DIGITAL WORK IN THE AGE OF PRECARITY:
A CASE STUDY OF WEB-BASED PLATFORM WORKERS IN TURKEY

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ABSTRACT

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A CASE STUDY OF WEB-BASED PLATFORM WORKERS IN TURKEY

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Digital labor platforms have come forward as one of the leading agents in the transformation of relations and processes of work under contemporary capitalism. Built upon the efficient mechanisms constructed by the digitalized phase of the capitalist economy, they push the existing dispositions of work toward the extremes, combining novel mechanisms of management and control with already existing modalities organizing work. This thesis takes the algorithmic management model enabled by data monopolization and the outsourcing mechanism it provides as the distinctive characteristics of the regime of work under digital labor platforms. There is also an accompanying continuation of fragmentation of contracts and employment relations and an overall flexibilization, which have been employed to an increasing degree since the beginning of the post-Fordist era, that is lived as precarization by the workers. In light of this conceptual perspective, this thesis investigates the outcomes of this transformation by looking at the subjective experiences of workers in web-based labor platforms in Turkey through a case study. In this sense, this thesis tries to understand how the general dispositions organizing processes of work in platform capitalism affect intellectual labor in the case of web-based digital labor platform workers in Turkey.

Keywords: digital labor platforms, intellectual labor, algorithmic management, precarization, post-Fordism

ÖZ

GÜVENCESİZLİK ÇAĞINDA DİJİTAL ÇALIŞMA: TÜRKİYE'DE WEB TABANLI PLATFORM İŞÇİLERİ ÖRNEĞİ

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Dijital emek platformları, çağdaş kapitalizmde çalışma süreçlerinin ve ilişkilerinin dönüşümünde sürükleyici aktörler olarak öne çıkmışlardır. Kapitalist ekonominin dijitalleşmesiyle inşa edilen etkili mekanizmalar üzerine oturtan bu platformlar, mevcut çalışma tertibatını gelişkin yönetim ve kontrol teknikleriyle birleştirerek zirveye çıkarmışlardır. Bu tez, veri hakimiyeti ve güç eşitsizliğinin mümkün kıldığı algoritmik yönetim ve maliyetleri dışsallaştırma mekanizmalarını dijital emek platformlarındaki çalışma rejiminin ayırt edici özelliği olarak almaktadır. Bunlara ise post-Fordist dönemin başından itibaren anlaşmalar ve istihdam ilişkilerindeki, işçiler tarafından güvencesizleşme olarak tecrübe edilen, parçalanmanın ve en bütüncül anlamıyla esnekleşmenin sürdürülmesi eşlik etmektedir. Bu kavramsal yaklaşım ışığında, Türkiye'de web tabanlı platform işçilerinin deneyimi ele alan bu tez, çalışma ilişkilerindeki mevzubahis dönüşümün sonuçlarını irdelemektedir. Bu bağlamda, platform kapitalizminde çalışma süreçlerini örgütleyen genel tertibatın, Türkiye'de web tabanlı platform işçileri örneğine bakarak, entelektüel emek üzerinde yarattığı etkiyi anlamak bu tezin ana çabasını oluşturmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: dijital emek platformları, entelektüel emek, algoritmik yönetim, güvencesizleşme, post-Fordizm

To all those imprisoned in lives smaller for their spirits,
and to the few who struggle to rip things apart

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The time has finally come. As I type these lines, I am about to get rid of one of the most corrosive phases so far in my life. It is not surprising at all that a Master's student makes sense of their thesis-writing process as such. Nonetheless, we do not come across that it is said out loud as much. Needless to say, it was full of difficulties, exhaustion, anxiety, uneasiness, frustrations, and so on. But it is done. No doubt, this success deserves some words and owes some people a significant debt of gratitude. Without some of them, this accomplishment would never be possible. And without some others, it would definitely be a more peaceful and suitable process. Before continuing, I would like to express my first and indispensable thanks. First and foremost, I want to present my innermost thanks to my advisor, Ömür Birler, for the extensive effort she put into this thesis, without which it would be nonexistent. The way she spared time to meet me, to read what I wrote over and over, to correct every little mistake made a student like me, with such an adaptation problem, complete a Master's thesis that lasted almost a year. I also want to express that I am more than grateful to the professors Asuman Göksel and Denizcan Kutlu, who were beyond mere jury members, contributing to this thesis in an essential manner. With the insistent, comprehensive, invaluable comments they made, this thesis has acquired an acceptable quality.

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In the long course of writing this thesis, I learned a lot. I deeply and practically comprehended some of what I thought I already knew from a theoretical perspective. I experienced feelings, discovered some affections, and encountered assessments I had never thought of before. I learned, by experience, for example, that completing a Master's thesis, as with any other case of being successful, is, in essence, composed of completing a process of subjectivation. That is to accomplish to adapt to a certain form of subjectivity, consisting of taming of the body, conforming to one specific type of thinking, feeling, living your life, and living your day, not overstepping regulations, rules, and leverages, learning to stay in determined borders, determined ways of doing, being and feeling, and scholarly-wise, to fulfill a very particular and predetermined form which is only characterized by a high degree of technical necessities. We, graduate students, become, at the end of this process, not so much as successful people or 'masters' but as subjects. Subjects who learned to comply with particular rules needed to be followed, to a specific form to write, to accord with insistences to succeed, who interiorized that it is ordinary and necessary to overwork even if your body or mental health urges you not to do so and to create value in an unpaid way... In accordance, I want to thank everyone who made me grasp these, making me think about whether I should justify and align the text 2.5 cm from the margin while I am writing or array it at the end altogether.

In this thesis, I tried to present an account of the increasingly spreading and widening precarization and the current outlook of intellectual labor in this context. It is firmly obvious that this is also about myself - just like many others out there. What conditions my conditions is mostly the University in its current shape. No doubt, our collective experiences directed me towards the topic. Low wages against the clear article of The Law on The Higher Education, tasks out of job description, strict pressure on shifts, work overload, poor facilities, underemployment, unemployment, alienation, unpaid wages for months, rectors directly threatening with your job when you try to organize, universities deprived of social and political action, weakened student movement, restrained right to organize, vertical hierarchy, appointed rectors, state of emergency practices, hard work to complete Master's and PhD that will give you at the end unemployment as a reward, social sciences that turned into unable to reflect on the conditions of their own, and so on... As these experiences directed me

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"The jobs are not big enough for people's spirits."
-Studs Terkel[1]

1.1. A historical background

From the 1970's onwards, capitalism has said to be entered into a new phase, a new way of organizing itself. This new epoch was intensely evaluated through a multiple set of concepts and analytical tools by various disciplines of social sciences. Although there have been a variety of competing and diverse approaches, one observation is common to all: the area of relations of work and the social, political, economic phenomena accompanying it is the locus of the transformation. Despite the existence of this agreement, on the other hand, the literature seems to provide a set of diverse reasons behind this change in relations of work, mechanisms fostering it and its prospective outcomes since the driving force of this transformation was claimed under different notions. "Though not uncontroversial, there is an emerging consensus in the social sciences that the period since the mid-1970s represents a transition from one distinct phase of capitalist development to a new phase" (Amin, 1994, p. 1). There are many principal works, sketching this new phase of capitalist relations of work and accompanying social and political formation(s). For convenience, the precedential literature on the topic can be categorized under two group of pioneer studies; one prioritizing technical and organizational novelties, which are resulted from outcomes of the technological developments as the main cause of this transformation of capitalist relations of production, conditioning the accompanying social and political change; and the other conceiving this change as an outcome,

[1] Recorded in a TV interview as cited in Frayne, D. (2015). *The Refusal of Work: The Theory and Practice of Resistance to Work*. Zed Books.

determined by economic and political processes, which has its driving force mostly rooted in the crisis of capitalist relations of production, more specifically as the crisis of the dominant model organizing relations of work, namely Fordism.

While defining a phase in history of capitalism with all aspects, Fordism in essence was a model of relations of work constituting a core which regulates various dimensions of the social and the political environment surrounding it. So is post-Fordism. Understanding the essential differences between the two would provide the characteristics of the context in which today's digital economy was born into. One definitive character of Fordism that had fallen behind, according to Jessop (1991), is that "it can be analysed as a distinctive type of labour process [or industrial paradigm], it involves mass production based on moving assembly-line techniques operated with the semi-skilled labour of the mass worker" (p. 136). It was comprised of a certain and rigid type of work, and therefore, of worker. This type of worker had been shaped within Fordism's "the rigidity of its command structure, the deskilling of workers, practices of industrial conflict" (Neilson & Rossiter, 2008, p. 55). In a context which was mostly determined by industrial production, "concentration of industrial capitalist relations within relatively few industrial sectors" (Lash & Urry, 1987, p. 4), which is organized through highly rationalized scientific management principles of Taylorism that generously provides central dispositions of Fordism, prerequiring its central organization and fixed capital schema (Piore & Sabel, 1984); there were a homogeneous -compared to consequential post-Fordist disposition- mass worker subject to central and unidirectional control (Jessop, 1991). Transition to post-Fordist era, besides many other things, is the transformation in this topography of labor. This transformation is far more than being one-dimensional as well as being merely about organization of production and labor process. Thus, it was not restricted to the borders of the factory. Fordism, rather, "can be seen as a general pattern of social organisation (‘societalisation’). In this context it involves the consumption of standardised, mass commodities in nuclear family households and provision of standardised, collective goods and services by the bureaucratic state" (Jessop, 1991, pp. 136-7). Therefore, transition to post-Fordism marks a comprehensive transformation as such.

According to the literature, the difference between Fordism and its aftermath, i.e. post-Fordism, can be understood in the most basic sense as the transformation from a rigid past to a present in which the term flexibility is favored (Piore & Sabel, 1984). Both accounts of transition from Fordism to post-Fordism or neo-Fordism, "stress the significance of greater flexibility in the organization of production" (Allen, 1992, p. 193). It is the distinction between mass production and flexible specialization, put forward as an answer to "the stagnation of the world economy in the early 1970s" (Amin, 1994, p. 15). Post-Fordism appears at the moment of stagnation and crisis of organization of capitalist production as

> an intensification of the rhythm of accumulation, the breaking of collective bargaining, and the stratification of the labour force into a restricted upper level of highly skilled workers and a vast lower level of atomized and flexibilized individuals kept on low wages and in precarious jobs. (Neilson & Rossiter, 2008, p. 57)

Through the crucial operationalization of novel technological developments, which enables new techniques of management and control, post-Fordist model has come into existence as a way out of the crisis of productivity by ensuring both the flexibility and fragmentation of overall design of labor process and flexibilization of workforce. It forms "the perceptible shift away from bureaucratization and centralization towards more flexible, less hierarchical modes of economic organization" (Allen, 1992, p. 171). In Jessop's words (1994) "as a labour process, post-Fordism can be defined as a flexible production process based on flexible machines or systems and an appropriately flexible workforce. Its crucial hardware is microelectronics-based information and communications technologies" (p. 253). Flexibility in terms of design and organization of labor process, workplace organization, re-array of fixed capital, markets, surveillance and control mechanisms, management, etc., consists of a variety of techniques and policies, which are not necessarily in harmony with each other in different scales, are one side of the post-Fordist transformation. Stemming from these new tendencies to a significant extent, flexibility for workers, the other half of this new phase of capitalism, manifest itself as precarization. The flexibility of the workforce is fundamentally "achieved through insecurity" (Murray, 1989, p. 49). Therefore, it seems crucial to understand the post-

Fordist context, upon which the digital economy has been born subsequently, as a meta process transforming the labor world. Its foundation basically is the flexibilization developed as a political solution to the crisis and stagnation of Fordist organization, which depends on a twofold mechanism: i) flexibility in the sense of fragmentation of processes of labor and production, and ii) flexibility of the workforce which culminates as insecurity and precarization for the workers.

While Fordism functioned as a whole, a monolithic model, post-Fordism appears more like a lack of single distinctive and rigid model. It comprises a variety of elements and dispositions, which are not necessarily compatible with each other, even conflicting to some degree, but coexistent within the same framework, and definitive as such. For this reason, relations of work and labor process under post-Fordism is defined by heterogeneity, fragmentation, and even contradictions. So does working class composition. This new phase of capitalist organization is "characterized by new principles in production, including specialist units of production, decentralized management and versatile technologies and workforces, to satisfy increasingly volatile markets" (Amin, 1994, p. 2). This heterogeneous picture exists alongside a bunch of multiple determinants: "individualization of salaries, task flexibility, labour market fragmentation, the growth of specialist services" (Amin, 1994, p. 2). Ralf Dahrendorf (1959) provides a pioneering account of this heterogenization process in a comparably earlier time, emphasizing the differentiation between semi-skilled mass worker conducting manual labor, and high skilled worker who takes care of overall design and control of the production process. In the post-Fordist era, fragmentation of the working class reached far beyond this antecessor division with the increased task specialization, special services, wide range of skills responsible from the production process of emergent goods and services, etc. Fragmentation and heterogenization includes also contradictions in themselves. According to Jessop (1994), for example, "the wage relation would be recomposed with a polarization between skilled and unskilled workers; there would be greater emphasis on flexibility in internal and external labour markets" (p. 253).

There exists, moreover, fundamental points of division also within working class, even in the forms and modes of flexibility (Atkinson, 1984), whereas in the South it

comes only to mean greater precarity for most of the workers in contrast to the North, where a certain portion of wage-laborers can utilize flexibility fulfilling search for autonomy to a certain degree. For certain sections of the waged-labor, flexibility is operationalized in favor of autonomy by the new management schema, for example, the "decentralization of decision-making authority, so as not only to reduce worker alienation, but also to raise responsibility and responsiveness in all areas of the work" (Amin, 1994, p. 21). Therefore, the post-Fordist principal element of the flexibilization of the workforce, results in fragmentation and heterogeneity within waged-labor through a variety of outcomes. The heterogenization of workers taking place in different scales not only creates a division between workers conducting a diverse range of tasks at a high range of skill differentiation inside one workplace but also the global division of labor between regions, namely the South and the North. In this respect, post-Fordism seems to have gained a global quality, as a meta regime regulating relations of work and labor process in global capitalism, as emphasized by Lipietz (1987). It is an economy that is "dominated by multinationals, with their new international division of labour and their greater autonomy from nation state control; and the ‘globalisation’ of the new financial markets, linked by the communications revolution" (Hall, 1988, p. 24).

At this precise point, post-Fordism's link with neoliberalism becomes clear, as this kind of a globally organized design prerequires some sorts of policy sets and execution. In line, diffusion of workers through regions, sectors, and skills in post-Fordism "enforced mobility in labour markets provoked by new geographies of employment" (Esser & Hirsch, 1994). In this respect, post-Fordism's quality as a historical era of capitalist organization of relations of work and production, and surrounding economic, social and political phenomena demonstrates itself as "a post-Fordist macro design" (Amin, 1994, p. 20). Yet, the most powerful functions of post-Fordism, which are flexibility, uncertainty, heterogeneity, fragmentation, and precarization turn out to be defining its own fate. As a design of a set of techniques, regulations, and dispositions formed as a response to the crisis of Fordism in the 1970s, the post-Fordist model seems to have taken over dynamics of the crisis. The crisis proceeds as Esser & Hirsch (1994) emphasizes:

> a new, stable, international, hegemonic 'post-Fordist' development has so far been unable to impose itself. In a national and an international context, the situation is characterized rather by a complex mixture of alternative strategies for overcoming the crisis, which are at the same time the subject of deep political-social conflicts. (p. 76)

Post-Fordism can be understood as the very fabric in which alternative and heterogeneous strategies and dispositions coexist. It is, in essence, defined by this very principle. In this respect, the heterogeneity and flexibility of post-Fordist relations of work and production, which have occurred as a response to the crisis and stagnation of the Fordist capitalist formation, have been at play in the face of ongoing dynamics of crisis, which subsequently formed the crisis dynamics of post-Fordism itself. Therefore, the post-Fordist reaction has been expansion and diversification of existent contradictions of relations of work and around which a whole economic, social, and political (dis)organization is constructed. This situation constitutes the present context upon which digital economy has emerged, which is to be seen as a result of these ongoing dynamics to a significant degree.

1.2. Objective of the study

This thesis aims to understand work in digital economy and its transformation in the given context, with a specific focus on the prominent role and position of digital labor platforms in the course of this change. In this sense, digital labor platforms are conceived as a specific modality; first, within the presence of a greater mass of global digital economy and second, in the context of long-since ongoing tendencies of post-Fordist dispositions on relations and processes of labor and production. The question that this thesis is after, in the most general sense, is to what extent digital labor platforms constitute a novel regime of work comprised of specific elements of processes of labor and production specifically belonging to themselves. As the world of digital labor platforms is composed of a vast and various number and types of professions, works, tasks, jobs, and services and continues to enlarge and absorb more; it is beyond the scope of a study like this one to encompass all sections of them. For this reason, this study limits its scope to the schematically half, and numerically minor of the whole of digital labor platforms. It is constructed upon a case study conducted with in-depth interviews with a group of people who work

through web-based digital labor platforms in Turkey. Therefore, the study includes only one type of platform labor, that is online gig, or freelance, work. While the study, on the one hand, is limited to people in Turkey, it is not limited with only to the digital labor platforms in Turkey. As the global scale of digital labor platforms is a definitive feature of this mode of work, platforms that the participants of the study work through are designed to be composed of both global and local platforms. Namely, digital labor platforms included in this study are Upwork, Fiverr, freelancer.com, Bionluk, and Armut; the former three are global ones, while the other two are Turkey-based.

Since the scope of the study is limited with one branch of digital labor platforms, this comes also to mean that it is an analysis on one type of labor. Yet, it is still not a specific type but rather the general category of intellectual labor as the complement to manual labor. This distinction overlaps with the broad categorization of digital labor platforms as location-based and web-based platforms, which also applies to platform works, which will be elaborately discussed in Chapter 2. Although there would inevitably be meshed and hybrid fields, these two broad branches of digital labor platforms are symmetrical to two historical types of labor: manual and intellectual. As the case study of this thesis is focused on web-based labor platforms evaluating the transformation of processes of labor and production among them with a historical and conceptual perspective on the issue, a discussion on the specific changes that intellectual labor in terms of quality and content has been going through in this context is also required. Web-based labor platforms comprise highly heterogeneous types of work, tasks, and jobs, almost as much as the general category of intellectual labor does. For this reason, this thesis attempts to elaborate on this heterogeneity, and, as a result, the case study is designed to reflect a heterogeneous group of works inside the category of intellectual labor in digital labor platforms to a certain degree. Yet, it is still limited with certain groups of work for the sake of clarity and as something that occurred as a natural consequence of the research limitations. The types of works being done through web-based labor platforms that are evaluated in the case study of this thesis are clustered within two main categories, which are i) creative works, including works like design, architectural design, digital modeling, digital art, illustration, sketching, and ii) intellectual works including

writing, translation, creative writing, content creation, ad writing, editing. These two broad categories are also the most common group of works, as demonstrated in the relevant literature, which will be shown in Chapter 3.

1.3. Study plan

This study's principal point of departure is that the most current transformations in the processes of labor, production, and exchange are materialized in the scope of post-Fordist dispositions of capitalist organization. In other words, the analysis is built on the argument that digital economy, and digital labor platforms as its prominent actors, spread and intensify the essential post-Fordist tendencies, such as flexibilization, fragmentation and consequent precarization. To that purpose, the research question of this thesis concerns the continuity and breaks between the digitalization of the global capitalist economy and the post-Fordist dispositions in terms of how the relations of labor and processes of work are transformed and how workers currently experience this process. For this reason, the following chapter, Chapter 2, starts with an examination of the historical background of global digital economy and its novelties that have been borne into the material context that post-Fordism brought about. The chapter continues with the evaluation of concepts regarding new forms and modalities of labor, value, and production in the global digital capitalist economy; since they are strictly relevant with the foundations of successive form of digital platform work. It also argues that a peculiar flexible setting which was made possible by the digital economy generates certain specific changes and contradictions that intellectual labor has been distinctively going through.

Chapter 2 continues with a review of theoretical frameworks and conceptual tools respectively on the platform capitalism, digital labor platforms and platform works. Theoretical approaches focusing on the roots and emergence of platforms capitalism are presented along with the historical development sketched so far. Relying heavily on the works Srnicek (2017), Schmidt (2017), Jones (2021) and Huws (2015); this chapter aims to arrive to an operationalized categorization in order to classify platform works and create a clear focus to the study. Firstly, Srnicek's

comprehensive work on platform capitalism, which basically makes a typology of platform business model is discussed. Although it provides a helpful guidance to the essential features of those companies and their modus operandi, what Srnicek offers is a typology of platform companies rather than platform works. For a further operationalization of the literature, Schmidt's classification of digital labor platforms, which can be conceived as a specific form of platform business model and companies, is used. Moving forward in reference to Schmidt, a taxonomy of 'platform works' is laid out to clarify the focus of the case study's design. Jones' and Huws' work is also intensively used in depicting the essential mechanism and core functions of digital labor platforms and platform works. The chapter concludes detecting definitive foundational features and mechanisms generating dispositions of processes of work in digital labor platforms in reference to the literature: i) outsourcing of labor costs, ii) data monopolization and algorithmic management and iii) precarization and fragmentation. These three mechanisms and characteristics of platform work provides main axes used in analysis of the material acquired in case study. The chapter ends dwelling on the question of to what extent there exists a peculiar 'platform regime of work'?

Chapter 3 is a literature review of the recent studies on digital labor platforms, platform work and the transformation process that labor in this field has been experiencing and going through. The chapter evaluates research and case studies on both types of digital labor platforms and platform works yet gives a specific place to the web-based platform work in order to detect the common mechanisms and compare and contrast the differences between them, and how different authors approach the issue. As majority of the qualitative researches underlie, algorithmic management and peculiar labor control employed in digital labor platforms constitutes the most vital axis of the transformation, contradictions and dynamics of this type of work. There appears to be a specific concept, as mentioned in the previous chapter too, that is digital Taylorism, which is worth discussing as being presented as a new paradigmatic model by advocates of the concept. The extent and degree to which the concept validates all sections of this economy need to be discussed. Besides, specific consequences of this 'platformized' model of management and labor control on online platform work and on intellectual and

creative labor are highlighted in the light of similar studies as it constitutes the case of this thesis. Another important dimension characterizing online platform work is the condition of workers in terms of organization, cooperation, and collective action. The chapter reviews the literature on the unique contradiction between autonomy and algorithmic management that online platform workers suffer, and its effects on their capacities to build solidarity, cooperation and raise struggle. Last but not least, the research and case studies on the platforms and platform workers in Turkey are reviewed in order to shed light on the distinctive situations belonging its case.

Chapter 4 is dedicated to the description, analysis and findings of the case study. The case study is composed of an analysis of findings acquired through in-depth interviews conducted with 11 creative/intellectual workers in web-based digital labor platforms. After the casting of the participants with respect to professions and types of work they do, level of dependence on income in platform works, other work experiences, and educational backgrounds, it continues with the key determinant themes operationalized in the analysis of the material acquired from interviews. These determinants are classified under four main categories, first of which is the i) description of the backgrounds and qualities of platform workers, and the other three are in line with the essential conceptual characteristics of platform work, that are ii) outsourcing of labor costs, iii) algorithmic management and labor process, and iv) precarity and subjective experiences. These determinants are detected both in order for a search and test of what is argued as main characteristics of platform work in the literature and also to discuss the contradictions of intellectual/creative labor has been going through in the context of digital capitalism with a specific focus on web-based labor platforms. The case study is structured in the light of the transformation in processes of work, production, management, relations of income, and arrangements within digital labor platforms; yet, it is focused on how workers experience them, how the observable changes in mechanisms of these processes are lived, and what outcomes are generated in respect of them. After all, the thesis ends with an exertion to produce answers to the following research question: "How do the general dispositions organizing processes of work in platform capitalism affect intellectual labor in the case of web-based digital labor platform workers in Turkey?

CHAPTER 2

DIGITAL LABOR PLATFORMS IN CONTEXT

"Masses of labourers, crowded into the factory,
are organised like soldiers."
-Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels

Digital labor platforms can be located in a greater schema of the global digital economy, which occurred in the course of a historical context. The emergence of the digital economy is to be understood in terms of the transformations that capitalist production has directed itself and the accompanying changes in social and political setting. The most notable reconfigurations in this sense have been taking place, no wonder, in the realm of relations and processes of labor and work. In this chapter, I will evaluate digital labor platforms as prominent actors within the digital economy, carrying most current transformations in the processes of labor, production, and work materialized in the scope of post-Fordist dispositions of capitalist organization. Digital labor platforms, in other words, are taken as the novel modality that spreads and intensifies the essential post-Fordist tendencies, such as flexibilization, fragmentation, and consequent precarization. For this reason, this chapter starts with an examination of the historical background of the global digital economy in response to certain moments of crises, capitalist responses, and technological change and its novelties that have been borne into the material context that post-Fordism brought about. I argue that a peculiar flexible setting, taking place on a global scale, became possible with the digital economy, and digital labor platforms take it to the extreme. I will present a basic sketch of this transformation and the progress that digital labor platforms have made. Digital labor platforms, on the other hand, are comprised of different types, a significant heterogeneity of works, professions, and tasks, and various forms of labor. In order to reach a clear focus, a categorization

should be operationalized, and differences and commonalities between different types of labor platforms should be laid out. For this reason, I will create a taxonomy based on the literature and different approaches in this chapter. Digital labor platforms employ a set of novel mechanisms, utilize some of the existing tendencies of capitalist organization, and create remarkable changes in processes and relations of labor and work and in terms of the experiences of working people. The definitive foundational features embedded in digital labor platforms are detected in this chapter as: i) outsourcing of labor costs, ii) data monopolization and algorithmic management, and iii) precarization and fragmentation. Birth, development, and characteristics of work in digital labor platforms will be evaluated in this order.

2.1. Emergence of digital economy and digital labor platforms in a historical perspective

Post-Fordist arrangements of work and accompanying social and political transformations were a response to crisis of capitalist organization of both production and the sociality of the 1970s. Transition to this new era of capitalist relations of production have taken place, inevitably, in a certain context and progressed in affinity with other determinant phenomena from those days onwards. The most prominent one among them is the neoliberal agenda aiming a transformation of relations of work according to organizational shift from Fordism to post-Fordism, and of power relations between labor and Capital.[2] Inseparable from the flourishing of post-Fordist dispositions are developments in information technologies. Yet, as in terms of its relation to modalities of production, "essence of technology is not solely technological" (Scholz, 2013, p. 10). Information and communication technologies have been integrated into production and processes of labor as a result of an intentional design in the framework of post-Fordist relations of work. As they have evolved in time and turned into a leading force in metamorphosis of capitalism enabling Capital to surpass borders, space and time, post-Fordist relations of work has begun to acquire a new face around the concept of flexibility and turned into a trailblazer in the process of globalization. Digital economy has emerged at the

[2] The capital "C" here is intentionally used. While capital refers to the main source of economic asset, Capital implies the organized class and class power built around it.

convergence of these processes accompanied and fostered by adaptive, transformative, and open-ended nature of post-Fordist (dis)organization of capitalism. As Terranova (2013) puts it, digital economy "seems to describe a formation that intersects on the one hand with the postmodern cultural economy (the media, the university, and the arts) and on the other hand with the information industry (the information and communication complex)" (p. 49).

Global capitalism, meanwhile, has kept producing crises in terms of multi-dimensions of economy, politics, and society. While during the 1990s peripheries of capitalism had witnessed recessions of various kinds, the years of the 2000s had begun with the crash of dot.com boom affecting the digital forms of accumulation, products, and work. Probably the most transformative crisis, on the other had, was the 2007-08 global financial crisis. According to Ursula Huws (2014), when for the first time that capitalism, following the emergence of post-Fordism, faced new challenges, it has extended its operation based on two dynamics: i) a general commodification breakthrough towards heretofore uncommodified spheres of human life and ii) perpetuation of flexible work regulations in an increasing manner by even more incorporation of information and communicative technologies. This process has become more aggressive as workers' precarious conditions have deepened, thus paving the way for it. Since it has also gained a significantly larger degree of flexibility, not only in terms of relations of work but also in forms of organization and design, post-Fordist dispositions of capitalism became able to easily gravitate towards new directions and new forms and tools regulating work within the logic of a certain framework. In this sense, the process what Ursula Huws (2014) calls digital wave of commodification, described as “the tendency in capitalist economies to transform ever more activities into products or services that can be delivered in multiple standardized versions, thus enabling profits to grow in proportion to the volume of sales” (p. 68), is symmetrical to post-Fordist tendency in creating flexibility and precarity in the context of digital economy. As the digital economy is defined alongside the expansion of digitalized information technologies (Terranova, 2013), it can be located in the context of post-Fordist capitalist organization as it has been progressing and intensifying through their incorporation to the processes of labor and surrounding relations of work. Crucial qualities of the digital economy

include the expansion of software analytical tools and the control and extraction of data both as an exchange value and as a tool that enables digital surveillance and algorithmic management. As a result, blurring boundaries between work and leisure, new forms of value and labor, and increasing obscurity in forms of employment and wage have all been perpetuating flexibility and precarity within the historical framework that post-Fordist tendencies had been produced. Incorporation of essential mechanisms of post-Fordist capitalist organization of relations production and elements of digital economy provided the basis for platform business model and its regime of work (Casilli & Posada, 2019).

2.1.1. Generation of digital infrastructure

The changes in production of value and forms of labor under digital capitalism has been discussed with a variety of concepts each trying to encapsulate the essence of what is at stake. Terms like prosumption (production + consumption) and playbour (play + labor) have been coined (Fuchs, 2014; Fuchs & Fisher, 2015) in order to articulate the obscuring dynamic of value production that digital capitalism pursues by intentional design of necessary mechanisms of digitalized information and communication technologies. The emphasis is upon the commodification of life itself, of leisure time through social media as a way of extracting value. This tendency has been emphasized before as rise of "immaterial labor" (Hardt & Negri, 2000; Lazzarato, 1996) expressing inclusion of immaterial and out-of-work activities to the production of value processes, establishment of "free labor" (Terranova, 2000) as the essence of the Internet as an emergent field of "excessive activities" to extract value as a capitalist move to refresh its ability to increase profit rates, or the increasing "cognitive" character of capitalist labor processes (Berardi, 2009). The construction of such a form of value production and type of labor creating it, on the other hand, has also transformative effects not only in inventing new blurry fields between free time and labor but also on waged-labor relationship in its classical form. In this sense, those who are obliged to work, i.e. get engaged in waged labor relationship, in order to survive are under a dual mechanism of exploitation; waged labor and immaterial labor, both of which are framed and constituted by digital

capitalist technologies of organization, accompanied by social, technical, legal, and institutional directions of neoliberal agenda. As Scholz (2013) puts it just on target:

> These are new forms of labor but old forms of exploitation. There are no minimum wages or health insurance and so far, federal and state regulators have not intervened. Digital labor matters; such underpaid, waged occupations must not be ignored when thinking about cognitive capitalism. (p. 8)

Platform business model and digital labor platforms comprises the most developed form of this new composition of exploitation mechanisms, and the novel dispositions organizing processes of production, exchange, and labor. For this reason, sketching the anatomy of the digitalized phase of post-Fordist capitalism would lay out the general characteristics that digital labor platforms take over in terms of relations and processes of labor and work. Digital economy invented a variety of new mechanisms thanks to the technological advancements incorporated processes of capitalist production, and consequently, "each rollout of online tools has offered ever more ingenious ways of extracting cheaper, discount work from users and participants" (Ross, 2013, p. 22). This wave of transformation concerning processes of production, exchange and labor demonstrates the most current instance of “capitalism’s extraordinary ability to survive the crises that periodically threaten to destroy it” (Huws, 2014, p. 7). Cultural goods, dimensions of sociality, creative work, artistic activities, public services have been commodified in order to come through recurrent crises of profitability in a context that new technologies have been launched. In turn of incorporating these into monetary relations, new forms of cheap, unwaged, flexible labor have been created within the digital economy. In this respect, since there is a significant success of digital capitalism in expanding post-Fordist relations of work and social setting through novel management and organization techniques, "it is not surprising that capitalism does not only survive its periodic crises, but emerges from each with renewed vigor, and a new armory of resources to bring to reestablishing its relationship with labor on fresh terms” (Huws, 2014, p. 16). Digital labor platforms, in this sense, are to be understood as the latest of this vigor and in terms of relations of labor as "part of a wider shift towards class discipline and the precarization of labour and need to be set in this context" (Cole et al., 2020, p. 83).

There was a significant infrastructure, which have been formed in the course of the pursuit of self-renewal of capitalism, that laid the groundwork digital economy and platform business model to flourish. One trivet of this infrastructure has been constructed with the first rise of information and communication technologies corresponding early post-Fordist arrangements of capitalist production. Second significant breakthrough in this technological infrastructure took place when the Internet entered to the picture and existing information and communication networks have begun to be digitalized.

> Throughout the late 1990s and 2000s, there were massive amounts of public and private investment in information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure. After the financial crisis of 2007-8, large-scale financial disruption pushed venture capital into new technologies, scaling up digital transformations and creating structural changes in the global ICT infrastructure to pave the way for the age of the intelligent machine. According to Internet World Stats, internet connectivity has grown from 16 million (0.4 per cent) of the global population in 1995 to 4.57 billion (58.7 per cent) as of January 2020. (Cole et al., 2020, p. 80)

This infrastructure has enabled larger sections of Capital to become immune to the fluctuations and restrictions of national economies and crises of global capitalism. Digital economy has gained an outlook as if it is independent of time and space, "belonging to a different universe" (Terranova, 2000). In this way, organization of capitalist production became able to accomplish an altogether transformation to a significant degree. According to Ursula Huws (2014), this has happened under three stages after Fordism as an era came to an end. Till the end of the 1980s, composition of working classes has begun to strategically be changed towards a more fragmented and precarious setting in order to cope with conflicts between labor and Capital in a context where profitability kept declining. Capitalism directed towards to a new macro-design, in which cost of labor was declined thanks to the creation of a massive precarization wave. This had an altering effect on composition of working class, which had profoundly begun to change with the first appearance of post-Fordist relations and accompanying social and political transformations. On the side of organization of processes of work, "the development of information technologies made it possible to simplify and standardize many labor processes, including in-service industries, undermining the bargaining power of some traditionally well-

organized groups of workers, while also opening up new areas of employment for others" (Huws, 2014, p. 19). The sequential changes concerning nature of work and formation of working class in this period, in which "a discourse about "atypical" employment began to emerge" (Huws, 2014), laid the background for fragmentation and flexibilization, which are going to get intensified both vertically and horizontally with the integration and spread of digital tools in following phases of development.

The following decades beginning with 1990 and proceeding till the mid-2000s constitutes distinct era in employment relations were characterized by political regulations of the neoliberal agenda in the context of globalization. This agenda had eased the spread of "formerly introduced tendencies concerning conditions of working class, relations and processes of labor and work and initiated an era of rapid deregulation and upgrading of telecommunication networks around the world" (Huws, 2014, pp. 20-21). While a new regime of global capitalist value production and a framework of deregulation had been laid, "...the information technologies that had begun to be introduced in the previous period reached critical mass, becoming cheaper and more ubiquitous" (Huws, 2014, p. 21). Hitherto existing computer systems and digitalization process were profoundly enhanced, interconnection between information systems and telecommunication infrastructure was provided, making a massive increase in productivity and flexibility possible (Huws, 2014 & Fuchs, 2014). As the deregulation and new framework of flexibility in production, exchange and labor relations was launched, sections of waged labor were pushed deeper into precarious conditions by a twofold mechanism, comprised by the resonance of fragmentation of processes of work and cancelling of political mechanisms protecting bargaining power and possibility of autonomy of the working class. This new landscape of regime of work has generated a global division of labor for the information-based, cognitive forms of work and labor force, "echoing that which had begun to appear in manufacturing work in the previous period" (Huws, 2014, p. 21). While extensive use of information technologies and incorporation of digitalized telecommunication paved the way, neoliberal politics of globalization created the offshore outsourcing phenomena, which is a modality of value production independent of time, space, national borders, and regulation. In sum, the already ongoing processes of flexibilization and precarization have continued with new

digital mechanisms attached to the post-Fordist tendencies. The whole of these constitutes the material conditions upon which platform capitalism is going to be later borne.

The financial crisis of 2007-2008, on the other hand, led to certain changes in dynamics of present composition of economic, social and political processes conditioning relations of work and labor (Huws, 2014). As the relationship between technological development and capitalist restructuring is concerned, this period has opened up a further revitalization of digital technologies, who had been playing important role in financial capitalism (Fuchs, 2022). As an economy that had started to rely heavily upon digital assets and processes of production and labor designed by digital tools produced a profound crisis, global capitalism directed towards a new and ever stronger wave of "valorisation process" encompassing a variety of formerly non-profitable fields operationalizing same tools already at use (Srnicek, 2018). Extensive activity of social media platforms and platform business model of all kinds is central to this latest orientation of digital capitalism (Fuchs, 2014). This new wave of valorisation through platform business model also generated a new topography of labor. Besides, the present composition regarding relations of work and conditions of working populations seems to have acquired a settled outlook. At the end of the historical axis of fragmentation of labor markets, flexibilization of processes of work, and overall precarization enframing all sections of wage laborer populations; present outlook of global capitalism dominated by digital economy "now presented young people with few options but to accept whatever was on offer to them in the labor market" (Huws, 2014, p. 23). The motor engine of digitalized post-Fordist capitalist relations of production, the digitally interconnected information and communication technologies had

> become part of the taken-for-granted environment of all work. The dissolution of clear boundaries between work and non-work and the erosion of formal rules governing work, while still not universal in existing jobs, was becoming ever more prevalent in those that were newly created. This blurriness of boundaries was by no means exclusive to online work. (Huws, 2014, p. 23)

The current outlook of global digital capitalism exhibits a landscape in which main axis determining processes of work and surrounding social and political phenomena

appears as "part of a wider shift towards class discipline and the precarization of labour" and "a much more diffuse sense of ‘precarization’ with many drivers beyond just technology" (Cole et al., 2020, p. 83). Yet, digital technological devices and platform business model as the pioneer agent of this process fulfills the most determinant function. Digital labor platforms operate in and towards the coalescence of the increasing flexibilization and fragmentation of processes of work and deepening of the precarization of waged labor populations have been subjected to.

2.1.2. A framework for work flexibility in digital space

Flexibilization, therefore, seems to be composed of two dimensions; i) flexibilization of market structure, labor costs, contracts, processes of work, and outsourcing; ii) flexibilization and fragmentation of employment relations and working conditions, i.e. "shifting flexibility costs onto workers" (Drahokoupil & Fabo, 2019, p. 34). Fragmentation of labor process is heavily observed in the distinctive changes in its components in digital economy's framework and digital labor platforms. Inside the digital economy, an increasing degree of heterogeneous forms of labor is observed, ranging from free, immaterial, unpaid labor to the fragmented contracts, on-call, automized arrangements, and gigs mostly organized through digital labor platforms. Most dramatic dimension of this process is that the two ends of this spectrum seem to have become inseparable. In the context of platform economy, this current can be said to have created a phenomenon of virtual work (Valenduc & Vendramin, 2016), where the term employment increasingly loses its meaning (Ross, 2013). The outsourcing mechanisms that had been started to appear before digital labor platforms in the context of digital economy perpetuates these fragmented, flexible, heterogeneous forms of labor and production. Digital labor platforms operationalize these digital mechanisms of outsourcing (Drahokoupil & Fabo, 2019) and generates a globally distributed workplace (Ross, 2013). With the increasing volume and activity of digital labor platforms, a set of qualities of work "that were regarded in previous periods as exceptional or unusual are now taken for granted by a growing proportion of the population and, in the process, expectations of what 'normal' working behavior should have also been transformed” (Huws, 2014, p. 17). In this respect, flexible, fragmented and precarity-spreading organization of work has

reached to a higher degree in the context of digital capitalism and witnessed a peak with the intentional design of digital labor platforms. In this sense, it is important to note that "despite being described as 'technologically neutral', platforms are political in nature" (Casilli & Posada, 2019, p. 303).

Since there exists a variety of types of labor and methods of value creation, a heterogeneity of works, jobs and tasks and multitudes of users participating in the form of ‘digital labor’; indigenous methods of organization and management of labor and production processes comprises a constructive essence in digital capitalism. It is specifically valid when it comes to the digital labor platforms as they constitute "a particular type of organisational technology reliant on piecework and algorithmic management" (Cole et al., 2020, p. 83). One prominent property in digital labor platforms is their ability to manage and organize work that gets fragmented and reduced to standard tasks with the inclusion of digital tools, algorithms, AI, software systems. The processes of "datafication", "taskification" and "the rise of AI have facilitated a ‘platformization’ of the regime of accumulation" (Cole et al., 2020, p. 83). The platformization phenomenon, which is in essence comprised of a cluster of digital labor, which "is a continuum of unpaid, micro-paid, and poorly paid human activities" (Casilli & Posada, 2019). The heterogeneous spectrum of jobs and tasks ranges from "non-standard forms of production, from semi-professional amateurism to monetized leisure, and from unpaid click-work to ‘gigs’ and freelancing" (Casilli & Posada, 2019). This is undertaken by digital labor platforms by locating activities outside of regular employment and spawns a variety of invisible, non-standard, even informal working arrangements. In order to ensure this organization of labor process, digital labor platforms fulfill a dual need consisting of both standardization and flexibilization of labor processes at the same time, which could appeal somewhat paradoxical to the eye. Digital labor platforms "encourage the ‘taskification’ of work, or the reduction of human activities to the smallest conceivable unit of execution. Standardization and segmentation of labor processes are thus instrumental in facing the uncertainty that this new division of labor entails" (Casilli & Posada, 2019). The fragmentation of online tasks and work that is organized through digital labor platforms is also crucially operational in favor of another definitive component of processes of labor, that is generation and extraction of data which feeds software

mechanisms urging algorithmic management. Datafication and algorithmic management together, in turn, enable standardization of heterogeneous jobs and professions, and creative and intellectual tasks, which comprises a significant portion of the digital labor landscape. Therefore, labor in digital capitalism, which is nowadays heavily organized through digital labor platforms, is going through a novel phase where "the standardization and the fragmentation of previously complex and specialized processes" (Casilli & Posada, 2019) have become possible thanks to the framework of platformized work regime and digital management techniques at use.

The seemingly paradoxical dual process that digital labor has been going through has its bases in the technological developments of digital age. Yet, the landscape is not only comprised only of technological advancements, as the political nature and intentional design is also determining. "The data and AI-driven technologies of the current technological revolution have allowed for further decentralization of production with lower capital overheads in relation to their scalability" (Cole et al., 2020, p. 82). They altogether have generated a model in which ultimate outsourcing (Drahokoupil & Fabo, 2019) of capitalist production so far became possible on the one hand, and a novel management framework on the other. This framework, for some, is a novel composition of a certain dispositions from older models of capitalist production and the newest digital techniques, which can be named as digital Taylorism (Park & Ryoo, 2023). Digital Taylorism is defined by European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (2018) as; "task standardisation through the use of information technology that involves identifying the tools and techniques to complete tasks, so as to improve and monitor efficiency in work performance, often through automated management" (p. 77). Taylorist management techniques go hand in hand outsourcing mechanisms, both two of which generates a deeper fragmentation and precarization as digital labor platforms became;

> able to institute Taylorist management techniques despite the dislocation of the workplace through the use of GPS, apps, customer ratings and other forms of surveillance. When workers receive poor feedback and ratings from customers, the algorithm justifies their termination. (Cole et al., 2020, p. 82).

The implementation of this digital Taylorist principles to work brings forth a unique way of power imbalance in terms of relations of employment and labor, "among the

various players involved in labour relations, restricting the autonomy of employees (as they are not free from need) and strengthening the authority of employers (who are being freed of social responsibilities)" (Serrano-Pascual & Jepsen, 2019, p. 12). Digital labor platforms introduce a distinctive disposition of discipline and management, especially for those group of waged labor who previously possess certain autonomy and bargaining capacity stemming from their skills. For the high-skilled, creative or intellectual labor, there happens a "radical change towards a decentralized but pervasive form of class discipline over workers, and a return to less standardized and more precarious organizational form of work" (Cole et al. 2020, p. 82). In this sense, the deepening precarization process resulting from the peak of outsourcing and novel composition of management through digital tools combined with Taylorist principles of fragmentation and taskification generates certain further and specific effects on intellectual labor.

It can be said that the precarization and flexibilization processes that had been first started with industrial labor when post-Fordist organization of labor relations appeared now encompasses intellectual labor to a greater extent. In the course of the spread of the global digital economy, “it can be postulated that if commodification is the engine, then intellectual labor is the spark that fires it” (Huws, 2014, p. 71). Just as the Taylorist management techniques of Fordist organization of capitalist production led to subsumption of industrial labor, the question is whether the new composition of Taylorist principles and digital technologies of management leads to the same in terms of intellectual labor. The answer is rather a contradictory one. In the context of the digital economy and digital labor platforms, intellectual labor is under strong pressure of standardization with the increasing inclusion of AI and algorithmic management schemas into the labor process. Yet, at the same time, tasks requiring certain skills preserve, and the complex nature of those in addition to an increasing heterogeneity of jobs, works, and labor force organized throughout digital sphere is apparent. “But the practices of 'knowledge management' that are developed to control them produce conditions that are inimical to that very creativity” (Huws, 2014, p. 79). Moreover, the space for this kind of a labor continuously expands as digital organization of capitalist production inevitably needs these skills. As Ross (2013) emphasizes, "there is little dispute that some high-growth industrial sectors

are increasingly dependent on ideas and creative talent, and that capital has had to grant some concessions in order to guarantee a supply of cognitive skills" (p. 38). Therefore, there appears an interesting contradiction in which intellectual labor is being subjected to standardization at one hand, yet, at the same time, a certain interval of autonomy and self-organization is inevitable to reproduce the base for the very management schema, and fragmentation and heterogeneity simultaneously increase.

2.2. Roots and emergence of platform capitalism

There has been an ongoing digitalization process in an increasing manner at least since the first public use of the Internet and related information technologies. No wonder, this technological enhancement of human life, as exactly as its predecessors, was driven by needs and pursuits of capitalist production processes and its compulsory profit seeking impulse. In this sense, it is capitalist economy, in essence, what has constructed today's flourished digital economy and digital labour platforms as its one of the most relevant and prominent facets. No doubt, once one particular element of a whole has been borne, it starts to present its own particular existence and functioning thereafter. So does digital labour platforms within today's digital economy. Since when digital labour platforms, as a particular element of digital economy in general, came to existence, they have turned into trailblazers in terms of labor relations over a relatively short period of time. Their area of operation has widely spread and spilled over a various branch of processes, relations and types of work. Antecedents of digital labour platforms are not brand new but exist for around two decades. "The oldest microtask crowdsourcing platform, Amazon Mechanical Turk, was launched in 2005. The oldest freelance platform, Elance, was launched in 1999" (Fair Crowd Work, 2017). Since the establishment of these two prominent examples, digital labour platforms have become diversified in terms of types of jobs, works and tasks they encompass. They have gone under manifold transformations and made a significant progress. These two of the oldest examples of labor platforms still exist and occupy a greater portion in the field, and the type that they in fact invented constitutes significant amount of the economy in this realm. Yet, the total mass and number of digital labour platforms have significantly increased since then.

More importantly, platform works -i.e. jobs, professions, tasks organized and realized through digital labour platforms- have diversified. "The digital platform economy is growing quickly. Today, over 28 million people in the EU work through digital labour platforms. In 2025, their number is expected to reach 43 million people. The vast majority of these people are genuinely self-employed" (European Commission, 2021).

Digital labour platform model, or platform capitalism is a product of crises and pursuits of global capitalist mode of production, no doubt in line with related technological advances, which naturally eased and boosted these pursuits and efforts to create responses to the crises. The relationship between technological advances and capitalist development, though not the main concern of this study, is at stake here. Which one among the two fosters the other? Do technological advancements completely subject to the needs and pursuits of capitalism, or do they possess a certain degree of autonomy in their own progress? Do they flourish autonomously and foster, by themselves, capitalism progression? This question is both as ancient as social theory's first objectification of capitalism as a social phenomenon and also still current, maybe even more topical today. Although dealing with this question is beyond the scope of this study, the development of this relationship in the specific context of this study's subject can be briefly addressed since technological change is an integral part of both the (pre)history of digital labour platforms and also their position in the context of contemporary global capitalism. Nick Srnicek (2017), in his book *Platform Capitalism*, depicts this relation as one in which the extent of "technological development" in the emergence of platforms was driven by needs of capitalism, since it "demands constant technological change" (p. 13). Tendencies and pursuits of capitalism in response to its own crises foster technological enhancements. It is what explains the emergence and flourishing digital labor platforms and platforms in general. Srnicek (2017) points out capitalism's tendency towards restructuring when a crisis appears, and continues: "Since the 2008 crisis, has there been a similar shift? The dominant narrative in the advanced capitalist countries has been one of change. In particular, there has been a renewed focus on the rise of technology" (pp. 36-37). To locate this relation into place is an inseparable

element of academic narratives on the birth of platform capitalism and digital labour platforms.

There are more and as central aspects in birth of digital labour platforms, or platform capitalism, and digital economy in general. One of the distinctive qualities that platforms brought about is that they constitute in a sense a new mechanism which enlarges capitalism profit seeking impulse towards new areas that had untrodden before. “Not all – and not even most – of our social interactions are co-opted into a system of profit generation. In fact, one of the reasons why companies must compete to build platforms is that most of our social interactions do not enter into a valorisation process” (Srnicek, 2017, p. 55). In this sense, this new facet of capitalist production and capitalist economy perpetuates its raison d'être with new tools and mechanisms. Digitalization, therefore, was a groundwork established in order for intensification of capitalist pursuits, which in turn provided ever more and unprecedented spheres for profit-seeking. The developments on the field proceeds in this manner ever since “the 1990s tech boom was a bubble that laid the groundwork for the digital economy to come" (Srnicek, 2017, p. 23). As a result of this process, digitalization, and also *platformization* as its currently leading facet, has flourished and intensified, infiltrated to numerous spheres of today's economy, business models, and human life; eventually became to characterize nearly all, in differing degrees, aspects of economic and social relations, and labour relations being particular. “Today every area of the economy is increasingly integrated with a digital layer; therefore, owning the infrastructure that is necessary to every other industry is an immensely powerful and profitable position to be in” (Srnicek, 2017, p. 63). Platformization has gained its present outlook as a result of such kind of a turn of events.

One of the clearer denominators of how platform capitalism borne out of pursuits of capitalism is the fact that first appearance of platforms has taken place inside regular companies as solutions to domestic requirements. “Indeed, a common theme in the genesis of platforms is that they often emerge out of internal company needs” (Srnicek, 2017, p. 62). One of the earliest books on the topic, *Platforms, Markets and Innovation* (2009) tries to approach to the concept with a business point of view and

discusses the newest properties that the platforms generate that can facilitate functioning of companies and business models known to that day. The different usage of the term in this study and the precedential points that authors emphasize in the book demonstrates how the roots of platforms take its source from capitalisms' own needs, pursuits, answer to its own problems, and search of further profit generation. The immature detections and stresses made in this book lay out some essential qualities that platform model introduces the global digitalized capitalism:

> An important property of platform systems is that they are evolvable, in the sense that they can adapt to unanticipated changes in the external environment. (...) In this fashion, the platform system as a whole becomes evolvable: it can be adapted at low cost without losing its identity or continuity of design. (Baldwin & Woodard, 2009, p. 24).

Ursula Huws is among the scholars who depicts the emergence of digital economy as a response to capitalism's own necessity to create a response to its own crisis. Ursula Huws (2015) refers to the case with specific term "profitability crisis". The term is borrowed from classical Marxist political economy language, which is still able to describe ontological moves and fluxes of capitalist ecosystem. By applying the term in describing the essentials of today's global digital economy, Huws contextualizes both causes and genesis of so-called digital economy and also the unique and emergent functioning that platforms bring forth:

> capitalism’s extraordinary ability to survive the crises, that periodically threaten to destroy it, by generating new commodities. Just at the point when its logic of expansion seems destined to generate a saturation of markets and a consequent crisis of profitability, it finds fresh areas of life to bring within its scope, generating new forms of production of new goods and services for which new markets can be created. These phases are often associated with the diffusion of new technologies. (Huws, 2015).

The digital economy and platform business model, in this sense, perpetuates capitalism ontic dispositions, moves and functions in accordance with its raison d'être. Therefore, according to Huws (2015), digital economy, as the global capitalism's newest facet, constitutes a fresh and deepened modality for profit seeking and creating habit. Today, according to Huws, global capitalist mechanism, with the integration of digitalization and related technologies, thus with digital

economy in general, has invented ways of extracting value from the elements of formerly private sphere activities and direct interpersonal relations. Therefore, roots and causes of emergence of platform business model, and digital labor platforms as its one of the pioneer elements is explained as a breakthrough development within the framework of capitalist production processes in line with its definitive tendencies.

Yet, of course, this breakthrough contains several distinguishing novelties besides the continuities it bears. The most characteristic alterations take place in the relations and processes of work and labor. The role and operation of digital labor platforms in this manner exhibits a profound nature. While they create brand new types and modalities of relations of work in certain respects on the one hand, they also perpetuate some of the tendencies that were already existing and previously flourishing at the same time. On the other hand, they bear some exclusive qualities that signifies a flashback to the ancient phenomenon in history of capitalism. In sum, it can be said that digital labor platforms took over some of the ongoing developments of capitalist production processes and introduced an enhanced and deepened outlook in terms of labor relations. Digital labor platforms, briefly stated, both perpetuate and also invent new forms of precarious employment relations in general. They contributed to the new general spread of on-call and just-in-time employment, they revitalized piece-wage, sub-employment and temporary contracts, they even succeeded in making people work without pay. All of these qualities comprise the essential object of inquiry in this study. What must be emphasized here is that platform business model took over and further operationalized capitalism's ongoing pursuits and former tendencies that digital economy in general created.

Nick Srnicek (2017) briefly summarizes the role and function of platform business model in terms of labor relations as follows: "What we see here is effectively an acceleration of the long-term tendency towards more precarious employment, particularly after 2008" (p. 79). Yet the distinctive features of digital labor platforms and the transformations that they generated in terms of labor relations are more comprehensive and deserves further emphasis especially on what distinguishes them in this respect. According to Florian Schmidt (2017):

> it is furthermore necessary to look at these phenomena not in isolation but in the context of other platform-based business models, and also to recognize them as just the latest digital stage in a long on-going development towards more flexible, temporary and tentative forms of labour, with analogue predecessors in outsourcing companies and temporary employment agencies. (p. 3)

In this respect, the distinctive features of platform business model and platforms capitalism becomes clearer if it is understood in comparison with its predecessors in terms of labor relations and dispositions in the world of work. “The shift towards lean production and ‘just in time’ supply chains have been an ongoing process since the 1970s, and digital platforms continue it in heightened form today. The same goes for the trend towards outsourcing” (Srnicek, 2017, p. 90). Therefore, platform business model appears once again as both a modality of continuation and also perpetuation of existing and emerging tendencies within capitalist production processes on the one hand, and as an innovator pioneer mechanism in efforts of overcoming capitalism's own crisis on the other.

Phil Jones (2021), who focuses on the field of relations and processes of labor and work in digital labour platforms, also emphasizes the role of the capitalist crises: “If the crisis of the 1970s set the groundwork for the flexible, service-centric labour market pioneered in the 1980s and 1990s, then the response to the 2008 financial crisis consolidated these changes into a fully-fledged order of ‘subemployment" (p. 33). In this respect, it can be said that the most particular and significant layer of capitalist production processes and related sociality that platform business model transforms appear as labor and employment relations. This means that to understand platform capitalism and its social and political impacts one must shift attention to relations and processes of labor and work. These manifold transformations procure a certain amount of its roots from the dispositions immanent to capitalism itself. To a certain extent, on one hand, it can be said that platform capitalism takes over certain already existing processes in the labour world, some of which are relatively younger while some are going on for more than several decades around the world. Moreover, there are also methods and mechanisms that platform business model scoops out of deeper layers in history of capitalism.

According to European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (2016), the background processes created by capitalism's global agendas paved the way for today's digital economy that is centered upon the platform business model and correspondent labour and employment relations:

> Since the 1970s it has been recognised that the combination of information and communication technologies has the potential to enable the relocation of work. In the 1980s, attention focused on ‘teleworking’, involving the relocation of work from a traditional office to the worker’s home. In the 1990s it became apparent that work could be shifted internationally, in a development that became known as ‘offshore outsourcing'. (p. 1)

The mechanisms and processes generated in the course of this development caused the most fundamental transformations in the field of labor relations and the general world around which the phenomena of 'work' is organized in the capitalist sociality. This development period has eventually led to the emergence of digital labour platforms. The years right before the appearance of platform business model witnessed the "emergence of large international companies supplying telemediated services, increasingly using practices described as ‘global sourcing’, in which workers from different parts of the world could be brought together on a just-in-time basis to deliver particular services, regardless of location" (EU-OSHA, 2016, p. 1). What we witness today, as a result, is the heyday of these developments, which eventually come to "enabling the emergence of entirely new forms of work organisation, coordinated by online platforms" (EU-OSHA, 2016, p. 1).

The relevant literature demonstrates that platform business model, or platform capitalism, has brought about profound changes and transformations, the general elements of which are still going on, in the labour relations and in the phenomena called "work". No wonder, the results that platforms generate are not limited to the processes and mechanisms framing work. Neither the changes and transformations in the labor relations and in the lives of those who have no choice different from being compelled to work are single-sourced. Yet, digital labour platforms, in our contemporary capitalist world, seem to be amongst generating mechanisms and tools that affecting and transforming laboring side of the world. For this reason, a certain need for an examination towards digital labour platforms in particular seems

necessary. To that aim categorizing platform models and locating digital labour platforms in this context is an inescapable task. For this reason, I will focus especially on digital labor platforms and try to make them fall into place within the platform capitalism, and global digital economy in general. Doing so, I will try to emphasize the essential characteristics of digital labour platforms, and main points of demarcations between them and compared to similar yet different elements and modalities of relations and processes of labor and work.

2.3. Taxonomy of platforms and platform works

Classifying platforms, platform companies, relationship between them and the structure of this specific market is a rather complex and advanced issue. In order for this study to determine the proper place of its object of inquiry, classifying the types of work organized through digital labour platforms is of essential importance. Therefore, a general sketch of the current platform world, kinds of areas and professions they absorb, fields of operation and eventually types of platform companies is needed to be emphasized in the lights of relevant literature. However, the main purpose of the classification is to reach a clear picture of platforms works. By this, I mean the jobs, professions, works, tasks, any kind of paid activity that is organized, managed and created by and through platform capitalism. Today, it is hard to give an example of a field in business where platform business model has not infiltrated to a certain degree, in one form or another. Yet, companies that can be named as platforms constitute the distinguished and crystallized actors of platform capitalism. Digital labour platforms, in particular, is a distinct type of platform companies, whose main function is to organize paid activities. This means that digital labour platforms are a type of platform company whose main product is waged labour. All businesses within platform capitalism and naturally all of platform companies, to a certain degree, organize, manage, and market labour. All of them are actors in the process of profound transformations in the labor relations. Digital labor platforms, on the other hand, constitute the type of platform whose main object is directly waged labor, paid activities, and production of value of some kind. For this reason, while the object of this study is limited this with digital labour platforms, to properly describe their position within this general framework, in order to understand the regime of work that is a product of platform capitalism is necessary.

Nick Srnicek's (2017) work on platform capitalism presents a comprehensive scheme of types and operations of platform companies. While his effort provides an encompassing understanding of current outlook of platform business model, another type of classification specifically focusing on categorizing types of works organized through platforms is needed. The reason is that while Srnicek classifies platform businesses, digital labor platforms are a specific type of it, which are to be further classified. Florian Schmidt's (2017) report fulfills this need in a highly satisfying manner. Schmidt's (2017) work focuses on digital labour platforms, the specific section of platform capitalism transforming work in a leading manner. Schmidt, no doubt, prefers this terminology by acknowledging that platform business model in the digital economy is something bigger than labour platforms, or vice versa digital labour platforms constitutes a specific portion of this economy. No wonder, none of the platform companies leaves labour relations untouched, but when the term digital labour platforms is used, we talk about a condensed area in which all the relations and framework surrounding and determining relations and processes of labor and work are directly shaped. For this reason, Schmidt's classification also succeeds in determining the points of separation between these different types of platforms, emphasize the characteristics of digital labour platforms, and evaluate the relationship and differences between neighbor concepts and terms such as gig economy, on-demand economy etc., all of which will be discussed in following pages. For this reason, these two categorization efforts are highly functional, thus evaluating them together will be fruitful in terms of detecting the distinguishing points between different types of platforms, as well as blurry areas between their boundaries. Alongside Srnicek's and Schmidt's categorizations, several similar studies will be mentioned. I will try, firstly, to sketch out the classifications that these two studies provide; then to try to detect the categories that seems most proper for this study in terms of the scope of its research.

According to Srnicek (2017); emerging platform companies can be classified under five types: advertising platforms, cloud platforms, industrial platforms, product platforms and lean platforms. He adds that "these analytical divisions can, and often do, run together within any one firm" (Srnicek, 2017, p. 50). Amazon is a perfect example as it simultaneously carries out multiple operations characterizing platform

capitalism. It functions as an advertising platform, an industrial platform, and as a lean platform. Srnicek's categorization is focused on types of platforms, rather than platform works. Yet, it is a comprehensive one in terms of understanding the scope of this business model, which is the essence generating labour relations of its own. In Srnicek's categorization the first type of platform companies is advertising platforms. These companies are comprised of the prominent most-known leaders of the digital economy, which are the actual pioneers of the market. Facebook, Google and alike are examples of this platform type, also generally referred as Big Tech in journalism terminology and in popular opinion. These firms' main sources of the power are data collecting, extracting and processing methods -most of which are actually invented by them- and turning this digital 'mine' into a valuable apparatus in advertising and commerce.[3]

> In the twenty-first century, on the basis of changes in digital technologies, data have become increasingly central to firms and their relations with workers, customers, and other capitalists. The platform has emerged as a new business model, capable of extracting and controlling immense amounts of data, and with this shift we have seen the rise of large monopolistic firms. (Srnicek, 2017, p. 6)

The first model of this data-driven monopolistic gigantic digital firms serves as a model for advertising platforms, which constitutes the pioneers of platform capitalism.

Second type of Nick Srnicek's categorization are cloud platforms, operating mainly upon the functions of cloud services and their integration into the digital economy. Cloud platforms position themselves as developers and suppliers of necessary software and hardware tools, which are essential elements in the digital economy. By supplying these crucial elements cloud platforms obtain an inevitable position and power for themselves and they generally combine this with other forms of operation in the sector. The prominent examples are Amazon and Apple, whose "the most fundamental principle, work on the renting of digital software and hardware" to other firms and sectors.

[3] For a detalied discussion see Shoshana Zuboff's (2019) *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*.

> If Google and Facebook built the first data extraction platforms, Amazon built the first major cloud platform in order to rent out an increasingly basic means of production for contemporary businesses. Rather than relying on advertisers' buying data, these cloud platforms are building up the basic infrastructure of the digital economy in a way that can be rented out profitably to others, while they collect data for their own uses. (Srnicek, 2017, p. 64)

Cloud platforms retain their irreplaceable and monopolistic positions by supplying "on-demand services for servers, storage and computing power, software development tools and operating systems, and ready-made applications" (Srnicek, 2017, p. 77). Yet, albeit this is a defining function, these firms' modes of operation are not limited to this framework, as I will demonstrate in proceeding pages.

The third other platform type in Srnicek's categorization is what he calls as industrial platforms, which integrate digital and platformized tools to the traditional manufacturing and heavy industrial production. This type has emerged from traditional companies' need of advanced surveillance and management methods in the pursuit of further efficiency, marketing strategies and new outsourcing mechanisms. For these purposes, these companies have gravitated to develop their own platform mechanisms in order to meet their own needs instead of purchasing these services from advertising platforms and cloud platforms. "As data collection, storage, and analysis have become increasingly cheaper, more and more companies have attempted to bring platforms into the field of traditional manufacturing" (Srnicek, 2017, pp. 64-65). Industrial platforms' importance is that they demonstrate how much the extent of platform business model can possibly expand and invade even most traditional sectors. What this also marks out is that platform business model, or platform capitalism is not an isolated incidence, or only comprise of platform companies and digital sector, but rather it really is a stage in the capitalist mode of production. This stage represents a sum of full-fledged mechanisms pursuing various transformations in nearly all aspects of capitalist production from marketing, management of labor, technology, commerce and even management of populations.

Fourth type of platform in Srnicek's categorization is product platforms, with which we generally are most familiar with in our daily lives. Their trademark is that they

serve a product, most generally a traditional product which have been consumed for a long time long even before digitalization, by turning it into good which cannot be purchased but rent or subscribed. The product platforms, in this way, “generate revenue by using other platforms to transform a traditional good into a service and by collecting rent or subscription fees on them” (Srnicek, 2017, p. 50). This type of platformization has started to extensively transform the ways and mechanisms of production, distribution, and consumption especially in cultural goods. Prominent representatives of this type of platforms are Netflix, Spotify, etc. Though this model of production and consumption are not limited to creative and cultural goods, it also encompasses traditional products by turning them into rentable services, by applying outsourced human labour most of the time, as this is the case in the examples of AirBnb, Zipcar, Uber and alike. “While subscription models have been around for centuries, for example in newspapers, what is novel today is their expansion to new realms: housing, cars, toothbrushes, razors, even private jets” (Srnicek, 2017, p. 72). The product platforms are significant since their main novelties result from the profound transformations that they bring about in terms of labour relations and new organizations of employment, contracts, prices, and wages. While product platforms perpetuate this transformation in the labor relations through changing mechanisms of production of relevant goods and behaviors of their consumption, the last and closely related platform model, lean platforms, deepens these transformations and carrying the pioneer model by directly operating on elements and determinants of labour relations, any mechanism around which a worker's life is affected and concerned.

The fifth type is the lean platforms, whose trademark is their “attempts to outsource nearly every possible cost” (Srnicek, 2017, p. 71). The particular importance of lean platforms relies on the fact that they “attempt to reduce their ownership of assets to a minimum and to profit by reducing costs as much as possible” (Srnicek, 2017, p. 50). Costs of labour are of course the leading among these costs they outsource. Lean platforms are directly constructed on the purpose of bringing together "service providers" and "customers". In essence, they play the role of labor agencies. Lean platforms:

> attempt to establish themselves as the platform upon which users, customers, and workers can meet. (...) It would seem that these are asset-less companies;

> we might call them virtual platforms. Yet the key is that they do own the most important asset: the platform of software and data analytics. Lean platforms operate through a hyper-outsourced model, whereby workers are outsourced, fixed capital is outsourced, maintenance costs are outsourced, and training is outsourced. (Srnicek, 2017, p. 76)

What they do, in practice, is to incorporate laborers of any kind to themselves as "users" or "members", without any responsibility of a traditional employer, match them with people or companies who seeks to purchase a specifically described labor, or a service, mask their agency behind virtual applications, websites, algorithms, and with the help of certain mechanisms, and present themselves "mere intermediaries" in this transaction. They possess, in essence, indispensable elements of this transaction process. In this way, there becomes an ex parte power concentration. In this framework, a "typical platform is characterised by a systemic information and power asymmetry in favour of the platform providers" (Schmidt, 2017, p. 10). Platforms control data, algorithms that shapes the transaction, software design, interfaces, the whole architecture. Therefore, they control labor process. The working people are labeled as “independent contractors” instead of “employees” in these platforms. They hold a just-in-time, on-demand, disposable army of workers by reaching out towards the most externalized in labor market, surplus population (Srnicek, 2017; Schmidt 2017; Huws, 2014).

In Nick Srnicek's categorization, lean platforms, one type of the five in his categorization, represents companies which specifically operate on and through relations and processes of labor and work. In other words, lean platforms are specifically constructed and designed in order to direct, shape, and utilize labor relations in a comprehensive manner in order to pursue profit. Therefore, they refresh mechanisms of exploitation. Although, exploitation, and transformations in terms of labor relations are, intrinsically, present in other types of platforms companies too, lean platforms constitute a separate case in this manner. Therefore, in Srnicek's comprehensive categorization, lean platforms are the most related category for the question of this study. Yet, it must be further evaluated that what peculiarities that this type of platforms, which operates directly on processes of labor and work, exhibits, and what commonalities they possess. How do they further differ within

this sub-category, and what distinguishes them? In order to brighten these issues and locate inside the broader picture properly, platforms that directly focused on labor are to be exclusively evaluated.

2.3.1. Digital Labour Platforms

Platform capitalism and digital labor platforms as a specific form causes multi-directional transformations in labor relations and the general world around which the phenomena of 'work' is organized in the capitalist sociality. In this sense, it can be alleged that there exists a platform regime of work. In order to understand the characteristics of these transformations, to investigate to what extent these transformations generate a new regime of work, what novelties do they bring about, what new processes and mechanisms are at stake, and in what degrees there can be observed continuities, digital labour platforms must be analyzed separately. Florian Schmidt's (2017) work on digital labor platforms fulfills this need, providing a detailed framework specifically on the role and place of these platforms in the digital economy, especially focusing on their impacts on relations and processes of labor and work. Schmidt's categorization is an effort to understand the nature and determinant elements of this business model in terms of work and labor relations. Therefore, his model becomes prominent within the literature in providing a useful model in order for a study prioritizing labor relations and world of workers, such as this one. I will try to go around this categorization by describing it and discussing the insights it provides. Then, I will sketch out certain other close efforts to categorize digital labor platforms and platform works in order to reach a clarified picture and a properly operationalized conceptual framework.

Digital labor platforms' trademark lies in their ability to mask their agencies. While they direct and control both the whole transaction processes and the processes of work, their positions of agency and power are not visible at the first look. Yet, thanks to certain key mechanisms, like possession and limitless right to use of data, algorithms, uneven schema in terms of knowledge and capital, platforms come in possession of the dominant party in this relation. This position of platforms plays a key role, constituting a modus operandi, which is genuinely represented in figure 1 by Florian Schmidt (2017), who depicts this relationship as follows:

> When analysing a particular platform, one has to look closely at whether the platform provider facilitates the exchange between the other two stakeholders merely on a technical level – therefore serving as nothing more than a software company or infrastructure provider, as these companies often claim – or if they actually control the interaction between the other two parties, as is often the case with digital labour platforms. (p. 10)

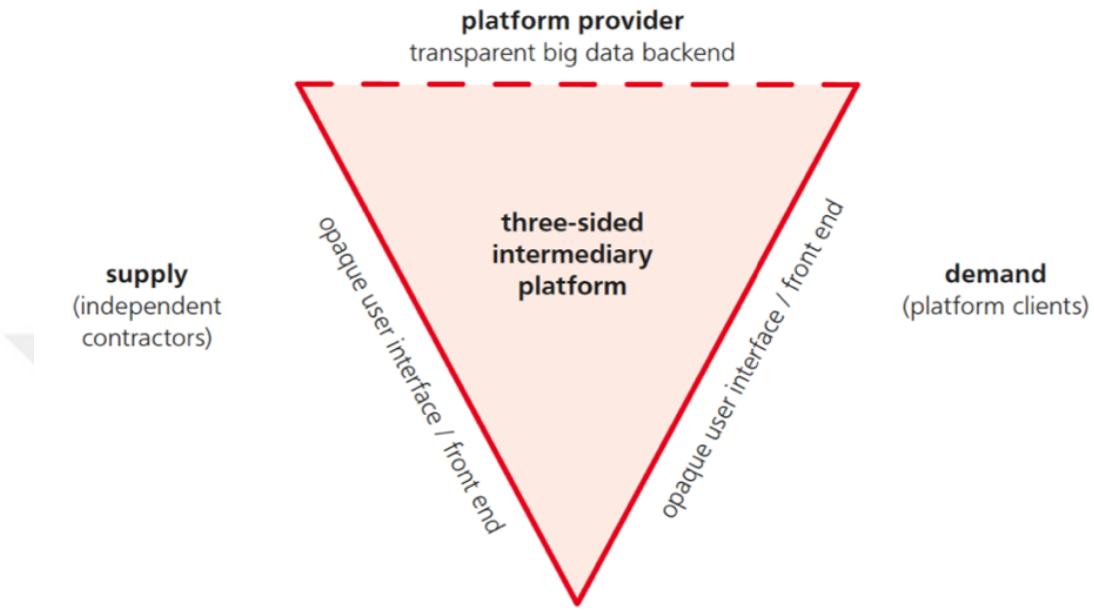

Figure 1. Tripartite functioning of digital labor platforms (Schmidt, 2017, p. 10)

Most of the studies in the literature trying to categorize digital labor platforms agree on the idea that first point of demarcation between them is whether or not the work is realized through the platform is remote/online or location based. It seems that there is a consensus in the literature on that first step of division between digital labour platforms and platform works. Schmidt (2017) divides platform works under two main categories: cloud work (web-based digital labour) and gig work (location-based digital labour): "if the task is not location-based and can be done remotely via the internet, it is cloud work and when a task has to be done at a specific location and time... it is gig work" (p. 5).

In the framework of this classification, I will try to describe general characteristics of platform work in general and those that constitutes the essential point of focus of this study, i.e., the web-based platform work, in particular. Yet, further effort will be necessary in order to reach a clearer picture, to determine the qualities that demarcate

type of platforms and platform works from each other, as well as overlapping and distinguishing sides with neighboring types and forms of labor, which are not totally absorbed by digital labor platforms yet being in a significant interaction and carrying strong affinities with them. There are also considerably older, even ancient mechanisms in relations and processes of work and labor, which are somehow and to some degree contained and revitalized by digital labor platforms that ought to be underlined and described in the terms of this study's objectives.

Both web-based digital labour, i.e. cloud work and location-based digital labour, i.e. gig work, are sub-divided into three categories (see figure 2). Location-based digital labour encompasses, in its basic sense, incorporation of rather traditional services and older professions, which are already deprived of job security in any sense, to the platform business model. Location-based digital labor is sub-divided into three categories in Schmidt's categorization (2017), which are accommodation, transportation and delivery services, and household and personal services. This type of work is called "gig" work actually independent of platform capitalism, in other words, one must be aware of the existence of gig work and services long before platforms. Yet, a massive absorbance of gig work to the platform economy is the key issues.

In fact, it can be said that digital labour platforms play an accelerator role in spread of both those kinds of work and precarity to the broader layers of population. This is the reason behind the existence of an ongoing discussion under the name of "gig economy" in an increasing manner. Web-based digital labour, on the other hand, comprises at least relatively new types and forms of tasks, professions, and paid services. Sub-categories of this main type of platform works are freelance marketplaces, microtasking crowd work, and contest-based creative crowd work. While some of the jobs and general framework encompassing this kind of digital labor platforms have a relatively older history than platform business model, some exclusive ones are directly products of platform capitalism and relations of work and labor it generates.

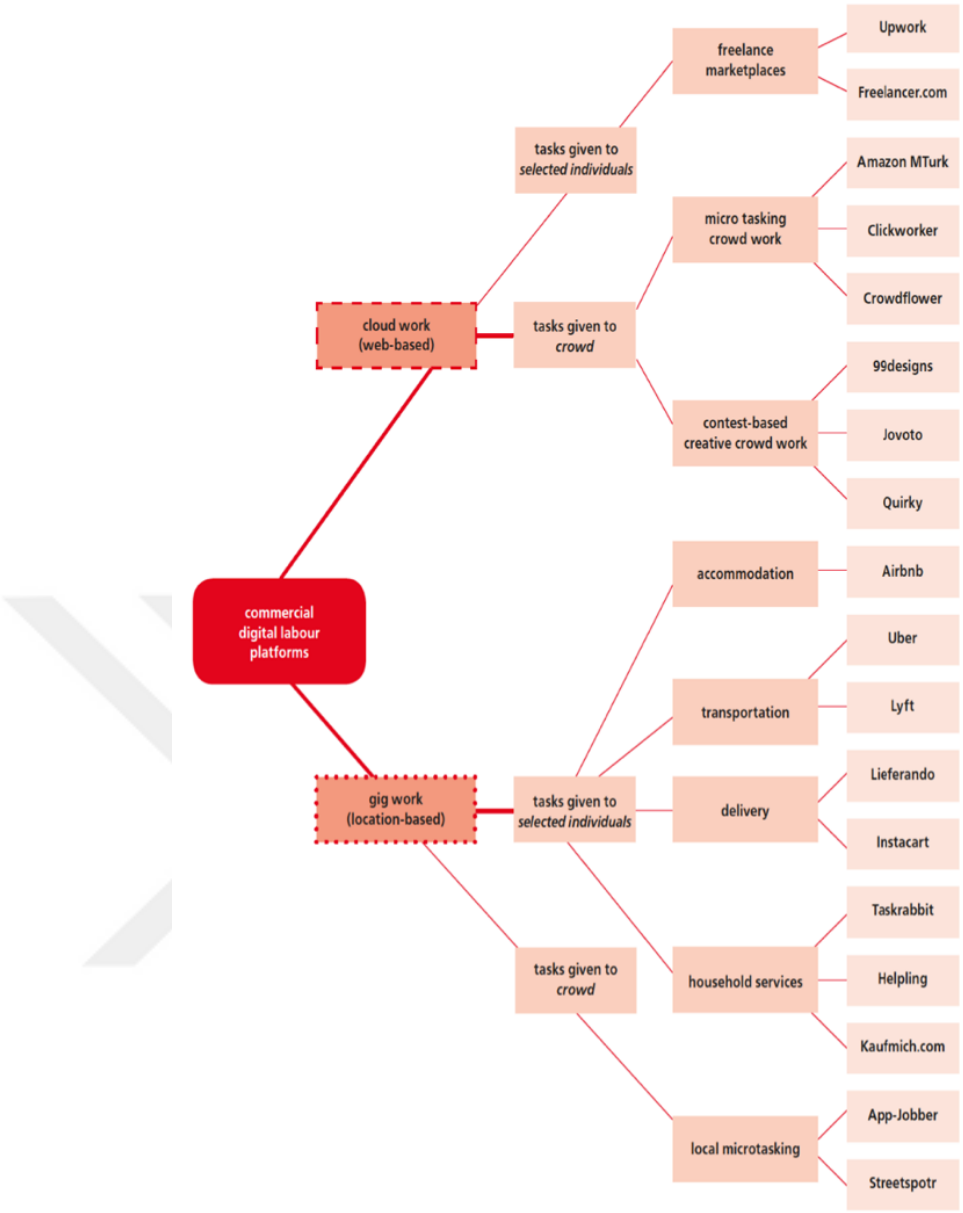

Figure 2. Digital labour platforms (Schmidt, 2017, p. 7)

There are other efforts in the literature in which scholars try to generate a schema that categorizes labor platforms and platform works, worthy of attention as they success to point out certain details and provide different perspectives in drawing the line between categories. One of them belongs to De Stefano & Aloisi (2018) who try not only to categorize digital labor platforms but also to indicate aspects that characterizes them. De Stefano & Aloisi's schema becomes significant as they demonstrate differences and commonalities between categories, and existence of multiple and heterogeneous dimensions that characterize the nature of these

platforms. According to the authors, labor performed through digital platforms can be classified under five determinants. The categorization they arrive in this method demonstrates that at the end of the day, digital labor platforms are mainly separated under two categories, which are online, web-based, remotely performed work, and location based, personal services gig work. Yet, their method also exhibits both the inter-categorical commonalities, for instance in terms of payment methods or quality of work or service, and also different levels of analysis that must be considered analyzing digital labor platforms.

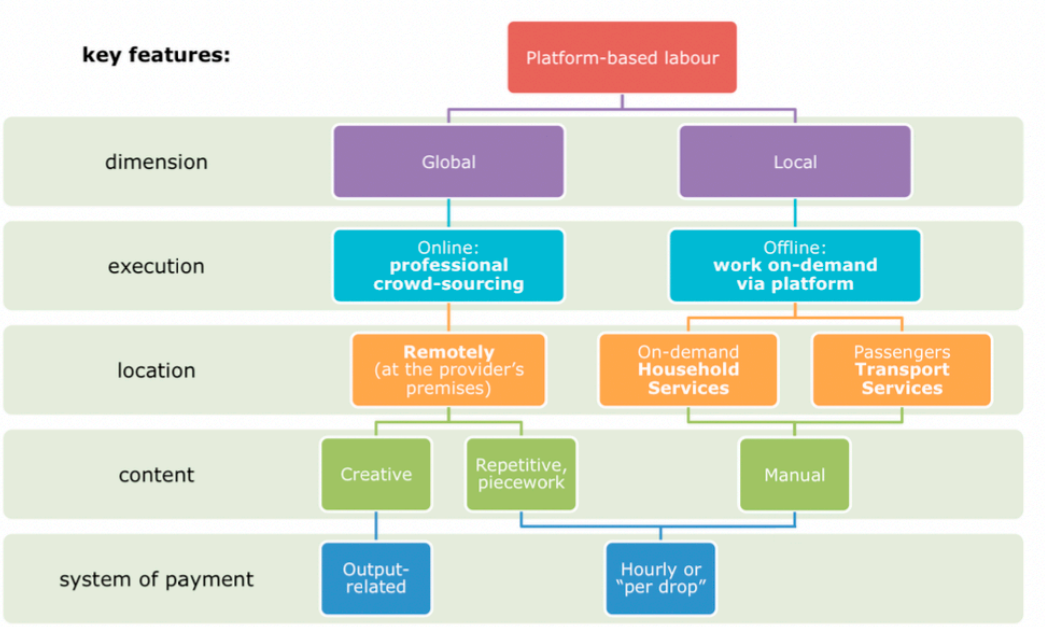

Figure 3. Typologies of labor platforms (De Stefano & Aloisi, 2018)

Farrell & Greig's (2016) extensive report on the total mass of the digital economy is another source from which a certain insight can be obtained on the categorization of digital labor platforms. The report prefers a hybrid categorization, which stands in between categorizing platforms as companies -as we see earlier in Nick Srnicek's work (2017)- and as labor platforms, succeeding both at the same time to a certain degree by applying a twofold schema: labor platforms and capital platforms. Authors differentiate the two by platforms in which transaction of labor takes place, and platforms in which transaction of a certain good or a product takes place. With the former, the case is, most of the time, digital labor platforms. In latter, category

contains both certain types of labor platforms, even though the rented or purchased commodity is not labor or a service but a product at first glance, and also certain other platform business model, at the point of which the distinction succeeds to demonstrate that there is an embedded relation of labor even in such platforms.

There are two other texts that categorize digital labor platforms in a similar way both between them and also in line with the general broad categorization that is going to preferred in this study. Fair Crowd Work (2017), a joint initiative of several leading unions around the Europe, distinguishes platform and app-based works under four main categories: microtask platforms, freelance platforms, platforms for place-based in-person tasks, contest-based platforms. Their preference is significant as the main motivation of the effort is to provide a useful schema for workers and workers' organizations. The other categorization, which presents a four-fold schema, belongs to a group of scholars, namely Huws, Spencer & Joyce (2016), who conducted one of the most comprehensive field researches on the subject. The first major point of demarcation they determined is between manual and non-manual labor, which is in line with most of the literature I try to sketch out here. This distinction can also be stated as online/remote and location-based work. Scholars further distinguishes online labor as high-skilled and low-skilled labor:

> We divide the non-manual online work into two broad sub-categories: high-skill work (for example providing creative or IT services, or professional services such as accountancy, consultancy, or legal services) and low-skill work, involving short, repetitive routine tasks or ‘click work’. The manual tasks are also divided into two broad sub-categories. The first of these involves driving or delivery work in public spaces. The second involves providing services in people’s homes or business premises. (Huws et al., 2016, pp. 2-3)

According to their classification, digital labor platforms can be evaluated under two main categories, both which are sub-divided into two other groups, therefore we possess a four-fold categorization at the end: i) non-manual high-skill online workers, ii) non-manual low-skill online workers, iii) manual driving workers working offline but managed online, and iv) manual service /maintenance/construction workers working offline but managed online.

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (2016) emphasizes the difficulties in categorization of the multiplicity of forms of online work: "Should they, for instance, be regarded as temporary work agencies, labour exchanges, social enterprises, service providers (supplying, for example, taxi, cleaning or care services), advertising platforms or just online directories?" (p. 4). As it can be seen in the light of given literature, boundaries between various types of works and modalities of labor mediated, organized, created, and maintained through digital labor platforms can be blurry, leading to an interpenetrative picture in sum, which is also manifest within the literature especially in respect of categorizing these platforms and works. Yet, there are commonalities between different efforts in categorizing digital labor platforms and platform works, especially in terms of points of separations applied, albeit it may lead to certain differences in different taxonomies. There seems to be a consensus, on the other hand, on the first main separator of digital labor platforms. In the light of the given literature, this consensus on the first major step in distinguishing digital labor platforms and platform works appears as the place in which transaction of labor takes place: one in physical space, and the other one in cyber space. In other words, platform works are classified under two main categories: location-based, gig work and online, remote digital labor. In terms of this study's main focus of point, the latter of these two main groups according to this categorization comes to the forefront as it carries the most lively and current transformations when the relations and processes of labor in intellectual work is concerned. In the following section, I will try to depicture the branches of this type of labor, main characteristics, novelties in terms organization, management and processes of labor and work, and what all of these come to mean for workers.

2.4. Essential mechanisms and core functions of digital labor platforms

As location-based gig work organized through platform capitalism creates a significant transformation process by itself; the web-based branch of digital platform labor constitutes a different dimension, that brings about an over-encompassing framework generating new modalities of production, new types of labor, new forms of products, and besides from top to the bottom changes in existing ones of these areas. While platform business model and the corresponding relations of labor it

generates represent the most current wave of certain ongoing course of changes in the processes and relations of work under capitalist society, web-based platform labor represents the some of the most radical tendencies in this manner. The online platform labor appears as a novel pioneer mechanism that forces a significant displacement and relocation in terms of labor relations and processes of work. Online web-based platform labor conducts this process of change by both inventing new types and forms of products, services, jobs, and modes of labor, and also by harshly deepening the ongoing tendencies of fragmentation, flexibilization, and consequent precarization for intellectual labor. In this sense, it is essential to highlight already present tendencies and mechanisms the platform business model took over and deepens towards the extremes and what novel topographies of work it creates.

Digital labor platforms appear as combination of a set of already existing tendencies: "the tendencies towards outsourcing, surplus populations, and the digitization of life, along with the post-2008 surge in unemployment and rise of an accommodative monetary policy, surplus capital, and cloud platforms that enable rapid scaling" (Srnicek, 2017, p. 88). These tendencies and moments that enabled both the formation and also the spread of platform business model are crucial to be evaluated for number of reasons. First, these already existing tendencies and mechanisms before the genesis of digital labor platforms are telling us what characterizes the world of work that it took over. Second, and in relation, they demonstrate the phenomena that digital labor platforms radically deepened. Third, the existing tendencies and moments that platform model are borne upon are also comprised the fruitful topography thanks to which digital labor platforms became able to put their novel inventions in terms of relations of labor into practice. And lastly, most of these tendencies are intensively decisive on the genesis and current outlook of the characteristic elements of online web-based labor. Therefore, to sketch out general characteristics and core functions of the online digital labor requires to describe its relations with its antecedent processes. In this way, we are to be able to depict current outlook and essential characteristics of online digital platform labor.

To begin with, digital labor platforms and online platform labor are constructed upon "a broader trend towards de-standardisation of employment relationships and de-

mutualisation of risk" (De Stefano & Aloisi, 2018, p. 2), just as other neighboring fields of digital economy and also in more traditional sectors and fields of labor. As this tendency has been proceeding for over decades starting from a long time before the genesis of it, platform model's birth corresponds a moment of intensification and spread this phenomenon. "The (new) world of work is characterised by an increased tendency towards relationships that are not based on direct employment contracts" (De Stefano & Aloisi, 2018, p. 2). As it is a general tendency encompassing most of the professions, services and various types and forms of labor; digital platform labor is highly characterized, even it is defined by it. As a result, there occurs a mutual effect according to which the reverse is also true and characteristic: digital platform labor re-defines, engages with and operationalizes de-standardized and non-traditional forms and mechanisms of work in a distinctive way. Along with that, another general characteristic both characterizing the today's general world of work, which is not limited with platform labor but out of which platform model has been borne, and also operationalized and distinctively engaged by digital labor platforms is that the significant proliferation of remote and flexible work. Online, web-based platform labor arrangement rests upon this rising tendency to a significant extent, not only because that it operates through the Internet, digital tools, communication technologies, and etc. but essentially that it extensively operationalizes the new topographies of labor force, workers, surplus populations that this digitalized remote modality of work has created and made possible. In the digital platform business model, "Workers may work from anywhere in the world, as long as they have a reliable Internet connection. Jobs range from sophisticated computer programming, data analysis and graphic design to relatively straightforward “microtasks” of a clerical nature" (ILO, 2018, p. 1). Thanks to the presence of increasing flexibilization, remote working and ongoing digitalization that made spread of these two easier; web-based branch of digital platform labor has constructed a certain novel world of work independent from "space", and significantly deepened existing dispositions in the labor relations, turning them into decisive characteristics of itself. Schmidt (2017) lays out the trends driven by digital technologies shaping the world of work, happening not in isolation, but as mutually dependent as follows: "automation, platform-based outsourcing of services to self-employed individuals, the division of formerly secure jobs into ever smaller and precarious tasks, and the

constant big-data tracking of the work process" (Schmidt, 2017, p. 23). I will try to categorize and evaluate these mutually dependent decisive characteristics and core functions in the operation of web-based platform labor with their seeming results in the remaining part of this chapter.

2.4.1. Outsourcing of labor costs

Digital labor platforms' definitive feature lies in their success, in a sense, in institutionalizing capitalism's some of the most essential existential orientations. One of them is Capital's effort to get rid of any responsibility within the unequal asymmetrical relationship established with workers, which is a distinctively characterizing success of platform capitalism's existence. This mechanism could be named as "outsourcing" in general. Capital's historical orientation towards not undertaking any cost or responsibility while appropriating the surplus value generated in the course of production process seems to have reached a moment whereby strong mechanisms ensuring this with platform capitalism. Representing a higher model institutionalizing certain mechanisms of outsourcing, digital labor platforms "operate through a hyper-outsourced model, whereby workers are outsourced, fixed capital is outsourced, maintenance costs are outsourced, and training is outsourced" (Srnicek, 2017, p. 76). Digital labor platforms load each of these costs and responsibilities into outsider mechanisms, processes, and actors, among which the most important is the workers itself. "The most notorious part of these firms is their outsourcing of workers. (...) This enables the companies to save around 30 per cent on labour costs by cutting out benefits, overtime, sick days, and other costs" (Srnicek, 2017, p. 76). This process of outsourcing especially upon workers is even more intensively valid and definitive in the online branch of platform labor, where the outsourcing of most of the maintenance costs are a constituent element:

> Platforms for the mediation of paid services (digital labour) that are web-based and not bound to a specific location (cloud work) make their profit mainly from the labour of their independent contractors (even though the workers still have to pay for their computers and access to the internet as means of production). (Schmidt, 2017, p. 11)

The case of independent contractors, as one of the chief mechanisms founding and perpetuating outsourcing capacity of digital labor platforms, seems to become a general norm in digital platform economy. "Usually, they rely on a workforce of independent contractors, who work on their own account and at their own risk, for low wages and without social security. Neither the platform providers nor their clients take on the role and responsibilities of an employer" (Schmidt, 2017, p. 2). While it turns into an apparatus engulfing highly various and heterogeneous economic activities, services, product, works, jobs, modalities of productions; outsourcing of labor costs by the mechanism of independent contracting is the very first definition of web-based remote work in digital labor platforms. As the absorption of more traditional jobs, and revitalization of older "gigs" into platform business model is a distinct and concrete topic on its own, whereby more traditional services and types of various manual labor are contained and operationalized via digital labor platforms; a little more complex picture is encountered when we look at the online branch of platform labor. There are two main directions, which correspond to the two main sub-categories of web-based platform labor. In the case of freelance marketplaces, in which specific tasks, jobs or works are given to selected individuals -or freelancers, or e-lancers- via the seeming intermediary role of the platform with piece-wage mechanism, constitutes a scene in which freelance work model that is something already present for with a bit longer time than the existence of digital labor platforms are massively absorbed into this newest modality of remote and flexible labor.

In the so-called "microtasking" platforms, on the other hand, what is at stake is an invention of a new labor topography, and a novel and genuine mechanism of outsourcing. In these labor platforms, tasks are presented to "crowds" rather than to selected individuals. These platforms can be separated from freelance marketplaces by high-skilled vs. low-skilled distinction, as Huws, et al. (2016) prefer to categorize in their report. Yet, while this distinction truly corresponds to the content of the jobs, tasks etc. organized trough these platforms, this distinction comes more of a result, rather than being a cause of the separation. The definitive feature of microtasking platforms rather lies in their genuine way of organizing labor process, which brings forth a novel and characteristic picture, different from many other types and branches

of platform works, platform economy and digital economy in general. In these labor platforms, clients of the platforms present the tasks they demand to be completed to the crowd, without any selection and filtration process; and among the workers, or users, whoever completes the task gets paid. Payment takes place according to by piece or per unit. This functioning is an invention that belongs to this type of labor platforms and in the online, remote jobs, which represents an advanced and radical modality of outsourcing. A journalist named Jeff Howe (2006) coined the phrase "crowdsourcing" to describe this mechanism. "As a combination of the words “crowd” and “outsourcing” suggest, the word’s origins directly refer to the economic motivations for businesses’ use of crowdsourcing – cheaper, on-demand labour" (ILO, 2018, p. 3). The crux of this mechanism lies in its success of deepening the general force of "outsourcing" by breaking down tasks into small units assignable to unskilled workers, which generates at the end of the day a “hyper division of labour and just-in-time outsourcing” (Jones, 2021, p. 45).

Microtasking platforms are based on distribution of a mass of tiny, repetitive tasks in order for enhancement of various digital and software tools to a vast and unspecified group of workers. Amazon, the owner of the first microtasking labor platform *Mechanical Turk*, describes its service to clients as a kind of “artificial intelligence”, “an on-demand, scalable, human workforce to complete jobs that humans can do better than computers, for example, recognizing objects in photos”.[4] The platform markets itself with the line of "looking for data labeling solutions to power Machine Learning models?", promising to provide its clients an "access a global, on-demand, 24x7 workforce". Amazon's documents very well reveal the essence and the function of microtasking platforms. Their operation is based on an unskilled, therefore interchangeable and disposable online workforce, needed to complete small digital tasks, provided as a globally on-time accessible army to the clients who search for cheaper ways to enhance various digital tools. Microtasking platforms' definitive function within the general picture of web-based digital labor platforms is “...taking a job traditionally performed by a designated agent (usually an employee) and outsourcing it to an undefined, generally large group of people in the form of an open

[4] Retrieved from: https://docs.aws.amazon.com/AWSMechTurk/latest/AWSMturkAPI/Welcome.html

call" (De Stefano & Aloisi, 2018, p. 11). They provide clients a field in which they can post their tasks to be completed by paying workers for each unit or piece of task they fulfilled. Microtasking platforms pose themselves in this transaction as intermediaries, while in reality they possess all knowledge and control over the process. "The platforms pay the workers the price indicated by the client minus their fee" (ILO, 2018, p. xv). There occurs a strong power asymmetry in terms of all dynamics of labor and transaction process between platforms and other parties, but especially with workers. As a result, what is present in microtasking platforms is a condensed and radicalized form of the definitive functions of online platform labor, an intensified hyper-outsourcing mechanism being prominent.

Online platform labor, on the other hand, does not only comprise of unskilled labor, or works and tasks that requires repetitive production process dividable into units, in terms of time or anything else. Online platform labor includes both high skilled and low skilled workforce and jobs, and high-skilled jobs are rather complicated to completely absorb into this hyper-outsourced model. Yet, it is important to underline that the same path and directory mechanisms exists, and platform business model's success in inserting these different labor processes and different services, jobs, professions into the same mode of transformation with the same mechanisms and models. When the inclusion of jobs and professions requiring a certain degree of skill to the online digital platform model is the case, the inclusion of a rather familiar type of labor which has already present at least a bit longer than platforms to the online platform economy is observed. The branch of digital labor platforms carrying this inclusion is called freelance marketplaces. Functioning of these web-based digital labor platforms seems more neutral and passive in comparison. They pose themselves mere intermediaries between freelancer workers, or service providers, and clients who receive these goods and services in return of a payment. Their role, indeed, is comparatively a passive one in comparison to the microtasking platforms like Amazon Mechanical Turk, Clickworker, TaskRabbit etc. Yet, it would be naive to think that the asymmetrical position of theirs immanent to the very architecture in platform business model is not operationalized on behalf of themselves. Freelance marketplaces also comprise of good examples how outsourcing mechanism deepens

precarity and workers' loss of power, benefits, rights etc. in the face of employers, and the pioneer role that digital labor platforms play in this process.

Although freelance work is a form of labor significantly older than and already present before the first appearance and institutionalization of them, its integration to online digital labor platforms marks a significant change in the nature of this modality of work either. While platform companies of this type seem like only a new sphere of freelance work, they absorb and reshape the jobs, works, professions and services we are familiar with freelance work in an extensive manner. The most important dynamic here is that digital labor platforms put freelance work into same process of transformations, reorganize it through same mechanisms, and redefine its labor process as with other branches of platform labor. Despite the differences, platform companies of this type, like freelancer.com, Upwork, Fiverr and etc. hold an asymmetrical position in terms of power relations. They provide a variety of strong tools that set the framework of freelance work and organize the whole process of labor to their clients, i.e. who employ freelancer workers through these platforms. The most decisive mechanism in this relationship is again outsourcing of most elements of labor process they, the online digital labor platforms, make possible. Both branches in web-based digital platform labor are independent contractors, even their 'contracts' embraces tiny little tasks or timely projects. Within this scale, there are a variety of types and modes of labor and production. Yet, what web-based digital labor platforms generate here is a global, online, on-demand workforce for who seek to employ workers in order for completion of various digitally deliverable tasks. The decisive moment in this framework is the distance platform business model has covered in turning high-skilled jobs and tasks or workers who conducts them as freelancers into disposable, on-demand and interchangeable elements in production process. Although “the types of jobs mediated via freelance marketplaces are very heterogeneous...complex, demanding and specialized” (Schmidt, 2017, p. 14), the success of digital labor platforms in putting this variety bundle into the same process of outsourcing and other dimensions of labor process they generate is the crux of what I will try to elaborate on this study.

There are crowdsourcing mechanisms operationalized also in 'skilled' tasks. Contest-based digital labor platforms built up a model in which tasks, professions and skills

that do not "lend themselves to being subdivided and automated, but they are especially well suited for outsourcing via a crowd contest" (Schmidt, 2017, p. 17). These kind of jobs and professions are also absorbed by the strongest of the outsourcing mechanism, which is crowdsourcing. Platforms like Jovoto, iStockPhoto, 99designs absorbs workforce that is suited for 'creative' jobs and make them also globally 7/24 accessible, disposable, on-demand labor. They provide to their clients "...a very heterogeneous pool of possible solutions developed by the crowd specifically for that client" (Schmidt, 2017, p. 17). In the spectrum of web-based digital platform labor, what is at stake is a common outsourcing mechanism, albeit in differing tones and strengths, which in the end strips any elements of power and autonomy off of workers, or independent contractors, taskers, clickers as the discourse has coded.

> It should also be underlined that digital platform work is in many respects very heterogeneous. The services that dominated the early platforms were relatively high- skilled IT tasks, where the tasks were not only matched but also delivered online – for example, through Upwork. However, not all digitally provided work is high-skilled as it includes lower-skilled repetitive online ‘click work’ – for example, Clickworker. (Eurofound, 2018, p. 22)

Inside this spectrum, from specialized freelancers using digital platforms to find jobs or projects to the creative workers who present their work to an unknown employer and to clickers who are employed only for seconds, there is a strong common mechanism equating the road that they are dragged, albeit differences, at the same time by the same power center, that is platforms capitalism.

In this spectrum, there exist forms in which boundaries are blurred, amorphous modes and unexpected combinations. There are common central dynamics, on the other hand, that connects them, making them parts of the same novel exploitation moment, same labor and work topography. The architecture of platform labor world, deific position of these companies in the labor process, aggressive and deepened outsourcing, piece-wage, just-in-time employment altogether generates a "platform regime of work". Platform capitalism's trademark is unique and strong combination of already present tendencies within capitalisms' recent and older history, revitalizing them in the context of today's digital economy and organizational tools it presents.

2.4.2. Data monopolization and algorithmic management

Digital labor platforms' another definitive function lies in their founding mysteries that access, extract, use, trade, valorize a 21st century mine, which is data. Monopoly over data is a decisive dimension that gives platform capitalism its powerful position with the various and rich tools it provides. Digital labor platforms "would seem that these are asset-less companies; we might call them virtual platforms. Yet the key is that they do own the most important asset: the platform of software and data analytics" (Srnicek, 2017, p. 76). Digital labor platforms, likewise, builds up a dominant position thanks to the data they access both *by* and *for* the transactions taking pace in them, which makes them the only agent who decides all elements of the labor process.

> The platform provider is also the only one of the three parties that has full access to and control over the data, processes and rules of the platform. The particular software architecture of the digital platform causes a systemic information asymmetry and, through that, a power asymmetry. (Schmidt, 2017, p. 5)

This unchallengeable position in terms for access and use of data, masking the dominant position of platforms, providing tools enabling a full control over the labor and production process and over the transaction between parties, is what gives digital labor platforms, especially the web-based branch the very essential characteristics, as this uneven relationship brings about and makes possible most of the architecture of the world of work that platform regime generates.

With the advance of digital and software technologies, extraction and recording data has become very easy for companies that integrate digital tools. In due course, as the benefit of this activity is observed, record, produce and transact data has turned into a purpose on its own, especially by the first explorers of this fact. With the globalization and digitalization as prominent forces altogether, "advanced capitalism came to be centered upon extracting and using a particular kind of raw material: data. (...) Data may involve knowledge, but this is not a necessary condition. Data also entail recording, and therefore a material medium of some kind" (Srnicek, 2017, p.

39). The exploration of this raw material is a product, in a sense, of global capitalist system's search for a response to its own crisis. The explorers were the first platform companies, who have also pioneered digital economy in general by doing this. Tech giants like Google, IBM, and later Apple, Facebook have immediately turned this digital mine they explored to a central element upon which an enormous concentration of wealth and power become possible. Platform business model's area of operation has massively expanded thereafter, leaving little to no area of human and economic interaction untouched:

> Often arising out of internal needs to handle data, platforms became an efficient way to monopolise, extract, analyse, and use the increasingly large amounts of data that were being recorded. Now this model has come to expand across the economy, as numerous companies incorporate platforms. (Srnicek, 2017, p. 42-43)

This course of events has created a path that was destined to profoundly reshape and organize relations of labor and work. Inside the global digital economy, and platform business model as its locomotive generated digital labor platforms and a new regime of work at the end of the day. This new regime of work intrinsically based on "a natural tendency towards monopolisation" of data and its use (Srnicek, 2017: 45). Extraction, storage and processing of data is what makes digital labor platform companies dominant over the transaction process and labor process taking place by them, providing a deific position in the face of parties, especially workers “since a platform positions itself (1) between users, and (2) as the ground upon which their activities occur, which thus gives it privileged access to record data" (Srnicek, 2017, p. 44). Digital labor platforms, within this architecture of software and correspondent relationship schema, "gain not only access to more data but also control and governance over the rules of the game” (Srnicek, 2017, p. 47). This "systemic information and power asymmetry in favour of the platform providers" are, therefore, the raison d'etre of digital labor platforms, and the most decisive mechanism in their operation and functioning. There is something else to be underlined in this context, which is the difference between branches of labor platform in this manner. It seems that for the web-based digital labor platforms, this feature appears more essential for number of reasons. As the whole process of

production takes place digitally, the service or product are produced and delivered digitally, elements of labor process are totally comprised of online tools and mechanisms of digital sphere; data are much more intrinsically decisive mechanism in web-based digital labor platforms compared to location-based gig platform works. As Schmidt (2017) emphasizes: "This structural imbalance in the architecture of the system could be countered only by decentralisation; a change that seems feasible for gig work but much less so for cloud work and crowd work" (p. 10).

In web-based digital labor platforms' software design and organizational dispositions, it is observed that the control over and access to data are actively framed and managed in this direction. In the terms & conditions of platforms like of Upwork, Fiverr, freelancer.com, Appen; "It is made clear that as a freelancer, one has little control over the data gathered on one's work behavior. The extraordinary degree of freedom on digital labour platforms such as Upwork is accompanied by an extraordinary degree of control" (Schmidt, 2017, p. 14). There are several reasons for this, which at the end confronts us as the results and framework of platform regime of work. First of all, while control and use over data may be a powerful tool in all sections of digital, or digitally mediated economy, the web-based labor platforms constitute a distinguished case as data, by definition, is the very object of the process and design of production, or at least becomes a secondary good. Moreover, this picture brings about key managerial functions, organizational dispositions, designing labor process and setting the framework for digital platform labor. In digital labor platforms, and essentially in web-based branch:

> data have come to serve a number of key capitalist functions: they educate and give competitive advantage to algorithms; they enable the coordination and outsourcing of workers; they allow for the optimization and flexibility of productive processes; they make possible the transformation of low-margin goods into high-margin services; and data analysis is itself generative of data, in a virtuous cycle. (Srnicek, 2017, pp. 41-42)

Algorithms, optimization and flexibility appears as characteristic elements, therefore, of function of monopoly over data in platform regime of work.

Development of algorithms, being made possible by the processing of data material by digital economy and platform companies, demonstrates a twofold operation. Their

very existence is resulted from the spread of digital economic sphere and emergence of platform business model, which at the end of the day turns out to be a great tool of control and management of dispositions determining processes of labor and work. Then, for this very reason, most of the jobs and tasks in platform labor world, directly or mediately, becomes designed in order to enhance algorithms and machine learning. The crucial point here when web-based digital labor platforms is the case, is that high-skilled freelance jobs and professions are also extensively dragged into this schema and effected by algorithmic management at the same rate as others in terms of design of labor process. Möhlmann and Zalmanson (2017) emphasizes that the scope of algorithmic management in digital labor platforms enlarge beyond directing the work towards employing control almost all aspects of the job. They define algorithmic management by five dynamics:

1. continuous tracking of workers' behavior
2. constant performance evaluation of workers from client reviews but also the client's acceptance or rejection of their work
3. the automatic implementation of decisions, without human intervention
4. workers' interaction with a "system" rather than humans, depriving them of opportunities for feedback or discussion and negotiation with their supervisor, as would be typically the case in offline jobs
5. low transparency. The low transparency stems from competitive business practices that keep platforms from disclosing how the algorithms work, but also by the adaptive nature of the algorithms, whereby the decisions change according to the data being collected.

Algorithms' function in the management and organization of platform work, which is enabled by the monopolistic position of platform companies in access and use of data, encompasses and determines many of the dynamics characterizing relations of labor in the field. This algorithmic model has paved the way for discussions whether or not there is a re-emergence of strong Taylorist principles towards taskification, standardization, unitization, and automation in the digital environment and in a fragmented and flexible setting (Martina, 2016; Huws, 2014; Altenreid, 2020).

2.4.3. Precarization and fragmentation

Rise and expansion of platform economy, and digital labor platforms in particular, brings along loss of job security, spread of gig works, rise of non-standard and temporary work arrangements in terms of relations of labor, and for those who are obliged to be in a relationship of waged labor in order to survive, all of which signifies a new moment of an overall precarization process. This new moment of overall precarization is not only comprised of revitalization and integration of older forms of temporary contracts and mechanisms of piece-wage by platform business model; but also, as aggressively transformative as that is, it pulls relatively secured and high-skilled jobs and professions into this schema of loss of rights, wealth, and status. Alongside this absorption of so-called high skilled jobs into this framework, there is invention of new areas of precarious work and construction of new topographies of labor. Digital labor platforms play a pioneer role in the creation of a global, 7/24 accessible, just-in-time employable, disposable, on-demand work force by germinating advanced mechanisms of outsourcing operationalizing variety of digital tools at hand and the deliberate and refined use of the asset data. Prominent actors of this transformation within the general digital economy and platform business model are a particular branch, that is web-based digital labor platforms, who produce and organize online, remote, flexible work and work force; as the area and mechanisms of operation belonging to them, generating this particular outcome, distinguishes them from neighboring agents. At the end of the day, this particular and innovational conduct they pursue generates an indefinite outlook for the workers of this type, in which social status of workers involved demonstrates a sharp decrease and the term 'employment' becomes to lose its meaning.

The line between employment and unemployment in this framework becomes uncertain and blurry. Workers involved in digital labor platforms in web-based online jobs swings in a liminal spot where the time, space and form of waged-labor becomes indistinct. This situation is to be categorized as sub-employment, describing arrangements that are " highly temporary, casual and contingent, work that involves large amounts of unpaid labour, significant underemployment or high levels of in-work-poverty, or work that, more often than not, no longer guarantees a life any

better than the most abject forms of unemployment" (Jones, 2021, p. 33). The employment status of workers in web-based digital labor platforms is already declined by the disposition functionalizing them as 'independent-contractors'. It is true that freelance work before platform business model was already based on independent contracting. The crux with digital labor platforms, on the other hand, is that freelance workers are deprived of their 'independency'. No wonder, an independent position was probably never possible to speak of, yet there was an autonomy within which freelance producers had retained a bargaining power, right to decide various dimensions of labor process to some degree. With the web-based digital labor platforms, freelancers, as independent contractors, has been undergone a transformation process in which they were being turned into basic on-call, disposable workers. While this is an obvious fact in the new forms of work, especially microwork and crowd work, which has been directly invented by themselves of digital labor platforms, as the very construction of these type of platform labor is directly constructed upon this phenomenon; relatively high-skilled jobs and professions has also been absorbed within this schema. They lose their bargaining power, they lose wages, they lose security, rights, they are deprived of possibilities of organizing. At the end of the day, freelancer and contractor professions of pre-platform world of work, as well as new ones, has been experiencing a significant decrease and precarization.

Digital economy and platform business model as a branch of it showed up in strong moments of global capitalist crisis and consequent loss of job security and precarization. In the middle of a moment in which significant portion of population has been purged to the margins of labor and employment relations and lost secured and standard contracts, platform business model and particularly digital labor platforms came in sight. They made use of the sections of waged-labor who has been swinging in and out through boundaries of labor market, operationalized emergent digital tools in designing a new architecture of labor process, revitalizing well-known ancient dispositions that has been creating precarity in the course of history of capitalist mode of production. Today, there occurs an outlook in which precarious conditions in terms of relations of work and labor have been revived under a digital facet, in which "digitalisation of the economy makes it increasingly difficult to

determine the boundaries between dependent employment and self-employment" (Eurofound, 2018, p. 22). Piece work and gig work presents a trend of sharp increase, concordantly, payment per unit, or piece wage, has become a norm. In platform business model, the "payment structure by task rather than time might also be seen to resemble pre-industrial piecework arrangements" (Cherry, 2016, p. 3). As Karl Marx succinctly remarks in *Capital*; "Piece wage is the form of wages most in harmony with the capitalist mode of production" (Marx, 1990, pp. 697-8, as cited in Srnicek, 2017). The oldest dispositions comprising the spirit of capitalism is haunting the most current jobs, professions and works of today's world. "The gig economy simply moves these sites online and adds a layer of pervasive surveillance" (Srnicek, 2017, p. 78). The total sum of which marks “a throwback to the de-skilled industrial processes associated with Taylor, but without the loyalty and job security” (Cherry, 2016, p. 3). This is the overall outlook of platform capitalism and the world it redefines. The services and professions most notoriously known as "low-skilled work" has already been swinging in the mangle of precarity and non-standard work ab initio over the course of capitalist history. Platform capitalism has pulled those into digital sphere, inside its unique architecture of labor process. The most novel invention of digital labor platforms, on the other hand, lies in its success in constructing a new online territory of labor and work according to this whole of dispositions in the first place, and also imposing this framework into relatively high-skilled already existing jobs and services referred with freelance work and independent professionals. In this sense, it marks a kind of "deskillization of skills" and construction of a digital neo Tayloristic dispositions of work, spilling it over as many branches and types of sites of labor as possible. The new reason and spirit of the world swallowing mass amount of waged labor up.

2.5. Concluding remarks

Digital labor platforms constitute a schema of processes and relations of work and labor on their own. It is in affinity with the recent ongoing developments in the field of social and economic relations, impossible to think of without the already-existent presence of a significant mass of digital economy. In this chapter, it is argued that the framework of relations and processes of work in digital labor platforms is both a

continuation, spread, and deepening of the dispositions introduced by post-Fordist capitalism and also composed of new, unique, and indigenous elements. In this framework, I evaluated digital labor platforms as prominent actors transforming the relations of labor and work through this unique composition of mechanisms and processes towards a more generalized and massified stage of fragmented, non-standard, flexible, and precarious work setting. In reference to the relevant literature, I employ a categorization concerning digital labor platforms in order to lay out a more precise focus on the topic. Although the platform world contains a vast spectrum of jobs, tasks, professions, and types of labor, I will focus on a specific type of labor platform, including certain types of jobs, in light of the categorizations made in the literature: web-based digital labor platforms. Focusing on this specific type of labor platform brings along a particular type of labor, that is, intellectual labor. Yet, it still continues to be a heterogeneous field of work in which a multitude of tasks, jobs, and professions is contained through the cognitive, intellectual, and creative labor of working people has put in use. Lastly, I sketched the general characteristics of processes and relations of work and labor in digital labor platforms according to the conceptual approaches to the topic. There appear, in this respect, three essential mechanisms determining processes of work: i) outsourcing of labor costs, ii) data monopolization and algorithmic management, and iii) precarization and fragmentation. I touch upon the significance of these mechanisms for the specific category of digital labor platforms that constitutes the subject of this thesis, which is the web-based ones. These mechanisms imply and generate certain different outcomes on intellectual labor and the experiences of workers laboring in digital platforms, which signifies the presence of a platform regime of work.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW ON PLATFORM WORK

There are estimated 163 million registered worldwide users in online labor platforms according to Online Labor Index project (Kässi et. al. 2021).[5] 14 million of them are active and mostly dependent on the income they gain from the engagements they get through these platforms. Some studies[6] argue that though at varying degrees at least a quarter of the workers participate non-standard, and gig works in the US, and more than one in ten workers heavily rely on incomes from those works. The term gig work implies something both contemporarily greater and also much older form of a modality of labor than digital economy and digital labor platforms. But there is no doubt that there is a strong affinity between the two. Not only digital labor platforms fall under the category of gig economy, as it is widely called nowadays; but also, they take over, incorporate, revitalize, deepen, advance and cause to spread of this type of labor. Most basically, digital labor platforms mediate non-standard, on-demand, daily, project-based, service-based agreements, i.e., already existing notions of gig work and freelance work. Yet, their existence produces far more profound effects. Gig, on-demand, just-in-time types of work has started to absorb more professions, jobs, tasks, and skills in an increasing manner in terms of both number and in intensity. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that 1.0 percent of the U.S. workforce primarily uses online platforms to arrange work.[7] More work is being done through such kinds of arrangements thanks to the dispositions that digital economy in general and digital labor platforms in particular have constructed. The works that had already being done in such a way started to be referred under their roof. Once high-skilled "independent professionals" are now online gig workers.

[5] Note that this measurement only includes platforms in English, Russian and Spanish language. see http://onlinelabourobservatory.org/paper/how-many-online-workers/

[6] see https://www.gigeconomydata.org/basics/how-many-gig-workers-are-there

[7] see https://www.gigeconomydata.org/basics/how-many-gig-workers-are-there

When the similar case studies on digital labor platforms are examined, a majority focusing on location-based gig work is observed. The situation is so both in academia around the globe and also studies held in Turkey. Yet, the research made on location-based digital platforms provide strong insights about the characteristics of this novel modality of work and employment relations. Work in web-based digital labor platforms and location-based ones share, unsurprisingly, the definitive essentials of the working regime in question. Nevertheless, there are important differences of range, level and violence when the main mechanisms defining platform work is the question, stemming from the differences of the content of the tasks, and no wonder of the variable of spatiality. To what extent the mechanisms of outsourcing of labor costs, management and labor control discussed under the concept of digital Taylorism employed by algorithmic management techniques, and the precarization and fragmentation functions as the same between the two is a question.

The research on online platform labor, especially qualitative studies conducted on the workers participating this section of labor world around the globe presents valuable insights. Studies who are not specifically focused on web-based platform work gives a fruitful base for comparison and to discuss general characteristics. For this reason, qualitative studies like this thesis will be gone around in this chapter. In addition, as the nature of their work environment, which is the Internet, is more than convenient, there are meaningful findings of some quantitative studies, some surveys etc. Then I would like to dwell specifically on studies who put the concept of digital Taylorism to use and go around it, as the issue constitute a main importance for this thesis. A separate remark will be made on the studies that discusses and searches for the forms and state of organization and cooperation between platform workers. Another page must be opened for the studies who approaches to the problems with law and status of digital labor platforms and platform workers. In this section, I take the studies about the case of Turkey specifically. Last but not least, the articles and research conducted in Turkey on the condition of platform workers there shall be specifically reviewed as the case study of this thesis is composed of people in this place. I would lay a separate place for the thesis and dissertations conducted before this one.

3.1. Research on the general characteristics of digital platform work

An ILO (2021) report demonstrates that digital platforms play a transformative role concerning world of work. The report shows that the number of digital labor platforms have increased five times in a time period of 10 years. The study detects a list of prominent tendencies which provides the transformation of the determinants of work in labor platforms, especially concerning the experiences and conditions of workers:

> 1) labor supply being greater than demand encourages a decrease in earnings, 2) a great diversity of companies are relying on digital labor platforms, 3) job flexibility and remote work opportunities is the principle motivator in freelancer platforms and particularly important for women in both developing and developed countries, 4) major platform income disparities exist between the less developed and developed countries, 5) working hours are unpredictable for workers in both online and location-based platforms. In online-based platforms workers in developing countries have to perform on unpredictable work schedules since the client base is mainly in developed countries with negative repercussions for work-life balance, 6) many workers feel underemployed in platforms due to insufficient amount of available or well-paying work, 7) working conditions are unilaterally determined by the platforms, 8) platform workers do not have access to collective bargaining, 9) there is a lack of social security coverage on platforms, 10) there is discrimination on online-based platforms based on gender (particularly women) and nationality (workers from developing countries) resulting in low pay and exclusion from work opportunities. (as cited in Urhan, 2023)

The general tendencies laid out in ILO report points out to the sticky situation in which platform workers find themselves into. Woodcock and Graham (2019) identify platform workers through their case study as "freelancers or independent contractors who are usually paid low wages per task; their work is subject to algorithmic management and constant surveillance" which leads to a very fragile and precarious position in the course of processes of work in platform model. Anwar & Graham's comprehensive study (2021) on how the platform-based remote work impacts the lives and livelihoods of African workers provides strong findings as it is focused on people who get work in Upwork, which is one of the platforms present in the case study of this thesis. They made their research with in-depth interviews in order to approach contradictory picture concerning freedom, flexibility, precarity and

vulnerability, and also with the structure of the labor market. Their findings suggest an affinity between informality, youth unemployment and the increase in participation to digital labor platforms. It is very important as it shows a parallel situation with the situation in Turkey too, which implies a common tendency in periphery countries. "While gig work can be seen as an answer to unemployment in Africa by some, these jobs are also symbolic of deteriorating working conditions and labour standards among the workforce that is already structurally constrained in their local labour markets" (Anwar & Graham 2021, p. 238). Anwar & Graham (2021) point out that the increase in fragmented, informal and contingent jobs continue through digital labor platforms in Africa. The essential mechanisms regulating work in labor platforms leads to vulnerability and precarity for workers as "algorithmic controls of the labour process and an emphasis on individual freedom over freedom of association and collective bargaining shifts the risks from capital to labour" (Anwar & Graham, 2021, p. 239). They emphasize the importance of "the value attributed to the freedom and flexibility that comes with freelancing and three quarter of the people they interviewed are willing to quit their regular jobs to do freelance work" (Anwar & Graham, 2021, p. 239). Yet, they got trapped by mechanisms of control specifically designed for every process taking place digitally in such platforms:

> individual freedom to workers in the gig economy is understood as freedom to choose employers, jobs, working hours and place of work. However, research is beginning to show that workers do enjoy considerable freedom but are constrained by algorithmic controls set up by digital work platforms. (Anwar & Graham, 2021, p. 240).

Upwork constitutes a peculiar example here as it "has a technological system of controlling the labour processes through a mix of algorithmic management and surveillance" (Anwar & Graham 2021, p. 244). At the end, the general outlook of the labor market in online gig economy and inside mechanisms of platforms generate together insecurity and vulnerability. Temporary contracts and labour oversupply lead to lack of bargaining power and scoring and rating systems lead to high work intensity which carries significant physical and psychological impacts. They also emphasize the discourse of freedom employed by platform companies, who label workers as entrepreneurs, leading a sticky situation. Platforms have lower entry

barriers compared to traditional labor market. This provides people who have hardships getting jobs a serious opportunity. For the people in countries in the South, where unemployment rates are high, and informality and irregularity are common, online labor platforms appears as a decent option. Yet, there appears a significant differences in payments compared to the services supplied from first world, which demonstrates once again the global division of labor cutting through the digital space and inequality. Aspiration for autonomy seem as another man source of motivation entering digital platform labor market, yet Anwar and Graham (2021) find that in terms of organization of time and space, digital labor platforms are far from providing more autonomous work arrangements to online gig workers as "a global competition for remote jobs means a race to the bottom rendering local minimum wages practically impossible in some circumstances further increasing income insecurity" (Anwar & Graham, 2021, p. 250). The overall precarization and uncertainty leads to "fear of losing jobs, unexpected cancellation of contracts and withholding of wages were keeping workers trapped in continuous cycles of exploitation" (Anwar & Graham, 2021, p. 253).

The research that Gilbert & Thomas (2021) conducted lays out certain peculiar characteristics of platform modality of work. While their case study is based on location-based gig jobs, including retail, transport, manufacturing, food processing, maintenance sectors, excluding online jobs, it has certain strong arguments about the total of this world of work. Depending on their findings, Gilbert & Thomas propose that the new model of labor and work relations generates a whole new paradigm that can be compared to that of named after Henry Ford. At the center of this new model lies prediction and control of labor process and workers' behavior in order to automate the production depending on algorithmic technologies, purging "completion of more tasks in less time, intensifying work. Standards set by algorithms are then used to evaluate and manage performance, incentivise or penalise workers, and grant or deny access to work" (Gilbert & Thomas, 2021, p. 3). This new model can be understood with the name of Amazon, as the platform company operates both in the manual labor sectors aforementioned and also in globally distributed online works. Another qualitative study made by Ravenelle (2019) with a mixed sample of location based and online labor platforms provides similar findings.

According to the discussion of the material of his research, Ravenelle (2019) seems confident about the increase of precarization of laborers and fragmentation of labor process and arrangements. Workers almost totally lost the control over the design and components of process of production and archaic mechanisms of history of capitalism like piecework and payment per piece. "Yet for all of its app-enabled modernity, the gig economy resembles the early industrial age, where workers worked long hours in a piecemeal system, workplace safety was nonexistent, and there were few options for redress" (Ravenelle, 2019, pp. 5-6).

The labeling this model as sharing-economy, workers as entrepreneurs carries a masking function of this harsh reality. Lehdonvirta (2018) also emphasizes this point on online platforms, through a case study primarily comprised mostly of crowdwork platforms, that the promised flexibility is far from being present, workers perform tasks inside a highly restrictive setting. Herr (2021) also dwells upon the role of algorithmic management techniques on controlling the labor process and as a result undermining all expectations towards autonomous and flexible working setting. "Algorithms are consciously constructed and implemented in the capitalist labour process to discipline and control labour. They are embedded in the use of rating tools, on-by-data extraction and tracking technologies, all of it fostering managerial surveillance and thereby facilitating labour extraction" (Herr, 2021, p. 41).

Murgia and Pulignano' study (2021) also focuses on the tension between autonomy and management. Despite the existence of a serious surveillance and control, they argue that through the concept of self-employment, the feeling and narrative of autonomy and agency operates despite the significant experience of insecurity. This demonstrates the importance of subjective dimension for the studies. In another study on the topic of management through algorithms, Heiland (2022) emphasizes the need to conduct discussion avoiding pitfalls of some kind of a technological determinist approach. Heiland (2022) underlines that labor control and management have a history as much as the history of capitalist production. It is known, likewise, from this history that as solid as they seem, there have been many occurrences of insurgencies. The comprehensive case study of Bronowicka and Ivanova (2021) with the location-based platform workers demonstrates how the contradictions between

management and workers' experiences can lead to the resistances. Similarly, Heiland & Schaupp's research (2021) on food delivery platform workers demonstrates the positive relationship between the stricter labor control through algorithmic management techniques and the cases of platform worker uprisings.

3.2. Qualitative research on web-based labor platforms

Besides the general case studies on the total of platform works and specifically on location-based labor platforms, there are a good number of qualitative analyses on web-based digital labor platforms. The various findings about online gig work point out a global division of labor and a parallel stratification as a decisive phenomenon. The degree that online platform work differs from location-based platform work, especially in terms of management and components of labor process, is to provide insights for my case study to. Last but not least, the significant shift from traditional employment to the global digital platforms and transformation of creative jobs is also found in the similar studies. There are also non-negligible differences between more automatable low-skill tasks and professional jobs that requires certain set of skills and experience. Yet, there is a vast commonality of mechanisms and architecture organizing work and production process observed, encompassing all types of platform work and labor, despite the huge heterogeneity.

A case study with Latin American platform workers who complete tasks of data clarification for algorithms, emphasizes that online gig work drags people into an unsustainable social setting, where reproduction and family-community relations get affected at a high degree alongside low and irregular wages. Posada's (2022) work demonstrate the importance of social background of workers participating platform economy. In this sense, especially for those who are in peripheries of global capitalism the multi-layered precarious setting is both taken over by this economy and got perpetuated by it, as it is argued by many of the conceptual approaches to the subject. Likewise, Popiel's (2017) findings suggest that in Upwork, "despite the company’s emphases on efficiency, flexibility, and freedom from the physical office, freelancers face significant trade-offs in undertaking such work, notably its infrequency, barriers to high wages, and intense global competition" (p. 229). Popiel

(2017) underlines that the constant uncertainty and irregularity especially on getting arrangements deepens precarious conditions that most of platform workers have been already in. There occurs a strong contradiction between the preference towards more free work setting and necessity and hardships. Popiel (2017) also emphasizes that the strong transformation lived as a transition to digital work marks a new regime of work, just like increase in the sum of creative and intellectual work marked the transition the shift from Fordism once. Popiel (2017) argues that the example of Upwork for instance, "...represents an aggressive extension of Harvey's flexible accumulation" (p. 229). In this sense, Popiel (2017) makes a parallel reading with the aforementioned argument of this thesis that digital labor platforms are to be understood in the context of ongoing post-Fordist rearrangements of work and production.

In the case studies on web-based labor platforms, the themes of flexible working, search for autonomy and their tension between management and labor control are occurring themes. Continuous precarization seems like an all-encompassing phenomenon. Duffy (2020) coins the term "algorithmic precarity" for this novel kind of management and the insecurities that it generates. What is meant, based on a case study on creative work, is that perpetuation of precarization over an already instable and fragmented area of work by the means of algorithmic management techniques within the platform regime of work. A similar account belongs to Wood & Lehdonvirta (2021), who calls this current outlook on the side of workers as "algorithmic insecurity". Alacovska, Bucher and Fieseler's (2024) study constitutes another great example in this sense, which is fruitful for arguments of this thesis. They made research directly on Upwork and Fiverr platforms, with in-depth interviews. Besides the negativities of labor control and management, creative and intellectual workers in those platforms also experience a reliance on their former, pre-platform networks ad relations in the market, which can operate both as a limitation and as a coping mechanism at the same time. Therefore, the autonomy searched through platforms can be reached in a sticky manner, in the sense that when workers can utilize their connections as a coping mechanism, but which at the same time operates a certain degree of dependency, therefore a slight degree of autonomy can be get in spite of a vulnerability. Blaising & Dabbish (2022) provide another set

of findings on the relation between pre-platform freelance or sectoral work and transition to digital labor platforms in respect of workers. Their case study on Upwork and Fiverr demonstrates that the creative and intellectual workers who have become more and more absorbed into this economy experience a serious adaptation process in the transition process, which is lived within a socially isolated situation.

The tension between algorithmic management systems and the idea of autonomy in digital labor platforms, especially in creative and intellectual work have been discussed in the literature in many other works. Laursen, Nielsen and Dyreborg (2021), for example, focuses on young freelancers' experiences in web-based digital labor platforms in Denmark. They detect the components of algorithmic management model creates a one-sided "non-transparency" which causes the feel of a total loss of control and autonomy that has been gone after in the beginning. The most prominent dual mechanisms of algorithmic management are the software design directing the process of finding arrangements for freelancers and the rating system at the end of the task has been done, which creates a cycle that functions as a resonance. Similarly, the research made by Sutherland, et. al. (2020) on Upwork constitutes another example of the course of events that platform workers experience, where they started in order to get a more flexible and autonomous working setting. The most unpredictable consequence that they suffer seems like the necessity of a constant process of adaptation of skills and strategies to find arrangements. This cycle appears the rule of those platforms in their findings which have become a harsh and corrosive process that deepens vulnerability and precarity. The frequency of the discussion on algorithmic management peculiar to the digital labor platforms and its consequences specifically on creative and intellectual labor on web-based platforms demonstrates that the contradiction constitutes a central importance. In order to take a closer look to this pivotal issue, there is a need to look specifically at the literature discussing management in detail, where the concept of digital Taylorism and disputes about it appear.

3.3. Algorithmic management, labor control and digital Taylorism

Proliferation of the concept of digital Taylorism is strictly linked to the algorithmic management schemas which has been widely employed and flourished via the

regime of work present in the digital labor platforms. It is mostly described by the components of labor process directed by algorithms, tools and technologies of management and control made possible by algorithms and data. Those scholars who prefers the term generally to imply that this new face of work and employment relations can mark a paradigmatic change. Yet, inevitably, there are discussions on the degree and scope of this change. Altenried's (2020) article is one of the prominent ones among those making use and operationalization of the concept digital Taylorism. Altenried (2020) argues that 'digital Taylorism' is the most accurate naming of a regime of work, where algorithmic management and surveillance, standardization, automation, measuring of results, prediction and feedback altogether function as the dominant mechanisms organizing labor process. The point here is that digital labor platforms constitute this regime in line with creation of an outsourced costs of labor, hyperflexible, globally scalable workforce, which "allows the platforms to assemble a deeply heterogeneous set of workers while bypassing the need to spatially and subjectively homogenise them" (Altenried, 2020, p. 145). Digital Taylorism depends on decomposition, standardisation, automation, algorithmic management, surveillance. Although Altenried's study (2020) is based on research on microwork platforms, the attention is drawn into the power of this new paradigmatic regime of work in determining pivotal transformative role, producing "new forms of algorithmic management just as the return of very old forms of exploitation such as the piece wage" (151).

There are other studies reaching the conclusion that what we observe today is kind of a digital Taylorism, led by digital labor platforms. According to Aloisi (2016), this new version of Taylorism can be summed being composed of "the fragmentation of labor into hyper-temporary jobs – called microtasks – on a virtual or local assembly line, strengthened by globalization and computerization" (Aloisi, 2016, p. 653). Aloisi (2016) grounds this approach on the findings of a case study that evaluate all kinds of digital labor platforms, i.e. both online and location-based ones together. There occurs, in this framework, sticky situations in terms of work and employment relations. According to Prassl (2018), for example, employment of Taylorist principles by digital and algorithmic means lead irrefutably to low wages and poor working conditions, prominently because this organization makes platform workers

to use any bargaining power impossible. Prassl (2018) also draws attention to that automation has certainly a limit, no work can be fully automated and digital platform works resist to this process in different degrees. Yet, this push towards automation and dehumanization causes serious decreases in working conditions, creating juridical problems, producing at the end nothing but precarization. The discourse labelling workers as entrepreneurs, functions right at this point, resembling parallelism with historical mechanism of Taylorism and capitalism:

> Today, Taylorism is back in full swing, resurrected under the guise of the on-demand economy, with technology and algorithms providing a degree of control and oversight of which even Frederick himself could not have dreamed. Instead of entrepreneurial autonomy, the vast majority of on-demand workers labour under strict platform supervision and control. (...) And just as Taylorism threatened to dehumanize workers and slash their basic working conditions at the advent of the last century, so does the on-demand economy today. (Prassl, 2018, p. 65)

There are also problematic points about both the employment and the consequences of calling the mechanisms of labor process in digital labor platforms as digital Taylorism. Cecchinato, Gould and Pitts (2021), for example, asserts that it is more than accurate to name this model as Taylorism with digital technologies, at the center of which there lies constant tracking of behavior, self-tracking and algorithmic control. On the other hand, it is vital to emphasize how this novel regime of work put precarious conditions of workers into use, constructing an individualized control. The question is, for the authors, to what extent this new disposition of work can lead to collective resistance, as it is inevitably foundational consequences on worker's subjectivities. Gonzales (2021) emphasizes, similarly, that at the center of management and control issue, there are workers' subjectivity and behavior determining the direction of what is going to be formed at the end. Within the discussions of digital Taylorism, Gonzales criticizes, the place and formation workers' subjectivity has been widely missed. Armano, Leonardi and Murgia (2022) provides a great account of digital Taylorist model with a case study on food delivery platform workers. This novel model of management, as they argue, can be understood in the basis of both the typical model of industrial capitalism, based on direct and disciplinary control, and the managerial model typical of post-Fordism,

centered instead on the subsumption of subjectivity and autonomy. In this sense, the authors presents plain and clear account of what has been revitalized from the inventory and has been invented under what has been discussed as digital Taylorism; "algorithmic management can, in some ways, be described as not completely new, since it includes both elements of the digital re-Taylorisation of work and the subsumption of autonomy" (Armano et al., 2022, p. 88). What has come as a brilliant merge is the transition from direct control to indirect automated control in digital Taylorism compared to classical one: "algorithmic control – engages with both direct control and indirect and introjected control using new methods. Big Data, new sensors, integrated systems and machine learning can enable constant cycles of feedback and real-time control of labour processes" (Armano et al., 2022, p. 88). The insistence and imposition of algorithms based on prediction of human behavior, which has always in essence a certain amount of uncertainty makes its contradictions vivid. Yet, as it absorbs and operationalizes autonomy and subjectivity, digital Taylorism has more than successful in turning the contradictions it creates into advantage and value.

There are also studies which raises doubts about calling the regime of work employed in digital labor platforms as Taylorism or not, although the alleged commonalities do exist. Wood et. al. (2019) present a complicated picture in their study conducted on remote gig economy using mixed methods of qualitative and quantitative methods over different parts of the world. They find that even though flexible setting of digital labor platforms satisfies the search of platform workers towards more autonomous life, the Taylorist principles of scoring, rating and algorithmic ranking of the workers generates a serious dehumanized control. The trick in this sense that digital labor platforms employs is that they carry an urge to automate and standardize every job and tasks they absorbed, yet they at the same time facilitate the task complexity especially in online high-skilled jobs and revitalizes the search for autonomy and flexibility in direction of this urge. In this sense, the authors draw attention to the contradictory strategy, in which platforms do not actually target full automation but get feed from the gap between ideal and reality, makes difficult to label the regime of work as digital Taylorism. This amount of resistance to standardization and intentional irregularity and fragmentation in the

workflow significantly differs from Taylorist principles. Another important critical point about the term is made by Casilli and Posada (2019) who agrees that despite significant commonalities, what is existent as a model in digital labor platforms cannot be referred as Taylorism. Although standardization, urge towards automatization, payment per piece carries a strong resemblance with Taylorist principles, it differs fundamentally from its paradigm. The main definitive trademark of digital labor platforms appears as outsourcing in their analysis, which makes impossible to refer as Taylorism as it is an incompatible and determining mechanism.

3.4. On organization, cooperation and social context

Besides the definitive mechanisms of platform work, transformation of labor and working practices, and management techniques, the social and political implications of what platform workers experience is also of substantial importance. According to Woodcock (2021), "platform work represents a shift in the organisation of work" (p. 8). As there be a decisive shift, it should be fundamental forces generating the result. For Woodcock (2021), the three driving factors are the changes in the organization of economy attributed to neoliberalism, which came together with an attack on labor organization, the technological changes enabling high levels of connectivity, and flexibility which;

> is important for many workers searching for different ways to work or to escape their local labour market. (...) Capital has also sought to exploit increasingly precarious workers (Woodcock & Graham, 2019). It is in this context, across different regions and countries, that platforms become established. (p. 8)

Even though algorithms generate a transformative role in platform work, this "does not mean that algorithms are fundamentally changing capital and labour relationships" (Woodcock, 2021, p. 8) like solidarity, organization, collective action etc. Woodcock operationalizes a class composition perspective in order to approach this question, considering i) the changing technical composition, i.e. the design of labor process, mechanisms of control, management etc. as one central variable, and

ii) the social composition, i.e. the social context and setting in which platform workers around the world are in, in order to reach the understanding of any organizational behavior, any form of political belonging, attitude towards work, daily practices, resistances, subjectivities etc. In this sense, Woodcock (2021) determines platform workers being labelled as self-employed who are in reality are in a relationship of dependency as a huge factor determining the platform regime of work. Algorithmic organization of labor process, software design, tracking, and knowledge asymmetry constitute the basis upon which political composition can be discussed. In digital labor platforms, "huge quantities of data are generated through the workers' participation on the platform, while only just enough information is provided in return for the worker to complete the task" (Woodcock, 2021, p. 37), which in turn make any form of collective action difficult.

When it comes to the web-based platform work specifically, things become little more complex as they rely primarily on a "global labour arbitrage", which creates "a new global division of labor" (Woodcock, 2021, pp. 53-54) in the largest scale. Platform-based freelance work can be seen as a new form of already existing freelance work, with "tasks now subcontracted across increasingly global platforms" (Woodcock, 2021, p. 55). The algorithmic and software architecture of digital labor platforms "has facilitated new ways to manage remote and distributed workforces" (Woodcock, 2021, p. 55). Online freelancers, on the other hand, experience a specific contradiction between outsourcing and exhibiting creative work. While they were escaping suffering local markets conditions, web-based platform workers got tangled up in a planetary labour market, its fragmentation and inequalities. Compared to other sections of platform labor, "online freelancing has an element of autonomy, something that brings risk for capital as the labour process takes place outside the boundaries of the traditional workplace" (Woodcock, 2021, p. 57). Although web-based labor platforms present themselves as open marketplaces where sellers and buyers meet, in reality "they are stratified, with new and existing relationships of exploitation and exclusion" (Woodcock, 2021, p. 60). Working through online platforms appear as an isolating experience, irregularity, insecurity and vulnerability for the vast majority especially for those in peripheries and the Global South. Graham & Anwar (2019) found that only 7 per cent of workers signed up to Upwork

had ever been able to secure work" (as cited in Woodcock, 2021, p. 60). They experience a serious precarity, stemming from this complex of problems plus the algorithmic and dehumanized control and management. "Platform work is indeed work, not some kind of flexible self-employment" (Woodcock, 2021, p. 85) as platforms exert managerial power over labor process and workers.

This does not mean, on the other hand, platform workers do not develop any form of resistance and action, that they do not perform any solidarity and cooperation. Woodcock (2021) opposes the idea that platform workers are not 'organisable', the platform model is not suitable for 'class struggle' as it detaches working people from traditional schemas of employment and labor process. What have certified this to a significant degree is actually the uprisings that have been taken place in a variety of countries of the delivery and transportation workers of platforms. The struggle and contention over the payment rates that these types of platform workers created is in essence a wage struggle. According to Woodcock (2021); "rather than undermining worker agency, platforms have instead provided the technical basis for the emergence of new global struggles against capitalism" (2021, p. 10). In organization of these struggles, subterranean methods of communication and solidarity through WhatsApp groups, forums, social media etc. came to the forefront.

> Despite platforms not facilitating communication between online workers, they nonetheless find ways to meet and discuss with each other. This is driven by the contradictions of the labour process: the work can be difficult to understand, the platforms do not provide training or other resources, and there are clear benefits to meeting other workers. (Woodcock, 2021, p. 62)

When it comes to the web-based platform workers, a more stratified and heterogeneous picture confronts us. This stems from both that the variety of jobs and tasks may differ in terms of internal dynamics and prices and also the in-platform ranking system that may cause significant differences of work being done by individual. Wood, Lehdonvirta and Graham's (2018) comprehensive research on web-based platform in middle-income countries demonstrates the status of collective action among workers. Through a mixed method of surveys and interviews mixed, they found that in the absence of unions, social media and Internet-based communities play a crucial role, enabling workers to support each other and share

information and constituting the form of collective organisation among online freelancers for now. This dynamic is not one that can be overlooked, as "One survey, for example, found that 58 per cent of online workers had communicated with other workers at least once every week, whether through social media, text message, email, or in forums" (Wood et al., 2018b, pp. 100-101).

Online platform workers may not be isolated as it is generally claimed. For some, the lack of communication with the platform companies, and the internationalization of platform working model led to global division of labor and new stratifications and as well as to transnational solidarity. Alacovska, Bucher and Fieseler (2024) argue that web-based platform workers have been building such a social infrastructure in an increasing manner. Schou & Bucher (2022) demonstrates another case for the web-based platforms, in which intellectual and creative labor are trapped in a "race to the bottom" in a global scale as a result of algorithmic control and bidding mechanisms. However, online platform workers come and act together to create social habitus online communities and digital communication, which functions as a lifesaving solidarity and coping mechanism with 'the race to the bottom' architecture of online labor platforms.

3.5. The case of Turkey

According to Online Labor Index project active online platform workers in Turkey comprises %0.733 of 14 million around the globe. The number corresponds approximately to 100.000 people. By taking into consideration of the fact that the index does not include local platforms, one should expect a significant increase in those numbers. The most common top groups of professions and tasks among online platform labor in Turkey are creative work and writing-translation as shown in the figure 2 and 3, which comprises the two groups of the case study of this thesis, as it is seen Online Labor Index below, they are the most common works done through digital labor platforms in Turkey in last 5 years. The research conducted by Tuna and Karadaş (2023) demonstrates that there is a positive relationship between unemployment rates in Turkey and participation to the digital labor platforms.

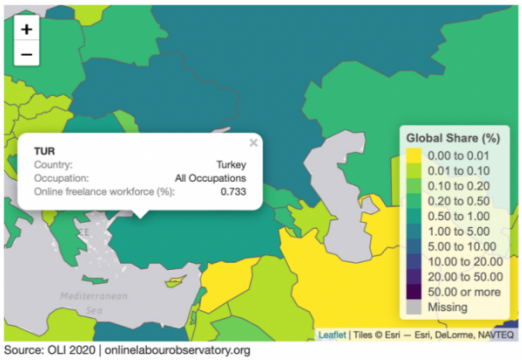

Figure 4. Global share of number of online platform workers in Turkey

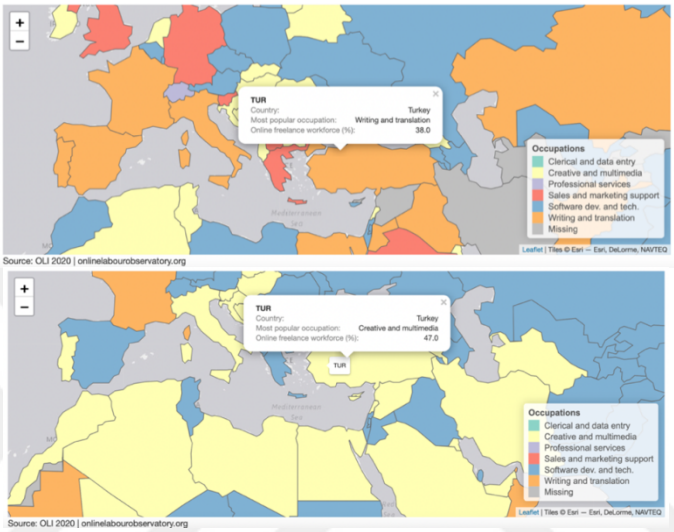

Figure 5. National share of type of work in online platform work in Turkey in 2018 and in 2023

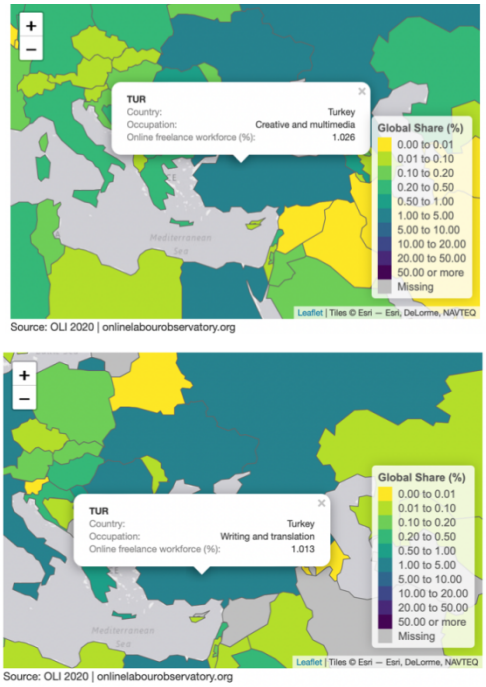

Figure 6. Global share of the most common type of online platform work in Turkey in 2018 and in 2023

3.5.1. Status and legal issues

One the most contentious issues concerning rights, problems, security and insecurities of platform workers is their status in juridical sense and the place of legal system. As Aloisi (2016) emphasizes: "these platforms may also be used to circumvent employment regulation, by operating informally in traditionally regulated markets" (p. 653). The labelling of economically dependent working people as self-employed and independent contractors function as a mechanism of decreasing costs for the platforms "even though many indicators seem to reveal a disguised employment relationship" (Aloisi, 2016, p. 653). Platform workers, as a result, legally suffer a serious insecurity, problems with payment, lack of pensions, social security, overtime pays etc. Yet the details of juridical issues on the status of platform workers differ in respect of context according to the country that is evaluated. There are a significant group of studies evaluating legal status of platform workers in Turkish law. With reference to the international examples and evaluation of Turkish legal system, there are different approaches to the question.

A comprehensive study belonging Boyacı (2020) that addresses the ambiguity surrounding the status of platform workers, highlights the challenges posed by outsourcing and occupational health issues. The absence of clear categorization, whether as independent contractors, employees, or a third category else, provides platforms an advantage, as demonstrated in other cases as well as in Turkey. Despite the lack of equivalent cases or regulations in Turkey, Boyacı advocates that a hybrid approach that acknowledges the economic dependency of platform workers while advocating for their social protection can be employed. It is emphasized that the need for a nuanced regulatory measure to address the diverse nature of platform work and the challenges it presents to collective bargaining and workers' representation. Yılmaz (2022) offers a comparative analysis of global legal examples and emphasizes that the importance of granting platform workers employee status, as they lack control over work processes and are economically dependent. Yılmaz argues for the extension of labor rights and social security benefits to platform workers and emphasizes the necessity of specialized legislation for peculiar their unique circumstances. Arslantaş (2024) features the necessity of recognizing

platform workers as a third category in the context of Turkish labor law. While acknowledging the appeal of platform work due to the independent status of workers, Arslantaş (2024) emphasizes the need to avoid of generalization and advocates for a case-by-case approach. Platform workers, in this sense, should be considered as engaged in an employment relationship due to the control exercised by platforms throughout the work process.

Another look at the legal issues, Küçük (2023) discusses the possibility of conceiving platforms as private employment agencies or franchise providers. While platform workers may exhibit characteristics of self-employment, their dependence on platforms for work assignments and the lack of control over work processes necessitate a reconsideration of their status. Küçük emphasizes the need for individualized assessments of platform workers' status and regulatory measures that rightly evaluate for their hybrid nature. Çakırlı (2023) also compares digital platform work with atypical employment forms in Turkish labor law, highlighting both similarities and differences. While acknowledging the shared characteristics of platform work with other atypical employment relationships, Çakırlı emphasizes the need for specialized regulations tailored to address the unique challenges posed by digital platforms. A development of new legislation that defines and regulates digital platform work, emphasizing the importance of workers' rights and collective representation is needed. Karaman (2023) draws parallels between platform work and private employment agencies, suggesting the need for specific regulations tailored to address the unique challenges posed by this emerging form of employment, highlighting the need for regulatory measures that ensure the protection of workers' rights while addressing the complexities of platform work arrangements. Günbattı's (2023) study, as another example, also argues for the distinct nature of platform work and the emphasizes that it poses challenges to existing labor regulations in Turkey. The absence of specific regulations for platforms allows them to evade responsibilities, despite the algorithms prioritizing platforms' interests. Günbattı (2023) emphasizes the need for directives similar to those in Europe and advocates for regulations that address the growing prevalence of platform work models in Turkey.

3.5.2. Experiences of platform workers in Turkey

Besides the issues around law and status of platform workers, there is a decent group of qualitative research on digital labor platforms and platform workers in Turkey. The existent literature comprises both types of labor platforms, and more importantly it points out the peculiar aspects of the field in Turkey, as well as demonstrates the common contradictions and dynamics with the international literature and theoretical approaches to the subject. To begin with the other side of this world of work, there have been an increasing attention to the delivery workers of platform economy in Turkey after the mobilizations on payments. There are also academic works on the subject, which portrays both the organizational outlook and the social context of the issue with qualitative and empirical evidence. Ceylan's (2022) research, for example, is a case study on delivery platform workers in İstanbul, based on the labor process theory, which comprehends the transformation of labor under platform regime as a 'deskillization' process. Dwelling on the predicaments of contracts and status of workers too, Ceylan's work presents a meaningful set of findings to compare the experiences from same country with different sections of laborers. A similar study is conducted by Kocadost (2024), which is again a research design on platform couriers in İstanbul, prioritizing workers' experiences and agencies. Making certain critical points on the literature, Kocadost argues that what brings about lack of autonomy is the fragmentation of labor process and the mechanism of piece wage rather than digital tools of control. Kocadost's argument is that this picture goes beyond what digital Taylorism and algorithmic management is capable of, creating atomization and individualization. There is also a social context going along and strengthening this tableau, that is the ongoing precarization of wage labor in Global South and the dimension of social reproduction generating an intricate status, which is usually neglected. Both studies emphasize the importance of the precarious background in Turkey's context. They mostly describe the idea of a free, autonomous working environment without bosses around as a scam, which implies certain differences from the findings of this thesis' case study.

Another study investigating the issue of control is of Uysal's (2023), which evaluates the experiences in relation to subjectivities in the case of location-based platform

workers who undertake domestic work in Armut platform in Turkey. Uysal's argument is that competitive bidding mechanism in this platform creates a contradiction, in which workers feel and act as entrepreneurs while they are actually in a relation of dependency. This contradiction undermines the agency of the worker, which constitutes a fundamental obstacle over organization. Madan's research (2023) is another example investigating conditions of platform workers in Turkey with qualitative methods. It demonstrates that while flexibility and free time management appear as the most important factors for workers to prefer platforms, lack of pensions, insurance, irregularity of payment due to the legal issues discussed previously pose serious problems.

There are also works focused on intellectual and creative work in digital labor platforms in Turkey. Değirmenci's (2020) evaluates a different type of platform other than labor platform, in which participants try to sell their products instead of labor. The platform in question here is Shutterstock, which comprises creative works like photography, design, and videography, therefore it can be suitable to compare. Değirmenci's research suggests that the same promise of autonomy exists in such platform too for producers, and the same contradiction that through algorithmic control and software architecture exhibits a functioning on the contrary. In this sense, this research gives a parallel picture on the transformation of creative labor. Another study on the case of creative work belongs to Dilek (2021), in which design work on digital labor platforms is evaluated. Dilek's findings suggests that control over the design process exhibited by platform companies undermines the search for autonomy. A serious dissatisfaction from the situation and suffering monotonous tasks also exist. Karataban and Gökmen's (2022) research is focused on online freelance platform workers in Turkey. The research shows that while the most prominent motivation for workers is to be in a free and flexible work arrangement but in contrast, they find themselves trapped in precarious conditions. Last but not least, Çiğdem & Koç (2019) argues upon the findings of their case study that this entrapment in precarious conditions, lack of autonomy, suffering from being deprived of rights and status can be countered with a new form of organization that is based on cooperation, the preliminary examples of which is existent in Turkish case.

3.6. Concluding remarks

When the relevant literature and similar studies are reviewed, the scope and expansion of the digital economy become evident. This fact also demonstrates itself by the increase in firms utilizing globally dispersed 7/24 accessible labor, especially in the web-based platforms. This increase signifies decrease in wages, uncertainty, fragmentation, unpredictable hours, especially for online platform workers, underemployment experience and informality, loss of collective bargaining, loss of rights and social security, and precarization for the workers. Still, increasing numbers of people prefer or somehow participate in this specific modality of labor. The foremost reasons behind this are the search for an autonomous work setting and compensation for the difficulties in regular employment or local markets. In other words, people make gigs in digital labor platforms because of their desire for a more flexible, freer array in terms of social relations and temporal and spatial aspects. In addition, it is also observed that a significant portion of people ran out of choice as they suffered from face-to-face jobs, the rigidity of the classical labor market, and unemployment. Yet, in the end, they get insecurity, uncertainty, and precarity, according to the relative studies reviewed in this chapter.

Work in web-based digital labor platforms and location-based ones share, unsurprisingly, the definitive essentials of the working regime in question. Nevertheless, there are substantial differences in range, level, and violence when the main mechanisms defining platform work is the question, stemming from the differences in the content of the tasks, and no wonder of the variable of spatiality. Algorithmic control deepens fragmentation in the processes of labor, which leads to the loss of control of workers on the work in both types of platform labor. There is a difference of degree, on the other hand, between location-based platform and online platform work, as the former is more suitable for decomposition, standardization, and atomization, while the latter still preserves complex tasks that require creative content. Yet, the crux is that it is also under pressure of automatization, algorithmic control, prediction, and invisible control and direction by software and algorithms, constituting the peculiar contradiction of intellectual/creative labor in the platform world. The pursuit of autonomy cannot be fulfilled. To what extent are the

mechanisms of outsourcing of labor costs, management, and labor control discussed under the concept of digital Taylorism employed by algorithmic management techniques, and the precarization and fragmentation functions as the same between the two is another essential question.

Research specifically on web-based platform labor and the role and effect of algorithmic management techniques in this field presents invaluable insights. First, it is observed that the three essential characteristics of work in digital labor platforms are interconnected, which are i) outsourcing of labor costs, ii) data monopolization and algorithmic management, and iii) precarization and fragmentation. In other words, these three definitive mechanisms feed, need, deepen, and, to a significant degree, are based on each other. Digital labor platforms lean significantly on already existent prevalent precarity, while the novel control and management mechanisms through data and algorithms deepen it as it causes experiences of uncertainty, low wages, irregularity, and insecurity. Outsourcing of labor costs also functions as the catalyzer of this picture. Intellectual/creative labor suffers distinctively from power asymmetry in platform architecture, loss of autonomy, Taylorist methods, rating system, impersonal control, rankings, feedbacks and all. The concept of digital Taylorism, on the other hand, comes forward as a powerful conceptual leap, yet controversial. The advocates of the concepts based on their arguments on the mechanisms of surveillance, decomposition, standardization, atomization, measurement, and direction based on predictions and feedback by automated systems of algorithms impenetrable and uncontrollable by workers, which directly shape their subjective experiences in the processes of work in digital labor platforms. It is also important to note that relevant studies demonstrate that this set of dispositions concerning the labor process also gets strengthened by the hyper-outsourced, globally dispersed, and fragmented relations and topography of work and labor in this branch of labor and production. The concept is marked as questionable when compared to the classical form of rigid, relatively secured, and regular form of employment in which it had been employed and criticized because it overlooks workers' agency in digital labor platforms.

In Turkey, there is a growing interest in mostly location-based platform workers, especially in couriers, work experiences, labor process and recent developments in

this field. There are also studies on web-based platform work, on intellectual and creative labor both in terms of processes and mechanisms of labor and work, and also on experiences and transformation of such kind of labor. This demonstrates that the field is expanding as it attracts scholarly attention to an increasing degree, a fact that can be confirmed by quantitative data. The situation in Turkey, on the other hand, remains blurry and uncertain, especially in terms of legal issues concerning contracts and status. Studies from a juridical point of view frequently investigate the different approaches to the question evaluating in the context of the Turkish legal framework in reference to the present situation and experiences. Although there are differences in approaches and tones, the main point of consensus is that false labeling as "self-employment" harms most of the workers getting engagements in digital labor platforms, deepening economic and social insecurity. Apart from that, qualitative studies demonstrate both the elements and mechanisms of the labor process and the most emphasized dynamics of workers' experiences and subjectivities in scholarly work around the globe are present and need to be discussed in the Turkish case too.

CHAPTER 4

CASE STUDY: WEB-BASED DIGITAL LABOR PLATFORM WORKERS IN TURKEY

4.1. Introduction/Description of the Study

Based on the distinction between categories of digital labor platforms provided in the previous chapter, the case study of this thesis encompasses one half of the those, namely the web-based digital labor platforms. Web-based digital labor platforms contain a high variety of tasks, jobs, professions, which are conductible remotely and deliverable digitally. Different from the other half of the digital labor platforms, i.e. location-based ones, web-based digital labor platforms demonstrate a higher resemblance in terms of processes of work for those who perform same jobs since before the web-based digital labor platforms. These jobs and professions most generally are the ones that fall under the terms of intellectual and creative labor. At this point, one specific form must be mentioned among the types of web-based platform work: microwork. Microwork is a kind particular to digital labor platforms and constitutes a novel and different quality from other branches of it (Schmidt, 2017). It is a kind of work which is an invention belonging to digital labor platform model, and the inventor is Amazon with its microwork platform Amazon Mechanical Turk. While other branches under web-based platform labor exhibits a resemblance, even a relationship of continuity to a certain degree, with freelance form of labor, which is a quite older mechanism than digital labor platforms; microwork platforms constitute a completely novel case. The case study of this thesis does not include people working in microwork platforms for several reasons. Firstly, due to limitations of the scope of the study, microwork platforms are separated from the general of web-based digital labor platforms as they shall be discussed individually. Secondly, for the sake of keeping in line with this thesis whose one of the central

themes is the transformation of intellectual/creative labor, microwork is excluded from the scope of the study as it firmly falls outside of this category. They commonly comprise rather unskilled and automated online work. Yet, the meaning and outcomes of the process that cognitive capacities of human labor put into work in microwork platforms deserves an independent discussion of its own. There is also a third and auxiliary reason, that is microwork seems not much common in Turkey compared to the other Global South countries, as opposed to the freelance marketplaces. For these reasons, this case study is composed of different kinds of creative and intellectual labor, which for a long time are exhibited as freelance work, but now drown into digital labor platforms in the context of global and digitalized relations of processes of labor and work that platform business model perpetuates.

4.2. Methodology

The case study is constructed upon qualitative research method and data collection through in-depth interviews with people who have work experiences in varying degrees on digital labor platforms. Interviews were conducted in September and November 2023 with 11 people, one by one. All but two interviews were done through online channels like Zoom, while it was possible to meet in person, which is itself a preliminary observation of the study demonstrating the integration of the tendency to prefer digital tools by those who work every day remotely and digitally, communicate in their work relations and deliver their work digitally. The average duration of the interviews was 54 minutes, while the longest took 87 minutes and the shortest 29 minutes. The material acquired through interviews is analyzed in light of dimensions provided by the literature, especially in terms of the essential definitive mechanisms and characteristics of the processes of labor and work in digital labor platforms, which were i) outsourcing of labor costs, ii) data monopolization and algorithmic management and iii) precarization and fragmentation. Interviews were conducted with the intention of searching, learning, and observing the functioning of those in practice, focusing on the effects and experiences that these definitive mechanisms generate in an open-ended manner. A set of questions was prepared before, without imposing the order or the exact form of the questions during the interviews, yet with the aim of fulfilling a degree of satisfaction. They are designed

in order to look for the actual presence of the given mechanisms and characteristics of the three essential mechanisms, functioning of the labor process and its elements, and additionally, participants' personal backgrounds, motivations, subjective reflections, how they experience and make sense of this type of work, what they expect and feel in an open-ended manner.

As the particular focus of this thesis is on the transformation of intellectual and creative labor, since various sections have been absorbed into the digital labor platforms in growing numbers, sample of the case study is tried to be designed in such a way that it consists of a certain degree of heterogeneity in terms of jobs, skills, and qualifications. Representation of both global digital labor platforms and Turkey-based platforms with more than one example is prioritized in selection of the participants. When sampling the case study and reaching out participants snowball sampling method is used. In-depth interviews are composed of 11 participants, all of whom have work experiences on digital labor platforms. While global digital labor platforms that the participants of the case study work through are Upwork, Fiverr and freelancer.com, and the Turkey based ones are Bionluk and Armut. Among them, Armut exhibits a compound nature, including both location-based and web-based tasks and works. The participants of this thesis' case study getting arrangements through Armut, on the other hand, engage only in web-based jobs in this platform. The composition of the participants is designed to include people who also have work experiences other than platform work, actively or in the past, in order to provide a scheme for comparison. As discussed in Chapter 2, digital labor platforms emerged as pioneer actors at the end of a multi-rooted historical processes of transformation centered upon relations of production and work, alongside with a material context providing technological enhancements and mechanisms for organization enabling them to operate as a part of an overall paradigm of digital economy. It has a specific focus on the condition of intellectual/creative labor since it has started to characterize capitalist relations of labor, production, and exchange in an increasing manner, as it is argued in the relevant literature. Chapter 2 also demonstrates the main characteristics and mechanisms running the general functioning of digital labor platforms in reference to the main conceptual framework in the relevant literature. These are, in general categories, outsourcing of labor costs,

data monopolization and algorithmic management as components of labor process, and precarization of waged labor and fragmentation as both a source and an outcome of platform business model and digital labor platform in the context of global digital capitalist economy. These three general conceptual characteristics and decisive mechanisms, laid out in the conceptual approaches and reviewed similar studies in Chapter 3, played a determining role in construction of the case study and structure of the interviews. In the light of these, the case study of this thesis is after the question that how do the general dispositions organizing processes of work in platform capitalism affect intellectual labor in the case of web-based digital labor platform workers in Turkey?

The main research question of the study can be cut into several pieces, each of which has a directive effect on both the design and analysis of the case study. The first question is in a general manner, which is to what extent there exists a peculiar 'platform regime of work'? In order to go after this question the conceptual characteristics giving the tangible shape of the dispositions of work in digital platforms had to be searched in the interviews. In this respect, a set of questions were prepared in order to understand how mechanism of outsourcing can be observed and algorithmic management techniques is experienced by the workers. The second sub-question, which is to understand the novelties of the work model in digital platforms, is: What recencies do they bring about in terms of relations of work, and how does it differ from both its predecessors and as well as its contemporaneous relatives? In order to investigate this, specific processes, and organizational sides of work in platforms and the comparison between other experiences of interviewees were asked in the interviews. The third sub-question is: Do digital labor platforms generate specific consequences on intellectual labor? Both the effects of algorithmic management and what is in line called digital Taylorism on the content of the work, and the precarious conditions in which intellectual and creative workers live in, were to be investigated in order to catch a glance of the transformation process that this type of work is in under digital labor platform model. Moreover, questions on the practices of solidarity and cooperation, subjective reflections, personal stories, expectations, past experiences, and entrance to the platforms were designed in order to make sense of the current outlook on the web-based digital platforms and workers.

In order to present a case to discuss these questions, the material acquired through interviews with the participants of the study is categorized under four categories, first of which is the i) description of the backgrounds and qualities of platform workers, and the other three are in line with the essential conceptual characteristics of platform work, that are ii) outsourcing of labor costs, iii) algorithmic management and labor process, and iv) precarity and subjectivity. These categories were pre-designed sets in constructing the outline of the interviews, in light of the research question and sub-questions of the study, considering conceptual foundations laid out in course of the study. On the other hand, in analyzing the interviews and to reach out findings, the material acquired is coded along a variety of occurring themes and observations, and these codes are grouped falling under each general category of the structure of the research design. These codes appear as shown in the Table 1.

Table 1. Codes used in analyses of interviews

Description of platforms workers	**Outsourcing of labor costs**	**Algorithmic management and labor process**	**Precarity and Subjectivity**
backgrounds and motivations of entrance to the platform	deprivation of rights and compensations	rating and feedback system	loss of autonomy and alienation
the pandemic effect	global division of labor	in-platform coins and gamification	irregularity of income and insecurity
relations of wages and income	just-in-time employment	control over work	tactics, cooperation, expectations
		degradation, standardization and AI tools	

Table 2. General sketch of participants, their professions, and the situation of platform use

Participant	Profession/Skill	Work experience, past and present			Platform company
		Regular job experience	Freelance work experience outside platforms	Digital labor platforms	
Tahsin	translator, content creator		X	X	Bionluk
İsmail	content creator	X		X	Upwork, Bionluk
Fırat	teacher, translator, blog writer	X	X	X	Armut
Lütfü	digital modeling, blog writer, editor		X	X	Upwork, Fiverr
Ekinsu	translator, content creator		X	X	Bionluk
Zelal	architect, digital design	X	X	X	Upwork, Fiverr, freelancer .com
Sina	digital sketch artist, illustrator	X	X	X	Upwork, Fiverr
Onur	photography, videography, editing and post-production	X	X	X	Armut
İlknur	translator, blogger, content developer		X	X	freelancer .com
Altuğ	stage decoration, digital artist, pixel art		X	X	Upwork, Fiverr
Canan	architect	X	X	X	Upwork, Fiverr

*green signifies the active engagement while red shows inactivity or past experience

4.3. Findings and Discussion

4.3.1. Description of platform workers

Table 3. Educational backgrounds of participants

Participant	Age	Undergraduate education	Year of graduation
Tahsin	27	History	2023
İsmail	30	History	2020
Fırat	22	English Literature	2023
Lütfü	26	Sociology	2022
Ekinsu	25	History*	2021
Zelal	29	Architecture	2018
Sina	28	Fine Arts, Painting	2019
Onur	22	Cinema and TV	2022
İlknur	29	Sociology*	2020
Altuğ	34	Stage Decoration	2011
Canan	30	Architecture	2017

* participants are currently in graduate programs in the same departments

There are significant points dividing participants of the study, thus they must be categorized, and they are to be categorized in reference to more than one criteria. Firstly, to start with the most basic dividing line, seven of the participants are currently active on digital labor platforms, albeit in varying degrees, while the rest is inactive. Yet, two of the inactive participants maintain irregular work arrangements, i.e. freelance work and performing piece works and gigs for employers or companies they got in contact via digital labor platforms. The remaining two are totally inactive, not only in digital labor platforms but also in labor market. Though not working at the moment, they contribute to the study by their recent experiences in digital labor platforms. Secondly, the level and intensity of involvement of the interviewees vary between both ends of the spectrum. While some of them were or still are involved just in order to make a minor contribution (or involuntarily only successful at this

level) to their total income, or who wants to give it a try with a hope of sustainable income at one end; others are professional freelancers, who succeeded to make a living through digital labor platforms. Yet, almost every characteristic and peculiarity of work in digital labor platforms appear as determinator in the material acquired in the interviews of the case study. In addition, here can another twofold categorization be mentioned, the first group of which is composed of college students (mostly seniors) or fresh graduates who is out of labor market yet, and second is young adults with more strong relation with employment. Although these two categories seem mostly symmetrical with the second line of division, this is still not a perfect fit.

Table 4. Participants' levels of dependences on income in digital labor platforms

participant	level of dependences on income in digital labor platforms		
	additional/marginal income	a significant portion of total income	totally dependent on platform work
Tahsin			X
İsmail	X		X
Fırat	X	X	
Lütfü		X	X
Ekinsu		X	X
Zelal			X
Sina			X
Onur	X	X	
İlknur		X	
Altuğ			X
Canan		X	

*green X's signifies the active situation while reds shows past experience

In line with the second line of division, type and quality of works, jobs, and tasks that participants perform in digital labor platforms also vary. The case study represents a just degree of heterogeneity of intellectual/creative labor in digital economy. I will group the participants with respect to their professions and works they do under two broad categories: intellectual work and creative work, which are

subdivided under two more categories. The reason for this categorization is that they are mostly in line with the levels of involvement distinction. Moreover, both the nature of labor process and also the scale they experience, they suffer, and their conditions seem to vary along with those two categories. Although there is no one engaging in microwork labor platforms among participants, some of them performs tiny, repetitive, and allegedly unqualified and somewhat automated tasks resembling convergence with it. It corresponds with one group of this twofold distinction: intellectual laborers. Yet, this kind of tasks are still provided thanks to certain "qualities" they bear. This point is deserving of a qualification, or "skill", discussion in line with this distinction. At the other hand, there are creative workers, who have more distinctive skill set, or a defined job, such as architects, or designers, illustrators, who can get arrangements as independent professionals in relatively long-term, and again relatively well-paid projects. In this sense, the distinction between those two groups of platform workers appears as one main source of scale differences how the main characteristics of processes of work in digital labor platforms. Differences and homogeneous points within this heterogeneous group can be discussed in line.

4.3.1.1. Backgrounds and motivations of entrance to the platforms

There are a group of people with a weak engagement in digital labor platforms are young adults, who are already employed in a regular job, or who have a relatively regular freelance workflow independent of digital labor platforms. Their existence in the platforms is either due to a search for additional income in some cases, or to obtain a certain degree of "autonomy" in their professional lives. Their experience also demonstrates that arrangements done via digital labor platforms do not exactly provide what they pursue, while bringing about a whole new set of problems. İsmail (30) is a creative writer of advertisements and marketing, who has a long-term experience in web-based platform works. After a while from his transition to regular employment in a firm after years of full dependence on the income from labor platforms, non-standard agreements and irregular payments; İsmail re-activates his accounts in these platforms in search of an additional income, which is expected to

create a window for more flexible work setting makes an example of one primary motivations among the online platform workers:

> I already have a full-time job. I can spare a limited amount of time. My aim is to rise within the platform and earn a certain level of additional income each month.The thing about these freelance platforms is for now that they do not provide an income enough for making a living. In a stable manner I mean. Actually, freelancing has significant advantages over regular work; it enables you to organize your time as you wish etc. The uncertainty, however, is a significant downside of it, and it is seen much more common. Because it's not guaranteed, you might not earn next month. So, I don't think it can ever replace my full-time job.

Another group is comprised of individuals who succeeded to make a living predominantly from jobs, works, and gigs they got on digital labor platforms. They seem as the most satisfied group with this regime of work. Yet, this neither mean they are immune to the same problems that the rest experience nor they get themselves from disorganized, precarious, and thus worrisome character of contemporary relations of work. They seem to have given contradictory answers as to whether or not they are thankful to what digital labor platforms provide, or about the advantages/disadvantages of this type of work. It seems that work through platforms is preferrable mostly in contrast to a classical regular job, and strong limitations of freelancing via older networks. Yet, it is clear they also at least pursue a relatively regular mechanism of income, ensuring at least a certain degree of security besides their arrangements from digital labor platforms, or to relocate their ongoing arrangements from platforms to more a more stable relation of work through various tactics and mechanisms. Altuğ's (34) case, as a freelancer with years of non-standard work experience and currently totally dependent on income through online platform works, sets an example for this intricate picture:

> The reason why I started doing this was to make money on such platforms. Since I'm a fine arts graduate and I've been interested in a number of other digital art branches for years, that transition wasn't too difficult for me. I worked very hard for about 6 months and improved myself. Then I somehow turned it into a job. I mean, I started making pixel art before I became a member of Fiverr, but I had a clear aim to turn it into a job. I actually graduated from the stage decor department.

Table 5. Professions of participants and their categorization

Area of work / Participant	intellectual		creative	
	translation	content/blog writer	architectural design, modeling	visual art, digital art
Tahsin	X	X		
İsmail		X		
Fırat	X	X		
Lütfü		X	X	
Ekinsu	X	X		
Zelal			X	
Sina				X
Onur				X
İlknur	X			
Altuğ				X
Canan			X	

4.3.1.2. The pandemic effect

The presence of a massive digital work sphere, catalyzer effect of the 2020 pandemic, and the institutional functioning of the prominent digital labor platforms seem to ease the spread of platform work practice day by day. Digital labor platforms' operation and total mass is in a strict affinity with digital economy's increasing presence in the pandemic, and in addition, every worker's personal story behind getting tangled up with this economy at those times present a case. Words of Altuğ, who changed his way of making a living, at those times, from face-to-face, on-demand creative works to the fresh areas of production and exchange taking place in the digital sphere, which have become digital art and pixel art that he sells his works through global web-based labor platforms, exemplifies this effect:

> Since the pandemic, as you know, put all kinds of jobs related to the stage in trouble, I had to think of something alternative. Just at that time, out of necessity, I was able to make this transition.

The transformation of the practices and relationship with work in the pandemic was also influential in the decision directing themselves to the labor platforms. Zelal (29), for example, as a white-collar professional worker who was employed as an architect before, mentioned the pandemic as a turning point enabling her transition from a regular office job to a flexible setting, which she found at global labor platforms, where she can find gigs suitable for her skills:

> Both for that reason and with the pandemic the perception of spending time at home has changed in all of us. I was already a domestic person, I mean, I don't like to be very social. I especially don't like socializing at work. You know, that was more my motivation, so of course these are the benefits of being white-collar.

4.3.1.3. Relations of wages and income

The first and foremost finding of the case study is that digital labor platform model cannot provide a meaningful and sustainable income and a preferrable work arrangement. Yet, as important as that is, it creates a possibility in which anyone can easily get involved in a waged labor relationship. Digital labor platforms seem to hold a power of absorbing of a heterogeneous group of professions and skills due to advantageous and charmful sides in certain situations. Some of the participants owe their position in the labor market to the digital labor platforms. Sina is a 28-year-old digital sketch artist and digital illustrator, whose education was in classical fine arts, which he could not turn into a source of income after graduation. Sina's case constitutes an example of digital labor platforms capacity to absorb this kind of skills into the globally dispersed labor market, which functions as an open field in which precarious workers can create currents of income:

> The biggest contribution to me was that it showed me that I could make money in a sector that I had never known before. When I was in a position where I didn't know what I could do when I graduated, how I could make money... As I started making money from this sector, I started to delve more into that community, I got deeper and deeper into it. It led me to a niche field.

This point comprises several groups of examples, differing in accordance with previously mentioned dividing lines. First group is composed of people having the weakest relationship with digital labor platforms, who are economically at the

margins and exhibiting a survival reflex in terms of making a living. These are mostly senior college students, fresh graduates or graduate students, who have spent, or currently spending a certain amount of time by doing gigs and types of piecework they acquire through digital labor platforms, providing themselves a small amount of income which is by no means sustainable but makes salvaging the day possible for them. As Onur (22), as a creative worker who has experience in the local labor platform Armut when he was a college student, states:

> I actually already work as a freelance videographer. I was usually finding freelance jobs through my contacts in the industry, going to movie sets etc. I actually joined Armut with the motivation that maybe there would be some side work, I could get work from there on the days I was free. Because it was a period when I was about to graduate and I started to work randomly, but I didn't know exactly where I could settle. At that time, I was chasing everywhere, and Armut was just an option. It provided me an additional income for a while.

Onur, now, works as a freelance photographer and videographer, after his graduation from college, out of digital labor platforms, through his networks in the sector. He finds arrangements in digital labor platforms too irregular to make a living, which can be an option for students for additional income, but unsustainable for a long time.

Work arrangements made possible by digital platforms seem to have several advantageous qualities, which gives its charm. The prominent element among them is the global scale of digital labor platforms, which makes possible to jump over borders or certain restrictions. This provides a vast range of jobs and gigs to workers, and a vast range of labor force, containing a high degree of variation in terms of level and type of skills, to the Capital. As a student, who, for years, have been providing himself an essential portion of income in terms of making a living in web-based labor platforms, Tahsin (27) explains well this trademark of these companies:

> Yes, the platform provides control. In fact, this is the reason why Bionluk is preferred, payment security. That's the reason why people are willing to pay commission. It gets you to the customer easily, and it also allows you to get paid. It also makes it possible to access a very diverse job pool for both parties in a single interface.

This pursuit of variation also strengthens the oligopolic outlook of digital labor platforms. To clarify with an example, you can find any kind of client and gig, and any kind of talent vice versa, on Fiverr or Upwork that you do not need to look at somewhere else. In addition, it seems that digital labor platforms have constructed a significant milestone in establishing a global division of labor in areas of intellectual/creative labor. Zelal, who works in global web-based digital labor platforms as a high-skilled creative worker, summarizes this situation as follows:

> On other platforms, the number of job postings is low, the number of employees is also low, the wheels are not turning. On this platform, the wheels are turning smoothly. There are freelancers from all over the world, there is no limit, it is global. There are all kinds of jobs. Just for my own skills, there is a new job posting every ten minutes worldwide.

4.3.2. Outsourcing of labor costs

One essential trademark of digital labor platforms is the hyper outsourcing capacity as it is discussed in previous chapters. Outsourcing is lived and experienced as precarization, anxiety, and decrease in conditions as it is essentially the moving of costs workers. Nearly all of the participants of the case study emphasized that digital labor platforms function for people who post jobs, or tasks as a mechanism of "get it done at the lowest price possible". They also emphasized that they see the logic behind it, rather than hire someone with all the costs of employment (regular payment, insurance etc.) get the task done by someone they do not have any responsibility over just in time, and in which frequency they needed it. While this appears in nearly every interview of this case study, Ekinsu (25), who is a graduate student, who had been significantly dependent on digital platform works while she was a college student seems to have experienced this cold fact and formulates it very well:

> Except for one, all the jobs that I found on Bionluk were from British and American employers. Those who work for them are all Turkish, if not from Eastern countries, no wonder. Also, students constitute the majority. By the way, they don’t make the payment in dollars either, don't get the wrong impression (smiling). Frankly, it's obvious that they serve the function of hiring the cheaper. For one thing, it gives work, it gives work to whomever it

> wants, whenever it wants. If it wants, it communicates again, if it doesn't, there is nothing left behind except the one-time fee. In jobs like mine, university students usually do it. The system is a bit based on this.

As one of the central foundations, in fact raison d'être, of digital labor platforms, outsourcing appears as an all-encompassing common characteristic in the case study. In the eyes of platforms workers, it is a fairly observable phenomenon that outsourcing, i.e. getting rid of any cost as much as possible, is the constitutive logic behind digital labor platforms. Yet, the effects of this mechanism on individuals may vary. Sina, for instance, is a digital illustrator who acquired interest in his current field of work when he first encountered with digital labor platforms. He thinks that he benefited from this tendency, for himself, in the beginning, whose words draw the framework in a well-put formulation:

> Normally, when you want to make money with this, what you will do professionally is to apply for jobs, have a nice portfolio and so on. This is difficult if you are still doing it as an amateur. But platforms like Fiverr are like 'Okay, you're doing this as a hobby, as an amateur, but that's okay. There are also customers here who want cheap services from amateur people. You can still make money from this. It can also turn into an opportunity and maybe it can develop your talent even more and make you do it professionally in the future.

4.3.2.1. Deprivation of rights and compensations

One of the most decisive elements of outsourcing is that no one undertakes costs of production and equipment, sick leaves, insurances etc. which constitutes a huge burden for workers. As Ekinsu, who had worked mostly in a local web-based labor platform in order to earn her keep in college years, states:

> I can of course see why they prefer to hire from the platforms. Companies only pay for each text ordered. And I got paid only when I can find a gig and complete the task. What happens when I am sick, or may laptop get broken is totally up to me.

İlknur, a 29-year-old graduate student who does translation jobs designed in small units and repetitive tasks with lower prices for each unit, put forward this phenomenon with all its clarity:

> I see freelancer.com as a low baller. The prices among laborers is really low. That's because the employer opens an advertisement, you send an offer to that advertisement. In this way, there is a competition on the bid. It seems to me more as a cheap labor market. That's why the employers there, for me, are there, to be honest. It's not sustainable in the long run for anyone. It wasn't for me too.

4.3.2.2. Global division of labor

As digital labor platforms take over the most useful schemas that digitalized capitalist relations of work and production have already generated, the division of labor and segmentation of wages and prices on the global scale is taken over and highly functionalized. Being also one important source for outsourcing, this global division of labor is also utilized via digital labor platforms in terms of contents of works being done. İsmail, a content creator doing platform works for additional income, lays out this segmentation succinctly:

> If you are from Turkey, you are very in between on global platforms. Let's assume there are three different user groups on the platform. Actually, it can be thought of a distinction like this: developed countries, developing countries, underdeveloped countries. Those who are from English speaking countries is advantageous as they are already native, especially in content writing jobs. They have an advantage in jobs with high expectations compared to you. What strategy can you apply then? Do the job they did for $50 for $25. But there is always a Pakistani who does it for 10 dollars.

The other aspect side of this global scale of labor market and segmentation is that it fosters the total mass of digital economy and participation to these platforms as it makes a wide range of skills and a heterogeneity of workers available. Lütfü (26), performing digital modelling in global digital labor platforms, exemplifies with his words:

> It's an open marketplace in essence. By typing keywords, you can find anything you want, an unlimited range. Do you want to make an animation for your website or a commercial for example? You can directly find one who can do it with one search just like that. As a freelancer, you actually tell people who are looking for these things to "get it from me". That it brings every party from a wide range together is their main thing. It is also a global platform. I mean, you get work from America, you get work from Argentina. I even get work from Guatemela all the time, for example.

There occurs a difference between Turkey based and global platforms at this point. Turkey based platforms has a scope most generally either limited with national market or even when global capital is involved the work is done through national mediators. In global platforms, on the other hand, there is an employer profile whose greater part are from Global North. A platform worker group from Global South, in this sense, fairly observable. There is a parallelism between both level of involvements and also intellectual/creative work divide of this case study with use of global platforms. Therefore, more professional, and fully engaged people's participation to the global division of labor that platforms bring forth is much higher in degree. Canan (30), for example, is an architect who had given a try to the digital labor platform in search for an out from regular jobs and limited income in labor market in his profession in Turkey. Although she could not reach a degree of involvement by which she can totally leave local markets restrictions behind, she utilizes freelance arrangements that she owes to the experience in this manner, which presents a case for how digital labor platforms utilizes global inequalities and both the meaning of Turkish case in this picture:

> I mean, the most important reason why these platforms have become so widespread is the dollar exchange rate in Turkey. If the dollar was 10 TL, it would not be so widespread. It has become quite widespread for 2-3 years due to the dollar exchange rate. I mean, people now have such a tendency because the motivation to earn dollar through these platforms is very attractive.

4.3.2.3. Just-in-time employment

In previous chapters, it is argued that digital labor platforms heighten some of the post-Fordist tendencies in the digital economy's context. One prominent mechanism among them is the ever-increasing flexibility of work process through fragmentation arrangements and contracts. In this sense, digital labor platforms maximize capitalist economy's capacity of on-call, disposable and just-in-time hiring practices, therefore getting rid of term and beneficiary costs of hiring. Sina's telling in case of creative works perfectly fits this characteristic:

> I think what makes platforms preferable is, first of all, looking for customers is a very challenging process. For example, if you are working in a sector that does not have continuity, that is, if you are working in a sector where a customer does not need you again and again. For example, like graphic design or logo design. How many times does a company need a logo? Fiverr is perfect because it constantly puts you in front of people who need you but who you may never meet in your life. You can have your one-off job done by someone you can choose at any time, you can see his/her portfolio, etc. from there.

While Lütfü, who almost totally make his living from the works he gets from global labor platforms, also demonstrates the need and use of just-in-time employment that digital labor platforms provide for the employers with his words, it is also observed that there is a varying scale in which it is a more likely possibility for fully engaged professional workers of turning one-time arrangements to periodical workflow:

> It's very expensive to hire someone when you compare. It's expensive to hire them and pay their salary, pay their insurance. Also, it's not the same job all the time. For example, they need a video once a month. So, they can buy the service from Fiverr. Also, when some customers trust you, they can give you a regular job every 2 months or 3 months. For example, one of my customers needs a video once a month and he gives it to me regularly.

4.3.3. Algorithmic management and labor process

The algorithmic management seems to occupy a greater importance for both labor process and the workers' experiences, and how the software design and use of data and algorithms brings about a power asymmetry in favor of platform companies, which is ensured by intentional design of overall process and mechanisms, becomes visible and seems even more vital in participants of the study. It seems to constitute an even more definitive part of the platform regime of work, providing an omnipotent position to platform companies, utilizing data they extract and control. The digital-Taylorist management and labor process design constitutes the heart of the issue as it is observable in the case study.

4.3.3.1. Rating and feedback systems

In this respect, algorithmic management techniques, fragmentation of arrangements work processes and opaque design of data control in favor of digital platforms keep

workers at edge of a constant struggle to get arrangements, to make a living. Tahsin (27), who is dependent on the income from web-based platform works as a college student, who sways a precarious life setting, struggling to stay on the average of minimum living standards without any other choice, experiences the dark face of the labor process design in these platforms:

> For example, not being able to deliver work on time is very problematic. They can deactivate your advert. Or if the customer complains saying “S/he did not do my job', you may be penalized. Or, for example, if s/he says that 'it's too bad' and gives a bad rating, then you’re finished. Very hard to fix it. It will affect your jobs very bad. It will be very difficult to clear it up.

4.3.3.2. In platform coins and gamification

The algorithms' impersonal and automated control operate also through mechanisms requiring active participations and attentions of workers. They have to employ certain strategies and join to the game, struggle every day to get arrangements, which appears as a huge invisible control over the process of work. One of the most characteristic examples of the-is situation is the in-platform coins that you can collect and use:

> It is hard to get the first job. This is the same on all platforms, both in Turkey and abroad. After you get the first job, it becomes easier to get a job. They make comments on your work and give you a rating. If you can be more visible, as a result of these processes, customers start to write to you directly instead of waiting for an offer. I got a lot of work that way. There is also a method to raise your ad: When you complete the job, the site gives you a score called "bicoin". When these scores accumulate, you can use them to promote your own ad. (Tahsin)

The high-experienced creative worker Altuğ portrays very well one of the inside mechanisms of those platforms directing processes of getting arrangements:

> There is something like a digital money system, like a token. It's called Connect. For example, for me to apply for your ad, I need to spend, for example, 5 Connect. The monthly system gives you 10 Connect if you don't have any premium membership. The number of ads you can apply for in a month, let's say five or ten. If you get a premium membership, it gives you more tokens. This makes sense to prevent bots that apply to all the ads all the time, but after a while, if you don't have a very, very good, very successful profile on Upwork or if you don't have a very successful portfolio or if you don't do very cheap work, it reduces your chances. That's why you need to

> look at the advertisements very often. You have to look at them all the time. You have to send messages to all of them that you are interested in its project, and you have to spend Connect for all of this, and if you don't get a job, maybe you have to buy those Connects at some point. You have to scroll constantly, you have to go around the pages, you have to go around and look at more ads, look at the prices, see how many people have applied for this, see if you have a chance. You need to keep up with this algorithm system and understand how it works.

4.3.3.3. Control over work

The fragmentation and atomization of contracts and tasks, even in creative and artistic works, constitutes the core of platformized modality of labor and work. If there exists a peculiar platform regime of work, it is the definitive essence of it since it is highly successful in creating a homogeneous labor process absorbing a heterogeneous group of labor in terms of profession and skill. Even there is an inevitable slight difference between one-day translation jobs and design projects taking couple of weeks, the general organizational schema belonging digital labor platforms encircles all. İsmail's experience on the topic, as a creative writer and content creator, represents very well how the intellectual tasks requiring a certain degree of free area is faced with a loss of control over what they do:

> You send a request for extended delivery time, and if the customer agrees, the time is extended, and this does not break your score for completing the project on time. Thus, customers do not see that you are delaying the work. But there is also such a thing that the algorithm makes you visible to a very few people if it realizes that you are procrastinating and delivering work over the normal time. Since you are shown to fewer people, you start getting fewer gigs. Also, if you are not active all the time, the algorithm throws you back anyway. You cannot be inactive.

4.3.3.4. Degradation, standardization and AI tools

In chapters 2 and 3, digital capitalism is shown, in light of the relevant literature, to have produce certain mechanisms revitalizing some older tendencies in the history of labor relations and management. Thanks to the operationalization of technological development, a kind of neo-Taylorism have emerged. Digital labor platforms, on the other hand, deepens these tendencies and mechanisms. In addition to just-in-time employment, piecework, and disposability; algorithmic management and control of

data seem to pose an even stronger problem and anxiety beyond the presumable degree, not only in terms of job security, or precarious existence in abstract terms, but also with several side effects and concrete examples. Zelal, for example, demonstrates well the way she experiences the outcomes of the processes of labor and work in digital labor platforms, intensely organized by algorithms and its management techniques:

> It takes a certain time to get a going in Fiverr, because it has a very unique algorithm. Also, you do not find the customers there. Customers find you. That's why in essence that it requires a serious time and effort. Because of this uncertainty, I can't focus on something else when I have a job in my hands, I worry that I can't do it well, I can't deliver it on time, my score will drop, etc. This also affects my social life, for example.

> You have to constantly look for it. I mean, you need to be constantly active. You need to follow things like you follow the stock market and you need to organize it so that you don't fall back. Then you have to apply for jobs regularly. When you make a deal, it's important to try to regularize it a little bit. Because you can earn your own salary by doing different jobs with different people all the time, but it will be much more tiring. (Canan)

There occurs a frequent response reflecting the strong concern and present effects of AI technologies towards it "take over jobs". The question seems relevant to all of the participants, meaning it concerns a certain degree of a variety of jobs, skills and professions, as the heterogeneity of the participants of the case study is taken into account. Translators and content writers have already significantly experienced the negative effects of AI tools, first notably of ChatGPT, such as decrease in wages and even loss of some arrangements. Designers, architects, and illustrators, on the other hand, conceive it waiting at the door, but not yet that concerning. There are three different answers below to my question concerning development of AI and future projections in terms of content and form of the work among different main groups of labor, i.e. intellectual and creative:

> After ChatGPT, the last team I worked with told me to write articles with ChatGPT. I said okay, but after ChatGPT, I started to get a lot of feedback from the work I received very little feedback before. In the meantime, I tried to learn how to use ChatGPT, I think I had figured it out a lot. But then something like this happened: I don't remember exactly now, but while I was

> getting 250 TL per word, I had a monthly income of 5.000-6.000 TL, the last time I was paid half of what I expected. Something like 1.000 TL, I was expecting 3.000. So, I said what's going on. Then they told me that after ChatGPT, we decided to give the money per article. I said that I wish you would have informed me before. Then nothing worked out. ChatGPT took my job from me (smiling). (Ekinsu)

> I can't predict much, but in our sector, that is, illustrators and digital illustrators, I don't know much about designers, but there is a danger of artificial intelligence taking our job away from us. Because it is more convenient and for example, I used to have a competitor on Fiverr, but when a customer searched for something related to our field, they would find 50 people. Now this number is high and more than half of them have artificial intelligence. So, what we do for 200 dollars, they do for 30-40 dollars. (Sina)

> It can affect it, of course. It affects it to a certain extent, because for example, in rendering works, for example, when there are interior renderings, there are certain things after all. There is a space, there are dimensions for it, it can be done according to that dimension. So, you are doing something a little more grounded. I think artificial intelligence cannot customize and automate them that much yet. If you want something hypothetical, it's okay. You know, if you tell me to create this kind of exterior space, create a facade design, of course, but it cannot customize it. At least right now. If it becomes customizable, of course it will affect us. It will affect us a lot. (Zelal)

4.3.4. Precarity and Subjectivity

In the case study, a serious and observable precarity especially for a certain group of participants, which is not separable from the general impoverishment in Turkey is observed. Parallel to the division lines grouping them, the degree of precarious conditions varies. Yet, lostness in job market resulted from disorganization and fragmentation, and alienation stemming from components of labor process peculiar to platform work seem to pave the way for anxiety, isolation, and feelings of insecurity for all groups of the participants. As people gravitate towards this type of work because of the precarious conditions and lack of security what they do, platform workers find themselves in the middle of greater uncertainty and insecurity. The reasons make them cling to digital labor platforms in spite of this situation, therefore, constitutes a crucial aspect to scrutinize. It seems, at first glance, as Berlant formulates: "affective conditions of precarity and how they can result in an ‘aspirational normativity’ – the state of trying to construct ‘a less-bad bad life’ (2007, p. 291) – goes a long way toward explaining why precarity supplies little political

motivation in situations where ‘dissatisfaction leads to reinvestment in the normative promises of capital and intimacy under capital’ (p. 281). (as cited in; Neilson & Rossiter, 2008, p. 57). Almost in every interview, it is observed that driving force behind participants' involvement in digital labor platforms is either low standards of living as a college student or as an employed individual, or it is problems in regular work, or classical freelance work, mostly job insecurity. Sina, with one of the most evident stories on how the precarious backgrounds of larger populations are drawn into and utilized by digital labor platforms, exemplifies the setting full of insecurity and fluctuations in which most of the platform workers struggle with:

> Compared to 2 years ago, the standard of living has dropped a lot. Even if you earn the same money, you definitely started not earning the same money by doing the same job. When the dollar was around 7-8 Turkish Lira, I mean, I am not someone who works very actively. I was earning around 1000 dollars on average, which was quite enough. I could go out whenever I wanted, I could spend as much money as I wanted. Of course, I'm not talking about a very luxurious life, I'm talking about going out with friends and drinking tea and coffee, eating, drinking beer and so on.1000 dollars at that time was really enough for me. I mean, the purchasing power of 1000 dollars at that time was very high. As this purchasing power started to decrease, I think I became more focused on this job. I think I'm working more now, but I'm not sure if I'm earning more, actually (smiling).

4.3.4.1. Loss of autonomy and alienation

About the "qualified" jobs and professions topic; there can be two notions detected along with different groups of participants. For the first group, the situation is that the qualities they bear remains unused what they do. For the intellectual workers who delivers writing, creative writing, translation, and content creation tasks, the conditions deepening alienation based on the discrepancy between their educational backgrounds, skills of their, is demonstrated by the following words of Ekinsu:

> Is there a connection between my education and my work? I mean, only language, I guess. English education and producing content in English, maybe that's the only connection. There is no other one, honestly. Just bullshit jobs (smiling).

The experiences and Tahsin and İlknur, undergraduate and graduate students who are dependent on web-based platform works, in which they use the skills they bear,

exemplifies the alienation fostered by algorithmic processes and design of digital labor platforms:

> When my friends and acquaintances heard that I was doing this kind of translation job, I did some work for a while with their recommendations. But of course, that was not that regular. Then, when it stopped, I had to find something, and I thought I would try Bionluk. I had a student loan, but apart from that, I was also earning a living from Bionluk. It is the same now, but of course, I spend as much time as I would work if I got a job.

> I took this job because I speak Spanish. Spanish to English translation. Okay. The job was actually more about fitting the format they wanted to be coded rather than translating. Open parentheses, close parentheses. The translations were already piece by piece, sentence by sentence. So, there was a loss of meaning.

It seems that workers have turbulent relationship with the idea of autonomy. A common theme in the interviews is incentive to get a more autonomous work arrangement in getting engaged in digital labor platforms, especially as opposed to office jobs or service jobs with standard contracts, or manual labor, to get free from control, surveillance, hierarchy, higher needs of reproduction and so on. Yet, they face new challenges in terms of autonomy, conception of which at this time exhibits turbulent nature. Interviewees, especially ones with stronger engagement with digital labor platforms, tend to talk about negative sides of platform work arrangement a lot, most of these sides are comprised of mechanisms deepening precarity and alienation. Moreover, one common theme is the loss of control or right to speak over the content of the tasks. All interviewees with creative skills emphasized this point. They do not seem, however, to conceive this as loss of autonomy or freedom in general. There seems to be a fractionated idea of freedom, in which incentive to get "freedom from" (control, discipline, surveillance etc.) is consciously articulated in the face of well-conceived mechanisms and processes against it. On the other hand, the other side of freedom, "freedom to" (work autonomously, have right to speak and control over what they do, be able to actively interact design labor process etc.) seems missing in level of consciousness. The more professional, and relatively skilled group of interviewees do not feel much of a lack of control over what they do in life, as opposed to the others. Yet, they stress that they don't have any control over the general process, they fluctuate between one job/task to other, over which they are

seemingly unable to affect. The precarious backgrounds of and fragmentation of labor relations also deepens the distance between their professions, what they urge to do independent of conditions and what they have to do in line with their skills and in platform world. Three different quotations below demonstrate the alienation and turbulent relationship with the idea of autonomy that people engaged in creative work in digital labor platforms experience:

> I mean, our school is on contemporary art. I was also dealing with video art a little bit. Video art is not something that can be bought and sold. Of course, museums buy certain things. But for a new graduate or a young artist, this is not something that is very possible. It's not a commodity that can be bought and sold, but you will enter competitions, you will win competitions, you will live off the money you get from there until you make a name for yourself. It was difficult for me. My economic situation was not very good. I need to make money fast. You know, I thought that if I made money quickly, maybe I would think about going back to the art sector, but then I didn't think about it at all (laughing). (Sina)

> If I didn't need to make money, I would completely choose to make short films and documentaries. You know, I would watch movies for a week, and the next week I would shoot the best scenes of the movies I watched and try to do something. The jobs on the platform are not like that at all. At most, they are jobs where students can earn their pocket money, so I think there's no point other than that. But at least for a student, if you have a decent camera, if you have a computer, you can edit something and earn your pocket money. But piecemeal work is meaningless. As I said, it cannot be satisfying for someone with ideals, or even for anyone in this sector. (Onur)

> For example, I started to look from a more individualistic perspective, which has not been existent before. Basically, it is because I had more control over my life. A desire had begun to appear towards a better life which is under my own control. It's about the percentage of work in your life. Apart from that, I still sometimes feel the lack of this: I mean, I look for the lack of a collective work. For example, the work I do. Even if the things I make are produced somewhere, I don't know that they are produced. You know, seeing it being produced is actually one of the things I want to witness. In university life, I was a little bit on that side, more design-oriented, social-oriented projects. I was both interested and more focused. But then suddenly I had to work, I had to pay rent. After that, I started to feel that the capacity of my brain was already decreasing. And I'm actually not that much of a person who can work my mind in a coordinated way. I mean, I wanted to be involved in social projects, but these are things that require your time, and your priority inevitably becomes maintaining your life. (Canan)

4.3.4.2. Irregularity of income and insecurity

The workers who have a lower degree of dependence to the platforms, who utilizes their arrangements as additional income, and mostly the ones exhibit intellectual work like wiring and translation suffer differently from the insecurity and irregularity of income. İlknur's words exhibits another remarkable example:

> I was convinced to work 3 days a week. Out of necessity, I mean, I had no income when I graduated. I could take that much with my thesis. Then I found someone for 12 dollars an hour, and he was going to give me a regular job. But I never had a regular schedule like I wanted. I never knew more or less what I was earning every month. It was like that for a few months, but then things changed.

The situation is somewhat different in essence for the other half of the participants. They use and work upon their creative skills. They do architectural designs, they draw models, illustrations, they produce artistic work. Yet, in the context of management, fragmentation, and automatization that their labor is subjected to, the alienation from the process of production and to the product deepens. Creativity being subjected to data-driven technical management processes, tiny, repetitive, unqualified tasks becoming parts of creative work and fragmented design of labor process in digital labor platforms seem to empower the feeling of alienation**.** All seem to confirm the paradoxical process that creative and intellectual labor undergoes in the framework of digital Taylorist arrangements of capitalist organization, which is discussed in chapter 2.

> While someone wants a design, for example, of a bathroom, someone else wants a part of a project with very large blocks. You need to have, however, the full grasp of the whole project to be able to do that specific part of it. But you're not. Then the next day someone else asks for a table drawing. This leads to a serious disconnection with what I do. I mean, I would like to do interior architecture if I didn't have to worry about earning money. I would like to take part in more projects that attach more importance to design, look at the human scale, prioritize the human scale but I don't want to work the way I work now. (Canan)

4.3.4.3. Tactics and cooperation, expectations

Advantages of working online through digital labor platforms still make itself charmful. The reason behind the most participants' preference is more about the

uneasiness with regular jobs. Getting rid of boss repression, face to face surveillance and workplace discipline seem like common motivations. The burden of daily reproduction is another uneasiness. At this point, digital labor platforms appear as the easiest way to find arrangements as old forms of freelancing is not compatible for anyone who wants to get jobs. As Canan, who works also in regular standard employment schema, and also through web-based labor platform arrangements, summarizes:

> Because there are so many people who think like me, from our age group, I think everyone is looking for a similar way out. So, I think these platforms also create an option; that's why I think they are valuable.

On the other hand, it has an accuracy of a fact that work through digital labor platforms, single handedly, is incapable of providing a sustainable income and life plan. Anxiety stemming from the lack of a sustainable arrangement, job security, plus a sense of no future. Yet, at the same time, participants feel rather "free" compared to regular job arrangements. This is also a point of difference between groups of the sample of this study. People with the highest level of involvement, who are somehow currently able to make a living in this way, seem to underline the advantageous of work in labor platforms compared to those for whom it is just a necessity. As Tahsin emphasizes: "Since it's something I can do on the computer, it's obviously very tiring for the brain, but the physical fatigue is less, you can do it at home". On the other hand, the corrosive and disadvantageous sides of platform work are also emphasized by both groups:

> I mean, I imagine working in an office, at least it would be a decent job. You don't know what you are in freelancing. I prefer a job with security. Things can end just like that, and your life is also very unpredictable. The thing I miss the most about white-collar workers is that there is nothing on your mind when you leave work, at least that's what the white-collar workers around me say. But you're not like that when you're in freelance. So there is always something on your mind. (Ekinsu)

> It's never sustainable. First of all, I think everyone should have one job. Single jobs already take up enough of our time. When I only freelance or chase work from the platform, for example, when you look at it hourly, weekly or monthly, let me put it this way, even if I work 20-30 hours a week, it tires me out mentally. After all, maybe I work 20 hours a month in excel,

> but reviewing and looking at the project they send me.... It's always in your mind. Having something to do while sitting, that is, when you are out with your friend or watching TV, there is always psychologically something I have to do. It's not like, I left the office at six, I closed the computer, I don't think anymore. I mean, there is always something going on in your head and I think it affects you a lot. (Canan)

All participants seem willing to get systematize at least some of the arrangements they got involved. The main motivation is to get a certain degree of certainty and security for sure. They seek to transfer from digital labor platforms to non-platform freelance work arrangements to a certain degree. They are seemingly distant from the idea of organization and unionization, resulting mainly from the structure of the market rather than their approach, yet all exhibit forms of cooperation and solidarity in the individual level. There are two different quotations below from interviews to the questions concerning possibility of acting together and organization:

> I mean, I don't think so, because for one thing I don't know if such a joint action is possible through the platform. Apart from that, I'm not sure if it's realistic, it was something that crossed my mind at first, but then I gave up. So it didn't seem realistic, yes. That's why; everyone is already working, so even if you work individually, you will work at the same rate. Even if you work with eight people, you will work at the same rate. And your wages are also increasing gradually. As the years go by, as experience and so on increases, your model library also develops. You can also use the models you made before. The models you bought before are already in your library. For example, if I work with someone, that person can work under me for 15 dollars on the platform instead of working for 10 dollars an hour. By using my inventory, he can both earn more money, and I can make money on him because he earns less money than me. So frankly, I would think of working with designers and being in a managerial position myself, you would make more money either way. Because people are already greedy for less, this is a fact. You pay a lot of money to this person, that is, a person with little experience. I'm not a capitalist, don't get me wrong (laughing). (Lütfü)

> Now I'm going to say something incredibly pessimistic, okay? Nothing can be done. Short and clear answer (smiling) You know why? Now, for example, especially in our age group, it is not possible to bring people like me, who are too lazy to read books, together under the same roof without a common interest. Since the audience you are talking about is already a very large audience, a diverse audience, it becomes even more difficult. It becomes impossible. For example, even if you talk only about architects, look, I'm not talking about our age group, there is a chamber. There is a chamber called the Chamber of Architects. I mean, this is a chamber that has existed for years. But recently it has become extremely dysfunctional. It has

> no function even in the classical profession today, how can anything be done on the platform? The thing that comes to my mind is unionization, but I don't know how that would work, I mean, it can't represent anything in general, it's very difficult when I think about it on a larger scale. (Canan)

4.4. Concluding remarks

Platform model seems to have established a permanent place to itself, constitutes a peculiar modality of flexible, fragmented, and disorganized work disposition under digital phase of post-Fordist regime of work. It seems to constitute a solid position to itself inside this general framework. In this sense, with its constitutive and novel features, such as hyper-outsourcing mechanism, data monopolization, algorithmic management, digital organization techniques, it can be said that there exists a platformized regime of work. Albeit it may produce different effects, or common effects in different degrees in certain respects, digital labor platforms established a total effect on businesses, sections of labor, and workers it absorbs. They can be seen, in conclusion, a solid and peculiar dimension of relations and processes of labor and work today; yet they are still only one among other.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

On March 11, The European Parliament agreed on a proposed legal presumption named "the directive on improving working conditions in platform work", as a result of the ongoing struggle for couple of years (Council of the European Union, 2024a).[8] The two main issues that the directive focuses on are employment status and algorithmic management in platform work processes (Brave New Europe, 2024a). The miscategorized "self-employment" status which causes a serious set of problems and being deprived of rights such as pensions, paid leaves on sickness, holidays etc., compensations and so on, is the first issue addressed in the directive. Whether or not that platform workers can be categorized as "self-employed" despite the fact that they are mostly economically dependent, deprived of control over work and therefore autonomy, and they are being directed and controlled most of the time by the platform. The second main topic is about the algorithmic management and use and control of data. Digital labor platforms being non-transparent and omnipotent in the course of relation with the workers is addressed a central cause of the inequalities and problems that workers suffer (Council of the European Union, 2024b). The directive makes provisions to make algorithms, automated decision mechanisms and data use by digital labor platforms transparent and accessible by workers. Knowledge of how algorithms work, how platforms monitor workers behavior and processes of work, and construct a model of surveillance must be open to workers, and they shall be able to contest these mechanisms, and communication channels among workers must be provided in order for a more just and less asymmetrical employment relation according to the directive. And last but not least, the directive presumes that organizations representing workers like unions can receive information on the data

[8] The full text of the directive can be reached here: https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7212-2024-ADD-1/en/pdf

and structure of platform companies possess, how algorithms operate, processes of work are designed and conducted.

The platform work directive seems to be able to touch upon the most decisive dimensions of the field, and the most prominent sources of problems that platform workers experience; which are in brief loss of rights and job security stemming from the employment status and outsourcing of labor costs, power asymmetry and lack of control over work and organization as a result of non-transparent and automated design of algorithmic management processes and data use. The unions and workers' organizations made a statement on the historical achievement of such a progressive directive being passed (Brave New Europe, 2024b). They emphasize in addition that digital platforms exploiting the labour of individuals in precarious situations and reproducing is not considered in the text. These three phenomena overlap, for the most part, with the essential mechanisms and dispositions of platform work that are of constitutive importance as argued in this thesis. Digital labor platforms, firstly, are currently comprising the ultimate model for the Capital's interest on getting rid of the costs of labor and costs of maintenance, constituting a novel outsourcing mechanism. By the environment provided by the digital infrastructure and the accompanying economic schema, digital labor platforms layered a globally distributed method of laying costs on the labor, which causes a serious deprivation of rights, compensations, job security etc. Secondly, the use and extraction of data, which occupies the center of digital capitalist economy in an increasing manner, and algorithmic techniques made possible this growing role, appears as what gives the unique and novel nature of regime of work eventualized in digital labor platforms. This fresh model of management and labor control seems to be resulting in a power asymmetry in favor of platforms, lack of control and autonomy for workers. Thirdly, both as a result of these altering set of mechanisms and in the course of an ongoing historical process, digital labor platform model is highly based upon an overall precarization of waged labor populations, as well as producing results perpetuating it.

In this thesis, digital labor platforms are investigated beginning from the emergence in a historical perspective and the underlying mechanisms in a context where

relations of work and employment have been transforming. As digital labor platforms are comprised of a high degree of variety of types, this thesis focuses on one type of them: web-based digital labor platforms. The main intention of the thesis was to evaluate how the transformations that digital labor platforms bring in the processes and relations of labor and work are experienced by workers. The case study investigates the novel composition of techniques, schemas of management, and elements of labor process employed in digital labor platforms by looking at how they are lived by the direct subjects of this transformation and their effect on labor. Relying on the literature and a case study conducted in Turkey, the novelties of the platform regime of work in practice are investigated, with a specific focus on intellectual and creative work experiencing its own peculiar contradictions and transformations within this emergent type of work and employment. The mechanisms underlying this new model of work, algorithmic management and control, a new kind of digital Tayloristic principles, and their effects on labor, autonomy, and creativity are observable in the experiences of web-based platform workers in Turkey. It is argued in this thesis that digital labor platforms constitute a schema of labor process and relations of work on their own, which is located inside the greater mass of the global digital capitalist economy and ongoing tendencies of post-Fordist dispositions of relations and processes of labor and work. They also carry new, unique, and indigenous elements, which generate a particular composition. There appear, in this respect, three essential mechanisms determining processes of work, creating this particular composition in digital labor platforms: i) outsourcing of labor costs, ii) data monopolization and algorithmic management, and iii) precarization and fragmentation. Through these essential mechanisms generating a significant transformation in respect of relations and processes of labor and work, the transformation that workers experience is evaluated in this thesis.

Increasing numbers of people prefer or somehow participate in this specific modality of labor. The foremost reasons behind this are the search for autonomous work setting and compensation for the difficulties in regular employment or local markets. In other words, people make gigs in digital labor platforms because of their desire towards a more flexible, freer array in terms of social relations and temporal and spatial aspects. The current outlook of the labor market in Turkey, relations of work

and labor, and affordability have profound effects on this case. In addition, it is also observed that a significant portion of people ran out of choice as they suffered from face-to-face jobs and unemployment. It is also observed in the case study's findings of this thesis. Nevertheless, there are a set of problems they suffer: a decrease in wages, uncertainty, fragmentation, unpredictable hours, loss of control over work, lack of social security, isolation, insecurity, and irregularity in terms of income and arrangements. Digital labor platforms lean significantly on already existent prevalent precarity, while with the novel control and management mechanisms through data and algorithms deepen it as it causes experiences of uncertainty, low wages, and irregularity and insecurity. Outsourcing of labor costs also functions as the catalyzer of this picture. Intellectual/creative labor suffers distinctively from power asymmetry in platform architecture, loss of autonomy, Taylorist methods, rating system, impersonal control, rankings, feedbacks. All of this strengthens feelings of alienation, isolation, loss of autonomy, and uncertainty towards the future that are widely observed in the case study, although there are differences with respect to the level of dependence and involvement. The global division of labor, outsourcing mechanism put to use by digital labor platforms in favor of companies, just-in-time employment, stemming insecurity is experienced. It is observed that a spread precarization and fragmentation is valid and experienced; at the same time, workers exhibit agency by employing tactics, cooperation, or individual struggle. This new outlook of historical process of precarization would be open to change in any direction and be decided in the course of contradictions back and forth. As the unions and workers' organizations on platform work emphasizes: "Whatever happens, the fight goes on" (Brave New Europe, 2024b).

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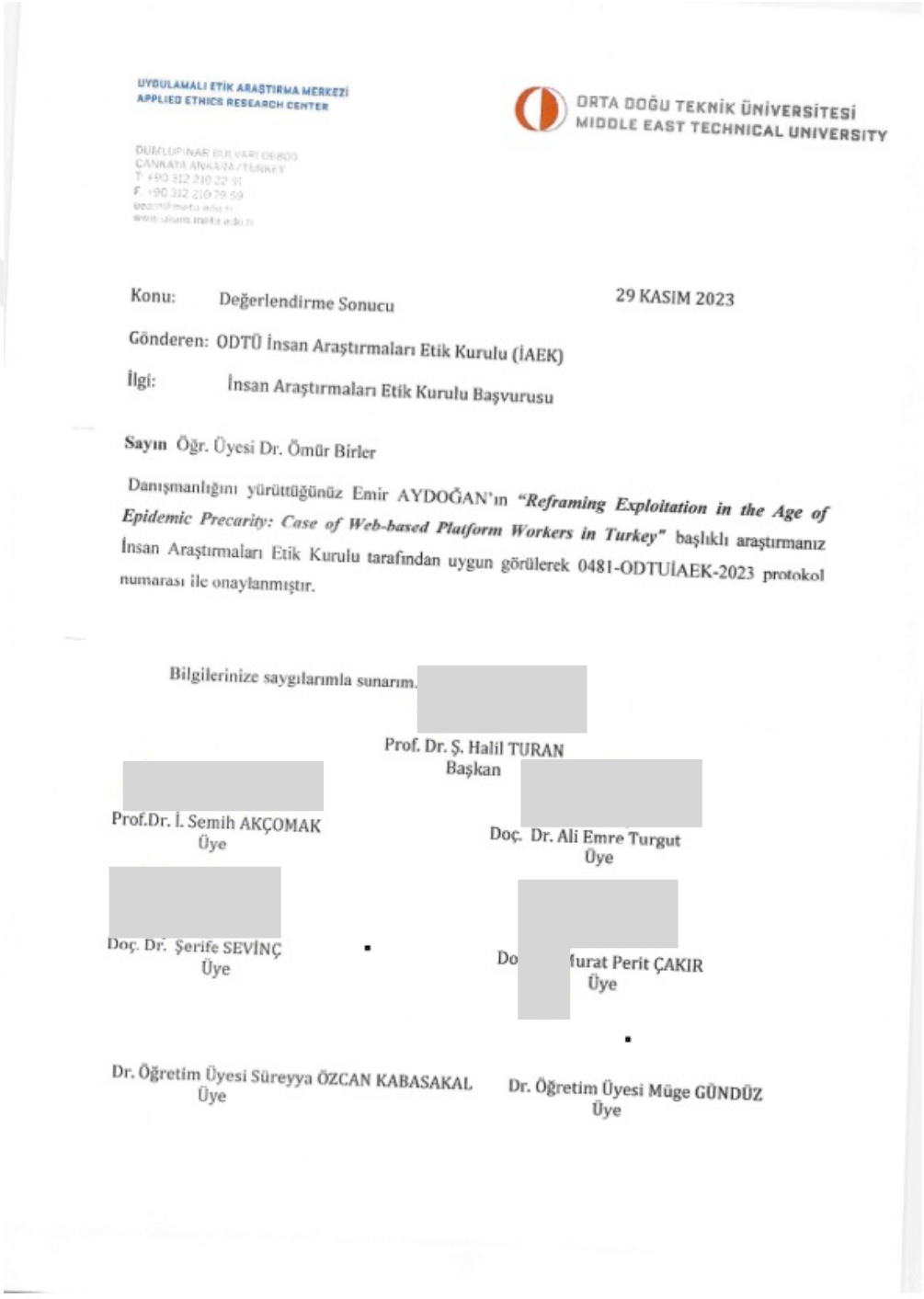
APPENDICES

A. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE



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29 KASIM 2023

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Öğr. Üyesi Dr. Ömür Birler

Danışmanlığını yürüttüğünüz Emir AYDOĞAN'ın ***"Reframing Exploitation in the Age of Epidemic Precarity: Case of Web-based Platform Workers in Turkey"*** başlıklı araştırmanız İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülerek 0481-ODTUİAEK-2023 protokol numarası ile onaylanmıştır.

Bilgilerinize saygılarımla sunarım.

Prof. Dr. Ş. Halil TURAN
Başkan

Prof.Dr. İ. Semih AKÇOMAK
Üye

Doç. Dr. Ali Emre Turgut
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Doç. Dr. Şerife SEVİNÇ
Üye

Do[illegible]urat Perit ÇAKIR
Üye

Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Süreyya ÖZCAN KABASAKAL
Üye

Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Müge GÜNDÜZ
Üye

B. SET OF QUESTIONS USED IN THE INTERVIEWS / MÜLAKATLARDA KULLANILAN SORU SETİ

1. Katılımcının dijital emek platformlarıyla olan ilişkisi ve geçmişine ilişkin sorular

- Hangi platform(lar) üzerinden iş alıyorsun?
- Ne zamandan beri platformlar üzerinden çalışıyorsun, platforma ne zaman kaydoldun?
- Platform üzerinden yaptığın işlerle mi geçiniyorsun/gelirinin ne kadarını oluşturuyor?
    - Tamamen platform üzerinden yaptığım işlerle geçiniyorum
    - Gelirimin hepsini değil ama çoğunluğunu/önemli bir kısmını oluşturuyor
    - Düzenli bir işim var, daha iyi bir standartta yaşamak için platform işi yapmam gerekiyor/iyi oluyor
    - Düzenli bir işim var, ek gelir olarak, para biriktirmek için platform işi yapıyorum
    - Öğrenciyim, platform üzerinden iş yaparak geçinmeye çalışıyorum
- Tek gelir kaynağın platform değilse kaç farklı iş yapıyorsun?
- Para kazanmaya ilk platformda mı başladın, daha önce de çalışıyor muydun?
- Eğitimin nedir? Hangi üniversitede, hangi bölümde okudun/okuyorsun?
- Seni platformlarda çalışmaya yönelten nedir?
- Bu şekilde çalışmayı önceden de düşünüyor muydun? Bu çalışma biçimiyle, platformlarla ilk nasıl tanıştın, nerden aklına düştü de o hesabı açtın?

2. Katılımcının mesleğinin/eğitiminin/becerilerinin yaptığı işlerin içeriği ve platformla olan ilişkisine yönelik sorular

- Platformlar üzerinden yaptığın işleri sıralayabilir misin? Ne gibi bir iş/işler yapıyorsun?
- Mesleğin nedir, ne iş yaptığını nasıl tanımlarsın?
- Platform üzerinden yaptığın işlerde mesleğini/eğitimini aldığın becerilerini mi kullanıyorsun?

- Yaptığın işlerde kullandığın becerileri platform üzerinden çalışıp para kazanmak için mi geliştirdin?
- Para kazanma zorunluluğun olmasa da bu alanda çalışmak, bu beceriyle uğraşmak, vakit harcamak ister miydin?
- Mesleğini/becerini daha önceden platform dışı bir şekilde icra ediyor muydun? Tam zamanlı bir yerde çalışıyor muydun örneğin, ya da başka yolla freelance işler yapıyor muydun?
- Önceki işinle/diğer işinle platform üzerinden çalışmayı kıyaslayabilir misin? Hangisini tercih edersin? Avantajları ve dezavantajları nelerdir?

3. Katılımcının üyesi olduğu dijital emek platformundaki işleyiş ve genel mekanizmalar, platform şirketi karşısında konumu, iş/sipariş aldığı müşteri karşısındaki, yaptığı iş üzerindeki söz hakkı, emek sürecindeki pozisyonu, üretim ve çalışma sürecindeki deneyimlerine ilişkin sorular

- Çalıştığın platformu tasarım, seçme süreçleri, müşteriyle ilişki açısından değerlendirir misin?
- İş yaptığın müşteri karşısında nasıl bir konumda oluyorsun, senin patronun gibi mi, senden sipariş alan, senin yönlendirmene bağlı birisi gibi mi?
- Platformun/sitenin bu ilişkideki rolü ne?
- Ödeme mekanizmasını biraz anlatır mısın?
- Ödeme veya başka bir konuda bir anlaşmazlık çıkarsa bu nasıl çözülüyor? Hakkınızın yendiğini düşündüğünüz oldu mu hiç? Platform burada ne gibi bir işlev görüyor?
- İşi aldığında teslim tarihine kim karar veriyor? Müşterinin istediği tarihe göre mi yoksa projeye başlamadan ortaklaşa mı kararlaştırıyorsunuz?
- İşi/projeyi aldığın andan teslime kadarki süreçte, herhangi bir kontrol, denetim mekanizması işliyor mu? Platformun sağladığı araçlar var mı bu bağlamda?
- İş alma, işi tamamlama, teslim etme-ödeme süreçlerini sen dizayn etsen neleri değiştirirsin?
- Platformlar üzerinden çalışmaya başladığından beri işler nasıl değişti? Ücretler, iş arama-bulma, iş sürecinin yönetimi?

- Çalışacağın saatleri, nerede çalışacağını nasıl düzenliyorsun? Evde mi çalışıyorsun, dışarda bir mekânda mı? Planlı mı çalışırsın yoksa saatlerin belirsiz midir?
- Günün ne kadar vaktini iş yapmaya harcıyorsun?
- Tamamen off gün verdiğin oluyor mu?
- Toplamda ortalama ne kadar çalışıyor, ne kadar kazanıyorsun?

4. Katılımcının deneyimleri, iş ve çalışmayla kurduğu ilişki, dijital emek platformları üzerine düşünceleri, gelecek beklentisi, gündelik pratikleri, örgütlenme eğilimi, sosyal bağlamı öznel mülahazalarına ilişkin sorular

- Sence platformların sağladığı çalışma imkânı bir fırsat/avantaj mı?
- Düzenli, yarınını öngörebildiğin bir gelir elde edebiliyor musun?
- Bu tarz platformlarda çalışmanın doğurduğu ne gibi fırsatlar ve dezavantajlar var?
- Hayatına platform işleri yaparak devam edebileceğini düşünüyor musun?
- Orta vadeli planlarında neler var?
- Platform üzerinden iş yaparken kullandığın becerilerini kullandığın düzenli bir işte çalışmak ister miydin?
- Seninle aynı platformda ya da benzer platformlarda çalışan arkadaş, eş, dost ya da tanıdığın herhangi biri var mı?
- Seninle aynı platformda ya da benzer platformlarda çalışan insanlarla iletişim halinde misin?
- Bu platformlarda çalışan insanların durumlarına yönelik gözlemlerin nelerdir?
- Bu şekilde para kazanmanız çevrenizde aşina olunan bir durum mu? Öyleyse (veya değilse) nasıl karşılanıyor, ne gibi tepkiler alıyorsun?
- Yaptığın işler hoşuna gidiyor mu, seni tatmin ediyor mu?
- İşinden, kazancından, yaşam standardından memnun musun?
- Çalışmama lüksün olsa, şu an para kazanmak için yaptığın şeyleri tamamen bırakır mısın?
- Sence platform modeli daha da yaygınlaşıp, klasik düzenli çalışmanın yerini alabilir mi?
- Çalıştığın platformun ve genel olarak bu modelin artılar ve eksileri neler?

- Platform işine başlarken ne bekliyordun, şimdi bakınca nasıl bir kıyas yaparsın beklentilerinle buldukların arasında?
- Hızlı değişen bir alanda çalışmak kaygı verici gelmiyor mu?
- Sigorta, emeklilik, sosyal güvence gibi konularda ne düşünüyorsun?
- Tasarruf yapabiliyor musun?
- İşini kaybetmek, şu an kazandığın parayı düzenli olarak kazanamamak, şu anki hayat standartlarını kaybetmek gibi kaygıların var mı?
- Ne kadar sürdürebilirsin bu işi? Hayatını böyle geçirebilir misin sence?
- Gelecek adına umutlu musun? Gelecekten ne bekliyorsun?

C. A SAMPLE INTERVIEW / ÖRNEK MÜLAKAT

Platformla olan geçmişin nedir? Hangi platformlarda çalışıyorsun?

Platform tanımına uyan ilk çalıştığım yer Bionluk. Daha önce başka yerlere de ilan vermiştim aslında. Mesela ilankedisi diye bir site vardı, sonra sanırım kapanmış bile olabilir şu an. Zaten ben çalışırken de bir süre sonra aktifliğini yitirmişti, bir şey düşmemeye başlamıştı. Senin platform tanımına da girmeyebilir zaten. Orada ilk olarak çeviriyle girmiştim. 2018 falandı yıl sanırım. Onun farkı şuydu; o aslında böyle gazetelerde iş ilanı sayfası olurdu ya, onun online versiyonu gibiydi. Kendileri de parayı siteye reklam alarak kazanıyordu. Bionluk gibi işin ücretinden komisyon almak gibi bir durum yoktu. O yüzden bilmiyorum senin platform tanımına girer mi? Ondan sonra ilk denediğim yer Bionluk oldu. Oraya da şöyle girdim: çevredeki eş dost duyunca bu tarz işler yaptığımı onların yönlendirmesiyle, tanıdık aracılığıyla vs. birilerine iş yapmıştım bir süre. Sonra onlar kesilince bir şey bulmam gerekti ve Bionluk'u deneyeyim dedim. Profil açtıktan sonra ilk işi almam 2-3 hafta sürmüştü diye hatırlıyorum. Sonra ilk işi alınca yavaş yavaş artmaya başladı. Zaten çalışma mekanizmaları da o şekilde. Sen iş aldıkça daha yukarıda göstermeye başlıyor platform seni. Yani yakın zamana kadar aktif şekilde devam ediyordum ama bırakmak üzereyim, sadece bir süredir düzenli iş veren müşterilerin verdiklerini yapıyorum, tek tük onlar da. Mülakatlara giriyordum bir süredir, umutlu olduğum için Bionluk'ta iş aramayı bıraktım. Elimdeki son birkaç iş de bitmek üzere.

Bir tek Bionluk'ta mı çalıştın?

Evet.

Öğrenciyken geçim sıkıntın olduğu için başladın değil mi? Hala da öyle sanırım. Bütçenin ne kadarını bu işlerden kazandığın para oluşturuyordu başladığında? Önemli ölçüde bu işlerle mi geçiniyordun? Şimdi nasıl?

Tabii. Şöyle KYK kredisi vardı, onun dışında buradan geçiniyordum. Bir süre sonra bana yetmeye başladı kazandığım para, evden para almıyordum. İki yıldır KYK yok zaten. Büyük oranda buradan geçindim hep. Şu an da öyle keza.

Çeviri mi yapıyorsun?

Çeviri de vardı, içerik üretimi de var.

İçerik üretimi derken?

Değişebiliyor. Bazen daha böyle reklam metinleri bazen de web sitelerinin Google'da daha yüksek pozisyon edinebilmesi için ihtiyaç duyduğu yazılar, SEO denen. Sektör olarak soruyorsan çok var. Ne bileyim, halı kilim üzerine de yazmışımdır, futbol üzerine olan da vardır. Bilim kurgu sitesi için film incelemesi de vardır. Ürün tanıtımına yönelik, ne bileyim biri web sitesinde hırka satıyor, hırka üzerine yazı yazıyorsun. Çeviriler de değişiyordu bu açıdan. Hukuk makalesi de çevirmişimdir. ilankedisi'nden gelenlerin bir tanesi elektrik elektronik mühendisliği üzerine bir metindi mesela.

Bundan önce çalışmıyordun değil mi?

Valla bunlar harici iş deneyimim... Şeyde bir çalışmıştım, kuzenimin kafesi vardı Eskişehir'de ama önce miydi sonra mıydı bilmiyorum. Çok ciddi bir deneyim değildi ama, tanıdığın yanında gibi.

Bu Bionluk nasıl çalışıyor peki?

Şimdi Bionluk'a girerken şöyle. Sanırım şu an üyelik ücretsiz. Ben üye olurken 30 lira gibi bir para ödemiştim, işte şimdinin 100 lirası gibi. Daha sonra üye olduktan sonra bir paneli var sitenin. O panelde sen çalışan arayan insanların ilanlarını görüyorsun, onlar ihtiyaçlarını yazıyor işte, tahmini bütçelerini yazıyor, sen de başvurabiliyorsun onlara. Bunun haricinde onlar da sana ulaşabiliyor direkt. İşverenler de biz nasıl iş ilanlarını görüyorsak, onlar da bizim profillerimizi görüyor. Seçip uygun olduğunu kişiye direkt yazabiliyorlar. Ben genelde bu şekilde alıyordum işleri, benim başvurduğum azdır. Çünkü ben epey yükselmiştim. Şu anda ilanımı aktifleştirdiğimde direkt gelir mesaj.

Çok iş almış olman mı sağlıyor bunu? Seni yukarı taşıyan ne?

Tabii. Şöyle şimdi ilk işi almak zor. Bu bütün platformlarda böyle, Türkiye'dekilerde de yurtdışındakilerde de böyle. İlk işi aldıktan sonra iş alman daha kolaylaşıyor. İlk işi aldıktan sonra da bu var. Aslında işi almak değil sadece de sana yorum yapıyorlar ve puan veriyorlar. Benim puanım 4.97 gibi bir şeydi 5 üzerinden. O yüzden çok üstlerde gözüküyordum. Daha görünür olduğunda da direkt sana yazıyorlar kendileri teklif beklemek yerine. Ben o şekilde iş aldım epey. Bir de ilanını yükseltmek için şöyle bir yöntem de var. İşi tamamlayınca site sana "bicoin" denen bir puan veriyordu. O puan da şu işe yarıyor, maddi bir değeri yok. Ama örneğin 10 bin tane birikti. Sen 1500 puan kullanarak ilanının daha yukarda çıkmasını sağlayabiliyorsun. İşte şu kadar süre yukarda gözüksün gibi bir şey için kullanabiliyorsun.

Aldığın eğitimle bir yakınlığı var mı peki yaptığın işlerin?
Başlangıçta aslında eğitimini aldığım şeye yakın işler geliyordu diyebiliriz. Mesela Bionluk'a ya da ilankedisi'ne ilan verdiğimde. Orada zaten yazıyorsun işte

ODTÜ'lüyüm, Tarih okuyorum şunu yapıyorum, İngilizce eğitim alıyorum vs. diye. O zaten bir artı getiriyor muhtemelen. Bir de şöyle bir etkisi oluyor. Benim ilk aldığım çeviri işlerinden biri örneğin bir akademisyenin şeylerini çevirmiştim, böyle Meksika'da eski tarihlerde kullanılan müzik aletleri ile ilgili bir metin vardı Türkçeye çevrilmesi gereken. Muhtemelen tarih öğrencisi olduğum, tarih makaleleri okuduğum için bana verdi. Tarih olmasa siyaset biliminden çevirdiğim şeyler de oluyordu. Çeviri konusunda alana yakın şeyler görülebiliyor.

Platform işlerine çeviriyle başladın sen. Bundan önce çeviri yapıyor muydun?

Ya aslında bundan önce bir tane çeviri yaptım. Bir tanıdığın bir arkadaşının çeviriye ihtiyacı varmış. Tahsin ODTÜ'de okuyor, İngilizcesi vardır diye düşünüp "Bunu çevirebilir misin?" demişti. Tamam bir deneyeyim dedim. Deneyip çevirdiğimi görünce dedim ki demek ki ben yapabilirim böyle bir iş fikri oluştu. Ondan önceki deneyimim buydu. Platforma kaydolup çeviri ilanı verme fikri oluşmasına da yardımcı olmuştu yani para kazanma ihtiyacım ortaya çıktığında.

Şunu sorayım; bu Biounluk'ta senin profilini müşteriler görebiliyor, yazabiliyor dedin ya. Sen de ilanları görüp başvurabiliyorsun. Bionluk'a girerken 20 lira verdin. Şimdi yok hatta bu ücret. Bionluk komisyon mu alıyor ne yapıyor?

Komisyon alıyor evet. % 20 olması lazım. İyi de alıyor.

Nasıl işliyor?

İşin bedeli 500 lira olarak gözüküyorsa ilanda, sen o işi yaptığında 400 yatıyor sana. O anlama geliyor. O sebeple teklif verirken mesela onu düşünerek vermen gerek.

Peki ödeme güvencesiyle ilgili bir şey var mı? Sen işi attın örneğin, platform bir kontrol sağlıyor mu? Nasıl gerçekleşiyor transaction?

Evet, platform bir kontrol sağlıyor. Hatta Bionluk'un tercih edilme nedeni de bu aslında, ödeme güvenliği. İnsanların bu komisyonu göze alma nedeni de bu. Seni hem müşteriye ulaştırıyor ama onun dışında ödemeni alabilmeni sağlıyor. Biounluk'tan ödemeyi alamamak diye bir şey, yani şöyle olabilir, banim başıma hiç gelmedi ama karşı taraf çok sürüncemede bırakırsa. Örneğin işi verirsin, beklentiye de uygundur. Ama parayı ödememek için olmamış bu der, ama kullanır falan. Benim başıma hiç gelmedi ama çözüm platformu gibi tam adını hatırlayamadığım bir mekanizması var Bionluk'un. İncelemeye alıyorlar öyle bir durumda, kimin haklı olduğuna karar veriliyor. Ama ben hiç böyle bir şey yaşamadım. Onun dışında karşı taraf parayı gönderdiği sürece ödemeyi alıyorsun. Zaten ödeme kısmı şöyle işliyor; ilanın aktifleşmesi için alıcının ödemeyi platforma yapmış olması lazım zaten. Alıcı ödemeyi yapıyor, sen işi teslim edene kadar para Bionluk'un havuzunda tutuluyor.

Sen teslim ediyorsun işi, alıcı onaylıyor, senin hesabına geçiyor sonradan. Örneğin teslim etmezsen de karşı tarafa geri yatıyor.

Mesela teslimin koşulları nasıl alıyor, şu kadar süre sonra diye önden kriter mi koyuyor?

Biraz karşılıklı. Sen kendin ilan verirken zaten belirtiyorsun. "Ben 500 kelimeyi şu ücrete, şu kadar gün içerisinde teslim ederim" gibi açıyorsun. Bunu görerek sana geliyor zaten alıcı. Ama bunun dışına da çıkılabilir. "Benim acil ihtiyacım var, fiyatı artıralım iki güne teslim et, olur mu" der. Olur örneğin. Tersi de geçerli.

Eşit bir ilişki mi bu sence?

Muhtemelen değil. Neden muhtemelen dedim, benim başıma gelmedi çünkü. Ama çözüm mekanizmasından insanlar memnun değildi biliyorum. Genelde alıcının tarafında durarak sorunları çözdüklerini duymuştum. Onun dışında şundan dolayı da o eşitlik mekanizması pek işlemiyor; örneğin sen ilanını aktif tutuyorsun. Sen pasife aldığında görünmüyorsun orada. Bunu ne zaman kullanırsın, örneğin eşinde çok iş birikti, böyle zamanlarda pasife alman gerekebilir. Fakat durum şöyle; platform zaten % 20 komisyon alıyor. Zaten freelancer formatının Türkiye'de çok da oturmadığı dönemlerdi ben ilk girdiğimde. Bu zaten "ucuza kapatma" yolu biraz. Bunun için eleman alıp maaşlı çalıştırmak yerine, ucuza çözmeye çalışıyor. Platformlardakiler genelde öğrenci zaten. Yani tamamı hatta benim yaptığım gibi işlerde. Belki yazılım, design gibi taraflarda farklıdır, zamanında girmiştir eskiden, 2015'ten beri yapıyordur, belki daha yüksek para kazanıyordur. Ama çeviri ve içerik üretimi en ölü fiyatların döndüğü yer. Zaten baştan bir eşitsizlik kuruluyor, orayı ucuz iş yaptırmak için tercih ediyor işveren zaten. İlanın aktif-pasif meselesine de şundan değinmiştim. Şimdi hacimli iş almak iyi bir şey aslında zaten tek işten para kazanılamıyor düzgün. Ama şimdi demiştim ya ilanına "şu kadar günde, şu kadar kelime teslim" diye. Burada direkt seni işe de alabiliyor alıcı. Yani "bu paketi seç"e tıklıyor. Direkt sipariş oluşturmuş oluyor. Benim yaşadığım en büyük sorun buydu sanırım. Böyle bir durum oldu, birisi sipariş oluşturdu. Ben de dedim ki "Benim elimde uzun bir iş var şu an müsait değilim, sorsaydınız keşke". O da "Ama ilanda böyle yazıyordu, ben de öyle olunca başlattım".

Direkt başlatabiliyor mu karşı taraf?

Evet direkt başlatabiliyor. Ve bu sıkıntı olabiliyor. Sen o ilanı şey için açıyorsun, yani farazi bir şey, "elimde iş yoksa genelde ben bu işi yapma sürem iki gün" misal. Ama direkt uygulamaya da koyabilir birisi, başlatabilir böyle bir sipariş. O da bir sorun yaratıyor.

E başlattı, sen yapamadın?

Ya n'olur, muhtemelen işi teslim etmediğinde ilanının süresi düşer. Belki pasife alma gibi bir cezası vardır, emin değilim şimdi. Ama iş teslim edememek çok sorunlu bir şey. Ya ilanını pasife alabilirler. Ya da "bu işimi yapmadı" diye şikayet ederse alıcı ceza alabilirsin. Ya da mesela "çok kötü olmuş" derse kötü puan verir, ve onu düzeltene kadar uğraş dur. Baya kötü etkiler. Çok zor olur onu toparlaması. Profilinde yorum gözükecek bir de falan. Ben yaşamadım bu kadarını ama oluyor bunlar da.

Peki şimdi ilk aldın, 3 günlük bir iş. Teslime kadarki sürede ne oluyor? Herhangi bir kontrol mekanizması, iletişim vs. oluyor mu? Platform ya da işveren tarafından.

Yani yazsa yazar, iş ne durumda falan diye ama çok tercih edilmiyor. Ama bunun nedeni şu zaten; sonuçta içerik hazırlıyorsun, zaten çok ucuza yapıyorsun. Karşıda da şeye sebep oluyor bu. Çok kritik bir iş olsa, ya da bütçeleri yüksek olsa zaten Bionluk'tan çözmeye çalışmazlar bu işi. O yüzden benim yaptığım işlerde çok rastlamadım açıkçası. Ama başka taraflarda yaşanıyor olabilir belki. Buna açık.

Sen şimdi 5 yıldır çalışıyorsun, birkaç aydır yavaşlattın. Ne sıklıkla iş alıyordun, ortalamaya vurunca ne kadar çalışıyordun? Her gün çalışıyor muydun?

Özellikle son zamanlarda daha hacimli işler de almaya başlamıştım. Uzun süre devam eden böyle, sen bırakmadığın sürece sürekli iş veriyor sana, öyle müşteriler olmuştu. O yüzden sürekli yeni şey almıyordum bir süre sonra buna. Aylık şu sayıda iş alıyorum demek zor, ama çalışma saati olarak düşüneyim; normal mesai 8 saatse günlük ben de 6 saat çalışıyorumdur günde. Çok farkı yoktu.

Ne kadar kazanıyordun?

En son bıraktığım aşamada, böyle farklı müşterilere yaptığım bütün işlerden asgari ücret kadar kazanıyordum nerdeyse. Ama son zamanlarda buna ulaşmıştım ancak. Platform üzerinden devam etsem bu kadar olmayabilirdi ama. Şöyle bir şey olmuştu. Bir tane adam bir blog açmış özel bir konu üzerine. Türkiye'ye gelecek digital nomadlar için bir rehber yapmaya çalışıyordu, böyle bir site açmış. Ona içerik yazacak birini arıyordu. ODTÜ'den Elektronik mezunu mu ne öyle bir şey. Beni görmüş Bionluk'ta. İsmim gözüküyor ya. Beni Instagram'dan mı Facebook'tan mı ne buldu. Dedi ki "Hocam senin ilanı Bionluk'ta gördüm. Site komisyon alıyor biliyorsun, ben de uzun vadeli bir şey arıyorum. Onu buradan yapalım senden de kesilmesin" gibi bir şey dedi. Ona uzun süre çalışmıştım mesela. Yine "şu kadar kelime şu kadar para" hesabı. Biraz iyilik yapmış oldu yani. Normalde Bionluk buna ceza veriyor mesela tespit ederse. O bana oradan hiç yazmadan Facebook'tan bulmuş

direkt. Birisi de bana bir dosya gönderdi, içinde iletişim bilgileri yazıyor. Mesaja direkt yazsa bir iletişim bilgisi, buradan haberleşelim falan, Bionluk'un radarına takılırdı, ceza alırdık muhtemelen. Onlardan da bir süre hacimli iş aldım mesela. Onların da hem siteleri için yazı yazıyordum, paraphrase ediyordum, bir de sosyal medyalarına bakıyordum mesela. Bunlar düzenli gibi bir şey olduğu için bir de bir o kadar Bionluk'tan buluyordum direkt, asgariye yakın bir şey kazanıyordum. Okulun son dönemi zaten, ders sayım azalmıştı. Tam zamanı çalışıyor gibi iş yüküm vardı ama, kendimi mesai düzenine sokmaya çalışıyordum mesela.

Bu iletişimi başka yere taşımak yasak, nasıl tespit edecek bunu?

Şimdi botları var sitenin. Muhtemelen mesajları tarıyor, seçilmiş bazı kelimeler içeriyorsa sinyal gidiyor diye tahmin ediyorum. Atıyorum "telefon" yazıyorsa, ya da "banka" yazınca örneğin. Ödemeyi ve iletişimi başka yere taşıyabileceğini ima eden kelimeleri otomatik tespit eden yazılımları var muhtemelen. Öyle bir sinyal giderse de sanırım bir ekip incelemeye alıyor konuşmayı. O bildirimi aldıklarında bakıyorlar muhtemelen.

Ama adın soyadın gözüküyor, Insta'ya yazar mesela bulursa seni oradan yazabilir direkt.

Ya şöyle, benim direkt yazıyor kullanıcı adımda adım soyadım ama öyle kullanmayanlar da var. Bir de bulabilir ama neden tercih etsin ki. Platformun sağladığı bir güvenlik var. Çocuk baktı ben de ODTÜ'lüyüm o da. İyi niyet gösterdi muhtemelen. Ama normalde mesela komisyon alsa bile platform, ben en azından ödemeyi alacağımdan eminim. Aynı şey onun için de geçerli sonuçta, iletişimi başka bir yere taşırsa, vermedin işi atıyorum, ne yapacak? Onun için de geçerli o platformun sağladığı garanti.

Ya ben bir şey diyeceğim bir de kullanmak ister misin bilmiyorum ama insanlardan çok böyle trajikomik şey çıkabilir hikâye. Demiştim ya mesela elektrik elektronik makalesi çevirdim diye. Şimdi terminolojiyi bilmiyorum, zaten normalde uğraştığımdan daha çok debeleniyorum. Bir de metnin içinde İspanyolca mı ne bir paragraf var böyle. Bana dedi ki "Burayı çevirmemişsiniz". Ben de dedim ki "İspanyolca bilmiyorum ama". "Ama metnin tamamı çevrilecek diye konuşmuştuk", "İyi" dedim ben de. O zaman google translate de aşırı dandik bugünkü gibi değil. Attım translate'e, ne verdiyse koydum artık .

Onun dışında şey çok olur. Mesela google translate'in kötü olduğu bir dönem vardı ve bir ara baya gelişti ya hızla. O dönem şey yaşanıyordu. Adam bir sayfalık bir şey gönderiyo, diyo ki "Ben bunu google translate'e attım, çok benziyor nerdeyse aynı". Yani yokluyor translete'le mi çevirdin diye. Lan ben n'apıyim translate bana benzer çevirdiyse, kaç farklı şekilde çevrilebilir zaten (gülüyor).

Bu translate'in vs. gelişmesi şurdan vurdu mesela. Artık iş alamıcak freelance çevirenler deniyordu. Ondan ziyade böyle bir şeye sebep oldu. "Translate de yapıyor zaten nerdeyse aynısını" gibi bir reaksiyon.

Bu çevirmen piyasasını düşürmüş olabilir mi mesela?

Evet düşürdü sanırım. Ama şöyle; freelance olarak yapanlarınkini bir miktar düşürmüştür çünkü sana gelen zaten çeviri bürosuna vs. gitmek yerine platforma girmiş seni bulmuş, demek ki birtakım eksikliklerin olmasını da göze almış, kendi standardı düşük yani. İşi açan için düşün yani, "Bu iyi çevirmense profesyonel olarak yapardı zaten" diye düşünüyorlar aslında, o kafayla sana geliyor. Şimdi böyle düşünen biri, gelişmiş bir translate'e de çevirebilir bir tık daha düşürürse beklentiyi. Öyle bir kayba sebep oldu gibi ama böyle bir tık daha edebi metinler, ya da makaleler, işte 30 sayfalık metin. Bir beklentisi varsa bir derece, çok etkilememiş olabilir. İnsana ihtiyaç var çünkü.

Platformda 5 yıldır çalışıyorsun şimdi sen, ağırlıkla Bionluk'ta. Bu çalışma biçimi avantajlı mı sence, bir fırsat mı böyle çalışabilmek?

Ya değişir, benim için avantajdı mesela. Neydi alternatifim. Barda çalışabilirdim. Belki ilk çalıştığım dönemlere göre daha fazla para kazanabilirdim. Ama o da yorucu. Fiziksel yoruculuğu daha fazla. Gece vakti çalışmak herkesin isteyebileceği bir şey değil örneğin. İnsanla uğraşması, direkt temas vs. Barda kafede değil herhangi bir yüz yüze iş de böyle sonuçta. Bu tip şeylerden kaçınan biriysen avantaj mesela. Bunun dışında şey avantajı var, bilgisayar başında yapıyosun sonuçta. Net bir mesaisi yok. Evet para kazanmak için bir süre sonra kendini mesaiye zorlaman gerekiyor, günde 5-6 saat çalışman gerekiyor, onun için bir düzen oturtmak falan. Ama şöyle bir şansın var. Kritik bir sınavın var mesela. Bir hafta iş almazsın. Biraz aç gezersin bir hafta ama istemezsen çalışmazsın yani, öyle bir şansın var. Bunu yapmışlığım var mesela.

Sen şimdi mezun oldun. Böyle devam edicek misin yine, uzun süre devam edebilir misin?

Gelir düzeyime bağlı açıkçası. Gelir düzeyim artarsa olabilir. Artmazsa ama yine yaptığım işi platformda değil de daha profesyonel olarak yapmak daha iyi bir tercih olabilir.

Kırabilir misin bu asgari ücret bandını örneğin. Öğrenci olarak fena değil ama sonrasında ne olur böyle, ciddi bir artış yaşanabilir mi?

Ya iki katına çıkması mesela zor gözüküyo. Biraz üstüne çıkabilir belki. İlk başladığımda baya altındaydı asgari ücretinde kazanabildiğim. Sonra bu seviyeye

geldi. Platformun panelinde daha da yükselirse mesela görünürlüğüm örneğin koyduğum fiyatı da artırabilirim.

Sadece aldığın iş sayısı artınca değil, parça başı ücreti de artırabildin yukarı çıkınca panelde yani.

Evet evet. Zaten düşük fiyat biraz yeni başlayan taktiği. Ben düşük fiyattan iş yapıyim sen de yüksek puan ver bana, iş ver gibi.

Bu kur meselesine ne diyosun? Bionluk'ta Türkiyeli müşteriler oluyor anladığım kadarıyla, yabancı menşeili platformlarda dolarla iş alma imkânı var mı?

Ya iyi aslında ama işte Bionluk'ta ilk işi almak nasıl zorduysa oralarda da öyle olacak. Hatta ilk işi alana kadar baya mesai yapman gerekecek iş yapıyor gibi. İlanı düzelteyim bakayım böyle nasıl oluyor. İşte görsel mi kötü oldu falan gibi şeylere vakit harcıyosun ve bekliyosun. Bir de şöyle; kur farkı var da 10 dolarlık aldığında 270 lira almış oluyorsun örneğin. Ama Türkiye'deki platformdan da alırsın 270 lirayı. Enerjin varsa, ona vakit harcayabileceksen bir süre çok para kazanmadan 10 doları 50 dolara çekebilirsen baya iyi tabii. Ama o noktaya gelmek için de 1 yıl daha harcamak lazım belki de. Ve karşılığını alamadan harcadığın vakitle geçecek o 1 yıl. Bir süre az kazanıp daha sonra yükseltmeyi seçersen o anlamda düşünülebilir.

Bu şekilde çalışan eşin dostun var mı? Ya da benzer işler yapan.

Benzer iş yapan var. Platform üzerinden çalışan var mı emin değilim. Bir arkadaşım Bionluk'ta açmıştı ilan. Ama o ilk aşamayı geçmekte zorlandı mesela ilk işi alması uzun sürdü. Benim aldığım işleri ona paslamıştım bir süre, o ilk işi alana kadar öyle bir şey yapmıştık. Aslında o da o şekilde yaptı bir dönem bir miktar iş. Çok platform üzerinden gidemedi ama, sonra başka yerde de yaptı. Beyaz yakalı oldu şimdi.

Nasıl bir kitle var bu platformlarda, hem eşin dostun hem platformda senin gibi insanlar hakkında ne dersin?

Ya Biounluk'ta geneli üniversite öğrencisi. Çeviride ve içerikte daha çok öyle sanırım. Türkiye menşeili platformlarda durum bu. Çünkü şu var yani 40 yaşında bir insanın buradan ev geçindirmesi mümkün değil. Bir de bu site 2014 ya da 2015'te kuruldu sanırım. Zaten şu anlama gelir; belli bir yaştaki insanlar belli bir noktadaydı bu platform işi çıktığında. Çok istisnai bir şekilde platformdan çok para kazanıyosa yapıyordur ama sanmıyorum. Ek gelir değil de ana gelir haline getirmek zor. Freelance çalışarak para kazanabilirsin ama platform üzerinden bunu yapmak ne kadar sürdürülebilir bilmiyorum. Türkiye'dekiler üzerinden özellikle. Şöyle bir şey olması lazım; çok başarılısın, yüksek fiyattan ilan veriyosun, iyi fiyat çekebiliyosun

yani, 5 tane 10 tane de düzenli müşterin var. O zaman kazanırsın. Ama zor, Bionluk'taki işe iş başına bin lira iki bin lira verecek insan yok. Platformun olayı biraz bu. Çok para vermek istemeyen alıcıyla ek gelir beklentisi olan çalışanı buluşturuyor gibi bir şey. Onun dışında o kadar yüksek fiyatla ilanın tutması da kolay değil. Hadi ilan tuttu bir iki kişiye yaptın. Böyle 10 müşteri bulmak kolay değil vs. Bionluk'ta iyi para çekebiliyosan zaten yapıyorsundur bu işi yani. Buranın komisyonuyla falan uğraşmazsın.

Bir de şey boyutu var; sigortadır, emekliliktir.

Ya Bionluk'ta çalışırken aslında şunu yapman gerekiyor. Herhangi bir platformda böyle. Aslında freelance çalışırken bunu vergilendirmen gerekiyor, özellikle ciddi gelirlere çıktığında. Kendine sigorta falan da yapman gerekiyor ayrıca çalıştığın bir işin yoksa. Ama noluyo, gelirin bankaların takibine falan takılmıcak seviyede kaldığı için fark edilmiyor ya da ses edilmiyor. Tepene binmiyolar yani. Ama sen Bionluk'ta ya da benzer bir platformda çalışıp bir de asgari ücretin üzerinde para kazanıyorsan bunun yükümlülükleriyle de uğraşman gerekir.

Duydun mu hiç böyle sorun yaşayan biri?

Duydum ama genelde yabancı platformlarda çalıştığı için gelirleri yüksek olanlardan duydum hep. Vergi cezası falan alanlar var, internette gördüm epey.

Ama platforma girerken böyle bir zorunluluk yok mu yani?

Platform sana bırakıyor o işi, ilgilenmiyor o kısmıyla yani. Sen vergilendiriyosan vergilendir. İstersen müşteriye fatura kes mesela.

Sen şimdi mezun olmak üzeresin. 2-3 sene sonra nerde olmak istersin?

Yani bu işte ilerledim, belli bir noktaya geldim, insanlar memnun da oluyor yaptığım şeylerden. Bu işi yapıp, ama daha sürdürülebilir bir şekilde devam etmek isterim. Platformdan irili ufaklı iş kovalamak değil de bir ajans olur, başka bir firma olur. Resmi çalışan olmayı yeğlerim. Böyle gitmez açıkçası.

D. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Dijital emek platformları, günümüz kapitalizminde çalışma süreçlerinin ve ilişkilerinin dönüşümünde sürükleyici aktörler olarak öne çıkmaktadırlar. Kapitalist ekonominin dijitalleşmesiyle inşa edilen etkili mekanizmalar üzerine oturan bu platformlar, mevcut çalışma tertibatını gelişkin yönetim ve kontrol teknikleriyle birleştirerek zirveye çıkarmışlardır. Bu tertibatın kurulumu, serpilmesi ve yaygınlaşması ise belirli bir tarihsel arka plana dayanıyor. Bu arka plan kapitalizmin 1970'lerden itibaren girdiği yeni evresi ve yeni örgütlenme biçimidir. Bu dönüşümün odağını çalışma ve iş ilişkileri ve ona eşlik eden toplumsal, politik, ekonomik olgular oluşturmaktadır. Bu dönüşümü ele alan geniş literatürü iki ana yaklaşım altında kategorize etmek mümkün gözüküyor. Bunlardan ilki kapitalist üretim ilişkilerindeki mevzubahis dönüşümün temel nedenini, teknolojik gelişmelerin sonuçlarından kaynaklanan teknik, örgütsel ve yönetimsel yenilikler ve bunlara eşlik eden iktisadi değişimi olarak görürken; ikincisi ise bu dönüşümün esas olarak toplumsal ve siyasal süreçler tarafından belirlendiğini ve itici gücünün büyük ölçüde kapitalist üretim ilişkilerinin krizi, daha spesifik olarak da çalışma ilişkilerini düzenleyen hâkim modelin, yani Fordizmin krizi olduğunu iddia ediyor.

Fordizm, kapitalist üretim ilişkilerinin tarihindeki bir evreyi onu çevreleyen toplumsal, siyasal, kültürel ve makro iktisadi unsurların tümüyle birlikte tanımlarken, özünde bu tabloyu bütün boyutlarıyla etkileyen bir çekirdek teşkil eden çalışma ilişkileri modeliydi. Fordizmin krizi, çözülüşü ve kapitalizmin kendisini üretim, çalışma ve iş ilişkileri üzerinden yeniden örgütleme arayışına girmesiyle birlikte yeni bir dönemin, post-Fordist bir dönemin başladığı kabul edildi. Post-Fordizmi tanımlayan temel özellikleri ve onu Fordizmden ayıran temel farkları anlamak, bugünün dijital ekonomisinin içine doğduğu bağlamı ortaya koyacaktır. Jessop'a (1991) göre, Fordizmin artık geride kalmış belirleyici özelliklerinden biri, kendine özgü bir emek süreci ya da bir endüstriyel paradigma olarak analiz edilebilmesi, kitlesel işçinin yarı vasıflı emeği ile işletilen hareketli montaj hattı tekniklerine

dayalı kitlesel üretimi içermesidir. Post-Fordist döneme geçiş, diğer pek çok şeyin yanı sıra, bu emek ve çalışma topografyasındaki dönüşümdür. Elbette bu dönüşüme toplumsal ve siyasal sonuçlar da eşlik edecekti. Literatüre göre Fordizm ile kendisinden sonraki dönemi işaret eden post-Fordizm arasındaki fark, en temel anlamda katı bir geçmişten esneklik teriminin tercih edildiği bir bugüne dönüşüm olarak anlaşılabilir (Piore & Sabel, 1984). Fordizmden post-Fordizme geçişe ilişkin iki farklı ana anlayışta da üretimin ve çalışma ve iş ilişkilerinin organizasyonunda daha fazla esnekliğin önemi vurgulanmaktadır (Allen, 1992). Bu durum 1970'lerin başında dünya ekonomisinin durgunluğuna bir cevap olarak öne sürülen kitlesel üretim ile esnek uzmanlaşma arasındaki ayrıma tekabül eder (Amin, 1994). Kapitalist üretimin durgunluk ve organizasyon krizi anında ortaya çıkan post-Fordist model, emek sürecinin genel tasarımının esnekleştirilmesinin ve parçalanmasının yanı sıra işgücünün esnekleştirilmesini de sağlayarak verimlilik krizinden çıkış yolu olarak kendini göstermiştir. Jessop'un (1994) vurguladığı gibi bir emek süreci olarak post-Fordizm, esnek makinelere veya sistemlere ve uygun şekilde esnek bir işgücüne dayanan esnek bir üretim süreci olarak tanımlanabilir.

Burada post-Fordist döneme ilişkin önemli bir fark karşımıza çıkıyor. Kapitalizmin Fordist evresi bir bütün, yekpare ve sabit bir model olarak işlev görürken, post-Fordizm ise daha ziyade tek bir ayırt edici ve katı, sınırları belirgin bir şekilde çizilmiş bir modelden yoksun bir görüntü arz eder. Öyle ki post-Fordizm, birbiriyle zorunlu olarak uyumlu olmayan, hatta bir dereceye kadar çatışabilen, aynı çerçeve içinde bir arada var olan ve birlikte işleyen, çoğul, değişken, sabit olmayan ve tam da bu şekilde tanımlanan çeşitli unsurlar ve eğilimlerin toplamından oluşur. Bu nedenle post-Fordist çalışma ilişkileri ve emek süreci heterojenlik, parçalılık, esneklik ve hatta çelişkilerle tanımlanır. Bunlar işçi sınıfı kompozisyonu da için de aynen geçerlidir. Bu bakımdan post-Fordizmin bütün bu çoklu yapıya yön veren temel bir ilkesinden, bir eğiliminden söz edeceksek, kavramın bütün içerimleriyle onun "esneklik" olduğunu söyleyebiliriz. Tartışmayı üretim, emek, çalışma ve iş ilişkilerinin düzenlenmesi ve yönetimsel boyutuyla sınırlı tuttuğumuzda, esneklik teriminin en temelde iki anlamını bu çalışma bağlamında kılavuz edinebiliriz: i) emek ve üretim süreçlerinin parçalanması anlamında esneklik ve ii) işçiler için güvencesizlik ve güvencesizleştirme olarak sonuçlanan işgücünün esnekliği. Bu

anlamda post-Fordizmin temel ögelerinin çalışma ve üretim ilişkilerinde heterojenlik, görev esnekliği, zamansal esneklik, ücretlerde esneklik ve parçalanma, işçilerin otonomi ihtiyacını da sömürme işlevi gören bir ademimerkeziyetçilik olduğunu ve adaptasyona açık, sabit veya katı merkezî bir model yerine çoğul bir tertibat ortaya koyan esnek bir paradigma olduğunu söyleyebiliriz. Bütün bu unsurların bilgi ve iletişim teknolojilerindeki yeni gelişmelerle zamansal ve mekânsal olarak yaygınlaşması, post-Fordizmin küresel ölçekte yeni bir iş bölümüne yol vermesi, küreselleşme denen süreçle rezonansa girmesi ve dolayısıyla neoliberal ajandanın siyasal makro tasarımıyla ilişkisi; dijital ekonominin içerisine doğduğu ekonomik, siyasal ve toplumsal bağlamın çerçevesini oluşturuyor.

Bu tez, küresel dijital kapitalist ekonomi içerisinde çalışma ve iş ilişkilerini post-Fordizmin temel özellik ve eğilimleri bağlamında ele alıyor. Günümüzde emek, üretim ve çalışma süreçlerindeki dönüşümlerin kapitalist örgütlenmenin post-Fordist eğilimleri kapsamında gerçekleştiği yaklaşımı, bu çalışmanın çıkış noktasını oluşturuyor. Küresel dijital ekonominin büyük kütlesinin varlığı içerisinde anlamını kazanan dijital emek platformlarının bu değişim sürecindeki belirgin rolü ve konumu ancak emek, üretim ve çalışma ilişkileri ve süreçlerindeki ucu açık post-Fordist çerçevenin uzun süredir devam eden eğilimleri bağlamında anlaşılabilir. Bu anlamda, post-Fordist dönemin serencamını ele alırken, kapitalizmin krizler üretmeye devam ettiği ve bununla ilintili olarak çeşitli momentler ve dalgalar halinde dijitalleşme atılımlarının devreye girdiğini de belirleyici bir referans noktası olarak ifade etmek gerekiyor. Huws (2014) ve Srnicek (2018) tarafından ortaya koyulan yaklaşımlar, bu tarihsel gelişim sürecinin temelde yeni değer alanları yaratma ve esneklik ve parçalanmanın derinleştirildiği yeni çalışma biçimleri icat etme gibi ikili bir dinamikle geliştiğini iddia ediyor. Bu dinamiği destekleyen en güçlü unsurlar yazılım teknolojilerindeki gelişim, İnternetin doğuşu ve yaygınlaşması, buna bağlı olarak bilgi ve iletişim teknolojilerinin yatay ve dikey olarak daha önce hiç olmadığı bir kapsama ulaşması, veri üretimi ve kullanımının geometrik bir şekilde artması, buna bağlı olarak incelikli bir gözetim teknolojisinin serpilmesi, kullanıcı emeği, tahmin ve yönlendirmeye dayalı algoritmalar ve yapay zekânın gelişmesi olarak karşımıza çıkıyor. Bütün bunların 1990'lar ve 2000'lerdeki çeşitli kriz anlarında, dot.com krizi ve 2007-08 finansal krizinin ihtiyaç doğurduğu arayışlar bağlamında, siyasal

süreçlerle ilişki içerisinde gerçekleştiğini ve çalışma ilişkileri özelinde esneklik, parçalanma ve güvencesizleştirme süreçlerinin derinleşmesi, yatay ve dikey olarak serpilmesi ve coğrafi olarak yaygınlaşması sonucunu doğurduğunu belirtmek gerekiyor.

Dijital ekonominin üretim ve emek kompozisyonu üzerinde yarattığı sonuçlar, toplumsal hayatın çalışma zamanı ve mekânı dışında kalan alanlarının da değer üretiminin boyunduruğu altına sokulduğunu vurgulayan bir dizi kavramla tasvir edilmeye çalışıldı. Örneğin "oyun" ile "emek" ve "üretim" ile "tüketim" alanlarının iç içe geçtiğini vurgulayan çalışmalar (Fuchs, 2014; Fuchs & Fisher, 2015), kapitalizmin artık büyüyen ölçüde "maddi olmayan emek" ile şekillendiğini iddia eden yaklaşımlar (Hardt & Negri, 2000; Lazzarato, 1996), bu yeni değer üretimi ve sömürü biçiminin bir çeşit "bedava emek" olduğunu söyleyenler (Terranova, 2000) ya da kapitalist değer üretimi süreçlerinin "bilişsel" niteliğini öne çıkaran teoriler (Berardi, 2009) var. Bu kavramsallaştırma denemeleri, her ne kadar dijital ekonominin karakterini irdelemek adına yerinde ve değerli tartışmalar olsa da bu tezin odak noktasını "ücretli emek" biçimlerindeki dönüşüm oluşturuyor. Bu tez, dijital ekonomide çalışmayı ve onun verili bağlamdaki dönüşümünü, dijital emek platformlarının bu değişim sürecindeki belirgin rolü ve konumuna odaklanarak anlamayı amaçlıyor. Bu anlamda, dijital emek platformlarını, birincisi, küresel dijital ekonominin gittikçe büyüyen kütlesinin içinde ve onun bir parçası olarak, ikincisi ise, üretim ve çalışma ilişki ve süreçlerinin post-Fordist tertibatının uzun süredir devam eden eğilimleri bağlamında belirli bir modalite olarak ele almaktadır.

Bu tez, veri hakimiyeti ve ondan kaynaklanan güç eşitsizliğinin mümkün kıldığı algoritmalara dayalı yönetim ve maliyetleri dışsallaştırma mekanizmalarını dijital emek platformlarındaki çalışma rejiminin ayırt edici özelliği olarak almaktadır. Bunlara ise post-Fordist dönemin başından itibaren anlaşmalar ve istihdam ilişkilerindeki, işçiler tarafından güvencesizleşme olarak tecrübe edilen, parçalanmanın ve en bütüncül anlamıyla esnekleşmenin sürdürülmesi eşlik etmektedir. Post-Fordizmin bu tanımlayıcı eğilimlerinin geçirdiği dönüşümlerle derinleşerek sürdüğünü, dijital emek platformlarının ise bu gidişat içerisinde en güncel ve öncü aktörler olarak karşımıza çıktığını iddia etmektedir. Başka bir

deyişle, bu çalışma, dijital ekonominin ve onun başlıca aktörleri olan dijital emek platformlarının, esnekleşme, parçalanma ve sonuç olarak güvencesizleşme gibi temel post-Fordist eğilimleri yaydığı ve yoğunlaştırdığı argümanı üzerine inşa edilmiştir. Ayrıca, dijital ekonominin mümkün kıldığı kendine özgü esneklik ortamının, yenilikçi değişimler ve yeni bir emek topografyası ile birlikte kendine özgü bazı çelişkiler yarattığı, yine bu çalışmanın iddiaları arasındadır. Bu tezin peşinde olduğu soru, en genel anlamda, dijital emek platformlarının ne ölçüde kendilerine özgü emek ve üretim süreçlerinin belirli unsurlarından oluşan yeni bir çalışma rejimi oluşturduğudur. Dijital emek platformları dünyası çok sayıda ve çeşitlilikte meslek, iş, görev ve hizmeti bünyesinde barındırdığı ve her geçen gün genişleyerek daha da fazlasını içerisine çekmeye devam ettiği için, bunların bütün unsurlarını kapsamak böyle bir çalışmanın kapsamını aşacak, araştırma odağı anlamında belirli bir çerçeve çizmek pek mümkün olmayacaktır. Bu sebeple, bu tezde dijital emek platformlarının bütününün belirli bir kısmı ele alınmaktadır.

Dijital emek platformları kendilerine özgü bir çalışma ve emek süreç ve ilişkileri şeması oluşturmaktadır. Bu şemanın çerçevesini çizebilmek için dijital emek platformlarının platform modeli ve platform ekonomisi içerisindeki yerini ve dijital emek platformlarının güncel yapısını ortaya koymak gerekiyor. Bu sebeple, ilk olarak, Srnicek'in (2017) platform kapitalizmi üzerine yaptığı ve temelde bir platform iş modeli tipolojisi oluşturan kapsamlı çalışması ele alınmaktadır. Srnicek'in çalışması, her ne kadar platform şirket modelinin tanımlayıcı özellikleri ve işleyiş biçimlerine dair kapsamlı bir kılavuz sunsa da platform "iş"leri ve platform "emeği" platform şirketlerinin yapısı ve tipolojisinden farklı birer olgudur. Platform kapitalizmi ve emek platformlarına ilişkin kavramsal çerçevenin daha işlevsel hale getirilmesi için, bu alanlara yönelik daha incelikli bir kategorizasyona ihtiyaç vardır. Bu bağlamda, platform iş modeli ve şirketlerinin belirli bir biçimi olarak düşünülebilecek dijital emek platformlarına yönelik Schmidt (2017) tarafından yapılan sınıflandırma konuya ilişkin oldukça işlevsel bir şema sunuyor. Ek olarak, Jones (2021) ve Huws (2015) ve De Stefano ve Aloisi'nin (2018) çalışmaları da dijital emek platformlarını ve platform emeğini kategorize etmeye, onları koşullayan temel mekanizmalara, bu mekanizmaların temel işlevlerine ve bütün bunların toplamının alametifarikasına dair önemli perspektif ve kavramsal araçlar öneriyor.

Bu yaklaşımların hepsi, dijital emek platformlarını gruplayan ilk ayrımın yüz yüze işlerin alınıp satıldığı konum tabanlı platformlar ile dijital olarak teslim edilebilir, online/uzaktan işlerin gerçekleştirildiği web tabanlı platformlar arasındaki ayrım olduğu noktasında hemfikir gözüküyor. Buna ek olarak, vasıflı/vasıfsız, küresel/yerel, el emeği/yaratıcı emek gibi çoğunlukla örtüşen ayrımların da dijital emek platformları alanının çerçevelenmesinde önemli olduğu vurgulanıyor. Mevzubahis literatürü temel alarak platform işlerini sınıflandırmak, platform emeğini, bu kapsamdaki çalışma ve iş ilişki ve süreçlerinin çerçevesini çizmek, bu yolla kendisi için berrak bir araştırma odağı oluşturmak amacıyla bu tez; dijital emek platformlarının temel, belirleyici ve ayırt edici özelliklerini şu şekilde ortaya koyuyor: i) emek maliyetlerinin dışsallaştırılması, ii) tekelci veri hakimiyeti ve algoritmalara dayalı yönetim ve iii) güvencesizleştirme ve parçalanma.

Bu çerçevede, dijital emek platformları, bu özgün mekanizma ve süreçlerin bileşimi aracılığıyla, emek ve çalışma ilişkilerini parçalı, standart olmayan, anlık istihdama dayalı, kullan-at, esnek ve güvencesiz bir emek ve çalışma düzeninin daha yaygınlaşmış ve kitleselleşmiş bir aşamasına taşıyan önemli aktörler olarak karşımızda duruyor. Bu tezde, bu dönüşümün belirli bir kesitine odaklanılarak dijital emek platformlarının ne ölçüde kendilerine has bir çalışma rejimine sahip olduğu inceleniyor. Platform emek dünyası çok geniş bir iş, görev, meslek ve emek türü yelpazesini içeriyor olsa da literatür ışığında yapılan kategorizasyondan hareketle belirli iş türlerini içeren belirli bir emek platformu türüne, web tabanlı dijital emek platformlarına odaklanılıyor. Bu spesifik emek platformu grubuna odaklanmak, belirli bir emek ve çalışma türüne has bir araştırmayı da beraberinde getiriyor: entelektüel emek. Bu daraltılmış odak noktası, insanların bilişsel, entelektüel ve yaratıcı emeğinin kullanımda olduğu, çok sayıda görev, iş ve mesleğin yer aldığı heterojen bir çalışma alanını kapsıyor. Dolayısıyla bu tez, dijital emek platformlarındaki çalışma ilişki ve süreçlerinin i) emek maliyetlerinin dışsallaştırılması, ii) tekelci veri hakimiyeti ve algoritmalara dayalı yönetim ve iii) güvencesizleştirme ve parçalanma şeklindeki üçlü mekanizmadan oluşan tanımlayıcı çerçevesinin bu alan üzerindeki etkisini ele alıyor. Bunun yanı sıra, dijital kapitalist ekonominin ortaya çıkardığı kendine özgü esneklik ve parçalılık düzeninin, entelektüel emeğin içinden geçmekte olduğu birtakım kendine özgü değişim ve

çelişkiler de bu çalışmanın bir diğer odak noktası. Bu mekanizmaların, bu tezin konusunu oluşturan dijital emek platformlarının belirli bir kategorisi olarak web tabanlı platformlardaki emek ve çalışma ilişki ve süreçleri için önemine değiniyor. Bu kavramsal yaklaşım ışığında, Türkiye'de web tabanlı platform işçilerinin deneyimini ele alan bu tez, çalışma ilişkilerindeki mevzubahis dönüşümün sonuçlarını platform işçilerinin deneyimi bağlamında inceliyor. Bu bağlamda çalışmanın başlıca amacı, platform kapitalizminde çalışma süreçlerini örgütleyen genel tertibatın entelektüel emek üzerinde yarattığı etkiyi Türkiye'de web tabanlı platform işçileri örneğine bakarak anlamaktır. Bu doğrultuda tez, Türkiye'de web tabanlı dijital emek platformları üzerinden çalışan bir grup çalışanla gerçekleştirilen derinlemesine mülakatlara dayanmaktadır.

İlgili literatür ve benzer çalışmalar, dijital ekonominin genişleyen hacmini göz önüne seriyor. Bu olgu, özellikle web tabanlı platformlardaki 7/24 erişilebilir, maliyetsiz işgücünü kullanan firmaların sayısının küresel ölçekte artmasıyla da kendini gösteriyor. Bu artış, işçiler için ücretlerde düşüş, belirsizlik, parçalılık, özellikle web tabanlı platform çalışanları için öngörülemeyen saatler, eksik istihdam deneyimi ve kayıt dışılık, ücretlerde pazarlık imkânının kayboluşu, sosyal haklardan ve iş güvencesinden mahrumiyet, izolasyon ve bütün hayatı kat eden güvencesizleşme olarak kendini gösteriyor. Ancak bir yandan da giderek daha fazla sayıda insanın bu spesifik çalışma biçimini tercih ettiğini veya bir sebepten bu çalışma biçimine katıldığını görüyoruz. Daha serbest bir çalışma düzeni arayışının yanı sıra klasik istihdam modelinde veya yerel emek piyasalarında yaşanan zorlukları telafi çabası, bu çalışma biçimlerine artan katılımın arkasındaki en önemli nedenler gibi görünüyor. Başka bir deyişle, insanlar toplumsal, zamansal ve mekânsal açıdan daha esnek, daha özgür bir çalışma düzeni arzuladıkları için dijital emek platformlarında gig işler yapmaya yöneliyorlar. Ayrıca, platform işçilerinin önemli bir kısmının yüz yüze işlerden, klasik işgücü piyasasının katılığından ve işsizlikten muzdarip oldukları için başka seçeneklerinin kalmadığı da gözlemleniyor. Ancak, literatürdeki benzer araştırmalar, bu arayışların günün sonunda düşük ücretler, yabancılaşma, belirsizlik ve güvencesizlik olarak deneyimlendiğini gösteriyor.

Web tabanlı ve konum tabanlı emek platformlarındaki çalışma ve iş süreç ve ilişkileri, şaşırtıcı olmayan bir şekilde, söz konusu çalışma rejiminin tanımlayıcı

özelliklerini paylaşıyor. Bununla birlikte, platform çalışma biçimini tanımlayan ana mekanizmalar açısından, aralarında seviye ve şiddet farkları olduğu gözleniyor. Örneğin algoritmalara dayalı kontrol, emek süreçlerindeki parçalanmayı derinleştirirken, bu da her iki platform emeği türünde de işçilerin iş üzerindeki kontrolünü kaybetmesine yol açıyor. Öte yandan, konum tabanlı platformlar ile online platform emeği arasında bu anlamda bir derece farkı vardır. Birincisi işin parçalara ayrıştırılması, standardizasyon ve otomasyon tekniklerinin uygulanmasına daha uygunken, ikinci emek tipi yaratıcı bir içerik gerektiren karmaşık görevleri hâlâ korumakta, bu bağlamda aralarında derece farkı ve niteliksel bir ayrım bulunmaktadır. Platform dünyasında entelektüel/yaratıcı emeğin otomasyon, algoritmalara dayalı kontrol, tahmin, yazılım ve algoritmalar tarafından yönlendirilme baskısı altında olması, onun kendine özgü çelişkisini de ortaya çıkarmaktadır; işçilerin otonomi arayışı düşünüldüğünde ise ciddi bir yabancılaşma yaratmaktadır. Dijital Taylorizm kavramı altında da tartışılan bu yönetim modelinin (Altenried, 2020; Prassl, 2018), dijital emek platformlarındaki çalışma rejiminin birbirini besleyen üç ana dinamiği açısından ne ölçüde uygulamada olduğu, emek maliyetlerinin dışsallaştırılması, algoritmalara dayalı kontrol mekanizmalarının uygulanması, güvencesizleştirme ve parçalama işlevlerinin yerine getirilmesi dinamikleri arasında kompozisyonun ne ölçüde aynı olduğu bir başka sorudur. Literatürdeki benzer çalışmalar, özellikle web tabanlı platform emeği ve algoritmalara dayalı yönetim ve kontrol tekniklerinin entelektüel/yaratıcı emek üzerindeki rolü ve etkisi hakkında önemli kavrayış sunmaktadır. Dijital emek platformlarında çalışma rejiminin üç temel dinamiği olan i) emek maliyetlerinin dışsallaştırılması, ii) tekelci veri hakimiyeti ve algoritmalara dayalı yönetim ve iii) güvencesizleştirme ve parçalanma süreçlerinin bileşik olduğu ve birbirlerini derinleştirip güçlendirdikleri gözlenmektedir. Başka bir deyişle, bu üç belirleyici mekanizma birbirini beslemekte, birbirlerine önemli ölçüde ihtiyaç duymakta, bazen bir diğerini ön gerektirmekte, derinleştirmekte ve önemli ölçüde birbirine dayanmaktadır. Dijital emek platformları, önemli ölçüde, hâlihazırda var olan yaygın güvencesizlik olgusuna yaslanırken, veri hakimiyeti ve algoritmalara dayalı yeni kontrol ve yönetim mekanizmaları belirsizlik, düşük ve düzensiz ücretler, parçalı anlaşmalar ve iş güvencesinin ortadan kaybolmasına yol açarak onu

derinleştirmektedir. Emek maliyetlerinin dışsallaştırılması da bu kompozisyon açısından bir katalizör işlevi görmektedir.

Entelektüel/yaratıcı emek, platform mimarisindeki asimetrik güç ilişkilerinden, özerklik ve yapılan iş üzerindeki kontrol kaybından, Taylorist yöntemlerden, puanlama ve derecelendirme sisteminden, gayrişahsileştirilmiş kontrolden, sıralamalardan, geri bildirimlerden belirgin bir şekilde muzdarip. Dijital Taylorizm kavramı ise güçlü bir kavramsal sıçrama olarak öne çıkmakla birlikte, literatürdeki çalışmalar açısından tartışmalı bir noktada duruyor. Kavramı öne sürenler açısından dijital Taylorizm, işçilerin öznel deneyimlerini doğrudan şekillendiren, onlar tarafından erişilemeyen, kontrol edilemeyen, bilgisine sahip olunmayan, otomatize edilmiş algoritma sistemlerinin tahmin ve geri bildirimlerine dayalı gözetim, ayrıştırma, standartlaştırma, atomize etme, ölçme ve yönlendirme mekanizmalarına dayanıyor. İlgili çalışmalar, emek sürecine ilişkin bu eğilimlerin toplamının, üretim ve çalışma dünyasının bu alanındaki maliyetlerin dışsallaştırılma mekanizmasına ve küresel ölçekte dağınık, parçalanmış, güvencesizleştirilmiş bir emek topografyasına dayandığını ve ondan güç aldığını da ortaya koymaktadır. Kavrama eleştirel yaklaşan çalışmalar ise, klasik Taylorizmin hâkim yönetim modeli olduğu görece güvenceli ve düzenli istihdam biçimiyle kıyaslandığında arada göz ardı edilemeyecek farklar olduğunu, ek olarak dijital emek platformlarındaki işçilerin öznel deneyimlerini ve özne olarak ortaya çıkma kapasitelerini göz ardı ettiğini vurguluyor.

Türkiye'de dijital emek platformlarını ele alan çalışmalara bakıldığında ise özellikle teslimat işçileri yani kuryeler başta olmak üzere, çoğunlukla konum tabanlı platform çalışanlarına yönelik artan bir ilgi olduğu görülüyor. Web tabanlı platform işleri üzerine ise, hem emek ve çalışma süreç ve ilişkilerini ele alan hem de entelektüel ve yaratıcı emek ve bu tür emeğin deneyimleri ve dönüşümü üzerine olan çalışmalar da görülüyor. Bu çalışma biçimine yönelik akademik ilgideki artış, bu alanın genişlediğinin de bir göstergesi. Ki bu durum nicel verilerle de doğrulanabiliyor. Türkiye'deki durum, özellikle sözleşmeler ve çalışanların statüsü ile ilgili yasal konular açısından belirsizliğini korumaktadır. Hukuk alanında yapılan çalışmalar, dünya genelindeki duruma ve deneyimlere atıfta bulunarak Türkiye'deki yasal çerçeve bağlamında konuyu incelemektedir. Bu çalışmaların yaklaşımları ve ulaştığı

sonuçların tonu açısından farklılıklar olsa da platform işçilerinin "bağımsız çalışan" olarak yanlış kategorize edilmelerinin dijital emek platformlarında çalışanların önemli çoğunluğuna zarar verdiği ve ekonomik ve sosyal güvencesizliği derinleştirdiği temel uzlaşı noktaları. Bu çalışmaların yanı sıra, Türkiye'de dijital platform işçileri üzerine yapılmış nitel araştırmalar da hem emek ve iş sürecinin unsurları ve mekanizmaları hem de dünya genelindeki akademik çalışmalarda işçilerin deneyimleri bağlamında ortaya konulan dinamiklerin Türkiye örneğinde de mevcut olduğunu ve tartışılması gerektiğini göstermektedir.

Platform emeğinin yalnızca bir türünü, web tabanlı gig ya da freelance çalışmayı kapsayan bu tez, Türkiye'deki platform işçilerinden oluşan, ama yalnızca Türkiye'deki dijital emek platformlarıyla sınırlı olmayan bir saha çalışmasına dayanıyor. Dijital emek platformlarının küresel ölçekte olması bu çalışma biçiminin belirleyici bir özelliği olduğundan, saha çalışmasına katılanların çalıştıkları platformlar hem küresel hem de yerel platformlardan oluşacak şekilde tasarlandı. Bu çalışmaya dâhil edilen küresel dijital emek platformları Upwork, Fiverr, freelancer.com iken, yerel platformlar ise Bionluk ve Armut'tan oluşuyor. Çalışmanın kapsamı dijital emek platformlarının bir türü ile sınırlı olduğundan, emeğin geçirdiği dönüşüm tartışması da genel bir kategori olarak entelektüel emek ile sınırlı. Bu ayrım, dijital emek platformlarının konum tabanlı ve web tabanlı platformlar olarak ilk derece gruplanışıyla da örtüşmekte. Dolayısıyla web tabanlı emek platformlarına odaklanan saha çalışması, entelektüel emeğin nitelik ve içerik bakımından geçirdiği spesifik değişimlerin de tartışılmasını gerektiriyor. Web tabanlı emek platformları, tıpkı genel anlamıyla entelektüel emek kategorisi gibi, kendi içerisinde heterojen meslek, görev ve iş biçimlerinden oluşmaktadır. Bu nedenle saha çalışması da bu heterojenliği belirli bir dereceye kadar yansıtacak şekilde tasarlanmıştır. Ancak yine de netlik adına ve araştırma sınırlamalarının doğal bir sonucu olarak belirli çalışma gruplarıyla sınırlı tutulmuştur. Bu tezin saha çalışmasında konu edinilen web tabanlı emek platformları aracılığıyla yapılan iş türleri iki ana kategoride toplanabilir: i) tasarım, grafik tasarım, mimari tasarım, dijital modelleme, dijital sanat, illüstrasyon, çizim, fotoğraf ve kurgu gibi işleri içeren yaratıcı işler ve ii) yazı, çeviri, yaratıcı yazarlık, içerik oluşturma, reklam

yazarlığı, editörlük gibi işleri içeren entelektüel işler. Bu iki ana kategori aynı zamanda Türkiye'de web tabanlı emek platformlarında yapılan en yaygın işlerdir.

Bunların ışığında, bu tezin saha çalışması, platform kapitalizminde emek ve çalışma ilişki ve süreçlerini düzenleyen genel mekanizmaların Türkiye'deki web tabanlı dijital emek platformu çalışanları örneğinde entelektüel emeği nasıl etkilediği sorusunun peşindedir. Türkiye'de dijital emek platformlarında çalışan 11 kişiyle yapılan derinlemesine görüşmelere dayanan bir saha araştırması kapsamında, ortalama 54 dakika, en uzunu 87 dakika, en kısası ise 29 dakika süren görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Görüşmelerden elde edilen malzeme, literatürün sunduğu kavramlar ışığında, özellikle de dijital emek platformlarındaki emek ve çalışma süreçlerinin temel tanımlayıcı mekanizmaları ve dinamikleri olan i) emek maliyetlerinin dışsallaştırılması, ii) tekelci veri hâkimiyeti ve algoritmalara dayalı yönetim ve iii) güvencesizleştirme ve parçalanma açısından analiz edilmiştir. Görüşmeler, bu kurucu mekanizmaların işçilerin deneyimleri nezdinde yarattığı etkilere ve deneyimlere odaklanarak, açık uçlu bir şekilde, bu mekanizmaların pratikteki işleyişini anlamak ve gözlemlemek amacıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Görüşmelerde kullanılan soru seti söz konusu mekanizmaların fiili varlığını ve temel özelliklerini, emek sürecinin işleyişi ve unsurlarını ve ayrıca katılımcıların kişisel geçmişlerini, motivasyonlarını, öznel yaklaşımlarını, bu tür bir işi nasıl deneyimlediklerini ve anlamlandırdıklarını, ne beklediklerini ve hissettiklerini açık uçlu bir şekilde araştırmak üzere tasarlanmıştır.
Bu soruları tartışmak için bir zemin sunmak amacıyla, çalışmanın katılımcılarıyla yapılan görüşmelerden elde edilen materyal dört grup altında kategorize edilmiştir; bunlardan ilki i) platform çalışanlarının arka planlarının tasviri, diğer üçü ise platform çalışmasının temel kavramsal özelliklerine paralel olarak ii) emek maliyetlerinin dışsallaştırılması, iii) algoritmalara dayalı yönetim ve emek süreci ve iv) güvencesizlik ve öznelliktir. Bu kategoriler, çalışmanın araştırma sorusu ve alt soruları ışığında, çalışma sırasında ortaya konan kavramsal temeller göz önünde bulundurularak, görüşmelerin ana hatlarını oluştururken önceden tasarlanmış setlerdir. Öte yandan, görüşmelerin analizinde ve bulgulara ulaşılmasında, elde edilen materyal, ortaya çıkan çeşitli temalar ve gözlemler doğrultusunda kodlanmış ve bu kodlar araştırma tasarımının yapısındaki her bir genel kategori altında gruplandırılmıştır. Çalışmanın ana amacı, dijital emek platformlarının emek ve

çalışma süreç ve ilişkilerinde meydana getirdiği dönüşümlerin işçiler tarafından nasıl deneyimlendiğini değerlendirmektir. Saha çalışması, dijital emek platformlarında kullanılan yönetim ve kontrol şemalarının ve emek süreci unsurlarının kompozisyonunun bu dönüşümün doğrudan özneleri tarafından nasıl yaşandığına ve emek üzerindeki etkilerine odaklanmaktadır. Platform çalışma rejiminin uygulamadaki yeniliklerini, bu yeni çalışma ve istihdam biçiminin içinde kendine özgü çelişkiler ve dönüşümler yaşayan entelektüel ve yaratıcı işlere odaklanarak incelenmektedir.

Platform çalışma modeli, post-Fordist emek ve çalışma ilişkilerinin dijital evresinde kendine kalıcı bir yer edinmiş ve esnek, parçalanmış ve dağınık iş örgütlenmesinin kendine özgü yeni bir modalitesini oluşturmuş gibi görünüyor. Bu genel çerçeve içerisinde öncü bir rol üstleniyor. Dijital emek platformları, günümüzde emek ve çalışma ilişki ve süreçlerinin somut, özgün ve dönüştürücü bir veçhesi olarak görülebilirler. Giderek artan sayıda insan bu spesifik çalışma biçimini tercih etmekte ya da bir şekilde bu çalışma biçimine katılmaktadır. Bunun en önemli nedenleri arasında daha özerk çalışma düzeni arayışı ve klasik istihdam biçimleri ya da yerel emek piyasasında yaşanan zorlukları telafi etme arayışı yer alıyor. Saha çalışmasında edinilen gözlemler, Türkiye'de de bu durumun oldukça öne çıktığını gösteriyor. Çalışanlar, sosyal ilişkiler ve zaman ve mekân bağlamında daha esnek, daha özgür bir düzen, iplerin kendi ellerinde olduğu bir yaşam arzuladıkları için dijital emek platformlarına yönelmektedir. Öte yandan, Türkiye'de işgücü piyasasının mevcut görünümü, çalışma ve emek ilişkilerindeki mevcut durum, ekonomik kriz, geçinememe gibi olgular da düzenli ve güvenceli bir gelir ve çalışma hayatına erişemeyen insanları bu alana yöneltmektedir. Dijital emek platformlarında çalışan insanların önemli bir kısmının yüz yüze işlerden ve işsizlikten muzdarip oldukları için seçeneklerinin tükendiğini de eklemek gerek. Ancak günün sonunda ücretlerde düşüş, belirsizlik, iş bulma ve çalışma süreçlerindeki parçalanma, öngörülemeyen saatler, yapılan iş üzerindeki kontrol kaybı, sosyal güvence eksikliği, izolasyon, yalnızlık, güvensizlik ve gelir düzensizliği, yabancılaşma en çok öne çıkan deneyimler olarak gözüküyor. Dijital emek platformları, önemli ölçüde yaslandığı hâlihazırda var olan yaygın güvencesizlik kompozisyonunu derinleştirmeyi de sürdürüyor. Entelektüel/yaratıcı emek, platform mimarisindeki asimetrik güç

ilişkilerinden, özerklik kaybından, dijital Taylorist yöntemlerden muzdarip. Bütün bunlar, platform işlerine olan bağımlılık dereceleri farklı olsa da saha çalışmasında yaygın olarak gözlemlenen yabancılaşma, izolasyon, özerklik kaybı ve geleceğe yönelik belirsizlik ve endişe duygularını güçlendiriyor. Buna karşın, yaygın bir güvencesizleştirme ve çok boyutlu bir parçalanma sürecinin geçerli olduğu bir bağlamda işçilerin idare etme pratikleri, taktikler, iş birliği, dayanışma ya da bireysel mücadele ya da baş etme yollarıyla özne olma kapasitelerinin devrede olduğu da görülüyor.

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