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Information society, work and new forms of social exclusion

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Major work package

- **literature report**
- **firm survey (standardized questionnaire; 100 firms per partner)**
focus on: ICT applications, organizational restructuring, skills and competencies, recruitment strategies, and user involvement
- **case studies (10 per partner) in-depth analysis of the same aspects and additional aspects: character of work, work regulations, exclusion risks**
- **regional profiles (labor market, industrial structure, educational system, industrial relations, I&T policy etc.)**
- **national reports and final report**

Major research questions

Can we identify the development of a new mode of production: ICT-based network organization?

What are the social consequences of such a new mode of production? (skills and competencies as well as social exclusion risks)

Is there just one way to information economy or are there different national or regional development paths? (path dependency)

Theoretical concept

- **Focus on mode of production instead of analyzing the march through the sectors: informatization of work**
- **Informatization means the interpenetration of all work processes with information activities not necessarily the intensive use of ICT**
- **Focus on organization of information work and information flows (new organization logic: network organization)**
- **Relationship between ICT and organization forms: no technical determinism but co-evolving structures**
- **More important than the technical nature of ICTs is the use practice**
- **Globalizing economy as driving factor of restructuring: quality and innovation as new competition criteria**

- **No linear transformation process from Fordist structures towards ICT-based network organization (network as a new Leitbild or new paradigm)**
- **Restructuring as an open process, in which elements of the old (Fordism) and the new production paradigm (network) can be combined in different ways**
- **Restructuring includes a cluster of complementary changes: ICT applications and use practices, organization forms, skills and competencies, main strategic goals or achievement criteria, business culture (practice concept)**
- **Different technological practices produce different social exclusion risks (narrow concept of social exclusion: work sphere and social exclusion risks)**
- **Formation of pathways into information economy through institutional settings (convergence versus divergence, technological determinism versus neo-institutionalism)**