Rice, Deborah. *Net-working jobcentres: An institutional work perspective on local employment policies in the Netherlands and Denmark.* Keynote speech at the Early Stage Researchers Conference “Delivering Integrated Employment Policies: Cross-Sectorial Policies in Practice”, Bordeaux, France, 12-13 May 2014.

Using the case of local Jobcenters providing financial support, counselling and services to the unemployed, this paper is concerned with advancing the theorization of "institutional work" (Lawrence, Suddaby and Leca 2009). The core of the institutional work concept lies in the interaction processes through which individual agents consciously or unconsciously create, maintain, or disrupt organizational configurations in their daily interactions. However, in spite of the theoretical advances that the institutional work perspective has made in recent years, this paper argues that the concept in its current state remains incomplete. On the one hand, empirical studies on institutional work have focused almost exclusively on the use of ideational resources by institutional workers, neglecting the material (e.g. budgets) and social (e.g. network connections) resources employed in creating, maintaining, or disrupting organizations (cf. Lawrence, Leca and Zilber 2013). On the other hand, few authors have tackled the question of systematic links between distinct forms of institutional work and specific organizational/ institutional contexts (notable exceptions include Dorado 2005 and Seo and Creed 2002).

This paper aims to contribute to the advancement of the institutional work perspective in organizational analysis in two ways. First, a qualitative case study based on 13 interviews with managers and caseworkers in Dutch jobcentres is presented to show how the micro-level “agents of the welfare state” (Jewell 2007) use social rather than ideational resources (in the form of network connections with external agents) in creating and maintaining their respective jobcentre organizations. Second, the Dutch case study is juxtaposed with an additional case study based on 12 interviews with managers and caseworkers in Danish jobcentres, resulting in three key propositions about how and why institutional work involving social resources varies by institutional context. (These three key propositions connect the use of social resources in institutional work with the context factors of rules, material resources, and institutional legacies). The paper closes with a plea to integrate the insight of network analysis that social connections constitute a resource in institution-building into the institutional work perspective.