



Research Group on Collaborative Spaces

12th RGCS Symposium 2027

22nd-23rd April, 2027
Paris, France

Co-organized by Dauphine Recherche en Management (DRM), Chair in Management and Ecological Transition, Future of Work Initiative of SSE (House of Innovation), and the Organologia Institute of PSL

CALL FOR PAPER

Addressing grand challenges: Reorganizing work and our ways of living

1. Grand Challenges in a New World of Work

Grand challenges are complex, global, and multi-stakeholder problems that require coordinated, systemic and integrated efforts to address. Tackling grand challenges such as climate change, resource depletion, economic crisis, geopolitical threats and societal inequalities require interorganizational collaboration and the redesign of socio-economic ecosystems (George et al., 2016). This involves fostering new partnerships, rethinking values and organizational ecosystems, collaborating across disciplines and building new imaginaries of work and organizing (Arnould, Godfrey, and Price, 2026; Fritzsche et al., 2026; Grattarola et al., 2026; Raizada & Sinha, 2025; Zandee & Coghlan, 2025).

In the context of this 12th RGCS Symposium, we will explore how **new forms of work and reconfigured ways of living would address these major societal challenges**. Reinventing

the organization of our society appears to be an urgent task for addressing contemporary grand challenges. We expect this new symposium to be the space of an interdisciplinary conversation around grand challenges that we hope will be treated holistically by the theoretical and empirical pieces submitted.

First, we present a few interconnected, overarching themes and perspectives to address the grand challenges we would like to place at the core of our discussion. Second, we propose questions that bridge these grand challenges with new ways of working that potential contributors could tackle.

Ecological Transition(s) and the de-centering from anthropocentric perspectives

Grand challenges can be understood as emergent phenomena, continuously enacted and transformed through organizational practices. This broader view extends the scope of management beyond human-centered frameworks, calling for attention to the socio-ecological systems and more-than-human actors with which organizations and ways of working are entangled (Ergene and Calas 2023). This demands new modes of attention and action including slowing down, accounting for the implication of other species, and embracing more response-able ways of composing a common world (Ehrnström-Fuentes and Biese 2023; Mercier-Roy & Mailhot 2024).

The posthumanist approach addresses grand challenges through a multispecies conception of collectives (Tsing, 2015) in a “world made up of many worlds” (van Dooren, 2022, p.15; Blaser & de la Cadena, 2018). In this perspective, grand challenges are endogenous to organizations, stemming from “concrete problems of arbitration between different beings (and ways of being)” (Mercier-Roy and Mailhot, 2024, p.46). Solutions must therefore involve nonhuman others such as forests, oceans, lakes and cities (Gehman et al., 2022; see also Berkowitz et al., 2019) and require learning to be affected by other species (Despret, 2007; Grant, Canniford and Shankar 2025). This requires a shift for research on ways of working to adopt relational ontologies that enable us to imagine “different human–Earth relationships for a more-than-human world” (Ergene, Banerjee and Hoffman 2021, p.33). The concept of habitability, looking at the condition of an inhabitable planet to better the health of all species, is a promising one in that regard (Sterly et al. 2024).

Meaning at Work and the loss of (common) sense

Technological advancements, digital transformation, and the COVID-19 pandemic have accelerated the shift to new work models, including remote and hybrid work arrangements creating unprecedented challenges and opportunities (Aroles, Mitev, and de Vaujany 2019; Endrissat and Leclercq-Vandelannoitte 2021). This phenomenon highlights a growing need for reorientation: moving away from mere economic optimization toward new forms of work and value creation that place collective intelligence and workers’ experience at their core (Schaad & Böhmer, 2024). New ways of working have the capacity to transform employee well-being, empowerment and socialization to address challenges like isolation, loss of meaning or burnout (Gerosa and Moraes, 2026; Gruen and Bardhi, 2025). In this regard,

examining organizations that enact promising futures in human/nohuman entanglement also seems crucial (e.g., Micheli 2026).

Organizations must adopt adaptive management practices, engage diverse stakeholders, and embrace experimentation to address these challenges effectively. The pragmatist approach to grand challenges, as described by Ferraro et al. (2015), characterises them as seemingly intractable problems affecting the wellbeing of large populations and proposes three strategies of “robust action” to address them, bringing together a variety of voices.

AI Crisis and the artificialization of our intelligence

Collective action and decision making are progressively shaped by using GenAI tools in organizations and the decision making processes underpinning market failures and strategic mistakes deserve more attention (Grattarola et al., 2026). Importantly, we need a better understanding and much more research on moral thinking and the decision making systems and ecosystems that address grand challenges.

Moral thinking and decision making processes that involve meta-human systems and human-machine collaboration experience progressive encapsulation (Hinds and von Krogh, 2024) that cloud decision makers’ abilities to tackle grand challenges. What are hurdles that AI tools impose and what are emerging opportunities?

Geopolitical fragmentation and radical strategic uncertainty of our time

Tackling grand challenges such as geopolitical conflicts, terrorisms, wars or economic and societal inequalities require interorganizational collaboration and the redesign of socio-economic ecosystems (George et al., 2016). Addressing these challenges requires coordinated efforts across borders and stakeholders, as well as the capacity to navigate tensions between competing world views and ways of organizing collective life.

2. Bringing these together: the challenge of the new world of work?

We encourage submissions that aim to address either one, two or multiple challenges systematically. Of course, we will be particularly interested in propositions discussing the **temporal, spatial and bodily dimensions** of the new or old ways of organizing work that address **grand challenges**.

Beyond the topic of this year, we will also welcome all papers dealing with old and news ways of organizing work, consumption, and ways of living, their spatial, temporal and bodily dimensions.

We provide some topics and questions of cross-fertilization to guide (but not limit) submissions:

- How do specific spatial configurations of work (offices, coworking spaces, remote settings, urban or rural environments) either accelerate or mitigate ecological grand challenges?
- What would it mean to design workplaces that are accountable to more-than-human actors?
- How do the acceleration of work schedules and rhythms and the “always-on” culture of digital work contribute to burnout, biodiversity loss, or resource depletion?
- What alternative temporal regimes (slowness, seasonality) might organizations adopt to provide alternative answers to grand challenges?
- What is lost or transformed (for humans, for ecosystems) when bodies are no longer co-present at work?
- Can coworking spaces, makerspaces, and other collaborative infrastructures serve as experimental sites for addressing grand challenges?
- What forms of interdisciplinary, interorganizational, or interspecies collaboration do collaborative spaces enable or foreclose?
- How do geopolitical tensions reshape the geography of work (reshoring, digital sovereignty, cross-border collaboration)?
- What new imaginaries of work are needed to sustain solidarity across fragmented worlds of work?
- How might “old” organizational forms (e.g., guilds, commons, itinerant labor, oral knowledge transmission) be reinvented and mobilise to transform work today?
- How are workers’ bodies differentially exposed to grand challenges (climate, precarity, digital fatigue, geopolitical violence)?

3. Submission process and organization

- You are invited to submit **extended abstracts** of 750 words (about 2 pages)
- To submit, please use >>> **THIS FORM** <<<
- Submission deadline: **November 30th, 2026**.
- Notification of acceptance or rejection will be sent by **mid-December 2026**
- Participation in the symposium for both presenters and auditors is **free of charge but requires registration**. Details on how to register will be shared starting from January 2027
- We are an international association, and inclusivity is one of the pillars of the RGCS community. In this spirit, online attendance and presentation are possible but we still **encourage on-site participation**.
- We are looking forward to your submission and/or registration for the Symposium!
- If you have questions or comments, please contact us at: rgcsparis@gmail.com

KEY DATES and INFO:

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- Notification: mid-December 2026
- Registration: January 2027
- Symposium: April 22-23 2027

4. Venue

The RGCS 2027 symposium will be held in Paris, France.

Main venue:

Université Paris Dauphine-PSL
Place du Maréchal Lattre de Tassigny
75116 Paris Cedex 16

5. RGCS in a nutshell

The Research Group on Collaborative Spaces (RGCS) is both an alternative learned society, a think tank and an immaterial maker space about and for new work practices. Collaborative communities and collaborative movements (coworkers, makers, hackers, DIY) are both a research object and a lever to transform work practices.

Since late 2016, the network co-produces a new research method OWEE ([Open Walked Event-Based Experimentations](#)) aiming at transforming jointly academic and entrepreneurial work practices. This method aims at becoming a commons for academics and entrepreneurs involved in it (e.g. with a sharing of the symbolic capital of impact and citations).

For more details about RGCS: <http://rgcs-owee.org>

6. Organizing committee

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9. Acknowledgments

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