

Long Abstract – Free Section

INVESTING IN THE SOCIAL REINTEGRATION CARE FOR DETAINEES: TRENDS AND NEW PERSPECTIVES OF THE ITALIAN WELFARE SYSTEM

edited by Alberto Pesce e Veronica Valenti

Mental health and the Gig Economy: a performance addiction?

Giacomo Prati

The contemporary performance-driven society is defined by a continuous acceleration, driven by technological advancements and the need to accomplish more tasks in less time. This model enforces continuous individual performance evaluation, generating anxiety, insecurity and increasing psychological pressure. Algorithms play a crucial role in measuring and controlling performance, fostering job insecurity and the necessity for constant reinvention. Social media amplifies this phenomenon, pushing individuals to constantly showcase and compare their achievements, fueling a vicious cycle of competition and stress.

The gig economy perfectly embodies this logic, restructuring work into a series of intermittent and hyper-controlled performances. Gig workers, though nominally autonomous, are bound by the dynamics of digital platforms, which impose relentless rhythms and continuous evaluations. Their working conditions are marked by low wages, unpredictable hours and precarious employment, contributing to stress anxiety, and alienation. The obsession with productivity and speed leads to sacrificing security and well-being to obtain positive reviews and maintain a high ranking. Additionally, the lack of contractual protections and adequate union support increases these workers' vulnerability, exposing them to chronic insecurity and constant emotional instability.

Among the most impacted workers are content moderators, who are forced to view extremely disturbing material. This type of work results in severe psychological consequences, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, insomnia, and depression. The detachment from traditional work environments, the absence of protections and the difficulty of building a support network exacerbate the mental distress of gig workers. Other categories, such as delivery riders and logistics operators, also face constant pressure to meet tight deadlines, negatively impacting their mental and physical health. Occupational diseases associated with this working model, including burnout, chronic fatigue and anxiety disorders, are steadily increasing.

The performance-driven culture affects not only workers but also consumers, who are increasingly immersed in a logic of efficiency and immediate gratification. Contemporary society imposes an incessant

pace, where consumption itself must be fast, optimized and performance-based. This vicious cycle fosters dissatisfaction and an obsession with image and instant results, significantly influencing collective well-being.

This phenomenon, which I define as performatism, or performance addiction, emerges as a new pathology of contemporary society. This disorder manifests as an inability to detach from the need to perform,

Long Abstract – Free Section

INVESTING IN THE SOCIAL REINTEGRATION CARE FOR DETAINEES: TRENDS AND NEW PERSPECTIVES OF THE ITALIAN WELFARE SYSTEM

edited by Alberto Pesce e Veronica Valenti

even during leisure time, leading to chronic stress, burnout and psychophysical issues. The continuous pursuit of visibility and success encourages excessive self-exposure, particularly on social media, amplifying feelings of inadequacy. Digital hyperconnectivity further erodes the boundaries between work and personal life, making psychological and physical recovery difficult. Performaholism not only reduces quality of life but also undermines collective well-being, turning the work and social landscape into an endless competition.

To counteract this trend, it is essential to rethink the value of work and leisure, advocating for policies that protect not only gig economy workers but society as a whole. Developing support strategies to mitigate the psychological consequences of a hyper-performance-driven system is crucial to fostering a healthier and more sustainable future.

Cite me: Giacomo Prati, Salute mentale e gig economy: una dipendenza da performance? in "WELFARE E ERGONOMIA" 2/2024, pp 229-240,

DOI: 10.3280/WE2024-002015