

MASTER'S PROJECT – DUKE UNIVERSITY
Tech-based Financing Mechanisms for Social Protection of Platform Workers
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Introduction and Motivation

As technology gives rise to new forms of employment and work, it has also exposed workers to exploitation and lack of social protection. Platform workers, defined as self-employed workers whose activity is organized or coordinated by a digital platform or app-based employer, tend to have less coverage by social protection schemes. Due to the more arbitrary nature of their working relationship with app companies, they are often only eligible for voluntary coverage or smaller benefit packages. However, the very digital nature of the work can also provide opportunities to leverage technology for effective coverage of platform workers around the world.

Research Question

This paper will fundamentally try to answer the following question: **Can policymakers harness technology to facilitate efficient and equitable financing mechanisms to fund social protection schemes for platform workers?** The paper will focus largely on location-based platform workers.

Interview Objectives

1. Understand a country's social protection landscape for platform workers.
2. Mechanism implementation by national governments, and their interactions with platform companies and workers.
3. Opportunities and obstacles for social protection of platform workers in the country and tech-based funding mechanisms.
4. Government interests and previous efforts to provide social protection to new types of workers.

Methods

- Case studies informed by documents and key informant interviews.
- Countries to be covered: India, Indonesia, Estonia

The research will employ qualitative methods, specifically case studies and interviews, to explore the question of financing mechanisms and their implementation. Case studies would allow us to understand how low-income workers with sporadic work can be better included within social protection schemes. I will study multiple cases to understand the technical implementation of social security funding mechanisms for platform workers in Estonia, Indonesia and India. These three countries represent three different financing mechanism models, namely automated registration, direct contributions from worker accounts and arrangements for workers with complex or unclear employment relationships. The interviews will be divided into four categories of government officials, staff from the ILO, academics focusing on platform work and platform company representatives.