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NEGOTIATING AGENCY AND SELF IN DIGITAL PLATFORM WORK IN
TÜRKİYE

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Negotiating Agency and Self in Digital Platform Work in Türkiye
Türkiye’de Dijital Platform Emeğinde Faillik ve Öznelliği Müzakere Etmek

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AKP	Justice and Development Party
ANAP	Motherland Party
DİSK	Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
SKG	Social Security Institution
YHK	High Board of Arbitration

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ABSTRACT

The thesis examines the labour control implications of digital labour platforms from the point of workers. The emergence of digital labour platforms had considerable effects on labour processes in many services which became dominated by digital form of mediation. In the absence of traditional labour control mechanisms in the platforms, the use of technology and data changed the way how the work is undertaken, as well as how it is controlled and evaluated. The meaning of these new instruments of control are studied in relations to their effects on worker agency and subjectivities. The effect of platform work in relation to labour control has been subject to extensive study, albeit with a dominant focus on high-skilled remote forms of platform work, or low-skilled local platform work in delivery and transportation services. Despite this attention in such forms of platform work, domestic work is offered predominantly through platforms, and has important implications for labour control discussion, in terms of the role of clients in the labour process as well as in terms of the personal nature of several forms of domestic work. The research is undertaken in a low-skilled platform work setting, focusing on domestic forms of work such as cleaning and various repair services offered at Armut, a popular platform in Turkey. Constructivist grounded theory methodology is employed in the study. The data was gathered through interviews with platform workers and through publicly available platform video content. A comparative analysis between platform working models as well as between cleaning and repair works was undertaken to build a theory bringing the negotiation concept between workers and clients to the fore. The findings suggest the substantive role of the competitive working model of the platform and that the platform mechanisms to empower clients at the expense of workers in negotiations have considerable effects on the sense of agency of workers. The study finds that as a result of a weaker position in negotiating with clients, workers lose their agency in the labour process, eroding their professional identities and resulting in the prevalence of

entrepreneurial selves. The effects of competition in this process, as well as the resulting weakening of workers' organizational prospects are discussed.

Keywords: Digital labour platforms, Worker autonomy, Labour control, Entrepreneurial self, Worker organization



ÖZET

Bu tez, dijital emek platformlarının işçiler üzerindeki emek kontrolü etkilerini incelemektedir. Dijital platformların ortaya çıkışının, ağırlıklı olarak dijital olarak aracılık edilen birçok hizmetteki emek süreçleri üzerinde önemli etkileri olmuştur. Geleneksel emek kontrol mekanizmalarının yokluğunda, platformların emek kontrolünde teknoloji ve veri kullanımı, emek sürecinin gerçekleşmesine olduğu kadar kontrol edilip değerlendirilmesine de ciddi değişiklikler getirmektedir. Bu yeni dijital kontrol araçlarının anlamı, işçi failliği ve öznellikleri üzerindeki etkileriyle ilişkili olarak incelenmektedir. Platform çalışmasının emek kontrolüne etkisi, uluslararası literatürde yüksek vasıflı işlerde uzaktan platform emeği çerçevesinde ya da teslimat ve ulaşım hizmetlerindeki düşük vasıflı yerel platform emeği çerçevesinde kapsamlı çalışmalara konu olmuştur. Platform çalışmasının bu tür biçimlerine gösterilen bu ilgiye rağmen, ev işleri ağırlıklı olarak platformlar aracılığıyla sunulmakta ve hem müşterilerin emek kontrolündeki rolü, hem de ev işlerinin doğası açısından emek kontrolü tartışmaları için önemli sonuçlar doğurmaktadır. Araştırma, Türkiye'de popüler bir platform olan Armut'ta sunulan temizlik ve çeşitli onarım hizmetleri gibi ev işçiliğine odaklanarak, düşük vasıflı platform emeğini incelemektedir. Çalışmada yapılandırmacı gömülü teori metodolojisi kullanılmıştır. Veriler, platform çalışanlarıyla yapılan görüşmeler ve kamuya açık platform video içerikleri aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Çalışanlar ve müşteriler arasındaki müzakere kavramını ön plana çıkaran bir teori oluşturmak için platform çalışma modelleri arasında karşılaştırmalı bir analiz yapılmıştır. Bulgular, platformun rekabetçi ortamının önemli rolünün yanı sıra platform mekanizmalarının müzakerelerde işçiler pahasına müşterileri güçlendirmesinin işçilerin faillik duygusu üzerinde önemli etkileri olduğunu göstermektedir. Çalışma, müşterilerle müzakerelerde daha zayıf bir konuma düşmelerinin bir sonucu olarak, işçilerin emek sürecindeki failliklerini kaybettiklerini, profesyonel kimliklerinin zayıfladığını ve girişimci benliklerinin yaygınlaştığını ortaya

koymaktadır. Bu süreçte rekabetin etkileri ve bunun sonucunda işçilerin örgütlenme olasılıklarının zayıflaması tartışılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dijital emek platformları, İşçi özerkliği, Emek kontrolü, Girişimci öznellik, İşçi örgütlenmesi



INTRODUCTION

Scholars have been paying a lot of attention to digitalization and the growing presence of platforms in economic life in the context of discussions about the "platform economy" (Kenney & Zysman, 2020), the "gig economy" (Vallas & Schor, 2020), or "platform capitalism." (Srnicek, 2016). Despite the fact that online platforms provide employment opportunities and have an effect on lowering the transaction costs in the respective markets that they operate in (Jarrahi et al., 2020), there are a number of studies that emphasize the precarious working conditions that platform workers are subjected to (Friedman, 2014; Malin & Chandler, 2017). Moreover, there have been calls made to bring the working conditions of platform workers up to decent work standards. (Heeks et al., 2021). In addition to the effects that platform employment has on gig workers in various economies, there is an effort in the academic literature to comprehend the mechanisms by which platforms structure labour markets and the implications that these mechanisms have from the standpoint of organizational sociology (Vallas & Schor, 2020).

The new organizational method introduced by platforms comes with a variety of different characteristics. These aspects are referred to as revenue strategies, recruiting and matching of workers with clients, work procedures and performance management, and norms of platform governance (ILO, 2021b). Among these features, work procedures and performance management are crucial in platform form of market organization as platforms have to keep control over the behaviour of workers in order to ensure the smooth provision of services to attract clients to the system (Tirapani & Willmott, 2023; Jarrahi et al., 2020). In a digital setting, this goal is achieved with the deployment of technological tools like algorithms acting on data gathered from the workers and clients. Therefore, platforms introduce a radical shift in worker control, marked by the absence of managers and introduction of new technologies. (Ivanova et al., 2018).

This study takes new forms of worker control instruments employed by platforms in the centre of attention. In deploying workers as independent contractors instead of workers, platforms take the worker/employer interaction out of the terms of a formal employment relationship (Baycık et al., 2021). On one hand, the status of independent contractor deprives workers from the benefits and security of relative labour laws. On the other hand, it compels platforms to find means to control worker behaviour without the control measures recognized in the framework of a formal employment relationship. The ideal type of platform architecture is designed to meet this need to control, by deploying mechanisms such as competitive settings, performance monitoring and incentivizing through the use of data and algorithms and reputation systems (Vallas & Schor, 2020). In many countries, the level of control exerted through such mechanisms is subject to court procedures to determine if the platform type of employment is in the framework of a formal relationship or not (De Stefano, 2021). Independent of legal discussions, several studies point out to the fact that as a result of these control mechanisms, workers are under strict platforms control, despite lacking hierarchical direct control measures from a boss or a line manager (Wood, 2020; Griesbach et al., 2019).

The worker experience under new control mechanisms employed by platforms has been subject to several studies in various national and sectoral contexts. Workers perceive the lack of a boss as in platforms as source of autonomy and empowerment, despite the despotic levels of control that platform mechanisms can reach in the regulating various aspects of the labour process (Purcell & Brook, 2022). Moreover, the level of worker autonomy and sense of agency has considerable implications on the work experience and subjectivities of workers (Franco, 2021). This study is an attempt to understand what platform form of work organization mean for the workers in terms of their control over the work process and how they perceive themselves undertaking platform work.

As platforms have total control over the design of the labour process, the worker experience, and the resulting sense of agency, as well as subjectivities are dependent

on the platform design. This crucial aspect of platform design depends on the form of work that the platform mediates (Vallas & Schor, 2020). Therefore, studies focusing on different country contexts as well as different forms of platform-mediated work is crucial to make sense of the platform economy from the perspective of worker experience. This research is based on a rather understudied type of platform work in local/physical repair work. While a considerable effort is undertaken to understand remote forms of platform work, or local/physical platform work in the delivery and ride-hailing sectors, domestic forms of platform work undertaken in the client's residence drew little attention. In fact, the location of the service as well as the nature of the work has considerable implications on the control exerted by the clients on the work process (McDonald et al., 2020)

Domestic forms of work are offered prevalently through platforms in Turkey. The study is centred on Armut, a popular platform in Turkey, offering a wide range of services dominantly in the domestic forms of work. By focusing on a rather understudied case in domestic type of platform work, and in an understudied country context of Turkey in the scope of platform work, the study aims at contributing to the understanding of worker experience under platform control mechanisms. My goal is to build a theory on worker autonomy and subjectivities related to platform work. To this end, I employed constructive grounded theory methodology in conducting the research. In the rest of the introduction chapter, I will give the background of platform work, detail study rationale, aims and limitations, and explain my positionality as a researcher before giving a general outline of the structure of the thesis.

1.1 BACKGROUND

Today, the economic interaction in various sectors and contexts is undertaken more and more digitally in the world. This change is referred to as the emergence of digital economy. The development of a variety of software technologies, including artificial

intelligence, cloud computing, and blockchain, among others, is linked to the growth of the digital economy. This resulted on the prevalence of companies whose business models increasingly depend on data, the internet, and information technology. Traditional industries including manufacturing, services, transportation, mining, and telecommunications are all affected by this process of digitalization. Digital platforms are fostering innovations and have led to the creation of many applications in a variety of economic sectors, which have the potential to change the industrial landscape (ILO, 2021b). Additionally, platforms have opened up fresh opportunities for digital businesses that are fostering the creation of novel products, services, and processes as well as modernizing previously off-line labour practices and business models.

This profound shift is the result of the continuation of the restructuring of capitalism (Srnicek, 2016). Following the crisis of the Taylorist model of work organization in the end of 1960s, the profitability of capital was re-established through streamlined production models inspired by Toyotism instead of Fordism as well as through a global attack on the labour power in many countries. These developments allowed for a flexible labour market, in a move away from the formal employment relationship marked by the Fordist form of production. Additionally, 1990s saw the outsourcing of traditional industries to the developing world from the developed economies including some service sectors with the advent of communication technologies. Parallely, the decline of industries in the share of economic activity and the rapid rise in the role finance played a role in the weakening of the social model based on the factory as the point of production.

Platforms are a result as well as the most recent step of these global developments. By further rendering the labour market flexible, they allow for a temporary, gig-based conduct of services totally in line with the labour demand. On the other hand, platforms constitute the extension of this new mode of production calibrated to the demand to the service sectors, by allowing the access of clients to a ready and temporary labour force on a growing number of services.

The introduction of new technologies, organizational structures, exploitation tactics, job categories, and market possibilities have made this new type of capital accumulation conceivable. All these features are built on the extraction of data as the new kind of raw material in this new form of capitalism. This process of change is backed by ideological factors, with the digital economy being portrayed as an ideal that can legitimize modern capitalism, along with alluring ideas of flexibility and the spirit of entrepreneurship. Digital economy promises the workers to be freed from the restrictions of a fixed profession and given the chance to support themselves. For consumers, it promises the presence of on-demand services and the network of interconnected tools that will satisfy their demands in an instant.

The benefits of digital platforms are based on their effects to reduce transaction costs and to find opportunities for workers, clients, and businesses. Platforms aim to increase market efficiency by lowering three different types of transaction costs: search and information costs incurred during the discovery of pertinent goods and services; bargaining costs incurred during the negotiation of a deal between two parties; and policing and enforcement costs incurred during the monitoring of compliance with the terms of the deal (Choudary, 2018). Finally, the relationships that platforms enabled may be evaluated in the labour platforms through reputation systems. Finally, to guarantee proper and timely payment in accordance with the agreement, certain labour platforms could provide additional services such as escrow service.

The arguments for the opportunities created by platforms are based on their ability to provide for income generation for certain types of workers which benefits from flexible work arrangements, such as women, persons with disabilities, and youth (ILO, 2022). Additionally, platforms present opportunities for disadvantaged groups in labour markets, such as migrant labourers and refugees. With regards to workers engaging on seasonal or low-paid jobs, platform work may present a way to supplement their incomes. With regards to businesses, platforms have given companies access to talent and employees throughout the world, enabling them to save costs and boost production. Businesses may gain from access to a larger market, a larger client base, a

larger labour pool, greater revenues, and increased efficiency using platform type of work.

Despite the arguments on the capacities of platforms to reduce transaction costs and provide for employment opportunities, the public opinion's reaction to the emergence of digital economy have been mixed. Popular publications questioned how governments should respond to the growth of digital economy and the on-demand forms of work that accompanies it (The Economist, 2018). Prominent politicians declared the rise of the gig economy and labour platforms as "*a more rapacious and exploitative form of capitalism*" and blamed the platforms for contributing to the weakening of workers' ability to engage in collective bargaining (ITV, 2017; Warren & Liss-Riordan, 2020). Such reactions reflect the concerns around the platforms and platform type of work organization in terms of eroding workers' traditionally granted rights. There is an established consensus that the growth of the gig economy will inevitably result in an increase in the size of the global precariat (Schor, 2020).

The growth of precariat doesn't only affect the material conditions of workers. In line with the claim of precariat as a new class (Standing, 2016), the prevalence of such form of work has implications on class relations. Therefore, it is crucial to discuss the growth of the gig economy or digital labour platforms in relation to the decomposition of the working classes. Under platforms, workers are drawn to the notion of self-commercialization and self-rationalization via the completion of short-term gigs under the status of independent contractors. In Foucauldian terms, platforms can be understood as a form of governmentality that brings all forms of life under the purview of economic rationality and exerts control over or contains the forces of labour (Foucault, 2008). One could argue that platforms promote the ideas of competitiveness and create an illusion through the promotion of the concept of entrepreneurialism and deploying workers as micro-enterprises (Vallas & Schor, 2020). Accordingly, whether or not digital labour platforms build a new kind of control and disciplining on the labour processes through the promotion of neoliberal subjectivities is a crucial question in understanding the platform experience of workers.

Within the context of these questions, the Turkish experience of digital labour platforms will be studied in this thesis, by presenting the findings of qualitative field research undertaken between 2020 and 2022 on a popular domestic work platform, Armut. The findings will be analysed in relation to the worker experience in the platforms, specifically focusing on worker autonomy under platform mediated work. The implications of platform control mechanisms on worker experience of platform control will be discussed in relation to subjectivities at work, including their implications for the organizational prospects of platform workers.

1.2 STUDY RATIONALE

This research on the platform control mechanisms contribute to the literature from several points of view. Firstly, as a new form of work organization, platform work requires a better understanding, especially from the point of worker control, where newly emerged mechanisms benefitting from technological advancements have been deployed by platforms to control worker behaviour. Secondly, the fact that platforms are dependent on local contexts require the need to study platform work in various socio-economic settings and platform designs. Thirdly, domestic forms of platform work are rather understudied in the literature and a comprehensive understanding of such distinct platform experience, taking into account the specifics of the work undertaken, is lacking.

With regards to the study of platforms through the point of view of labour control, the literature is marked by studies that focus on the role of platforms in precarious working conditions and the flexibilization of the labour market (Llosa & Agulló-Tomás, 2022). Moreover, several studies examined platforms' impact on the formalization of work and processes via the control, procedures, standards, and regulations enhanced by the technology and management strategies (Randolph et al., 2019). Both of these research lines contribute significantly to the understanding of

platform work. However, in the absence of direct control mechanisms, the role of subjectivities in worker control becomes crucial (Bellesia et al., 2019; Franco, 2021; Ravenelle, 2019).

In this sense, the most important contribution that the thesis will provide to the existing body of research would be its specific emphasis on the role of subjectivities on worker control in domestic forms of work. An emphasis on domestic work is crucial in this regard, since the work undertaken in the client's residence has strong implications in labour control, in terms of both the increased role of client in the control function, and in the changing power dynamics between the worker and the client due to the location and nature of the work (McDonald et al., 2020). The research would allow for a discussion of the findings of an extensive body of research undertaken in remote platforms and in local/physical platforms in the delivery as well as transportation sectors in the light of the specifics of domestic work platforms.

Moreover, the study of platform work mostly has been centred on developed economies in the context of local/physical platform work (Franke & Pulignano, 2021; Griesbach et al. 2019; Veen et al., 2020; Woodcock, 2021; Rosenblat & Stark, 2016; Maffie, 2023). The research undertaken in developing countries are predominantly focused on remote/online forms of work (Anwar & Graham, 2020; Wood & Lehdonvirta, 2021; Wood et al., 2019). This research aims at an in-depth study of local/physical platform work in a developing country setting in Turkey. The similarity of platform type of organizations under different social and legal contexts presents an opportunity to undertake comparative studies between different platforms in the same sectors as well as between different types of work offered in the same platform. Such studies would contribute significantly to the understanding of platform economy as a whole taking into account its specifics and local socio-economic contexts. This research is expected to contribute to the literature by enabling such future studies.

Moreover, with regards to the specific case of Turkey, the research is expected to shed light into the much discussed but little understood case of platform work. This form of work emerged as a part of public discussion firstly through conflict between

Uber and traditional taxi drivers (İnci, 2018). Later on, the working conditions of delivery workers came to the public agenda following the collective protests of delivery workers (ILO, 2022). Despite this public attention, academic literature is limited to valuable studies with regards to the employment status of platform workers (Baycık et al., 2021; Ünal & Temiz, 2022) and gender inequalities at platforms work (Urhan, 2022), which doesn't involve empirical evidence. In this sense, this study will provide for an empirical attempt to present a comprehensive understanding of the domestic platform work in the context of Turkey.

Finally, a discussion of platform work in the Turkish context will have to consider the specifics of Turkish labour market. Following the neoliberal reforms of 1980s, as well as the flexibilization of the labour market as a result of the introduction of atypical forms of work during the Justice and Development Party (AKP) era starting from early 2000s, precarity and job insecurity became the norm for the majority of workers (Bakır, 2018). Both these processes had been possible due to the deliberative weakening of worker organizations (Akkaya, 2004), and the results of these processes had negative implications on the organizational efforts of workers (Birelma, 2021). In this context, the study will have a significant contribution by discussing the organizational prospects of platform workers, and the effects of worker agency and subjectivities in the platform labour process to these prospects.

1.3 STUDY AIMS

The aim of the study is to contribute to the understanding of worker experience in digital labour platforms in Turkey within the scope of labour control processes. Specific attention is devoted to how the worker autonomy is experienced under the new control mechanisms employed by platforms. In relation to the worker autonomy, worker subjectivities coming into play with platform work will be discussed, with the goal of building a theory on the effect of platforms on organizational prospects and resistance practices of workers. By conducting this study, my intention is to explore in

which ways platform work effects worker experience of autonomy and platform control and to present a theoretical framework for the study of the role of different actors in platform work in the given study context. The detailed research questions are given under the chapter on methodological choices in the study of platforms.

1.4 MY POSITIONALITY AND PERSPECTIVE

As I will detail in the chapter on my methodological choices in conducting this study, I employ constructive grounded theory methodology in researching labour control in platform work. As a researcher, I acknowledge my role in the construction of knowledge based on the accounts that my participants build based on their subjective experiences. Accordingly, my positionality and perspective play a role in all processes of this research. My interest in the study of labour was already formed during my MA study in the Political Economy labour reforms in the European Union within the scope of Europe 2020 Strategy. When I started my PhD in 2012, my academic interest in labour was already carried to professional field with my work as a Field Officer with International Labour Organization's (ILO) Office in Ankara, Turkey. My research interests during that time were shaped by a definition of work as the species activity of men as well as a curiosity and a newly forming understanding for the political processes surrounding the capital-labour relationship.

During my PhD process, I kept my interest in labour issues, however my perspective was evolved from an emphasis on macro-level understanding of the processes of political economy to micro-level understanding of sociology of work. Accordingly, I started working professionally in international supply chains, acting as consultant for Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives aiming to improve global working conditions. As a part of this job, I worked in many factories in the garment sector in Turkey on issues of social dialogue, trade union rights and working hours. My academic interests also shifted to the labour process and to the point of production as a result of this work. The

understanding of power relations between workers and management became my main curiosity. The emergence of digital platform work during that time, introduced considerable changes to the design and implementation of power relations at work.

My personal curiosity, as well as my academic and professional experiences on labour issues had effects in the design, field study and analysis processes of this research, which were all synchronous. As a professional on labour issues and rights, I tried to be reflexive and clear with this position during these processes. For this end, I collected data not only from the workers but also from the platform as well. I questioned various accounts of my participants and drew comparisons between them to uncover their motivations. Despite these efforts, I had a number of assumptions in designing the study. I assumed that the labour control mechanisms employed by platforms would reflect on worker experience. After conducting the interviews, I discovered how the lack of a boss in platforms and the temporary and impersonal nature of strict client control create a sense of agency for workers. I reflected these discoveries in the theory that I built as a result of this research.

1.5 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The study takes in its scope a platform offering predominantly domestic work in Turkey. Therefore, the results are based on the experiences of workers in cleaning and home repair sectors undertaking work from Armut platform. Despite the popularity and dominant position of the platform in Turkish context, my research is limited with the Turkish context and the specific nature of the cleaning and home repair works, which significantly effects the platform working models.

In spite of this limitation, the existence of different platform models allowed me to undertake a comparative analysis and to build a theoretical framework to study the role of different actors as well as the process of platform mediation, taking into consideration and explaining different working models of the platform. The theoretical

framework built solely on data from the field results offers explanatory concepts in the study of domestic forms of work in various socio-economic and platform contexts, while at the same time offers an opportunity to undertake comparative studies in different forms of platform work such as high-skilled remote freelance work or low-skilled local/physical platform work such as in the delivery and transportation sectors.

My data is based workers and the platform. I conducted interviews with workers in various types of services in the platform and collected data from platform videos prepared as a guidance for the workers. A limitation to the study is the client experience as a source of data. I based my analysis of worker-client relations and negotiation processes on the accounts of my worker participants as well as on the platform videos aiming contribute to the regulation of worker-client relations.

1.6 THESIS STRUCTURE

Following this introductory chapter, the thesis is composed of seven subsequent chapters starting from the definition and overview of digital labour platforms as well as the literature on labour control within the scope of platforms. In this chapter, I will discuss how labour control is studied in relation to worker autonomy, the effect of competitive mechanisms as well as the role of subjectivities in platform form of control. The third chapter is devoted to the Turkish context, specifying the neoliberal reforms and the resulting distributional effects of changing capital-labour power relations. The current state of the labour market in Turkey will be given in the light of atypical forms of work before an overview of the platforms in Turkey and the study context in Armut platform.

The fourth chapter of the thesis is on my methodological choices in the study of platform work in Turkey, detailing the grounded theory methodology in the light of my research questions and the use of constructive grounded theory methodology in this study with the reasons justifying such selection. The fifth chapter will detail the

methods I employed in the study, providing detailed information on data collection methods, study sample, ethical considerations adhered in conducting the study as well as the coding and analysis processes.

The sixth chapter is devoted to the conveying the results of the field research under three sections. Firstly, I will focus on the role of the platform in designing the competition as well as the client-worker relations. The second section under this chapter is on the negotiation processes between workers and clients, detailing the increased role of clients in labour control and the role of platform mechanisms in the weak bargaining power of workers against the clients. In the third section, a critical discussion is offered on the implications of worker-client negotiations on the worker sense of agency as well as on the subjectivities of workers, before finalizing the chapter on the effects of platform work on the organizational prospects of workers.

I will discuss the findings of my field research in the light of the literature in the seventh chapter, with a focus on the role of clients in labour control in different country and platform design contexts and explain my position to study platform work as negotiated relationships. In the final section of the chapter, the subjectivities in platform work will be discussed and the resulting resistance practices of the workers will be compared with different cases studied in the literature. In the eighth and final chapter, I will conclude the study by returning to my research questions and my answers found as a result of the study, before presenting the limitations of research and further study prospects.

2. PLATFORMS, LABOUR CONTROL AND SUBJECTIVITIES

This chapter is devoted to the literature on platforms, from the perspective of labour control mechanisms that platforms employ and the role of worker subjectivities in the effectiveness of control measures. I will start the chapter by giving a definition of platforms, tracking the development of platform employment through the definition of sharing economy and its transformation of platform capitalism. In the next section, I will focus on worker control on platforms, particularly emphasizing the studies undertaken on the role of data and algorithm as the new methods of control employed by platforms. Worker control on platforms has been debated in the literature in line with the worker autonomy in relation to choosing the job and client, therefore the following section will discuss this debate. The role of competition in worker control and the resulting effects on professional worker identities will form the next section of the literature review. Finally, I will discuss the role of worker subjectivities and entrepreneurial self in worker control, in a discussion inspired by the governmentality concept of Foucault, with references to the related literature on platforms.

2.1 DIGITAL PLATFORMS: DEFINITIONS AND OVERVIEW

Digital platforms today operate in many sectors under different designs and shapes, regulating the delivery of good and services of a considerable share of economic activity. Before coming to how platforms organize their respective markets and their relevance in terms of organizers, I will touch on the discussion in relation to how to name such form of economic organization. When platforms emerged initially in 2010s, there were different approaches to what term to use to designate them. Initially, a clear distinction between commercial and non-commercial platform-type of organization didn't exist. Terms such as sharing economy or collaborative consumption were being used for all kinds of platform activity.

The origins of the term sharing economy go back to 2010 and it was first used to designate activities that platforms facilitate which were originally called as “collaborative consumption” (Schor & Atwood-Charles, 2017). Collaborative consumption is defined as “*an economy built on distributed networks of connected individuals and communities versus centralized institutions, transforming how we can produce, consume, finance and learn*” (Botsman, 2013, as cited in Carboni, 2016, pp. 7-8). Sharing economy is part of this economy of distributed networks and involves users granting each other access to under-utilized physical assets in exchange for money or for free. While the definition of collaborative consumption points out to a set of transformative economic activities undertaken outside of state structures, the definition of sharing economy emphasizes the idleness of the shared products or services. The deployment of transformation and sharing discourses to define sharing economy platforms has the function of the promise of community, inclusion, and participation in what ended up as one-sided market structures (Cockayne, 2016).

This original meanings of the sharing economy and collaborative consumption may define an era of digital platforms where the services were not commodified. But the study of actual sharing economy platforms today would reveal that they offer a digitally mediated form of market exchange similar to existing market structures (Cockayne, 2016). Therefore, despite the use of sharing economy is still found within literature to point out to platforms involving the exchange of labour, the term “platform economy” is prevalently used in the literature, as such a term excludes the transformation and sharing discourses that contemporary platforms fail to fulfil.

Economic activity governed through platforms is defined in multiple terms not limited to “sharing economy” and “platform economy”, but also as “gig economy” and “on-demand economy”. Before moving on with the prevalence, typology, and business models of platforms, I would like to emphasize the distinction between those alternative terms and their limitations to indicate platforms. I discussed the weakness of the term “sharing economy” in its use of sharing discourse in a commodified economic sphere. Gig economy, on the other hand, defines an economic relationship

where work is undertaken through pieces or one-time performances, but lacks a reference to digitalization and platforms as the principle of organization (Kenney & Zysman, 2018). While platforms contribute to the intensification of division of work to gigs or performances, this phenomenon predates the emergence of platforms, therefore gig-economy is not the proper term for such phenomenon. On-demand economy on the other hand refers to the instant availability of services or products. Similarly, to gig-economy, this refers to one of the important aspects of platforms, where the access to services or products of consumers is greatly enhanced, but the use of on-demand economy is only focusing on this aspect while missing the important feature of platforms in the organization of economic activity.

Some research defines platform work as “work-on-demand via apps” (De Stefano, 2015), or “crowdwork” (Howcroft & Bergvall-Kareborn, 2019) Similarly to the term on-demand economy, the use of “work-on-demand via apps” misses the focus on part played by platforms in the process of work mediation. The term “crowdwork”, on the other hand, refers to a certain kind of labour in which workers are located in a variety of different locations. (Duggan et al., 2020). This form of work is mediated via platforms, but so is physical labour, which often takes place in locations with a high concentration of workers. The term “platform-mediated work” provides a definition that places primary attention on the predominate feature of this new kind of work (Tucker, 2020).

Platforms are the main actors in the platform economy. Platform is defined as “*a business that connects external producers and consumers and enables value-creating interactions between them*” (Choudary, 2018, p. 1). This definition emphasizes the interactions that platforms enable, by connecting all sorts of things and people to potential clients, ranging from private individuals to multinational corporations (Langley & Leyshon, 2016). Apart from connecting different actors and things, platforms also regulate and organize these connections (Kenney & Zysman, 2018). As business ecosystems built upon algorithms and software, running on cloud, and operating on data, platforms introduce a new way to organize exchange. Accordingly,

to denote the major role of platforms in organizing their respective sectors, the term “platform economy” has been used to name this new form of economic organization.

With the emergence and prevalence of platform economy, various studies were undertaken to determine the size of platforms in conventional economic activities. A survey undertaken in 2016 indicates that 22% of adult workers in the United States have worked in the on-demand economy (Malin & Chandler, 2017). I should note here that while we mentioned certain limitations of on-demand economy to define the platforms, the term is representative of the economic activity organized around platforms. For major platforms engaged in mediating transportation service such as Uber, Lyft and Sidecar, there are estimates that these popular platforms employed a global workforce of 216.000 as of 2016 (De Stefano, 2016). Home service platforms such as Handy, TaskRabbit or Care.com, on the other hand are estimated to employ a much higher number of workers, given as 6.000.000. ILO’s report on platforms states that 22% of the working age population in Unites-States offered goods or services through platforms (2021b). When it comes to how significant platform work is for workers, the report suggests that 33% of those who offered platform work earn at least 40% of their monthly income from the platforms.

While platform economy is growing in United States and globally, studies centred on Europe shows a similar growth and prevalence despite being behind United States. A survey conducted by ING with their clients shows that 5% of Europeans have participated in platform economy by utilizing goods that are idle (ING, 2015). Same survey gives the rate of 9% participation for Americans. Among European countries Turkey has the highest recognition and participation rate to platform economy with %9 of customers participating, a mark equalling the rate in the United States. The number of workers engaged in platform work in Europe is given as between 9-22% in 2021, in the above-mentioned ILO report (2021b). The fact that participation in the platform economy is rising throughout the world, and that much of the value creation occurs through virtual platforms in an increasing rate are indicators that the implication of this new economic model is in need of careful study (Kenney & Zysman, 2018).

In platform economy, there are distinctions between various types of platforms. Platforms can mediate the provision of either goods or services. Prominent goods platforms include eBay, Amazon, and Alibaba, while TaskRabbit, Uber, Upwork can are major platforms operating in various service sectors (Kenney & Zysman, 2018). In a wider definition, the term “platform capitalism” includes not only the exchange of goods and services but also social media and user generated content platforms such as Facebook, Youtube, Twitter or crowdfunding platforms such as Kickstarter, Indiegogo etc. (Langley & Leyshon, 2016).

Major labour platforms in US operate in several sectors. The major platforms in their respective sectors are Uber and Lyft as ride brokers, Sidecar as delivery broker, TaskRabbit as homework mediator, Fiverr as creative and professional services marketplace, Postmates and Favor as delivery service platforms, Homejoy as cleaning service marketplace and Instacart as grocery delivery platform (Carboni, 2016). Among labour platforms, there are also variations depending on the business model of the platform. Couchsurfing is an example of a non-transactional and for-profit platform, while Airbnb is a transactional platform making idle user resources available through work of house-owners which is not remunerated by the platform (Cockayne, 2016). On the other hand, Uber is similar to Airbnb in making idle resources of users available but differs in allowing work of car owners to sell their labour power to consumers.

Despite displaying differences on business models depending on the sector as well as platform design, there are commonalities among all labour platforms in terms of major components of the platform mediating interaction. Majority of labour platforms involve three phases of core interaction as discovery, exchange, and relationship (Choudary, 2018). Discovery implies the phase where producers and consumers of a product or service meets, exchange signifies the phase when these two actors exchange the product or service, and the relationship phase implies the feeding of interactions and repeated exchanges. Depending on the design of the platform one of these phases will be dominant, such as discovery phase in Uber’s case, or relationship phase for

Upwork or exchange phase for TaskRabbit. With the careful design of those phases, the main goal of the platform is attracting consumers and producers and then scale up the operations benefitting from network effects caused by these two types of users.

The structure of platforms depends largely on their intended functions. The goal of labour platforms is to disrupt the existing markets by changing the model of exchange, rather than creating new markets within the economy. In this sense, labour platforms are the newest outcome of the continuation and intensification of the longer trend of transformation of labour with the increasing prevalence of alternative forms of employment (Collier et al., 2017). Contrary to the public opinion, platforms are not exactly tech companies, but rather new and more dominant players within the temporary staffing industry that leverages technology and software to optimize labour's flexibility (van Doorn, 2017). The deployment of technology in labour platforms is not directly related to the production processes but rather related to rendering the market more efficient (Collier et al. 2017).

The business model employed by the platforms brings into the question the role of finance in the process of platformisation of various sectors. Finance has played an important role in the digital transformation of some markets within the traditional economy (Kenney & Zysman, 2018). As the business model of the platforms is aimed at constantly scaling-up and finally reaching dominance within the market, their profitability is also very low in the initial stages of the platform, as they need incentives to attract workers and clients by disrupting the conventional competitors and driving them out of the market. To compensate for low profitability at the initial stage platforms use finance from the venture capitalists who may be willing to absorb exceptional losses in the hopes of acquiring future monopolistic profits.

In this section, I defined platform economy, located it within the existing literature, provided information on its size, prevalence, and expectation for growth, and also discussed variations and commonalities among platform business models. Within the scope of this study, platform form of organization is crucial in terms of its implications

on labour control strategies and practices. In the next section I will detail the labour control issue in digital labour platforms through research undertaken in this area.

2.2 LABOUR CONTROL AND PLATFORMS

Labour control has been subject to extensive study, especially in the scope of the labour process theory of Braverman (1975). Labour process theory has been applied in a variety of industrial contexts in its early stages to unpack the relationships between the employer, who owns the means of production, and the worker, who is the possessor of labour power (Gandini, 2019). The theory specifically focuses on how these roles of the employer and the worker sets in motion the “labour process”, as the process of transforming labour power into a commodity in accordance with the relations of production. As a consequence, a methodology that has proven useful for studying worker autonomy, management control, and consent within industrial capitalism as well as the rationale for the "degradation" of worker skills throughout the process of capital accumulation was developed.

The concept of labour control was developed in relation to the problem of indeterminacy of labour (Sewell, 2005). The indeterminacy of labour can be conceptualized as the difference between a worker's theoretical capacity of labour (also known as their “labour power”) and what the worker actually ends up accomplishing. This gap is known as the indeterminacy of labour. The objective of the labour control system, according to the labour process theory, is to narrow this gap. Through the studies adhering to labour process theory undertaken over the years, several forms of labour control at the point of production have been identified.

The forms of labour control differ on its source based on organization or the labour market (Standing, 2010). Internal labour control is identified as control within an organization and external labour control is control arising from the effects of the labour market. In an organization, simple forms of control imply mechanisms such as

direction, monitoring, assessment, rewards, and disciplinary measures. The purpose of direction or supervision is to promote productivity. The simple form of labour control is applied through incentives such as wage rates, overtime, bonuses, profit shares, fringe benefits and promotions, as well as through sanctions such as wage deductions, extra labour, exclusion from benefits, demotion, and dismissal.

Simple control mechanisms evolved into and coexisted with the technical forms of control (Standing, 2010). Technical control, as opposed to basic control, links control methods to job reorganization and the precise division of labour with the goal of limiting workers' ability to violate contractual commitments. Management employs technologic ways to track and assess labour input, impose a pace and direction on labour, and reduce worker choice. Foremen, supervisors, and middle management are not as needed when technological control is possible. The prevalence of technical control allowed for a new type of control to emerge. Bureaucratic control is the next stage in the evolution of labour control. In bureaucratic control, the work regulations become formalized, centralized, and hierarchical, leaving little room for discretion on the part of workers but also on the part of the layers of controllers as well. Regulation of job categorization, promotion, punishment, compensation scales, grades, and descriptions of minute tasks is often accomplished via the establishment of centralized, administrative regulations and intricate processes.

Before digital labour platforms, there was already a trend of moving away from direct supervision and toward complex systems of implicit games as a result of the post-Fordist modes of production. Such systems include rules as well as both explicit and implicit bargaining processes (Standing, 2010). The emergence of digital labour platforms opened the door for a new discussion on the forms of control and on how platforms control labour in the absence of managers. Workers in the platforms are categorized as independent contractors, resulting in precarity since they are denied the securities and advantages associated with having a traditional employment relationship. (Carboni, 2016). Therefore, theories of control built around a formal employment relationship are revisited in line with the emergence of platforms. To

deliver services in an efficient way and to match the services of the workers with the labour demand, platforms depend on new methods of organizing their particular markets, which include new forms of labour control. (Wood & Lehdonvirta, 2021; Vallas & Schor, 2020).

Platforms use data and algorithms in innovative ways to implement new types of labour control. The labour process theory is being revisited by one line of research which concentrates on the use of algorithms in labour control. (Gandini, 2019; Veen et al., 2020). Studies provide light on the ways in which algorithmic processes, such as information asymmetry, rating and comment systems, or digital monitoring approaches, are used to exert control over workers (Wood et al., 2019; Rosenblat & Stark, 2016; Kellogg et al., 2020; Duggan et al., 2020, Lee et al., 2015; Maffie, 2023; Parth & Bathini, 2021; Shapiro, 2018; Veen et al., 2020).¹ Even if platforms are moving away from having direct control over their workforce through traditional management approaches, the fact that they are introducing new means of management via algorithms means that this move will not result in a lower degree of control experiences by the workers. (Griesbach et al., 2019).

Therefore, when it comes to platform control, instead of a specific focus on the role of algorithms, a comprehensive analysis is required taking into account specific ways that allow or restrict worker behaviour along with an emphasis on subjectivities. (Veen et al., 2020). This is closely related to the shifting nature of control from “control by organization” to “control by market” (Ivanova et al., 2018) or to the “illusion of control” in the platforms (Woodcock, 2021), as a result of the deployment of workers as micro-enterprises. (Fleming, 2017). The success of such new methods is dependent on worker autonomy and the calculability of worker action, which results in the production of an active economic subject under neoliberal ideology. (Moisander et al.,

¹ While the concept of information asymmetry was first introduced to economic theory to denote the advantage of seller over the buyer in the market (Lofgren et al., 2002), in the scope of platform work, the concept is used to emphasize the limited information made available to workers by the platform, as a limiting factor to worker agency.

2018; Shapiro, 2018). Consequently, the promotion of autonomy in platforms becomes a tool of worker control. In the next section, I will focus on this duality and review from which points of view worker autonomy and management control in platforms have been studied.

2.3 WORKER AUTONOMY VS. CONTROL

The discussions and theories around the issue of labour control cannot be studied without reference to autonomy, as control cannot be separated from autonomy as a concept. As post-Fordist modes of production became more prevalent, new forms of management control, calculating and acting on the worker's autonomy came to the fore. For example, Fordist forms of control I mentioned in the previous section, which are characteristic of physical industrial labour are replaced by management efforts to reward workers when they “*direct their discretionary efforts*” towards the ends of employers and organizations (Sewell, 2005). Rather than relying on onsite physical control, modern forms of organizations foster worker autonomy through the management of workers' consciousnesses and their knowledge (Shibata, 2019). As a result, the on-site form of control over the worker was progressively supplanted by the control of knowledge and the management's discourse of worker empowerment.

Such form of autonomy, which is employed by managements as an alternative to direct control is defined as “responsible autonomy” by Ackroyd and Thompson (1999). They define in turn, “irresponsible autonomy”, as a kind of autonomy that is created by employees in their interactions with co-workers and in the small group micropolitics. Even in strict administrative systems, the behaviours of workers cannot be designed in such a straightforward manner (Gerber, 2021). Workers develop informal norms and hierarchies, as well as forms of individual or collective resistance and misbehaviour, both in response to and independently of management strategies (Edwards, 1986).

These practices of irresponsible autonomy are based on a subjective form of autonomy. The subjective definition of autonomy refers to the informal worker connections and workplace practices that are determined by bottom-up standards and ideals, creating and defending an independent meaning system and domain from the formal organization and its demands (Laaser & Karlsson, 2021). The objective autonomy in the workplace, on the other hand, refers to situations in which workers are given the opportunity to independently use their expertise and judgment across the many phases of the production or development of a service. This is embodied in chances for individuals or groups of workers to make decisions on the strategies they use to complete their jobs, how they apply these strategies, the sequencing and timing of the processes required to complete tasks, and the standards used to evaluate their level of effort. In this way, workers may participate in work that is defined by self-determination and self-development.

In differentiating between responsible/irresponsible or subjective/objective forms of autonomy, I am not claiming a definition of autonomy independent of social contexts. Even in the conditions of objective autonomy, the worker, as an individual, is a socially constructed subject, who is regulating its life in accord with a regime of power in Foucauldian terms (Bevir, 1999). In this sense, I am adopting a definition of autonomy which is closer in meaning to agency. Agency is a multi-faceted concept that implies both the purpose and practice of taking action for one's own self-interest or the interest of others (Anwar & Graham, 2020). I acknowledge agents' creativity, occurring in a given social context which influences it (Bevir, 1999).

The question of worker autonomy is investigated from a variety of angles in the context of digital labour platforms. The debate on whether or not platform work limits or expands the autonomy of workers evolves following two opposing schools of thought. Some studies point out that workers are allowed to decide on the location or the time of work on platforms and considering the increased number of clients to work for, the experience of autonomy is increased for the worker. At the same time, however, emphasis is placed on the new components of control that platforms have as described

in the previous section. Even if there is no direct supervisor, platform work can still be autocratic, according to the findings of some other studies that focus on the obstacles to the experience of such an autonomy by the worker which result from the structure of platforms. I will detail these two opposing arguments in the following part of this section.

The duality of autonomy and control in platforms has been subject to studies in the context of both localized physical work and remote work platforms. A study focusing on remote platforms, relies on the concept of “subordinated agency”, to describe worker experience (Wood & Lehdonvirta, 2021). The concepts refer to the process where platforms enable workers to diminish their dependency to a single or a few clients by providing them with the opportunity to choose clients from a high number of available options. On the other hand, this autonomy is balanced by a greater dependency of workers to the platforms. This is due to the fact that platforms present this opportunity of selecting clients from a very large pool to workers in return for their acceptance of being subjected to the control mechanisms of the platform. As a result, the dependency of the worker is shifted from being linked to clients toward being linked to the platform. The results of this empirical investigation on remote work platforms are backed by the findings of conceptual analyses as well. The term “permissive potentates” is suggested to explain the role of platforms in organizing supply and demand (Vallas & Schor, 2020). The concept implies the process the responsibility of labour control is not directly held by the platform but rather dispersed among various actors including clients. The distribution of control among other actors does not necessarily lead to a decentralized power structure since the platform retains the primary authority in determining the nature of the relationships that exist between the actors.

Discussion around autonomy and control in platforms does not only concern remote work. It is also studied in relation to localized physical labour, especially in the context of delivery platforms. Research conducted on delivery workers are consistent with the findings of studies that have been conducted on remote work (Franke & Pulignano,

2021). In delivery work, the multiparty form of mediation undertaken by the platform including workers, clients and restaurants come to the fore. In this context, delivery platforms, in terms of use data gathered from all parties to empower or disempower selected actors in line with strategic goals of the platform. In such a double role, platform has to rely on incentives to strictly control worker behaviour in order to extract value from the production process of the service.

When it comes to the factors effecting the worker experience of such strict control by platforms, studies are concentrating on a variety of elements. The experience of autonomy among remote platform workers is heavily influenced by the kind of tasks they do (Gerber & Krzywdzinski, 2019). This argument is based on the significant role of reputation in worker control. In macro forms of work, indicating the high-skilled work where a project is fully undertaken by the worker, clients and the workers negotiate over who has the better reputation among the workers, giving the worker a direct role in determining his reputation, resulting in a relative autonomy. When it comes to micro forms of work, on the other hand, where a low-skilled and often fragmented kind of work is involved, a worker's reputation is determined by algorithms. This leads to a decrease in the worker's level of autonomy by making the worker highly dependent on the platform and reducing the sense of agency. The structure and regulations of the platform are also important considerations when assessing the degree of autonomy experienced while using a platform. Certain platform designs in delivery sector provide workers with freedom, especially in relation to choosing the days as well as the timing of the work, including the right to reject a certain gig or a specific work schedule (Griesbach et al., 2019). This form of an autonomy may be limited due to measures of algorithmic control which incentivize the acceptance of a certain gig or a certain work schedule by the worker in line with the market demands. Moreover, other platform designs may involve restrictions in worker choice, with the platform forcing a determined schedule over workers.

While a specific line of research focuses on the factors effecting the experience of autonomy, others ignore such factors and instead centre on the authoritarian aspects of platform work. Ideology plays a key factor in such despotic platform representations. The term “econormativity” is employed to denote the ideological process where the possibility of radical conflict is consumed through a narrative of freedom based on self-entrepreneurship (Tirapani & Willmott, 2023). In this way, by creating neoliberal subjectivities, the dictatorial employer is merely replaced by the tyrannical platform. The results of empirical studies on remote platform work, support the strict platform control idea. While workers in remote work platforms may have some control over when and where to perform their jobs, this control can be undermined by the use of “boundary resources” by the platforms (Jarrahi et al., 2020). Platform resources such as the introduction of information asymmetries or the implementation of gatekeeping policies make workers more reliant on the platform, resulting in a strictly controlled work experience for workers.

The arguments pointing at the strict levels of control in platforms lead to the consideration of the worker response to management control and possibility of conflict in platform work. There is a growing trend of benefiting from Hirschmann’s (1970) exit, voice, and loyalty theory in the explanation of worker behaviour in this context. This theory states that when presented with a conflict situation, workers have a distinct set of alternatives, including the following: they may exit, leaving their existing organization, they may choose voice, striving to change their current organization, or they may opt for loyalty, doing nothing and hoping the situation would improve. Voice, in this context, is defined as ways that workers attempt to have a say and influence the organizational rules and settings that affect their conditions. A variety of elements play a role in the decision-making process that workers go through when selecting one of these alternatives. For example, workers who have access to conflict resolution procedures, are more likely to choose voice over exit.

Studies on platform work point out to the difficulties in the use of worker voice in platforms. The nature of platform work, which decentralized, and isolates workers spatially, organizationally, and socially is found to be a crucial element in the struggle of workers to express themselves (Heiland, 2020). Being a very heterogeneous group, the capacity of using voice as individuals among platform workers, is largely dependent on the type of platform organization as well as on the skill level of the worker. When it comes to collective voice, the prospects of worker organization are even lower considering the independent contractor status of platform workers, preventing them from engaging in collective action. The limitations on the formation and use of collective voice are exacerbated in many platforms, due to platform policies deliberately hindering and preventing the organizational efforts of the workers.

Coming back to the theory of Hirschmann, the option of choosing to exit for platform workers are limited as well. The first barrier in exiting the platform is a result of the platform work mandating the workers to provide their own tools and equipment. While platforms employ independent contractor arrangements to enable workers to swiftly access the market, studies point out that such ease of entry may bring additional costs for workers as a result of their considerable investments in tools and equipment to start working in platforms (Maffie, 2023). Another limitation to worker exit is the gatekeeping or data lock-in policies of platforms (Wood & Lehdonvirta, 2021). An example of such policies is the employment of non-transferable reputation systems in their designs (Gandini et al., 2016), which results in a considerably high cost for the workers who consider the option to exit. Within the scope of Hirschmann's theory, under such difficulties to opt for voice or exit, loyalty becomes the prevalent choice for platform workers.

The research on platforms in the context of worker autonomy and control is dominantly preoccupied with remote platform work as well as with localized physical labour undertaken outside of residences such as delivery or transport services. An exception to this trend is a study emphasize the unique characteristics of platform care work (McDonald et al., 2020), focusing on the control mechanisms used by care work

platforms. Platform work that is performed in the home of the client has special repercussions for the worker's autonomy through control mechanisms that the platform or the client asserts on the work process. Because of this, the results that are presented in the literature and the ideas that were produced as a result need to be carefully re-evaluated within the context of this specific kind of platform work. Consequently, my aim in conducting this study is to focus on cleaning and repair work, which is undertaken in clients' residences, through a specific focus on how the nature of the work as well as its location have effects on the labour control processes. In this section, I reviewed the ways platform work is studied as an autonomizing or controlling phenomenon for workers in the literature. In the following sections, I will review the elements and mechanisms which are employed by platforms in relation to worker autonomy and control. I will start by the use and design of competition in platforms.

2.4 COMPETITION AND PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

The achievement of business goals of digital labour platforms is contingent on the network effects that are generated as a result of their successful coordination of labour supply and demand. (ILO, 2021b). In order to accomplish this goal, it is necessary for the platforms to draw in a significant number of clients and workers. In addition to this, higher number of workers leads to a higher level of competition among workers, which in turn has a depressing influence on the pricing, potentially increasing the demand for the services. Moreover, by classifying workers as independent contractors rather than workers, platforms are able to set the terms of competition in a way that is favourable to the market demand and create a nexus that is not subject to the safeguards afforded by labour laws. Research undertaken on delivery platforms confirm this line of thinking by showing how rising competition in platforms leads to higher degree of commercialization of labour relationships. (Franke & Pulignano, 2021).

A high degree of competition among workers is not a phenomenon exclusive to local physical work platforms such as the delivery service work. According to studies carried out on remote work platforms, intense competition is used as tool by platforms effecting the fee and profit rates of workers. (Wood & Lehdonvirta, 2021). Similarly, a report by the ILO (2021b) reflects the level competition across a variety of platforms. According to the study, 86% of online web-based platform professionals would prefer to perform additional work. The report also demonstrates that between the years 2017 and 2021, there was a large growth in the labour supply on platforms, although the demand for labour remained the same. As a consequence of this, workers struggle to compete and the number of workers having success in the platforms diminish dramatically. The study reports that the percentage of workers registered on five main platforms, who do not actively utilize the platform to get jobs is more than 90 percent.

When it gets difficult to obtain job on the platforms, workers react by changing their behaviour in order to increase their chances of success. They make use of a wide variety of resources available to them in order to catch the attention of clients while competing with a large number of other workers. The most effective way to attract clients is through the use of reputation systems put in place by platforms to build trust between users. These systems also act as an effective way of algorithmic control as well demonstrated in the literature. (Stark & Pais, 2021). Reputation systems most commonly involve ratings and comments given by the client to the worker after the completion of a job. Some platforms involve systems that enable workers to rate clients as well. However, in the majority of platforms it is devised as a one-way tool directed to rate the workers. Although some workers are requesting these assessments from their clients in an effort to boost their ratings and increase the number of comments they get, the power that workers have over this aspect of their jobs is quite restricted. Their reputation in the platform is under the control of the ratings and comments given by past clients. Consequently, they need to concentrate on the aspects of their platform presence which are within their sphere of influence, such as the descriptions of their profiles.

Workers' representations of themselves in their platform profiles is seldom emphasized in the relevant academic research. According to the findings of a study that looked specifically at remote freelancing platforms, the self-representation of workers implies that there has been a shift from a focus on professional identity to job proficiency. (Pongratz, 2018). This line of reasoning is predicated on the assumption that the platform logic is dependent on the unbroken availability of workers and the simplicity of operation for clients. This is important in order for platforms to achieve the network effects they are striving for since the overall value of platforms is dependent on the number of users, including both clients and workers. At the same time, in order to guarantee a service of a better quality, platforms also need to require workers to maintain a professional demeanour.

Platforms depend on reputation systems such as ratings and comments with the goal to guarantee that job standards are met in the absence of managers and direct control methods. However, clients often lack the information and abilities necessary to accurately assess professional skills possessed by a worker, which is why these evaluations fall well short of ensuring that professional standards are met. In order to compensate for this, platforms provide information such as videos or directives that aims at guiding workers through the process of carrying out their activities in accordance with professional standards; however, this content is simply provided as a guide, with no way to ensure it is received by the worker or it is followed during the work. Consequently, there are no direct control mechanisms in platforms to monitor the degree of professionalism with which workers carry out their jobs. Therefore, what platforms achieve is the presence of workers in large numbers and the availability of them, rather than the guarantee of professional standards and competencies. In this context, work proficiency, defined as the minimum expertise required to execute a job, combined with the availability and readiness to meet the varying expectations of clients in a manner that is adaptable (Pongratz, 2018), takes on increased significance.

There is a conflict arising as a result of the dual demand that platforms must fulfil, which is to guarantee both the availability of workers and the quality of the job. While job proficiency does require a certain level of knowledge of the job that is to be performed, it is largely opposed to professionalism in that it places an emphasis on the immediate conduct of the work in one way or another rather than the possession of education or certification (Pongratz, 2018). Such professional processes ensure the completion of the work in accordance with some pre-set processes and within standards. In this sense, platform work advocates for the de-professionalization of the workforce by placing a focus on job competency. As a result, platforms provide clients and organizations with the chance to acquire the services of a labour force that is adaptable, self-trained, and capable of sustaining itself. (Fuchs, 2010). The professional class, which is more costly and more stringent in its approach to work in terms of following procedures, norms, and standards, was intentionally weakened in order to make this feasible (Wexler, 2011). The shift in worker identities brought by platforms is not limited to worker professionalism. In the next chapter, I will discuss the literature on how worker subjectivities play a role in the platforms, with a focus on labour control.

2.5 GOVERNMENTALITY AND SUBJECTIFICATION

The study of neoliberalism as a form of governmentality has considerable explanatory power in relation to the issue of labour control in platforms (Moisander et al., 2018). This line of research is based on the ideas of Foucault, who studied the relationship between power and knowledge, positioning power not as a limiting factor to knowledge but as a factor stimulating and producing it (Lemke, 2019). In Foucauldian terms, power-knowledge implies that the fields of knowledge are built on power relations. Accordingly, the economic power-knowledge is analysed as a form of social control with a focus on neoliberal self and subjectivities.

In contrast to earlier works of Foucault taking discipline in the centre of analysis, the concept of “government” introduced in his later works is based on the idea that the people who are governed will continuously disrupt, alter, oppose, and remove themselves from the processes of governing (Foucault, 1982). The question of government tied closely to the space of bodies, lives, and persons in his analysis. Government activity is the activity of “conduct of conduct” (Dean, 1999), which is a rational activity composed of both the practices of government as well as the practices of self. Accordingly, “governmentality” is a relationship between tactics of dominance and techniques of the self, indicating forms of agency as power/knowledge interactions, framing possibilities not just in ways that are outwardly oppressive, but also in ways that appear alluring and appealing to the individual (Mackenzie et al., 2021).

The process of subjectification of the self takes importance in the governmentality approach. In the contradictory process of becoming a subject, active and passive components, autonomy, and heteronomy are intricately entwined. The self manifests itself by taking on the viewpoint of the other and creating a self-image (Bröckling, 2015). Humans become subjects because they must create the selves they are and lead the lives they live. The subject may be described as having an autonomous I, that can identify itself, shape itself, and act on it. However, it gets its power to act from the same powers that it claims its autonomy from. The self's creation and subjugation go hand in hand. As a result, the subjectification is a paradox entwined with the paradox of power, which is the sum of factors that have an impact on the subject.

The subject is neither only a passive recipient of power relations nor a self-willed opposer of it, but rather is the aftereffect of both processes (Bröckling, 2015). As power is built on the autonomy of human behaviour, it must act on some measure of freedom. Having the position of subject entails being bound to one's own identity by a consciousness of self-knowledge, but yet being subject to a form of power via control and dependency. In self-control, the controlling and controlled elements are both represented. The subject is both the address and the creator of power interventions, as well as the consequence. It is a being that performs its own creation, but whose

performances are incorporated into orders of knowledge, plays of force, and relations of dominance.

In order to understand the neoliberal process of subjectification, it is necessary to study the neoliberal order of knowledge. Foucault defines neoliberal governmentality through its adoption of competition as the dominant principle of social life, where competition is seen as a specific objective to be obtained, a challenging equilibrium that can only be established via deliberate interventions to the market, rather than as an inherent attribute of the market readily acquired under particular circumstances. (Foucault, 2008). This results in the outflow of market principles to the government practices. Government's role in neoliberalism is to intervene in society in its fabric, to ensure that competitive mechanisms can regulate all forms of social relations, with the aim of reaching a general regulation of society by the market. Enterprise form is the formative power of this intervention. As such, the adoption of competition as the dominant economic principle will result in the domination of the society by entrepreneurial culture.

A standout example of how neoliberal governmentality was put into practice in social processes is the treatment of labour. Human resources theory is the dominant thinking behind the neoliberal formation of labour according to Foucault (2008) In human resources theory, labour is a production factor (Kaya, 2011). In contrary to classical liberal or Marxist approaches, labour is no longer treated as the species activity of men in neoliberalism, but rather seen as a rationalized, strategic activity undertaken by an individual enterprise. In this approach, labour serves as the worker's capital, making the worker both the business and the entrepreneur. Wage transforms into profit, as an income acquired through this capitalized labour. With the market expanding to non-marketized social areas, the society including individuals as its basic actor are expected to be fully formed of enterprise-units.

The proliferation of the entrepreneurial selves creates a bounded freedom under neoliberalism, which serves as the architect of control, since subjects are obliged to see themselves as entrepreneurs of themselves, whether they do so willingly or not

(Foucault, 2008). Personal choices are constrained according to a logic of self-fulfilment and the building of human capital in line with the power/knowledge created by the human resources theory. This is accomplished via the use of concepts such as learning, competence, employability, and career (Nörback, 2021). This results in the transfer of “conducting” duties from the organizations to the worker.

As a result, the life itself of the individual is constituted as a sort of permanent and multiple enterprise (Foucault, 2008). Workers are no longer shaped into subservient docile bodies without agency. Instead, they are shaped into agentic subjects who are ready and eager to continually labour to increase their worth in the marketplace (Nörback, 2021). Because entrepreneurial subjects are encouraged, the exercise of power and control is shifted from the use of punishment to individual’s positive power over life itself. This is due to the fact that power and control are then focused not on what an individual is unable to do, but rather on what the individual is able to do.

In this sense, entrepreneurial self is both a normative human model and an ensemble of several modern technologies of the self and social technologies of society, all of which have as their common goal to structure life around the entrepreneurial model of conduct (Bröckling, 2015). The idea of entrepreneurial self specifies more than just a set of rules for behaviour; it also describes the ways in which people learn the truth about themselves, the processes of control and regulation they are subject to, and the behaviours they engage in to condition themselves. In other words, the discourse of entrepreneurial self does not truly teach individuals who they are. Instead, it explains what they must become.

When we look at how entrepreneurial self is studied in the context of work relations the concept of “entremployee” in the literature comes to the fore (Pongratz & Voß, 2003). Entremployee presents an ideal type of entrepreneurial subjectivity in the workplace, by describing how such subjectivity is effective on different aspects of worker experience in a workplace. The emergence of self-organizational principles and the demise of the Taylorist system of work organization gave birth to the concept of the entremployee. It refers to the process by which workers took over the direct control formerly exercised

by employers in guaranteeing the achievement of worker performance. To do this, a worker with entrepreneurial traits has to develop.

Entremployee is defined through three distinctive characteristics of this new form of labour (Pongratz & Voß, 2003). The first is self-commercialization, comprised of the generation of worker's own performance and worker's practices of marketing of the labour capacity within the organization. The greater worker involvement in the work planning, organization, control, and monitoring procedures indicates the second characteristic of entremployee, which is defined as self-control. with the role of institutional departments retracting in all those tasks. The third characteristic is self-rationalization, marked by worker's strategic and commodity-like approach to labour by thinking, designing, and executing plans for developing and exploiting it.

While constituting an ideal type of entrepreneurial self in work relations, entremployee may fall short in the explanation of the role of worker subjectivities in labour control in a digital labour platform setting. The first reason for this is the fact that the concept denotes a formal employment relationship instead of self-employed work as the definition of entremployee is generated in comparison to an ideal type of Taylorist organization of work. Also, the emergence of entremployee was in the context of high-skilled work such as the service economy, IT sector and cultural professions (Pongratz & Voß, 2003). While such forms of work are part of platform economy, it excludes a considerable part of platforms comprised of crowdwork or services like delivery, ride-hailing or repairs involving low-skilled local/physical labour.

An inquiry into the literature on the practical manifestations of entrepreneurial self leads to studies where the dominance of the enterprise culture has been treated extensively under the field of management and organization studies. The studies reveal changing culture within businesses with an emphasis on the dominance of the customer culture within organizations (Du Gay & Salaman, 1992). This is a result of customer-supplier relationship, defined by market principles, becoming more and more prevalent within organizations. The most visible effect of this change is every unit within an organization acting as an independent market agent in order to fuel competitiveness

within the organization. Naturally, these enterprise units are not limited to departments within an organization, with workers as the smallest units within an enterprise are expected to adopt market principles: “... *workers treat each other as if they were customers and customers are treated as if they were managers.*” (Du Gay and Salaman, 1992, p. 619). This means the transfer of labour control duties to the customers and also to disperse it among workers. While this shift in the traditional industrial organization became more prevalent, platforms emerged as a completely new form of organization, showcasing the continuation and dramatic intensification of enterprise culture.

Empirical studies studying entrepreneurial self within the scope of work relationships, focus on the use of freedom and autonomy as an element of managerial control. While being mobilized as an autonomous free market actor, the worker-subject of neoliberal governmentality is rendered governable through the active management of freedom (Moisander et al., 2018). Techniques of managerial control are used in this process, which liberates workers' entrepreneurial potential within the confines of the management-defined framework without directly targeting the workers themselves. This implies a rather positive process formed of inducements rather than a negative process preventing or prohibiting the actions of the workers.

Among scholars studying management control techniques in industrial forms of production within the labour process theory in 90s, there was a missing subject debate, focusing on the process of subjectification and shaping of the selves in response to the power/knowledge created in the organization². Recent research has emphasized entrepreneurial subjectivities within the context of work interactions for high-skilled white-collar professionals (Vallas & Christin, 2018; Vallas & Cummins, 2015). In the context of low-skilled platform-mediated service, the advent of digital labour platforms and the instruments of control they use offers an opportunity to review the relationship

² For an overview of the missing subject debate in the labour process theory see Knights, 1990; Thompson & O'Doherty, 2011

between entrepreneurial subjectivity and labour control. Some recent studies show that entrepreneurial self is relevant in the delivery and ride hailing service platforms with relation to control of worker behaviour (Fleming, 2016; Veen et al., 2019).

These studies demonstrate that if the enterprise culture is relevant in terms of the subjectivities within the scope of a formal work relationship, then its implications are even more significant in the case of platform workers and freelancers, who typically work on their own and establish a business without the protections that are associated with formalized employment (Mondon-Navazo et al., 2022; Norbäck, 2021). Freelancers may thus be regarded representatives of the rising entrepreneurial subjects, who are striving for freedom while confronting the implications of highly individualized forms of work. Freelancing is often a means for workers who are seeking for a job that they can control their selves to escape the subordination in formal employment and restore control over their work.

Studies show that for freelancers and platform workers, the ability to organize their own time and to turn down jobs that aren't interesting to them might be seen as liberating (Vallas & Christin, 2018). Such promises of autonomy are not always realized, potentially ending with high levels of self-control as a result of subjectification. Apart from various control factors, not limited to subjectification as I described in this chapter, the work context and platform design is crucial in determining the worker experience in platform economy. While platform work has been dominant in certain economic contexts and in specific sectors, the specifics of the labour market, the sectors involved, and the working culture are highly effective and in how labour control is organized. Accordingly, the following chapter is devoted to the characteristics of labour market in Turkey, with a focus on the neoliberal reforms, history of distributional policies as well as effects of neoliberalism on the labour market.

3. TURKEY, NEOLIBERALISM AND PLATFORMS

As a form of work outside of a regular employment relationship, platform work is the latest stage in the flexible and on-demand forms of work. To build my analysis in the framework of the prevalence of such atypical forms of work, I will first detail the neoliberal reforms introduced in 1980s in Turkey, which resulted in the erosion of formal employment relationship. I will detail the effect of neoliberal reforms on the weakening of labour power against the capital and follow the implications of this weakening in the distributional inequality in Turkey. Before describing the emergence of the platforms in Turkey, I will give an overview of the current state of the labour market, with a focus on informality and sub-contract work, as well as on the provisions rendering the labour market flexible since 2000s. The last section of this chapter will be devoted to the study setting, where I will detail the Armut platform and its working models.

3.1 NEOLIBERAL REFORMS AND LABOUR MARKET

The rise of platform work in Turkey should be read in relation to the country's labour market, which has been marked by the dominance of neoliberal policies in the last four decades. In line with the global tendency towards the neoliberal model, marked by the policies of Thatcher in United Kingdom and Reagan in United States, the neoliberal agenda was put in place in Turkey through the opportunities provided by the 1980 military intervention. The neoliberal transition kickstarted with the 24 January 1980 decisions, which introduced structural reforms to liberalize the economy. The sustainability of these decision was ensured under the safeguard of the military administration that was in power from 1980 to 1983, during which major political parties from left and right of the political spectrum were banned.

This transition was mainly focused on creating authoritarian legal and institutional means to suppress the labour movement which has been very active since 1960s. The labour regulations of the 1960-80 period were characterized by a combination of liberal corporatist elements and state corporatism (Akkaya, 2004). The main characteristic of the period is that the working class, which developed and grew with the accumulation of industrial capital, entered the political scene as a class for the first time in the history of the country. For the first time, the rising labour movement had significant effects on capital accumulation, class struggle and the evolution of the political regime. This resulted in controlled and restrained market forces (Çelik, 2015). The shift after 1980 may be seen as the dramatic weakening of the working-class political position. The collective and institutional isolation of labouring classes from the policy-making processes had been one of the most significant pillars of the neoliberal assault, which had resulted in the loss of wage shares and social rights for workers in Turkey.

After 1980, the government construed labour laws in favour of 'flexibilization' in the service of large business, and labour protections were liberalized. The social state suffered a setback. The 12 September 1980 coup d'état's repressive and authoritarian effects, which touched every aspect of society and political life, seriously affected labour relations. With the 12 September coup d'état, the strong social policy direction given by the 1961 Constitution and the union laws numbered 274 and 275 were abolished. The Constitution of 1982 and the new union legislation comprised of Laws number 2821 and 2822 created an authoritarian labour system (Çelik, 2015).

During the military administration between 1980 and 1983, trade union activity came to an end. The Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions (DİSK) was the target of a lawsuit, and its leaders were placed on trial (Çelik, 2015). The High Board of Arbitration (YHK) was established, which was a mandatory arbitration panel made up mostly of government and employer representatives, tasked with finalizing collective agreements. Strikes and collective bargaining processes were prohibited. Numerous clauses of the earlier collective agreements drafted before 1980 which were favouring

the workers were not renewed by the YHK. This led to the elimination of important components of the labour rights created between 1960 and 1980.

On individual labour relations, reforms to render the labour market flexible were implemented, concurrently with the new strict laws in the area of collective labour relations (Çelik, 2015). In particular, premiums and severance pay were decreased. Following the coup d'état in October 1980, an amendment was introduced that set a cap on severance pay. The aim of this legislation was to stop the unions from negotiating an increase in severance compensation. Through amendments to different laws, workers were allowed to receive only four premium pays a year via collective bargaining.

The impact of neoliberal policies can be tracked on the rapid decline of the power of trade unions and unionization rates. Starting from early 1980s, the membership number and accordingly the power of labour unions have been severely eroded in Turkey. Among all wage earners excluding public servants and including informal workers, the rate of workers under the protection of collective bargaining agreements was around 25% in the late 1980s and early 1990s, falling steadily to 6% in 2013 and then rising by one or two percentage points in the subsequent years (Birelma, 2021). Decline in the unionization rates are parallel to the decline in the rate of the workers under the collective bargaining agreements. While the unionization rate in thirty-six member countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) decreased by 27% on average in the 1998-2018 period, the same rate for Turkey was 51%.4 (Birelma, 2021). Several factors played a role in the sharp decline in unionization rates: massive privatizations, the expansion of flexible/precarious employment, the global crisis of socialism, restrictive trade union laws and the aggressive de-unionization tactics used by employers led to the disempowerment of the labour against the capital.

3.2 POLITICAL ECONOMY OF NEOLIBERAL REFORMS

The effects of the declining labour power had visible effects on the income levels. To follow the effects of neoliberal policies on power relationship between the labour and capital, it is necessary to look at the distribution of income among these production factors, in other words at the functional distribution of income. The period before the 1980 coup was marked by populist policies as well as the growth of the organized labour in Turkey. This is shown by an increase in the number of workers within the collective agreement regime and increase in the number of strikes. Therefore, an expected increase in the wage share can be traced in the available data. The increased role of public economic enterprises also contributed to the increase of the wage share. Accordingly, if we accept the real wages as 100 points in 1963, in 1976 the wages reached at 220 points with an average increase of 4.9% per year (Boratav, 2014).

As given above, the period starting from 1980 marks the counterattack of the capital in reaction to the increased share and influence of labour between 1960 and 1980 in Turkey (Boratav, 2014). The results of the military intervention and accompanying neoliberal reforms, reflected in the 24 January 1980 decisions, manifests itself mostly on the functional distribution of income. By 1988, the unions were neutralized, and the real wages declined by 18% compared to 1983. On the other hand, populist policies were implemented in this period by ANAP (Motherland Party) governments, mainly through the use of local governments, with practices outside the labour market and the capital-labour contradiction, in order to ease the effects of the neoliberal restructuring on the working class. Another trait of the 1980s was the rise of neoliberal ideology and the adoption of the new pro-capital economic model by the society through use of media channels and proliferation of pro-capital public discourse, which resulted in the public adoption of the market and market society terms and discourse. (Coşkun, 2012).

Starting from 1988, Turkey witnessed a normalization process with the re-emergence of pre-1980 political parties and the labour movement. In the spring of 1989, the labour class organized major protests and ANAP was defeated heavily in the

local elections, followed by the widespread strikes in 1990 and 1991 (Boratav, 2014). Those developments resulted in the implementation of conventional populist policies, such as the 142% raise in the wage of public workers, and the following similar wage rises in the private sector. However, reacting against the short-term gains of the labour class, the political coalition in support of the capital succeeded in lowering the unionization rate through the threat of unemployment and in popularizing unregistered work. These resulted in the decrease of unionization rate from 41% to 21% between 1990 and 2000.

The following period between 1998 and 2008 is marked by the uninterrupted commitment from the part of the governments to the neoliberal restructuring, mainly by AKP, which came to power as a result of the 2002 elections. Both before and after 2002, the economic government was transferred to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank and the Fund's stabilization programmes. The AKP period also witnessed the continuation as well as the institutionalization of the populist local government policies first introduced by Motherland Party (ANAP), through the use of cash or in-kind transfers to families in need determined by the party, which served as an important tool for clientelist practices.

Despite these populist policies implemented outside of the labour market, an important trait of the AKP rule can be traced in the functional distribution of income of the period, which shows erosion of wage share in parallel to global trends. The levels of labour share in the national income, both in the manufacturing industry as well as in total, fell from around 50% in 1980 to around 20% in 1994 (Onaran, 2009). Following a weak rise between 1999 and 2001, the wage share is set around 20% in manufacturing industry until 2006. The weakening of the material conditions of the labour is rendered possible through an ideological dominance of capital in this period. This is evident in how the privatization process was undertaken in AKP era. While the attempts for the privatization in the ANAP era in 1980s have faced with serious social resistance, the privatization process in the AKP era was accomplished with relatively less resistance

(Öniş, 2011). This is a consequence of the weakening of anti-privatization coalition indicating the dominance of neoliberal ideology during the AKP rule.

3.3 PROLIFERATION OF ATYPICAL FORMS OF WORK

With the institutional and ideological power of the labour broken down, numerous labour market reforms weakening workers and favouring the capital was undertaken under AKP governments. The rapid proliferation of subcontract work as well as part-time, temporary, and seasonal working, was the consequence of the implementation of new labour rules that allowed for insecure and precarious working conditions. This was coupled by persisting high levels of informality in the labour market despite the progress made in lowering the rate of informality in the last two decades. Moreover, such restructuring of the labour market was not only limited to the private sector. A new public administration reform was implemented in the public sector, and the goal of the reform was to shape the personnel regime based on the principles of performance standards.

The segmented and multi-layered structure of the Turkish labour market in the period of AKP has been a distinguishing feature (Çelik, 2015). Despite having a segmented structure, the segments of the labour force all have similar traits, most notably precariousness and flexibility. A lower level of labour force participation is now a structural aspect of the labour market, particularly for women (İlkkaracan, 2012). The decline of public employment (both civil officials and public employees) became another feature of the labour market. The growth of wage labour is significantly influenced by new labour legislation.

The systematic eroding of the legal protections governing specific labour interactions is one of the significant developments during the AKP era (Çelik, 2015). The Labour Law number 4857, introduced in 2003, started a more constrained phase in terms of labour rights. Numerous flexible provisions that were absent from the

previous law were introduced in the new labour legislation. As a consequence, several pro-labour policies and institutions that had been in place for more than 30 years have been altered or eliminated. Flexible, insecure, and atypical working conditions became the norm. For example, the employment security was limited to be valid only for businesses with 10 or more workers, instead of 30. Considering a big share of small and medium sized enterprises in the employment, this resulted in more than half of the workforce to lose the employment security protections. The wage compensation for workers who are dismissed without a legal reason was also decreased with the new Law.

Another provision introduced in the AKP period was related to private employment agencies. Such agencies are made legal and permitted to rent personnel to other employers under another effort that is a component of the flexibilization process of individual labour relations (Çelik, 2015). In 2009, a clause on private employment agencies was added to the Labour Law. Private employment agencies may transfer workers who are employed under contract to another company for a period of 18 months in accordance with the new law. In these circumstances, the private employment agency serves as the worker's real employer, and the agency and the company receiving the worker would enter into a temporary employment contract. A new regulation related to private employment agencies was introduced in 2016.

The promotion of the use of sub-employers and sub-contracted workers is another example of how the AKP governments encourages flexibility (Çelik, 2015). Subcontracting, outsourcing, downsizing of businesses, flexible and nonstandard working arrangements, and the decline and privatization of the public sector all damage individual labour relations. Such factors also contribute to substantial de-unionization. The cleaning works in the public sector and construction work in private sector are most impacted by subcontracting, with the municipalities, the public economic enterprises, and the higher education institutions often practicing subcontracting. The number of subcontracted workers reached almost to 1.5 million as of 2014, compared to 387,000 in 2002 (Bakır, 2018).

The increase in the labour market flexibility and the prevalence of sub-contract form of work in the AKP era has been coupled with traditionally high rates of informal employment. In informal type of employment, long working hours, low wages and insecurity are typical (Bakır, 2018). Employers benefit from informal employment as firms are not affected by legal regulations in labour markets by being freed from the costs related to social security premiums and other provisions. On the other hand, firms employing workers formally bear these costs and are exposed to unfair competition. The data on unregistered employment based on registration with the Social Security Institution (SGK) shows that the rate of informal employment is 33.4% in 2016 (Bakır, 2018). This shows that despite a decrease in the last 20 years, the level of informality in total employment is still quite high. Therefore, it can be said that deregulation persists in the Turkish labour market.

I showed that the emergence of platforms in Turkey occurred under the conditions of a labour market marked by wide-spread practices of unregistered, atypical, insecure, and unorganized work following the neoliberal reforms and their distributional effects. In the following section I will present a general picture of platform work in Turkey based on available research and data and discuss the legal framework regarding platform workers.

3.4 EMERGENCE OF PLATFORM WORK IN TURKEY

In spite of the widespread use of platforms that provide novel kinds of employment, there is a dearth of research on platform work in Turkey, particularly when seen from the perspective of its effects on the labour control processes. Conceptual research that differentiates between non-profit and for-profit platforms finds that there are 106 national or international platforms that are actively operating in Turkey (Kiracı & Kayabaşı, 2017). Recent studies emphasize the fact that platform work reinforces and strengthens the social norms that underpin the gender-based division of labour and

gender-based inequalities in the labour market (Urhan, 2022), and point out to the changing form of employment relationship with the advent of Uber (Ünal & Temiz, 2022).

The most popular form of platform work in Turkey is delivery. There is a considerable number of workers active in the delivery platforms. The most successful local delivery platforms, such as Kapgel and Getir, were at the front of the pack in this industry, until other players in the platform sector such as Yemeksepeti, Banabi and Trendyol joined in the competition. There are no official statistics relating to the total of workers working as delivery workers in Turkey. A recent study of the ILO, emphasizing the psychosocial hazards for the delivery workers estimates the number of delivery workers in Istanbul as 10.000 and in Turkey as 900.000 including unregistered workers (ILO, 2022).

Some not so recent numbers released by the platforms display the popularity of delivery platform work in Turkey. Kapgel had a total of 50.000 clients and 40.000 deliveries done in 2016 (Webrazzi, 2016). In 2018, Getir fulfilled five million orders with 2.000 workers (Webrazzi, 2019). In addition to delivery, domestic work and services offered at the residence of the client has been quite popular among platforms. Armut is one of the most popular platforms in Turkey, operating within numerous service categories like cleaning, repairs, moving, assembly, private instruction, health care and wedding services. As of 2022, Armut has 1.4 million registered workers, delivering a variety of services for the platform (Webrazzi, 2022).

This popularity of platform work in Turkey didn't result in the emergence of platform work in the political agenda. Delivery workers organized under a foundation to draw attention to the very weak occupational safety of workers, resulting in high number of worker deaths in accidents. However, the political agenda ignores these demands as well as the insecure working conditions of platform workers arising from their independent contractor status. This is contrary to the global trend, as the status of platform workers have been discussed in a large number of academic studies as well as in the mainstream media in many countries where platform work has been popular.

Studies focused on the fact that platforms around the globe typically put employees under the status of independent contractors, so depriving them of the legal protections that come along with a formal employment relationship (De Stefano et al., 2021). Moreover, many platforms are implementing stringent worker control mechanisms comparable to those that an employer in a conventional employment relationship, especially in the context of delivery platform work in Turkey (Baycık et al., 2021). The forms of strict control in platforms led to the acceptance of worker status for platform workers or to the implementation of fundamental social protection measures in a number of different countries (De Stefano et al., 2021). Courts in countries where there is no active litigation on the contract status of platform employees have made rulings based on different models of employment tests. These models of employment tests take into consideration, among other things, the degree to which workers are subject to the amount of control exercised by platforms.

Such developments towards a regulation for platform workers didn't occur in Turkey. There was no comprehensive attempt made toward enacting regulations encompassing the whole workforce of platforms. At the present time, none of the workers on platforms are covered by the safeguards provided by Labour Law No. 4857. Nevertheless, certain categories of platform workers are affected by legislation that was adopted more recently. For instance, some platforms provide domestic labour as cleaning, cooking, gardening, as well as child or senior care on a one-time or ongoing basis. This kind of employment may be found on a variety of platforms including Armut, as given above.

Domestic work is defined by the ILO (2021) as labour carried out in or for a home within the framework of employment relationship and on an occupational basis. Workers who do domestic work on an infrequent basis are not included in this definition. Some protections for domestic workers were included in 2014 amendments to Turkey's Law No. 5510 on Social Insurance and General Health Insurance. According to the law, employers who hire a domestic worker for less than ten days in a given month are only required to pay social security payments for workers'

compensation in the event of occupational diseases or accidents on the job. On the other hand, employers who hire a domestic worker for more than ten days in a single month are responsible for paying all of the social security premiums for the worker. These costs include insurance for pregnancy, sickness, and long-term care (Güler & Benli, 2021).

In platforms, workers usually offer services such as cleaning or child, sick or elderly care on one time basis. In this case, according to the Law No. 5510, the clients are responsible to pay the social security premium of workers in relation to occupational diseases and accidents. Some platforms, like Armut, offer a regular and repetitive service between a worker and a client. In that case, if the work is undertaken in more than 10 days in a month, the client is responsible for all social security premiums of the worker. However, platforms ignore this legal requirement and do not intervene on such responsibilities of the clients. When we consider out of platform domestic work, in spite of legislation, the figures reveal that the number of registrations for both types of domestic worker categories that were formed by the Law are very low in comparison to the real number of employees (Güler & Benli, 2021). This is because even in traditional forms of labour, the scope of labour inspection in Turkey is very limited. An added challenge for platform work is the difficulty of conducting inspections at residences or for any other kind of work carried out through platforms. Coupled with a working culture where unregistered work is normalized and prevalent, this results in the inadequate implementation of the legal protections offered for domestic workers in platforms.

Another regulation effecting platform workers is Law No. 6356 on Trade Unions and Collective Labour Agreements adopted in 2012. As I showed in the section on neoliberal reforms in Turkey, the right to organize has been considerably limited after the 1980 coup. The Law No. 6356 is no different in this regard, introducing several thresholds in different levels to allow the unions to engage in collective bargaining negotiations for workers under a formal employment relationship.

With regards to platform workers, according to the Law, workers who are not part of a formal employment relationship were granted the legal right to organize and be member of labour unions. Despite this recognition, there are barriers in the Law against the exercise all the benefits of trade union organization for platform workers, as the right to sign and benefit from a collective labour agreement is only recognized for workers who are in a formal employment relationship. Therefore, the unions formed by workers without a formal employment relationship can't negotiate and sign a collective agreement (Baycık et al., 2021). With regards to both the social protections and the right to organize, legal provisions for platform workers in Turkey is very weak and the minor protections offered in existing laws for some categories of domestic platform workers are insufficient and do not provide for any practical benefits due to the lack of implementation.

3.5 STUDY SETTING: DOMESTIC WORK AND ARMUT

After outlining the dominant features of the labour market and the legal framework concerning platform workers, in this section I will clarify the definition of domestic work and define Armut platform in its size and its workings. As given in preceding section ILO's Domestic Worker Convention (No. 189), defines domestic work as work performed in or for a household (2011). For a worker to be defined as a domestic worker, the work has to be carried out within an employment relationship and on an occupational basis rather than occasionally. Despite the fact that the ILO Convention defines domestic work in a wide scope without limiting based on the work undertaken, traditionally domestic work involves works such as cleaning, cooking and care work including for children, elderly and sick.

Other forms of domestic work may include repair and maintenance works. While such works are in line with the domestic work definition of the ILO Convention 189, for the statistical purposes, they are excluded from the definition of domestic workers

(ILO, 2018). This is due to the fact that in many countries where domestic work is legally defined, repair and maintenance works are excluded from the definition of workers and the workers undertaking such works are accepted as self-employed. Legal definitions of a formal employment relationship usually take into account the existence of a subordination relationship between the employer and the worker (Baycık et al., 2021). As repair and maintenance workers have weaker subordination relationship with their employers, such works are categorised under self-employment rather than in the scope of a formal employment relationship.

In this study, I use the larger definition of domestic work proposed by the ILO Convention 189 which includes traditionally defined domestic works such as cleaning and care works as well as repair and maintenance work. In designing the study and undertaking the analysis, the variations in the nature of such works as well as in the subordination of the worker to the employer in the control exerted over the worker are taken into account. I will describe such differences in detail in the following discussion of the services provided under different working models of the Armut platform.

Armut is a well-known platform in Turkey offering a variety of services. It operates by connecting workers and clients for domestic and non-domestic services including cleaning, repairs, painting, private tutoring, healthcare, photo shooting and more, via a digital app. Since 2017, Armut has been doing business as HomeRun in 8 more countries. Following its merger with its Italian rival ProntoPro in 2022, the platform's revenue increased by 328% and 4.7 million service requests were generated in that year alone. (Webrazzi, 2022). A total of 1.4 million workers and over 12 million clients are registered in the platform with these numbers covering the whole group. The most popular service was home cleaning in 2022 with more than 733.000 homes cleaned by Armut workers. The following most popular services were painting, repairs and home moving. In these services, Armut holds a monopolistic position among platforms in the market with no serious competitor.

The platform works under different models based on the service category. As described by Armut, the process of mediation begins with service requests made by potential clients, or by the "requesters". The procedure that is used depends on the kind of service. In Armut, there are two service models. "Bidding model" is the process whereby *"service providers bid on their initiatives following the routing of the service request of the service requesters to them"* (Armut, 2021a, para. 2.9). In this model, the service request is distributed among the workers according to the platform algorithm's recommended ordering. The request is closed when four workers have submitted bids, and the client is required to choose one. Workers pay a fee for each offer they submit, even whether it is unsuccessful. The platform determines the cost based on the value of the request and the information provided by the client.

Workers who are submitting bids on a request are given the client's contact information. It is still feasible to settle on a price that differs from the one the platform's first calculation at this point. Armut suggests that workers report such pricing adjustments. When a bid is successful, and the client indicates in the app that a bid is accepted, Armut charges an additional commission. Armut requires the client to pick the bid via the app, in order for the client to be able to rate and comment on the worker, preventing an agreement between the clients and the workers outside of the parameters of the platform.

Armut's second service model is the "reservation model". This model is defined as *"the process where the service provider is directed by Armut and the service requester defines the day and time of the service request which can be for one time or regular intervals"* (Armut, 2021a, para. 2.10). In this model, Armut sets the fee and conducts the financial transaction. The cost is determined using the client's information on the specifics of the service. When the request is created, the client pays Armut the fee. Armut routes the request to various workers in the sequence determined by the algorithm until it is approved. When a worker accepts a request, a reservation is made, and Armut communicates the client and worker's contact information between them.

Clients are invited to rate or comment on the workers. After deducting a commission, Armut transfers the worker's payment three days after the job is finished.

Table 3.1. Comparison Between Two Working Models at Armut

	Bidding Model	Reservation Model
Working Mechanism	Similar to an auction house where participants are limited and selected.	Similar to an employment agency
Timing of the Work	Flexible. Determined by the worker and service requester.	Strict. Determined at the time of reservation
Monetary Transaction	Undertaken between worker and service requester.	Undertaken through the platform
Number of Workers Involved in the Process	4	1
Rating & Comment System	Yes	Yes
Priority Ranking System	Yes	No

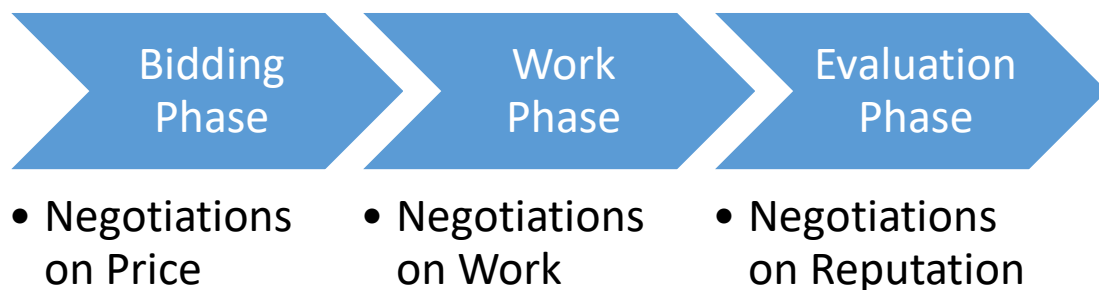
Source: Uysal (2023)

Under the bidding model, the platform functions as an auction house, and under the reservation model, as an employment agency. Most services, including painting and repairs, are provided via a bidding model. The reservation model is used for certain services, such as cleaning. Both models share some components, like the reputation system (see Table 3.1). But they operate quite differently from one another. A "priority ranking" mechanism governs how the platform functions under the bidding model. All

workers in a service category are rated, and the requests are forwarded to workers in higher positions first. Although the actual method of ranking determination is opaque, past satisfaction ratings and the percentage of success for employees' bids are taken into consideration. (Armut, 2021b). This results in an increased competition in bids and encourages more offers to be made.

Looking at the two models of how the platform works, we can identify different phases in each working model (see Figure 3.1). The bidding model starts with the bidding phase. In this phase workers bid to the request of the client until client selects a bid in the app. The request is created by the client, so the worker has limited information on the work to be done and has to rely on the client's description of the work. Sometimes, the client doesn't select a bid among the offer, as the work may be delayed or cancelled, or the client may be unaware of how the platform works, or the client may be just trying to have an idea about the market without having an intention of having a work done. In this phase, workers who bid receive the communication information of the client. They may receive the client's number, or just the option to message the client in the app, depending on the preference of the client. As the worker already communicated with the client in this phase, negotiations start, usually clients having more than one offer and already in communication with more than one worker.

Figure 3.1. Phases of Bidding Model at Armut and the Role of Negotiations



Source: Author's Description

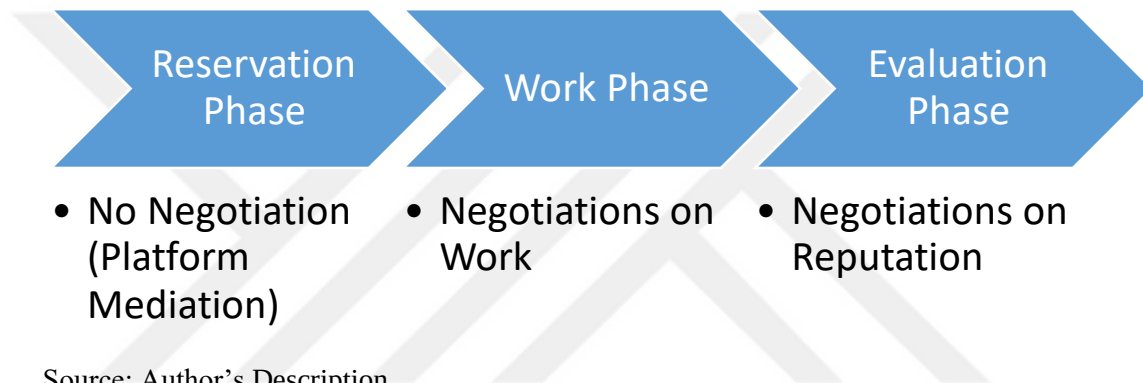
The next phase, starting after the finalization of the bidding phase is the phase of work, where the work requested is undertaken. Either in this phase or in the bidding phase the worker may undertake a scouting visit to the client to see the work to be done and agree on the details such as the price, the materials, or the timing of the work as well as the client's preferences and choices. This may also be undertaken with a phone call or with the client sending information about the work to be done through a photo or a video. During such information exchange, negotiations usually continue between the worker and the client. After agreement on the details the work is undertaken by the worker. Sometimes, in a painting or repair job for example, a further need for work is discovered when the worker is undertaken the initially agreed job. This will trigger another round of negotiations, where parties may or may not agree on the conditions to undertake this further work. Following this phase, the evaluation phase starts. The client may or may not give the worker a rating, write a comment about the worker, or alternatively, if there is a problem, can place a complaint to the platform about the worker. In such cases of complaint, platform usually asks the worker to satisfy the client, so that the issue can be resolved.

When we look at these different phases in the bidding system, we see that the negotiation dominates all phases (see Figure 3.1). In the bidding phase, client negotiate with different workers to select one among them. In the work phase, both the details of the work, the price, the materials as well as timing of the work are the subject of negotiations. In the evaluation phase, worker and client may engage in a tacit or open negotiation involving the exchange of client satisfaction by the worker and a good rating or a comment by the client. Even when there is a complaint to the platform by the client, platform gets involved to a negotiated result between the client and the worker, usually favouring the satisfaction of the client.

In the reservation model, negotiation is still in play, however it is undertaken exclusively during the work and evaluation phases (see Figure 3.2). The model is marked by reservation, work, and evaluation phases. In the reservation phase, the details of the job, as described by the client which includes exact work time, duration

as well as the work to be done is sent to the worker. The payment is determined based on the duration given by the client. The money is charged by the platform to the client when a request is created before waiting for it to be accepted by a worker. If the worker rejects the request, platform sends it to the next worker.

Figure 3.2. Phases of Reservation Model at Armut and the Role of Negotiations



When a worker accepts a request, a reservation is created. Both parties communicate with each other, and worker is expected to be at the workplace in the initially requested time. When the work phase starts, the worker gets to see the work to be done and how much time was allocated by the client for such work. At this stage, after the monetary exchange is undertaken by the platform, it is not possible to change the payment. However, it is possible and a widespread practice, that the client indicates a duration which is not enough to complete the work requested. To resolve this conflict, worker and client engage in negotiation over which work to undertake and in which duration. Here, as in the bidding model, the ratings and comments may be a tacit or open chip in negotiations, as well as compliments offered by the client to the worker such as tea or food may come into play. After the work phase is completed, the client may rate or comment on the worker in the evaluation phase. Or possibly, can place a complaint to the platform about the worker.

The reservation model, offered in cleaning work, involves a direct form of control over the labour process by defining the details, price and timing of the work and undertaking the monetary transaction through the platform. Despite the fact that the worker has the autonomy to choose the work requests, after the reservation is created following the acceptance of the request by the workers, it involves a subordination relationship between the platform and the worker, which is in line with the defining features of a formal employment relationship. Bidding model offered on repair works, on the other hand, leaves the determination of such critical details of the labour process to be handled between the worker and the client. Therefore, the bidding model doesn't involve a direct control of the platform and should be described as self-employment. I described Armut's size, service categories and the workings of different models in the platform. I defined phases in each model, with how worker and clients as actors are set by the platform to act as well as the role of negotiation in all phases. In the next chapter, I will describe how I collected data for the study including the interviews, recruitment and data collected from platform videos.

4. METHODOLOGICAL CHOICES IN THE STUDY OF PLATFORMS

After outlining the scientific discussions on digital labour platforms in the previous chapter and describing the labour market in Turkey as well as the study setting, I will devote this chapter on methodological choices in conducting this study. For this end, I start by stating my research questions and objective, which were crucial in my methodological selection. Afterwards, I explain my philosophical assumptions, which led me to adopt grounded theory methodology in looking for answers to those questions. In this chapter, departing from my philosophical assumptions, I also detail which tradition of grounded theory I am adhering to in this study, by providing detailed reasoning for my methodological choices.

4.1 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE AND QUESTIONS

In this study my aim is to explore the recently emerged phenomenon of digital labour platforms. My focus in this attempt is to understand the worker experience specifically in how managerial control is applied by the platform when work is intermediated digitally and how this results in the lived experience of neoliberalism in the individual level by the worker. I devote special attention to the how workers are approaching to this kind of work and its effect on worker subjectivities in the individual and class levels. To this end, I ask the following questions:

- 1- What are the experiences of workers undertaking work in digital labour platforms in the context of labour control? In which ways, the labour control mechanisms introduced through the new platform model of organization to compensate for this absence, are affecting worker experience?

- 2- What are the effects of platform work on the labour processes? How are material conditions of workers are influenced by platforms including their organizational prospects?
- 3- How is the worker agency affected by platform work? What are the emerging worker subjectivities, when workers perform within the distinctive economic system created by platforms?

To answer these questions, I employ constructivist grounded theory methodology. The philosophical basis of constructivist grounded theory is in line with how I consider my work as a researcher and how I formed and seek answers to my research questions. Additionally methodical tools that constructivist grounded theory presents provided me with the best opportunity to have an understanding of the worker experience in digital labour platforms. Theory building is my priority undertaking such research. As given in the literature review section, while digital labour platforms attract considerable empirical interest by researchers, it is still an underdeveloped field in terms of the presence of theories to understand such phenomenon with its varying practicalities in different socio-economic contexts. Therefore, the use of grounded theory methodology, with its emphasis on theory building was a result of my research goals. In the rest of this chapter, I will explain the grounded theory methodology and detail my justifications for adhering to it. For this purpose, the next section is devoted to my philosophical assumptions undertaking this study.

4.2 ONTOLOGICAL AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL POSITIONS

In this section I will describe my philosophical assumptions concerning epistemology and ontology, which guided me to in my efforts to understand digital labour platforms as well as in the design and application of this study. Ontology is the study of being (Crotty, 1998). It focuses on the characteristics of reality as well as on the question of

if the reality exists. Relativist view of ontology is closer to the qualitative tradition of scientific research. Relativist perspectives tend to argue that the truth or justification of a claim, or the application of a rule or standard, relies on one's circumstance or point of view (Godfrey-Smith, 2003). For the purpose of this study, my ontological stance is based on the relativist tradition. According to this ontological stance, the truth is impacted by the social context around it. Social actors have the ability to create their distinct realities, but such realities are only valid within the framework of their society and culture. (Pernecky, 2016). This stance is consistent with my position, by stating that each of us creates various realities as a result of our interactions with one another. By adhering to this position, I reject the idea that there is an external objective reality.

The ontological discussion is closely related to the epistemological one. Epistemology is the philosophical theory of knowing. (Williams, 2016). To put it another way, epistemology examines the question of how we know what we know (Crotty, 1998). I adhere to constructivist epistemological position. I believe that as a researcher I construct knowledge based on their realities as I experience them, similarly to the participants in my study who construct their realities based on the social norms and rules around them. This perspective is compatible with both my research objectives focusing on worker experience in platforms and with the ontological viewpoint of relativism that I hold.

Constructivism maintains that new knowledge must be created, rather than found by the researcher. (Gray, 2014). Therefore, constructivist thought holds the belief that knowledge does not exist in a separate world apart from the one the researcher is investigating. The concept of objective knowledge is rejected in favour of the idea that it is rather the creation of human mind. Constructivists also hold the assumption that various realities are produced as a result of the interaction of the researcher and the subjects of the study (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Interactions between researchers and participants result in the process of two actors jointly constructing meanings based on the participants' experiences, in an on-going process where realities built are rethought and reinterpreted (Charmaz, 2006).

As my purpose in this study is to understand the experiences as well as subjectivities of participants in relation to the platform work, I tried to focus how they construct their identities throughout the research. I took into account the fact that their experiences with the platform as well as with their clients had a considerable effect in those constructs, along with the social structure that they are within. Moreover, my intervention in their experience, initiating as a client than evolving to the position of a researcher also effected their realities, as I described in the following study methods chapter. For example, despite my very open statements on the goals of the study, some participants were convinced that I was serving the platform that I study, by trying to acquire knowledge on how the platform mechanisms are effective on workers. Others believed that I was trying to acquire information with the aim of founding a competitor platform. I will describe this process in detail in the study methods chapter. For the purpose of this section, I should note that my approach was to acknowledge and be conscious of my effect on the realities created by the participants with specific focus on the structural influences behind them, as well of my own knowledge construction process as a researcher.

4.3 GROUNDED THEORY METHODOLOGY: AN OVERVIEW AND TRADITIONS

In this section, I will begin by providing an overview of the fundamental ideas that comprise grounded theory before proceeding to discuss its historical development. Grounded theory methodology is concerned with the manner in which the people being researched comprehend and make sense of the social realities around them. The purpose of grounded theory is to create a theory about subjects that are significant to the lives of people. (Glaser & Strauss, 2006). It was founded by sociologists Glaser and Strauss in 1960s. Their findings in their research on dying in hospitals led to the

emergence of grounded theory as a formal approach dominantly used in qualitative inquiries.

The goal of grounded theory is to generate theories that is "*grounded*" in data acquired from participants based on the intricacies of their experiences in a social environment. The theory proposed by Glaser and Strauss (2006) is inductively formed via an iterative process of data gathering, coding, conceptualizing, ongoing comparison, and theorizing. (Charmaz, 2006). Instead of beginning with narrowly circumscribed, pre-conceived hypotheses, grounded theory starts with broad research questions. Glaser and Strauss asserted that an inductive-abductive reasoning renders possible the construction of middle-range theories based on data. They presented grounded theory as an organized way of deriving theory from evidence (2006).

Students of grounded theory follow the tradition of symbolic interactionism, which is a theoretical framework that provides insight into the process of data conceptualization and understanding. Based on the work of Blumer (1969), symbolic interactionism places an emphasis on the ideas of action and agency as essential tenets by focusing on the selves and the interaction processes. The action makes reference to events that are relevant to the individual on a reflexive level. The term "*agency*" refers to the place where actions are carried out, which might be a person, a language, or any other structure or process. The position of an independent and self-reflexive person in the process of constructing meaningful action is at question in this theory (Denzin, 2004). Symbolist interactionist view doesn't exclude the role of the structure. Every person has the potential to operate as a social agent in the real world, but their ability to do so is limited by structural norms, material resources, and the structural processes that are associated with class, gender, race, ethnicity, country, and community.

The assumption of symbolic interactionists is that humans construct their worlds by acting upon things in accordance with their significance for them. (Charmaz, 2006). In this process meanings emerge through interactions and are moulded by self-reflections in relation to particular circumstances. Therefore, a symbolic interactionist viewpoint is centred at performing individual. (Denzin, 2004). In this research, my goal is to

understand how platform workers undertake identity work on themselves and build their selves as constructs based on the social structure, they are surrounded by such as the platform form of organization or the characteristics of the labour market. I pay special attention to the role of their interactions with the clients as well as with the platform in their performances.

Accordingly, grounded theory methodology based on symbolic interactionism provides for an appropriate approach to my research aims. After outlining the philosophical grounds of grounded theory, I will mention the main features of the methodology³. The inductive-abductive reasoning of grounded theory has implications on the role of literature throughout the research. In the traditional form of grounded theory, the researcher does not consider the existing literature until conducting the study and the codes and categories have been formed solely based on the data gathered (Glaser & Strauss, 2006). The role of existing theory and literature is secondary as the goal is not to test or validate an existing theory. Instead, the adoption of such methodology is intended towards studying social interactions and experiences in order to describe a process and theorize on it.

The research process in grounded theory is distinctive, marked by simultaneous processes of research and theory building. Data collection and analysis go hand in hand, with the use of theoretical sampling (Glaser & Strauss, 2006). Theoretical sampling refers to the process where the sampling of the study is decided in line with the goal of theory building. As the data gathering and analysis go hand in hand, data collection is dependent on the identified categories and theoretical saturation (Charmaz, 2006).

The strategy of simultaneous data gathering, and analysis is coupled with a strategy of constant comparative analysis, which defines the relationship between the data gathering and theory building throughout the research. Constant comparison is undertaken through the practice of memo drafting in all stages of the research, in order

³ For a detailed handbook on grounded theory methodology, including different grounded theory traditions as well as application of the methodology on various contexts see: Bryant & Charmaz, 2007 and Bryant & Charmaz, 2019

to develop categories, clarify their attributes and establish links between categories. With the employment of theoretical sampling, and constant comparative analysis, the analytical procedure ultimately leads to the creation of the core category and, as a consequence, to the forming of a final theory (Charmaz, 2006).

The originators of the grounded theory developed divergent views over the course of time about the methodology, evident in the emergence of Glaserian, Straussian and Constructive traditions among grounded theorists. After the emergence of the work of Glaser and Strauss in 1960s, which is named as the Glaserian grounded theory that I outlined above, Strauss & Corbin (2015) created their version of the methodology in 1990s, which is called Straussian grounded theory. Although the approach to grounded theory proposed by Strauss and Corbin adhered to the same fundamental research processes as classic grounded theory, there were differences in the implementation of coding process.

The first and main difference in the Straussian grounded theory is the introduction of an alternate coding procedure. The initial Glaserian grounded theory placed a significant emphasis on emergence, which is process of immediately generating codes and categories from data. These codes are supposed to be strictly based on data without being generated by a pre-existing theory or conceptual construct. Straussian grounded theory proposes axial coding, which is the process of classifying data according to pre-existing categories, based on their circumstances and consequences. (Strauss & Corbin, 2015). This characteristic of Straussian grounded theory is formulaic and prescriptive, possibly hindering the process of the development of a new theory solely based on data. (Charmaz, 2006). In this sense, the use of axial coding results in a move of grounded theory from the stage of theory creation to that of theory verification (Strauss & Corbin, 2015).

In Straussian tradition, in the process of data analysis, researchers are able to take into account a priori assumptions. Strauss and Corbin (2015) believed that researchers could benefit from looking at the data from a variety of perspectives by drawing on their prior experience and knowledge. Strauss and Corbin suggest that pre-existing

understandings, gleaned from the body of research, can be purposefully used in a way that questions the findings. Glaserian grounded theory is arguably objectivist in its core assumptions (Charmaz, 2006). This is because it aims at the development of a generalizable theory that is capable of describing an objective world. Rather than being determined by participants or researchers, fundamental processes and issues manifest themselves on their own. Instead of being regarded co-constructors of knowledge, researchers are seen as objective observers.

Straussian grounded theory (2015) recognizes the presence of a researcher who has a role to play in the process of establishing categories and developing theory. They acknowledge the pre-existing knowledge of the researcher and give a role to the pre-existing constructs in the analysis. However, Straussian grounded theory is still far from accepting researcher's active role during the research as a co-constructor of the knowledge along with the participants. For such an acknowledgement, we have to look at the constructivist tradition of grounded theory proposed by Charmaz (2006).

4.4 CONSTRUCTIVIST GROUNDED THEORY

Constructivist tradition of grounded theory developed by Charmaz (2006), places investigation within the context of its historical, cultural, and social surroundings. Constructivist tradition focuses on how people construct and act on their own realities, while taking into account the social structure, by benefitting from existing theories on social issues such as power and inequalities. In order to theorize on connections between local constructed words and structural realities constructivist grounded theory offers specific ways to make use of pre-existing theories, without giving-up on the practice of "grounding" theory in data.

The role of pre-existing theory in constructivist grounded theory is acknowledged as "sensitizing concepts" (Charmaz, 2006). As the researcher brings past experiences and knowledge to the study inevitably during the knowledge construction process,

constructivist grounded theory offers ways for benefitting from such constructs without giving up from the inductive feature of methodology. In this approach, sensitizing concepts are used in forming the general research topics in the beginning of the study. In this sense, they constitute ways to start the research, but not to end it. Such pre-existing concepts are not to be used during the coding. Codes have to be solely based on data. The researcher is not supposed to force preconceived ideas and theories into data. If a sensitizing concept will be used as a code or category, it has to "*earn its way*" into the analysis, by being strongly backed by data.

As evident in the role of pre-existing theory, constructivist grounded theory recognizes the viewpoints and positions held by the researcher in addition to those held by the participants (Charmaz, 2006). In this sense, the fundamental tenets of constructivism as an analytical framework are mirrored in Charmaz's grounded theory approach. Accordingly, a constructivist tradition presupposes the presence of an active rather than a neutral observer, the choices of whom influence both the process and the output of the study. It is presumed that realities are not unified and objective but rather multifaceted and constructed. However, this requires researcher's continuous reflexivity during the study on his position, knowledge, and construction process.

Additionally, constructivist grounded theory regards the coding and categorizing processes as a dialectical and dynamic activity. (Charmaz, 2006). Charmaz's constructivist tradition casts doubt on the idea that the researcher is discovering an objective truth which can be evaluated or summed up by means of scientific inquiry. In this tradition, grounded theory methods are seen as tools that researchers may utilize to meet their own empirical concerns. As a consequence of this, Charmaz's methodology proposes less prescriptive methods than the Glaserian or Straussian traditions.

Considering this increased part of the researcher during the less prescribed data analysis phase, Charmaz's constructivist tradition follows the inductive creativity of the traditional grounded theory, while at the same time connecting it with the principles of constructivism by acknowledging the role of the researcher as a constructor of

knowledge. In the next section, I will provide more depth to the constructive grounded theory and justify my reasons to adhere with this tradition in this study.

4.5 CONSTRUCTIVIST GROUNDED THEORY IN THE STUDY OF PLATFORM WORK

As indicated in my research questions above, my goal in conducting this study is to build a theory to understand worker experience in digital labour platforms. I employ constructivist grounded theory methodology in this task for several reasons. Firstly, the characteristic of grounded theory makes it suitable for research focusing on relatively poorly understood and under-theorized cases (Rindova & Kotha, 2001). Emerged very recently through the employment of new technologies in the mediation of supply and demand of labour, digital labour platforms are phenomena that are still at the early stages of being studied. This explains the different claims and theories on the meaning and significance of the emergence of digital labour platforms, given in the preceding chapters. To improve the understanding of labour control within digital labour platforms, and to reach theoretical conclusions on platform work with the use of data on a labour platform in Turkey, grounded theory methods provide for suitable means for the purpose of this study.

The claim of grounded theory to scientific validity is through generalizations induced from comparisons between social situations (Burawoy, 1991). However, the focus of grounded theory on the data, as well as on the worlds of the research participants has been interpreted as a neglect on the structural processes during the analysis. I believe that constructivist grounded theory tradition, with its focus on sensitizing concepts as a way to benefit from existing theories and knowledge on the analysis, presents a good opportunity to conduct an inductive analysis which addresses connections between participants' worlds and structural realities (Charmaz, 2006). To this end, in this study, I used the existing research on digital labour platforms as

sensitizing concepts to make sense of the data I gathered from the participants. I detailed this process, with presenting the concepts I used and dropped, how data interacted with those concepts as well as how these concepts earned their way into my analysis, in the next chapter on research methods.

As given above, all traditions of grounded theory attributes great importance to constant comparative analysis in the forming of the codes and categories. This is particularly important for me, as digital labour platforms involve similar platform architectures between different national economies, between platforms, as well as within different working models under one platform. In building a theory on the platforms, I specifically benefited from the opportunity to make comparisons between different platforms models, as well as from the differences in various categories of work presented under the same working model in the platform that I based my data on. The specifics of the case selected, as given in the following section, allowed for a comparative analysis of two different working models facilitating the generation of a theory. In the next chapter, I will detail the research methods I employed in this study.

5. RESEARCH METHODS EMPLOYED IN THE STUDY

The previous chapter was based on my philosophical stance and on my choice of methodology as constructivist grounded theory along with my justifications of my selection. In this chapter I will detail the methods I used to gather, manage, code, and analyse data as well as my choices and journey during those processes. I will start by explaining my data collection methods and process, followed by how I used theoretical sampling in this study. I dedicated sections on the ethical considerations and data management during simultaneous data gathering and analysis phases. Finally, I will describe the coding and analysis methods I used, with a specific focus on various stages of coding, how I used memo-writing and constant comparative analysis and describe my theory building process.

5.1 DATA COLLECTION

I based my analysis on the data collected from platform workers through interviews. These allowed me to acquire knowledge on their experiences on platform work, as well as to understand how they build their worlds and construct their stories. Theory building in grounded theory can benefit from different data collection methods in line with the research question of the researcher (Charmaz, 2006). As my goal is to understand the role of platform control mechanisms on worker behaviour, I collected data from the platform as well to undertake my analysis. Platform data is gathered from the guiding video content prepared by the platform for workers. I will describe both data sources as well as my data collection process in this section.

5.1.1 Interviews

In line with my goal to understand worker experience, I undertook 30 semi-structured individual interviews with the workers taking work in different service categories of

Armut. All interviews lasted between 1 and 1.5 hours. They were recorded and transcribed afterwards. The working categories in the sample covered both categories such as cleaning under the reservation model, or painting, window repair, electricity and plumbing and patient care categories under the bidding model to allow for a comparative analysis. Using semi-structured interviews allowed me to both follow my research interests along with my research question and to allow the participant the space to reflect on the issues that are critical for them.

The interviews were undertaken in a timespan of 2 years between March 2020 and July 2022. I did the interviews in three rounds due to the ongoing analysis process. After undertaking first 10 interviews on cleaners and painters, I undertook an initial analysis of the data, and decided to expand my sample to other working categories in order to see if the comparative analysis between two working models can be undertaken and to reflect on the effect of the nature of the work in different service categories. In line with the principles of initial sampling (Charmaz, 2006), in the second round of interviews I added 6 interviews with window repair and patient care workers to the sample. I conducted a second analysis with these 16 total interviews and saw emergent issues such as worker voice and client control arising from the specific workings of platform mechanisms.

In line with the principles of theoretical sampling, as a result of this analysis, for the last and third round of interviews I decided to expand my questionnaire to give a larger emphasis on the topics of platform mechanisms such a reputation system or complaint mechanism and their role in the negotiation processes between the worker and the client, as well as on the voice of the workers in the platform and their organizational efforts and prospects. I also focused on worker experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic in this third round of interviews, as I already started interviewing before the pandemic measures and I wanted to see how such measures affected workers. My goal here was to reach theoretical saturation on the categories of worker-client negotiations and worker voice and resistance in my analysis. I also added the service categories of electricity and plumbing repairs in this round and to strengthen the comparative

analysis and to balance the weight of different service categories in the interview sample.

5.1.2 Participant Recruitment

Initially I struggled to recruit platform workers. They were not organized physically or online. It was possible to see their comments on some forums or online platforms where it was not possible to reach the writers of those comments. After this failed attempt I decided to use the platform as a client to recruit workers. I posted service requests to the platform as client in the service categories that I am interested. When workers placed a bid to my request, I called them and explained my study, objectives, expected results and anonymity conditions and invited them for an interview stating the expected duration of interviews. I interviewed all workers who agreed to take part in the interview. The interview questions were on topics of platform workers' motivation, app profiles, relations with clients, links with the platform, connections with other workers, the experience of the COVID-19 period, efforts to be more visible within the platform, how they control their own work processes, and their perceptions of their labour and future careers within or outside the platform.

Because of their packed platform work schedules, several workers declined to participate in the study. I also found workers who were initially hesitant to participate owing to worries about their anonymity. Another challenge was the belief by some workers that Armut was behind the scenes owner the research and use it to check on the workers. I gave participants a written information sheets with specifics about the study, the contact information of the researcher and detailed anonymity conditions in response. As a result, participants were able to offer their written agreement to participate in the research after receiving all relevant information.

As I explained above, the platform collects a bidding fee from a worker when the worker submits a bid in response to a request. All of the workers who submitted bids

in response to our service requests were reimbursed for their costs. Due to the fact that the platform provides workers with a large number of gig possibilities with below the market service fees, workers are always in a rush to complete as many tasks as they can during the day. I also offered a symbolic payment that was based on the amount of time and costs of the work, which were decided by the platform for each service category, in line with the duration of the interview. I decided for this payment so that I could reimburse workers for the time that they lost while participating in the interview. The total payment for each participant, which included the fee for bidding as well as the minimum service fee defined by the platform, varied from one hundred to three hundred Turkish Liras, depending on the work category as well as on the platform pricing in the time of the interview.

One limitation of recruiting the workers through ads on the platform emerges in relation to the success level of the workers. As I conveyed in the literature review chapter, the workers who are active and successful in platforms usually represents only a small percentage of all workers who are registered. In recruiting participants by posting ads on the platform, I was only able to reach workers who are relatively active and successful. The global data on platforms demonstrates very high number of workers who are passive or who had to unregister or kicked out of the platform for various reasons. I believe this is the case for Armut as well, considering the popularity of the platform and the difficult of having success with a high number of competitors. Therefore, my findings will be biased towards the experience of active and successful platform workers.

5.1.3 Platform Guiding Content for Workers

The second part of my data consists of videos prepared by the platform for the workers posted on Youtube. As my research questions aims at exploring the effect of platform work on the worker experience, an instrument of the platform to assert such an effect

was included in the data. My choice of using platform videos as data was supported by the data I gathered in my interviews with the workers. In the interviews, I noticed how worker behaviour in the bidding and marketing processes are shaped by platform design and the rules of the competition. To reflect such rules and design in the research, I looked for a second source of data, which would enable me to include platform structure, as well as platform's expectations from the workers in designing such a structure.

The use of varying sources of data is a common strategy in constructive grounded theory. Charmaz (2006), suggest employing two or more data-gathering approaches for large research projects such as theses. Such a need may arise after collecting one kind of data, as it was the case in my research process, as I narrated above. To answer the need for a data source, which would inform me on platform structure as well as on the world that platform creates for the workers, I looked for various resources that platform creates for the workers. I choose the videos as my choice of data, based on the fact that it is publicly available, and also easy to access for workers as well, which increases the visibility and effectiveness of the videos.

The videos are divided in two kinds. One kind is comprised "How to" videos prepared by Armut, involving an Armut management staff, informing workers about how to use the platform, giving them recommendations on Armut registration, their app profiles, as well as on their bidding and client communication behaviours. Second kind is comprised of "Service Provider Stories" videos prepared by Armut, where selected successful workers are shown as role models. They talk about benefits of Armut to their businesses and narrate how they act with regards to issues such as their profiles, marketing efforts, bidding behaviour and client relations. After checking the contents of the videos, I decided that they complement my interview data as extant texts (Charmaz, 2006), giving me a valuable opportunity to analyse the perspective of the platform on worker experience and worker behaviour.

In Armut's Youtube channel (2023), there are other sorts of videos, such as celebrations for special days, interviews of platform founders in the TV channels,

marketing videos of the platform or tips for how to undertake some of the service offered in the platform. I identified 16 videos in total belonging to the two-categories which were directly addressing the workers regarding their behaviours in the platform. All videos falling under the above-mentioned categories were grabbed, comprised of 9 how to videos and 7 service provider stories. The video details are given below in the sampling section. How to videos are shorter in duration, mostly around 1-2 minutes. Service provider stories are between 3-5 minutes. They were uploaded to the channel between 2018 and 2022. The videos were collected in March 2023. All videos were transcribed to be used in the analysis.

5.2 THEORETICAL SAMPLING AND STUDY SAMPLE

Theoretical sampling is the exploration of pertinent data to develop theoretical categories in the constructive grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006). As I mentioned above in the interviews section of this chapter, after conducting an initial sampling of 16 interviews on different service categories in Armut, I decided on the 14 remaining interviews based on my categories which were already developing at that stage. I found in my initial analysis that the worker control in the platform is undertaken through the competitive mechanism in the platform, as well as through platform instruments that empower clients against the workers. Accordingly, the direct control of workers was minimal, and the role of the clients were very significant. Under such circumstances, negotiations between the workers and the clients becomes crucial in defining worker agency and selves in platform work.

As I result, I defined my main category as negotiating agency and self. In my remaining sample of 14 workers, I aimed at recruiting mostly workers in the bidding mechanism, where workers have a stronger sense of agency and the negotiation processes between them, and the clients are less one-sided compared to the workers under the reservation model (see Table 5.1). In conducting these interviews, I gave a

larger role to the actual process of client-worker relations as a result. I also considered to have a considerable number of participants from each service category, in order to be able to consider the role of the nature of the work during the negotiation phase.

Table 5.1. Interview Sample

No	Participant Nickname	Work Category	Interview Date	Age	Gender	Education
1	Türkan	Cleaning	01.03.2020	44	Female	High School
2	Hayriye	Cleaning	05.03.2020	30	Female	Primary School
3	Buğra	Painting	08.03.2020	42	Male	High School
4	Ümit	Painting	09.03.2020	38	Male	Secondary School
5	Hakan	Painting	09.03.2020	42	Male	University
6	Fatma	Cleaning	10.03.2020	45	Female	Primary School
7	Tahsin	Painting	12.03.2020	39	Male	No education
8	Ayşe	Cleaning	14.03.2020	46	Female	Primary School
9	Volkan	Painting	15.03.2020	43	Male	University
10	İsmail	Painting	16.03.2020	39	Male	Primary School
11	Adem	Care	19.10.2020	38	Male	Postgraduate
12	Mülayim	Window Repair	20.10.2020	46	Male	Primary School
13	Murat	Painting	21.10.2020	46	Male	High School

14	Hasan	Painting	21.10.2020	27	Male	Primary School
15	Ahmet	Painting	21.10.2020	28	Male	Secondary School
16	Musa	Window Repair	22.10.2020	29	Male	Primary School
17	Erkan	Electricity	18.06.2022	36	Male	High School
18	Özgür	Electricity	20.06.2022	28	Male	Secondary School
19	Türker	Plumbing	20.06.2022	49	Male	High School
20	Kemal	Electricity	21.06.2022	37	Male	High School
21	Cemal	Plumbing	22.06.2022	31	Male	Secondary School
22	Sarper	Electricity	27.06.2022	40	Male	Primary School
23	Mert	Plumbing	28.06.2022	52	Male	High School
24	Muhammet	Electricity	28.06.2022	38	Male	Primary School
25	Umut	Electricity	28.06.2022	31	Male	Secondary School
26	Alpay	Window Repair	29.06.2022	28	Male	High School
27	Refik	Plumbing	29.06.2022	28	Male	High School
28	Güler	Cleaning	01.07.2022	37	Female	Primary School
29	Halit	Window Repair	04.07.2022	40	Male	Primary School
30	Emrah	Plumbing	05.07.2022	44	Male	High School

Source: Author's Description

In selecting the videos to be included in the analysis, theoretical sampling principles were effective as well. How to, and service provider stories categories of videos contain platform guidance directly related to the behaviour of workers in the phases of bidding, marketing and negotiations which were crucial in my analysis, as they inform on the competition and negotiation processes. I included service provider stories not only on the service categories that I recruited participants from, but also on different kinds of work which were offered under the bidding model of the platform (see Table 5.2). I made that decision after watching all videos, based on the fact that the content of the videos is unrelated to the nature of the work undertaken, and that all services offered under the bidding model are subject to the same principles and mechanisms of competition and bidding.

Table 5.2. Platform Guiding Content Sample

No	Title	Content Type	Category
1	Armut.com Service Provider Stories - Ferdi (Sofa Upholstery)	Video	Service Provider Stories
2	Armut.com Service Provider Stories - Gülgün & Bülent (Wedding Organization)	Video	Service Provider Stories
3	Armut.com Service Provider Stories - Levent (Moving Company)	Video	Service Provider Stories
4	Why Should I Sign Up for Armut?	Video	How to Videos
5	How Do I Create a Strong Profile?	Video	How to Videos
6	How Do Bidding Fees Vary on Armut?	Video	How to Videos
7	How Do I Become a Member of Armut?	Video	How to Videos
8	What Should I Pay Attention to After Making a Bid?	Video	How to Videos
9	How Do I Bid?	Video	How to Videos

10	What is the Bidding Fee?	Video	How to Videos
11	How Do I Ensure Continuity in Winning Jobs?	Video	How to Videos
12	What Should I Consider When Making an Offer?	Video	How to Videos
13	Armut.com Service Provider Stories Özkan (Water Plumber)	Video	Service Provider Stories
14	Armut.com Service Provider Stories Simay (Dietitian)	Video	Service Provider Stories
15	Armut.com Service Provider Stories Ferman (Curtain Master)	Video	Service Provider Stories
16	Armut.com Service Provider Stories Ibrahim (Carpet Cleaning)	Video	Service Provider Stories

Source: Author's Description

5.3 ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND CONSIDERATIONS

I took into account several ethical issues during the research process and benefitted from Creswell's (2014) points of emphasis on ethical issues in research design. Prior to gathering data, the research design and the interview questions were approved by the Bilgi University Committee on Ethics in Research on Humans. During the interviews, a consent form was presented to the participants, which included detailed information on the research goals, researcher, measures to protect participants, expectations from the participant as well as the expected final outcomes and uses of the research. This form was signed by all participants who took part in the study. In line with the principle of considering future research, researcher need to disrupt the research site as little as possible. I followed this principle by agreeing to hold the interviews in times and places that are most suitable for them, in order to not to disrupt their daily platform work. Also, I tried to affect the platform order as little as possible,

only acting as a client to post ads to recruit workers and not undertaking any other activity besides that.

In line with not harming the participants through the study and benefitting them as much as possible (Creswell, 2014), I offered a small participation fee, which would cover their bidding fees as well as their lost time during the interviews in a way which was determined by their platform work fees. Another ethical point in conducting research with humans is related to not to deceive the participants by exploiting them. In consideration with this principle, I acted transparently about myself, my research, the institution that I was a part of conducting the research as well as on the research outcomes as anonymity principles. I first mentioned these points in my first contact on the phone to the workers and then presented in written form as part of the consent form, giving the participants a copy of it.

With regards to the power imbalance between the researcher and the participant, benefiting from the flexibility of semi-structured interviews, I first let the participants express themselves with regards to the issues of importance to them in relation to the platform. Many workers were anxious to tell me about the platform issues that they feel strongly with. I directed the interviews in a way to find a balance between letting the participants express on their priorities and focusing on the issues of importance for my research questions. To this end, I placed importance of building a rapport with the participants and directing them to my points of interest. During the analysis, all participants names were kept private, by using nicknames for each participant. This was done to prevent harm for the participants in line with the anonymity conditions promised in the research information given to the participants.

The research data consists of audio records of interviews and the transcribed texts. The videos are publicly available data on Youtube platform. The interviews were recorded using the researcher's personal phone. The phone is protected by a 4-digit personal pin code. The transcriptions were stored in Word format in the researcher's personal computer, which is also protected by a personal code. Apart from the digital data I used a field notebook, where I noted important points during the interviews as

well as described the interview setting and the participants. The notebook is stored privately by the researcher.

5.4 CODING AND ANALYSIS

In this section I will describe the coding process, comprised of line-by-line coding, focused coding, and theoretical coding phases. I will define the role of literature as sensitizing concepts in my analysis, displaying which concepts I benefited from the analysis and how these concepts were confirmed, modified, or falsified by data. Finally, I will transmit the process of my analysis, by explaining how the main categories of analysis emerged, by emphasizing the role of constant comparison and memo-writing.

5.4.1 Coding Process

I undertook the coding process of the data in three phases in MAXQDA software, consisting of line-by-line coding, focused coding, and theoretical coding. In line with the constructivist grounded theory principles, I initially coded the data line-by-line (Charmaz, 2006). Line-by-line coding is undertaken by assigning codes to every line of the data. In this phase, the goal is to understand the participant. The researcher should stick close to data, instead of trying to apply concepts or theories to data. For this goal, I coded the data with words that reflect the actions of the participant (see Table 5.3). As a result of the line-by-line coding process, I had a total of 1812 codes initially.

Table 5.3. Examples of Line-by-Line Coding

Segment	Code(s)
You know, I have close friends who want to do their own business on Armut. He makes an offer. You have to deal with the client. You called the client once. For example, you gave a price to the client. It's a big job. The client said: 'I'll get back to you.' You said: 'okay.' and hung up. Once you hang up that phone, you have a competitor. Three or four of them. You have to call that guy a day later.	- Believing other workers don't market themselves well. - Calling the client after the bid to convince
Of course, I convince him on the phone. I also give him a guarantee. For example, I convince him that I will come when there is a problem related to the work that I did. Anyway, I really give the guarantee, not just in words. Obviously, I give a guarantee because I am self-confident in this work.	- Offering work guarantee to convince the client. - Trusting self to do the job well
The most important thing is the location. I check the proximity. I check the distance. Most importantly, I check the bidding fee. How much is the bidding fee?	- Considering location in making a bid - Considering bidding fee in making a bid
I don't bid to the requests which already has a bidder, because it is very	- Not bidding as a second bidder due to low chance

troublesome to secure the job in the bid ones.	
I wrote the duration of my experience in the About section. I wrote a text such as 'customer satisfaction is always important for us to serve you with a solid team' and so on. The text stayed that way anyway	- Mentioning client satisfaction in the profile - Mentioning experience in the profile - Mentioning the presence of a team in the profile

Source: Author's Description

Following line-by-line coding, I undertook focused coding, by selecting the most relevant codes for my analysis. I formed 76 codes which are given as sub-codes in my coding map (see Table 5.4). The codes were selected based on most significant codes in line-by-line coding as well as based on my analysis of competition, client control and negotiations, which was taking shape at that moment. Therefore, as can be seen in the categories, the sub-codes under competition, negotiation, reputation system, entrepreneurship and control-autonomy gained importance at this stage.

Following the focused coding, I undertook theoretical coding of the data, in line with my analysis. The theoretical codes which were formed were more determined in this phase. For example, codes related to autonomy were united with the codes related to control. Negotiation became a distinct category. I formed the 17 categories based on the relations between different sub-codes emerged in the focused coding process. Some sub-codes which may have fallen under different categories helped me to refine the category and code descriptions. A total of 17 categories were formed as a result (see Table 5.4).

Table 5.4. Code System

1 COVID-19	9 Networking
1.1 Work availability	9.1 Networking as Goal
1.2 Precautions at Work	9.2 Presence of Network
1.3 Transport	9.3 Networking as Control
2 Competition & Marketing	10 Role of Platform Work
2.1 Thoughts on Bidding System	10.1 Work Satisfaction
2.2 Success in Bids	10.2 Primacy of Platform Work
2.3 Effects of Competition	10.3 Goals in Platform
2.4 Beliefs on Competitors	10.4 Difficulty of Work
2.5 Bidding Strategies	10.5 Availability of Work
2.6 Client Marketing Strategies	11 Professionalism
3 Control-Autonomy	11.1 Professional Identity
3.1 Client Control on Behaviour	11.2 Education/Training
3.2 Client Satisfaction	11.3 Role of Personal Feelings
3.3 Control from Rating System	11.4 Experience
3.4 Autonomy in Platform	11.5 Platform Work as Only Job
3.5 Client Control on Working Hours	11.6 Work Ethic
3.6 Control from Complaint Mechanism	11.7 Platform Registration
3.7 Client Control on Extra Work	12 Reputation
3.8 Client Control on Work	12.1 Strategies to Better Reputation
3.9 Client Control on Fees and Profit	12.2 Views on Reputation System
4 Demand for Respect	12.3 Problems with Reputation System
4.1 Respect in General Behaviour	12.4 Reputation out of Platform
4.2 Respect Related to Work	13 Resistance
4.3 Respect Related to Identity	13.1 Efforts to Organize or Trick Platform
4.4 Respect Related to Compliments	13.2 Thoughts on Organization Prospects
5 Entrepreneurialism	13.3 Contacts with Other Workers

5.1 Self-Development	13.4 Other Hopes of Change
5.2 Being an Employer	14 Time and Scheduling
5.3 Commercial Outlook	14.1 Being Punctual and Fast
5.4 Entrepreneurial Identity	14.2 Planning and Scheduling
5.5 Business Growth	14.3 Work Duration and Timing
5.6 Having a Business	14.4 Timing of Dealing with the App
6 Fees & Benefits	15 Transportation and Materials
6.1 Mode of Payment	15.1 Taking Care of Materials
6.2 Social Security	15.2 Organizing Transportation
6.3 Service Fee and Profit Levels	16 Trust
6.4 Commission Fee Rationalization and Views	16.1 Worker Trust
7 Information Asymmetry	16.2 Role of Platform in Trust
7.1 Knowledge on Clients	16.3 Client Trust
7.2 Knowledge on Work Details	17 Voice
7.3 Knowledge on Platform Mechanisms	17.1 Platform Communication Channels
7.4 Client Knowledge of Work	17.2 Platform Position on Disagreements
8 Negotiation	17.3 Alternative Communication Channels
8.1 On Extra Work	
8.2 Payment Issues	
8.3 On Extra Costs	
8.4 On Price	
8.5 On Work Details	

Source: Author's Description

5.4.2 Sensitizing Concepts: The Role of Pre-Existing Theory

As given in the methodology chapter in relation to the different traditions of grounded theory methodology, the roles of theory, literature and pre-conceived concepts are a subject of debate among grounded theorists. As a result of my adherence to constructive grounded theory tradition, I benefitted from the literature on platforms in my study. However, I used some of the concepts in the literature only as starting points in my analysis, or as sensitizing concepts as per Charmaz's (2006) definition. This approach recognizes the researcher's background and subjective knowledge, while ensuring that such knowledge and theories are applied to the data at a later stage, following the coding process, which is solely based on data.

Before undertaking the coding, my ideas were mostly evolving around the entrepreneurial forms of work, crystallized in the entreployee concept (Pongratz & Voß, 2003). I believed that entreployee may offer a valid explanation on how the worker control is undertaken in platforms through entrepreneurial subjectivities. At the same time, considering the certain level of autonomy that workers have in the platform, I was assuming that the concept of subordinated agency (Wood & Lehdonvirta, 2021), would help me explain the type of worker control that platform enforces, by emphasizing the platform dependence of workers, as well as their autonomy arising from their significantly increased options to select the jobs and clients that they prefer.

After engaging with data, I realized how negotiation process with clients is the dominant factor in worker control in Armut, both in terms of the sense of agency of the workers, as well as in terms of worker subjectivities. In this sense, while I still believed that entreployee concept has some explanatory power in relation to the competitive mechanisms that the platform employs, it became clear to me that in the case of Armut, it is only explanatory in relation to the negotiations process. Accordingly, I based my analysis on how competitive mechanisms as well as the outcome of worker-client negotiations results in the prominence of various dimension of entreployee. On the other hand, the concept of subordinated agency became irrelevant for my analysis, as

the direct platform control lose its importance with the transfer of a substantive part of control duties to the client in Armut. At the same time, the empowerment factor implied by the subordinated agency concept, in relation to the increasing client portfolio through the platform, became irrelevant, as my codes were pointing out a significant worker disempowerment vis-à-vis the client.

As a result of basing my analysis on my codes, extracted solely from data, employee concept earned its way to my analysis, only in relation to, and as an indirect result of, the negotiation process. The concept of subordinated agency on the other hand, was removed from the analysis, due to the increased role of client-related and negotiated control as well as to the lack of worker autonomy connected to increased client network, as claimed in the subordinated agency concept. Moreover, my data indicated that increased client control, as a result of significant disempowered position in the negotiations, results in a decreased level of worker control on the labour process, including the way to undertake the work. This result, which I haven't foreseen before engaging with the data, showed me that the argument on the decrease of professional values and skills in platform work at the expense of job proficiency is relevant according to my data (Pongratz, 2018). I benefited from this idea as a sensitizing concept as well, both in explaining the role of professional subjectivity among platform workers, as well as the increased emphasis on job proficiency, which led the way to my conclusion on the prevalence of entrepreneurial self in Armut.

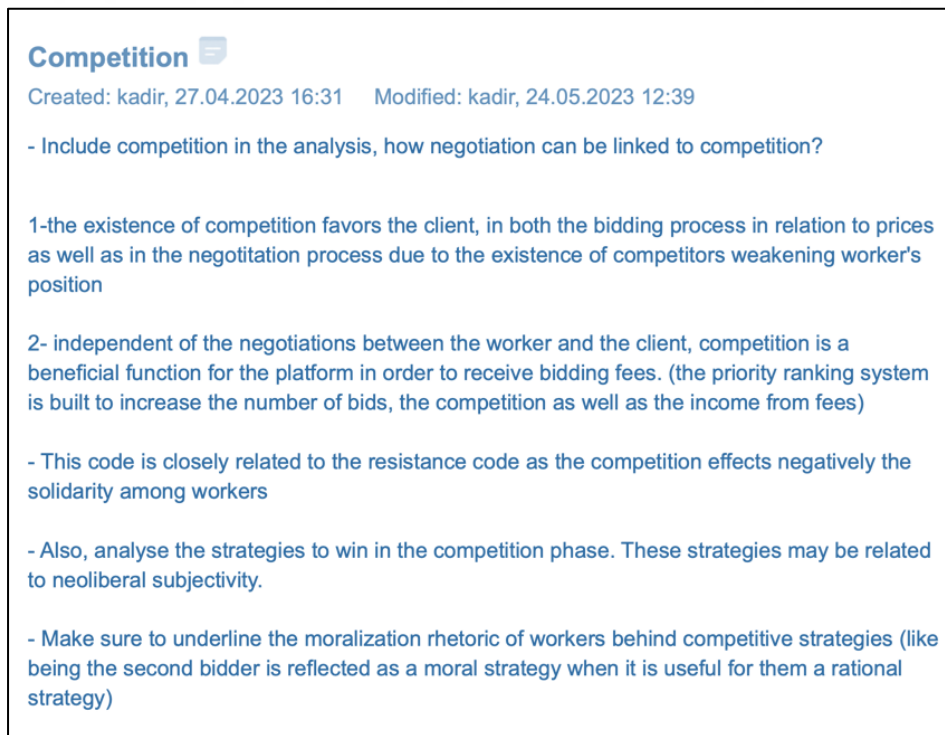
5.4.3 Analysis Process

The analysis was undertaken in MAXQDA software. Already during the coding phase, the importance of Competition and Marketing, Autonomy-Control and Negotiation categories (see Table 5.4) were visible, as these categories made the most analytical sense. I based my analysis on these categories, while benefiting from the other 14 concepts in relation to these main categories. I undertook constant comparison, not only between codes and concepts, but also between participants. The existence of two

working models helped my comparative analysis considerably. For example, the effects of competition became apparent after comparing the line-by-line codes and accounts of participants in the bidding model with participants in the reservation model, where there is no platform-built competition.

In constant comparison, I used the memo function in MAXQDA. I wrote memos to define codes, to compare them between themselves, and to compare the experiences of workers in different service categories as well as in different working models of the platform in relation to their accounts under the same code or category. For example, I wrote a memo on the competition category, to link it with the negotiation and resistance categories and also to remind myself to question moralization of worker accounts on their competitive strategies (see Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1. Memo on Competition under the Competition & Marketing Category



Source: Author's Description

After establishing the relations between all concepts, the negotiation emerged as the main category in my analysis. I used the power dynamics in the negotiation process to explain autonomy and control in the platform. I defined the resulting worker agency and subjectivities, as well as the organizational prospects of workers in relation to the outcomes of the negotiations process, which I claim to be heavily favouring the client due to platform mechanisms disempowering the worker. I used the competition category both in its relation to the negotiation processes, but also in having direct effect on worker subjectivities and the resulting lack of worker solidarity and resistance practices. All other categories were included in the analysis in their relation negotiation and competition categories.

I defined in this chapter in detail; the study setting by presenting the Armut platform, my data collection methods and processes comprised of interviews and publicly available videos, my ethical considerations in the participant recruitment process and in undertaking interviews, as well as my coding and analysis processes. In the next chapter, I will convey the results of the study, comprised of three sections on competition, negotiation and worker agency and selves.

6. STUDY FINDINGS

After detailing the methods I used during the collection, management, coding, and analysis phases of the study data, in this chapter, I will convey the findings of my study. In the first section, I will focus on the institutional level, mentioning how competition is set-up by the platform, with specific focus on the workings of competitive mechanisms and in which ways those mechanisms encourage platform workers to act. Along with the creation and management of competition, the role of platform also covers how the relations between the clients and workers evolves. Therefore, the first section also includes the process after the bidding stage, namely the stages of work and evaluation, which controls the power dynamics and relations of negotiation between the worker and the client. Accordingly, the second part of the first section will be devoted to the platform mechanisms' role in empowering or disempowering clients and workers in the ongoing negotiations and re-negotiations between actors.

I devoted the second section of the results chapter to the ways client control is asserted on the worker during the on-going negotiation and re-negotiation processes. In this section, based on the findings conveyed in the first section on the role of the platform in setting-up the terms of negotiation between workers and clients, I will detail how actors negotiate on the terms of the work. I will convey the results based on the subjects of negotiations, such as client satisfaction, worker behaviour, work and unpaid work as well as fees and profit. While describing the ways workers and clients negotiate on those topics, I will refer to the non-platform factors in the negotiations including the skill levels of the workers as well as the goals of networking and client connections.

In the third section, I will focus on the identity work by workers. I will start by describing how the subject of negotiations given in the preceding section and the resulting material conditions are effective in how workers create and shape their identity including their professional identities. The section will be followed by describing how autonomy and control are seen and legitimized by workers as well as how they relate to entrepreneurial selves. The second section will be devoted to the

issue of voice within the platform, with focus on the platform's policies to hear and take into account workers' views. Finally in the third section, I will describe the effects of competition over worker identity and the resulting prospects of organization and practices of resistance among workers.

6.1 PLATFORM CONTROL: SETTING-UP COMPETITION AND DEFINING CLIENT-WORKER RELATIONS

As given in the literature review section, platforms present a new way to organize the supply and demand of services by creating distinctive economic systems that actors play within. This definition of the role of the platforms is fitting for the case of Armut. Armut not only creates and manages competition in the platform ecosystem through competitive mechanisms such as bidding system or priority ranking of the workers, but also manages the relationship between the clients and the workers by deploying a reputation system, a complaint mechanism as well as by building information asymmetries between users. While competitive mechanisms disciplines workers against the platform, by ensuring the supply of bids and the resulting services in line with platform principles, the tools to manage worker-client relationships ensures the client's control over worker behaviour by empowering clients and disempowering workers in the phases of work and evaluation. To analyse the role of platform in those two phases, I will first start by analysing the competitive mechanisms and follow by the analysis of mechanisms enabling client control.

6.1.1 “The House Always Wins”: Competitive Bidding Mechanism

As described in the study setting section, Armut employs a bidding system, where a maximum of four workers bid to the service requests of their choice by paying a bidding fee to the platform. The goal of the system is to create a competitive

environment within the platform to ensure the quality of the services for a lower price, as well as to make sure that the platform gets a revenue for mediating between workers and clients. The videos prepared by Armut for the workers rationalizes such a system by indicating that *“the bidding system builds a quality scale and ensures a healthy competition environment.”* On the other hand, according to Armut, such a system results in workers to: *“hold the control by bidding only for requests that they are really interested.”* Similarly, in a video prepared by Armut for the purpose of providing guidance for the workers, a successful worker praises the bidding system for enabling him to select the works that he wants for the times that he wants.

Such control of work schedule and the autonomy over accepting/rejecting or bidding/not bidding on the jobs are greatly appreciated by workers in the platform. Workers in the past have either worked in different sectors in full time and have to leave their jobs due to different reasons, or worked under a master or a shop owner or in the construction works under a contractor in their profession that they give service in the platform. For majority of them, having no boss in the platform are a very positive factor. Özgür, an electrician, told me how this is a contrast from a full-time job: *“For example I have two work appointments for tomorrow. If I have another job or if I want to rest, simply I won’t make a bid. But if you are working in wage job, you can do this one day or maximum two. In the third day your boss will ask you: ‘What’s going on?’”*

This lack of a boss in person in the platform is creating a strong sense of agency among the workers. When they control their work schedules, workers feel like they are the bosses of themselves. It also attracts a lot of workers to the platform, as they have options to consider the several details such as the content, the duration, the timing, the location of the work. For Kemal, an electrician, such autonomy is an important factor for him to take platform work: *“The requests come, and you select considering distance or considering if I can do this job or not. This is attractive for me. You have the chance to select the jobs that you do. On the other hand, you may select a work and not get selected to do it also.”*

As stated by Kemal, when you bid for a work, you have a chance to lose that work. In fact, it is a good chance, considering up to four workers can bid for a request. Naturally, workers struggle in succeeding in bids under heavy competition. This is despite the fact that my sample is biased towards successful workers, due to the fact that I recruited participants from the platform by giving service ads, and the responding workers are heavily among active workers who succeed and can bid to new requests. Despite indicating they take a lot of jobs through the platform, majority of participants in the study are struggling to succeed in bids, by making a lot of offers and ending up with doing the work in only a small percentage of those bids.

In the presence of high competition, strategizing in the bids became crucial for the workers. The platform encourages such strategies, with the videos prepared for workers suggesting workers to *“bid fast against job opportunities to beat competitors”*, and to not to *“wait if you see a job you can take, as clients select one of the first three offers in 93% of the time”*. Workers mostly comply with this strategy, as many rushes to be the first bidder in requests. Some indicate that they never bid to the request as there is already a bidder in place. Surely, in order to be fast, workers need to constantly be alert on job opportunities at the platform. Because of this, many workers check their apps in their phones constantly, even during the interviews. Can, an electric master taking jobs in Armut, explains how he feels the need to check the app and make a bid immediately: *“Here it is all about time, the client shared that job, you have to grab it at that moment. If you don’t grab it, either you lose it or you have to do the job for 7 liras instead of 10. Because 2 more masters can come in and escalate things.”*

Apart from being always alert on service request and acting fast on them, the timing of bids can also offer a competitive advantage to the workers. Platform recommends the workers to be alert day and night by sharing the experiences of a worker who checks the offers and makes bids after 9 o’clock in the evening and another worker who bid on a request at 3.30 in the morning during the month of Ramadan and be successful. The advantage of being active at night is acknowledged by participants as several of

them mentioned they check the app at nights to bid on the requests in order to benefit from the lower level of competition at the moment in the platform.

As Master Can stated above drawing from his experience, competition works to lower the price of services in the platform. Workers mention the need to cut the prices below market levels, or even doing works without a profit, to succeed in the bidding system, with the expectation of winning the bid and hoping for a good rating or a comment from the client or enlarging client network with the expectation of a future job. A video prepared by the platform suggests a similar approach in an interview with a successful worker chosen by Armut: *“I offer a price which can be accepted so that we can work together, so that people are satisfied from us and give their comments”*. Accordingly, workers have to offer prices below the market to succeed in bids under the competition created in the bidding system.

To lower the prices below the market, and still be able to make a profit, workers strategize in different ways. One of the most dominant strategies is to act according to the level of competitors in the request. In the bidding system, workers can see the ratings and number of comments of their competitors. The names, profiles and the amount bid to the request are hidden. Some workers mention they never bid when they see a highly ranked competitor, bidding instead when competitors in the request are ranked lower than themselves, trusting their higher ratings will be a factor for the client to choose their bid. Others, who are more experienced in the platform, believe that competitors who has very high number of comments can only reach such position by winning the bids and outsourcing work to other workers, as they can't undertake such high number of works themselves. In that case, they consider such competitors will have to take commission from the workers they outsource the work to, and their bid will be higher than the usual prices in the platform. In that case, they place a below the market bid and try to win the client by the price instead of by ratings and comments.

Almost all participants agree on the fact that workers have to cut significantly on their profits to win in bids. Murat, a painter, explains how he approaches platform work in the presence of such low profits: *“The best way of getting work from Armut is to be*

able to work in your free time instead of being unemployed. You say to yourself: 'Instead of sitting at home, I can get a room paint job and earn a pocket money for myself'. You can't think bigger than that. You can't think I will get jobs from Armut and grow my work and develop myself." As the margins of profit are so slim, workers look for other ways to cut on their offers to win the bids. A dominant strategy among workers to cut the prices is to lower the costs. For some workers, the best way to do this is through the materials used in the repair works, such as using low quality paint in painting jobs, or low-quality spare parts in electricity or plumbing works. Apart from materials, a big cost within the price is the transportation, especially considering the recent increases in the price of gas. Many workers strategize in bids to cut the transportation costs, by bidding only requests in their very close proximity. Some use public transport or bike when going to jobs and reflect the lower cost of transportation to their bids in order to succeed.

Bidding system not only sets up the competition to ensure the presence of services for a fee below the market level, but also is the main source of income for the platform. As the workers bid to the requests, the platform gains commission fee from every bid, successful or unsuccessful. Videos prepared by the platform legitimizes the bidding fees in different ways. In one video, bidding fee is defined as a system which ensures: *"that service providers bids to the requests that they can really undertake"*. Here, the focus is on the selective nature of the fee system, which prevents unrealistic bids from the workers according to the platform. In another video, bidding fee system is justified in comparison with different marketing activities. In the video, it is argued that with the bidding fee system, workers won't need complicated online marketing plans and tiring flyer distribution activities. This representation of bidding fee as a marketing cost is supported by another video prepared by the platform. In this video, a successful worker narrates how he had to pay for Google Ads with no avail before meeting Armut.

Justifications are reflected in some participants' accounts. While Adem, a patient care worker defines bidding fees as marketing fees, Refik, a plumber, goes further and defines platforms role as a partner: *"Armut makes more money than me. Why? Because*

it is my partner, I give it a share, I give it a certain percentage depending on the job.” Despite some workers justifying the fees in the bidding system, majority of workers find the system unjust. The bidding fee is a source of strong criticism from the workers, as many complain about very high bidding fees and the injustice of paying a fee under such a competition where the chance of success can be slim. The fact that the fee is charged even if the worker loses the bid is the focal point of worker criticism. For Türker, a plumber, this is no different than gambling for the workers. Another plumbing worker, Emrah, echoes the gambling analogy describing the bidding system as a way to ensure the workers lose and the platform wins: *“Even if I don’t undertake a service, the platform cuts that money. 4 people bids, 4 of them pays. Only one gets the job. They say, ‘the house always wins’ in gambling, here, in Armut the house always wins too.”*

The gambling analogy of the bidding system is well placed in reflecting how the competitive bidding mechanism in the platform supplies a strong encouragement for the workers to act in a rationalized way to win in bids. This encouragement is supported by the priority ranking system, where the workers who bid more often are ranked priorly and receive the service requests in advance of their competitors. In the platform ecosystem where bidding first and fast is crucial in the success, as described above, the ranking system provides a considerable advantage. Despite the fact that the platform states the role of ratings and success in bids in ranking the workers, the workers’ experience points out to the role of the number of bids in their rankings. Buğra, a painter with good ranking and a high number of comments, explains his experience with the priority ranking system with an emphasis on the role of bids he makes: *“If I don’t bid in Armut for a week, they decrease my ranking to 150 to 200. The request that client places reach me a week later. When I receive that request, the job is already taken. The more money I put into the system, my ranking increases and I get more jobs. Instead of comments, the number of bids I make increases my ranking.”*

With the ranking system in place, platform requires not only fast, rationalized, and strategic action of the worker, but also demands worker’s constant activity in line with this specific way of acting. In this system, the rules and the spirit of competition is

applied without the intervention of any other principle. In one way, workers are disciplined by being submitted to limitless competition and the constant availability and supply of services are guaranteed. In another way, this availability and bidding activity is monetized even if no work is undertaken, so that the profit of the platform is ensured. In the processes that follow the bidding phase, the role of platform is present but in a less visible way. After the worker makes a bid and gets in communication with a prospective client, the platform doesn't intervene directly, however it sets the stage and distributes the cards through various mechanisms in the negotiations that occurs between the worker and the client. The next section is devoted to the role of the platform in regulating worker-client relations.

6.1.2 Platform Setting the Stage for Worker-Client Relations

Competition devised by the platform not only ensures platform's goals such as the active behaviour of the worker and service prices below the market level. Competition also creates an environment where, presented with different worker options, clients acquire advantage in the expense of workers. Even after the bids are placed, and the prices are set, workers, knowing that their competitors may dissuade their clients, have to market themselves to the client act responsively to various client demands. Clients leverage this position in their benefits in most cases. This advantageous position of the clients is not only due to the competitive mechanisms, but also supported and amplified by various systems employed by the platform.

I described in detail in the literature review chapter, how platforms try to ensure the delivery of quality service in the absence of managers. As in many platforms in different countries and services, Armut uses mechanisms such as the reputation system for this end. In this section, I will detail how the reputation system is set up, along with other instruments such as complaint mechanism, information asymmetry and worker

voice. The way these systems work has considerable effect on the power dynamics between the workers and clients, as well as on the workers' subjectivities.

Reputation system in Armut, is based on clients attributing a rating out of 5 points to the worker as well as the option to write a comment on them. Some platforms base their reputation systems on reciprocity introducing two-way systems where workers may rate and comment on the clients as well. This is not the case in Armut, where workers can't rate or write a comment on the clients. The role of ratings and comments are acknowledged by the workers, with many participants stating that they have great influence on the success in the bids. Emrah, a plumber with high ratings and numerous positive comments mentions how clients consider his reputation in their decisions: *"I worked a lot to win those ratings and comments. My comments got more positive afterwards. Then I started to get more jobs."*

Such a mechanism is appreciated by most workers. They see the ratings and comments not only as a track record of their good work, but also a part of their personality, as Halit, a window repair worker describes: *"The fact that the client can see me is positive. Because he can read my comments, he gives me the job. In a way, he sees my personality in there, when he sees my profile."* This shows that ratings and comments doesn't only play an important role in the success in the platforms, but also works as a personal appreciation factor for the workers. Many are proud of the high ratings and praising comments that they received, showing, or reading the interviewer about them during the interview. This is proven by the fact that the reputation in the platform is not only important for workers who are under the bidding model of the platform. For example, cleaning workers who work under the reservation model, rely considerably less on reputation to get the jobs, as in the absence of a competitive bidding system, the service requests are sent to them by the platform, and they have the option to accept and reject those requests. Fatma, a cleaner explains the meaning of rating for her as a respect to her labour: *"On what basis the client gives the rating? Based on his satisfaction. I mean based if he sees that you truly did the work, and values it. In a way he expresses his respect to your work"*.

The feeling of appreciation is important for all workers in both working models in the platform. This is due to the fact that it is closely connected to the feeling of success. When I asked them if they feel successful in their platform work, a dominant majority of workers responded positively even if they struggle to succeed in bids or making low profit. All of them connected this feeling of success on their high ratings and positive comments on their profiles. Because the reputation system is important both in succeeding in bids and on the feeling of appreciation and success, a negative comment and or a bad rating have very negative consequences for them. Cemal, a plumber who outsources work to other workers, described me a situation where one of the workers he outsources work to, decided to quit the platform after receiving a bad comment from a client, which he feels was undeserved.

Having a low rating or a bad comment unjustly by a client is an experience many workers had. Özgür, an electrician with very high ratings and high number of comments, narrated his experience with a client where he received 1 point and a negative comment: *“Maybe I went to 500 jobs in total. I never fail to show up for a job. Except on one occasion, where I had a car accident on my way to the client. I was going to install curtain rods. I had rods of 6 meters high with me. I left the car to repair shop. I tried to find a rental car, but I couldn’t find a car which will take such big materials. I sent the client the photos of the accident and the official report. I apologized several times. He said OK in an understanding manner. After that he gave me 1 point and wrote a comment. He wrote in the comment: ‘the worker didn’t show up and cost me two days of my time.’”* According to participants, such incidents are not rare in Armut, where clients rate workers or comment on them based on not liking the way they talk or rejecting to undertake the work below the market price, or asking for extra payment when they demand an extra work to be done for free.

The platform doesn’t intervene in such arbitrary ratings and comments according to the workers. Many tried to contact the platform on such occasions, with no success of reaching the platform, or receiving the answer that they can’t intervene in client ratings and comments. By designing the reputation system as one-way, and by ensuring that

workers have no say in any circumstance over their reputation, platform ensures that the reputation system acts as a strong mechanism of control over worker behaviour. This policy of the superiority of clients are also part of the complaint mechanism set up within the platform. The mechanism works in the way that a client can place a complaint to Armut on a worker after a service is undertaken. As in the reputation system, there is no such process where a worker can place a complaint on a client.

In such instances, where a client places a complaint on a worker, the platform contacts the worker and asks the worker to please the client. For workers, this is cause for strong criticism, as they feel that the platform should take into account the workers' perspective as well. Özgür, an electrician, is feeling he has to do what the platform asks and please the client, in order to not to face the consequences: *“If you don't do the job well or there is a complaint from the client, Armut calls us and tells us to do the job again and satisfy the client. If you don't do it, they say, we will freeze your profile, we won't send you work anymore. I mean even if you have 500 good comments, you are finished. If you do one job badly, you are done. But not all clients are right. In reality, maybe you did the job well, but the client didn't like something about you. You can't express yourself to the platform in such situations.”*

Many workers complain about this policy and suggest that the platform should investigate such situations, instead of acting one-sidedly on the word of the clients. When the platform attributes such power to the clients in the cases of complaints, it significantly disempowers workers in their relations with the clients. This power imbalance is not only limited to how reputation and complaint systems work. The choices and the design of the platform puts worker in a disadvantageous position way before the work is undertaken by limiting the information they have. To solidify the client's supremacy vis-à-vis the worker and to submit workers under client control, the platform places information asymmetries in several phases of the platform experience. Such asymmetries start with the information received by the worker on the client. For cleaning workers under the reservation model, this is crucial, as they want to be

informed about their prospective clients just as they are informed about the workers. Here, the trust mechanism built by the platform fails the workers.

Türkan, a cleaning worker who started having jobs from the platform after leaving his previous profession due to an occupational disease, is particularly concerned about her safety at client's home, after having health issues in the past. For her, there must be equality of information and trust between the worker and the client: *"There is only a photo of the client. And mostly even the photo is absent. I mean who is he/she? I am sure they receive information on us as we go to their place. If they need my information for trust, I need their information as well. I am carrying a life, just like the clients do, don't I? You can come across a schizophrenic or someone with any other disease."* By limiting information that the worker receives on the client, platform considerably limits workers' choices. When accepting or rejecting a reservation request or when deciding to bid or not to bid on a request, workers act on limited information, placing them on a weaker position against the clients, who has the detailed profile information as well as ratings and comments of the worker.

In the absence of information on clients, workers have to rely on the information given in the description of the work when making their decisions. This creates an even bigger asymmetry, where workers have to decide based on the information created by the clients. In the reservation model, the details of the work are written by the client and the client is expected to choose a work duration accordingly. In the cleaning category, the duration can range from 3 hours to all day. When both the content and the duration of the work is indicated by the client, they determine how much work can be undertaken in the duration of the reservation. As the service fee is calculated automatically by the platform on the details and duration given by the client, clients become the deciders of the work as well as the fee. Workers, on the other hand, start the work without objective knowledge on what is needed. According to Fatma, a cleaner, contents of the work and the duration are rarely a match: *"I am talking about an apartment of 100 square meters. The cleaning job of such an apartment of 3+1 rooms including the windows, doors, sweeping, and wiping takes minimum 5-6 hours."*

Doesn't matter how quickly you work. It was a 4-hour job. I started at 10 and finished at 4." In such instances of overwork or overtime, the platform doesn't intervene, and the payment doesn't change unless the client informs the platform, or just pays the worker in cash.

Information asymmetry on work details is equally a problem for workers in the bidding model. In that case, workers are bidding on the requests which are created by the clients. The price is not set by the platform, so the workers are free to bid as they wish. However, they build their cost and profit estimates on the information given by the clients, which is usually missing or deceiving. Buğra, a painter, told me about how the information on the requests can be misleading: *"I go to paint a room, it turns out to be an apartment when I go there. I go to paint a wall; it turns out to be a room. I tell the client 'I bid for a room only.' Some clients tell me: 'you are right', and we negotiate the price again, some clients tell me: 'You already made the bid', and we can't agree."* As seen in the account of Buğra, the fact that the clients have power on determining the extend of the work before the service request, can be used as a chip by the clients in the on-going negotiations between them and the workers. For the purpose of the role of the platform on setting up the relations between the workers and clients, the information asymmetry serves as a disempowering factor for the part of the workers.

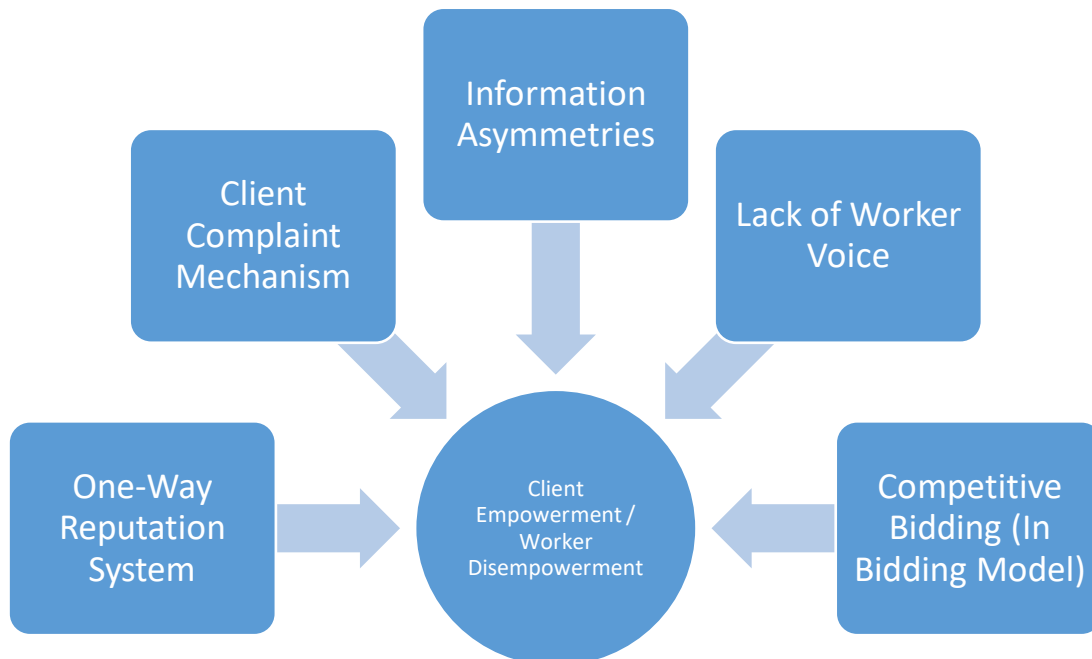
6.1.3 The Double Role of Platform on Worker Behaviour

As I displayed on the previous section, platform exerts control over worker behaviour by devising competitive mechanisms. This form of control is not direct, as platform doesn't impose definite rules on the workers on how to behave. It is rather a form of control through market mechanisms, granting a limited agency to the worker, by setting the rules of the competition and letting the workers act in line with market needs to succeed. Instead of disciplining workers directly, platform sets up the competition and lets the market discipline the workers. Competitive processes are devised in a way to

encourage workers to act in a certain way. The way to succeed in the platform is through constant bidding and strategizing in their bids.

While controlling workers' behaviour indirectly by propelling them through competitive mechanisms, platform takes a role in the client control over worker behaviour as well. As showed above, mechanisms such as one-sided reputation and complaint mechanisms and information asymmetries exposes the worker to the supremacy of the client which results in the strict client control (see Figure 6.1). While the platform doesn't take direct part in how clients act on the workers, the design of such mechanisms forms an unequal bargaining power and facilitate clients' control. By facilitating the powerful client position, platform ensures the attraction of the clients to the platform.

Figure 6.1. Armut's Mechanisms and Policies Affecting Worker-Client Relations



Source: Author's Description

In order to give a general picture of the platform's double role in the exchange processes in different stages of platform work, I am listing below the main features of the platform:

- 1- Creating and enforcing rules throughout platform processes.
- 2- Setting-up competition in the bidding model to form a closed competitive market with up to four workers and a client for each service request.
- 3- Securing active role of competing workers by employing a priority ranking system
- 4- Designing client-worker relations by adopting a one-way reputation system and complaint mechanism for both working models
- 5- Controlling the access to information for both parties to create power asymmetry in the favour of clients for both working models.
- 6- Ensuring the attraction of clients to the platform, by using the downward effect of competition on the prices, as well the predominance of clients in their relations with the workers
- 7- Ensuring the loyalty of workers to the platform by using the abundance of clients as well as the motivating effect of the non-transferable reputation system as leverage

In line with these features, the platform undertakes two different roles in determining worker behaviour:

- 1- The role of “Propeller of Competitive Control”: To point out the role of platform's creation of a competitive market among workers to ensure indirect control of worker behaviour as autonomous market agents.
- 2- The role of “Facilitator of Client Supremacy”: To point out the role of the platform in empowering the client against the worker for the stages of exchange between two parties.

I showed in the beginning of this section how competition is effective in controlling worker behaviour in terms of acting as market agents to succeed. I defined the role of platform in this process as propeller since platform's role is limited to push the workers forward by creating the rules of the competition. The competition ends up ensuring the rationalized, strategic worker behaviour. Platform doesn't direct workers actively to act in one specific way or another. Rather, it directs workers only to be active by employing the priority ranking system. Workers have agency to bid or not to bid or bid in their own terms in the competitive bidding model. However, as the success depends on acting as active market agents developing strategies in accordance with market needs, the workers assume such behaviour in their actions.

I defined the role of the platform in setting up client supremacy as facilitator due to the fact that platform's role here is limited in giving opportunity to the clients to dominate the workers. By having this opportunity, the clients may or may not use such position in their favour. Therefore, the platform's role in this process is limited to facilitation instead of controlling or intervening in the process directly. By assuming a double role of propeller of control by competition and facilitator of client supremacy, platform controls the worker behaviour two distinctive in-direct and effective ways. I showed in the first section of this chapter how control by competition operates. The next section will be devoted to the processes of negotiation between workers and clients and display the ways that client supremacy works in practice.

6.2 NEGOTIATING EVERY GIG: CLIENT-WORKER RELATIONS

Following the bidding phase in the bidding model or the reservation phase in the reservation model, workers and clients get into communication. In the bidding model, based on the details of the job given in the service request written by the client and on the bid given by the worker, the details of the job as well as the price is set on theory.

The platform at that stage enables communication between the parties through the messaging module in the Armut app. Platform also shares the phone number of all bidding workers with the client, so that the client may get in touch with them through a call. The sharing of client phone number on the other hand is dependent on client preferences. The client may prefer to keep the phone number hidden. In that case, communication between parties is undertaken solely in the platform messaging module. Two parties communicate on the messaging module or on the phone to discuss the details of the job including timing, job requested or the price and materials. At that stage, depending on the work to be done, the worker and the client may agree for the worker to undertake a scouting visit to see the work to be done before starting the work. Alternatively, they may agree on the messaging module or on the phone directly for an appointment to undertake the job without undertaking a scouting visit.

In the reservation model, after the worker accepts a service request sent by the platform, the reservation is created for a set date and time and in a way similar to the bidding model platform sets up the communication between the parties. The payment is already set strictly by the platform and charged to the client at the moment of the creation of the service request. Therefore, the communication between parties usually starts a day before the time of the work and it involves address and transportation details for the worker to arrive to the workplace at the required time.

In both models, after a bid is placed or a reservation is accepted, the workers create an image of the work to be done based on the work details given in the service request and the fee. However, this image rarely translates into reality. This is due to the fact that in both models, workers and clients engage in continuous negotiations in all subsequent phases of the process. In the bidding model, after the communication is enabled by the platform, clients may further negotiate on the bid price based on several bids that they receive. If the worker and client agree on a scouting visit, after worker sees the work to be done, the nature and details of the work can shift significantly, due to several facts. This may be due to the missing information on the service request, or the missing knowledge of the client on work to be performed. Consequently, another

round of negotiation is undertaken in the scouting visit, where worker tries to convince the client to take the job, and both parties try to agree on favourable terms for themselves.

This negotiation process continues during the work phase as well. At that stage, new client demands may emerge, clients may change their preferences with regards to the work, infrastructure at the workplace may require a change in the work or in the materials, the origin of the problem or need may prove to be different than initially anticipated or worker may fail the work or commit a mistake, which requires further work to be done. In each of those situations, client and worker undertake a new round of negotiations in the work to be done, how to do it, when to do it, for which price and with which materials. Similarly to the bidding model, in the reservation model, the pre-conceived idea of the worker on the work based on the service request detail, changes in most situations. Worker may find the work larger than it was initially advertised, which creates a mismatch between the pre-agreed duration and price for the work and the work to be undertaken, or new client demands may emerge, or a disagreement may occur on how the work should be done between parties. In such cases, workers and client renegotiates the terms of the work at the workplace.

In those ongoing negotiations, the factors I described in the previous section are extremely effective. The existence of competitive bidding, one-way reputation system, client complaint mechanism as well as information asymmetries in the platform act as factors strengthening client position and weakening workers considerably. I will describe the resulting processes of worker-client negotiations in the next sub-sections based on their effects on different aspects of the work comprising worker marketing, client satisfaction and worker behaviour, work details including unpaid work and fees and profit.

6.2.1 Marketing Self Under Competition

The effect of competition is felt dominantly for the workers under the bidding model. After bids are placed to a service request, several factors get into play in the final decision of the client to select a bid. These dominant factors are the bid price and the reputation of the worker comprised of the ratings and comments. However, as the workers can communicate with the client at that stage, marketing activities become important as well. According to the platform it is important for the workers to market themselves well in their efforts to succeed in the bidding. A guidance video prepared by the platform recommends the workers to call the clients or send them a message after bidding in order to market their services. According to the video, such marketing activities should involve sharing the visuals of previous work undertaken by the worker, offering a scouting visit, or demanding more information on the work to better understand client needs, or offering work guarantee conditions.

Such recommendations are followed to a large extent by the workers. They call the client after placing the bid and try to market their services. An important aspect of marketing is the materials to be used in work as it effects the costs and the bid price considerably. For Musa, a window repair master, calling the client and praising the quality of the materials he uses is crucial: *“I send my bid. Then I call the client. ‘Good day sir. I am calling through Armut. I gave such and such price. What we use is the material from Şişecam [a known local producer of glass]. It won’t be tarnished. The thickness is 4 mms.’ Sometimes they ask me: ‘Why your bid is so high?’ I tell them that the others use glass made in China, that it will spoil very fast.”* Other workers offer the clients an option to lower the price by using cheaper material, in order to convince them to select their bid.

As given in the guiding video prepared by the platform, the offering of work guarantee is an important aspect of marketing for the workers. Murat, a painter, told me that when he bids for a painting job of an apartment, he calls the client and offers to paint only one room initially without any pre-payment, and if the client is satisfied

with his job, he can continue to paint the rest of the apartment. That's a common practice especially among painters, to offering the client to do the job without a pre-payment, and only to charge the fee if the client is satisfied with the final work. Such efforts to secure the job in the bidding model naturally involves marketing on the price as well. Hasan, a painter, makes a bid on the market price and calls the client afterwards to tell that if the client selects him, he can do the job for a lower than the bid fee after having a scouting visit.

At the stage where client has to select between the bids, communication becomes an important skill. Cemal, a plumber, appreciates the platform for giving the worker the opportunity to get into contact with the clients. For him, after that, it is up to the worker to get the job: *"You speak with the client one-on-one. It is up to you to secure the client. It depends on your capacity to convince the client. You need to make the client believe that you can do the job well to secure the client."* Özgür, an electrician, agree with this argument and believes that other aspects of marketing are not important as long as you know how to communicate: *"I don't write detailed offers or messages to the clients. Why? Because they don't even read those. You can write there whatever you want. You can say you are the best in the world in this job. It comes down to how you talk with the client. What the client wants? How can you respond to that? As I have been in service job for years, I understand what clients want from the way that they speak. So, I have the capacity to convince them."*

Such different approaches to marketing point out the fact that workers appeal to their different skills. Some put an emphasis on their soft skills by convincing the client in the way that they communicate. Others offer job guarantees, emphasizing their professional skills. In both cases, workers have to make an effort to convince the client to select their bid in the competitive bidding model. Such a model empowers the client by presenting different options and creating a competition among workers. In such competition, negotiations start even before the bidding phase, with the knowledge of the existence of competing bids. Workers find themselves in a position to convince the clients to secure the job. This position of weakness of the worker, created through the

competitive bidding model, has considerable effects on the negotiating power of both parties in the subsequent phases of the work process. In the preceding sections, I will detail how other platform mechanisms such as reputation system, complaint mechanism and information asymmetries combine with the competitive bidding model to strengthen client leverage and control over all various aspects of the work.

6.2.2 “I Do Everything to Please”: Client Satisfaction as Paramount Principle

In Armut, satisfying the client at all costs is the main principle. This principle is not only enforced to workers as a result of the competitive system detailed in the previous section. It is also ensured through the power asymmetry devised in the platform by mechanisms enhancing client power over the worker. Moreover, platform confirms the priority it attached to client satisfaction in the videos they prepared for the workers. In one video, where a successful worker in the platform is presented as a role model for workers explains his approach to satisfy his clients: *“When I serve our clients, they are my princes. I got the feeling of serving my children, not my client, because my success here becomes an investment to my future and my children.”* In other platform videos, an Armut employee recommends workers to: *“Ensure client satisfaction”* and *“Use a constructive and client satisfaction-oriented communication language.”*

For workers, this principle infused below by the platform is fully embraced. Several workers expressed how client satisfaction is important for them, and that they make considerable efforts to secure it. While many workers accepts that the goal of getting higher ratings and comments, or the fear from the possibility of having a complaint by the client, some legitimizes their efforts to satisfy clients at all costs by moral grounds. For Halit, a plumber, satisfying the client is related to deserving the money: *“If the client didn’t like the final work, I do it again as the client wants. Client satisfaction is important. Let alone the comments. I don’t do the job for comments. I have to do justice to the money I receive.”* Halit had over 100 positive comments in his profile. When I

asked him, what clients consider when they gave those positive comments, he admits he behaves very kindly when he contacts the clients, and that communication and manners are very effective in satisfying the clients.

The role of ratings and comments are very clearly effective in workers' efforts to satisfy clients. For Emrah, a plumber, the expectation of a positive comments is very important, even though it doesn't always realize, as clients may not write comments, or write a negative comment, despite all his efforts: *"You really do a good work and get an undeserved comment, or client may not explain the good work you do in detail in the comment. You do everything you can to please them. As long as not to receive a negative comment. Please be sure, the job that I do, I don't do it for kicks. I get into dialogue with the clients. I tell them: 'Tell me if you want anything, anything extra. Let's separate in good terms here.' I tell them this. There were many times I did work on extra without pay like this. I do everything to please them. But sometimes let's say in 10% of time, you may encounter such people."*

These efforts to ensure the satisfaction of clients for ratings and comments are a considerable source of motivation for the workers. I showed in the previous section, how strongly the feeling of success is related to high ratings and good comments for them. When their efforts to satisfy the clients fail, just like it happened Emrah as given above, workers react in different ways. Some workers contact the platform to complain about an undeserved or unjust comment, to no avail. Others see such instances a chance to increase their motivation in their work like Cemal, a plumber: *"Negative comments instigates those who think like me towards work. You can persevere to go and do that job and make that client correct that comment. I am determined on these issues. For example, I will go after the interview to that client who made a comment in the morning. I will not charge fee from him."*

The determination to please the client at any cost may result in a very uncommercialized approach from the part of the worker. Many participants told me they undertook jobs without profit, or jobs where they ended up in a financial loss, in order to ensure client satisfaction. I will come to the issue of how the client satisfaction

resulting from the platform mechanisms ensuring client control end up effecting the price and work negotiations. For the moment, I would like to emphasize how workers go great lengths to please the clients by offering free work, or by helping the client in one way or another without remuneration. Sarper, an electrician, mentioned how he provides for the client, as much he provides for himself: *“For example I went to a job this morning. I went and checked; the automatic door operator was blown. I told them: ‘If you buy the spare part yourself, you can buy it cheaper than buying from me.’ The guy liked this and told me he would get it himself. I showed him how to connect it. I told him to take a video while I was showing him in case he forgets how to do it. I told him: ‘Don’t pay for labour cost to connect it, it would be waste of your money.’ I mean I think about the client as much as I think about myself.”*

For many workers, such actions to offer cheap or no-cost solutions for the client is an essential way to ensure client satisfaction. However, what most participants agree on is that the way of communication, in terms of behaving kind, friendly and understanding is the easiest way to get high rankings, good comments and avoid client complaints to platform. In one way, self-control of the worker on his behaviour is connected to the fact that he does the job in the client’s private space. Workers told me how they behave very carefully in client’s apartments, as they are afraid to face such issues as being held responsible for a lost valuable object, or they may be accused of improper behaviour. In another way, apart from being very careful, they must behave very kind and polite, to secure the client’s satisfaction and consequently get a good rating and a positive comment.

The need for the worker to behave carefully at the client’s apartment has been escalated in the COVID-19 pandemic. Workers had to work under extreme measures, such working without touching anything in the apartment, including the source of repair that they were called for, or having to change clothes in every apartment they go to, or working with 3 masks on under the sun during very hot weather. Due to such measures, the working time for all kinds of work extended considerably, resulting in their incomes to drop. This was especially difficult for them, as the availability of work

already decreased in pandemic, due to clients delaying all kinds of service jobs in that period preferring to isolate.

Workers' self-control over their behaviours under the paramount principle of client satisfaction can reach considerable heights. This is due to the fact that how clients rate and comment on workers or how they place complaints over them can be arbitrary, without the worker having any say. Halit, a window repairer, had to reconsider his behaviour after having a complaint from a client: *"A new window blind job. I removed the old one and installed a new one. I didn't do any repairs. We controlled it together with the client by making it successfully work 4-5 times and I left there. A week later she called me and told me that it doesn't work. I told her 'I can't come right away, give me some time. I can come in a week.' She told me: 'You people always do like this. You will come' I responded her sarcastically: 'Ok, done.', 'How can I come right away?' She told me 'How can you use such wording to a client?' and made a complaint to Armut about me."*

Due to such cases of complaint or low rating and negative comment, workers must behave in a strictly controlled manner when communicating with clients. Some told me that they wait for the client to establish the way of communication. If the client communicates in a very official way, they respond officially. Or if the client communicates in a friendly way, they respond friendly as well. Even if they face impolite behaviour from the client, they must respond politely. For Refik, a plumber, this kind of self-control is key to succeed in platform: *"If you break someone's heart, you go down 1-0. You must be smiling to the man. You must be smiling even if he curses you. This is the way in our work. There is nothing you can do. Maybe the man couldn't get his wage. You can't always think about yourself. You must sympathize with others."* As in the case of Refik, workers try to keep their good behaviour in the face of clients in any situation. It is common among them to refer to moral justifications for such strict self-control. Some mention the importance of sympathizing with others as Refik, others claim the importance of respect to women or to elderly to explain their controlled behaviour in situations where they feel they were disrespected by clients.

Apart from the principle of client satisfaction, platform mechanisms such as rating and comment system, client complaint mechanism and information asymmetries have a role in the process where the worker and the client engage in the continuous negotiations over the work to be done as well as over the price and profit. In the following section, I will describe how strict client control is revealed on the negotiations over the details of the initial work, as well as over the work undertaken extra.

6.2.3 Negotiating Labour: Worker Skill Against Client Power

The negotiations on work between the clients and the workers are affected by several factors. Information asymmetry is an important factor, as the clients have power to know the work to be done and describe it as they wish. Another important factor is skill. After a worker acquires knowledge on the work by his or her own experience, the skill level of the worker can be a leverage during the negotiations. Finally, the existence of a reputation system and a complaint mechanism favours the client in the process of deciding on work details. These factors can be important in terms of all aspects of the work to be done. It may be related to the size of the work, where client may decide to undertake a larger or smaller work in the end. It can also be effective about the quality of the materials to be used, or the duration of the work, in terms of hours needed to finish it, as well as in terms of the deadline of delivery of the work. It may be effective on doing the work in one way or another, or in terms of how the final work would look aesthetically including the cleanliness of the work as well of the working environment. Moreover, extra work which has no relation to the initially agreed work come into the picture often and be part of the negotiation process.

When I look at how the information asymmetries effect negotiations on work, I see that the effect depends on differences on the reservation and bidding models in Armut. In the reservation model, clients have larger power, as they not only set the content of

the work, but also the duration as well, consequently determining the fee of the work. This has a considerable effect on the worker, as for example they show up at work for 4 hours of reservation, only to see that the content of the work requires a much longer duration. Ayşe, a cleaner, experiences such situations often and believes it is a strategy employed by the clients to have large amount of work for a cheap price: *“Clients force me to do 3.5 or 4 hours work in 3 hours reservation. They force you. They mean that you are obliged to do it. They lower your points; they lower your comments.”* Feeling forced to work extra time is common among cleaners. For Fatma the clients are strict about this: *“The houseowner notifies that [the work expectations] to you there. That he or she is expecting such and such services, even if they state those services in the request or not. They tell you ‘This is what I expect. This is what I want. You can’t leave without finishing this.’”*

In fact, such extra unpaid work is against the platform rules. According to several workers, platform calls them and asked them to finish the work and leave, when the duration of their reservation is finished. However, under such strict control of clients enabled by the platform, workers are not empowered enough to leave the work without meeting client demands in such situations. For Fatma, platform must communicate such rules to clients, not to workers: *“Clients tell you: ‘Maybe Armut told you to do so, but this is the work to be done. This is my expectation.’ Now you are caught in the middle. Armut is the one who must clarify this and come up with a solution with the clients.”* Instead of communicating rules of the service to the clients, platform creates a grey area, where clients may leverage their stronger positions in the platform, arising from information asymmetry, or reputation and complaint mechanisms, to compel workers to undertake unpaid work exceeding the pre-agreed content, duration, and terms.

Such occurrences of unpaid work are present in the bidding model as well. Due to the differences of the working of the bidding model, the process unfolds differently compared to the reservation model. In the bidding model, clients usually describe the work lesser than it is too. However, in the bidding model, the price is not set by the

platform, and the payment is not made prior to the work. The worker and the client have larger room for negotiation once worker gets first-hand information on the work to be done. However, in such cases, clients often ask for the fee initially bid by the worker, based on details given by the clients in the request. If the worker tries to increase the price, after seeing that the work is larger or different than what was initially described, clients usually negotiate to make the worker do the job for the bid price. I will focus in detail about the price negotiations in the next section. For the sake of negotiations on the work in the bidding model, the issue of free extra work comes to the fore.

When a worker in the bidding model undertakes a pre-agreed job in the residence of the client, clients often ask them to do different works that they need for free. Such work may involve simple tasks such as installing a lamp to the ceiling, drive a nail to the wall, or a task more related to the skill of the worker, such as checking a leaking tap for the plumber, checking the grounding of the sockets for the electrician, or cooking food for the patient nurse. Doing such work without asking for a fee is the most effective strategy to collect good ratings and comments for the workers. Sarper, an electrician, explains how he acts when he faces such demands: *“You must satisfy the client to get good ratings and comments. You must do as he asks perfectly. You must do if he has an extra work, and you have to not ask for a fee.”*

Sometimes such extra work involves going back to the client’s residence. Ümit, a painter, told me how after he finished painting the apartment for a client, the client asked him to come back to do some more painting, as some parts of the paint got damaged when he moved his furniture in. In such a case, he repaired the paint in those damaged parts for free. Sometimes such work may involve work that has nothing to do with his expertise: *“For example the man says, the cabinet door is broken, or there is a leak in my water installation, or screws of my closed have fallen. And I don’t receive a fee for it. I say: ‘There is no need. I don’t want.’”* While the expectation of a good rating or a comment is effective in undertaking such work for fee from the part of worker, some justify such work with personal or moral reasons, as they don’t feel

comfortable to be in a situation of doing free work in the expectation of a rating. Several workers told me they consider their communication with the client when they decide to ask for a fee or not for such extra work. Muhammet, an electrician, tells me he does such work because he can: *“I don’t ask for an additional fee. Because I am already there. It won’t be appropriate to ask for a fee. Because it is a work that I can do. So what? If I tighten a screw or two? They have two simple chandeliers to hang. I won’t have it on my hands.”*

As some workers justify doing such work for free by moral reasons, many admit openly they do it to secure a rating or a comment and are complaining from the levels such demands reach to. Mert, a plumber, had enough of such client requests: *“Unfortunately I am having demands for extra work. I do them as much as I can. For example, I had a client. I went there for a work of 1 hour and I left hardly in 3 hours. Do this, do that. I told the client in the end: ‘Let me go. Let me free.’ There can be many things outside of the initial work. Some pay for extra, some don’t. Generally, I can’t ask for extra money. It is very rare that I ask for it.”* As clients are given a considerably higher power in the platform, client satisfaction becomes paramount, and workers usually must comply with such demands and undertake unpaid work if they want to succeed in the platform. In fact, every gig that they go kick starts a new round of negotiation between them and the clients, on which size of work to do, how to undertake the work or if asking for a fee for extras. It is a very rare occasion that they end up doing the work which was initially advertised in the service request. In such processes of negotiation, clients hold most of the leverage, and consequently, usually end up coming out on top.

One factor that workers use in their benefit during those negotiations is their skill level. When the work to be undertaken involves none or little skills, the workers find themselves in an even weaker position. This is the case for cleaners who are under much stricter control compared to workers with some degree of skill such as painters or plumbers. As the cleaning work doesn’t require a high level of knowledge, and as having practice of cleaning is enough to be qualified for the job, they can’t claim to

have an expertise and use such knowledge in their benefit against the client. One experience that Fatma had, gives an idea on what the degree of client control may be exerted over the working process: *“Clients may have different requests. The expectations can be high. For example, one client gave me a print-out. A list of everything that she expects to be done for each room in the apartment. She told me: ‘When you finish a room, you will read the list. You will put a sign next to all tasks that you did. This way you will see if you have a missing task or not.’”*

Such a strict control over work is not the case for workers with skills such as painters, plumbers or electricians. Even though clients may try to intervene how they do the work, they can leverage their knowledge and experience and resist such attempts to control the process of work. In their cases, clients are mostly interested on how the final work looks. Cemal, a plumber, uses his knowledge of the job effectively when dealing with the client interventions: *“There are many clients who try to intervene in the work. For example, if I am going to 10 houses, 4 of the owners try to intervene. But I am finding a way to deal with them. They kind of act like they know all the answers. But I am answering them with knowledge, or by showing them how the work is done. I suppress them this way.”* However, when it comes to negotiate on demands of free extra work, or on the price, such leverage of skill is not enough to overcome client power in the platform. In the next section, I will detail the processes of negotiation on price and worker profit.

6.2.4 On Price and Profit: Working for a Reputation

Negotiations between the worker and the client on price and profit are processes dominantly experienced by workers in the bidding model. In the reservation model, as given in the preceding section, the monetary exchange is already completed through the platform when two parties meet in the workplace which is the client’s home. In such case, the subject of negotiations is limited with the duration and contents of the

work, including the extra work demands, as given in the preceding section. In some cases, clients may offer fee for an extended or extra work in the reservation model. Despite factors such as the worker's communication with the client or the effort that the workers put in the work may be effective in the decision of the client to offer an extra fee, such cases doesn't constitute a negotiation process in a strict definition as it is bounded to client's one-sided decision.

For workers in the bidding model, price and profit are essential parts of the negotiations along with what the work entails. These two factors are interlinked in the process, where a set fee may be negotiated in terms of the work to be undertaken for example through the larger or extra work demands or offers, or a set work may be negotiated in terms of its price. Along with the platform enabled factors such as reputation system, client complaint mechanism as well as information asymmetries given in the preceding section, an important factor in price and profit negotiations is the cost and time of the worker. This is displayed evidently in the cases where the worker undertakes a scouting visit to the client's house. Such cases are prevalent in the bidding model where services such as painting as well as electrical, plumbing or window repairs are undertaken. In such kinds of work, it is important for the worker to see the work before agreeing with the client, as the information given in the client's request may be misleading as a negotiating strategy of the client, or maybe simply incomplete due to the technicalities of the work.

In those cases, undertaking a scouting visit to the client's house presents not only an opportunity for the worker to have a better estimate of the costs, but also a chance to convince the client to agree to work by using several strategies. However, when such a visit occurs, the worker is already in a disadvantage when negotiating with the client. Undertaking a scouting visit is already a cost for the worker, not only due to the opportunity cost of another work, but also in terms of paying for the transportation cost, not the mention the bidding fee that the worker already paid to the platform. Ümit, a painter, feels like he must agree with the client at whatever cost at that point: *"If you lose that job, you lose on [time to undertake] another job too, you fall out of work. You*

bought your material; you took your car and went there. So, you can't come back empty handed. When you can't come back, you are forced to take that job. You must do it."

Clients leverage such advantages in order to lower the prices. There is a dominant belief among workers that only clients who are looking for cheap work use the platform. In such situation, even though their profits drop, workers aim at building their reputation and forming a client network and hope that the clients they please will call them directly in for their future needs without using the platform. This is the best benefit of Armut for Refik, a plumber, who offers free work to clients in exchange for comments: *"The best side of Armut is that if I do my job well, clients write comments accordingly. I don't ask for a fee. I tell them: 'Thank you, give me your blessing.'"* Musa, a window repairer, follows the same strategy in cases where the work is small in its scope: *"I go to take a measurement. Sometimes the work is worth 100 Liras. Or it may be worth 70 Liras. Something small. I do it quickly. They ask me: 'How much should I pay?' I tell them: 'No need to pay. It's not important.' I go up 2-0 at that point. Then I tell the client: 'Just write me a comment, it would be enough.'"*

The goal to better reputation in the platform is especially important for newcomers. Workers who joined recently the platform have less leverage against the clients, as they are desperate in their need to have ratings and comments for a better chance to succeed in future bids. Clients are aware of the power of reputation in such situations. Ahmet, a painter, told me how they negotiated with a client, which ended up badly for him: *"I placed a bid of 900 Liras. Then the client communicated with me. She asked me to lower the price. I told her that I will do whatever I can, and we agreed for 500 Liras. After the work is done, she made the payment late and sent me only 400 Liras. She was supposed to make a comment, she didn't do it neither. I told her that the money is not important, just write the comment."*

As in the case of Ahmet, the expectation of a rating and comment plays an important role in workers' behaviour. This is a direct result of the one-way reputation system designed by the platform, which enables arbitrary rating and comment behaviour of the client. The fact that the worker has no say over the reputation system even in cases of

unjust rating and commenting by the client, considerably weakens the worker during the phases of negotiation and renegotiation over price or over the details and content of the work. Apart from the reputation system, the fear of a client complaint is effective over worker behaviour, as workers know that the platform will side with the client in such cases and their profile may be frozen or closed as a result.

Since the bidding model creates a competition where workers bid and market themselves to be selected by the client, the weak position of the worker vis-à-vis the client becomes more evident. In such a competitive process, client satisfaction becomes the main goal to be reached at all costs. When the clients use their advantage of information in their favour, benefiting from the information asymmetries designed by the platform, they can enforce their own conditions over the workers, including the price, work details and extra work that they wish to be accomplished. Workers, in such one-sided negotiations, try to leverage their knowledge and expertise on the work. They try to direct clients and move the terms in their favour by appealing to the technicalities of the job. In the case of cleaners, where the job doesn't involve technical skills, they are submitted to total control of the clients.

By setting up such mechanisms to empower clients and disempower workers in turn, platform make it possible for clients to dominate workers and impose their own terms in negotiations. Despite such dominance of clients, workers don't feel like they are controlled by clients. This is due to the fact that the platform gives them autonomy to take or reject any gig. However, the rules of the platform are designed in such a way that the success of the worker is dependent in the level of satisfaction of the client as well as on the level of submission of the worker to the client. Another factor in the absence of the feeling of control in the workers is that the client control, despite reaching to despotic levels, is temporary. Not all clients force their will onto the workers despite having the means and opportunity to do so thanks to the platform. And when workers face clients who use opportunities that platform grants them to impose strict control on them, they go along with the client and comfort themselves with the fact that it is a temporary gig.

6.2.5 Defining Client and Worker Roles

In the end of the first section of this chapter, I defined the platform's role in client-worker relations as "Facilitator of Client Supremacy". Throughout this section I showed how mechanisms employed by the platform affect the practicalities of worker-client relations in terms of various aspects of negotiations undertaken between those two parties. Now I will focus on how workers and clients undertake roles under this facilitating role of the platform. Looking at the role of clients in their relations with workers, the following features come to the fore:

- 1- Temporary and ever-shifting feature of the client power over the worker.
- 2- Arbitrary and personal feature of the client power referring to the fact that client satisfaction is not connected to pre-set conditions.
- 3- The inclination of client power to use and exploit rules which are set in its favour by the platform.

In line with these features, I define client role in the platform as "Arbitrary Rule-Exploiter". In focusing on the arbitrary nature of client power, I point out to the fact that it is both person-dependent and unpredictable. It may even change depending on the mood of the client or depending on the time and day of interaction between the client and the worker, as shown by narrated worker experiences in this chapter. In emphasizing the rule exploiting feature of client role, I want to point out to the fact that client power takes its origin from the rules of the platform. Moreover, this feature puts emphasis on the general inclination of the clients to use the power given to them by the platform rules in their favour. This may reveal in the form of using the one-way reputation and complaint mechanisms to ensure the finalization of negotiations in their favour. This may also reveal in bad faith usage of the authority, as I showed how the

information asymmetry on work details can result in clients showing the work lesser than it is to gain an advantage in the terms of the work.

When it comes to the role of the worker in the platform encompassing their relations with the platform as well as with the clients, the following features emerge:

- 1- Having agency, albeit considerable limitations by platform structure
- 2- Acting under the controlling effect of the closed competition designed by the platform, depending on the platform working model.
- 3- Being in a considerably weaker position vis-à-vis the client in each gig, resulting in negotiating the terms of work from a position of weakness
- 4- Being/Not being able to use the leverage of skill as an empowering factor against the client, depending on the work they undertake.

In line with these features, I define the worker role in the platform as “Subordinated Negotiator”. The emphasis on the negotiating feature of the worker role implies worker agency on some features of the work process, such as in the decisions to work or not, or to work when and where. In the case of workers under the bidding model, such an emphasis also points the leverage of the worker, as in the case of the worker knowledge and skill level, that they use in their negotiations with clients. In turn, the emphasis on the subordinated feature of the worker role implies that the agency of the worker is strictly limited in conforming to the rules of competition for the workers in the bidding model, which indirectly control worker behaviour to comply with the idea of a rational and strategic actor. The emphasis on the subordinated position of the worker is also relevant for the worker-client relations, and it covers both working models in this case. The heavily unequal distribution of power favouring clients in multiple platform mechanisms results in the subordinated position of the worker vis-a-vis the client.

As there is no bidding system in the reservation model, platform control through competition is not the case for these workers. This doesn't result however in the diminished power of clients, as the one-way reputation system still has importance both

as an appreciation factor and as a platform control mechanism for workers in the reservation model, even in the absence of competitive bidding. In fact, under the reservation model, the client control is stricter, closer to some form of despotic control, as this working model is used in low or non-skilled work such as cleaning service, and the workers can't leverage knowledge and skill against dominant clients. Due to the fact that the fee is fixed, and the monetary transaction is undertaken through the platform, the client-worker negotiations is limited, only to cover the labour-related issues such as work content, details and unpaid extra work. Despite such factors, I am convinced that the role of subordinated negotiator is relevant for the reservation model as well, as workers engage in negotiations with the clients in the above-mentioned aspects of the work, in exchange for ratings and comments, despite being in a weaker position compared to the workers in the bidding model. After detailing the negotiation processes throughout this section along with defining the roles of clients and workers in the platform, in the next section I will describe the effect of such worker roles in the platform work on the agency and selves of the worker.

6.3 NEGOTIATING AGENCY AND SELVES

The result of the negotiations occurred between workers and clients have considerable effect on the agency of the worker and consequently on worker identities. Facing clients in such a powerful position in the labour process and having to ensure client satisfaction at all costs, workers have to give up from their authority on various aspects of their work. When they conceive from their authority on work details and processes, as described in the preceding section, worker agency is limited, with regards to their professional identities. This results in the prevalence of job proficiency instead of professionalism, where the satisfaction of the client becomes the main objective and worker control over the work process is considerably diminished, with the knowledge, skill and expertise taking a place of lesser importance. Despite this disempowered

position of the worker, the fact that such weak position doesn't occur in the benefit of and doesn't take the shape of one strong boss, has an effect of strengthening the sense of agency for the worker.

The result of taking the role of subordinated negotiator from a weaker position in terms of price and profit on the other hand, has significant consequences on worker identity. While entrepreneurial self is dominant in the presence of a strong competition, the practical manifestations of entrepreneurial activities are far from being realized. Under strict control of the client on fees and profits, workers rarely embark on growing their work or founding a business. In such a case, entrepreneurial self acts as only as a measure of control in high competition, rather than resulting on realizing entrepreneurial dreams. On the other hand, such entrepreneurial identity and individualization results in the decline of solidarity among workers, where competitors are seen negatively. Under such competitive and individualized identities, the prospects for organization and collective resistance becomes slim. I will detail how worker agency is experienced under the disempowered negotiation status of the worker in the next section. In the following sections, I will underline how this experienced agency has implication on the worker selves, along with the effects of competitive mechanisms, as well as the resulting prospects for worker solidarity and organization.

6.3.1 Worker Agency and Relation to the Work Process

I described in the first section of the Results Chapter, how the autonomy to accept or reject work any time, based on details such as the workload, the duration of the work, contents of the work, as well as the location of the work is effective in the feeling of agency for the workers. Later in the second section of the chapter, I showed how client control can reach very strict levels, under the system set up by the platform where workers are considerably disempowered in their negotiations with the client. Despite their disempowered position, the fact that workers can negotiate with the clients on the

terms of the work is important in showing the presence of worker agency in such a process. While the agency of the worker is limited due to how platform sets up the work process in heavy advantage of the client, the workers appreciate the lack of a strict boss as a person in the platform.

The lack of a boss, incarnating in a single person, is the reason why workers have a sense of agency in taking work from the platform. This feeling of the lack of a boss is not limited to how they have the possibility to choose from different service requests. Workers have a sense of agency for after taking a work, and during the negotiation process with the client despite having to accept client demands in most cases. Two factors are important in such a sense of agency. First, as I described above, workers have the basic freedom to negotiate with the client, which is based on the autonomy to reject the terms dictated by the client. Such a decision by the worker will have several negative consequences, such as losing out on the bidding fee or other expenses, or having a bad rating and comment, or a complaint by the client. Despite these costs, the autonomy to say no to the client supports the sense of agency for the worker. Alpay, a window worker, told me how he rejected a work based on his feelings about the client: *“I don’t feel under the control of the client. For example. I gave one client a bid, we agreed on all terms. I didn’t do the job because of our last communication. She didn’t give me trust. She said: ‘I will pay half of the fee in the middle of the work and half in the end.’ I said: ‘No, thank you.’ So, there were instances where I rejected the client.”*

While how the worker-client relations are set up in the platform allows the workers like Alpay to reject a client, such decisions may come with a cost. This is similar to how competition is set up by the platform, where worker can decide on how and on which requests to bid, but it is impossible to win the bids and have success in the platform unless the worker acts as a rational actor choosing to be strategic in the bidding process. Similarly, despite the fact that the option to reject client demands is theoretically possible for the worker; it is impossible to practically build up a good reputation, avoid client complaints and make a profit by undertaking as many jobs as possible, unless workers comply with any and every client demand. Naturally, when

workers have such a limited negotiation power against the clients, the result of such one-sided negotiations on how to undertake the job comes out in the favour of the clients.

Therefore, for many workers, who can't afford to reject client terms, or who are in need to take the jobs for monetary needs, the client control is felt strongly, and the sense of agency is dependent on client preferences. For such cases, the fact that the work is undertaken as gigs and such client control is experienced temporarily only from one gig to another, is an important factor in the fact that the workers doesn't see clients as despotic bosses significantly limiting their autonomy. Sarper, an electrician, told me that he is fine to submitting to client control, despite the fact that he strongly dislikes such control, knowing that it is temporary: *"It is not a big problem when you face such clients. In the end it is 3-5 minutes of work. You do it. You tell: 'God damn you' from within. You finish the job and leave."*

Another important factor in limiting the sense of autonomy is the lack of worker voice vis-à-vis the platform and the mechanisms that platform employs to strengthen client position. This is a factor which is related how worker autonomy is realized in relations to the client, as platform mechanisms define the nature of the relationship between workers and clients. The lack of voice is crucial especially with regards to the reputation system and complaint mechanism. When a worker faced with an unjust rating, comment or complaint, platform doesn't consider worker's position and takes the client position as just and correct in every case. As given in the previous section on negotiations, this lack of voice is an important factor in the dominant client position. In turn, such lack of voice is effective on the limited agency of the worker. Cemal, a plumber, gives an example where he witnessed how worker and client voices are received differently in the platform: *"I wrote to the customer service of the platform about an unjust comment about a job that I didn't do. They never get back to you. They just write you: 'we transferred the request to the relative department.' I went back to the client who placed that comment. I told the client: 'you wrote such comment about me, but I wasn't the one doing the job.' The client sent an email to the platform while*

I was there. The customer service called the client back in 5 minutes. There is an injustice here. Worker pays a fee to Armut, the client doesn't. But Armut doesn't back the worker as much as it backs the client."

The lack of voice in platform is crucial in how workers approach the platform. As I mentioned above, workers have a sense of agency against the clients, despite their disempowered position, due to the fact that client control is temporary and independent of a sole authority of one person or organization. With regards to voice in the platform however, workers strongly feel the lack of agency. The lack of voice has an effect of the feeling of despair for things to change. Due to this lack of voice, workers see platform work as temporary. There is a consensus among participants that there is no future in platform work, as conditions of the work, such as arbitrary client ratings, comments and complaints to the platform cannot be changed. Therefore, many workers have the goal of building a network of clients who trust them from the jobs they do in the platform, and quit taking platform work, as in such network and reference jobs the arbitrary reputation system and complaint mechanism is absent.

The goal of workers to leave platform work after acquiring a network of clients provides for insight onto how platform job and network job differ for them. Most importantly for workers, the fees are better in network job, due to the lack of competition. Musa, a window repairer, told me how he strategizes by lowering his price in the platform job in the expectation of a better pay in a future network job: *"Network job is better for me. Because the client gives me reference. I work for a lower fee in order to win the client. In the future when the client has a need, he calls me. What happens next is, I charge a little higher for another job. I don't make much profit on the first job. I make more on the second."*

Apart from the fees, the trust factor comes into play in network job compared to the platform. As workers undertook their job successfully and satisfied the clients in their first contact, once a client is in their network, the trust between the worker and the client is established strongly. For many workers, this form of trust is considerably higher than the trust established in the platform through the reputation system. The trust

factor plays a significant role in the negotiations. Having satisfied the client once through the platform, workers can negotiate their terms from a stronger position. The stronger position of the worker in network job is also related to the lack of platform mechanisms disempowering workers such as the reputation system and information asymmetry. Murat, a painter, described how the negotiations go in a less commercialized way in network job compared to the platform job: *“If that person trusts me, I present him my offer on the market level. Clients tell me: ‘Master, you are a manual labourer, you are not a product. I can’t negotiate on your fee.’”*

This process of less intensive negotiations results in a higher control of the worker over the work process. The lack of platform mechanisms in network job, and the established trust arising from experience, results in the stronger position of the workers vis-a-vis the client. As a result of the empowerment of the worker in negotiations, a more balanced relationship between the worker and the client is established. This is the case even for the cleaners under the reservation model, where the lack of worker skill may result in despotic levels of client control in platform job. Fatma, a cleaner, described how she feels more in control of the work in network job compared to platform job: *“There is a difference in the jobs I do through references and jobs that I go first time through Armut. In Armut, the person you will face is a surprise. You don’t know what to expect. In reference job that you go regularly, you know their expectations. You can tell the client: ‘Let’s not try to fit this task to this week. Let’s do it next week.’ For example, you can clean the kitchen in detail this week, and you can clean the living room in detail the week after.”*

The lower control of the worker on the labour process has serious implications for workers. The submission of the worker to client authority combined with the lack of worker voice in the platform, has considerable influence on the sense of agency of workers. This is most evident in the professionalism levels of the workers. Professionalism requires a certain level of autonomy in conducting the work. A professional worker approaches the work in line with pre-set processes and standards arising from the nature of the work. Such processes are followed according to the

requirements of the job. However, in Armut, workers must concede from following professional requirements in order to please the clients. The platform puts workers in a contradictory situation in this sense. On one hand, as evident in the platform videos prepared as a guidance for the workers, platform asks the workers to leave a “professional impression” on the clients. On the other hand, as given in the preceding section, the satisfaction of the client is recommended and ensured through platform mechanisms as the paramount principle for the worker.

The dilemma becomes evident when the clients demand for a work which is contradictory to the professional standards. Sarper, an electrician, described an instance where he had to quit the work without finishing: *“Sometimes I come across people who doesn’t know the job. But because they pay you, they think they can use you to do anything. They come to me and try to teach me my profession: ‘Connect this cable from here. Do that in this way’. I ask them: ‘Do you know this job?’ If you know it, why do you need me? I gather my stuff and leave the job there. I won’t consider money.”* Not all workers have the luxury to leave the job and leave, as they don’t want to risk having a bad rating and comment or facing a complaint, let alone make a loss of the bidding fee that they already paid to the platform. Therefore, professional standards are in erosion in the platform. Instead of professional hard skills, job proficiency-related soft skills come to the fore, defined as a general knowledge about the work, combined with skills to undertake any work quickly and pleasantly, and be available and accommodating to client needs to ensure their satisfaction (Pongratz, 2018). Such lack of a sense of agency on the work processes as well as against the client empowered by the platform has considerable effects on how workers see themselves in undertaking platform work and on the worker identities constructed as a result.

6.3.2 Negotiating Selves: Proficient and Entrepreneurial Identities

Due to an erosion of the worker sense of agency, and the consequent weakening of the professional standards in the platform, many workers, even those who has occupational education or training certificates, doesn't see themselves as experts. Apart from the lack of the sense of agency, the fact that workers don't have time to develop themselves and follow the new developments in their fields, play a role in this. I showed in the first section of this chapter how time is important in winning the bids and the profit margins are low under competitive bidding model. In the competition created by the platform, workers always must be active in the app, checking the requests and bidding accordingly, or be doing service constantly in order to make ends meet. With the skills and approaches related to job proficiency, such as client satisfaction and constant and fast availability of the worker in line with the service demand, becoming a requirement to succeed in the platform, the professional self is in decline in Armut at the expense of job proficiency.

As seen on how competition set-up in the platform effects the actions of the workers, the platform work needs a certain kind of worker to succeed. Workers who approach their job in a professional way, by doing their work according to set processes and standards in terms of materials or in terms of their market level fees are doomed to lose in the extremely competitive system that platform created. Instead, the bidding system of the platform requests workers who can handle their jobs in a fast way and find a way to lower the fees by lowering their profits or lowering the costs related to the work by giving up on the professional requirements. In that sense, job proficiency, in the sense of undertaking the work in one way or another for a low cost and being constantly available in line with market demands becomes important as professional traits becomes unpopular.

The advent of job proficiency skills in Armut is closely related to entrepreneurial self. When professional self is in decline in the favour of job proficiency, soft skills such as availability, good communication, working fast and in line with client

satisfaction gain importance. Surely, skills in relation to professionalism, such as technical knowledge to undertake the job is still important to please the client. But such skills take a secondary place behind soft skills. When I asked the workers about the factors that clients consider when they give ratings or write comments, larger role of soft skills compared to technical ones becomes evident. Muhammet, an electrician, first told me about being a hard worker as the key to success in platform. When I asked him if everyone who works hard can be successful, he replied: *“The formula to success is being favourable, having good communication and doing the job well. You must be positive when you go to the client. If you are negative, you can’t be successful. When you meet the client, you will pass that positive energy, so that the man will smile and say that ‘this friend is really a positive person’ about you.”*

The role of worker attitude is acknowledged by many workers in having a good reputation and consequently being successful in the platform. This positive attitude includes being accommodating to different client demands, including how to do the job as well. Refik, a plumber, told me how he gives priority to client demands when undertaking his work: *“There are clients who control the work. I ask them how I should do the work and how they envisage the work. I tell them: ‘Yes, sir, how do you want this made?’”* When the work to be undertaken involves a decorative aspect, such as in the window repair job, such client control on the work can be more understandable, as the client preferences become important. However, even in work unrelated to decorative works, which involves technical expertise such as plumbing or electricity repairs, the client preferences are dominant due to how the client control is ensured in the platform. This is in line with a proficient approach to work, where the standards and processes are not defined in line with professional norms, but rather defined by the worker, who is open to interventions from the client in a platform setting.

In this sense, under the job proficiency approach, the worker undertakes self-control in the process of work, in terms of ensuring his own performance. In this form of control, the criteria to evaluate and control the work becomes the satisfaction of the client, rather than professional norms of the job. In this way, it is a part of

entrepreneurial approach, along with self-commercialization and self-rationalization of the worker. Through the self-control of the worker in the work process, the entrepreneurial self at work is part of identity work performed by the workers in Armut. Along with self-control, other dimensions of entrepreneurial self at work, such practices of self-commercialization and self-rationalization (Pongratz & Voß, 2003) are dominant in platform work as well. As I discussed in the first section of this chapter, the competition built by the platform requires the worker to market and promote his work to convince the clients to take the bid. Such marketing activities demonstrate the ways the workers undertake self-commercialization in the platform.

On the other hand, strategies needed to succeed in the bidding system, such as considering the level of competition in bids or rationalizing own time and speed in line with competitive demands require self-commercializing approach to work. In line with such a need, platform encourages workers to have entrepreneurial behaviour in the videos they prepared for workers. In one of the videos a successful platform worker mentions employing 7 workers in his workplace. In another, a worker describes how he started as an apprentice and ended up growing his work and founding his own business. Accordingly, majority of the participants have plans or dreams of having their own businesses, mostly in the works that they offer in the platform, or in some cases in different sectors.

The level of fees and profit have direct effect on entrepreneurial plans and behaviour of the workers. With high competition cutting the profits in the platform, several workers gravitated to commercial activities, to be able to offer competitive bids to the clients. Özgür, an electrician who receives a good amount of work from Armut, found the way to lower the costs in storing materials: *“One room of my house is reserved for materials. I always follow the market on the materials. Sometimes you can procure a cable of 14 Liras for 13 Liras. In that case I buy in bulk and store it. After a while price increase further anyway.”* Such commercial thinking on different costs of the work is necessary to succeed in the bids and shows how workers approach their work commercially for this end.

When I asked the participants about their entrepreneurial plans many respond that such plans are far from being realized due to current economic conditions. A reference to economic conditions means that workers simply doesn't make enough profit to grow their work and found their business. This is closely related to how they see themselves. Volkan, a painter who outsources work to others and who tried to found a similar platform to Armut in the past, narrates how he feels like a labourer: *"I see myself as a labourer. The market has been very stagnant in the last 2-3 years. I am just trying salvage the day."* Thinking daily is a very popular way to approach the work among workers. It effects not only how they see themselves but also their dreams. Murat, a painter who told me about how he wanted to have his own business in the future admits that he doesn't have any plans to do so: *"Of course I have the wish to found my own company. But I don't think very big. If I have one step ahead of me now, I think about that step. Because it is imaginary for now. I can't see very far ahead. I don't want to dream about something I can't do."*

Considering how the supremacy of the client satisfaction is effective on the erosion of professional selves and how the platform competition and low profit levels are effective on entrepreneurial selves, it becomes clear that the negotiations that workers are engaging with the clients have considerable effect on how workers construct selves in the platform. When the work is undertaken as the client wants, instead of how the technical and professional norms of the worker dictates, the professional identity of the worker erodes in the favour of job proficiency. The fact that the success in the platform depends on being strategic in bids and marketable against the clients, brings entrepreneurial self to the fore. Therefore, when workers engage in negotiations with the clients about how to do their work and for what compensation, they negotiate their identities as well. Those negotiations are bound to end of in the favour of the client however, and entrepreneurial self becomes only a way of controlling worker behaviour, as workers can't make the profits needed to realize their entrepreneurial dreams. Therefore, the entrepreneurial self in the platform act only as a way to ensure their rationalized and commercialized behaviour in the highly competitive bidding system

in the platform, rather than giving them a real opportunity to be entrepreneurs. Moreover, along with ensuring competitive, rational, strategic, and proficient worker behaviour, entrepreneurial self encouraged by the competitive mechanisms, limits the workers' solidarity prospects, by positioning them as competitors instead of fellow workers.

6.3.3 Competing Individuals: Organizational Prospects and Resistance Practices

When workers compete among them as entrepreneurial selves, their negative stance towards the competition created in the platform reflects to their feelings and beliefs towards their competitors. Many workers are having difficulty believing that their competitors bids fees so low prices compared to market price. Some are trying to explain such differences in fees through the materials that their competitors use. Ümit, a painter, can't find any other explanation for such bid differences: *"I bid 1000 Liras for a request. The second master bids 800, the third bids 700, the fourth bids 600. Who is that master bidding 600 Liras? These are the ones who use bad quality paint. The quality of the paint makes a huge difference in the cost."* For others, their competitors are fine with making very little profit in doing their jobs or are negotiating better. Türker, a plumber, believes both explanations may be credible: *"It depends on the person. Some look at this work blindly, he makes 50-100 Liras, and he believes it is good money. I believe many people are like that. Or, I don't know, maybe he has the gift of the gab, and he can take 1000 Liras instead of 300 for a simple job."*

Beliefs on competitors are predominantly negative among workers. Not only they believe their competitors use bad materials or accept jobs for a very little fee, but they also believe that their competitors are bad at their job. All workers told me that other workers in the platform are doing very bad jobs, based on the stories they heard from the clients. For Özgür, an electrician, the ease of registration in Armut, without the need for mastery is important in the fact that such bad jobs happen in the platform:

“There are absolutely bad masters in the platform. Even my apprentice started to take work from Armut. He couldn’t succeed. He received four ratings. Two one points. One three points and one five points.” Negative beliefs on competitors are not limited to the work they do or how they bid. Some workers believe their competitors are messing up with the reputation system by opening fake client account and writing fake positive comments for themselves by paying the bidding fee.

The most polarizing topic among the workers with regards to their competitors is related to being the second bidder. Workers are frustrated from the competition’s downward effect on fees in the platform, so when another worker bids for a request that they already bid, that’s unethical for them. In fact, as I mentioned in the first section of this chapter, being the first bidder is crucial in securing the job. Some workers, however, justifies this rational competitive strategy with moral reasons. Muhammet, an electrician, never bids on a request as second bidder as he believes it to be wrong: *“I don’t bid as second bidder. The man placed a bid. It is his daily bread now. I can’t steal that bread from him. I absolutely can’t. Because it is his. The man placed a bid. He paid a price for it. Why would I steal from his bread? Or why would I pay money from my own pocket for second or third time? The man already stepped in. Maybe he gets it maybe he doesn’t, there is nothing I can do.”* As evident from Muhammet’s account, not bidding as a second bidder is an effective strategy to cut on the bidding fee spent for requests that a worker has a slight chance to win. At the same time, such practice is justified as a moral position to resist the competition that the platform subjects the workers to.

Such instances of negative perspectives on competitors shows how competition in the platform affects worker solidarity. Deployed as individual enterprises to compete with each other to bring down the prices, workers reflect their frustrations against the bidding system to their fellow workers, who are subject to the same competitive principles. With the words of a painter, Buğra: *“Armut plays off masters against each other.”* When a worker’s win becomes another’s loss, the trust is hard to build among

the workers, as evident in their beliefs in the actions of their competitors. Without trust, prospects of bringing change through organizing look slim.

The prevalence of entrepreneurial selves in the platform work not only ensures the competition among the workers but also weakens the working-class identity. Similar to how high-level managers and white-collar workers lost working class consciousness during the development of Fordist and Post-Fordist modes of production, now the individual enterprise approach is becoming dominant in low skilled service work through competitive mechanisms of the platforms. Such continuation and aggravation of the trend of the decomposition of the working class renders organizational prospects even more difficult in platform work. The individualization of the worker in platform is made possible not only through the competition and the entrepreneurial selves, but also it is inherent in the nature of platform work. When I ask the workers if they know any other fellow worker in Armut, many told me they didn't. The belief that they formed on their competitors are based on stories they heard from clients or social environment. Platform never shares the contact information of a worker with another, and the competitive system is designed to keep them isolated. The fact that they are deployed as individual contractors and the lack of a common workplace are other factors supporting the individualizing effect of platform work.

When they feel the need to contact each other, workers must come up with creative ways. Several workers told me that they have come across a fake service request created by a worker registered as a client, where the worker was calling other workers to stop bidding as second bidders. Similarly, Cemal, a plumber described how he tried to use platform to reach out to other workers: *"It would be great if workers can come together. I placed a service request. I opened a client account and placed a request. I wrote there: 'Friends, this is not a service request, don't bid on this and pay a bidding fee. Let's get together and write a petition to Armut. Let's stop working for a week because they let us be crushed. We make them money and they let us be crushed.' Only 3-4 workers wrote back to me. The rest didn't care."*

As in the case of Cemal, there is a despair among the workers towards an effort to organize as workers against the platform. For some, such an effort is impossible as workers don't have communication with each other. When I remind them that communication among workers was possible for other platform workers in Turkey such as in the case of delivery workers, workers mention the lack of trust as the main reason why they believe such prospect is difficult to be realized. Halit, a window repairer, expressed his distrust for fellow workers: *"It would be good if workers can organize. We can thread a type of path for us in consciousness. But it is hard to realize. There are many untrustworthy people in this sector. There are many cunning people. I don't trust no one anymore."* The lack of trust among workers is in line with their perspectives on their competitors; just as they can't be trusted in their work, they can't be trusted in their solidarity as well. Here the negative effect of directly competing with each other in the bidding model is evident in the organizational prospects of the workers.

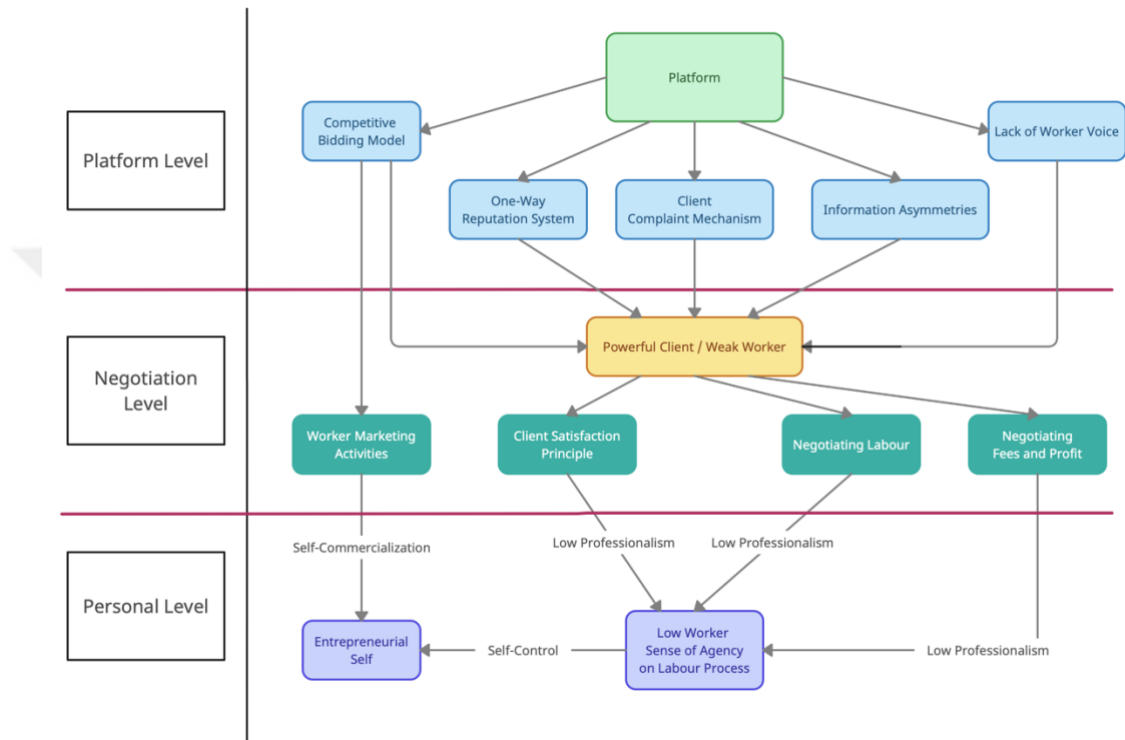
As workers are not hopeful on themselves and on their competitors to organize against the platform, they expect and seek change from external entities. For some workers, platform should give them a space to come together and voice their concerns. Considering how platform disregards individual voices of the workers, such a possibility seems unrealistic. Other workers believe political contacts are necessary for them to make the platform hear their voice. For Özgür, an electrician, someone need to discipline Armut by using the same form of discipline that the Armut submits them to; a competitive market discipline: *"There are many problems in Armut. But truly, I want only this: A strong competitor to Armut. I love Armut, but they need a competitor. There are some apps, but they are not even close to being competitors. Armut need to get themselves together."*

There is no surprise in a competitive entrepreneur having success in the platform, to expect platform change from a competitor instead of a worker organizational effort. Such an approach displays evidently how platform work is successful in eroding worker identity and decomposing the working class in low skilled repair work by

creating competitive, entrepreneurial selves. By ensuring the prevalence of entrepreneurial selves under market discipline in the bidding system, platform thrives to undermine trust among workers and to obstruct the prospect of worker resistance against itself. Considering the added challenge of difficulty of communication among workers as well as the individualizing effect of platform work, the belief among workers for a possibility to organize is very low, resulting in the lack concrete efforts for such a prospect.

Throughout the results chapter, I showed how platform mechanisms effect workers directly as well as indirectly through worker-client negotiations (see Figure 6.2). By using competitive mechanisms, platform not only applies market discipline to workers but also undermines their position in the negotiations with the clients. Other platform mechanisms, such as reputation system, client complaint mechanism, information asymmetries and lack of worker voice, support and ensure the powerful position of the client against the worker in the negotiations (see Figure 6.2). The outcome of worker-client negotiations has considerable effect on worker sense of agency, as workers often have to give up from their terms of work, including monetary terms as well as how to undertake the work. The weakening of worker sense of agency has considerable influence on worker subjectivities resulting in the weakening of professional identity at the expense of job proficiency, and ensures the prevalence of entrepreneurial self, lowering the possibility of worker solidarity and organization. This argument is given in Figure 5, representing my theory visually. After conveying the results of the study in three sections comprised of Platform Control, Worker-Client Negotiations and Negotiating Agency and Selves, in the next chapter, I will discuss these findings in the light of the existing literature on platforms.

Figure 6.2. Conceptual Map of Negotiating Agency and Self in Platform Work



Source: Author's Description

7. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In the results chapter, I defined the double role of the platform in setting up the competition as “Propeller of Competitive Control” and in empowering the clients against the workers as “Facilitator of Client Supremacy”. In the second section of the results chapter, I focused on worker-client negotiations, and I defined the client role in this system as “Arbitrary Rule-Exploiter”, in benefitting from their advantage given in the platform mechanisms to enforce their terms to the workers. In turn, the worker role under the double control of the platform and the client is defined as “Subordinated Negotiator”, in their efforts to impose their terms from a position of disadvantage. In the third section, I showed how such process of negotiation is effective in the sense of agency of the worker, as well as in their identity work. I described how, despite the increased sense of agency arising from the lack of a singular boss embodied in a person, the weakening worker agency over the work results in the decline of professional selves, and in the prevalence of proficient and entrepreneurial selves with the practices of self-control, self-rationalization, and self-commercialization. In this chapter, I will discuss these findings in the light of the existing literature on platforms in terms of studied undertaken in different contexts and platform models, starting from the role of the platform in controlling worker behaviour.

7.1 NETWORK EFFECTS AND ALGORITHMIC MANAGEMENT

The fact that the platform working model is based on the network effects is given in several studies (ILO, 2021b; Langley & Leyshon, 2016). In such a model, platforms strive to bring together a high number of service requesters and service providers. When demand is high on the platform, it attracts the supply and vice-versa and a profitable ecosystem can be created. The goal of creating network effects is the main factor in platforms’ policies to attract a high number of users in the early stages of the platform by spending heavily on advertising and by subsidizing the services to offer

below the market prices with the aim of disrupting the sector, which results in the need of considerable financing of platforms at this stage (Kenney & Zysman, 2018). Considering the policy of Armut to attract clients by offering below the market prices and excessive control over the workers and over terms of the work, it becomes clear that the goal of creating network effects is dominant in platform policies. The workers' high praise of the abundance of work, as well as their goal of building their client networks in the expense of making profits, proves that Armut succeeded in creating network effects by attracting a high number of clients to the platform, and securing the attraction and loyalty of the workers as a result.

However, the findings point out to the general discontent of the workers in Armut, due to the lack of worker voice in the platform, as well as to the below the market prices arising from intense competition. The client-favouring design of platform mechanisms such as reputation system, complaint mechanism and information asymmetries play a crucial role in the discontent of workers. Accordingly, many workers aim at making a healthy client network through platform and quit Armut to continue working in their own network, as labour control is less strict and fees are considerably better in network jobs. While Armut secured the temporary loyalty of workers by offering a large pool of clients, this loyalty is only for a short-term. If a high number of workers opts for "Exit" instead of "Loyalty" in Hirschmann's terms (1970), the network effects will be disrupted due to weak supply of labour. In this sense, the results of the study point out for a need to establish worker-client power balance in platform design if the platform aims at benefitting from network effects

An important discussion in the literature is on the role of platforms, in directly controlling workers through the use of algorithmic management systems by acting on the data gathered from the users in the process (Woodcock, 2021; Wood et al., 2019; Rosenblat & Stark, 2016). For example, a study on food delivery platforms in Australia, employing labour process theory accounts how the data gathered by the platform on user location, speed and user metrics is used as performance evaluations by the platform algorithm to arrange labour supply in line with the labour demand (Veen et

al., 2019). This form of algorithmic management is mostly used in delivery or ride-hailing works where platform has greater control over how the work is undertaken. In the case of Armut, however, as the work is comprised of domestic forms of work, such control over the work processes is transferred to the clients. Surely, as given in the results chapter, the role of reputation system and information asymmetries is crucial in Armut as well. But such mechanisms are deployed as a way to ensure the supremacy of the clients, rather than assert control of the worker directly by the platform.

Such difference between the use of various methods of algorithmic control in different service works shows that the nature of the work is crucial in how the platforms set up worker control mechanisms in different works and contexts. When offering a structured form of service such as delivery or riding, platform assumes direct control of the work by gathering data and acting on the workers through the algorithm. In the case of Armut, such control of the worker is transferred to the client, as in the domestic forms of work, the nature of the service is not pre-determined, but rather formed by finding a balance between worker expertise and client preferences through negotiations. This nature of the domestic forms of work is confirmed by the study conducted by McDonald et al. (2020). In their research of platform workers in the care service, the study finds the use of one-way reputation system, unlike the mutual reputation systems in the delivery or ride-hailing services, to be employed in the control of the workers, similarly to the case of Armut. In such a high emphasis on reputation system to control worker behaviour, workers' need for productive dispositions, such as creation and maintenance of online profiles and acquiring high ratings and comments become crucial, resulting the arbitrary role of the client control, parallel to my findings in this study.

Due to the increased role of client control in domestic work, platform design becomes crucial. There are already challenges against the implementation of decent work standards for domestic workers such as the informality or the challenges in labour inspection (ILO, 2021a). One-way reputation systems like employed by Armut further increases the prevalence of arbitrary forms of client control in platforms offering

domestic work. As reputation system gains importance and as the control duties are transferred from the platform to the clients, an egalitarian design of reputation systems is needed, especially in the context of domestic platform work.

7.2 DISTRIBUTED CONTROL - RETAINED POWER

The diminishing role of direct platform control over workers at the expense of rising client power is well documented in the conceptual study undertaken by Vallas & Schor (2020). In the study, the platform is analysed as a distinct form of organization, differentiating from previous forms of organizations such as hierarchies, markets, and networks, with its characteristic of delegating control among different users in the ecosystem. To name the platform type of organization, the authors use the concept of “Permissive Potantes”, to imply the distinctive feature of the platforms where, “*control is radically distributed, but the power remains centralized*” (Kornberger et al., 2017, as cited in Vallas & Schor, 2020, p. 282). The way Armut organizes the domestic work service fits well within this description. Some form of control is dispersed to the workers, in terms of the autonomy granted them to decide on the jobs they take based on their preferences of work content, time and duration. On the other hand, a significant amount of control is transferred to the clients, as I mentioned above. In this sense, platform’s role as facilitator of client supremacy is well-reflected in the definition of permissive potantes.

As I showed in the results chapter, Armut facilitates client supremacy by employing not just a reputation system and a complaint mechanism, but also strategically designing information asymmetries between clients and workers. The role of information asymmetry in worker control is studied extensively in the literature. Franke & Pulignano’s (2021) study on a food delivery platform in Belgium emphasizes the role of information asymmetry in the commodification processes of relations by the platform in connecting the actors in the system as workers, clients, and restaurants. The

study focuses on the lack of information provided for workers in the workings of the platform in terms of assigning of deliveries as well as on waiting times of deliveries. In this way, platform exerts higher control in matching the demand with the supply, by limiting the information that workers have to make decisions on accept or rejects gigs. In this sense, the nature of the work becomes important how the information asymmetries are designed in the platform. In Armut, the lack of knowledge on clients has also a similar effect, with the workers having little information on clients, which becomes crucial considering the important role of client control in the platform.

Despite this limitation, in Armut, workers have crucial information on the work, such as the work details chosen in the categories that platform provides for the clients when determining work details. However, the fact that such details are often missing or misleading, due to client description of the work is an important factor in limiting the choice of workers. As I discussed above in relation to the lack of direct platform control in Armut with regards to algorithmic control, in terms of information asymmetries, the platform transfers the creation of such asymmetries to clients, when it comes to work details. In this sense, the platform's position is again limited to being the facilitator of client control, by transferring the authority to determine the details of the job one-sidedly to clients, without platform mediation and worker inclusion. In this sense, in contrast to the delivery work, where information is gathered, processed, and used in way to limit worker agency in order to better match demand with supply, worker control arising from information asymmetry is also transferred to clients in domestic work in Armut.

7.3 PLATFORMS AS NEGOTIATED RELATIONSHIPS

My focus on negotiation as the primary category in my analysis is closely related to the above-mentioned policy of Armut, in placing emphasis on client empowerment at the expense of direct platform control mechanisms. Such a focus on negotiations marks a

divergence from the dominant inclination in the literature to analyse platforms by prioritizing platform's role in the direct algorithmic control over the worker. Such analysis not only overlooks the role of the client but also the role of worker agency in platform control processes. An important study in this sense is undertaken by Jarrahi et al. (2020) by introducing the concept of "boundary resources". The analysis conducted on Upwork, a platform offering high-skilled freelance services, focus on the dynamic negotiations between the actors in the platform. Authors define platform as boundary resources, focusing on the effects of such resources both as enabling worker autonomy and as enabling platform control. In this way, the study proposes an analytic perspective different than defining platforms with their material features such as algorithms or reputation systems, proposing instead the study of platforms through relationships between different actors. The study finds that, on one hand, platform supports worker autonomy by providing for structural work processes and contracts, which are both flexible and durable, enabling workers to hold a more structured negotiation process with clients on the terms of work. On the other hand, information asymmetries and policies to ensure worker loyalty to platform such as holding monopoly of communication and reputation systems results in platformic control of workers.

The factors ensuring worker autonomy in Armut is limited compared to the results of the study undertaken in Upwork. There is no effective structuring of the work processes, barring some options that platforms provide for clients when they form service requests. Also, there is no platform support with relation to contracting processes. The control factors, on the other hand, is similarly in place, such as the feature of enabling clients to give rating and comment to the worker, only in the cases where workers are designated by the clients through Armut app, in a way to prevent disintermediation of the platform. However, such a focus on the platform as a total of relations within the ecosystem disregards the indirect control that the platform exerts over workers, such as in the case of control through competition in Armut. In this regard, the importance of platform architecture gains importance. In Upwork,

freelancers may bid for specific work proposals in their areas, the competition is not closed and strictly mediated as in the case of Armut. The effect of closed competitive bidding process is crucial in how competition is devised as a controlling element by the platform. In any case, in cases of different types of competitive mechanisms like in Upwork, a closer look on how the competition effects worker behaviour is crucial.

While the study of platforms as negotiated relationships is promising in terms of taking into account worker agency, it is important to note how platforms limit worker agency by controlling the structure. In this regard, the study of platforms as fostering neoliberal subjectivities as way of control is needed to reveal the effects of platform labour on worker experience, along with a deeper focus on how the process of negotiations unfold in the areas where platform control is transferred to other actors, such as clients.

7.4 SKILL AND REPUTATION AS FACTORS IN NEGOTIATIONS

Studying platforms as boundary resources reveals an important point in its emphasis on the relations between actors in the platform system. However, it still concentrates on the platformic management concept, which takes the role of the platform in its core. To reveal how the platformic management is effective in the actual control of worker behaviour, a deeper focus on the negotiation processes between clients and workers is necessary along with the indirect control asserted by the platform through competitive mechanisms. The study of negotiation processes between platform workers and clients are undertaken mostly with reference to worker skill as an empowering factor.

Wood et al.'s (2019) study on remote platform workers reveals the role of the worker skill level, in their exercise of power not only against clients but also against competitor workers. The study finds a direct relation between the skill-level of the worker and job quality outcomes such as pay or labour market security, along with reputation being another factor empowering workers in their negotiations. As I showed

in the study results, skill level is an important factor in domestic physical work in Armut as well. Workers may leverage their knowledge and skill to affect the outcome of their negotiations with the clients. The role of skill level becomes evident in the stricter control experienced by unskilled workers in the reservation model in Armut. However, in relation of reputation as a worker empowering factor in the platforms, as I showed in my study, the one-way reputation system architecture, as well as lack of voice in the platform results in reputation system acting as a strict client control mechanism. This is also the case for workers who already have good reputations in Armut, where one bad comment may have significant negative influence in their efforts to win the bids in the competitive bidding model. Therefore, while successful workers with high scores may end up with more work, they are still subjected to strict client control. In this sense, the design of the reputation system becomes important in how it affects worker agency as a mechanism of control. As I showed in the results section, one-way reputation system results in despotic levels of control over workers by ensuring client supremacy.

The importance of skill level in determining worker agency is not only related to worker's acquired skills, but also closely related to the task-type that they undertake, as I showed in the divide between cleaning and repair workers. This distinction is stressed in the study undertaken by Gerber & Krzywdzinski (2019), in their research on remote crowdwork platforms in Germany and US offering microtask and macrotask types of works. The reputation systems used in platforms differ according to the task type which significantly affects the role of direct platform control according to the findings of the study. The authors emphasize the combined role of direct output control, reputation systems and the community building among workers in the levels of control. As micro-tasks are mostly automatized type of works, the skill level of the worker diminishes in importance in the design of reputation systems. In contrast, in macro-tasks, the skill level as well as the personal information of the worker takes precedence.

The argument based on task-type on platform work is in parallel to the findings of the labour process theory of Braverman (1974), emphasizing the role of degradation of skills resulting in the loss of worker autonomy in the labour process. In this sense, macro-task platforms such as Amazon Mechanical Turk constitute a further step in this process of skill degradation (Jarrahi et al., 2020). The divide on task-type in relation to the reputation system and worker control is in parallel to my findings on Armut. Despite having the same reputation system designs on both reservation and bidding models, reputation system in works under reservation models such as cleaning acts more as a factor of a personal appreciation for the workers, rather than differentiating them for the clients. In the bidding model, reputation scores and comments have greater importance in the success in the bids, therefore directly affecting material conditions of the workers. However, the role of direct output control is only relevant in the priority-ranking system in Armut, therefore, not having an effect on the reputation of the worker. Hence, the arbitrary nature of the ratings and comments by clients takes a larger importance in such reputation system design.

Apart from the skill-level, the networking capacity of the workers was also studied as a factor in worker autonomy in platforms. Wood & Lehdonvirta's (2021) study on remote platform workers in North America, UK and Philippines introduces the concept of "subordinated agency" to describe worker autonomy in the platform. The concept points out to double effect of the platform on worker autonomy. On one hand, by provides workers with an opportunity to extend their client network, platform strengthens worker agency. Accordingly, workers may leverage their enhanced network to exit from clients that they favour less. On the other hand, platform strengthens its position vis-à-vis the client, by locking the workers to the platform through gatekeeping practices, which causes antagonism between platform and workers on issues such as fees and competition. Despite the fact that networking is an important element of worker leverage in Armut as well, considering the fact that workers aim at extending their client networks and leaving the platform due to low profit levels, the effect of networking in their agency when they still undertake work in

the platform is limited. This is due to the fact that in remote platform work, workers can geographically enrich their client contacts, in contrast to local physical work, where workers are constrained by physical distance. Moreover, in Armut workers are given the client contacts only after winning the bids and enlarging network is only possible after satisfying the client at all costs. Therefore, the effect of networking is revealed as a factor limited worker agency instead of empowering in Armut.

7.5 PLATFORM SUBJECTIVITIES AND WORKER RESISTANCE

The prevalence of job proficiency and entrepreneurial selves are acting as a control mechanism in Armut, as I noted in the results chapter. In the literature, entrepreneurial selves are seldom discussed in relation to platform work, especially considering empirical studies. Pongratz's discursive study on 44 global crowdsourcing platforms is an exception, where the advent of the job proficiency and the decline of professional identities is revealed (2018). As I discussed in the findings chapter, the effect of client power, has such effect in Armut, where workers have to give up on their professional identities, by emphasizing client satisfaction over all other aspects of work. For Pongratz, such a move away from professionalism in platforms is closely related to entrepreneurial self at work, as the worker undertakes self-control over the work processes as a result. As I showed in my findings, client supremacy, combined with the rationalizing and commercializing effect of competition in Armut, results in entrepreneurial selves in the framework of low-skilled domestic work as well.

The controlling effect of entrepreneurial self is not limited to self-controlled, self-rationalized and self-commercialized worker behaviour as in the conceptualization undertaken by Pongratz & Voß (2003). It also results in the pacification of potential conflicts in platform work. Tirapani & Willmot's (2023) study on "econormativity" in gig economy is a well-constructed example of how the process of pacification of potential conflicts can be understood. By combining the terms "economic" and

“normativity”, the concept implies the process where social norms and expectations are structured in a specific way so that social behaviours follow and reinforce dominant economic principles. This results in limiting the extent of imagination as well as enactment of alternative socio-economic models. The study identifies four elements of econormativity; responsibilisation and quantification resulting in individualization and universalism and disembodies resulting in hegemonic ideology.

In this analysis, responsibilisation denotes the process where individual is accepted as responsible for its own success, well-being, and welfare. It is closely connected with entrepreneurial self at work, in terms of aspirations of the worker to be the boss of himself by undertaking the self-control, self-commercialization and self-rationalization practices. Considering the identity work of workers at Armut, I claim that this dimension of econormativity is highly prevalent in platform work and explains well the individualizing effect of the competitive bidding model. Quantification dimension is related to processes to record, measure and quantify various aspects of social life. In terms of the context of Armut, while the reputation system, as well as the priority ranking mechanism has quantifying effects, the fact that Armut doesn't undertake direct control of workers using metrics or quantified performance evaluators, the client control factor, which is more dominant than platform control, is undertaken through more personal, qualitative, and unrecorded processes. Therefore, this dimension is less influential in the individualization process of platform workers. However, one additional individualizing effect for the case of Armut is inherent in the nature of the platform, which is the isolated working practices, as I showed in the results chapter. The fact that workers rarely know each other and undertake their work in isolation from each other, arising from both the platform design as well as the nature of platform work has considerable effect on individualization of platform workers in Armut.

Universalism dimension of econormativity emphasizes the dominance of rational economic principles in all contexts and aspects of social life. This concept is closely related to competition, which, as I demonstrated, ensures that workers act in a rational, strategic, and predictable way as market agents. In this sense, closed competition

created by Armut though the bidding model is effective in the dominance of hegemonic ideology. Disembeddedness on the other hand, is defined as the commodification of all social relations in line with the neoliberal principles. Such a commodification process is defined under the self-rationalization dimension of entrepreneur (Pongratz & Voß, 2003), as the ideal type of entrepreneurial self at work. It is realized through rational approach of the worker to its own labour, by finding ways to exploit it and treating it as its capital. Considering how workers in the bidding model in Armut undertake unpaid work in exchange for reputation from the clients, such a rational approach becomes apparent. Therefore, I claim that the disembeddedness of workers is a direct result of the competitive bidding model in the case of Armut.

In the last section of the Results chapter, I showed how the individualizing and ideological dimensions of econormativity results in the pacification of potential solidarity, organization, and conflict for platform workers. This results both on accepting the platform conditions as given and hoping for a change from external factors such as a competitor platform, further highlighting the ideological element of econormativity. Considering how the findings of this research is positioned in relation to the existing literature, I draw attention to the importance of platform design, as well the nature of the work, in the experience of worker control in platforms.

As I discussed above, the nature of work has strong effect on the platform design of worker control elements. The competition created in the platform can depend on different types of work and platform preferences in its design. This in turn, determines the extent of direct worker control by the platform through data and metrics, such as in the case of delivery and ride-hailing platforms studied. When the nature of the work is dependent on client preferences, such as in the repair works in Armut, the role of the client and the negotiation process between parties becomes crucial, and the platform design gains a strong influence in determining the bargaining power of the parties. Finally, agency and identity work of the workers have a direct relation to the outcomes and processes of negotiations. The resulting of negotiations in the conditions of worker control over the work processes and material gains shape the weakening of professional

selves and prevalence of entrepreneurial selves in return. With entrepreneurial workers competing in the market, the prospects for solidarity are kept under control. Therefore, in the context of domestic platform work in Turkey, entrepreneurial subjectivities do not only serve the platform to ensure a health match of labour demand with supply, but also to suppress a potential solidarity and organization movement from the workers, through the weakening of worker identity and class consciousness and prevalence of neoliberal agents.



CONCLUSION

After discussing the findings of the study and the theory I built in the light of the literature in the previous chapter, I will convey my conclusions. I will start by reminding my research questions and the answers I deduced as a result of my analysis. The next section will be dedicated to the practical implications of the study findings for different actors in the platform eco-system, as well as to the indications for policymaking on platforms. Finally, I will convey the limitations of the study and delve into further research paths originating from my results.

8.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND FINDINGS

In this study on platforms in domestic work in Turkey, I analysed worker experience of control mechanisms employed by Armut platform. I departed from the effect of emerging control mechanisms employed by the platform, and questioned how such mechanisms shape the material conditions of workers. My goal was to understand the worker agency under platform control and how such an agency translates and effect worker subjectivities.

I found that the role of platform control is indirect in Armut, recognizing the autonomy of platform workers in several work details. However, platform compensates this autonomy it provides for the worker by playing two different roles in the control of workers. Firstly, as the propeller of competitive control, it sets up a mediated and closed competition among up to four workers for each service request created. This leads to rational, strategic, and predictable worker behaviour, due to the controlling effect of competition. On the other hand, platform regulates the worker-client relations, by delegating direct control features to clients through one-way reputation mechanism, complaint mechanism and information asymmetries. Such deliberate empowerment of clients leads them to have considerable leverage in their negotiations with the workers.

As my research progressed, I took a closer look at how the worker-client negotiations develops, as this is the dominant factor in worker agency and the resulting subjectivities. The mechanisms deployed by the platform to favour the client results in the client role as arbitrary rule-exploiters. I found that such role arises from the fact that client actions are unpredictable and arbitrary, as well as their inclination to employ and exploit the rules of the platform which grants them a significant power over the workers. The workers' role is defined by a constant effort to negotiate from a position of weakness. While they may leverage their knowledge of work and skills against the clients, they are highly disadvantaged due to the importance of the reputation system in the platform as well as to their lack of voice in the platform. Under strict control of the clients, I defined the worker role as subordinated negotiator. Such subordination leads to new ways of exploitation of workers' labour, as evident in unpaid work undertaken by workers to acquire ratings and comments as well as in below-the-market fees they are forced to accept due to being submitted to platform-mediated competition aiming to offer favourable conditions to clients.

The role of subordinated negotiator in the platform is marked by a low sense of agency and low level of control over work details, including the work process as well as monetary conditions. Such a role has considerable consequences on worker subjectivities. To ensure client satisfaction, I found that the workers give up on their professional identities and emphasize soft skills and communication instead. This results in the prevalence of entrepreneurial selves, not only due to their position vis-à-vis the clients, but also closely related to the competitive system designed by the platform. I found that entrepreneurial worker subjectivities, the effects of competition, the individualizing effect of the platform work combine to result in the low levels of trust among workers, and a lack of effort to communicate and organize for change. On one hand, such entrepreneurial worker subjectivities enable a new way of labour control for the platform. On the other hand, by pacifying the prospects for conflict and by limiting worker organizational efforts, they denote a new chapter in the on-going decomposition of the working class.

By benefitting from the constructed grounded theory methodology I employed in the study, I theorised on the role of platform, workers and clients in the domestic platform work setting in Turkey. I showed the effects of control mechanisms on negotiations through the empowerment of clients and disempowerment of workers. I demonstrated the effects of weaker worker sense of agency in the weakening of professionalism in workers and the resulting prevalence of entrepreneurial selves. Despite the workers' appreciation of the autonomy to choose the details of the work, the anonymity of platform control mechanisms, as well as the temporary nature of client control which may reach despotic levels, are factors contributing the subtle experience of high levels of control. The theory I built based on the data displays the ways platform control operates in a domestic work setting, specifically through the clients, and by acting on the agency of workers.

The study results show the effectiveness of entrepreneurial self on worker behaviour in a low-skilled service work setting. Entrepreneurial self at work has been discussed in the context of high skilled work, as well as in the context of working class entrepreneurialism within a regular employment relationship. The relevance of entrepreneurial self for low-skilled platform work demonstrates the contribution of platforms to the further decomposition of the working class by targeting low skilled service workers. In this way, platforms not only successfully ensure the strategic and rational worker behaviour to answer the service demand but also considerably limit the prospect for an organized worker movement against the conditions that platforms subject workers to.

8.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTORS AND POLICY-MAKING

The findings of the study have several practical and political implications. To begin with the platform, role of propelling the competition and empowering clients at the expense of the workers results in the alienation of workers to the platform, as I showed

in the results chapter. Despite the fact that platform's leverage of the abundance of clients and a chance to build a network for the workers is effective to keep workers at the platform, many successful workers take less work from the platform or plan to quit altogether after reaching a healthy number of client contacts. The monopolistic position of Armut in domestic platform work is an important factor allowing the platform to enable client dominance and ignore worker voice. Moreover, gatekeeping policies such as non-transferability of worker reputation compels the workers to the platform. To keep the workers in the eco-system, platform needs to change the asymmetric relationship it designed between the clients and the workers. A more equal reputation system, allowing workers to rate the clients will strengthen the sense of agency of the workers and result in clients acting less arbitrarily. In the same lines, the voice of the workers in the platform should be strengthened, to prevent workers from quitting the platform. A mechanism granting equal voice of clients and workers is needed.

The competitive mechanism, which creates a closed competition is effective in ensuring the below-market prices for the platform. However, it also results in further individualization of workers and damages the trust between workers significantly. To regulate such a system is a definite need, by lowering the level of competition. The deduction of bidding fees only from the worker who wins the bid, as suggested by several workers, will not only lower the competition among workers, but also strengthen their position against the clients.

The legal insurance compensation for domestic workers is not paid by clients when they receive service from the platform, as I mentioned in the chapter on platforms in Turkey. Armut should intervene in this situation, as a legal responsibility is clearly overlooked in a service that is undertaken under the platform's mediation. This may be ensured through Armut's direct involvement by facilitating the payment of insurance fees, or by devising mechanisms for the clients to pay the fees for themselves.

With regards to workers, there are organizing efforts in different country settings among platform workers in different sectors. The weakening of worker organizations following the neoliberal reforms in Turkey after 1980 has been effective in the

ideological dominance of the capital which resulted in a negative social attitude for worker organizations among various groups in Turkish society. However, there are platform workers in other sectors in Turkey, such as in the delivery work, where workers organize by establishing foundations or unions. Unions like Nakliyat-İş are making efforts to bring the working conditions of delivery platform workers to national agenda. Despite the fact that such a union wouldn't be able to sign collective bargaining agreement under current law, the fact that workers organize in one form or another and form a public opinion about their struggles is crucial. While the individualizing effect of competition and entrepreneurial subjectivities are rendering such an effort difficult, it is clear that the workers need to claim their own sense of agency themselves. Unions or other types of worker organizations in Turkey such as foundations should develop policies to reach out to domestic platform workers as well. Legal protections for platform workers in several countries have been established after organizational efforts of workers and unions by making alliances with labour law academics and activists.

The issue of platform work is not in the political agenda in Turkey, contrary to many countries where such form of work is widespread. It is clear that under the legal gap which is created due to the fact that platform workers are not in the scope of the Labour Law, platforms devise their eco-system which significantly undermine working conditions and worker agency. The need for the regulation of platform work is evident. There are various ways different countries chose to regulate, from including platform workers to national labour legislation to provide for basic securities for them through constructing new legal statuses. Despite the fact that current legislation is weak, to ensure the implementation of protections in place, such as the protections for domestic workers, should be the priority of public policy. An effective labour inspection mechanism is needed, so that domestic workers can benefit from the legal protections. The use of data in devising a new labour inspection system for platform work is crucial. Just as platforms act on data gathered from workers and clients for the purposes of labour control, such technologies should be used by public agencies including the

labour inspectorate to keep track of informal platform work and to ensure the implementation of legal protections.

8.3 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

There two major limitations I faced in conducting the study and reaching the above-mentioned results. Firstly, in my efforts to understand worker experience, my research process evolved and resulting my choice to focus on the role of platform in the negotiation process between the clients and the workers. As Armut transfers a considerable part of worker control duties to the clients, this emphasis was necessary to grasp worker experience in line with my research questions. While I updated my questionnaire in line with my adoption of negotiation as the primary category in my analysis, and I undertook theoretical sampling in the selection of worker participants to develop this category, the client point of view is missing in the design of the study to have a better understand the subtleties of the negotiations from both sides engaging in it. To compensate for such limitation, I asked various examples of their interactions with clients to the workers in different categories, by demanding them to diversify their accounts of client negotiations.

Another limitation of the study is the lack of comparison opportunity with non-platform work, which would enable me to have a better understanding of the platform experience. However, all participants were undertaking different works, either in the form of different kinds of work, or in the form of undertaking their platform-related work through non-platform sources such as from their personal networks or by reference of previous clients. I devoted a significant part of my questionnaire to asking workers to compare their in-platform and out-of-platform experiences, which enabled me to mitigate this limitation and to have a better understanding of the effects of platform work on worker experience.

The fact that negotiations between workers and clients have significant effect on the worker agency and subjectivities clearly demonstrates the need for studied researching this process in detail. As I mentioned in the literature review and discussion of findings chapters, studies mostly focus on the role of the platform. This was my departing point in designing this study as well. Despite the fact that platforms play a significant role in this process by setting the rules and conditions for negotiations, a deeper focus on the negotiation process alone is needed to understand worker experience. Further studies, which takes into account client experience as well, would help enlighten and conceptualize the negotiations.

I underlined the fact that the nature of work and platform design has significant implications in both platform-worker and client-worker relations. Platform economy is a phenomenon which can result in varying effects based on these factors. I had the chance to compare the effect of different working models in the platform in my effort to build a theory on worker experience. Studies focusing on different types of work offered in different platform architectures would enrich the understanding of platform work. Moreover, there is a significant opportunity in platform research arising from the fact that platforms offering services in the same sectors in different countries employ similar architectures. Research aiming at understanding how worker agency and subjectivities are affected by similar platform architectures in different socio-economic context would significantly help both in understanding the platform work in different contexts and in analysing practical and political implications for actors in different countries. Such comparative studies would potentially contribute to the emergence of a global movement to better working conditions in platforms.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Date

Location:

Participant Name:

Gender:

Age:

Marital Status:

Education Level:

Income Status:

Consent Form Signed:

General Questions

- Are you currently actively a worker at Armut? Since when?
- In which areas do you provide services on Armut?
- Can you tell me your story? How did you start this job? Are you from Istanbul? If no, how did you decide to come here and work in this business?
- Do you consider yourself an expert in one field? Or are you a service person who can do everything?
- How many jobs did you get through Armut in the previous month? In the previous year?
- How many service bids did you place on Armut in the previous month? Previous year?
- Do you get work through different digital labour platforms other than Armut? Which ones?

- Do you get work outside of online platforms? Through which channels?
- Do you work on your own account or are you an employee of a company?
- Do you have any other source of income other than your work on Armut? What is it?
- Are you currently working on starting your own business? Has it happened in the past?

Motivation

- How many years have you been doing this job?
- What are your skills in your field? Do you have a formal training or certification? Are you a member of a chamber of trades or professional organization?
- How would you describe your work experience before you joined Armut?
- Why did you start getting jobs through Armut and how did you make this decision?
- What do you think are the best things about working through Armut?
- What do you think are the worst things about working through Armut?
- How do you deal with these downsides? Is there a strategy you use to mitigate these impacts?
- If you get work through channels other than Armut, can you compare this experience with the experience of getting work through Armut? What are the similarities and differences?

Armut Profile

- Can you describe your profile on Armut?
- Which skills and strengths did you mention in your profile? Why?
- Do you think the profile is important and gives you an advantage?
- Do you think your profile is appreciated by clients and have you received any feedback in this direction?
- Is there a strategy you use in your profile to distinguish yourself from other workers?
- Have you ever changed or updated your profile? On what basis and with what thought did you do this?
- Do you look at other workers' profiles? Have you tried to take clues from other profiles?

Relations with Service Recipients

- What criteria do you consider when bidding on a service request? What are the most important criteria for you?
- Have you ever received a rating below 5 out of 5? If yes, for what reason?
- Have you ever received a negative comment on your profile? If yes, for what reason?
- Have you ever had a situation where you could not agree with the clients? If yes, can you tell me about it and compare it with your experiences outside of Armut?
- Have you ever had a service recipient make a request that you are not used to? If yes, what did you do and did you report it to Armut?

- How do you feel about working in clients' own homes? How does it differ from working in a workplace?

Relations with the Platform

- How does the user rating and evaluation system affect your business? Can you compare this with your experiences outside of Armut?
- For what do customers give you high ratings and reviews?
- Are you aware of the priority ranking of workers? Where do you rank and how does it work? How do you move up and down? Is it regional or city-based?
- How does the priority ranking mechanism affect your business? Can you compare this with your experiences outside of Armut?
- What is your opinion about the process of matching workers with clients? Do you think Armut decides according to certain criteria when directing you to a job? Like user ratings or geographical proximity? Or is the matching done purely by chance?
- How often do you check the Armut app during the day?
- Do you receive notifications from Armut, how often and about what? Do you check all of these notifications? Do you check them instantly?
- Do you feel the need to constantly check the app?

Relations with Other Workers

- Do you ever meet other workers during your work?

- Do you know other workers working in the same field in Armut? What do you think about them?

- What is the quality of work of other workers? Do you know or have you heard about it?

- Do you think that other workers face the same situations in getting jobs from Armut?

COVID-19

- How has your work been affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic?

- Was there anything you had to do differently related to your work during this period?

- Are these effects still valid? Or has the situation returned to the way it was before Pandemic for you?

Self-Commercialization

- Does the reputation system affect your work performance?

- Do you have a strategy to get good ratings? If so, what is it?

- Do you request ratings and comments from clients?

- Do you make an extra effort to get better ratings and comments?

- Do you make an extra effort to get future network jobs from the client you go through Armut?

- Do you have a strategy to make sure that the client chooses you and not someone else during the bidding process?
- What motivates you to do a good job with the work you get through Armut?
- If you had the chance, how many points would you give yourself on Armut? Why would you do that?

Self-Control

- How do you handle the administrative aspects of your work, such as transportation, lunch, buying materials needed for the job?
- How would you describe your work schedule? Where do you go and on which days? Is there a strategy or calendar you follow?
- After the work is done, do the clients control your work? Or do you control it yourself? Does this make a difference to your performance?

Self-Rationalization

- How would you describe yourself?
- Would you say that you see yourself as a business? Do you feel like you are self-employed?
- Do you have any business plans for the future?
- Would you say that you have created opportunities for yourself for the future through your work and effort? Or are you approaching your work on a daily basis?
- What is your career goal in platforms like Armut?

- How do you approach your work at Armut? Are you strategic or not? Do you have bigger plans?

- Do you consider yourself a professional in your field? Why?

Other

- Are you generally satisfied with your job? Why?

- Do you consider yourself successful at Armut? Why?

- What do you think is the key to being successful at Armut?

- Do you feel like you are working freely and independently at Armut? Why?

- Do you feel under control at Armut? If yes, does the client or Armut create this feeling of control more?

- Do you know someone like you who does this work through Armut?

Thank you for your participation!

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

This research is being conducted to understand the changes that digital labour platforms such as Armut have brought about with regards to the meaning of work for workers. By signing this form and participating in the interview, you agree to participate in the research.

The study will evaluate group results, not individual results. Your responses will be used for scientific research purposes only. Your personal information will remain strictly confidential and will not be shared with anyone other than the research team. The data collected during this study will be used for academic research purposes only and will only be presented in national/international academic meetings and/or publications. The interview will be recorded for the purpose of detailed analysis and the recordings will be kept confidential.

There are no right or wrong answers to the questions you are asked. The research aims to understand your experiences and views. Therefore, your sincerity and honesty in answering the questions is very important for the research results and will contribute to the reliability of the research.

If you have any complaints, comments, or questions about the study, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher of this study (phone: - e-mail: -).

Thank you for your participation.

Kadir Uysal
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PhD Program in Political Science

APPENDIX C: ETHICS BOARD APPROVAL

Ethics Board Approval is available in the printed version of this dissertation.

