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GDPower Research Design

Leonard Geyer, European Centre for Social
Welfare Policy and Research

Warsaw, September 12, 2025

Research design

Common research design used for all country case studies (with small adjustments)

Research and analysis at two levels

- The level of social dialogue and collective actors
- The level of workers (and worker data)

Research at the level of social dialogue and collective actors

Research questions:

- What **strategies** are used by activists, trade unions and employer groups for *negotiating* and *implementing* **collective bargaining agreements (CBAs)** on platform workers' pay and working conditions and processing of their personal data?
- Are CBAs in the location-based platform economy **implemented correctly**?
- What are the **challenges** for social partners in negotiating and/or enforcing CBAs?

Methods

- **Desk research** to understand each countries' platform economy
- **Mapping** of applicable **collective agreements** at the industry and company level
- **Focus groups/interviews** with trade unions & activists and employer groups & platform company representatives to understand their strategies and challenges, and whether the existing agreements are implemented correctly.

Research at the level of workers and worker data

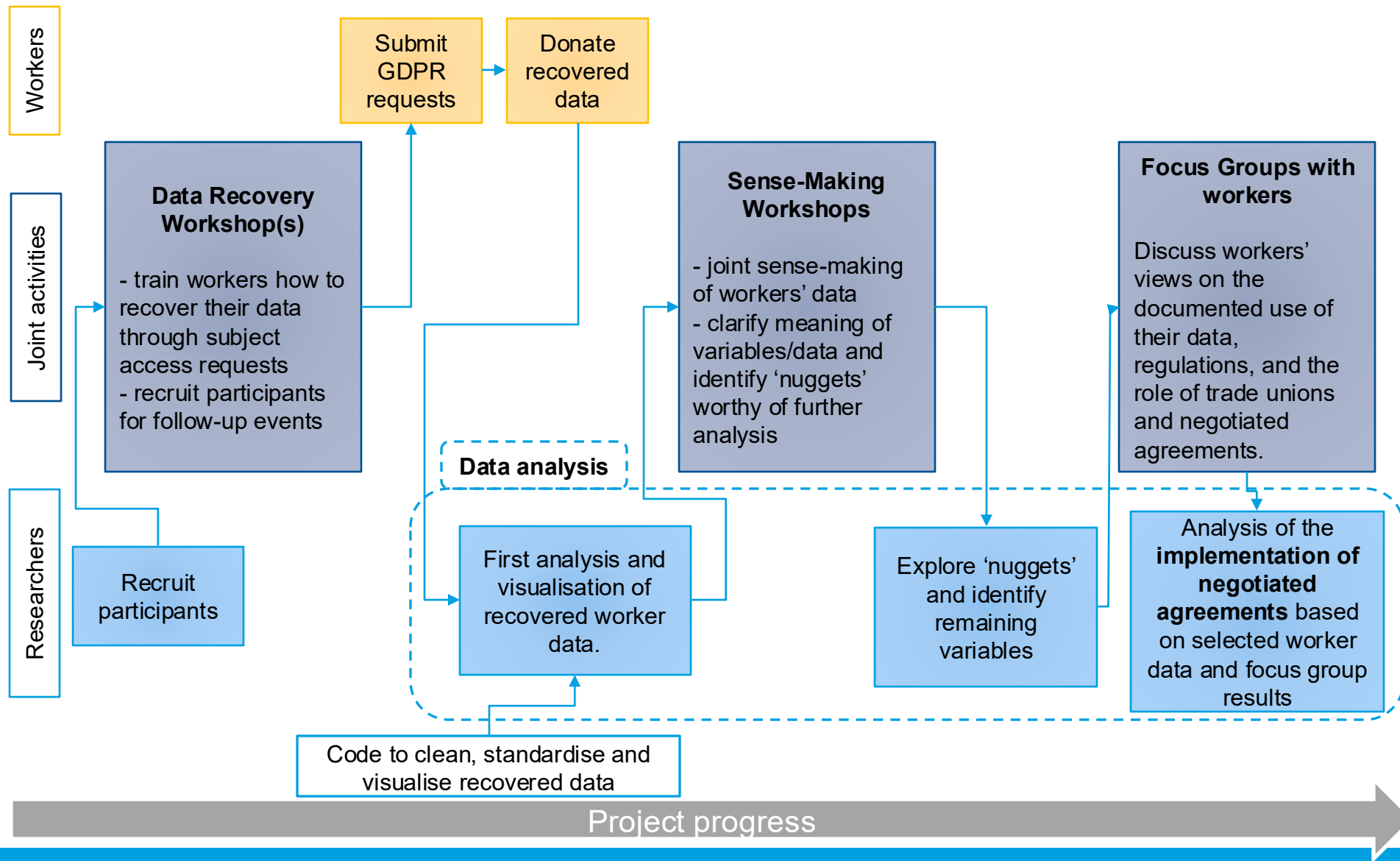
Research questions:

- **What data** do digital labour platforms collect on workers?
- Are workers **aware** of what data is collect on them?
- How do platforms' data collection practices **influence workers**? (*well-being, mobilisation*)
- Are CBAs **implemented correctly**? (*based on worker data*)

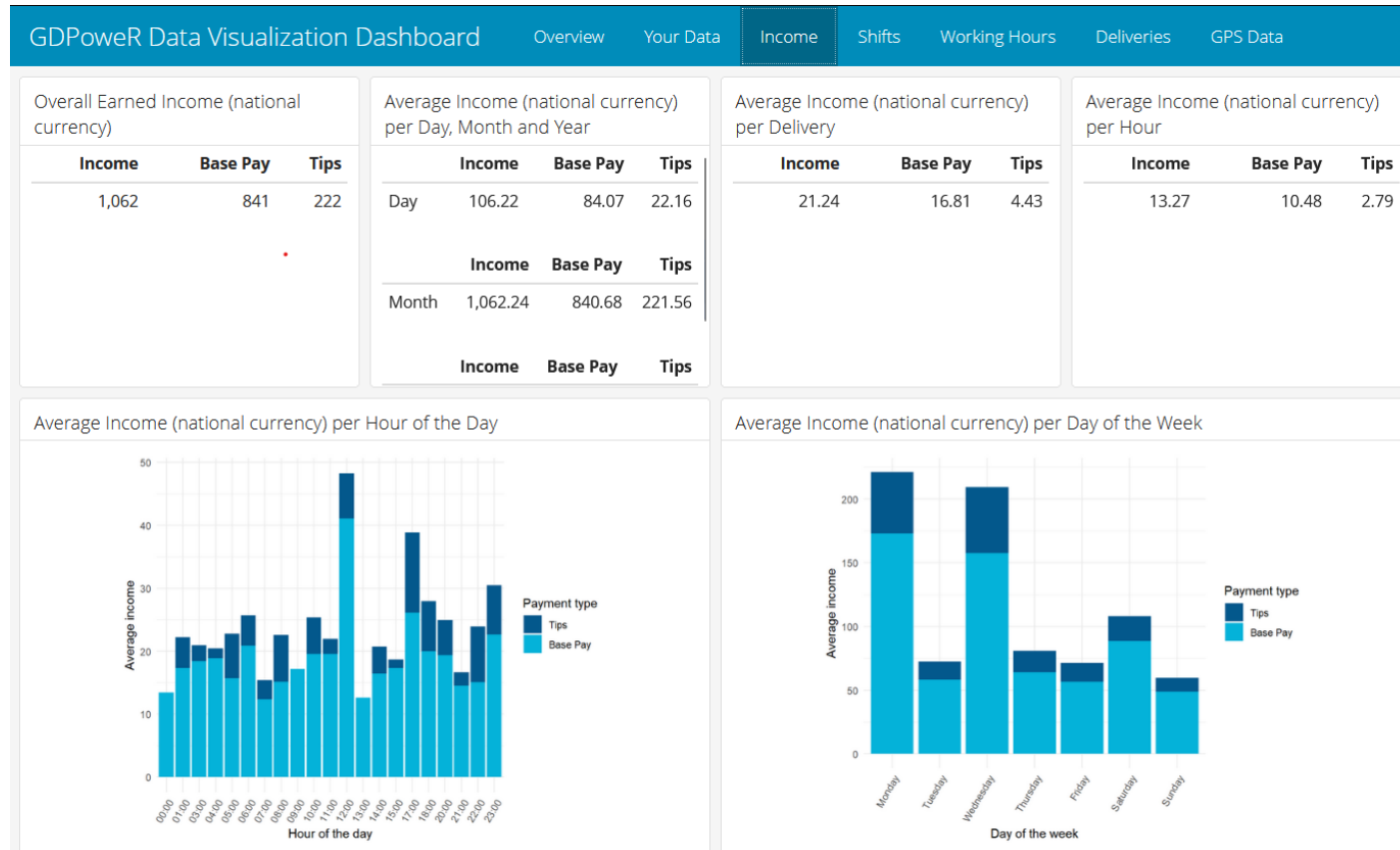
Methods:

- Help workers requests copies of their personal data (Art. 15/20 GDPR) and information on automated decision-making (Art. 22 GDPR)
- Analyse the data with them (sense-making) and afterwards ask if they were aware platform's data processing and how they feel about it (focus group)
- Review personal data donated by workers for evidence of non-compliance with CBAs

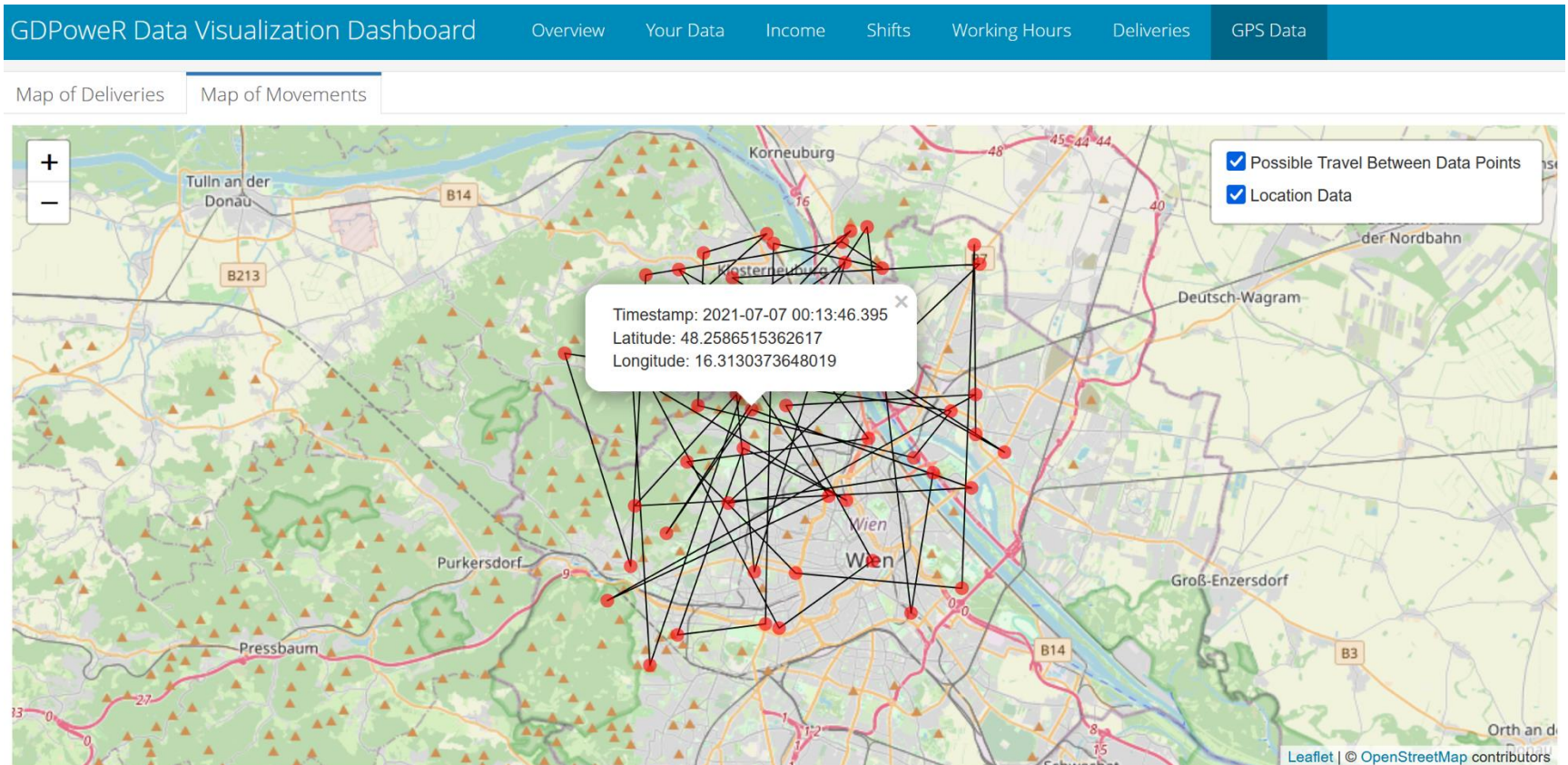
Builds on work using GDPR rights as research method (Ausloos & Veale, 2020; Li & Toh, 2022; Habu & Henderson, 2023) especially the #digipower investigation (Bowyer, Pidoux, Gursky, & Dehaye, 2022)



Data visualisation tool



Data visualisation tool (cont'd)



References

Ausloos, J., & Veale, M. (2020). Researching with Data Rights. *Technology and Regulation*, 136-157.

Bowyer, A., Pidoux, J., Gursky, J., & Dehay, P.-O. (2022). Auditing the Data Economy through Personal Data Access. A Methodology and Case Studies Report. Hestia.ai.

Geyer, L., Kayran, E.N. & Danaj, S. (2024). Research Design and Data Recovery Protocol. GDPower – Recovering workers’ data to negotiate and monitor collective agreements in the platform economy.

Habu, A. A., & Henderson, T. (2023). Data subject rights as a research methodology: A systematic literature review. *Journal of Responsible Technology*, 16.

Li, W., & Toh, J. (2022). Data Subject Rights as a Tool for Platform Worker Resistance: Lessons from the Uber/Ola Judgments. SSRN. doi: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4306868



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GDPOWER Results - Austria

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Leonard Geyer, Sonila Danaj & Nikko Bilitza,
European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and
Research

Warsaw, September 11, 2025

Austria's platform economy ecosystem

- **Principal platforms:** Lieferando, Foodora(Mjam) & Wolt in food-delivery and Uber, Bolt & local
- **No specific legislation** platform work
- **Employment status:** Platform workers work as regular employees, free service providers (FD) or self-employed
 - Nearly all food delivery riders are FD
 - Uber and Bolt drivers are self-employed or employees of AT taxi companies
- Only licensed taxi drivers can drive Uber or Bolt

Industry-level collective bargaining (and its challenges)

There are **industry-level agreements** regulating minimum wages, general working conditions like working hours, breaks, etc. for **delivery couriers** and **taxi drivers**,

but they cover only employees (not FD or self-employed)

- ~10% of Foodora riders are covered, Wolt and Lieferando riders are not (anymore).
- Drivers using Uber or Bolt who are employed by a taxi company (intermediary) are covered

WIRTSCHAFT

Lieferando kündigt Angestellte, lockt freie Dienstnehmer mit Zuckerl

Von nachrichten.at/apa, 06. April 2025, 12:55 Uhr



850 angestellte Lieferanten werden gekündigt, für sie wird derzeit ein Sozialplan verhandelt.

Bild: HARALD SCHNEIDER (APA)

WIEN/AMSTERDAM. Ab 16. April und bis 30. Juni zahlt Lieferando nun jedem neuen freien Dienstnehmer 2 Euro extra je erfolgreicher Bestellung, um Personal zu finden. Derzeit wird ein Sozialplan für die zur Kündigung bereits beim AMS angemeldeten Menschen verhandelt.

Data protection at the company level (and its challenge)

- Foodora and Lieferando have (had) elected **works councils**.
- Employers *require* the **works council's consent** to introduce control and monitoring measures that “affect human dignity” (§ 96 Labour Constitution Act) like the collection of GPS data. Works council can sue to stop unsanctioned data processing.
- Foodora signed a company-level agreement in Feb. 2020 limiting the collection and storage of GPS data, which expired in 2021.
- Lieferando's works council unsuccessfully tried to negotiate one.
- Challenges
 - Unclear if lawsuits against collection of GPS data would succeed
 - Successful suit shuts down the company
 - § 96 only covers employees. Platforms can shift to free service providers.

Workers and worker data

- Organised data Recovery Workshops with trade unions and activists for riders and taxi drivers
- However, many workers (especially taxi drivers) are hesitant to make request
 - Limited interest “*I can see all past drives in the app*”
 - Fear of repercussions (requests are always personalized)
 - Fear of discovery (“*there is a lot of undeclared work in the industry, people are very cautious*”)
- 10 datasets donated by food-delivery riders, none by Uber or Bolt drivers

Platform	Lieferando	Foodora	Wolt
Employment status	Employee	Employee	Free service provider
Personal and contractual information	yes	yes	yes
Working times	yes	yes	yes
Delivery/drive data (times, locations)	yes	yes	yes
Payment data			
payment per month	-	yes	-
payment per delivery/ drive	-	limited (kilometre fee, tips)	yes
GPS data			
Delivery locations	pick-up, drop off	accepted, pick-up	accepted, pick-up
Detailed location data	-	Yes (location in 30-second intervals, speed, accuracy and direction)	Yes (location in 30-second intervals, speed, accuracy and direction)
			Yes (regularly >10 locations per minute, heading, accuracy, speed)
Performance data			
Acceptance rate	-	yes	-
Utilization rate (deliveries/hour)	-	yes	-
Absences/no shows	yes	yes	-
Internal rating score	-	-	-
Communication data	-	yes	yes
App data	yes	yes	-
Information on automated decision-making (Art. 22)?	No		

Worker's awareness

Are workers aware of what data is collected about them?

- Mostly well informed, often drawing on work-related experiences (*possible selection bias*)
- Surprised over the lack of tracking in one case; suspicion that recovered datasets are incomplete in another
- Data visualisation appears to have resulted in further insights, e.g. regarding tracking abroad
- Frustration about perceived lack of transparency

Researcher: "Do you think you know what data they're collecting and how they use it?"

[...]

Rider 1: "It's more that **we all assume some things**. Like we assume that they track us every second where we are. [...]"

I have heard this before, but I think it would be **surprising** to most Lieferando riders that **they actually don't store every second where we are** but only the locations of pick-up and drop-off.

Because since they don't inform us clearly and transparently what they actually say. From us **we just assume the worst.**"

Effects on workers

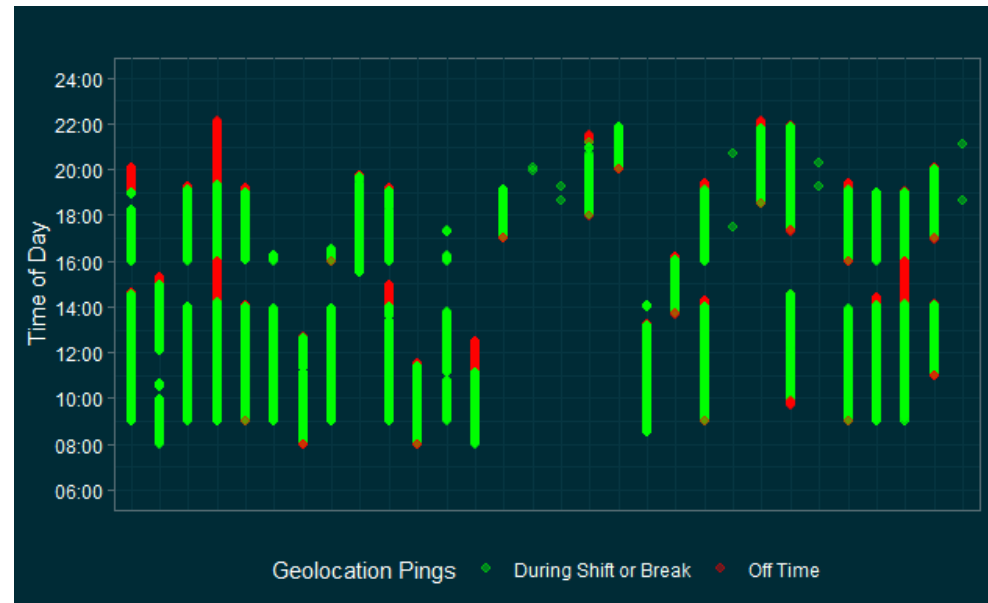
- **Negative:** Feeling of constant surveillance, loss of autonomy, frustration with decisions perceived as unfair
- **Neutral/Indifferent:** Data processing is necessary/part of the job/part of modern life
- **Positive:** Data helps with my taxes, defence against customer allegation

Implementation of collective agreements

- Are the collective agreements negotiated in the delivery and ride-hailing platforms being implemented correctly?
 - **Trade unions:** yes, mostly
 - **CBA for delivery couriers:** Analysis based on data from two riders of rules on working hours and breaks and payment for kilometer fee
- No evidence of violations

Foodora/Mjam data agreement

Provision	Operationalisation	Violation indicated ?
GPS data shall be collected only during shifts (§4(3))	Does the recovered data include any geolocation data that was collected outside of the period delineated by the shift start and the end of the shift or the last delivery of that day?	Yes
GPS data shall be recorded once per minute (§4(3))	Does the recovered data include any geolocation data that was recorded less than 60 seconds apart?	Yes
GPS data shall be anonymised after one month (§7(3))	Does the recovered data include any geolocation data that was recorded <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - more than one month before a GDPR request was processed OR - more than one month before the most recent information in the same dataset was collected? 	Yes
GPS data shall be deleted after six months (§7(3))	Does the recovered data include any geolocation data that was recorded <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - more than six months before a GDPR request was processed OR - more than six months before the most recent information in the same dataset was collected? 	Yes



Main findings

- Strong collective bargaining rights including powers to regulate worker monitoring, but
 - Free-service providers and self-employed are excluded
 - Ride-hailing companies have avoided (effective) company-level agreements even for employees
 - Re-classification option gives platforms leverage
- Hesitancy among many workers to use their GDPR rights.
- Workers are generally aware of companies' data collection practices but lack specifics and lament lack of transparency.
- Effects on workers range from negative, to neutral and positive.
- Industry-level CBAs are implemented (mostly) correct.
Company-level measures



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GDPower final conference Country case: Belgium

Laurène Thil (KU Leuven), Sebastiaan Kennes (ACV Innovatief)

Warsaw / 11.09.2025

Platform economy in Belgium

Scale and growth

- Platform work adoption slower than in neighbouring EU countries, but growing steadily since 2016.
- Food delivery and ride-hailing remain the dominant sectors.

Worker profiles

- Majority are young men, often migrants or students.
- Many combine platform work with studies or another job → reflects use as supplementary income. For some, however, it is the main livelihood, especially among migrant communities.

Platform economy in Belgium

Regulatory context shaping work status

- Unique reliance on “*sharing economy*” regime:
 - In food delivery, up to 97% of couriers work under this fiscal scheme.
 - Neither self-employed nor employees → outside mainstream labour law.
- Small minority classified as employees or “traditional” self-employed.

Working conditions

- Pay per task, not per hour → unstable and unpredictable income.
- Limited access to social protection (sick leave, unemployment, pensions).

Legal and regulatory framework

- **2016 De Croo Act:** special fiscal regime for platform work (“sharing economy”)
- **2018–2020 reforms:** broadened tax-free supplementary income → annulled by Constitutional Court
- **2022 Labour Deal:** introduced presumption of employment (effective 2023)
- Current situation: coexistence of multiple regimes → legal uncertainty and confusion
- Enforcement remains limited → workers often unaware of obligations and risks

Data collection and algorithmic management

- Platforms gather highly granular data:
 - Geolocation (continuous, high resolution)
 - Device details (battery, Wi-Fi history, app usage timestamps)
 - Ratings, customer communications, call records
- Workers often assumed only basic operational data were tracked
- Focus groups: surprise and concern when confronted with data files
- Algorithms use this data to allocate tasks, evaluate performance, or deactivate accounts

Impact on workers' well-being



- Cognitive opacity → stress, hyper-vigilance, “guessing the algorithm”
- Surveillance → sense of being constantly monitored, loss of autonomy
- Non-contestability → frustration with arbitrary deactivations and poor rating systems
- Emotional toll: anxiety, mistrust, and resignation
- Many prioritise pay and scheduling concerns, but data practices amplify insecurity

Collective bargaining and mobilisation

- Belgium has strong collective bargaining institutions ($\approx 96\%$ coverage)
- Traditional unions (FGTB/ABVV, CSC/ACV, ACLVB) experimenting with new approaches
- Company-level agreement: Uber–ABVV (contested and not public)
- Grassroots initiatives (e.g. Maison des Livreurs) support riders directly
- Mobilisation often triggered by deactivation or sudden loss of income, not by data issues alone

Key findings

- Workers' awareness of data practices is limited and fragmented
- Algorithmic management undermines well-being by increasing demands, reducing autonomy, and eroding fairness
- Mobilisation around data issues rare → data becomes salient mainly after triggering events
- Regulation exists but fragmented; enforcement is weak
- Unions and grassroots organisations face challenges but remain crucial intermediaries

Policy implications

- Strengthen enforcement of Belgian legal framework to reduce uncertainty
- Ensure transparency and human oversight in algorithmic management (align with EU Platform Work Directive)
- Build workers' awareness of data practices and rights (training, outreach, participatory tools)
- Support unions and grassroots organisations in integrating data rights into bargaining strategies



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Workers and data rights in France's Platform Economy

Cynthia Srnec, Maxime Cornet, Pauline Moreau Avila

11/09/2025



France's job market and Platform Economy Landscape

600K

Self-Employed Workers

Evolution of Self-Employment

11.5%

13%

Employment

2013

2025

42%

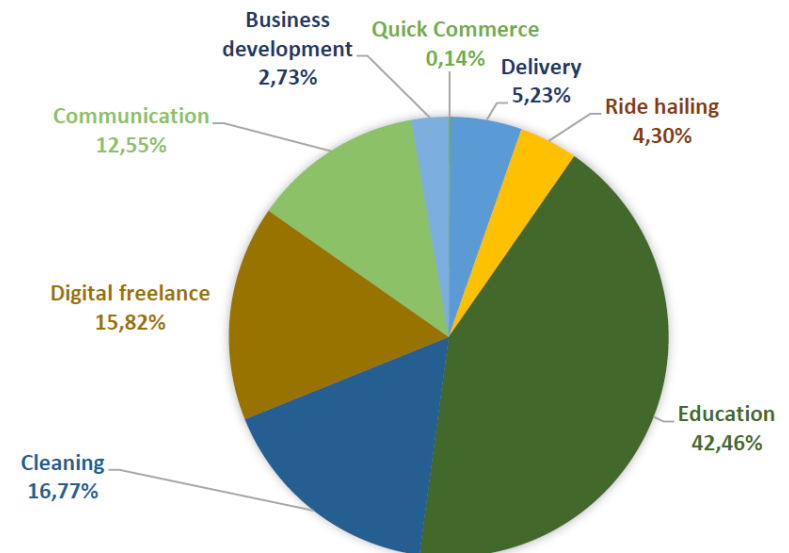
Unemployment

Young people without a diploma

0.8%

Workforce Participation

French workers engaged in platform-mediated labor



Platform Workers in France (2023)

N: 1 884 242

Rapid growth in platform work services, especially in urban areas.

Chauffeur-driven transport market

Uber (40,000 drivers), Allocab, and Le Cab lead the VTC sector.

Market value in 2024: USD 5.29 billion, growing at 6.7% annually.

Entry barriers: VTC card, vehicle ownership, insurance.

Food Delivery: Europe's Second Market Market

Uber Eats (60,000 riders) and **Deliveroo** (20,000 riders) dominate food delivery.

Platforms struggle with profitability due to high admin costs.

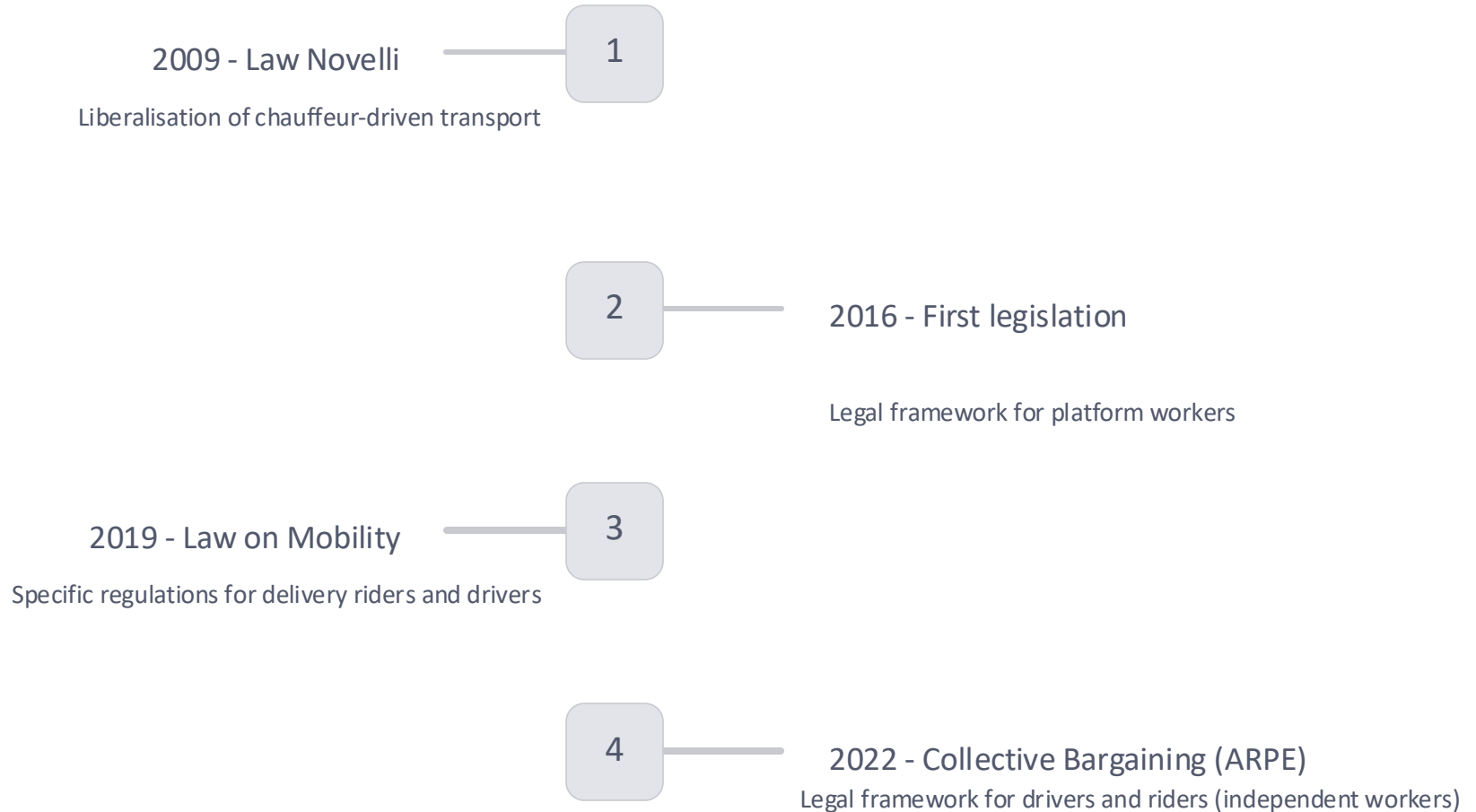
Challenges:

Precarious working conditions.

Lack of transparency in pricing and algorithmic management.

High turnover and undocumented workers in food delivery.

Regulatory Developments



Regulatory Framework and Collective Bargaining

Legal Status:

Workers are classified as **self-employed**, not employees.

Laws (2016, 2019) grant limited individual social rights (training, accident insurance) and collective rights.

ARPE (Authority for Social Relations on Employment Platforms):

Created (2022) to facilitate social dialogue and collective bargaining.

Organizes elections for worker representatives in VTC and delivery sectors.

- Low voter turnout (3.9% in delivery, 19.96% in VTC in 2024) questions legitimacy.



GDPR demands : Data Access Barriers Barriers

Identity Verification Issues Issues

Requests refused for "third party" suspicions or inability to verify requester identity

Variable Response Times Times

Processing ranges from 2 weeks to weeks to indefinite delays, despite despite GDPR's one-month requirement

Incomplete Datasets

Fragmented data with varying completion rates and limited time periods periods


Collective Agreements

(among independent workers and platforms):

Content

Cover income guarantees, deactivation procedures, and discrimination.

Implementation

- 
- A blue magnifying glass icon with a white pulse line inside the lens, positioned to the left of the implementation list.
- Criticized for weak content and limited impact on real working conditions.
 - Platforms often control the data needed to verify compliance, limiting transparency.
 - ARPE lacks enforcement power;
 - Trade unions rely on individual information to assess impact.

Collected data :

- Most agreements **formalize existing practices** rather than improve conditions.

Symbolic Outcomes



Workers' strategies

Trade unions showed differing levels of involvement in collective bargaining

Diverse actors but some big unions (CGT, FO) refuse to sign agreements, citing lack of real negotiation.

Workers adapt behavior due to surveillance:

self-censorship,
strategic acceptance of
tasks, and
informal data sharing.

Trade unions and workers use data as a **legal and strategic tool** to support reclassification efforts.

Conclusions

Structural Limits of Social Dialogue in Platform Economy

Data rights are essential for empowering workers and enabling fair negotiations.

The French model shows the **limits of soft governance** and voluntary compliance.

Future Prospects:

EU Platform Work Directive (2024) may shift legal status toward employment.

ARPE's role under scrutiny; trade unions call for reform or abolition.

Rebalance Power : Unions push for stronger regulation and enforcement.

Thanks for your attention, Thanks to all the workers who contributed to this research !

Coordinator

European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (AU)

Partners

HIVA-KU Leuven (BE)

ACV-Innovatief (BE)

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