

**Call for papers for the Working Group *Workplaces: Pasts and Presents*
European Labour History Conference 2024**

Layering and connecting space: a view from the workplace

*We invite proposals for papers and themed sessions for the ELHN Conference on 11-13 June 2024 in Uppsala to be submitted by **15 August 2023**. Please send a max. 400-words abstract of your proposal to Görkem Akgöz, akgozqorkem@yahoo.com or Nico Pizzolato, n.pizzolato@mdx.ac.uk. The proposal should include your name, surname, current affiliation, contact details, and paper title.*

The “spatial turn” – the shift from an idea of space as static to one in which it is continuously constructed – has generated increasing attention in the humanities and social sciences over questions of space and place in the last three decades. Scholars of labour and the workplace have long analysed and written about space, even if they have not theorised it particularly well. The idea that the study of work and labour needs to engage with the spatial has been only reiterated by trends in deindustrialization, post-industrial restructuring, globalisation, flexibilisation and precarity, and the rise of platform work. Mobility, circulation, flows, and networks have an ever-greater significance in explaining how capitalism, labour relations, workplace cultures and organisational dynamics function. COVID-19 brought forth another reorganisation of work and space, which scholars are still discussing.

A vast literature has adopted a view from the workplace, pointing at how class, race and gender contribute to creating and transforming the uneven geographies of capitalism. In turn, workers try to reshape such geography through their own agency: social struggle is often a spatial struggle. Attention to the space of workers’ actions has contributed to the relativisation of the workplace and the boundaries between work and home. The connection between workplace and space is no longer a neglected territory. Questions of scale are paramount in this endeavour: they range from the spatial dynamics on the shop floor of a single plant to economic relationships between widely separated regions of the globe. Focusing on spatial dynamics at work allows us to maintain a multiscale perspective that looks not only at the workplace transformations but also at the broader shifts within global and financial capitalism, and at the interrelations between different scales and locales. We believe it is urgent that labour studies articulate the study of production at the workplaces with the mapping of international fluxes, networks and connections.

We call for papers that benefit from the methodological insights offered by spatial history in the study of the workplace, and invite proposals for papers and roundtables addressing one or more of the following themes:

- Forms of spatialisation organisation of the production process
- The spatial dimension of labour relations in the workplace
- Labour studies and trans-local connections
- Networks, connections and linkages among workplaces
- Circulation of ideas and technologies of production
- The spatiality of labour organisation and workers' resistance
- Race, class, gender and the uneven geographies of capitalism

About the ELHN Workplaces: Pasts and Presents Working Group

The working group has existed since 2014, initially under the name "Factory History". The change of name in 2021 reflected the growing contribution of scholars of workplaces other than the industrial one and acknowledges the contribution of scholars in fields other than history, in particular anthropology and geography. The group is truly international and far-flung; it includes scholars at various stages in their respective careers and in a number of academic disciplines; it has assembled a solid library of working papers and primary materials; and it possesses an abundance of energy and vision. The group runs a [digital platform](#) for collaborative research exhibits. We also run a [podcast series](#). If you would like to join us or receive news from the group, please email one of the coordinators at akgozgorkem@yahoo.com or n.pizzolato@mdx.ac.uk.