

Call for Participation!
LABOR.A[®] 2024

Berlin & Digital
September 19, 2024

STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY
WHAT IS WORK?
ALTERNATIVE MODELS OF GROWTH
THE

GAP
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND POWER
PSYCHOLOGICAL STR... IN THE WORKPLACE

ABOUT LABOR.A®

LABOR.A® is the Hans Böckler Foundation's hybrid conference on the future of work. The conference will take place for the seventh time on September 19, 2024, again at the Cafe Moskau in Berlin as well as online. Almost 2,000 people participated in the event in 2023.

The goal of LABOR.A® is to engage with and propel forward the current discussion on the transformation of labor, to identify visions of the future, and to bring stakeholders together.

The LABOR.A® program is developed in collaboration with participants from academia, labor unions, the political sphere, and civil society. Present your issues, share your experiences, join us in debating the work of the future! More information and highlights from the sessions and panels of previous years' conferences can be found here: www.labora.digital

THE MOTTO OF LABOR.A® 2024: FILL_THE_GAP

The debate over how to shape the transformation of labor is defined by gaps: gaps in the political discourse, in the budget, in society. LABOR.A® 2024 wants to identify these gaps and demonstrate that together we can fill them. Indeed, we have to fill them if we want to resist a potential backlash and build a progressive, promising future. To this end, we need to build alliances and expand our networks. The motto `fill_the_gap!` is also meant to be understood as the Hans Böckler Foundation's heartfelt invitation to all those who are not yet involved, but who are working for a democratic, just, and sustainable transformation of labor and of the economy: Let us bring our ideas together and find common ground!

YOUNG LABOR.A®

We explicitly invite early-career scholars and PhD candidates as well as youth and trainee representatives and young activists with a background in union organizing or from civil society organizations and the environmental movement to participate in the LABOR.A® 2024 program. We need your voices. Fill the gap! We welcome proposals that go beyond conventional panel discussion formats.



HOW TO - PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCE- DURES

The LABOR.A® partner program formats are designed by the organizations, projects, initiatives, and other entities that submit an application.

Please apply using this form only:
<https://labora.digital/2024/call>

Possible formats for the LABOR.A® partner program:

SESSIONS

are 45 minutes long. Audience participation must be facilitated and applications must be submitted jointly by at least two organizations. A Hans Böckler Foundation jury will select participants based on these applications.

KICKOFF PRESENTATIONS

are 15 or 30 minutes long. They can be held by one or two people and their content should be clearly defined (proposition, idea, project...). Applicants must be willing to record their presentation in advance if requested.

EXHIBITIONS

are presentations of research findings, projects, or organizations on our event page or at Cafe Moskau. They do not receive a program slot (lecture or discussion) at the event.

Funding

The Hans Böckler Foundation will cover the cost of the event on site as well as streaming costs. Any fees and travel expenses for speakers and session chairs are the responsibility of the partner organizations. Please let us know if this presents a problem for your organization.

Deadline: March 1, 2024

Please contact the "Work of the Future" research group with any questions you may have:

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KEY TOPICS AT LABOR.A[®] 2024

STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY

LABOR.A[®] 2024 is taking place in the campaign and election year 2024. We want to be a platform for constructive, democratic forces to network and find common ground. Our vision of the future of labor is diverse, allows for different ways of living and working, and is shaped by democratic processes.

Employer and employee federations are important stakeholders and companies key places for the strengthening of a resilient democracy. We look forward to contributions that share research knowledge and experiences in this regard.

Facts and fakes: What role does (deliberate) misinformation play in the discussion surrounding democratic values vs. right-wing positions? How are we using semi-automated applications or AI and how can we best defend against deep fakes?

How can works councils and unions develop strategies against right-wing extremism? What role do alliances and networks play? Is there a strategy gap here – and, if so, why?

What alliances are needed to promote diversity and democracy? What role do workplace stakeholders play?

Why are right-wing positions becoming stronger and right-wing extremist discourse gaining in acceptance? What do we know about the impact of socio-economic status on the susceptibility to such discourse and what role does the increasing complexity of our society play? How does worker participation as “living democracy” fit in here?

How do the positions of German and European right-wing parties translate into employment conditions and worker participation? What do they mean for the welfare state? What do they mean for female and non-binary employees, those read as migrants, or BIPoC?

What responsibility and what scope do employers, works councils, and unions have in dealing with right-wing extremist or populist positions within companies? What are the specific conflicts here?

STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY

JUST TRANSITION

Alliances between the environmental movement and the labor movement are essential for the success of the socio-ecological transformation. What are common leverage points, what differences remain? What experiences can we draw on at the European and international level?

The Hans Böckler Foundation's current focus is on the just shaping of the ecological transformation. LABOR.A® explicitly invites stakeholders from the environmental movement and civil society to share their insights and contribute to the discussion in a context oriented toward organized labor. We also welcome contributions from the current research on climate change and adaptation, particularly as it relates to labor.

Terms such as "socio-ecological transformation" or "socio-ecological economic miracle" are part of a positive narrative of the future but also elicit intensely negative reactions.

What do we know about polarization and common denominators between heterogeneous groups in our society and in the workplace on the road to a "Just Transition"? What role do framings, narratives, and trigger points play?

Transformation happens locally. What are the specific challenges faced in different sectors, regions, and forms of employment? What examples of best practice are there in different companies? What regional and municipal networks are being leveraged?

Ambitious climate change policy is under pressure from right-wing majorities across Europe. Are we facing a "climate backlash"?

Just Transition is also a political project. What are the specific experiences companies are having with national, European, and international regulation? How can state subsidies and public investment be tied to requirements that bring together social and ecological aspects of the transition?

SHARING THE BURDEN

How can the socio-ecological transformation be paid for in a way that is just? This is the key question for holding society together. We look forward to contributions drawing on research and practice that analyze different ideas for sharing the burden and describe their social, economic, and ecological effects.

Some ideas currently on the table: the balanced budget amendment, a wealth tax, an inheritance tax, carbon pricing, a climate bonus, ecological VAT, the transformation fund.

What does a lack of public funding mean for corporate transformation processes?

What role do public and private investment and investment incentives play on the road to a fairly funded sustainable economy?

What measures and projects are addressing the global distribution of wealth and standards?

JUST TRANSITION

SHARING THE BURDEN

ALTERNATIVE MODELS OF GROWTH

There is no alternative to moving away from fossil fuels as the basic energy source of European economic performance. There is a diversity of opinion, however, about the growth parameters under which decarbonization can and should take place. We look forward to contributions that will propel this discussion forward.

What must an alternative economic model deliver in order to safeguard decent work? Are there viable concepts for less growth that maintain prosperity and secure jobs?

Economic growth and measuring prosperity – what models tell us what we need to know?

What attitudes do workers have towards different growth models?

Green growth includes green industries and thus preserves Germany's status as a leading industrial nation – right?

How can Germany continue to finance its welfare state under conditions of declining growth? What strategies are other countries implementing?

EDUCATION IN THE TRANSFORMATION

If we are to successfully leave behind the fossil fuel economy while at the same time retaining good jobs and securing prosperity, we need to invest in education – so that we can maintain skilled workers, counteract social division, and explore the potential of immigration. We look forward to contributions drawing on research and practice that address the issue of sustainability in vocational education and training.

To what extent can sustainability measures be included in training regulations? Where are the limits here?

How can education for sustainable development (ESD) be used to make corporate action more sustainable? What conditions need to be in place so that we can develop effective sustainability strategies?

How can we reach small and medium-sized businesses, micro-enterprises, or sectors dominated by project-based work and self-employment?

What skills are needed to transform different areas of the economy and the job market? What various challenges are there, for example, in commerce, in the textile industry, in the automotive industry, in the chemical industry, in the education sector?

Does embedding sustainability in a profession's profile make jobs more attractive?

What skilled workers do we need for a fossil-free future and how should we be training them?

INFRASTRUCTURE(S)

Public infrastructures are the foundation of a successful socio-ecological transformation. Delayed investments and poor planning have created massive gaps in Germany, which are currently not only slowing down processes, but also giving rise to tensions within society. We welcome contributions that analyze current developments and present possible solutions.

Fields of interest here include housing (e.g., issues surrounding sustainable construction), care (e.g., the role of AI/semi-automation), data infrastructures, mobility, art/culture, education, and, in particular, social welfare.

How do municipal infrastructures help maintain the social fabric? What are examples of the expansion and conversion of municipal infrastructure?

What is the relationship between public infrastructures and issues of equity and discrimination?

“Learning from others” – how are other countries developing their infrastructures for the socio-ecological transformation?

Where can we find responsible players on the municipal, regional, national, and European level? What role do networks of different stakeholders play?

Where do we need public investment and where should private sector players be involved?

WHAT IS WORK?

We welcome contributions that explore the outer limits of employment.

AI and work – what defines human labor?

What role do different generational attitudes play?

What is decent self-employed work?

What role does work play in times of crisis – beyond securing livelihoods?

What is the future of labor beyond paid work?

How can the social security system take into account project-based forms of work and employment histories with gaps? Paid work and care work – where do we stand in relation to the compatibility of family and work? What developments are we seeing concerning women in the workforce?

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND POWER

It is hard to overestimate the impact of AI on different areas and aspects of labor. At the same time, this impact is difficult to grasp in concrete terms and extremely heterogeneous. We look forward to critical perspectives on the (so far largely unfulfilled) promise of AI and concrete examples of experiences with AI across industries and companies.

How can the positive effects of the digital transformation be made tangible for workers?

AI both destroys and creates jobs. What useful research is out there, where can we find reliable data?

What generational differences are there in regard to the use and regulation of AI-based applications?

Under what premises, in whose interests, and in what scope are specific AI applications being implemented in the workplace? What collective agreements are already in place that regulate this use in a precise way?

The concept of intelligence is controversial and a question of power. What role do power structures play in the language and the debate surrounding AI? How can we sharpen our vocabulary and expand our knowledge here?

PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS IN THE WORKPLACE

LABOR.A® 2024 is taking place at a time of multiple crises that are putting workers under pressure. We looking forward to contributions from current research on the resilience and the experiences of different groups in society as well as examples of how companies, organizations, and industries deal with acute employee stress.

Possible topics here include the specific challenges posed by particular professions, gender and psychological stress, the effects of war and flight in the workplace, and the acute and perceived threat of AI to people's jobs.