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INTRODUCTION

Sebastiano Fadda

The relationship between the so-called “Fourth Industrial Revolution” and employment has been the object of the Second International ASTRIL Conference. This relationship can be observed through the deep transformation of the structure of production processes of both goods and services. Its consequences mainly affect, from a macroeconomic perspective, the employment level and income distribution, and, from a microeconomic perspective, the evolution of jobs, skills, and tasks, working conditions, and workers’ rights. Labour market institutions have to cope with the problems triggered by such deep changes.

WAGE MODERATION AND REGIONAL IMBALANCES IN EUROPE

Giorgio Colacchio, Guglielmo Forges Davanzati

The aim of this paper is to propose an interpretation of the crisis of the Eurozone, according to which the wider and wider gaps at regional level (also) depend on the stronger wage moderation and higher deflation in “peripheral” countries. The argument put forward is based on the debt-deflation theory developed by Irving Fisher in 1933. This argument is leveraged to explain the diverging trends of public debt as against GDP, making specific reference to the comparison between Italy and Germany. In particular, it is outlined that: (i) wage moderation, along with other factors, triggers deflation; (ii) deflation involves higher real interest rates on State bonds; and (iii) deflation curbs consumption and investment. As a consequence, in “peripheral” countries (Italy, in particular), wage moderation reduces internal demand, and brings about a higher level of public debt/GDP, without a significant long-term impact on the growth of net exports.

ARE WE READY FOR THE FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION? EVIDENCE FROM THE ITALIAN CASE

Natalia Faraoni, Tommaso Ferraresi, Nicola Sciclone

The aim of this paper is to explore the potential impact of the adoption of the latest waves of digital technologies (commonly referred to as “Industry 4.0”) upon employment trends, focusing on how the tasks performed by workers might be affected. The literature on the future of jobs and on the changing nature of innovation and work (so-called “Fourth Industrial Revolution”) has blossomed. For instance, some authors find that around 47% of total US employment is potentially automatable over the next decades. Some others, when estimating the share of jobs at risk of automation for 21 OECD countries, obtain very different results (9% of jobs are at risk in the USA). We suggest a different perspective by considering not how many and what kind of jobs could disappear, but: (i) what are the potential benefits of the adoption of ICT on employment; (ii) whether the Italian labour market is ready for this shift in the technological paradigm; and (iii) under what conditions. In order to achieve our research goals, we implement two complementary approaches. First, we provide an overview of the knowledge, skills, and tasks currently required in order to pursue each profession in Italy and in the USA, based on the INAPP and O*NET datasets, respectively. In order to analyse the databases, we identify two different sets of variables, so as to capture the degree of automation/substitution, and the degree of digitalisation. Second, by using a dictionary of skills and abilities related to the Fourth Industrial Revolution, we outline the different impacts of digitalisation processes on the professions covered by the INAPP dataset, through an analysis of their main components.

THE SILVER INNOVATION. OLDER WORKERS' CHARACTERISTICS, AND DIGITALISATION OF THE ECONOMY

Pietro Checcucci

The current trends in the ageing of the workforce, which are only in part counterbalanced by immigration flows, risk exposing European enterprises to a widespread situation of skills shortage, together with the loss of a huge wealth of knowledge and experience, as a consequence of baby boomers' retirement. In this context, the automation/digitalisation of production represents one of the main tools in the hands of advanced economies and organisations to react to the shrinking of the labour force, while boosting productivity, and containing costs.

The paper attempts to provide an initial framing of the problematic relationship between digital innovation and employability of older workers. The discussion will offer a possible interpretation of ongoing transformations, as well as a provisional explanation of the current situation in Italy.

The contribution will summarise the most important demographic transformations that affected the labour market during these years, in the light of the (potentially) disruptive spread of digital technologies. The topic of the digital evolution of the content of job tasks, and its influence on training needs will be addressed. Reflections concerning the relationship between the adoption of technological innovations, and the quality of human capital will be presented, and some hypotheses concerning the recent evolution of employers' attitudes towards older workers will be suggested with a view to facing the ongoing technological innovation.

LABOUR LAW FRAMEWORK AND WORKERS' PROTECTION IN DIGITAL LABOUR PLATFORMS.A TECHNO-REGULATORY MODEL

Massimo De Minicis, Silvia Donà, Nicola Lettieri, Manuel Marocco

The distribution and organisation of work through information and communication technologies is probably one of the most current and debated aspects of the digital economy. Labour platforms are not only opening up new prospects for economic development, but also raise many issues that are still far from being settled. The supranational nature of market players, the multilevel architecture of companies' technological infrastructures, and the substantial inscrutability of the algorithms used to manage workers' activity and the matching of service demand and supply significantly hamper the design of effective policies. In this scenario, traditional legal remedies risk being unfit in view of the complexity of ongoing processes. A considerable challenge is that of developing new regulatory strategies capable of providing crowdworkers with higher levels of protection, without curbing economic growth. The paper deals with these issues by adopting a techno-regulation perspective, a regulatory paradigm according to which technology is seen not only as an object but also as an integral part of the regulatory process. After a review of the current situation of labour platforms, as well as a brief introduction on the very concept of algorithmic governance, we hence sketch a proposal for the protection of gig-economy workers that integrates legal remedies and technological solutions (blockchain) into a single regulatory strategy.

RESEARCH NOTES ON THE FCA-CNH GROUP

Matteo Gaddi, Francesco Garibaldo, Matteo Rinaldini

The article builds on and deepens the main findings of a research project implemented by Fondazione Giuseppe Di Vittorio and Fondazione Claudio Sabattini on the FCA-CNH Group at the request of FIOM and CGIL. The research revolved around two main aspects: the first one dealt with the transformations of the automotive sector at international level, and the strategic positioning of the FCA Group with respect to the main trends of electrification, connectivity, and mobility as a service; the second one focused on the changes that have affected working conditions following the technological and organisational changes implemented by the company. From this latter point of view, there was an overall worsening of working conditions in the aftermath of the introduction of the WCM organisational system, as well as due to the new labour metrics deriving from Ergo-UAS, and the technological transformations towards a higher level of automation and digitisation.

THE YOUTH GUARANTEE IN THE ITALIAN SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITION SYSTEM. OPPORTUNITIES AND CRITICALITIES

Francesco Pastore

This essay provides a review of the (mainly Italian) literature evaluating the impact of the Youth Guarantee programme implemented in Italy in the last five years or so. The institutional, organisational, and economic aspects are considered, at both micro and macro level. The policy has been successful in the sense that it has actually demonstrated to a significant number of young people that the European Union was dealing with their problem, although the effects on employment were rather modest, both because of the organisational difficulties encountered by public employment services, and due to macroeconomic issues linked to low growth.