

## **The Professional Modeling Industry: A “model” for what’s wrong with modern precarious employment**

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Behind the glossy covers of fashion magazines lies the much less attractive underbelly of precarious employment, exploitation, and in some cases, human trafficking. This global industry preys on young, vulnerable labor, often immigrants, just as many other industries do today. Models are typically classified as independent contractors, subjecting them to a host of fees and improper responsibilities, but perhaps more importantly, the classification leaves them with little to no protection from wage theft, discrimination, sexual harassment, child labor violations, or the ability to come together and collectively bargain and form unions. This talk will look at some of the inherent challenges to organizing in the modeling industry, the structure of the precarious employment relationship, and what is currently being done to change this. In many respects, the modeling industry has much in common with other sectors of the entertainment industry, and much can be learned by comparing the structure of actors’ and musicians’ unions. While these industries appear unique in the labor market, the precarious nature of employment (for all but the most successful stars), is a “model” being replicated more and more in modern employment schemes. Consequently, lessons from successful organizing tactics have never been more relevant.