Scaling Up? TRANSNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISING IN GLOBALISED PRODUCTION

Special Issue Guest Editors: Karin Fischer,
Signe Moe,
Cornelia Staritz

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Kruskaya Hidalgo Cordero
Decolonial Readings of Platform Economies: The Organising of On-Demand Delivery Women Workers in Ecuador

Abstract *The article provides a decolonial and feminist analysis of a particular kind of platform economies, namely those working on location-based applications called on-demand delivery apps. The focus is on the impact of this platform work on women on-demand delivery workers in Ecuador. Through this analysis, the author aims to enrich the study of transnational organisational processes of platform labour by arguing for the importance of intersectional approaches, where gender and migration are essential categories. By drawing on decolonial theoretical and methodological approaches, this paper makes reveals that women face more vulnerability working with on-demand delivery apps, such as sexual harassment and care work overload, but also, that they must make their way into leadership positions in a highly masculinised sector. The article shows that women on-demand delivery workers have the capacity to organise and resist bad working conditions and that they utilise transnational networks to do so.*

Keywords *platform economies, women on-demand delivery workers, decolonial studies*

1. Introduction

Technological progress is frenetically transforming economic models, consumption patterns, social interactions, and even the construction of subjectivities. Many of these changes are generating greater inequalities, such as the intensification of labour flexibilisation, outsourcing and precariousness. One of the phenomena of this technological process is plat-

form economies, known also as digital labour platforms (Rosenblat 2018; Srnicek 2017; Scully-Russ/Torraco 2020). These are new business models that are developed through mobile cell phone applications called apps, where several actors, such as users/consumers, establishments/restaurants and service providers/workers, interact. However, the working relationships between those actors are unclear, because the app companies deny the existence of labour relations by using commercial contracts and discursive rhetoric, designating the latter actors as partners or as self-employed. Thus, these models leave bilateral relationships behind (Duggan et al. 2019; Koutsimpogiorgos et al. 2020) and instead establish trilateral interactions, where outsourcing occurs.

The International Labour Organization has created a classification of these platforms as one of two types: applications "where work is outsourced through an open call to a geographically dispersed crowd ('crowdwork'), and location-based applications (apps) which allocate work to individuals in a specific geographical area" (ILO 2018). For this article, I will focus on location-based applications, specifically those that provide on-demand delivery services.

On-demand delivery companies present crucial challenges around issues such as labour responsibility, minimum wage, and workers' affiliation to social security systems or private insurance. In this sense, the labour and dependency relationships are questioned, leaving workers unprotected. So, the notion of an existing asymmetry between capital and labour is lost, leaving the weakest party – the worker – unprotected. But, in addition, inalienable labour rights such as maternity leave, sick leave, and holiday are jeopardised; not recognising these labour rights is not only a problem on digital platforms but sets a precedent to stop doing so in other types of jobs as well. For this reason, to talk about digital work is to dispute the meaning of how these platforms are sold: presenting themselves as new ways to generate income, be your boss and manage your own time; as if they were innovative, entertaining activities, hobbies, or even entrepreneurship. They try, from the discursive point of view, to hide the labour rights violations they commit and instead present themselves as non-precarious activities.

The literature on platform economies – rooted in digital labour studies – comes mostly from the global North, which has established a monopolistic narrative of the situation on a global scale (Evans 2011; Gillespie 2008;

Rifkin 1995). However, it is essential to have specific analyses, and situated and geographically perspectives on the debates around platform economies that account for the complexity and difference of the socio-economic impacts on the global South. The impacts of these business models in the global South have been more detrimental to workers. On the one hand, the colonial heritage aggravates and intensifies the negative impacts of digital labour in Africa, Latin America, and Asia, where constant processes of dispossession and weakening of national-state projects by global North economic interests and multinational companies have generated major governance problems and weak legal frameworks. Thereby, these regions face major challenges to regularise these apps. On the other hand, in the global South, the forms of labour organisation coming from the colonial heritage, such as semi-slavery, *hacienda* logics, agribusiness, and informality do not find novelty in the effects of digital platform models. In fact, platform economies become just one more problem to solve.

Findings from the global South show urgent categories of analysis and contextual dynamics to more comprehensively understand platform economies on the peripheries of the world that are not discussed in the North literature, including issues such as unfavourable legal frameworks (ILAW 2021); intersectional and gendered perspectives on digital work (Hidalgo/Salazar 2021); cosmetics sales work as an step to app work (Abilio/Machado 2017); resistance and the bargaining power of platform workers (Anwar 2019); migration and human mobility as factors in the expansion of platforms (Arora 2014); reinforcement of neoliberal regimes and increased labour flexibilisation (Munck 2013); expansion of neoliberal subjectivity (Morales 2020); and the creativity, resilience, and recursivity of digital activists in our territories (Grohman 2020).

Just as we make visible the differential impacts in terms of regions and geographies, it is crucial to understand that these business models affect women, migrants, and other specific social groups in different ways around the world. As I will unpack in following sections, it is not the same to be a migrant woman working for digital platforms who rents a motorcycle, as it is to be a middle-class male university student who uses his car to work with Uber from time to time. There are significant differences in the experience of work among on-demand delivery workers. In other words, gender, race, class, nationality, sexual orientation, among other categories, work

in an intertwined manner, generating complex realities (Curiel 2007; Hill Collins 1998).

This research provides a decolonial and feminist analysis of platform economies with a focus on the impact on women delivery workers' lives in Ecuador, the challenges of organising processes among delivery workers, and how women workers in Latin America are taking on protagonist roles in organising initiatives. Thus, this text starts with a theoretical section on decolonial approaches. A methodological part on positionality and research methods follows. The third section is about platform work in Ecuador, and a final part on the national and regional organisational processes. The text ends with conclusions.

2. Decoloniality and platform economies

The decolonial wager I propose in this text is political and epistemic. Thinking from decoloniality implies a multilevel action that must always be conjugated with praxis. By this, I mean that decoloniality is not just theory; it is a daily task of rethinking all the practices of life. "[It is] a continuous posture and attitude – one of transgressing, intervening, in-surfacing and incising" (Walsh 2009: 14f.).

As part of coloniality, an international, sexual and racial division of labour has been established. But, in addition, a new international division of labour has crystallised where countries in the global South have become sources of cheap digital labour for multinational corporations (Fuchs 2016). As Lisa Nakamura brings to light "[c]heap female labor is the engine that powers the internet" (Nakamura 2015:106). In platform economies, these correlations are very evident. In several Latin American countries, the majority of on-demand delivery platform workers are migrants or from racialised populations; for example, in Ecuador, Colombia, and Argentina they are of Venezuelan nationality (Hidalgo/Salazar 2021; Jaramillo 2020); in Brazil, they are Afro-descendants and come from precarious neighbourhoods (Abílio et al. 2020; Associação Brasileira do Sector de Bicicletas 2019); in Mexico, they are a racialised population with dark skin (Jaramillo-Molina 2020); in the United States, they are mostly migrants coming from Latino and Asian communities (van Doorn 2017). In other

words, these business models are sustained by the migrant and racialised workforce.

These platforms arrive in Africa, Latin America, and Asia to exploit working people, invade, and conquer national markets by buying or investing in local apps, plunder data, and use forms of big data collection that are illegal in the global North. In addition, this exploitation does not occur equally in the global North and South. Several of these multinational companies guarantee a minimum of labour rights within European territories. For example, the Lieferando app provides contracts to its workers on German territory, but Lieferando is part of the Delivery Hero conglomerate, which in its international operations does not recognise delivery workers as workers (Koutsimpogiorgos et al. 2020). Instead, in the global South this company claims that the service providers are partners or self-employed, but that they are not workers in a dependency relation with the app. By using monopolistic practices, this same conglomerate has acquired apps such as Pedidos Ya and Domicilios – which were born in Uruguay and Colombia, respectively (Moed 2020), eradicating local companies.

Apart from these monopolistic practices, it is important to point out that these digital platform companies do not only have as their workforce those visible workers – i.e., riders or drivers. In fact, they have a whole operational network behind them that includes customer and user support, programmers, data analysts and a strong investment in digital marketing and product design and promotions. All of these sectors operate locally and/or offshore, providing remote services. Thereby, the central axis of their business model is data processing, algorithmic management of employment, and the monopolistic capacity – as I mentioned above – to generate agreements and promotions with payment methods, businesses, and outsourced companies. According to an ILO report, "work is outsourced on these platforms by businesses in the global North, and performed by workers in the global South" (International Labour Organization 2021: 46).

Talking about data processing, there are fewer regulations on their collection in our regions. So, these multinationals take advantage of legal loopholes to further profit their businesses in the global South (Couldry/ Mejias 2019; Magalhães/Couldry 2020). Among the implications of this

generation, collection and sale of digital personal data, we see monitoring and control: surveillance society through GPS that report your location in real-time; analysis of human behaviour based on your consumptions, tastes, and online interactions. It is a process of data colonisation that invades our ways of knowing, producing, and participating in the world (Couldry/Mejias 2019). So, colonisation was a form of historical appropriation of territories, natural resources, and people; now, it is done with our personal information, transforming it into data, with or without our authorisation. These data enter a computer system of collection and analysis called an algorithm and generate products for purchase and sale in the capitalist world. "[T]he current infrastructural conditions have been insidiously designed by digital service providers to extract, circulate, and interpret this data as capital often without the informed consent or knowledge of their users who produce/own it" (Singh 2021).

These debates extend to algorithmisation and artificial intelligence as tools of imperial/colonial political economy and a nebulous ideology isomorphic to whiteness (Katz 2020). Or, as Paola Ricaurte says, platform economy and, in particular, Artificial intelligence (AI) are "necro-techno-political tools" (Ricaurte 2019), because every stage of capitalism develops its key technologies (Mbembe 2003), and platform economy and AI are the key technologies of the current stage of capitalism – which is colonial/racist, and patriarchal, and exploitative.

Thinking about the colonisation of data from a feminist analysis of the digital industry, Jac Kee posits that one "can enter at the level of bodies, the labor they engage in, the data that they generate, the context of their economy, their histories of colonialism. This would shift the question from a simplistic understanding of ICTs [Information and communication technologies] as empowerment" (Faith 2018). The feminist perspective of the digital economy makes it possible to discuss the negative externalities and side effects of it: such as mining, manufacturing, natural resource consumption, and toxic e-waste pollution. Furthermore, it makes it possible to understand that women are affected to a much higher degree by the lack of access to communal resources, technology, the Internet, and private property (Federici 2012:143; Hidalgo 2020). But the algorithm goes further; multiple studies show how they apply sexist, racist, discriminatory biases (Chander 2017; Khurana 2020), because technology is not neutral

and develops based on prejudices already existing in society. For example, women Uber drivers earn less than men drivers in the United States (Cook et al. 2018).

I do not seek to compare – let alone equate – the processes of colonisation and those of the colonial past with these new forms of dispossession and accumulation. Falling into superficial parallels could generate trivialisation and dehistoricisation (Casilli 2017). However, it cannot be forgotten that the material inheritance of colonisation and the matrix of privilege and oppressions established with coloniality create indisputably different realities between the countries of the global North and South. These significant differences make it impossible to equate the impacts of unrecognised and unpaid digital labour among technology users in our different regions. As Anita Gurumurthy, Nandini Chami and Cecilia Alemany (2018: 1) say: "The phenomenon of platformization transforms production, distribution and social reproduction in ways that reinforce the concentration of economic and social power in the hands of digital corporations and countries of the global North."

Thus, coloniality is not only about the invisible labour performed by all the people mistakenly called 'users', or about data mining. Coloniality – and even more so decoloniality – in the platform economies challenges us to unravel the neoliberal subjectivities that are being reinforced, the strategies of resistance and the alternatives that are proposed in each territory, the impacts on the psyche of the workers themselves, as well as to question the forms of knowledge construction, the interpersonal relationships with the workers, and the politics of enunciation and citation.

3. Methodology: positionality, devolution, and collective body

Decolonial methodological frameworks imply questioning the roles of power within academic and research practice, revealing how colonial practices are reproduced when doing research. Unfortunately, it is a widespread practice to extract information from people and communities, write about them without any qualms, publish texts that only have the names of the researchers, receive all the economic benefits and academic recognition, and never return anything to those people and communities, even if that

research was generated through their lives (Rivera Cusicanqui 2010). Is there retribution and return of what is written to those people and communities from whom that knowledge was extracted? Are they asked if what is written represents them? There is a vast historical tradition of decolonial, Chicana, black, and racial critical theorists who argue that "the hegemonic Eurocentric paradigms that have informed western philosophy and sciences in the Capitalist/Patriarchal Western-centric/Christian-centric Modern/Colonial world-system for the last 500 hundred years assume a universalistic point of view" (Grosfoguel 2011). In this sense, Western knowledge is capitalist, colonial, and patriarchal. Therefore, knowledge is in dispute, as are the ways of constructing that knowledge (Lugones 2003).

In this paper, all quotations and references that I make from the women delivery workers have been previously approved by them. However, the return of research does not remain in the previous reading, it must go out of the text to the material social life of the people who live the precariousness of the platform economies. The data and findings of this text will be disseminated in a pedagogical way within the *Observatorio de Plataformas* project, a space of articulation between researchers and platform workers that, from audiovisual languages, seeks to raise awareness about labour precariousness in apps.

Turning to language, these lines are written in the first person in an exercise of embodying the approaches that are made. From academic rigidity, which comes loaded with ideologies such as positivism, we have been taught that the use of the third person singular is formal. That is to say, we must subtract ourselves from the texts we write, hide behind that apparent neutrality. However, it is always someone who writes a text; people of flesh and blood who express in their research their principles, moral codes, ethics, ideologies. They are people with a specific gender, social class, skin colour, sexual orientation, from a particular country or territory, and with a certain corporeality (Kilomba 2010). All these characteristics of the people who write theories, even if they are not explicit in the texts, inform the totality of what they say.

So too, I speak from that first-person plural, from that *we*. Because knowledge is not made alone, even if individualistic capitalism has told us otherwise (hooks 1994), but rather every theory, every hypothesis, every approach is built with human interaction. In this case, it has been produced

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with the women delivery workers and my colleagues from the *Observatorio de Plataformas*. But the *we* of the collective body is also the body of the organisation. It is from the organising processes of platform workers that theoretical and methodological praxis has been generated to understand the implications of these business models.

Moving on to research methods; since August 2019 I have collected an oral history archive of women delivery workers from two Ecuadorian cities: Quito and Guayaquil. Qualitative information from that archive is included in this text. In addition, I use quantitative information from two digital "Surveys of Working Conditions of App Delivery Workers" that we developed at the *Observatorio de Plataformas*. The first survey was carried out between July and September 2020 to one hundred and forty-eight responses of on-demand delivery workers. The second one was carried out between June and July 2021 to two hundred and three on-demand delivery workers in the two largest cities of the country: Quito and Guayaquil. These instruments were developed in collaboration with the first button-up self-organised group of delivery workers in the country, Glovers_Ecuador. This cooperation was in terms of the co-construction of the tool, pilot testing, and dissemination in social networks.

4. Delivery work in Ecuador: the situation in numbers

Three delivery apps are present in Ecuador: Pedidos Ya – formerly Glovo – Uber Eats, and Rappi. Glovo and Uber Eats arrived in 2018, Rappi at the end of 2019, and in March 2021 the acquisition of Glovo by Pedidos Ya took place. As was mentioned before, Pedidos Ya is part of the German conglomerate Delivery Hero, a global cluster of companies of this type that acquires brands around the world, seeking to establish a hegemonic and monopolistic market strategy. Uber Eats is a branch of the North American transnational company Uber, and Rappi is a Colombian regional-based company. On the other hand, the programming and maintenance of the algorithmic and data system may be delocalised and subdivided into one or several countries. In the case of Rappi, its scheduling services are divided between Argentina, Brazil, and Colombia (Hidalgo/Scasserra 2021).

These app companies arrived during one of the multiple crises in the Ecuadorian labour market (Salgado 2017). Given the commodity dependence of the economy in Ecuador, it is worth remembering that, in the last decade, the whole economy and employment were significantly affected by the fall in commodity prices, which triggered what was called "the labor market crisis" in 2016 (Salgado 2017). Employment in the formal sector fell 10 percentage points, from 41% in 2016 to 31% in 2021 (INEC 2016/2021). This drop is due, among other factors, to the implementation of neoliberal policies in the past five years and economic and political crises – not least caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (Hevia/Vera 2021).

In this context of labour debacle, platform economies find the perfect niche to provide a supposed 'salvation', creating spaces for working people to generate income. However, this is under working conditions of exploitation and subordination. In fact, the number of on-demand delivery workers is increasing every day; for example, there were approximately seven thousand delivery workers nationwide at the beginning of the pandemic. Nowadays we are talking about twenty thousand. It is important to mention that the population of on-demand delivery workers is an estimate, because the app companies have not made this data transparent, even though they have held meetings with the Ministry of Labour, where this information has been requested. According to 2021's Survey of Working Conditions of App Delivery Workers, which included the three apps operating in the country, 69% are migrants and 92% are men. 75% have technical, higher, or postgraduate education. As for the type of vehicle or means of transportation they use, 94 % use a motorcycle. However, it should be considered that 12% rent a motorcycle and 59% have debts to pay for the motorcycle acquisition (Hevia/Vera 2021).

It is important to note that, although the digital platforms claim that there is no employment relationship and that the on-demand delivery workers are "collaborators", "freelancers", "partners" or even "entrepreneurs", 53.2% recognise themselves as workers, 17.73% strongly complain that they have no autonomy or freedom – and, even, some workers claim to be slaves (Hevia/Vera 2021). Ninety four percent do not have social security, and the 6% of workers who have it are paying through their own means. In terms of monthly income, the average is $800. However, gasoline, motorcycle maintenance, and mobile data expenses, which amount

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to up to 300 dollars a month, must be deducted from this amount. There-fore, the average profit earned by on-demand delivery workers is US$500 per month. That is, their earnings are little more than a minimum wage, but they work more than 10 hours a day and seven days a week (Salazar/ Hidalgo 2020). "We live to work, you know, all day on the street, from Monday to Monday. And what we earn does not represent the effort we make" (Marcela, in an interview with the author, 2020).

Likewise, we asked them how many days a year they have taken vaca-tions: 81.7 % answered that they had not taken a single day (Hevia/Vera 2021). This is directly related to the fact that 85% of on-demand delivery workers depend solely on the income they generate with the app. For this reason, they not only have to work from sunrise to sunset without a break, but they also live in constant fear of losing their job. "The first thing we do when we get up is pick up our cell phone and see if our account hasn't been blocked. We don't see the time, we don't see messages, we see the app! This affects us psychologically" (Yuly, Zoom meeting with the Platforms Observatory, 2020). As Yuly says, this causes a constant state of uncer-tainty and unease; something that has direct implications for the state of mind and well-being of the on-demand delivery workers.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ecuadorian government decided to implement mandatory quarantine at the national level with very strict mobility measures, including curfews. This change in the daily routine of the middle and upper classes directly influenced the increase in app consump-tion. It is not unimportant to recollect that even the President Moreno, in a national chain, encouraged citizens to use app delivery services to respect the #StayAtHome. 92.6% of on-demand delivery workers continued with their work in the pandemic. However, to the question "Do you feel at risk to continue working during the health emergency?", 89.2% answered yes (Salazar/Hidalgo 2020). On-demand delivery workers have repeatedly complained that the app companies do not provide them with the neces-sary biosecurity supplies to protect themselves. As they say, "the pandemic came to increase the precariousness that we already live" (Yuly, in a press conference, 2020). This is one of the cruelest faces of neoliberalism within the logic of necropolitics (Mbembe 2003), in which certain bodies must be protected and others are disposable. For example, the on-demand delivery workers have been on the front line of the contagion; they have put their

lives at risk so that people who enjoy a specific class privilege can stay at home. However, for these people, neither governments nor corporations protect them. Thus, for this nefarious system, on-demand delivery workers – mostly migrants – are disposable lives.

The sector of delivery apps is highly masculinised, as the survey shows, related to the fact that there are activities that take place in the public space, a sphere historically denied to women. To this day there is stigmatisation, if, as women, we walk at night alone, drive or ride a bicycle. It would seem that these activities are only for men. In 2021 this should sound farfetched, but women delivery workers every day report sexual harassment on public roads and countless insults that refer to "why are you on a motorcycle, you should be cooking?" (Fernanda, in an interview with the author, 2019), "where did you learn to drive? Better go home" (Marcela, in an interview with the author, 2020), and "women shouldn't be on motorcycles, what don't you have a husband?" (Yuly, in an interview with the author, 2020). Reading these phrases, it no longer seems farfetched to think about the restriction of public space, established since colonisation, regarding women and feminised bodies. Nor does it seem illogical to wonder what percentage of women have driving licenses or own vehicles in their own name. Gender inequality in access to private property is one of the reasons for material inequality. For this reason, bringing historical analysis of the construction of inequality is imperative in order to give comprehensive and deep readings on the daily experience of digital platform workers.

Delving into this interweaving of oppressions, women delivery workers face constant sexual harassment, health problems, including urinary tract infections, absence of any maternity leave, and health insurance when pregnant. According to the 2021 survey, 66% of women on-demand delivery workers have been sexually harassed. In addition, migrant women are exposed to xenophobia, engendered racism, and racialised sexism on a daily basis (Viveros 2009). According to the 2021 survey, 48% of migrant women on-demand delivery workers have been discriminated against for their nationality. In the Ecuadorian context, Venezuelan women face constant hypersexualisation, eroticisation and exoticisation: "they see you as Venezuelan and they already think you are willing to do anything" (Yuly, in an interview with the author 2020). In short, sexual harassment and xenophobia should be thought of in an intersectional way in the debates on digital work and the platform economy.

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In addition, pregnant women are working on these digital platforms, some of whom continue to work until their seventh month of pregnancy without any health insurance. They must hide their condition, because, if the companies find out they are pregnant, they block them from the app (Hidalgo 2021). This happens, even though in Ecuador, labour discrimination due to maternity is regulated by the Constitution in its Art. 43. Further, the on-demand delivery women workers know that during the months of childbirth and breastfeeding they will not have any income, since these platforms do not guarantee these rights. For this reason, it is crucial to have a gender focus when talking about work on digital platforms, where women face greater rights violations.

5. National and transnational organising

Faced with this extreme precariousness, multiple national and international strikes of on-demand delivery workers have taken place during the pandemic, to denounce the situation and make visible the violation of labour rights on a global scale. These strikes have succeeded in bringing the struggle of delivery workers to the forefront of society. The fact that these workers are using internet and mobile technologies everyday gives them a considerable digital skill which is very useful in the current context. In recent months, social movements of various kinds have embraced the struggle of delivery workers as their own: among the images, illustrations and designs.

In Ecuador, there have been several national strikes, and almost all of them were organised by the on-demand delivery bottom-up self-organised group Glovers_Ecuador. This workers' group is based in Quito, and was founded after the first strike of November 2019, when Glovo decided to reduce the rate from 1 USD to 0, 50 USD per kilometre (Bilbao 2020). After this important event for the delivery workers' organising process, the company refused to improve their rates. Months later, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Glovo worsened their conditions by reducing their rates once again. In response to these injustices, workers organised a strike that took place on April 17th, five days before the first international strike (Hidalgo/Salazar 2021). On the 22nd of July 2020, Glovers_Ecuador was able to convene the first national virtual assembly of delivery workers, with

99 attendees – of which, only five women attended; but the one who led the assembly was a migrant woman, the leader of Glovers_Ecuador: Yuly Ramirez. In 2021, the last strike was on May 31st with the participation of on-demand delivery workers from the major three apps: Rappi, Uber Eats, and Pedidos Ya.

It is worth mentioning that on-demand delivery workers in all the apps are paid for each order they place, based on mileage. Each kilometre travelled has a corresponding payment. However, in the case of the app Pedidos Ya – since March 2021 – the mileage is no longer counted based on the Google Maps GPS route travelled, but using a system called the Manhattan calculation. This new way of accounting is based on drawing a straight line between point A and point B, i.e., less mileage than the actual mileage. It does not consider the geography of the city, the direction of the streets, or traffic signs. For this reason, on the last national strike, on-demand delivery workers required a fair count of the routes and therefore of the payments (Ramírez et al. 2021).

According to the 2021 survey, 92% of on-demand delivery workers say it is important to organise: 41% consider that the best way would be through a union, 27% through an association, and 15% through a cooperative (Hevia/Vera 2021). This demonstrates the potential that exists in the country to consolidate the organisational processes of on-demand working people. In fact, on the 7th of October 2021, the first – and the only so far – platform workers' union was founded in Ecuador: FrenAPP (Frente de les Trabajadores de Plataformas Digitales del Ecuador). It is relevant to mention that the name of the union contains the non-binary pronoun 'les', making visible the feminist political commitment of those who promote this organisational process.

Regarding the transnational organisation of on-demand delivery workers – and location-based applications in general – Unidxs World Action is an international assembly of platform workers which is of great relevance here. Created in 2020, this international assembly allocates more than 40 organisations from18 countries from the Americas, Europe, and Asia. It is the international space to discuss specific issues and coordinate international actions; but, also, their members "are very clear about one thing: in the fate of their struggles lies a good part of the

future of the working class" (Marinaro 2020). In this sense, the organisations that are part of Unidxs World Action have a class-struggle discourse and know that the platform economy can grow to other areas of labour and backlash labour rights for all workers. However, within this international space, there are also discrepancies regarding the ways of organising and demanding labour rights. Some believe that union processes are the answer, while others do not support unions. In Argentina, Colombia and Ecuador, workers are currently organising into unions. Instead, in Mexico, workers are consolidated in civil society organisations but have no interest in creating unions. These tensions reflect different historical processes in each country. Different political positions are discussed in general assembly and specific agreements are generated for actions. What they all agree on is that they are workers, and not self-employed or partners as app companies typically call them.

It is worth mentioning that the international strikes of 2020 were conceived and organised at Unidxs World Action. The international strikes of delivery workers let us see the potential of cross-border exchanges: WhatsApp chats have been created with people from Brazil to Japan; virtual Zoom meetings have been convened with translation into two or three languages. All of this is self-managed between delivery workers and people who support their struggles. The first international strike of delivery workers took place on April 22, 2020, the second on May 29, the third on July 1, and the fourth on October 8. For the last one, the demand was extended to on-demand delivery workers and digital platform workers in general. The last international strike of delivery workers on October 8 was the largest action so far: 36 countries and more than 60 organisations raising their voices. In addition, while fighting for labour rights, other meanings were being disputed, such as feminist and gender perspectives; inclusive language; and solidarity with the peoples of Lebanon and Palestine, so that the potential of the struggle overflows and must be intersectional.

Latin American on-demand delivery workers organisations have some very interesting features. Women are leading platform workers' struggles in several countries in the region, and they have been very visible among the international conversations and strikes. Yuly Ramírez is the founder of

Glovers_Ecuador and the general secretary of FrenApp; Carolina Hevia is the general secretary of UnidApp in Colombia, and Maru Fierro is the assistant secretary of Asociación del Personal de Plataformas (APP, Association of Platform Workers) in Argentina (Hidalgo/Salazar 2021). This fact sparks the possibility to change history regarding on-demand platform trade union and transnational workers' organisation dynamics; yet also, to rethink imaginaries in an intersectional way: being a woman, migrant, and organiser.

6. Conclusions

The impacts of platform economies are different in the global North and South. For this reason, it is imperative to create situated knowledge from our geographies. For example, in the global South, there are colonial inherited realities of marginalised labour and informality. So, for our regions, the arrival of digital applications does not generate frameworks of precariousness far from the realities we already know. In addition, there are different material realities between the countries of the global North and South that make it impossible to equate the impacts of unrecognised labour relations among on-demand delivery workers and unpaid digital labour among technology users in these regions.

Considering the above, I assert that digital platforms operate under a logic embedded in coloniality. They dispossess workers of their means of production: motorcycles, bicycles, cell phones, mobile data, insofar as they force them to make them available to work on apps; they dehumanise working people, apps denying them even the very recognition of their subjectivity as workers; these transnational and multinational companies articulate a logic of exploitation and extraction while they exert greater pressure on the markets of the global South; they apply forms of commercialisation of big data that are prohibited in European countries; they hide, do not recognise, and do not remunerate the work done by the users of the platforms; and they do not recognise minimum labour rights, such as labour contracts, while in countries of the global North they operate with other standards.

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Over these pages, I have described the multiple violations of labour rights exercised by on-demand delivery platforms in Ecuador, as well as profiling who the delivery workers are. Based on the interweaving of oppressions, it is imperative to analyse the categories of gender, race, nationality, social class, among others, to understand the complexity of the lives of delivery workers. Thus, women on-demand delivery workers experience greater precariousness within these apps, and it is necessary to politicise these profound differences.

Finally, it is essential to highlight the capacity of articulation that app workers have in order to organise and resist. It is not insignificant that they have international connections and actions throughout the five continents, or that they are using technology to their advantage to generate dialogues, legal advice apps, international strikes, and multimedia production. In addition, on-demand delivery workers organisations are bringing feminist and gender perspectives to a transnational arena with strong female leadership. Furthermore, as they say, the struggle of the delivery workers is the struggle of all the workers of the world, because the precariousness that they now live will extend to all labour activities if a common front of struggle is not built. This internationalist articulation leaves much hope; knowing that, if exploitation is global, resistance is international.

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Abstract *Der Artikel unternimmt eine dekoloniale und feministische Analyse einer besonderen Art von Plattformökonomie, und zwar der sogenannten On-Demand-Lieferdiensten, die auf standortbasierten Technologien basieren. Der Fokus liegt auf den Auswirkungen dieser Plattformarbeit auf On-Demand-Delivery-Arbeiterinnen in Ecuador sowie deren Organisationsbemühungen. Die Autorin bereichert die Beforschung transnationaler Organisationsprozesse in der Plattformarbeit, indem sie in ihrer Analyse eine intersektionale Perspektive einnimmt, die Geschlecht und Migration als zentrale Kategorien berücksichtigt. Unter Rückgriff auf dekoloniale theoretische und methodische Ansätze wird in diesem Beitrag aufgezeigt, dass Frauen bei der Arbeit in On-Demand-Lieferdiensten von sexueller Belästigung und von Überlastung durch Haushalts- und Betreuungsarbeit betroffen sind. Darüber*

hinaus müssen sie in diesem stark maskulinisierten Sektor um Führungspo-
sitionen kämpfen. Der Artikel zeigt aber auch, dass On-Demand-Delivery-
Arbeiterinnen in der Lage sind, sich zu organisieren und sich gegen schlechte
Arbeitsbedingungen zu wehren, und dass sie dazu transnationale Netzwerke
nutzen.

Kruskaya Hidalgo Cordero
Atlantic Fellow for Social and Economic Equity,
The London School of Economics and Political Science
K.C.Hidalgo-Cordero@lse.ac.uk