

**41<sup>st</sup> Conference of the International Working Party on Labour Market  
Segmentation (IWPLMS)**

**Paris, 14-16 September 2023**

**Adjusting to a world of instability: workers, firms and institutions**

**Call for papers**

Work and employment have undergone major changes over the last decades, following the effects of technological change and digitalization as well as of labour market policy reforms, mainly aiming at deregulation. Quantitative employment flexibility has been rising with the development of multiple forms of employment relations: not only non-standard employment contracts (short term, zero hour) but also platform outsourcing or posted workers for instance. New forms of flexibility have also been developing, based on spatial flexibility and digital tools, such as teleworking. These transformations have renewed and intensified job quality concerns, for manual workers exposed to hard working conditions and work intensification, as well as for managers and professionals who face long working hours and difficulties to maintain a barrier between work and personal life.

In addition to these long-term trends, several crises hit workers and firms over the last 15 years, from the financial crisis leading to substantial increases in unemployment in many countries, to the COVID crisis, which led to a sudden stop to some activities and a need to adapt for others. The current recovery period combines labour shortages in some occupations and poor wage dynamics despite inflation. If we add to these

economic and health crises the issues raised by global warming, ecological transformation or the war in Ukraine, it is clear that our economies are in an era of multiple and interlocking crises. Uncertainty concerning the future of economic growth as well as the nature of employment appears quite high and constantly challenged.

In this context of repeated crises and high uncertainty, it seems crucial to develop research that focuses on how institutions, firms and workers are responding to these changes and with what consequences for inequalities and segmentation. This Conference aims at extending and renewing the comparative and institutionalist approach to segmentation as developed by the International Working Party on Labour Market Segmentation for four decades.

Accordingly, we encourage you to submit contributions in this vein, analyzing processes and policies put in place to adjusting to a world of instability. We suggest addressing these issues through three complementary approaches.

First, the conference will particularly focus on changes in **work attitudes** following the recent and ongoing crises (health crisis and ecological crisis). Even if the “great resignation” is questionable (is its magnitude unprecedented? How common is it across different national systems?) and may reflect different causes in different countries, there are signs in existing surveys of a change in the meaning of work and in the degree of workers’ involvement. Some jobs offering poor working and employment conditions are characterized by rising hiring difficulties. Have employees’ attitudes towards work changed with the health crisis? Are employees looking for more meaningful work? The shortage of labour in many sectors could give employees greater bargaining power and lead to improved employment and working conditions.

Second, analyses of the responses and strategies of **firms and social partners** to the recent crisis are also welcome. What changes are taking place in work organization and productive systems? How did human resource practices and employment strategies adjust to the crises? What role is played by the national context? How did employer’s strategies adapt to changes in labour market policies (short-time work, employment retention policies, minimum wage levels etc.)? A focus on the dynamics of industrial relations and their role in coping with the crisis is crucial. How do unions impinge on repeated strategic adjustment? What has been the role played by employers’ organizations?

Third, the conference welcomes analyses of **how institutions react**, adapt and anticipate changes in the economic context. How do labor market institutions cope with the return of inflation? How does this affect wage setting institutions, unemployment insurance, employment protection legislation and social minima etc.? And how are they responding to new limitations on international trade? How does this affect global value chains and productive systems at the national level? A crucial point

here would also be to better link the analysis of micro and macro transformations of our economies: How do changing practices at the micro level impact on the macroeconomic sustainability of our economic systems? How do changing employment conditions impact on growth and inequality? How do changing practices reshape labor market segmentation?

In this context of multi-level and interdependent crises, we encourage the submission of articles proposing an analysis of the transformations taking place at the level of employees (theme 1), companies and collective actors (theme 2) or institutions (theme 3). The three themes proposed can be combined and should be read in the light of different national contexts to inform our thinking on the future of work and employment.

### **Submission of abstracts**

Please submit abstracts for a conference paper by **April 3<sup>rd</sup>** via our conference website <https://iwplms2023.sciencesconf.org>.

We recommend a document of 1 to 2 pages and, preferably, pdf format. We ask you to situate your proposal in one or more of the call's three themes.

The selected abstracts will be announced before the end of April.

The conference will take place in Paris (*Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers*, CNAM), from 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> of September 2023.

For more details on the conference and the IWPLMS, please refer to the conference website <https://iwplms2023.sciencesconf.org>

### **Local organizing committee**

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