

Experimentation for better work

Stream convenors

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The conference stream invites papers that deal with responses to disruptions in the regulation of work and employment through organisational and institutional experimentation.

Major changes are taking place in the regulation of work and employment, resulting in increased work uncertainty and variety. The challenges are pressing. People are now experiencing their work, participating in their communities and living their lives in ways that prompt questions about their future. These include the impact of digital technologies, changes in the role of the state, the recasting of company boundaries, the growth of global production networks, the challenge of sustainable development and shifts in identity, solidarity and values. It is no longer clear where existing institutions for the regulation of work fit: are they prompting uncertainties rather than security?

The specific focus of this stream is on the efforts of different social and policy actors to engage in organisational and institutional experimentation in the re-regulation of work and employment, on how these experiments entail the re-combination of modes of rules and modes of governance at work (sometimes crossing or combining different regulatory arenas), and on the impact of these "experiments" in terms of whether they make work "better" or "worse" (i.e. disparities in the quality of jobs and the ability to construct lives beyond those jobs). Experimentation might be a transitional strategy, exploring alternatives to blockages in existing institutions; it might also be re-combinations where the absence of *ex ante* solutions entails effort to reshape organisations and institutions in ways that connect existing frameworks with innovative solutions.

Hence, can better work be achieved - productive, innovative, healthy and inclusive work, in which individuals live free from excessive insecurity, exercise control over their working lives and contribute to their workplace and society? What kinds of experiments are taking place in efforts to craft new regulatory combinations? What are the prospects for or barriers to experiments for better work, by different types of actors (employers, governments, trade unions, and NGOs)? Who are the social actors that can prompt such modifications and what skills and capabilities do they require?

The stream seeks contributions in three broad areas of enquiry:

- Digital impacts and work
- Work models and regulatory frameworks.
- Forms of work