

WORK AND TECHNOLOGIES

Coordinators: Francesco Bonifacio, Marino Pezzolo, Giorgio Pirina

While technology has always been a central issue in economic sociology and organization studies, the processes of digitalization (big-data analytics, machine learning, algorithmic management, Internet of Things, etc.) have further extended its scope and implications in unprecedented ways. The pervasive presence of digital tools has also been reinforced by the Covid-19 pandemic, which has fostered their introduction in areas apparently more reluctant to technological innovation, such as education and public administration. More generally, in the contemporary scenario digital technologies are framed as a qualifying feature of new ways of organizing production, work, and everyday life. In this sense, scholars refer to "digital labour", "digital organizing" and "digital platforms".

According to the enthusiastic narratives that accompanied the birth of the internet, digital technologies were initially praised for their empowerment potential, for their ability to build easier, more democratic and inclusive forms of access and connection. On the other hand, these promises have been challenged in a short time by processes of concentration and financialization of major digital platforms, and by the rise of critical approaches that look at digitalization not as an ahistorical process, but in continuity with other trends of contemporary capitalism, such as the flexibilization of the labour market and the construction of global value chains. From this point of view, the disruptive potential of digitalization processes is related to classical sociological issues, such as power, organizational control, automation, skills, and security within work contexts, as well as the construction of new subjectivities.

Moving longitudinally between different disciplinary perspectives (organizational studies, sociology of work, Science and Technology Studies, etc.), this panel aims to gather contributions that investigate the role of digital technologies in contemporary social processes, using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Possible but not exclusive topics of interest include:

- The organizational changes associated with digitalization processes in companies and public administration, concerning the redefinition of roles, skills, and inter-organizational relations;
- Studies of 'technologies-in-use' within new (e.g., platform labour) and/or traditional work contexts;
- New forms of organizational control enabled by digital technologies (e.g., 'algorithmic management') as well as the individual and collective practices of renegotiation implemented by workers (e.g., 'algoactivism' practices) and more generally by users;
- The automation processes conveyed by algorithms and artificial intelligence and, nonetheless, the 'invisible work' and 'repair' practices often performed by human actors that enable the actual functioning of technological infrastructures;
- The way digital technologies reshape the construction of time and space in work and everyday life;
- How digitalization processes reconfigure conflict dynamics in work contexts.

For further informations: francesco.bonifacio@unicatt.it; m.pezzolo@campus.uniu
giorgio.pirina@unive.it.