

PLATFORM CAPITALISM AND PLATFORM LABOR: GENDER, PRECARIETY AND RESISTANCE



OCTOBER 8, 2021 @ 10 am - 12 pm (EDT)
<https://bit.ly/platformlabor>

This virtual event is chaired by Yoonkyung Lee (Sociology, University of Toronto)

Wrestling with the platforms in China: precarious participation and glimmer of alternative self-organizing

JULIE CHEN (iSCHOOL, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO)

The number of platform-based workers in China is estimated to exceed 84 million in 2020—that is, about 10% of the national work force. The magnitude of the transformation of work due to platform power is crucial to understand the contemporary labor politics. In this talk, I will first show how China's existing informal labor force and the capitalistic logic in the platform economy that prioritizes market dominance have shaped the platform-based workforce in its heterogeneity and scale and led to a rising centralized and infrastructural power in the hands of platform companies to regulate the fragmented just-in-time work force. I will further discuss the contradictions between the monopolistic capital and China's infrastructural state and the implications for the continued (old) and new labor struggles. To conclude, I will reflect on the possibility, promise, and limitations of worker's alternative organizing by exploring a national network of self-organized drivers prior to, during, and after the dominance of the ride-hailing platforms from 2011 to 2019.

Platform capitalism and the melting labor: South Korean Platform Labor work and its Mismatch with Welfare Institutions

SEUNGYOON LEE (SOCIAL WELFARE, CHUNG-ANG UNIVERSITY)

Discussions on labor rights and social rights of these platform work developed rapidly and the main topic of discussion was focused on the emergence of this new type of work called platform work. In this study, I conceptualize 'dismantling of various boundaries surrounding the traditional forms of work and workplace, such as standard employment before the fissured workplace and pure self-employment', as *melting labor*. The concept of melting labor includes the increase of new forms of work that deviates from the standard employment before the fissured workplace such as non-regular and atypical work, subcontracted and outsourced work, and also changes in the pure self-employment such as dependent/disguised self-employed as well as freelancers and platform work. Korea's platform labor market expanded considerably in the short run and there was a diversity of platform labor.

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