



CALL FOR PAPERS

WELL-BEING AT AND THROUGH WORK

FOURTEENTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN COMMEMORATION OF PROFESSOR MARCO BIAGI

Modena, Marco Biagi Foundation, 18-19 March 2016

The concept of well-being is increasingly considered by policy-makers and scholars as a framework that brings together different issues relating to worker protection. Significant in this respect is the substantive body of legislation, policy and research elaborated by the European Union and its specialized agencies, namely the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work and the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.

Such analytical framework provides a useful perspective as it makes possible an exploration of the functional and theoretical links between a number of research strands and disciplines with a common focus on the personal dimension of the worker, analysed in its relationship with work organization and ongoing changes in the labour market.

From a policy point of view, in light of the changing patterns of employment, the concept of personal well-being presents an opportunity to examine certain implications of current employment and labour market strategies that would otherwise be neglected, to reflect on the values underlying labour legislation and the trends in collective bargaining, and to envisage the way ahead in the regulation of change.

A substantial body of research, inspiring policy-making at several levels (national as well as European), envisages a positive relationship between competitiveness-oriented organizational and regulatory strategies based on flexibility, innovation and productivity, on the one hand, and their externalities in terms of job satisfaction, health, and other indicators of employee personal well-being, on the other. As it was emphasized in a recent publication of Eurofound, “the underlying thesis is that implementing certain combinations of workplace practices can have a positive effect on outcomes for both workers and companies” (Eurofound, “Third European Company Survey – Overview report: Workplace practices – Patterns, performance and well-being”, 2015). In other words, it may be argued that the new economic framework entails the potential to strengthen the character of work as a source of personal well-being.

However, research also underlines the risks for employees arising from new forms of employment as well as from new patterns of traditional employment. Flexible working schedules, enhanced job

mobility, increased functional autonomy and atypical forms of work may prove beneficial in providing better opportunities for vocational development, work-life balance, and integration into the labour market for certain categories of workers, but they may also entail social and occupational isolation, labour market segmentation, a sense of insecurity, a lack of social protection, and other factors that can adversely affect worker health and safety, leading to stress, injuries and occupational diseases (Eurofound, “New Forms of Employment”, 2015).

A recent survey by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work has pointed out in particular that the emergence of peculiar psychosocial risks can be linked to “the way work is designed, organised and managed, as well as to the economic and social context of work”, resulting in an increased level of stress and can lead to serious deterioration of mental and physical health (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, “Second European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks-ESENER-2”, 2015).

Hence, the developments in the world of work challenge policy-makers, social partners and researchers to update the traditional machinery and put into practice new tools to ensure that workers are protected from the risks arising from the workplace.

Other research and policy strands adopting the “human development” perspective advocate a shift of the theoretical and policy framework from “jobs” and “employment” to “work”, and also invite to focus on the interaction between paid work and living conditions. In this connection it may be argued that the interaction between paid work and living conditions should be defined in broader terms. In this conceptualization, living conditions not only depend on monetary income but also on extended income – placing a monetary value on unpaid work care and housework and recognizing gender inequalities in its distribution – along with social relations and the formation of social capital. In addition there is a need to measure the social costs of low-grade employment, both in terms of living conditions of the individual and his/her family and in terms of social capital (United Nations Development Programme, “2015 Human Development Report – Rethinking Work for Human Development”, forthcoming).

The conference aims to include contributions from different disciplinary perspectives (law, industrial relations, economics, organization theory, sociology, psychology, ergonomics), in order to broaden the knowledge base about changes in the world of work and their impact on personal well-being. Opportunities and risks need to be examined together to cast light on recent developments and to outline innovative solutions in respect of how regulators (lawmakers, the social partners and other stakeholders and relevant actors) can contribute to promoting the conciliation of different needs to achieve solutions that match the needs and opportunities of changing employment patterns with the well-being and fair treatment of workers. For this purpose, four main strands can be identified:

1. **Working Time.** The strand will investigate the evolution of working time patterns, with a focus on current practices and regulatory sources. Papers addressing one or more of the following issues, in the perspective of employees’ well-being, will be particularly welcome:
 - changes in the regulatory framework aimed primarily at increasing flexibility (reference may be made, for instance, to the evolving European framework);
 - the integration between legislative and collective bargaining provisions, with particular emphasis on the description of original and innovative solutions;

- the interaction between working time arrangements and other organizational and normative measures;
 - opportunities and risks relating to productivity and work-life balance, including measures adopted to enhance the beneficial effects and prevent the misuse as well as the adverse effects of flexibility (e.g. with reference to work-related stress).
2. **New Forms of Employment and Well-being at Work.** This strand is intended to provide insight on the implication on worker well-being of changing patterns of work linked to:
- the new forms of work deriving from technological development, diversification of vocational expertise and skills and the dematerialization of the workplace (e.g. smart working, telework);
 - new organizational arrangements in the workplace; increased autonomy in performing work and the functional interchangeability of jobs;
 - the models of collective representation of workers in atypical forms of employment and the extent to which collective players contribute to the protection of workers' well-being.
3. **Workplace Health and Safety.** The papers in this strand should put the traditional workplace health and safety issues in the context of recent labour market and organizational developments, with a view to assessing the effectiveness of the regulatory framework, practices and cultural backgrounds in relation to safety and prevention, and to identify possible improvements. Topics may include:
- integration of specific categories in the workplace, such as people with disabilities, young and older persons;
 - measures related to challenge peculiar risk factors such as those of a psychosocial nature;
 - organizational models and work practices devoted to the prevention of injuries and occupational diseases, with particular regard for industrial relations practices, employee involvement etc.;
 - the functioning and effectiveness of regulatory tools aimed at incentivizing the adoption of preventive and inclusive measures and sanctioning liability for injuries and occupational diseases.
4. **Company Welfare.** This strand will focus on the tools deployed for the protection of workers' well being from old and new "social risks" such as those related to health, aging, work-life balance, care responsibilities, housing, income support, skills development and the like. Papers that deal with the following issues will be particularly welcome:
- the relationship between public and private welfare services and the emerging dimension of company welfare provisions;
 - the normative and contractual provisions dealing with the enlargement and diversification of personal needs, the emergence of "new social risks" and the increasingly complex and fragmented configuration of workers' interests;

- the links between work organization and employee welfare;
 - the role of collective bargaining in setting up and governing welfare measures.
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SUBMISSIONS

Participants who intend to contribute a paper to one of the conference strands should submit by **26 June 2015** an **expression of interest**, indicating:

- the title of the proposed paper;
- a brief description of about **150 words**, that should present the topic and highlight the nature of the paper (theoretical analysis, strategic paper, presentation of empirical data etc);
- the paper's disciplinary or inter-disciplinary background (e.g. Labour Law, Organization Theory, Labour Economics);
- the author's affiliation;
- the conference strand where the paper is intended to be included. However, the Organising Committee reserves the right to assign papers to the strand and session they consider to be most appropriate.

Expressions of interest will be selected by the Organising Committee by **15 July 2015**.

Selected authors will be invited to present an extended abstract (**2000 words**) no later than **1 September 2015**, by filling the form that will be made available from June 2015 on the Marco Biagi Foundation website: www.fmb.unimore.it

Abstracts shall include a brief discussion of the results and conclusions that the paper aims to present.

Extended abstracts will be selected by the Organising Committee by **18 September 2015**.

Selected authors shall submit a full paper of about **8000 - 10000 words** by **18 December 2015**. Full papers should present a complete piece of research and not be limited to the description of a work in progress.

The Organising Committee reserves the right to refuse full papers that are not consistent with the conference strands or with the expression of interest/full abstract that have been approved.

The working languages of the conference will be English and Italian. Abstracts and papers may be submitted either in English or in Italian.

DEADLINES

- Deadline for submission of expressions of interest: **26 June 2015**
- Deadline for submission of extended abstracts: **1 September 2015**
- Deadline for submission of full papers: **18 December 2015**

ORGANISING COMMITTEE

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CONTACTS

For information about the presentation of abstracts and papers:

Iacopo Senatori, Researcher, Marco Biagi Foundation: [**iacopo.senatori@unimore.it**](mailto:iacopo.senatori@unimore.it)

The first draft of the conference programme will be made available in January 2016.

Further information will be posted on the Marco Biagi Foundation's web site [**www.fmb.unimore.it**](http://www.fmb.unimore.it)