



Call for papers

THE 19TH ILERA WORLD CONGRESS, 21–24 JUNE 2021 | LUND UNIVERSITY, SWEDEN

For more than 50 years, ILERA, the International Labour and Employment Relations Association, has promoted the study – in and across a number of academic disciplines – of labour and employment relations throughout the world.

The 19th ILERA World Congress in Lund will continue this impressive tradition and serve as a vital global platform, gathering scholars, social partners, policy-makers, and other stakeholders to exchange ideas and best practices.

Making and Breaking Boundaries in Work and Employment Relations

INTRODUCTION

Boundaries are key to the future of work and employment relations. Increasingly, people and companies move across borders. Pandemics, like Covid-19, question this mobility and more generally, boundaries are renegotiated – between humans and machines, work and private life, and employment and other forms of work.

Furthermore, work and employment relations around the globe are being reshaped by crucial developments, such as globalization, protectionism, pandemics, climate change and greening of the economy, digitalization and automation, inequality and the struggle for decent and sustainable work, gender equality and diversity, and ageing populations and intergenerational tension.

We encourage proposals that address topical and challenging issues in work and employment relations in developing as well as developed economies. Proposals across disciplinary boundaries are welcome, as are proposals that focus or integrate gender-equality dimensions, and proposals that aim at dynamic innovation in theories, methodologies, and practices in our field.

TRACKS

Track 1: Collective Voice and Social Dialogue

Collective voice continues to be crucial for shaping a decent and sustainable working life. Many important things have been accomplished, but old challenges persist all over the globe, and new ones urgently call for our attention. The state plays a major role here, among other things in removing barriers to collective voice, safeguarding respect for freedom of association, and promoting the inclusion of workers operating outside regular structures. Collective actors themselves may also move in new directions. New challenges and themes – such as the platform economy, climate change, new groups of working-poor and pandemics – may require innovative approaches as well as new strategies, partnerships, and even actors, both nationally and internationally. A stronger focus on equality and diversity makes new demands on collective-voice processes. Crossing geographical frontiers and establishing cross-border collaboration is difficult, but it is even more important in an atmosphere where protectionism is gaining ground. This track explores these issues and examines the role of collective voice and social dialogue in addressing the working-life challenges of our time.

We welcome papers and special sessions on such topics as the following:

- Freedom of association, collective bargaining, and the right to strike: legislation, methods, and results
- Innovative ways for collective actors to reach out to and include all workers and workplaces: new solidarities across borders
- International and comparative studies on social dialogue and other forms of collective voice
- The role of collective voice and social dialogue for
 - a sustainable work organization,
 - innovative and emerging trends in work, and
 - equality, diversity, and inclusion

Track 2: Work and Employment Relations

In recent decades, research on work and employment relations has focused to a great extent on the effects of globalization – the internationalization of markets, the rise of extensive production chains, the creation of international organizations, and the convergence of economic policies and prescriptions on deregulation and flexibilization – on work and employment relations in national contexts. These trends persist. In recent years, however, something has started to happen which is not in line with expectations of increasing convergence and international integration. Nationalistic policies, protectionism, and trade wars have appeared in international relations calling in question the dismantling of boundaries. Moreover, international organizations like the OECD and IMF now regard rising inequality as a dangerous side-effect of the policies of recent decades. At the same time, international collaboration would seem to be more urgent than ever if we are to be able to face the challenges of our time, among them climate change and environmental destruction, pandemics, immigration, unequal economic development, and the weakening of labour standards.

The focus of this track is on how work and employment relations are being affected by conflicting trends in the changing world economy, as well as by structural changes arising from new technology.

We welcome papers and special sessions on such topics as the following:

- Trends and changes in the institutions or mechanisms regulating wages and working conditions, such as collective bargaining, labour law, corporate social-responsibility policies, etc.
- The role of actors (the state, trade unions, employee representatives, employers and employers' associations, the self-employed, and stakeholder communities) in work and employment relations. Who are the drivers of continuity and change?
- Analysis of the outcomes of the regulation of work and employment relations: trends in wages and working conditions; precarious work; economic inequality; managing diversity at work; etc.
- Theoretical and methodological development: what are the relevant pathways for the study of work and employment relations today?

Track 3: Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

Increasing migration flows and globalized production processes not only forge new ties across the world; they also pose challenges to labour market governance, to welfare states, and to social cohesion. The fundamental changes associated with transient borders and technological change have brought new forms of work and employment relations as well as inequalities and conflicts. Workers in the more affluent countries face intensified competition from low-paid workers in developing and emergent economies. Peripheral regions are left behind in the restructuring of labour markets. In the global south, widespread informal employment calls for regulation to safeguard rights, provide social protection, and promote decent working conditions. In many OECD countries, new forms of precarious work are threatening standards that were previously achieved. The task of including migrant workers and low-skilled workers in new labour markets while combatting discrimination and exploitation puts new pressures on social actors and institutional frameworks. The global increase in female labour-force participation calls for a stronger focus on gender discrimination, equal treatment, and work-family policies. The ageing of the population and of the workforce poses new challenges in the world of work, related to care responsibilities borne by employees with elderly relatives, and to the safeguarding of a sustainable working life for persons of all ages. The risk of conflicts and tensions between different generations, as well as between other groups in the working population, is another serious challenge posed by current demographic developments.

We welcome papers and special sessions on such topics as the following:

- Job polarization, segmented labour markets, new insecurities, and the working poor
- Tension between migrant workers and host country welfare states and labour markets: inclusive policies and decent work?
- Gender inequalities, discrimination, and harassment: moving forward or back?
- The role of non-discrimination law and of policies and measures to promote equal treatment
- Informal 'shadow' workers and global care chains

Track 4: Work Organization and HRM

Work organizations and HRM practices around the globe face serious challenges currently, due to ageing populations, climate change, globalized organizations and markets, and the increased digitalization of society. HRM practices are central for supporting organizations to meet the challenges of the 21st century to attract, retain, and develop personnel. At the same time, HRM practices are necessary for ensuring decent and sustainable work, furthering gender equality,

and promoting diverse and inclusive workplaces. We are interested in discussing how changing HRM practices are making and breaking boundaries in terms of employment relations (new forms of employment and contracts/temporary contracts, gig-work), business models/organizational forms, and inter-organizational relations.

We welcome papers and special sessions on such topics as the following:

- Prolonged working lives and between jobs: lifelong learning, transitional labour markets, matching of competencies in changing work organizations, and employee health and well-being
- HRM across boundaries: MNCs and HRM-model transfer
- The spread of management ideas, such as quality management and lean methods in the service and public sectors
- White- and blue-collar boundaries: are white-collar jobs being squeezed, and is professionalization creating new entry-barriers into occupations?
- Talent management, knowledge management, and employer branding

Track 5: Innovation and Emerging Trends in Work

Contemporary society and the world of work are facing multiple challenges and forces of change and innovation. Some of these long-term forces are defined as megatrends, such as globalization, demographics, climate change, and new technology. Megatrends are borderless, and they are likely to change the world of work (although we do not exactly know how). Since they are shaped, moreover, by both global and local contexts, they vary in their manifestations, impacts, and actor responses. Huge and variegated efforts are now being made through collective action, and by politicians and businesses, to promote social and institutional innovation in the world of work, sometimes driven by unexpected events such as Covid-19. It is important for the world of work that scientific debate be promoted and that knowledge about possible, probable, and preferable futures feed into sound policy formation and decision-making. For example, how can technological advances such as artificial intelligence, automation, and robotics, be applied to ensure that production has an environmentally sustainable footprint, and that decent, inclusive, and equitable forms of work are developed? Answering such looming questions requires innovative reforms in the ways we work, and in how we distribute the burdens and benefits of change. Faced as we are by an unpredictable world of work, we have a greater need than ever for empirical studies on new and imaginative ways of organizing, rewarding, and managing work – matched with scientific knowledge about causality and complexity.

We welcome papers and special sessions on such topics as the following:

- Digitalization, AI, automation, robotization, and the consequences of such trends for the form and content of work
- The gig economy, platform work, new workforces, and beyond
- The changing interaction and boundaries between humans at work, and between humans and machines
- Innovative technology, emerging technologies, and innovation in the organization and institutions of work
- Climate change, greening of the economy, and the implications for work and employment relations. Are borders emerging or disappearing?

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Paper Abstract

Submissions of paper abstracts are invited. The abstract should relate to one of the congress tracks, and contain a maximum of 4 000 characters, including spaces (and not contain any illustrations, graphs or tables).

Special Session Proposal

Submissions of special session proposals are invited. A special session is convened by a chair and should relate to one of the congress tracks. The special sessions will run for 90 minutes, and could have different formats, for example, thematic paper presentations with discussion, round-table on a current topic, or book launch with presentations and discussion. The text describing the outline, topic and content of the special session as well as the participants involved should contain a maximum of 10 000 characters, including spaces (and not contain any illustrations, graphs or tables).

Submissions and Deadlines

The congress language is English. Paper abstracts are to be submitted in English. Special session proposals are, in principle, to be submitted in English. However, in order to enable a global dialogue on labour and employment relations throughout the world, we plan to organize a limited number of sessions in French and Spanish. To that end, special session proposals can also be submitted in French and Spanish.

Deadline for submissions: 1 November 2020

Notifications of acceptance: 1 February 2021

Registration for the World Congress will open on 1 October 2020.

Submissions are made through the World Congress website at: www.ileraworldcongress2021.se

For questions, please contact: ilera2021@jur.lu.se

