

Title: **Occupational regulation and migration (double session workshop)**

Organizer(s): Ida Drange, Forsker II, Work Research Institute (AFI), Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences

Email: Ida.Drange@afi.hioa.no

Occupational regulation and migration

Occupational regulation is a powerful labour market institution that affects the inclusion and exclusion of migrant workers. In its strongest form, occupational regulation gives a legal framework for occupations to monopolize work tasks and to exclude competitors who do not meet specific requirements. From the government's perspective, regulation is a means for reducing information asymmetries in the market, protect the public and increase consumer welfare. From the perspective of closure theorists however, regulations are the outcome of political strategies from privileged occupational groups that mostly serve their interests. By raising barriers to access, the occupation receives higher wages and more employment stability than in a (fully) competitive market.

Occupational regulation is becoming more widespread across Western countries, and the number of workers performing a regulated occupation is growing. As it stands, regulations are found at every level of the occupational hierarchy. In the context of international migration, occupational regulations reduce mobility because the legal framework is usually negotiated and settled at the national level with country-specific requirements for education and training. Regulations thus affect migrants' chances of finding employment in the occupation for which they are qualified. Due to the European qualifications framework (EQF), labor mobility is more accessible to European citizens compared with non-European citizens. Nevertheless, because regulations draw a boundary between those who are "inside" and "outside" the occupation that tend to overlap with migration status, occupational regulations relate to social and ethnic inequality.

With increased international migration, governments seek to reduce the negative impact of occupational regulations for migrant workers by harmonizing legal frameworks. From the perspective of the labour organizations, dismantling national legislation might challenge the occupations' position. Thus, tension might arise between national and supranational interests in labour unions and professional associations.

This session welcomes papers that discuss the origins, issues and consequences of occupational regulations for international migration from a range of different disciplines such as history, human geography, political science, law and sociology.

Topics cover

- * Economic integration (employment patterns and wage inequality)
- * Labour unions/professional associations
- * International migration and challenges to professionalism
- * Harmonization of regulations across EU-member states
- * Recognition of foreign qualifications

The workshop will be connected to the project "Income Inequality in Professional and Vocational Occupations" based at the Centre for Welfare and Labour research at Oslo and Akershus University of Applied Sciences. Researchers from the project group will present papers at the session.

