



Start-ups and Platforms: Regulating Labor in the Gig Economy

Panel Discussion

Friday, April 13, 2018, 6 p.m., Room A 300

In many sectors, platforms organize markets for formally independent freelancers. Some focus on specific markets like mobility and like transport services (Uber, Deliveroo), medical services, or the creative sector (99designs), competing with traditional providers. These platforms present themselves as neutral mediators between customers and service providers, while in fact they fulfill typical roles of employers, organizing and controlling the labor process. Workers in the platform economy have no social security nor entitlements like annual leave, sickness pay etc. How can the platform economy be regulated in order to minimize the disruptive effects on labor markets? Can platform companies be forced to formally become employers? Should we develop welfare systems that are not bound to the employment relationship? How can we avoid a polarization of the labor market between a secure but shrinking core of traditional employment and an increasing precarious “margin” of platform workers?

Discussants:

Steven Hill, journalist and author, currently Journalist-in-Residence at the WZB. His most recent books are: *Die Start-up Illusion: Wie die Internet-Ökonomie unseren Sozialstaat ruiniert* (Knaur) and *Raw Deal: How the “Uber Economy” and Runaway Capitalism Are Screwing American Workers* (St. Martin’s Press).

Sabine Pfeiffer, professor of sociology at the University of Erlangen-Nürnberg. Her research focuses on the relationship between technology and labor, in particular the impact of the internet and digital technologies on workers, work organization, and skills.

M. Six Silberman, project secretary, IG Metall. He is currently responsible for the trade union’s projects aiming at organizing platform workers. He was one of the creators of *Turkopticon*, an online system supporting workers of the „Amazon Mechanical Turk“ platform.

Moderated by **Martin Krzywdzinski**, head of the WZB Project Group Globalization, Work, and Production and Principal Investigator at the Weizenbaum Institute.

The discussion is organized by the Project Group in cooperation with the Weizenbaum Institute for the Networked Society and the sections Labor and Industrial Sociology and Science and Technology Studies of the German Sociological Association (DGS). It is part of the Science Year 2018 “Working Worlds of the Future”.

Invitation

Our event location is wheelchair-accessible. If you need support, please let Friederike Theilen-Kosch know: friederike.theilen-kosch@wzb.eu

To register, please reply by April 6 to Barbara Schlüter, email: barbara.schlueter@wzb.eu

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