
Flexibility or Precarity? A Sociological Inquiry into Platform Drivers in Morocco

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Abstract

This research aims to examine how the platform economy reshapes labor dynamics in Morocco by focusing on the case of *inDrive* drivers in Rabat. While digital platforms are often promoted as offering flexible and autonomous employment, they also generate new forms of professional precariousness. This study adopts a sociological approach, drawing on the theoretical frameworks of Serge Paugam, Robert Castel, and Maryse Bresson to analyze the complexity of gig work and its implications for workers. Serge Paugam's theory helps distinguish between job insecurity and professional disqualification, revealing how drivers experience unstable trajectories and fragile labor market integration. Robert Castel's analysis of the disintegration of stable wage labor provides insight into how these workers are progressively excluded from the traditional social contract. Maryse Bresson contributes a multidimensional understanding of precarity-encompassing economic, legal, social, and symbolic aspects-which is especially relevant for analyzing platform labor. In parallel, this study refers to the International Labour Organization's (ILO) framework of *decent work*, which includes indicators such as stable income, regulated working hours, access to social protection, health and safety standards, and the right to collective organization. These indicators provide a benchmark for assessing the conditions of platform workers in the Moroccan context. The central research question is: *How do inDrive drivers in Morocco experience and interpret professional precariousness, and what individual or collective strategies do they develop to cope with it?* The underlying hypothesis is that while the platform promises flexibility and autonomy, most drivers see it as a temporary or constrained choice rather than a sustainable career. The methodology combines participant observation and informal interviews with drivers in Rabat. The sample includes unemployed youth, students, public sector employees working illegally, and former taxi drivers. Three configurations emerge: (1) drivers who value flexibility due to other income sources; (2) financially precarious drivers facing debts or car rental obligations; and (3) structurally precarious drivers with no legal status or protections, exposed to legal and social risks. Findings reveal that while some drivers perceive their work as a source of autonomy, others are trapped in cycles of dependency. Informal WhatsApp groups serve as spaces for solidarity, information sharing, and early forms of collective consciousness. This research highlights the dual reality of platform work: it offers short-term economic opportunity but also deepens precarity. As Morocco prepares for global events like the 2030 FIFA World Cup, integrating these workers into urban policy.

Keywords: Precarious employment inDrive Morocco Digital labor Decent work

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