

Ethnic self-organization, informal logistics, and algorithmic management: hybrid forms of platform work among migrant riders.

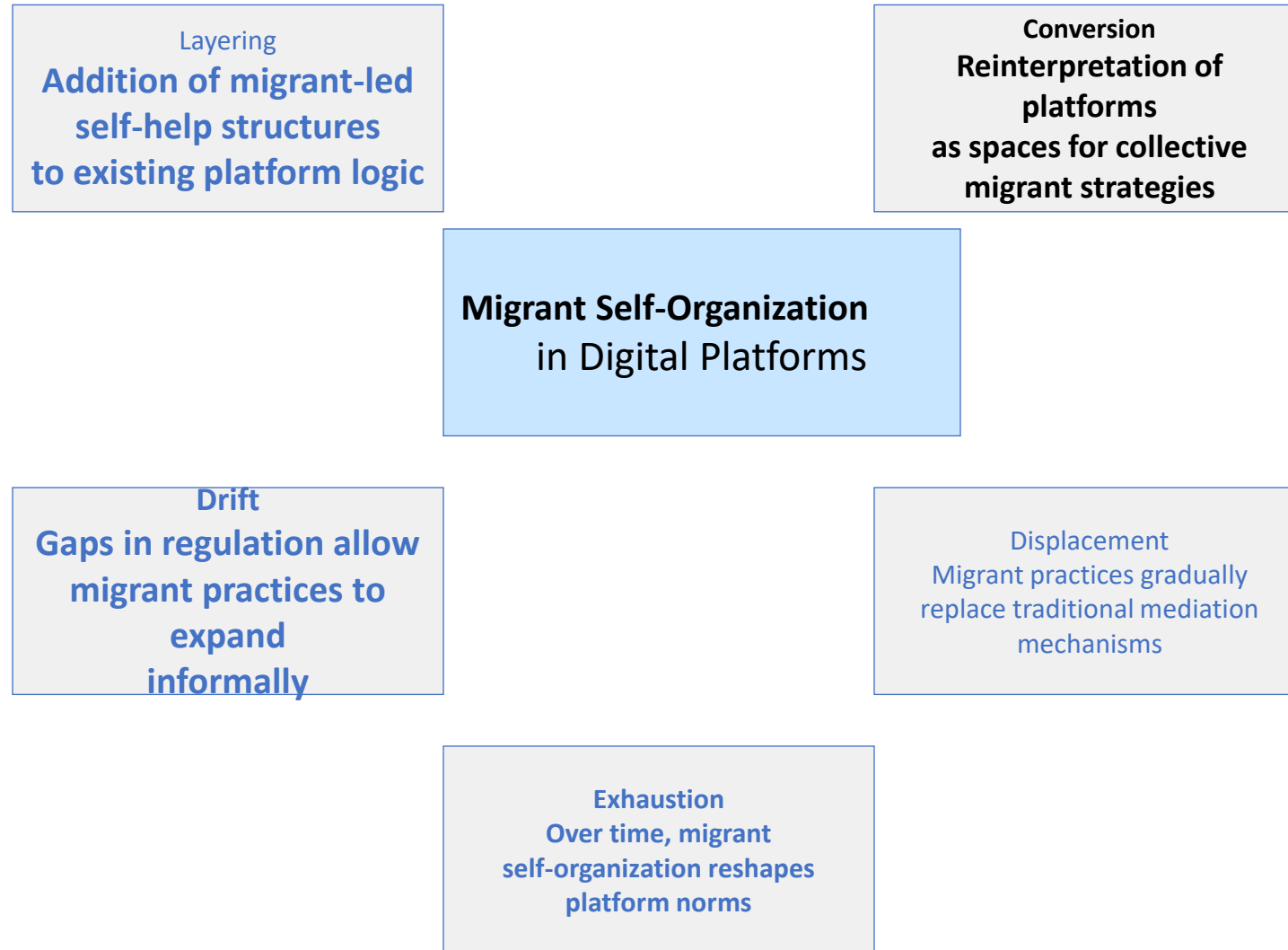
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Platform migrant Self-Organization (Streek and Thelen - Path dependency classification)



Platform Capitalism

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graph TD; A[Platform Capitalism] --> B[Regulatory Gaps / Non-recognition as Employer]; B --> C[Migrant Networks]; C --> D[Hybrid Logistics & Self-Organization];
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**Regulatory Gaps /
Non-recognition as
Employer**

Migrant Networks

- Informal coordination
- Resource sharing
- Mutual support

**Hybrid Logistics &
Self-Organization**

Platform Capitalism and Migrant Labor

Regulatory responses in Spain and Italy have try to reshape platform firms, with increased trust on socially fragile groups (migrants, residence permit holders) - **the systematic large-scale activation of surplus labor** (Woodcock & Graham, 2019; Vallas & Schor, 2020 Mezzadra,2021)

These workers are often less able to claim professional rights and thus more exposed to precarious conditions.

Comparative evidence highlights strong national differences in contractual arrangements and status recognition.

Algorithmic Management

Technological system that defines working conditions and manages rider activities through massive data collection (e.g., order allocation, shift scheduling).

Control Mechanisms (6R – Kellogg et al., 2019) Algorithmic Management Functions in Platform Work

- **Reenforce:** Imposes operational rules and social standards.
- **Recommend:** Suggests optimal decisions to maximize efficiency.
- **Record:** Monitors and records worker activity through datafication.
- **Rating - Evaluate:** Assesses performance via rating
- **Replace:** Penalizes or substitutes underperforming riders.
- **Ranking - Incentivize:** Motivates through bonus structures and assignment priority, ranking systems.

Implications

- Continuous standardization & monitoring (GPS, scores).
- Reduced autonomy, aligned with employer planning.
- New challenges for industrial relations and worker protections.

| Platform | Country | Estimated Number of Riders (at least one task in the last month) | Percentage with Residence Permit | Type of Contract | Percentage Intermediaries |
|-----------|---------|--|----------------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| Glovo | Italy | ~15,000 | ~60% | self-employed worker | ~5-10% |
| Glovo | Spain | ~25,000 | ~75% | self-employed worker (under legal challenge) | ~5-10% |
| Deliveroo | Italy | ~13,000 | ~50% | self-employed worker | ~5-10% |
| Deliveroo | Spain | ~12,000 | ~70% | Dependent (Law Rider 2021) | ~5-10% |
| Just Eat | Italy | ~4,000 | ~65% | Dependent part-time (fixed-term or permanent) | ~5% |
| Just Eat | Spain | ~18,000 | ~80% | Dependent (Law Rider 2021) | ~5% |
| Uber Eats | Italy | 0,000 | - | - | - |
| Uber Eats | Spain | ~8,000 | ~70% | Dependent (Law Rider 2021) | ~5% |

Source: Annual Report Glovo – Deliveroo – JustEat 2023 – Rataj 2025

Informal Infrastructures and Collective Practices a fragmented patchwork

- Under apparent individualization of gig work, forms of collective self-organization emerge (Graham et al., 2017; Veen et al., 2020).
- Migrant riders create informal ethnic networks that allow:
 - Exchange of accounts, shifts, orders, **Work shift planning**.
 - Sharing of tools (phones, SIM cards, bicycles, delivery bags).
 - Oral transmission of instructions and access codes.
- Local migrant-owned shops (minimarkets, phone centers, gas stations) function as “*informal hubs*”, providing logistics, safety, and solidarity.
- International evidence (North America, Southeast Asia) shows hybrid governance systems: algorithmic management linked with community-based regulation (Woodcock & Graham, 2019; Vann Doorn et al., 2024).
- Risk: without institutionalized worker representation, these practices may drift toward digital gangmastering (Altenried, 2022).

Findings

Platform capitalism intersects with migrant networks that autonomously organize within regulatory gaps.

Regulatory gaps arise because platforms do not recognize themselves as employer infrastructures.

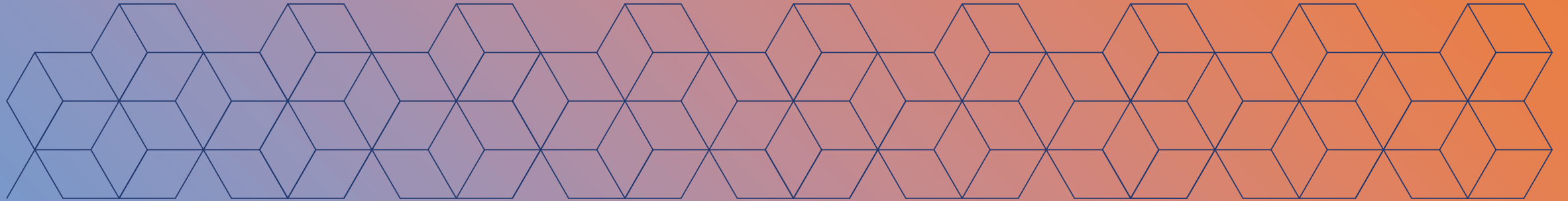
Consequences of this regulatory absence: Lack of fixed work hours and physical group centers , Weak industrial relations

Migrants' self-organization emerges as a critical mechanism to coordinate work, ensure mutual support, and create hybrid logistics.

Highlights the interplay between digital governance and community-based labor practices in shaping contemporary platform economies.

Capacity to Respond to the Persistent tasks Assignment through Ethical Mutuality and Account Sharing

In the absence of renewed forms of industrial relations, the system seems to self-represent and self-organize by mediating the logic of platforms through ethno-migratory dynamics, with the risk of a form of 'digital gangmastering'



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