

Is My Employer an Algorithm? Does UBER redefine the Employer's Notion? Protections in Gig-Economy and Post-Industrial Corporations

2017 SERI Colloquium for Young Scholars

SERI is organizing a colloquium with a subsequent special issue in "Economia&Lavoro" devoted to international comparisons on the gig economy, the challenges it poses to the notion of employer, and its impact on working conditions.

PhD students and young scholars interested in participating should send an application to SERI. Abstracts (no more than 500 words) and CVs must be submitted electronically (michele.faioli@uniroma2.it) **by March 15, 2017**. Annamaria Simonazzi (University of Rome – Sapienza) and Michele Faioli (University of Rome - Tor Vergata Law School) will chair the Scientific Committee.

The colloquium will be held in Rome (Italy), at Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini premises (Via Solferino, 32) on May 18-20, 2017.

Expenses will be partially subsidized by SERI. Participants will have to cover accommodation fees amounting to a total of 50.00 euro per person for the whole period.

2017 Colloquium for Young Scholars Rome - May 18/20, 2017



In Europe and in the USA, the rising role of web-based platforms in the so-called gig economy is entailing radical changes in the modality of employment, challenging as well the way labour law deals with the concept of self-employment and, especially, of employer.

The rapidly developing digital technologies – among them social media, mobility, analytics and cloud – enable unprecedented levels of connectivity for individual customers, workers and businesses. The way platforms exploited this potentiality in the employment field varies significantly from apps to apps and depends as well on their sectoral scope.

Apps are spread in most of the service sectors, including food delivery, urban transport, research, design and creative works, and housework.

From a legal point of view, their activities can vary significantly, possibly resembling the functions of an employment agency or even those of an employer. Also in the case of workers, it is unclear to what extent the power of direction and organisation, possibly exerted by the platforms by means of algorithms and big data, would require their classification as employees.

In addition, the way they intermediate employment challenges the role of collective bargaining and the link between working time and wage, in reason of the actual adoption of piece work rates or price-based competition practices among workers (including bids).

From an economic standpoint, it is important to gauge whether gig workers actually rely on web-platforms to make a living, and whether platforms are substituting casual work, undeclared marginal activities, or even economic activities characterised by more stable employment patterns.

A deeper understanding of all such aspects is crucial to inform measures and policies addressing the current and future impact of technological changes on labour.

Academic investigations/studies concerning (i) the impact of gig economy on the notion of employer, and/or (ii) the impact of gig economy on wages and working conditions, will be selected for the 2017 SERI Outreach.

