

Life and Work  
The Work and Life Project

Saturday 11th July – Monday 13th July 2015  
Mansfield College, Oxford, United Kingdom

Call for Presentations:

The project considers whether work is something integral to what we are as persons or whether this is something we have become over the centuries. Is work inherent in what makes us human (like the ants and the bees) or is it something which has been evolved into us by the way society has been shaped. With technological advancements, would a utopian society include work?

Work has become such an integral part of human existence that individuals often assume identity through the work they do. Is everything individuals do in life, work?

The project begins with the present conditions and an understanding of the current situation faced globally by many individuals in relation to life and work. There have been significant challenges globally due to changes in the nature and availability of work in the 21st century. A measured international response from governments, private sector and non-government organisations has been to embrace financial prudence and focus on efficiency of the labour force of their operations, resulting in downsizing and loss of work status.

The workplace globally has also been influenced by countless changes that threaten the underlying features of living. The over-valuing of work and the consequences of this for people's personal lives (stress, work/life balance, quality of life) as well as the way it started to change both the way society itself works (blurring of the boundaries between workplace and everything around it), the economy, politics etc.

For those who are out of work, the moral, psychological and social stigma attached to being unemployed is taking a toll. If life itself was defined through work any loss of employment in the work-life span has devastating effects irrespective of age (young, middle aged and old) gender (male and female) and skill levels (skilled or unskilled).

This international and interdisciplinary conference aims to bring together people from all walks of life – practitioners, labour unions, teachers, career counsellors, managers, administrators, politicians, and academics from a wide range of disciplines to focus on a fundamental aspect of life span and work relationships.

This conference seeks to gain an in depth understanding of whether there is anything to life other than work? When, how and in what way did the boundaries between work and life become blurred? As increasing number of people are choosing to work from home what impact is this having on life and living conditions?

The conference aims to specifically focus on the nature of work itself and the unambiguous nature of

its impacts on the individuals, families and communities in both developing and developed economies. It also seeks perspectives and understanding that breaks from the logic of how young are preparing for work, how work is often done and how people are preparing for life time work and how jobs are being created over life time span. In particular what are the possibilities of work that contributes to human well-being, and the idea of striking a work-life balance? It also seeks to investigate the relationship of work to leisure and friendship.

Papers, workshops and presentations are invited on any of the following themes:

#### 1. Differentiating between Work and Living:

- Defining and understanding work in past and the present and the vision of what work will be in the future
- Impact of age, class, gender, ethnicity and nationality on perceptions and experiences of work, work environments and the work-life balance
  - Critiques of the value of work
- Shifting attitudes toward particular types of work and their impact on worker psychology, employment patterns and economies
  - First-hand accounts of experiencing work as a labourer, professional, artist, etc.
- Shifting contexts and the spread of work through technological advancements and technical revolutions
  - Implications for career counsellors and educators

#### 2. Healthy Work:

- Effects of micromanagement on workers, working hours, and stress
  - Creating a psychologically healthy workplace
  - Coping with unemployment

#### 3. Excellence at Work

- The idea of craftsmanship
  - Spirituality and excellent work
- Learning challenges and opportunities for contemporary work
  - Excellence and meaningful work
- Apathy, negligence, the 'work to live' mindset and other forms of resistance against strong work ethics
  - Application of ethical values in challenging work environments, such as nursing, social work, psychological, psychiatric treatment, defence and police work.
    - Rotary ideals of work

#### 4. Influence of Media on Life and Work:

- Representations of work, work environments and worker behaviour in TV, film, theatre, music, the visual arts and literature
  - How have the media influenced the way work is understood and valued in societies?
    - Devaluing of media and the arts as a form of work

#### 5. Social Connections at Work and the Role of Social Media:

- Understanding forms of friendship at work
  - Fostering a friendly work environment

- Personal recognition and social capital
- Reaching out to the world through being alienated from work

#### 6. Work and Leisure:

- How can both work and leisure complement and enhance each other?
- What is the contribution of voluntary work?
- Working in retirement

#### 7. Work and Social Justice:

- Impact of state, national and international regulation of work and work environments (e.g. working time directives, anti-discrimination provisions, disability and compensation allowance, harassment provisions)
- Activism related to work and work environments (unions, sanctions, consumer boycotts over unfair conditions, etc.)
  - Challenges and strategies associated with ensuring employer compliance
- Global responses to sweatshops, child labour and other social justice issues
  - Strategies for tackling problems related to workers and workplaces

#### 8. Work and Culture:

- Differences in the meaning of work and workplace
  - Cultural constructs of work and workplace
    - Work attitudes
- Cross cultural aspects of exploitation of work, child workers
  - Worker remuneration

The Steering Group welcomes the submission of proposals for short workshops, practitioner-based activities, performances, and pre-formed panels. We particularly welcome short film screenings; photographic essays; installations; interactive talks and alternative presentation styles that encourage engagement.

#### What to Send:

Proposals will also be considered on any related theme. 300 word proposals should be submitted by Friday 13th March 2015. If a proposal is accepted for the conference, a full draft paper of no more than 3000 words should be submitted by Friday 22nd May 2015. Proposals should be submitted simultaneously to both Organising Chairs; proposals may be in Word or RTF formats with the following information and in this order:

- a) author(s), b) affiliation, c) email address, d) title of abstract, e) body of abstract.
- E-mails should be entitled: WORK4 Abstract Submission.

Please use plain text (Times Roman 12) and abstain from using footnotes and any special formatting, characters or emphasis (such as bold, italics or underline). We acknowledge receipt and answer to all paper proposals submitted. If you do not receive a reply from us in a week you should assume we did not receive your proposal; it might be lost in cyberspace! We suggest, then, to look for an alternative electronic route or resend.

Organising Chairs:  
[work4@inter-disciplinary.net](mailto:work4@inter-disciplinary.net) Rob Fisher and Ram Vemuri:

The conference is part of the Probing the Boundaries domain which aims to bring together people from different areas and interests to share ideas and explore innovative and challenging routes of intellectual and academic exploration. All proposals accepted for and presented at the conference must be in English and will be eligible for publication in an ISBN eBook. Selected proposals may be developed for publication in a themed hard copy volume(s). All publications from the conference will require editors, to be chosen from interested delegates from the conference.

Inter-Disciplinary,Net believes it is a mark of personal courtesy and professional respect to your colleagues that all delegates should attend for the full duration of the meeting. If you are unable to make this commitment, please do not submit an abstract for presentation.

For further details of the conference, please visit:  
<http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/probing-the-boundaries/persons/work-and-life/call-for-presentations/>