



CRIMT 2024

WORK ON THE BRINK BETTER WORK FOR A JUST AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

24-26 October 2024, HEC Montreal, Montreal, Canada

The CRIMT Partnership Project on *Institutional Experimentation for Better Work*, which brings together the *Interuniversity Research Centre on Globalization and Work* (CRIMT) and an international network of partner centres and associated researchers, is organizing a major international conference entitled: *WORK ON THE BRINK: Better Work for a Just and Sustainable Future*. This conference will examine the disruptions and crises affecting the world of work, address their consequences, and critically assess the strategies, policies and actions implemented by world-of-work actors to support, mitigate, or counter these effects.

This conference will take place at **HEC Montréal** (Montréal, Canada) from **Thursday October 24th to Saturday October 26th, 2024**. It aims to engage researchers from the academic community and professionals from the world of work and will include a hybrid component to facilitate remote participation.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The current era is characterized by significant upheavals, stemming from various disruptive factors. These factors, amplified by globalization, have significant repercussions on the nature and quality of work, on individuals in their workplaces, as well as on their organizations and communities. **The aim of this conference is to better understand these effects and the challenges they pose, as well as the actions, experiments, and resilience deployed by actors to address them.**

Among these disruptive factors, it is important to mention **the acceleration of climate change**, which threatens biodiversity and ecosystems, is likely to result in significant population movements, and imposes a strict timeline for decarbonizing the economy. Climate change will also generate new employment opportunities in renewable energy, sustainable mobility, and environmental preservation, while requiring mitigation and retraining for workers in declining and transitioning industries.

The global COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated macroeconomic uncertainty, highlighting the fragility of supply chains and the social value of work. It has encouraged the widespread adoption of teleworking, including as a work organization model. Although teleworking potentially facilitates better work-life balance, it blurs the boundaries between work and non-work time. It can also lead to the implementation of surveillance and control mechanisms that infringe on worker privacy. The pandemic has also raised significant issues regarding income security and health and safety at work.

The rise of digital technologies, whether it be artificial intelligence, algorithmic management, the Internet of Things, or digital intermediary platforms, has given rise to new forms of employment, and new production and business models, with repercussions for all aspects of working lives. The rapid deployment of these technologies, without genuine deliberation, regulation or negotiation, risks reinforcing trends already present in the world of work. These include the intensification and extensification of work, the fissuring of work, the proliferation of precarious work and employment arrangements, and the weakening of social dialogue.

Many regions are facing **major demographic changes**, with a concentration of the population at the extremes of the age pyramid, leading to skill shortages and insufficient numbers of workers to meet labour market needs.

Geopolitical tensions are causing population displacements, resulting in migratory crises and demographic pressures. They are also facilitating the reallocation of productive capacities, leading to trade tensions, supply chain pressures, and increasing protectionism. These tensions are thus reshaping the global economy and challenging the neoliberal policies of recent decades.

Amidst **the current inflationary crisis**, power and income disparities are widening even further. Certain groups, such as women, racialized individuals, Indigenous peoples, youth, and migrants, are experiencing a worsening of the inequalities they already face.

In turn, these pressures on the standard of living, inequalities, and migratory movements, whether in the Global North or South, threaten the quality of democratic life. Specifically, **the rise of populism** fuels hatred and violence towards minorities and migrant populations, thus challenging the foundations of liberal democracies and their institutions.

In light of these uncertainties and faced with often contradictory choices, world-of-work actors pursue a variety of actions and strategies to cope with these disruptions. Approaches vary with national, industry, and organizational contexts as well as the political orientations and resources of the actors themselves. When driven by a desire to make work better, these actions and strategies can aim:

- To promote a more responsible and sustainable economy, whether through collective bargaining and social dialogue, the circular economy, socially responsible investment, green industrial policies, or active policies aimed at facilitating the retraining and participation of workers in the ecological transition;
- To encourage the responsible regulation and implementation of new technologies such as digital intermediation platforms and artificial intelligence;

- To ensure access to representation and collective bargaining in sectors with low union density, whether through the multiplication and intensification of recruitment campaigns or the reform of public policies;
- To reverse power and income inequalities that compromise the quality of democracies;
- To defend working conditions, particularly those related to the quality of services in the public sector and therefore the quality of life of citizens;
- To promote better forms of work and work organization, and more democratic and participatory organizations, as levers for the recruitment, attraction, and engagement of employees throughout supply chains;
- To fight for social justice, condemn structural inequalities, harassment, and sexual violence at work, and promote equity, diversity and inclusion, while rejecting patterns and practices inherited from the colonial era.

These are just a few examples for illustrative purposes. Other scenarios could be mentioned, including those where improving work is not an objective (for instance, aiming for operational efficiency without considering the consequences on the workforce). The key is to gain a better understanding of how these strategies or any other approach to these disruptions develop and, when applicable, are institutionalized. It is also crucial to comprehend why these actions and strategies sometimes make work better and sometimes make work worse, on one or more of its dimensions.

The organizers of this conference are seeking proposals on either of the following two themes.

Theme 1: the disruptions (as identified in this call for papers or any other deemed relevant) and their impact on the nature and quality of work, on individuals at work, as well as on their organizations and communities.

Theme 2: the strategies, actions, and policies implemented by world-of-work actors to support, regulate, or counter the effects of these disruptions. The organizers of this conference invite proposals that will help better understand the nature and extent of the strategies, actions, and policies implemented by stakeholders, whether resulting from collaborative or individual initiatives, and whether they lead to an improvement or deterioration of work and the organizations and societies in which that work takes place.

Proposals combining these two themes are welcome, as are those addressing the theoretical, methodological, empirical, and normative challenges arising from the study of the quality of work and employment and its broader societal implications.

SUBMIT A PROPOSAL

We invite interested researchers, including graduate students, to submit their communication proposals by **Monday, April 29, 2024**. The submission should be made using the online forms referenced below. Please submit a separate form for each proposal.

We accept different types of proposal: **individual**, submitted by one or more authors; **workshop**, comprising three to four contributions or three contributions and one commentary, centred on a common theme; **symposium**, bringing together at least two workshops linked by a common theme;

roundtable, gathering at least three speakers and one moderator, whether they come from the academic or professional spheres. Roundtable proposals can aim to stimulate debates on current issues, contemporary themes, or new publications, following the model of *authors meet critics*.

Online form to submit a proposal (please choose accordingly):

1. **Individual:** <https://forms.gle/LYWCD6iSesrzY7t18>
2. **Workshop:** <https://forms.gle/98smTQoQAmDyv4URA>
3. **Symposium:** <https://forms.gle/SL49e218KxEbYhn49>
4. **Roundtable:** <https://forms.gle/xU5sUHU8eMj2RLuT7>

Individual proposals should include a title, the names of the authors (in the order of appearance in the program) and their institutional affiliations, and then describe the nature of the study (main analytical orientations and, if applicable, methodological approaches). They should not exceed two pages. Workshop, symposium, or roundtable proposals should mention the participants and their institutional affiliations, provide a detailed overview of the contribution as a whole (i.e., the theme of the workshop, symposium, or roundtable), as well as each individual contribution (two to three paragraphs for each author or group of authors). They should not exceed three to five pages.

All submissions will be peer-reviewed. We will strive to respond to you as soon as possible, allowing you time to secure the necessary funding to attend the conference. Each participant is responsible for covering their registration fees, as well as any travel and accommodation expenses they may incur.

If you have any questions regarding the submission process or the organization of this conference, please refer to the [conference website](#) or contact **Marjorie Gionest-Larouche** (marjorie.gionest-larouche@rlt.ulaval.ca), Activities Coordinator at CRIMT, or **Nicolas Roby** (nicolas.robby@umontreal.ca), Scientific Coordinator at CRIMT.

The Interuniversity Research Centre on Globalization and Work, along with its international network of partners (the CRIMT Partnership Project on Experimentation for Better Work), is looking forward to stimulating discussions and debates. If you wish to know about our research activities, we invite you to visit [our website](#), as well as the program of our previous international conference (2022), or to view some of the many presentations stored in our video archive, please click on the [following link](#).

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*The **Interuniversity Research Centre on Globalization and Work** is focused on the theoretical and practical challenges associated with changes in work and employment. This centre is referred to by its acronym (CRIMT) in both French and English. Funded by the Partnership Program of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Fonds de recherche société et culture - Québec, the CRIMT Partnership brings together an international network of specialists in industrial and labour relations, labour and employment policies, human resource management, labour law and geography, in Quebec, the rest of Canada and in a dozen other countries. Its three founding institutions are the Université de Montréal, Université Laval and HEC Montréal.*