

Call for Papers

8th International Conference “Work and Health”

Thursday, 25 Januar to Friday, 26 Januar 2024

School of Social Work, University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland (FHNW), Olten (Switzerland)

Focus of the conference “Work and Health” is on the topics **“New Work in the World of Work”** and **“Contemporary Challenges.”**

CFP 1: Focus “New Work in the World of Work”

The current, far-reaching transformation processes in working society are often summarized and discussed under the term “new work“. The concept of “new work,” which goes back to Frithjof Bergmann’s formulation, focuses on the needs of employees for work activities that are meaningful to them. According to Bergmann, New Work is characterized by work in which workers have the opportunity to pursue a job that they really like and that they can largely organize themselves. The concept of “new work” in the transformation of the working world can also be linked to the discourses about “good work” or “decent work,” such as those conducted in connection with the International Labor Organization ILO.

The triggers and drivers of the current transformation of the working world are the developments in the areas of operational production and organization associated with digitization. New digitized forms of production lead to a comprehensive redesign of the previous operational order(s). Companies that were previously largely hierarchically managed and controlled in line organizations are increasingly being supplemented or even replaced by agile organizational forms that rely on self-management. With the introduction of these new forms of organization, important foundations for a comprehensive flexibilization of the operational production context are being created at the same time. These focus on the employees themselves, who are increasingly seen as the linchpin of successful, productive work in the company. For employees, this means that they see themselves exposed to new demands in their professional activities that require new skills and competencies. These relate to both technical knowledge and skills as well as the interdisciplinary skills required for gainful employment and employment orientation. In the context of “new work,” questions of qualification are raised in particular, for example in connection with “digital literacy,” “lifelong learning” and “employability” (Kraus). While at the beginning of the 2000s the subjectivation of work activities that began in the course of the transition from automation to digitization in relation to employees was critically addressed above all as a transition from “professional skilled workers” to “subjectified labor entrepreneurs” (Voss/Pongratz), today this discourse is hardly being taken up and discussed in the current debates on phenomena of “new work.”

There are many reasons for this, but obviously the identified type of labor entrepreneur is still too strongly oriented toward traditional ideas of personnel and organization, which have lost much of their importance in the advanced transformation processes. In the models of democratic corporate organization, such as the “holocracy,” which are becoming more and more attractive, this connection is becoming increasingly visible.

Digitally framed New Work concepts also enable a spatial reconfiguration of gainful employment, which is expressed in particular in the increasing importance of hybrid work concepts that alternate between working in the office and working from home. The implications of hybrid work concepts for employee health, company health management, but also for human resources management and company social relations have not yet been adequately researched. Within the framework of agile, network-type work contexts, which are designed for self-management, companies are also faced with a variety of new challenges, for example in relation to qualification, health or the dissolution of work boundaries. Against this background, the contributions to the conference should address the following topics inter alia:

- The importance of the “new work” concept in the current transformation of the working world and the associated emergence of new forms of work and organization;
- Opportunities and challenges that arise from “new work” for companies and employees with regard to professional activities, vocational training and qualification;
- Opportunities and challenges that arise through “new work” for clients and organizations in work integration and in the various fields of employment-oriented integration;
- Dynamics in the transformation from “professional skilled worker” to “flexible, self-managed worker” in connection with “new work”;
- Influences and consequences of “new work” on the labor market segment “simple work”;
- Health risks and resources of employees in connection with “new work,”
- Challenges and chances of “new work” for company health management as well as for integration management/disability management.

Both theoretical contributions and empirical contributions on the focus topic “New Work in the world of work” are welcome.

CFP 2: “Current Challenges”

Globalization, digitalization and demographic change are currently perceived as central features of a fundamental change in our contemporary society. They play an important role in the transformation of the world of work, which also creates new challenges for companies, organizations and employees in the field of “work and health.”

When dealing with technological, personnel and organizational challenges, companies often need innovative solutions. For employees, questions of participation and co-determination arise when it comes to innovations. For example, new qualification requirements often arise that destabilize old compromises, create uncertainty and stress - the pressure to adapt often also entails health risks. Another challenge for companies and employees is the shortage of skilled workers at all qualification levels,

which brings with it new options and opportunities for employees, but is also associated with challenges and burdens for companies and employees, in particular due to the additional workload for the workforce. Despite the shortage of skilled workers, people are still affected by job losses, for example due to company relocations, technological change, health burdens, and a fundamental professional reorientation is often necessary, even at an advanced age. With in-creasing age, the probability of one's own chronic illnesses also increases, and important reference persons and relatives, such as one's own parents, more often require assistance (help, support and care). Against this background, questions arise with regard to:

- the importance of health risks related to employment;
- welfare state and company measures in the context of work and health;
- the compatibility of work with family care-giving and nursing (“informal care”);
- the effects of health impairments on remaining in or accessing the labor market;
- forms of discrimination in the workplace.

Both theoretical and empirical contributions are welcome.

As part of the international conference, various facets of the focus topic “new work” as well as questions on current developments in connection with “work and health” will be discussed.

Please assign your proposal to one of the following subject areas:

1. “New work”
2. Health
3. Digital transformation
4. Internationalization
5. Operational Developments in the company
6. Work integration
7. Welfare state developments
8. Compatibility of work and family, care/care-giving for relatives

Proposal submission

Those interested in giving a presentation are asked to submit a proposal of no more than 300 words using the digital conference tool (access via: www.fachtagung-eingliederungsmanagement.ch). The proposals are selected in a peer review by the members of the program committee. Please indicate to which main topic (CFP 1 or CFP 2) you assign your contribution and in which conference languages (German and English) you can present and discuss.

Submission of the proposal by September 20, 2023

Feedback to proposal submitter scholars by October 15, 2023

Conference languages: German and English

Information: www.fachtagung-eingliederungsmanagement.ch

Organizers

- Institute Integration and Participation, School of Social Work, University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland (FHNW), Olten (Switzerland)
- University of Bremen, Institute for Work and the Economy (Bremen, Germany)
- University of Vienna, Institute for Sociology (Vienna, Austria)

Program Committee

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- Research Committee, Sociology of Health and Medicine, Swiss Sociological Association
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