

HETEROGENEOUS WORK TRANSFORMATIONS
Pasts, presents and futures

Call for Panel Contributions

Heterogeneous sociotechnical practices and relations, developed directly because of work or implicated by it, have enabled mobile work and mobile work practices. Yet, the field of work mobilities is often homogenised to focus on paid (white collar) work or the mobile office. Within and beyond these classical representations, assemblages of materials and information, place and non-places, corporeal and affective movements, and the organisation of social life more generally, constitute work sites and practices (Wood, Smith and Hall, 2016).

In this panel, we aim to develop a deeper understanding and raise the visibility of all work that is mobile, exploring a series of interrelated questions around the reconfigurations of work, workplace and work practices when they become mobile, distributed, relational and contested. We posit that taking a more inclusive approach to mobile work gives new perspectives for societies on the move. Developing a more inclusive approach entails capturing the utopic and dystopic heterogeneity that contributes to the lived experiences of work and the contours of the “political economy of mobilities”. We are interested in how these reconfigurations have come about, how they are currently unfolding and also what they tell about the work futures to which we are headed? What have been the social, discursive, embodied, technological, material and political economic orderings that enable these reconfigurations? What are the frictions, tensions and contestations that occur during these reconfigurations?

Some examples that we have observed include:

- Increasing incorporation of data-intensive techniques or technologies (very broadly defined to include algorithms, sensors, predictive modelling, etc.) into the fabric of performing and evaluating work and governance.
- Creative appropriations of mundane technologies to enable highly mobile work of workers and/or their (significant) others.
- Invisible work required for the acquisition of most recent sociotechnical skills, experiences and knowledge, expanding work outside of formal work, workplace and work time.
- Health, wellbeing and (network and economic) capital costs of mobile work, including un- and under- employment, over-working, anxiety and maintaining relationships at a distance.

These are indicative examples and we would like to encourage you to share your case studies that might cross-cut with the following topics, but we are open to suggestions too.

- Work and work practices in unanticipated/invisible places/time;
- Heterogeneous relations and practices in non-human work (e.g. animals, plants, geological processes, etc.);
- Skills, emotions and subjectivities in mobile work;
- Gendering and diversifying mobile labour;
- Health, wellbeing and mobile work;
- Re-ordering of governance through mobile work.

Submission

Please send your abstract (300 words) and bio of each presenter (100 words) to the panel organisers by **Friday 31st March**. If you have any questions, please do get in touch.

Further information about the Mobile Utopia: Past, Present and Future conference can be found at: <http://wp.lancs.ac.uk/t2mc2c/>

Panel Organisers

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