



24 & 25 OCTOBER
2019 AMSTERDAM

CALL FOR PAPERS

INTRODUCTION

Over the last decade, 'gig economy' platforms such as Uber, Helping, and UpWork have rapidly transformed the way we work and employ others, generate income, and make use of our free time. These platforms facilitate exchanges between providers of services – 'platform workers' or 'gig workers' - and clients, including individual consumers and organizations. Platforms have emerged to coordinate tasks ranging from tagging photos to food delivery, and from babysitting to coding. Platforms may be oriented at low-skilled micro-tasks as well as expert labor; online clickwork as well as offline physical services.

Interactions are typically facilitated by digital technologies – e.g., apps, algorithms, blockchain – that lower transaction costs and allow the creation of more flexible job opportunities in these highly accessible labor markets. At the same time, platforms have been accused of operating in disregard of existing labor laws and local regulations. In addition, they are said to benefit platform owners more than platform workers, for whom flexibility may entail high uncertainty and absence of traditional employment benefits (e.g. pensions, insurance).

It is, however, clear that platforms are game changers and the new rules of the game are currently being shaped, both locally and globally. Drawn by the promises and challenges of platforms, we have witnessed the surge of new initiatives and experiments with new organizational forms. For instance, platform cooperatives currently stand as an alternative to 'platform capitalism' – the dominant form of organizing in the platform economy. Governments at different levels are experimenting with innovative regulation to harness potential and avoid detrimental consequences, and public perceptions of what is legitimate are changing. For this reason, it is crucial that these emerging platforms - both as operational infrastructures and institutional actors - are studied from a variety of disciplinary angles, in order to better understand the opportunities and challenges they present to the future of work.

Therefore, in this conference we invite the submission of high quality and timely research contributions from different backgrounds, grouped together as business & economics, sociology & humanities, and law.

BUSINESS & ECONOMICS

Digital platforms are efficient and effective technological infrastructures for matching demand and supply, which are increasingly used by firms to access human capital, allowing more varied and flexible types of work for job seekers. These new platform-based business models have implications for the type and quality of human capital that can be obtained through platforms. This model poses new organizational challenges related to the re-design of working routines, human resources practices and governance mechanisms that can foster complementarities between the in-company activities and the activity of "external" workers. Are firms eschewing the benefits of firm-specific human capital in favor of the benefits of greater flexibility in firm-employee relationships? What are the implications for the firm boundaries and organizational structure's design? We invite contributions from the fields of business and economics that may examine, among others, the following aspects:

- New business models, relationships to traditional enterprises, and market access requirements
- Changing boundaries and theories of the firm: how platform-based models are changing the boundaries and role of the organization in the economy
- Role of decreasing prediction costs, automation, and algorithms on demand and characteristics on work and workers of platforms
- New ways of working, managing workforce, and the organization of work
- Asymmetric information and trust-building
- Effects of digital labor platforms on innovation and entrepreneurship
- The role of new technologies, such as blockchain, for the emergence of new forms of platform organizations
- Alternative solutions that allow workers to capture more of the value that is generated by platforms, such as portable reputations and platform cooperatives



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SOCIOLOGY & HUMANITIES

Digital platforms and online marketplaces for goods and services operate across a wide variety of labor markets and economic contexts. From developed to developing countries, platforms have lowered barriers to participate in some types of labor markets, but also often change the rules of participation and rewards. We welcome contributions from academics, non-profits, policy-makers, and other stakeholders that address the ways social and cultural forces shape both opportunity and inequality for diverse populations of platform workers. Studies that focus on identity (national, racial/ethnic, professional, gender) and inequality are particularly welcome. We invite papers from the social sciences and humanities that address, among others, the following topics:

- The role of marginalized peoples on platforms - as consumers, clients, and as workers within platform companies, and/or as platform workers
- Intersectional studies on platform work (race, gender, class, etc.)
- Critical studies of algorithms & data
- The role of the local in global platforms and businesses – local politics, labor markets, identities, geography
- Reputation, reviews, discrimination and equity
- Policy analysis or interventions targeting diversity, inclusivity, and sustainability

LAW

In the field of law we invite all stakeholders (included but not limited to academics, law- and policymakers, representatives of the temporary staffing industry, platform companies and workers) to present papers across a range of legal research topics (see below). More particularly, we welcome papers that explore alternatives for hard law regulation, such as soft law, local or regional pilots, the 'right to challenge', and self-regulation. Papers that reflect empirical legal studies linked to one of the suggested topics are also most welcome.

- Labor law and policy: stimulating entrepreneurship, protecting workers and regulating the labor market
- Dispute resolution: role of arbitration, courts, and regulation
- Discrimination across the platform economy: platforms, workers and consumers
- Liability and risk: current practices, alternatives and implications for allocating liability and risk
- Taxation: the impact of tax design choices on the direction of the platform economy and possibilities to decrease informal economy through platforms
- Consumer protection and/or competition law: impact on establishing a level playing field
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SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Those wishing to participate in the conference by presenting a research paper/report are requested to submit an extended abstract (around 800 words) by June 17, 2019. Applicants should include their title, institutional affiliation, and indicate the division to which their work belongs (business & economics, sociology & humanities or law). Abstracts should be sent to submissions@reshapingwork.net. You may also contact Hans Berends (j.j.berends@vu.nl) with any questions you may have about scholarly contributions to this conference. Notification of acceptance will be sent in the first half of July.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Reshaping Work 2019 conference will take place on October 24th & 25th, 2019 at De Nieuwe Liefde, Amsterdam. For practical information, please consult our website: reshapingwork.net. Early-bird tickets go on sale on June 17th. To ensure you stay up-to-date, please sign up for our newsletter or follow us on Facebook & Twitter.

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

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