



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

Future of Work in the Global South and Global North Symposium 2-3 May, 2024, The University of Melbourne, Australia

School of Social and Political Sciences

Keynote speakers: Professor Niels van Doorn (University of Amsterdam), Associate Professor Cheryll Ruth R. Soriano (De La Salle University) and Dr Katie Wells (Georgetown University)

Call for papers:

This two-day symposium aims to bring together researchers from across the social sciences—sociology, geography, work and organisational studies, industrial relations, cultural studies and beyond to discuss the variegated nature of digital labour platforms (Uber, Gojek, Didi, Deliveroo, Menulog, Hungry Panda, Mable, Hire Up etc.) and their operations in the Global South and Global North countries.

An increasing body of literature has focused on the emergence of the digital labour platforms and how these platforms build, connect, and reconstruct the social relations among labourers, consumers, and businesses (Aslam and Woodcock, 2020; Lata et al., 2022; van Doorn, 2017). Digital labour platforms are the newest technological wave that is reshaping and reconfiguring the economic and labour landscape. These digital labour platforms encompass a broad range of services that rely on an ever-growing labour pool to respond to on-demand requests. Digital labour platforms are increasingly adopting app-based models to connect consumers with workers to complete their on-demand tasks. These on-demand apps have created new labour markets that have transcended borders and rely on a revolving door of workers to complete both local and global service tasks (Anwar & Graham, 2021; Lata et al., 2022; van Doorn, 2023). This is reshaping the gig economy sectors, which require new labour relationships to respond to the needs of on-demand apps. Digital gig work is based within the platform or gig economy where markets are based on platforms that facilitate interactions between buyers and sellers and provides irregular work to gig workers based on customer demand.

Work can be sourced locally or globally, with clients able to utilise platform apps to interact across spatial lines. Global estimates posit 70 million workers registered with platform apps, with user growth of online platforms at 26% annually (Heeks 2017; Kässi and Lehdonvirta, 2016). There is a disparity in views on the gig economy, with high-income country policymakers concerned about the casualisation and fragmentation of work and the paid per piece model undermining minimum standards of work. However, low and middle income countries view gig work as a possible

Event Details

Time and location:

2-3 May 2024
9am - 5pm
The Linkway (level 4), John
Medley Building

The University of Melbourne
Parkville Campus
Melbourne, Australia

poverty reduction mechanism, which can digitally supply jobs across borders and foster economic growth. This indicates that the emergence and expansion of gig economy have not followed the same trends in the Global South and Global North. Additionally, existing research shows that the gig economy workers are discriminated against based on their gender, race, caste, and/or migrant status. Within this context, we invite submissions that address the following issues, or other issues pertinent to contemporary governance of digital labour platforms:

- The variegated nature of digital labour platforms and their operations in/across the Global South and Global North countries
- Intersectional approaches to gig economies
- The entanglements of gig work and other forms of (reproductive, paid & unpaid) work
- Labour struggles and resistance in the gig economy sectors
- The role of trade unions and other informal organisations in demanding gig workers rights
- Challenges to regulate digital labour platforms
- The role of gig platforms in urban (uneven) development
- The business/industry dimension of gig economies (e.g. how market consolidation and the rise of super apps has impacted platform labour?)

Submission instructions

To participate in this symposium, please submit an abstract (150-200 words) and a short bio to Lutfun Nahar Lata (L.lata@unimelb.edu.au).

Deadline for submission of abstracts:

10 March 2024. Notifications of decisions on abstracts will be made by 7 April 2024.

Registration:

Registration is free.
All catering will be supplied.
Participants responsible for their own travel.

Format:

To maximise the participation of scholars from Global South and Global North, we plan to organise this as a hybrid symposium that will simultaneously take place at The University of Melbourne and through Zoom.