

## Special issue theme: organizations and digital work in contemporariness

Sociologist Georg Simmel stresses technology relevance as a social determinant of modernity, considered by him as a scientific-technological era (Garcia, 2007). Robots and process automation technologies have increasingly become commonplace in business operations within organizations since the so-called Third Industrial Revolution. Many industries have already automatized their processes, such as manufacturing, chemical plants, health and aviation. Automation advocates claim, and it will promote workers well-being by performing traditional repetitive or life-risking tasks. In some companies, robots will completely replace labor (Madakam, Holmukhe, & Jaiswal, 2019).

While automation replaces a variety of jobs, new ones are being created, and they demand highly qualified and specialized professionals (Lima & Bridi, 2019). Nowadays, technology tracing to Fourth Industrial Revolution, or digital revolution, sharpens the challenges to be faced in the new digital economy, platform economy or sharing economy (Gandini, 2018; Fleming, 2017). “Artificial Intelligence”, “Internet of Things” and “management through algorithms” definitely entered contemporary social and organizational lexica. Machines that solve problems, machines sending data to other machines, a mathematical system that manages activities and – why not? – full companies have transformed the way of managing other companies, transformed labor relations and transformed interactions with consumers. More than a scientific forewarning, this is reality for many start-ups, companies that emerge and grow very quickly, usually founded on digital technologies and organizational cultures guided by great pressure for results, attention to diversity practices – that they aim to promote – and attention to symbolic violence (psychological harassment, among others) – that they aim to restrain.

Furthermore, technology coupled with personal devices makes working possible at any moment, in any place, progressively hindering the separation between personal and professional lives. As a consequence, work hours are consistently increasing, as well as the pressure on professionals for being permanently available, 24 hours a day, seven days a week (Bessi *et al.*, 2007). For Srnicek (2017), “new technologies, new organizational forms, new models of exploitation, new types of jobs, and new markets, all emerge to create a new way of accumulating capital” (Srnicek, 2017, p. 17). As representatives of these novelties, digital platforms constitute infrastructure for interactions between two or more groups. Labor relations are also impacted by technological changes. Many of the jobs, more or less qualified, are being performed without a traditional employment arrangement through digital platforms. Workers need to learn to interact with algorithms and procedures to achieve good ratings or distributions (inclusion and exclusion) (Erwin, 2015). On top of that, in this business model, there is a risk shift from employers to employees, increasing the precariousness of the work (Sutherland, Jarrahi, Dunn, & Nelson, 2020).

Despite the nearly absent workers’ organization – particularly in digital platforms – due to the fragmented nature of work environment, reinforced by the entrepreneurship aura, some



resistance forms aiming at improving working conditions are observed, and their mobilization also is organized through technology.

In fact, the new business model conveyed by digital platforms emerges under the deregulation aegis, in both markets and labor relations, at least for workers considered “service providers”. For those working in management organizational structure, the outlook seems to resemble the one referred by Harvey (1994) as central workers, with formal employment bonds, attractive career plans and well-defined engagement needs. At the same time that new technologies’ intensive use creates or aggravates precarious labor relations, a new and yet to be defined study field materializes around the impact on professional careers and social interactions. REGE special issue on *Organizations and Digital Work* will accept articles mainly on the following non-exhausting list of topics.

- (1) Organizations, culture and technology.
  - Industry 4.0 and new organizational models.
  - Artificial intelligence and algorithmic management.
  - Business and management models in startups.
  - New models of organization and organizational culture.
  - Technology and workplace: co-working and home-office.
- (2) Work, career and technology
  - Artificial intelligence and impacts on the world of work.
  - Platform work and control.
  - Unions and forms of resistance in digital work.
  - Informality, outsourcing, job insecurity and technology.
  - Engagement, commitment and sense of work.
  - Career, new career models, centrality of work and work-family conflict.

For further information regarding our special issue, please do not hesitate to contact us! Please send an email to [rege@usp.br](mailto:rege@usp.br) with the subject title “Special issue”.

### **Deadlines**

Manuscripts (max. 8000 words) are expected to be submitted until July, 31st.

Special issue publication (expected): up to July, 2022 (articles will be published in “ahead of print” as they are accepted).

For further information regarding submission procedures and other details, please follow the link for call for papers.

We look forward to your contributions.

Best regards,

Prof. Dr. Angela Lucas - University of Campinas

Prof. Dr. Rodrigo Bombonati de Souza Moraes - Federal University of Goiás

Dr. Martin Krzywdzinski - WZB Berlin - Social Science Center

Prof. Dr. Antonio Carvalho Neto - Pontifical Catholic University of Minas Gerais.

Guest Editors.

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