

Chapter 4

Motivations for Labour Provision on Digital Platforms in Europe: Examining the Differences Between Only Gigers and Gigers and Renters

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ABSTRACT

Research on the gig economy has rarely addressed the study on the motivations for the provision of labour services on digital platforms. Through a sample of 3,619 gigers in Europe, obtained from the COLLEM research, results have been obtained for labour providers (only gigers) and for labour and capital use providers (gigers and renters). The valuation of labour, being an internal resource of the gigers, has a great set of economic foundations, working conditions, and labour relations. On the other hand, the valuation of labour and capital uses is more focused on their economic and labour relations fundamentals, notably reducing the role of working conditions. These motivations suggest different platform strategies and public employment policies for both groups. While the promotion of the general job quality would also encourage the gig-job quality, the promotion of the labour and capital uses valuation requires specific actions on the platform operations.

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INTRODUCTION

During the last decades, economic globalization and the digital revolution have been profoundly and structurally transforming employment and labor relations (Martínez-Cerdá et al., 2020). Progressively, homogeneous and routine jobs; the industrial organization of work: atomization, hierarchy, and lack of autonomy in the workplace; stable lifetime employment in the same firm or organization; separate periods of training, employment, and retirement; only fixed rewards, and a framework of labor relations, with a social contract that exchanges homogeneous hours of work and fixed wages for productivity, are running out (Díaz-Chao et al., 2016). In substitution to traditional forms of employment, new and alternative forms of work, such as part-time, on-demand, or occasional employment, are being consolidated (Katz & Krueger, 2019).

From a technological perspective and like any other wave of disruptive innovation, digital-based technologies have generated a wide range of positive and negative effects on employment (Ballestar et al., 2020). In this sense, research on the effects of technology on employment has reached two basic consensuses (Vivarelli & Pianta, 2000). An initial agreement is based on the idea that the first effect of technology on employment is a skills bias. Empirically, the thesis of *skill-biased technological change* has been extensively verified (Card & DiNardo, 2002; Moore & Ranjan, 2005). According to this approach, the process of technological innovation generated, or that can only be used, by more trained workers with better skills and flexible organizations open to change, would explain the improvements in employment.

On the other hand, technological innovation would also be linked to increases in unemployment, falls in wages or the deterioration of the working conditions of employees with less training and skills, and more rigid organizational schemes (Antonelli & Fassio, 2014). In this sense, the second consensus establishes that the workers' skills, capabilities, and competencies, the firms' strategic, organizational and productive models; managerial decisions; labor relations; cultural and institutional settings; and public policies are fundamental for explaining the results of technology on employment. The impact of technology on employment can only be understood from its complex interaction with the educational, economic, social, political, and cultural system where it is applied (Autor et al., 2003).

In recent years, and leaning with the first wave of change related to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and the non-interactive Internet (Internet 1.0), a new phase of disruptive technological change has been generated. This new phase of digitization began with the appearance of social networks (Web 2.0) that exponentially increased the capacity for interaction and sharing of audio-visual material between people (Carroll & Romano, 2011). More recently, it has been confirmed that we would be at the beginning of a new general-purpose technological wave (so-called the fourth industrial revolution), which reinforces and deepens the first waves of digitization (Torrent-Sellens, 2015). Robotics, artificial intelligence, machine learning, and deep learning, cloud computing, big data, 3D printing, Internet of things or social networks, and digital platforms, among others, are beginning to show signs of construction of a new interconnected technological base, a new technical-economic paradigm, that will be interrelated with social and cultural changes of unprecedented magnitude (Torrent-Sellens, 2019; Trajtenberg, 2018). This new digitization wave, which will strongly materialize in the coming years (Frey & Osborne, 2017; Pratt, 2015), has fundamental implications in explaining productivity and the structure of employment, which has garnered renewed interest from researchers in the field (Autor, 2015; Camiña et al., 2020).

Therefore, a new digital wave appeared. In the new forms of digitization, labor markets tend to polarize and relocate skills, tasks, occupations, and jobs favoring workers and the highest and lowest incomes in the employment structure. This dynamic harms workers and the average income of the oc-

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