

Regulating the Platform Economy: The Problem of Popular Representation

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Argument

1. World of Work: Labor platforms *accelerate* a longer-term change in the world of work and *compensate* for the pathologies of the off-line labor market. It raises worker and public interest issues.
2. Democracy 2.0: Labor platforms reinforce shift in popular interest regime. Collective action problems lead to demobilization of productionist issues.
3. US Uber politics: elite-driven politics of concentrated actors and surrogate representation of dispersed actors—workers and consumers. Regulatory capture.

While the platform economy is disruptive in many ways, it continues a longer-term trend toward

1. Contingent work
2. More complex, mediated employment relations; the fissured workplace (David Weil)

Raises work, social policy, public interest issues.

Low-wage dynamic of labor platforms

1. Crowdsourcing Platforms

Construct an international labor market that integrates high and low wage economies. Requesters are businesses.

2. On-demand Platforms

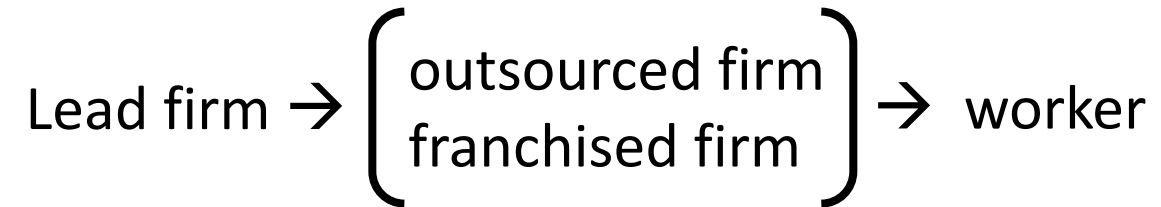
Grow by making cheap services available down the social hierarchy. Requesters are customers.

Labor Platforms: technology makes the market not the worker more efficient.

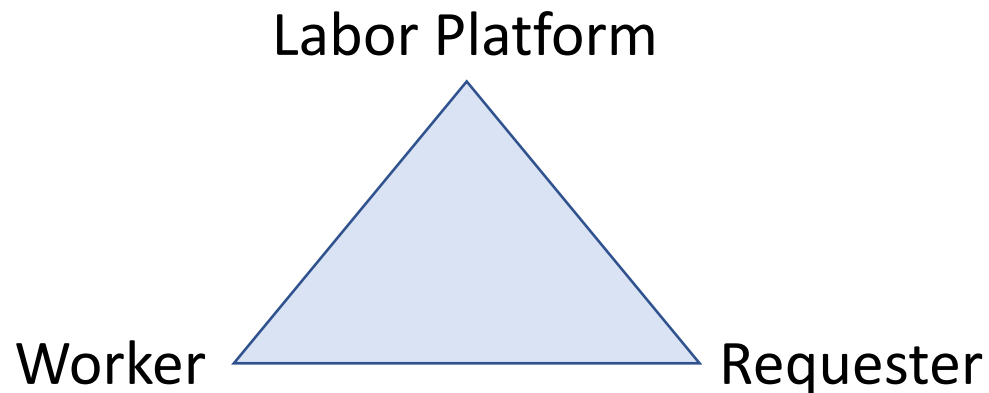
Income increases with more gigs IF the greater number of gigs “outrun” the lower price per gig. A bigger problem with on-demand platforms.

Mediated Labor Relations

Fissured workplace:



Labor platform triangle:



Popular Interest Regime

Democracy 1.0: Onset of mass politics

Growth of factory production/work force

Labor unions predominant

Democracy 2.0: End of 20th c.

Growth of atomized contingent work force

Unions on the defensive

More pluralistic: many kinds of organizations

Popular Interest Regime

	Unions	SMOs, CSOs, Think tanks, Foundations
Organizational traits	Party-affiliated, members, dues, in-person meetings, peak/hierarchical	Staff-centered, dispersed sympathizers/constituencies; networks
Issues	Micro & macro productionist	Rights, risks, consumptionist, distributive, corruption/accountability
Repertoire of Action	Wide: economic and political; workplace to national politics; strikes to institutionalized negotiation	Contention, lobbying, policy analysis Collective action problems

Uber in the US: Disruptive Regulation

1. Elite-driven politics among concentrated interests

Challenger vs. Incumbent (Uber vs. Taxis)

Substantial regulatory capture by Uber

2. Surrogate representation of dispersed interests

- A. Drivers: job creation, labor issues

- B. Consumers/public: hi supply, lo cost, consumer protection, safety

Surrogates Representation of Dispersed Actors

