T11 – Emerging Technologies and Organizational Culture

Emerging technologies, which we take to include artificial intelligence, data analytics technologies, social media and many more related platforms (Bailey et al., 2019), now pervade every aspect of organizational life. These new forms of mostly digital technologies have unique characteristics that have the potential to fundamentally alter how organizations operate. Social media are characterized by a high degree of openness, involving distributed innovation agency encompassing a heterogeneous constellation of actors (Nambisan et al., 2017) with multiple and often incongruent goals, values, and expectations (Young et al., 2016). Open platforms are deployed in an exceedingly complex context, characterized by a plurality of technology, spatial and institutional affordances that shape the use of these technologies and their outcomes (Nambisan et al., 2017). Artificial intelligence is characterized by high levels of autonomy, in that it can remove humans entirely from both the generation and execution of tasks and inscrutability, in that AI procedures and outputs can become impossible to assess and understand by human actors (Berente et al., 2021). These unique features mean that organizational deployments of these emerging digital technologies are much more complex and challenging than traditional organizational structures and practices (Smith & Beretta, 2021) requiring organizations to develop new mindsets, routines, and business models (Volberda et al., 2021).

Nevertheless, the precise organizational impact of these technologies remains unclear: The technologies are, of course, defined as 'emergent' and are, therefore, expected to carry with them a high potential for change and, indeed, disruption. Beyond this baseline agreement, however, there is no consensus on the meaning and effects of emergent technologies (Cozzens et al., 2010). Many have settled upon a cultural appreciation of the problem to bring some order to these reflections. Culture is a highly complex, intangible, and implicit phenomenon (Kummer & Schmiedel, 2016). Moreover, previous relevant research noted that it consists also of several tangible and distinctive elements. Considering this and to be inclusive in our track, we do not follow any specific description or definition of culture. In this rendering of the core issues, the emerging technologies that shape our lives and interactions are regarded as cultural insofar as they reflect and project our preferences, ideals, and identities (Baumgartner, 2020; Davenport, 2019; Duan et al., 2019; Leidner & Kayworth, 2006; Ransbotham et al., 2021; Weritz et al., 2020). Cultural resources (Leonardi, 2011) and organizational actors' identities (Bunduchi et al., 2022) have been shown to explain how organizations leverage such emerging digital technologies to organize their activity. This cultural understanding of our emerging technologies is, of course, now generally accepted. However, it is poorly understood and is (or should be) vulnerable to dissenting voices that are not always allowed the privilege of a fair hearing. For example, managerialist writers, commenting upon the issues surfaced by the continuing development of emerging technologies, tend to operate with an understanding of culture and identity that is singular in nature and top-down in orientation (Collins, 2021). In short, the preferred cultural appreciation of emerging technologies tends to take 'the social' out of 'social media'.

In this conference track, the convenors invite contributions from scholars and practitioners who would avoid the now familiar frameworks and prescriptions of/ for successful (cultural) change. Thus, we welcome contributions from those who would explore the way emerging technologies, variously, transplant, embed and/or supplant the familiar social and organizational conventions that are, too often, reduced to 'culture'. We seek contributions recognizing the need to forge a constructive engagement with the important debates around technology development and organizational innovation. And yet, we are keen to hear from those who remain willing to challenge the (cultural) categorizations that have been deployed to shape our appreciation of the challenges posed by emerging technologies.

Track main topics

We hesitate to provide a definitive list of topics for fear that this might diminish the exercise of the sociological imagination, and so, crowd-out alternative ideas and approaches. Nonetheless, we especially seek contributions around 'problematising' technology, organization and culture, which particularly consider the following:

-The extent to which conventional classifications of culture facilitate our appreciation of emerging technologies.

-Meaning of being a user in the context of emerging technologies.

-The extent to which current invocations of all things 'digital' are truly suggestive of transformative change.

-Emerging technologies and the problem of identity.

-Culture, frames and the deployment of emerging technologies.

-Culture, change and digital transformation.

-The 'great resignation'.

-Diversity in the context of 'emerging technologies' and vice versa.

-The problems and processes of agility.

-Theories of/for emerging technologies.

-Multi-level studies of technological development/ innovation and change.

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Track Co-Chairs (one table for each track chair)

(From 2 up to 4 co-chairs; at least one international co-chair; no more than 2 Italian co-chairs; the first one is considered the primary contact of the track)

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