

Call for Papers for the special issue of Society Register 1/2020

**Well-being and Ill-being in the Gig Economy. Digitally Mediated
Work Environment and the Quality of Life**

Editors

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New phenomena labelled as the gig economy are usually described as a collection of markets that match providers and consumers on a gig (task or job) basis. Globally dispersed workforce enter into formal agreements with the owner of a platform or app-based infrastructure to provide on-demand services (Donavan et al. 2016). Taking the shape of crowdwork or work-on-demand via apps (De Stefano 2016), gig work is identified as micro-entrepreneurship. Companies like Uber, TaskRabbit, Amazon and many others promise that this supposedly free relationship between the company and the contractor is mutually beneficial. On a social scale, gig economy advocates argue that it reduces economic inequality, slows ecological destruction, promotes workers rights and empowers the poor, the disabled and women (Hill 2015).

At the same time, for a number of gig platform participants, these promises are unconvincing. From the labor relations perspective, gig economy can be seen as a part of the historical process of de-standardization and flexibilization of work, weakening collective forms of employee organization and expansion of project-based contracts. All of which is not exclusively connected with platform economy.

When Diane Coyle (2017) points out that digital platforms are particularly disruptive to incumbent, regulated businesses, she means that they dismantle the existing welfare structures and employee protections. Labor relations trends visible in platform economy are definitely part of the wider changes observed since the 1970s. Platforms are an important factor in strengthening these tendencies by bringing in new elements, including digital mediation (Rosenblat & Stark 2016).

There is broad consensus among scholars that such work arrangements have significant potential to deprive workers of employment security and, subsequently, influence their general well-being. This is by itself highly important for the workers' quality of life, with very real effects on the stability of their source of livelihood, the type and level of working conditions, earnings, etc. A number of empirical questions arise here, for example: remuneration method, work schedule, type of motivation that prompted the individual to work in the gig economy, the level and stability of earnings, the individual's assessment of her/his working conditions including relations with supervisor (i.e. technological infrastructure), whether a given 'gig job' is the main or additional source of livelihood, and, more broadly, whether the gig worker is the breadwinner or is their life partner also gainfully employed.

The above socio-economic foundation, gain an insight into how work on gig platform influences family relations, civic engagement, and even political views. Generally speaking we can investigate importance of gig platforms for well-being understood as a complex, multifaceted and dynamic phenomenon, including various life domains and areas (e.g. education, housing, social relations, health, safety, leisure, political participation, public services), different components (e.g. economic, social, emotional, and psychological well-being) and different system levels (e.g. individual, societal, local, regional, and national).

So, it is important to remember that every phenomenon attracting widespread attention brings up ambiguity and unclear definitions. As pointed out by Sutherland and Jarrahi (2018), gig economy is an emerging research area with a number of associated terms and a lack of consensus on the boundaries between them. For the special issue of "Society Register", we invite papers aiming to provide a precise scientifically justified, understanding the gig economy which address topics similar, but not limited to, the following:

- Conceptualization and understanding of gig economy, crowdwork and work-on-demand via apps.

- Power and ownership relations in the gig economy.
- The political economy of the broad spectrum of gig work.
- Gig work placement within traditional systems of labor relations.
- Gig workers and the modern welfare system.
- Subjective work (dis)satisfaction of gig workers.
- Organization and collective actions of gig workers.
- Importance of technologies in the gig economy.
- The gig economy and the environment.
- The gig economy and class, gender, race, age.

The above issues are general guidelines for the content of the submitted articles. We believe that they are broad enough to cover a significant portion of the key problems. We encourage representatives from all social science disciplines, whose theoretical and empirical work can contribute to the understanding of the gig economy, to submit articles, discussions and reviews.

The deadline for submitting complete contributions, compliant with editorial guidelines is **September 30th, 2019**.

Expected date of publication: **first half of 2020**.

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