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. And yet the precise 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, as yet no consensus as to the meaning and effects of our and emergent technologies (see Cozzens et al., 2010). In an attempt to bring some order to these reflections many have settled upon a cultural appreciation of the problem. Culture is as a highly complex, intangible, and implicit phenomenon (Kummer & Schmiedel, 2016; Deal & Kennedy, 1983). Moreover, previous relevant research (Deal & Kennedy, 1983) 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 our interactions are regarded as cultural insofar as they, both, reflect and project our preferences, our ideals and our identities (Ransbotham et al., 2021; Baumgartner, 2020; Davenport, 2019; Knowledge@Wharton, 2019; Duan et al., 2019; Leidner & Kayworth, 2006).

This cultural understanding of our emerging technologies is of course now generally accepted. But it is not well understood, and it 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 from 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 which recognise 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) categorisations 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 seek, especially, contributions which in 'problematising' technology, organization and culture consider:

- 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.
- The 'great resignation'.
- Diversity in the context of 'emerging technologies' and vice versa.
- The problems and processes of agility.
- Theories of/ for emerging technologies; lesson learned from those who explored 'new technology' in the 1980s.
- Multi-level studies of technological development/ innovation and change.

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