Platform labour, migration, and resistance:
Organizing against hyper-exploitation in Paris and Toronto's food delivery industries

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ii. Abstract

This doctoral thesis combines empirical research and theoretical innovations aimed at comprehending the dynamics of platform labour within advanced-capitalist economies. Through case studies in Paris, France, and Toronto, Canada, the thesis contributes to the evolving landscape of platform labour studies, migration studies, and labour geography. The over-representation of racialized immigrants engaged in platform food delivery has attracted significant attention from both academia and mainstream media, notably in Toronto with international students from India and in Paris with sans-papiers from Africa. Focusing specifically on migration and working conditions, this study unveils hyper-precarity in Euro-American cities. The primary objective of the thesis is to provide a new perspective that includes immigration and citizenship within current discourse on platform labour. Drawing inspiration from critical urban studies, migration studies, and science and technology studies, the research introduces two conceptual propositions: i) "citizen-rentier-ship", designed to elucidate how various stakeholders benefit from precarious citizenship status, and ii) a "relational comparison" of platform labour resistance, offering insights into the evolution of the unrest against platform labour exploitation—a crucial facet of urban development. The thesis is based on extensive interviews with food riders, workers, spokespersons, and other key actors, shedding light on their capacity for self-organization within advanced capitalist societies. By exploring strategies, limitations, and the dimensions of resistance—both digital and physical—through interactions with riders and individuals who resisted deactivation, low wages, and algorithmic management, the research contributes to a nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by these workers. The case studies place emphasis on migrant workers' perspectives. They reshape ongoing debates about global platforms by centering attention on the bottom ends of labour markets. In conclusion, the study contends that the struggles of migrant workers are deeply entwined with labour laws, immigration policies, misclassification practices, and urban policies in France and Canada.

iii. Acknowledgements

I need to extend my gratitude to all the individuals and organizations whose collective efforts and support have played a role in bringing this thesis to fruition. First, I want to express my appreciation to the couriers, workers, spokespersons, and activists who generously dedicated their time to respond to my questions. Their invaluable insights have greatly enriched my research. Special acknowledgment is due to the people involved with the organizations that extended their support, including CLAP, COOPCycle, CGT and La Maison des Coursiers in Paris, as well as GWU, Foodsters United and CUPW in Toronto. I am deeply indebted to my academic circles for their consistent feedback and invaluable advice. My gratitude extends to my supervisor, Steven Tufts, whose guidance has been very valuable for me throughout the years. I also acknowledge the essential contributions of York's geography department and of my committee members, Kean Birch and Stefan Kipfer. I appreciate the stimulating opportunities provided by many colleagues, to speak about this thesis and conduct further research, notably Mircea Vultur at the INRS, Violaine Jolivet at the UdeM, everyone involved with CRIMT, CAG, CAWLS and IDIVOSH, and Shiva Mohan at the CERC. The many discussions with colleagues working on similar issues played a pivotal role in shaping this academic journey. Finally, I give thanks to those closest to me, my parents Pierre and Louise, who created an environment that has been both stimulating and supportive. To Sophie, Corinne and Kim for keeping me grounded and providing support throughout the years.

iv. Publications note

This thesis adopts a traditional manuscript-based format, incorporating materials from diverse sources, including publications in various journals, edited volumes, and blogs. Some material from the Paris case found in Chapter 4 was first published in 2022 as a short blog post for platformlabour.net, an ERC funded research project under the supervision of van Doorn. This chapter was later expanded and published in Antipode Journal as: "Citizen-rentier-ship: Delivering the Undocumented to Labour Platforms in Paris" in the Fall of 2023. Following a conference at the INRS in the Spring of 2022, parts of Chapter 4 and 5, mostly the Toronto case, were published as a book chapter in French for the edited volume titled: "*Les plateformes de travail numériques. Polygraphie d'un nouveau modèle organisationnel*", under the direction of Vultur. In the Fall of 2023, I was asked to write a chapter for the edited volume: "The Global Platform Economy & the Local Conditioning of Algorithmic Work" edited by A. Wolf and M. Figueroa. Material found in Chapter 6 was published as a forthcoming chapter for this book. Finally, interviews collected for the Toronto case were also used for a comparative study between Montreal and Toronto, along with my colleague Vultur. This study was submitted as an article, in French, for the journal PISTES ("*Perspectives interdisciplinaires sur le travail et la santé"*) following the IDIVOSH conference. For this thesis, the bibliography was generated with Zotero. When e-books are consulted APA6 does not include pagination.

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vii. List of Acronyms

Association des Plateformes d'Indépendantes (API)
Atelier Parisien d'Urbanisme (APUR)
Autorité de régulation des plateformes d'emploi (ARPE)
Canadian Border and Security Agency (CBSA)
Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)
Canada Emergency Student Benefit (CESB)
Centre de Rétention Administratif (CRA)
Centre d'Enregistrement et de Révision des Formulaires Administratifs (CERFA)
Citizen-*rentier*-ship (CRS)
Collectif des Livreurs Autonomes de Paris (CLAP)
Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT)
Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail (CFDT)
Confédération Nationale du Travail (CNT)
Contrat de travail à durée déterminée (CDD)
Contrat de travail à durée indéterminée (CDI)
Cotisation Foncière des Entreprises (CFE)
Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW)
European Trade Union Institute (ETUI)
European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)
European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF)
European Union (EU)
Fédération Nationale des Auto-Entrepreneurs et microentrepreneurs (FNAE)
Force Ouvrière (FO)
Gig Workers United (GWU)
Global Production Networks (GPN)
Greater Toronto Area (GTA)
Groupe d'Information et de Soutien des Immigré-es (GISTI)
Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB)
Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques (INSEE)
Institut National de la Recherche Scientifique (INRS)
International Mobility Program (IMP)
International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF)
Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)
Maison Des Coursiers (MDC)
Migrant Workers Alliance for Change (MWAC)
Obligation de Quitter le Territoire Français (OQTF)
Parti Communiste Français (PCF)
Quartier Prioritaire de la Ville (QPV)
Réseau Express Régional (RER)
Salaire Minimum de Croissance (SMIC)
Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP)
United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW)
Union de recouvrement des cotisations de sécurité sociale et d'allocations familiales (URSSAF)

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

"If you think you're coming to collect the dole and sit around, it's not going to happen. Go somewhere else." – Doug Ford, Ontario's Prime Minister, on immigrant workers, October 2021

July 2022

On a busy lunch hour in downtown Toronto, I find myself in the fast-paced world of Uber Eats deliveries. Pedaling through crowded streets, I stop near another food deliverer, a seasoned rider on his $3000 electric bike. He multitasks by switching interfaces between Skip The Dishes and Uber Eats on his phone. A new order takes me to a noodle shop near Queen and Spadina, a 10-minute ride away. Eager to deliver fast, I arrive at the shop only to find that the order isn't ready yet. Patience is needed, as a Door Dash driver pulls up, hazard lights on, also awaiting his order. In a casual exchange, he shares that he comes from Jamaica and has been navigating between Door Dash and Uber Eats for a couple of months.

Our wait becomes a social gathering as a third rider comes in wearing an all-blue suit and a big helmet labeled "F.O.D.".[1] He joins the scene, with his matching blue scooter parked on the sidewalk. We engage in lively discussions about the day's order volume, traffic jams, and the occasional sluggish pace of some restaurants. As time ticks away, a fourth rider, also affiliated with Uber Eats, adds to the growing circle at the shop's entrance. Conversations flow timidly, touching upon the perks and challenges of food delivery gig work. After a 30-minute wait, the last

[1] Food On Delivery was a platform startup from Toronto who declared bankruptcy in 2023.

rider cancels his order. “No way I can wait for this long”, he says, before swiftly leaving. This brief encounter encapsulates the urban hustle, the challenges and the impromptu decisions that characterize the daily experiences of delivery riders in the heart of Toronto.

February 2022

On one of my first nights in Paris, my friend and I decide to go out for food. It is a match night for the local soccer team, the P.S.G. (Paris Saint Germain). They are playing in their home stadium, the famous Parc des Princes, which is situated on the farthest reaches of the East side of Paris. On this Friday night, around 9:00 pm, my friend and I, along with three other couriers, are patiently awaiting our slices at a pizza shop. This is the peak time for food delivery. The significance of soccer for food delivery is marked by the league officially renamed ‘Ligue 1 Uber Eats’ in 2020, following a substantial €15 million per year partnership with the platform. The convergence of soccer and food delivery is palpable in the vibrant urban atmosphere.

I try to spark a conversation with the couriers at the pizza shop. They affirm the intensity of the night, revealing that orders flood nonstop during game nights. Busy nights are rare nowadays in big cities with the over-recruitment of couriers by platforms. My friend and I return home on his motorcycle across the various *arrondissements*. As we pause at a red light on a busy intersection on the 11th, we see the essence of Parisian food delivery. Four food couriers, each with distinctive cubiform delivery bags, ride alongside us. Two are on scooters, the other two on motorcycles, representing various platforms such as Uber Eats, Gerti, Picard, and Deliveroo. The traffic signal switches to green, and with synchronized engines the couriers speed through the intersection, showcasing the interconnected rhythms of urban life in Paris.

*

In the initial months of 2020, as many found themselves confined to their homes, a distinct category of workers ventured into the near-empty streets. They were delivery couriers, navigating cities to bring food to those adhering to lockdown measures. The food delivery orders surged with the emergence of new online delivery platforms. Platforms were establishing new partnerships with restaurants to fulfill the exponentially growing number of orders.

In major North American and European cities, another notable trend emerged: the over-representation of immigrant deliverers within the workforces of these platforms. Paris witnessed the growing participation of undocumented workers who seized this sudden opportunity to work by renting accounts. For almost two years, these riders, many in highly precarious housing situations, worked for Uber Eats, Deliveroo, and more. Near the end of 2022, the platforms deactivated numerous accounts deemed fraudulent - accounts owned by 'citizens' but rented by undocumented workers. The abrupt deactivation of 2500 Uber Eats accounts overnight left an impact and undocumented workers took to the streets to protest deactivations, as well as low pay and misclassification. While the phenomenon of "pump and dump"[2] strategies associated with precarious immigrant labour is not a new occurrence, the contemporary ways in which it is executed through digital platforms vastly expand its reach and impact.

[2] In finance, the term 'pump and dump' means to artificially boost the price of a stock (pump) and then getting rid of those assets at a profit (dump). It was also used by journalists to characterize Uber Eats strategy in Paris, with mass hiring to face growing demand (pump) and firing/deactivations when orders got low (dump). https://www.wired.com/story/uber-eats-paris-protests/

Across the Atlantic, Toronto saw a similar situation unfold. As working conditions deteriorated, Canadian students and artists fled the food delivery industry. They were replaced by precarious immigrants and racialized workers.[3] Precarious international students from India, needing to pay tens of thousands of dollars in tuition fees every year, are now doing most of the delivery work in downtown Toronto. Many are sharing housing with 10 to 15 other people to make ends meet.[4] This shows how the platform economy is at the intersection of various state and urban policies regarding employment regulation, immigration, and tech innovation.

This thesis is about the dialectical relationship between *exploitation* and *resistance* found in modern platform food delivery labour. Owners and managers of these technological companies are constantly looking for ways to reach profitability; trying to find how to extract more surplus-value from workers, restaurants and customers (van Doorn & Badger, 2020). A significant number of migrant workers find themselves forced to remain connected online, waiting for orders, dedicating time without compensation, and ultimately making a meager hourly wage. This situation creates an environment where platforms can continually reduce wages, taking advantage of the limited choices available to their workers. These platforms are strategically positioned at the intersection of urban techno-solutionism, gig work, migration, and precarity. Despite facing multiple layers of challenges, including financial hardships, housing instability, citizenship issues, policing concerns, and compromised health and safety conditions, workers are actively organizing

[3] For an in-depth review of the changes at Uber - including worsening of working conditions - since the arrival of Dara Khosrowshahi see Sherman (2023): https://www.forbes.com/sites/lensherman/2023/12/15/ubers-ceo-hides-driver-pay-cuts-to-boost-profits/?sh=493911433ba4

[4] A full portrait of the situation by CBC's 'The Fifth Estate' (Oct. 13th, 2022) can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dNrXA5m7ROM&ab_channel=TheFifthEstate

and asserting their agency. They navigate algorithmic surveillance and disciplinary measures, while also demonstrating resilience and resistance in interconnected ways (Woodcock, 2021b).

Understanding the current platformization of capitalist urbanization and its resistance, through a sociospatial comparison between Toronto and Paris, will help shed the light on this new phenomenon. The term 'platformization' gained in popularity in recent years within critical urban research, notably with new edited volumes such as 'Platformization of urban life' (Strüver & Bauriedl, 2022) or 'Platformization and Informality' (Huws & Surie, 2023). Many researchers, as well as myself, understand this process as a shift of society towards digital platforms in all facets of (urban) everyday life. We have seen digital platforms 'insert' themselves in most economic, social, governmental, and infrastructural spheres of societies.

The general platformization of capitalist urbanization is in part allowed by a shifting of states towards laissez-faire economics and innovation policies. In 2017, during his address to VivaTech – an annual tech conference in Paris – French President Emmanuel Macron announced tax cuts and a 10 billion euro investment for building towards what he called the '*start-up nation*'. His goal was to build a stronger bond between tech entrepreneurship a French state that does not: "regulate everything, but rather allows tech companies to flourish".[5]

Jeannot and Cottin-Marx, in their recent book "*La privatisation numérique*" (2022), have noted an intertwined phenomenon of privatization and platformization of the state's public sectors. They argue that this is only the tip of the iceberg of the start-up movement taking over public services.

[5]Macron's speech can be found here: https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2017/06/15/discours-du-president-de-la-republique-au-salon-vivatech-201

Analyzing what they call the 'uberization' of the state, they note that private platforms are bound to play a bigger role in Macron's future techno-neoliberal utopia (Jeannot & Cottin-Marx, 2022). A similar idea will be developed further in Chapter 2, through the concept of platform urbanism.

In Paris, the widespread practice of renting profiles on platforms, off someone with legal access to the labour market, has allowed undocumented food couriers to deliver meals for labour platforms. Sometimes, they do so while also being chased down by the police for staying 'illegally' in the country (Baril, 2024). While Macron's program argued for a shifting of the state towards laissez-faire economics and technological innovations, it is simultaneously hardening migration policies for irregular migrants. In December 2023, the French parliament passed an immigration reform, making it easier to for the state to deport irregular migrants, notably through OQTF (*Obligation de Quitter le Territoire Français*). Undocumented workers then participated in the mobilizations against the bill in January 2024.[6]

A similar situation is observed in Canada. In Toronto, platformized capitalist urbanization intersects with migration, education, and technological laissez-faire in similar, but not identical manner. While with temporary status, international students, permanent residents, and refugees are currently delivering for Uber Eats, DoorDash or Skip The Dishes for low pay and without protection and benefits. In 2023, a temporary policy removed a cap on the '20-hour work limit' that international students could work while in classes. Many used this opportunity to log in countless hours on food delivery platforms. International students enrolled in private colleges pay five times the tuitions paid by domestic students in Canada. Moreover, journalists reveal that these

[6] https://www.radiofrance.fr/franceculture/podcasts/journal-de-18h/journal-de-18h-emission-du-dimanche-21-janvier-2024-6166301

colleges offer subpar education to these students, whom not only have to pay exorbitant tuition fees for those diplomas, but also see increasing costs of rent and living.[7] The temporary policy came to an end on December 31st, 2023. One student note: "I am a student. My main concern should be studying, but right now my main concern is: will I be able to pay rent? Will I be able to pay my groceries when the limit is 20 hours?"[8]

The race for monopoly control of major food delivery markets has led tech platforms to resort to exploitative, unequal, sometimes illegal, forms of employment. The events discussed above also remind us how omnipresent the start-up mentalities '*move fast and break things*' or '*ask for forgiveness, not permission*' still are.

1.1 Research questions and thesis

An important debate currently going on in social sciences revolves around asking: Is the platform economy new or is it simply a reiteration of classic capitalist relations. In other words, is it simply old wine in a new bottle? As we will see with the Paris and Toronto cases, two processes have been colliding in the recent decades: i) the commodification of social reproduction, referring to household work such as cooking, cleaning, babysitting or dog walking. This type of work is increasingly taken over by private companies where immigrants, often racialized, are over-represented. This has been going on for a while, way before modern labour platforms. ii) the

[7] In Canada, between 2014 and 2019, price of housing went up 20% while wages remind the same. See CBC, The Fifth Estate, Oct. 13th, 2022.

[8] https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/cap-students-work-hours-1.7050994#:~:text=On%20Dec.,only%2020%20hours%20per%20week

platformization of labour, meaning any type of labour market where the selling or hiring of labour power is done through digital platforms. Labour platforms, especially food delivery platforms, have also seen an over-representation of racialized immigrants working for them.

These two processes inform us about the growth of precarious work in urban settings. Doorn, Ferrari & Graham (2022) recently called for a refocusing of the literature on gig work towards the "platform-mediated commodification of migrant labour". In the case of labour platforms, social space and local geographies matter. The primary objective of this thesis is to look at the relationships between food delivery platforms, state and local governments, migrant workers and traditional unions, through a political economy lens. This dialectical relationship ('*exploitation-resistance*') is at the heart of this project. With the context introduced above, the thesis poses two main general questions:

1. How do food delivery couriers, notably urban immigrants, come to work in, exercise agency, and experience the platform-mediated food delivery markets of Paris and Toronto?
2. How do social movements by food delivery couriers, advocacy groups and labour unions play a role in shaping platform-mediated urban gig work?

Based on interviews with riders, experts, community workers and other activists in Paris and Toronto, this thesis will show the importance of citizenship ambiguity and migrant labour in the extraction of value by labour platforms. It will also discuss the role played by traditional unions in this new form of employment. The lived experiences of migrant workers doing food delivery for labour platforms has not received as much attention in the media and in academic research as misclassification issues or algorithmic management. By re-centering the focus on the stories of

migrant couriers, this thesis provides some answers for the questions above. Two main transformations were identified during the fieldwork:

1. The expansion of 'citizen-*rentier*-ship' (CRS)
2. The workers' resistance to labour platformization

The first process from this two cities case-study, which answers the first question, is what I call 'citizen-*rentier*-ship' (CRS). The goal is to build around work done by citizenship studies of migrant labour in urban spaces, and recent work in science and technology studies around 'rentiership'.

Economic and regulatory rents extracted by platforms in France and Canada are possible because of citizenship precariousness in many cases. The research will show that, in both Toronto and Paris, ambiguities in labour market regulations allowed platforms to benefit from the citizenship status of many of their workers. This precarious migration status is due to a plethora of state policies and regulations. Despite having access to sections of the labour market, immigrants often end up doing precarious and dangerous labour. This type of labour is now easily accessible because of the platforms' infrastructures which, unlike traditional forms of employment have no formal interviews, no surveillance on who is doing the labour, where and for how long.

Using aggressive competitive tactics, platforms have changed some of the employment facets of urban labour. This results in more precarity for migrant workers. These workers accept online-unpaid time which often exceed their expectations. They constitute a pool of labourers willing to deliver far, fast and for cheap pay. Many other stakeholders insert themselves in this new work

environment (e-bike rental companies, security background check firms, data brokers, government agencies, etc.).

The stance taken in this thesis is that the exploitation of migrant workers in urban spaces is not a new phenomenon. There has been a lot of research on migrant workers, on employers and traditional unions, and even on the rise of precarious gig work. Some researchers have brought necropolitics and food delivery together to understand how profits are made off precarity (Orr et al., 2022). They note how dehumanising some of the aspects of platform economy work are. This speaks to other research on the dynamics of power under algorithmic management that affect the bodies of workers (Bissell, 2021). To bring forth a complementary view on how new labour platforms hire workers, extract value, and produce urban spaces, this thesis will focus on precarious migration status.

The second part, which answers the second question, will look at the resistance by workers to labour platformization. Both local resistance and local regulations play a key role in the development of labour platforms. As I will argue, the platformization of labour is not solely a force that is changing urban spaces through experimentation and innovation, it is also itself changed by local geographies, regulations, and resistance. There are various ways and examples where the scaling up of a platform was stopped or altered by local resistance. Platformization is also limited in its capacity to undertake new spaces and new projects. We have seen food delivery platforms being messy, experimental, and built on trial/errors. I will show through multiple cases (Foodora in Canada, Deliveroo in France, Frichti & Stuart in Paris, Uber Eats in Toronto and Paris) that one set of rules or marketing techniques working in one place does not mean it will work in another.

Platforms face local resistance by a wide range of actors from regulators, traditional unions to migrant workers' collectives. Conceptualizing the resistance to labour platformization must therefore include unionism, collective agency and local responses to exploitation as integral parts of the socio-historical contexts where capitalist firms want to do business.

Through these two co-constitutive parts (exploitation-resistance), this thesis will show that labour platforms resort to uneven, messy, and sometimes illegal strategies to make their way in urban spaces and scale up their operations. In New York City for example, the American food delivery platform GrubHub decided to launch a promotional offer: $15 off any order made in the New York City area between 11am and 2pm. This offer was put in place by the platform following a large survey that found 69% of working New Yorkers have skipped lunch at least once. The result was an unexpected 6,000 orders per minute creating huge backlogs in restaurants, overwhelming delivery riders and ultimately crashing the application.[9]

Platforms are also reshaping sociospatial relations of everyday urban life, notably how immigrants find work upon their arrival in advanced capitalist countries. When standard relations of work are reshaped, so are resistance strategies. This thesis will demonstrate the importance of traditional unions and grassroots collectives of workers for the resistance to exploitation. Historically in France, relations between the unions, the employers, and the state were hostile (Rehfeldt & Vincent, 2023). As we have seen in the recent social unrest in Paris, relations between unions, platform companies, and new branches of government, are still tense. Platforms often brand

[9] https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/may/18/this-cant-be-real-grubhub-promotion-turns-new-york-city-restaurants-into-a-war-zone?fbclid=IwAR2CpP0qzum%E2%80%A6

themselves as progress (a potential better techno-future for cities). However, this is done while also concealing and exploiting precarious migrant workers. This is how they can generate revenues. Social movements are at the heart of the changing labour markets and show how both exploitation and resistance is anchored in socio-historical contexts.

1.2 Geographies of food delivery platforms

The first challenge is defining who the main 'disruptors' are (food delivery platforms), and more generally, what is the process of platformization of labour in urban spaces. The process of platformization takes many different forms. In in simplest form, it increases use of the digital infrastructures in all aspects of social life. It is simultaneously externalizing management responsibilities to algorithms, extending the potential reach of this type of labour because of its easy access (through a smartphone and data plan), and centralizing personal data of clients, workers and restaurants.

Helmond describes 'platforms' as infrastructures used to expend into external online spaces (Helmond, 2015). The data acquired via the web format is re-used *for* and *by* the platform. It fits economic interest through the commodification of user activities and content. 'Platformization' is "the rise of the platform as the dominant infrastructural and economic model of the social web and its consequences" (Helmond, 2015: 1). This joins Srnicek's now influential book 'Platform Capitalism' (2017) that defines platforms as:

> Platforms are enclave economic systems, […] users are limited in their market-like interactions to other users on the platform; they have no access to non-platform (market)

> actors and, as such, the supply and demand of a particular good or service is limited to those within the enclave (Srnicek, 2017: 47)
>
> [Platforms] are characterized by providing the infrastructure to intermediate between different user groups, by displaying monopoly tendencies driven by network effects, by employing cross-subsidization to draw in different user groups, and by having a designed core architecture that governs the interaction possibilities (Srnicek, 2017: 76)

Platforms act as intermediaries, infrastructures and interfaces to provide closed markets for labour buying and selling, but also to collect data on customers and workers. Datasets collected daily are re-integrated in the platform to make the marketing and the labour process more efficient, what many called 'algorithmic management' (Griesbach et al., 2019; Herr, 2021; Stark & Pais, 2020; Woodcock, 2021a). I will argue throughout this thesis that platforms benefit from regulations put in place by the Canadian and French states regarding citizenship and precarious migrant labour.

Platforms can set their focus on many different facets of everyday life. In 'Labour in contemporary capitalism' (2019), Huws argues that the rise of platform service work is part of a larger commodification of reproductive labour. Hence, this thesis considers delivery as: "the kinds of subsistence or consumption labour that are either carried out as unpaid work by household members, or as paid servants or delivered by casual workers in the informal economy as servant labour" (Huws, 2019: 122). What are the different types of platforms and who works for them? Many have explored some of the reasons why migrants end up in precarious gig work (Altenried, 2022; Lam & Triandafyllidou, 2022; van Doorn, 2022). Platform gig work can take various forms. Platforms are usually divided in the literature into 4 categories:

1) *Capital* platform, where goods are bought and sold (e.g. Amazon)
2) *Non-Profit Organization* platform (e.g. Wikipedia)
3) *Information* platform, where surplus-value is extracted off data (e.g. Facebook)
4) ***Labour* platform,** where labour-power is bought and sold (e.g. Uber Eats)

This classification of platforms from various authors (Grabher, 2020b; Sadowski, 2020a; van Doorn & Badger, 2020) helps narrow the focus of this research on the fourth category, which is 'labour platforms'. For-profit labour platforms are built on a trajectory that first started with a 'sharing' discourse (Schor, 2020; Schor & Vallas, 2021). Over the last decade, the promises of the sharing economy faded and the critics of platform-mediated labour exploded (Ravenelle, 2019; Rosenblat, 2018; Scholz, 2017). Platform workers have seen their wages decrease over that time period (Fuchs, 2014). As Toronto-based law professor Tucker (2020) argues, platforms are limited in their ability to collect rents from clients (what they can charge). Therefore, he argues, it "makes the extraction of surplus value from ground workers crucial to the platform capitalist's ability to turn a profit or staunch the losses incurred in scaling up" (Tucker, 2020: 195). To make sure that the pools of labourers are always online and ready-to-deliver, delivery platforms use over-recruitment techniques. Uber Eats, for example, does not cap the number of riders on its app. Anyone can sign up and start delivering. The consequence of this is the end of a minimum wage for riders.

As van Doorn (2022) also found, migrants in the Global North end up working for labour platforms in precarious conditions. He argues that food delivery is characterised by informality and absence of regulations, which then intensify exploitation and allow platforms to scale up rapidly and around the traditional rules of employment (van Doorn, 2022).

The labour market for online gig work on labour platforms is three-fold:

1) *Crowdsourced*, in a deterritorialized manner (e.g. MechanicalTurk),
2) *Freelance*, which is for the offering of specific skills (e.g. UpWork)
3) ***Location-specific***, which is place-based (e.g. Uber Eats)

This three-fold categorization narrows the definition of food delivery platforms to "place-based labour platforms" (Graham & Woodcock, 2018). To show the interconnectedness of urban spaces as a key site of migration, exploitation and resistance, my multiple case study will explore how food delivery platforms offer a quick solution for newcomers in their migration trajectories.

Many newcomers have no other choice but to take on gig work to eat, pay rent or send money back home. At the intersection of racial capitalism and platform capitalism is a concept currently growing in popularity called 'racial platform capitalism' (Bernard, 2023; Gebrial, 2022). Both Bernard (2023) and Gebrial's (2022) empirical studies of Uber driving in Paris, London and Montreal found how platform capitalism is built on social-historical contexts of racism and colonialism. Bernard's book #UberUsés (2023) is a deep inquiry into the everyday lives of Uber drivers in Paris, London and Montreal. Her fieldwork reveals many of the structural conditions of employment that pushed immigrants and racialized workers towards Uber driving. Firstly, in Paris, Uber targeted traditional taxi drivers and private drivers (VTC or *Véhicule de Tourisme avec Chauffeur*) – mainly racialized men. Secondly, the company launched a vast communication operation in the popular neighbourhoods, the *banlieues* (suburbs), where unemployment rates among racialized men is high. This shows how interlocked processes of platformization and racialization are.

Many more companies insert themselves in 'location specific' platform labour. It is part of the changing urban landscape. The online foodservice delivery business needs external companies, such as screenings and background checks security companies, e-bike rentals and repairs companies offering services to the workers, surge finder apps, ghost kitchens and their platforms,

and temporary food trucks. Those new business opportunities came quickly with the rise of food delivery. New e-bike markets, for example, offer monthly subscriptions to riders that need this type of transportation to make a full day of deliveries. When doing deliveries in Toronto or Paris, one quickly comes to the realization that the only way to make a living with food delivery is by doing the work on an e-bike or scooter. The e-bike rental market is quickly growing with multiple companies either selling, renting or repairing e-bikes. The most popular option among new couriers is the rental of an e-bike through Zoomo, Zap, Zigg, or Emmo. Many are also buying used e-bikes on online markets like Facebook's 'Marketplace', Craigslist or Kijiji. Many newcomers choose this option to maximize the work opportunities, and because you don't need insurance or licenses for driving an e-bike. Rentals also allow a quick start, since buying a brand-new e-bike can cost multiple thousands of dollars. E-bike repair shops also started offering rentals, most notably Amego, Emmo, MotorX and GreenMoto, which are often seen in downtown Toronto. E-bike shops represent the 'ground' level of workers finding e-bikes. At a more national level, and even supra-national level, companies offer subscription-based e-bike rental opportunities. Zap and Zigg for example, offer monthly subscription for e-bike rentals. This is branded as 'delivery rider friendly' and can cost up to 150$/month. This is another added cost for couriers, which is offloaded from the delivery platform onto the worker. Zoomo emerged as a global e-bike renting start-up operating in Euro-America, notably the U.-S., the U.-K., Canada, France, Germany and Spain.

A second new business opportunity that came with the rise of online food service delivery is the arrival of ghost kitchens and temporary food trucks for delivery only. Many chains such as Wendy's have installed 'food trucks' for delivery couriers to pick up orders. The separation of the walk-in customer and the delivery-customer is seen in multiple types of restaurants in Toronto.

Some restaurants offer kitchen services for multiple 'online' restaurants that only exist on the platforms. Moreover, the rise of platform-mediated food delivery has led to the creation of 'ghost' kitchen companies. These companies followed the same 'plaformized' model as delivery companies with a platform infrastructure for restaurants wanting to separate their delivery-customers from their walk-in customers through monthly subscriptions. This service is built-in the digital infrastructure offered by ghost kitchen platforms.

As described by Vandaele (2022), the literature on platform food delivery is mostly focused on algorithmic management, independent contractorship, misclassification issue and the general labour process. Labour process theory and gig work are understood as a convergence of four steps (Gandini, 2019):

1) *function* of labour in capital accumulation in the workplace;
2) *role of skills* in this process;
3) *logic of control* of the labour process by an employer;
4) ***social relations between capital and labour*** in the workplace as 'structurally antagonistic'

Per Gandini (2018), labour process theory and Marxist approaches in general must understand the platform economy as a historical continuum with degrees of variations, from 'techno-normative' control to antagonistic relations between employers and workers. As for Gandini, many scholars have mobilized labour process theory for characterizing work management by place-based labour platforms (Tassinari & Maccarrone, 2020; Veen et al., 2020). The study of different cases of food couriers and drivers organizing in cities around the world is part of labour geography's new focus on gig workers' agency (Heiland, 2021b; Johnston, 2020; Wells et al., 2020). Food delivery platforms face a plethora of local resistance around the world. They focus on different issues, because of the specificities of each local workforce. Corporations must adapt to the urban and

labour geographies where they want to extract value. Autonomy, solidarity, recognition and contestation *of* and *by* food couriers, notably those in precarious citizenship, financial and housing situations, will be a large part of this study.

Food delivery platforms are competing for clients, but also for labour (e.g. the online time of workers on the interface, the amount of 'accepted' orders or the capacity to deliver faster and further). Many of the major local labour markets are populated by low-paid precarious and racialized migrant workers, the primary source of platform workers (Tucker, 2020). International students and permanent residents are often structurally put in situations where they must work hours to pay tuition fees, for diploma equivalence, housing and the tools to work. In the same sense, MacMillan Cottom (2020) argues that platform capitalism is a site of racial capitalism, a new intersection worth studying. For MacMillan Cottom, platforms "introduce new layers of opacity into every facet of social life" which is crucial for the study of racism and capitalism (Cottom, 2020: 443). However, two aspects are often less discussed in the literature on racialized urban platform labour: the role of citizenship status and the resistance to labour platformization. Immigrants are over-represented in food delivery work which is often deemed 'unskilled' and therefore present low barriers to entry.

In sum, this is a thesis on place-based platform-mediated food delivery, how platforms can profit from ambiguous citizenship regulations and how couriers resist in these two locations. The reason why I chose to focus on the urban scale is because it first resonates more with riders both in Paris and in Toronto. Many moved to Paris or to Toronto because they had either housing or work opportunities. This does not mean that national regulations are forgotten. Regarding migration

policies and labour laws for example, the national contexts will come first in the analysis. However, the urban process remains the central lens of this thesis which I consider to be part of a continuity with capitalist urbanization. In France, the Paris market is ubiquitous compared to the rest of the country. Similarly, Toronto represents most of the sales in Canada. The urban is the mainstage for platform companies to operate.

1.3 Outline of the thesis

At the intersection of critical urban studies and labour geography, this research aims to contribute to the growing body of literature on platform-mediated labour. Notably, it reinforces the importance of migration, of the urban-labour nexus and of unionism for the development of the platform economy through a comparative study of two major cities. It will reiterate the importance of migrant workers' resistance, notably for future research discussing algorithmic and racialized exploitation.

Chapter 2 will cover some of the global processes that led to the emergence of platform urbanism as one of the new forces driving capitalist urbanization today. After decades of work on globalization and neoliberalization, urban and labour studies are now developing key new fields like platform urbanism and platform capitalism to ask: "Are urban spaces Uberized?"[10] This will lead to my conceptualization of CRS as a useful tool to understand how labour platforms profit off citizenship precarity. It will also note the importance agency and the labour geography project.

[10] This formulation comes from F. Namberger's PhD thesis 'Uberizing the Urban' (2022).

This will be pertinent when looking at labour resistance to platformization and exploitation in Euro-America.

Chapter 3 presents the methodological framework used to conduct this study. One of the central themes of this thesis is the importance of scales in urban comparison. As not many studies have tackled platformized migrant labour, citizenship and platform-mediated food delivery, a discussion on research methods for this type of geographical analysis will help show the connectedness of contemporary urban platformization. This chapter also outlines where fieldwork was conducted, information about the interviewees, ethics implications and other methods used, such as doing participatory observation (becoming a food delivery courier for Uber Eats in Toronto).

Chapter 4 discusses the experiences of undocumented workers and migrant workers in Paris. This section will show how companies in Paris can profit from the ambiguity of citizenship precariousness. Using the 'hyper-precarious trap' concept, but also expending it to other scales and types of citizenship, this section will empirically build the concept of CRS. The case of Frichti shows that the platform targeted sans-papiers during hire, put exploitative work conditions, then fired them when media pressure started to grow. By considering the experiences of platform-mediated migrant food delivery couriers, it will show four aspects of this job that creates hyper-precarity for migrants who are often in a no-choice situation.

Chapter 5 will investigate the case of Toronto. Uber Eats has been the subject of many studies. However, there have not been many discussions on how it can profit from workers in precarious citizenship conditions in Canada. This chapter will show, on the one hand, how the Canadian

migration regulations fit what Uber needs to extract value. On the other hand, ambiguities concerning migrant workers allow the platforms to extract value. Uber Eats has also been benefiting from a large pool of migrant workers that are having a hard time affording life in Toronto. They must stay online and unpaid for large portions of the day, delivering in dangerous conditions, to make ends meet.

Chapter 6 presents two cases that highlight the 'ground-level' resistance to exploitation in platform labour. Through multiple interviews with couriers, experts, actors of the resistance and union representatives, this chapter explores how resistance is shaping regulations and restraining platform-exploitation. First, it dives into the case of Frichti and Stuart, which were the first *sans-papiers* strikes in Paris. Second, it will explore the Foodora unionization campaign in Toronto. Through these two cases, this chapter will show how newly arrived or newly formed platforms such as Foodora and Frichti are limited by local workforce and resistance. The *sans-papiers* strikes at Frichti (and Stuart), with the help of the CGT, follows the long socio-historical experience of sans-papiers strikes in France. It also highlights a double role played by the French state in creating the sans-papiers status and profiting off precarity, notably through the public owned platform Stuart. The case of Foodora in Toronto shows the importance of physical space and traditional unions, which are common factors to the Paris cases. It also discusses connections between resistance movements in the two cities in a relational perspective.

This chapter, through relational comparison (Hart, 2002), analyzes some aspects of platforms' operations, but most importantly how their workers resist. Uber Eats is in two cities, but acts in different ways in its relationship with the city/local governments. It is also in dialogue with

different private actors, traditional unions (GWU, CGT, CUPW, CLAP) and the national French and Canadian states. Ideas of policies for 'platform urbanism' (Barns, 2019, 2020) have been travelling between cities through networks of professional actors (Peck & Theodore, 2015). Uber Eats (as for Deliveroo) is largely dependent on precarious migrant workers for revenues. To build this workforce they must use various tactics. I developed this idea by looking at how it uses targeted ads for racialized youth in suburban neighborhoods, and through 'partnerships' with corporate unions for representing workers (UFCW in Canada, FNAE in France).

The concluding chapter will highlight some of the theoretical contributions made in this thesis and identify the various policy implications that this research entails. It will also discuss the future of platform mediated food delivery and potential new areas for research.

CHAPTER II: RACIAL PLATFORM CAPITALISM

"We are going to be able to deport even more foreigners with this law." – Gérald Darmanin, France's Minister of Interior, January 2023 on immigration reform

This chapter provides the theoretical framework for this thesis. It contains two co-constitutive parts to migrant platform gig work: an urban dimension and a labour dimension. The urban-labour nexus follows a tradition of empirical work and workers' inquiry (Engels, 1844; Marx & Engels, 1848). The relationship between *where* and *how* workers work, live and exercise agency is at the heart of a research project on urban platform labour. This current form of racial platform capitalism can generate revenues because of a long history of racialization and precarization of immigrant workers in the city. Robinson's *Black Marxism* (1983) investigates historical racial ordering. Per Robinson, racial exploitation dating back to colonial Euro-America still permeates in today's economy (Robinson, 1983). Racial ordering, for him, predates capitalism and is the main driving force of exploitation. Robinson goes against a purely orthodox Marxism that reads from class position first (Paret & Levenson, 2024). Highly exploited racialized workers are key for the regimes of capitalist accumulation. These links between platformization and informality are being observed all around the world (Huws & Surie, 2023).

The intersection of racial capitalism and platform capitalism is at the center of this research project. One of the main arguments found in this thesis is that a study of platform labour needs to be connected to considerations of migration and citizenship. It is crucial to include racial capitalism,

and citizenship studies to this type of analysis, as migrant labour is a fast-growing part of urban labour in Western societies.

Previous debates in labour geography have called for a refocusing of the attention towards racial capitalism and colonialism (Pulido, 2017; Strauss, 2019). Urban precarity of racialized workers has been around for a long time, before platform labour. Platform capitalism is now a key site of racial capitalism (McMillan Cottom, 2020). Racial capitalism refers to the many relationships found between racial inequality and capitalism (Go, 2021). Many other scholars followed this idea, arguing that there is a generalized devaluation of nonwhite bodies, which has been incorporated in today's economic processes (Pulido, 2017). The racial exploitation that dates from colonial Euro-America still permeates today's economy. Another important component of racial capitalism is that it is typically referring to "global relations rather than capitalism within a single national context" (Go, 2021: 39). This chapter will mobilize various theoretical frameworks from critical urban studies and labour geography to answer the research questions, notably how urban migrants experience platform labour and exercise agency. It will also connect past work on space, scales, and neoliberal urbanism to contemporary work on platform urbanism.

2.1 Algorithmic and racialized exploitation in urban Euro-America

As Huws (2019) recently reminds us, technological relationships such as algorithmic management of labour, surveillance or artificial intelligence are embedded in sociohistorical capitalist processes. Following the 2008 financial crisis, alternatives to the neoliberal economy

were being proposed by the left and the right. This led to many arguing for a new type of technological future rooted in the idea of sharing unused resources - the 'sharing economy' (Sundararajan, 2016). For example, if you needed a specific tool, technology could connect you to a neighbor willing to let you borrow it for a certain amount of time. Although the birth of the platform economy has its roots in this idea of sharing, it morphed over the years into hyper-forms of exploitation.[11] Technological start-ups found ways to monetize this pseudo-return to barter economy by charging a service fee on every interaction found within their digital infrastructure.

Moreover, the platform economy was marketed to people with a car, or a bike, and some free time as a way to earn extra money. The platform economy tapped into each sociohistorical area in different ways. In Toronto, platform labour pulled from a large pool of racialized workers and international students in need of a fast second or third income to afford the increasing price of accommodation, food supply and transportation. In Paris, undocumented workers unable to apply for most work needed quick income without barriers.

This embeddedness of the platforms' development with urban spaces and socioeconomical processes led some researchers to conceptualizing it as 'actually existing platformization' (van Doorn et al., 2021). They argue that just like neoliberalization, platformization is a spatially uneven process that materialized through trial and error, where the private sector's strategies interact with pre-existing uses of space, state configurations and a variety of sociopolitical powers (Brenner et al., 2010; van Doorn et al., 2021). This idea will be developed further in section 2.1.3 where I will be discussing the role of neoliberalization in the current form of platform capitalism. I situate the

[11] In a reflective piece, and using a Polanyian framework, Grabher traces the development of platforms from the early stages of the 'sharing economy' to the modern disruptive platform economy we know today (Grabher, 2020a)

rise of the literature on platform capitalism in continuity with the decades of research on globalization and global cities, actually existing neoliberalism, and racial capitalism. This will be leading to a key concept for this thesis which is racial platform capitalism – or the intersection of racial capitalism (Robinson, 1983) and platform capitalism (Srnicek, 2017). This chapter argues that migration and citizenship studies should be included in discussions on platform-mediated gig work, notably given the growing popularity of the concept of racial platform capitalism. In the case of France and Canada, global capitalist labour platforms are built off the irregular situations of migrants, which allows them to generate revenues. Per Fanon, colonial racism is at the heart of racial exploitation (Fanon, 1952). Fanon's theorization of racism as part of a cultural system of oppression inherited from the colonial era, was one of the first to link racial ordering and capitalism. Racialized workers are subject to this type of exploitation today because of past colonialism and racialism (Fanon, 1961). However, just like racialized exploitation, platformization is also facing resistance.

The first way I decided to approach a political economy of platform-mediated food delivery is through the *urban* dimension. This perspective seems underdeveloped in the body of literature on food platforms. There are some discussions on these new roles in urbanism, which help understand the current transformations of cities, as well as worker resistance (Barns, 2019; Sadowski, 2020). Many of the workers' inquiry approach (Badger, 2021; Gandini, 2019; Woodcock, 2021b) to platform work are well defined in terms of the labour process, but a perspective that places migration and citizenship at the center of the argument is still missing. This means re-centering the discussion on current platform labour as part of a history of capitalist urbanization, migrant

labour and racial capitalism (Paret & Levenson, 2024). As MacMillan Cottom (2020) argues, platform capitalism is a site of racial capitalism.

This intertwined relationship between technologies and cities has been looked at by urban geographers for decades, but we now need to turn to this in relation to 'migrant platform labour' and 'racial platform capitalism'. This section of the chapter discusses the urban space through work done by critical urban studies, specifically on globalization, neoliberalization, platformization and technoscientific management. From Lefebvre's foundational urban theory (1970; 1974) to recent work on urbanism (Barns, 2020; Kuttler, 2022; Mattern, 2021), I consider the platformization of urban labour as the result of a longer trajectory of deregulation, monopolization and integration of technologies in cities (Brenner & Schmid, 2015). How can we use this body of work to make sense of the new platformized forms of labour and algorithmic management of urban workforces? Uber Eats' arrival (along with other labour platforms) can be put at the intersection of many subfields of urban studies: i) through a globalization/global cities analytical framework, as transnational corporations are built on cosmopolitan markets and tax heaven schemes; ii) a form of neoliberal urbanization/globalization, with a travelling lobby for private monopolies; iii) part of platform urbanism and the technoscientific management of cities.

The second way to understand the issues within food delivery platforms is through a *labour* dimension. This includes labour process theory, international political economy and labour geography as avenues to understand the problem (Heiland, 2021a; Moore & Joyce, 2020; Tucker, 2020). A large part of the research articles on platform-mediated food delivery workers traditionally focus on legal aspects such as misclassification, algorithmic exploitation, agency and

resistance (Bissell, 2021; Tassinari & Maccarrone, 2020; Triandafyllidou & Lam, 2021; Wells et al., 2020). Labour geographers have been at the forefront of the recent literature on platform labour, displacement of unions and the erosion of workers' rights (Johnston, 2020; Wells et al., 2020). This section will cover some of the work done on solidarity in the platform economy and the strengths and weaknesses of traditional unions (Vandaele, 2020, 2022). This will be critical for the analysis of the interviews with union organizers and spokespeople. It will also discuss workers under algorithmic management and individual and collective agency. The technoscientific management of workers is disguised as pragmatism, but racialized exploitation is hidden under a technological veil (Benjamin, 2019; McMillan Cottom, 2020; Strauss, 2019). Holston & Appaduraian connect globalization to urban neoliberalization, nationalism and immigration:

> Where the shanties of migrants sprout next to the mansions, factories, and skyscrapers of industrial-state capitalism, new kinds of citizens engage each other in struggles over the nature of belonging to the national society. Such struggles are particularly evident in the social movements of the urban poor for rights to the city. (Holston & Appadurai, 2003: 302)

Labour platformization is limited by the geographies of the urban spaces it is taking over. Generated revenues are built on migrant and precarious workers, but also subject to their resistance. Therefore, adding citizenship and migration perspectives to labour and resistance will be the most important contribution of this chapter.

The next sections will cover three major processes that played a role in the global production of urban spaces: globalization, neoliberalization and platformization. These are only three of the many ways urban geographers have been looking at cities and even though some might go in and out of fashion, there are still many important and relevant concepts to grasp, apply and learn from. Each of the processes above builds off the previous one. Even though they are historically

differently situated, they overlap and participate in a co-evolving way to the development of the urban. The role of migration and citizenship will be highlighted as a key part of the global political economy that creates cities and markets as we know them. This will lead to the conceptualization of citizen-rentier-ship (CRS) has a conceptual tool to understand how labour platforms can extract surplus-value off citizenship precarity in key urban areas via new technologies. Finally, this chapter concludes that there is a theoretical need to include decolonial perspectives to platform-mediated labour studies. The survival of platform capitalism depends on this colonial and racial division of labour, which is the key to understand contemporary forms of migrant exploitation by labour platforms.

2.1.1 Globalization and the Production of urban space

Globalization is commonly understood as an intensification of connections, mobilities and sociospatial relations that characterize capitalism. Space is the result of capitalist production, an ensemble of connections, flows and networks. Lefebvre's work has inspired geographers and sociologists in their understanding of global and regional development for decades. Lefebvre's goal was to unveil the processes behind the production of the spaces of accumulation – what he called *abstract* space. He famously framed that (social) space is a (social) product (Lefebvre, 1991), and moving on from the production of commodities (Marx, 1887) to the production of space. The production of space also refers to an epochal transition, from a state mode of production focused on commodities, towards the production of space itself. Here, I focus on Lefebvre's work

and the ways we can use it today to understand contemporary platformization of urban labour, and the resistance to it.

Lefebvrian theory can give perspective to the current trajectories of modern platforms not only in terms of how urban spaces are produced, but also how everyday practices of resistance contribute to the production of space. Lefebvre argues that planners, urbanists and other agents of the state play an important (but not exclusive) role in producing space in all its dimensions: lived (*vécu*), perceived (*perçu*) and conceived (*conçu*). This spatial triad of the production of space is a way to reveal how power materializes and is mediated. Many are now taking on Lefebvre's work to better understand the process of 'urban platformization' (Kuttler, 2022; Strüver & Bauriedl, 2022) and the role of platformization in changing what he called 'everyday life' (Lefebvre, 1958, 1961, 1981).

Analysis of the imbrications of the global and local scales, and the end of the supremacy of the national scale, were found in geographical studies. In the early 2000s and following a decade of market-led globalizing discourses (Peck & Tickell, 1994, 2002), geographers like Erik Swyngedouw argued that the processes of capitalist development, and the 'powers' that came with it, were being rescaled to supranational and intranational scales (Swyngedouw, 2004).

In her 2002 book 'Disabling Globalization', Hart builds on Lefebvre's critique of scale as a top-down relation, where a global (active) scale impacts a local (passive) recipient. Hart's (2002) idea of 'disabling globalization' by critiquing economistic narratives of globalization, follows Lefebvre's formulation of social space, which implicates that:

> No space disappears in the course of growth and development: the worldwide does not abolish the local. The places of social space are very different from those of natural space in that they are not simply juxtaposed: they may be intercalated, combined, superimposed— they may even sometimes collide. Consequently the local does not disappear, for it is never absorbed by the regional, national or even worldwide level (Lefebvre, 1991: 86)

Her work connects agrarian practices in East Asia and South Africa with colonial power, through what she called 'relational comparison'. Hart mentions that everyday local practices and resistance movements are globally connected, not simply effects of global flows, but co-constitutive of these flows (Hart, 2002). Chapter 6 builds on Hart's work to propose a politically enabling understanding of resistance to platform exploitation through a relational comparison of Toronto and Paris.

This collision mentioned above by Lefebvre is part of an on-going tension still found today in urban areas between global platforms, local workers, national unions, and grassroots organizations. There are various scales that relate to those sociospatial relations described by Lefebvre and found within the production of space (such as place-making, territorialization or networking). All scales constituting space are intertwined and nested in overlapping spaces, which are part of what he called 'space-as-process'. In other words, "various scales of spatial practice are ever more tightly intermeshed; they are mutually embedded within one another and, increasingly, they coevolve and co-transform" (Brenner, 2019: 67). Those relations and scales constitute the *urban fabric*, or the social tissue upon which capitalist urbanization and social relations lie. It is precisely this urban fabric that platforms set their sight on. They remodel depending on what new technologies are currently developed.

Lefebre's work on the production of space (Lefebvre, 1974) is built on his previous work on the urban (Lefebvre, 1970). The urban plays a key role in Lefebvre's theory as a historical site of this transition (a long shift from agricultural to industrial to urban societies). It is through multiple overlapping scales: national, regional, and local, that spaces are co-evolving (a discussion on 'scales' and scalar analysis will follow in Chapter 3). In 'The Urban Revolution', he develops the idea of *dimensions* of the urban phenomenon, or the essential properties of urbanization. This idea speaks directly to the development of platform labour on the global stage today.

Firstly, social relationships have a surface area (Lefebvre, 2003b). Lefebvre does not operate with a strictly place-based or scaled conception of the urban, but rather an open-ended and flowing conception. Abstract relationships are arising from commodities and markets, contracts, and/or quasi-contracts among 'agents' on a global stage (Lefebvre qualifies those as a mix of "various juxtaposed, superimposed, and sometimes conflicting markets for products, capital, labor, works of art, and symbols, housing and land") (87). Secondly, the urban is also an arena in which various strategies clash: "They are in no sense goals or objectives but means and instruments of action". This includes institutions, organizations, and urban agents that govern and decide spatial strategies. Thirdly, urbanization is place-specific. It is link to the sociospatial histories of each space: "There is an urban practice concerning space and its organization that cannot be reduced to global ideologies or institutions or to specifically "urbanistic" activities" (88). In other words, it is the result of long sociohistorical contexts which is key for Lefebvre.

These three dimensions of the production of space can be used to analyse what is the central focus of this study: the collision between new, often global, technological labour platforms and local,

often precarious migrant, workers, and worker unions. Recent work by Kuttler (2022) uses Lefebvre's framework to analyze platform labour in India. He notes that understanding platform labour through Lefebvre is relevant in many ways, especially because Lefebvre's spatial triad (*vécu, perçu, conçu*) helps represent the totality of the experiences of urban taxi drivers. Kuttler's work focused on mobilities and rhythms in taxi driving, but also maintain that platform labour is always embedded within sociospatial contexts. In a similar way, the arrival of platforms in Paris and Toronto come in collision with many different actors and groups with diverging interests. Lefebvre's work re-shifts the focus of the analysis towards the urban as a context, instead of the city as a field. It also re-centers the urban question towards everyday life (Kipfer et al., 2012).

It is necessary to first reflect on the *urban*, and its connectedness to global economics and politics, before turning our attention towards *labour*. Brenner (2019) mentions three epistemological implications of urban theory, which is to: i) maintain reflexivity of urban concepts, to ii) deconstruct major ideologies of urbanism (such as platforms being solely progress/innovations for the urban), and finally to iii) anticipate the emergent urban conditions, practices, and transformations, such as the commodification and platformization of migrant labour (see Chapter 4). Those three epistemological implications serve as a call for urban geographers to look into emerging trend such as platform urbanism.

Another important contribution to the understanding of space and place is by Massey, whom advocated for the analysis of geographical and historical specificities resulting from uneven capitalist development (Massey, 1984). Space (economic and social), and scale, are the results of production relations. Production is also, inversely, the result of social relations. Massey's

methodological concern when analysing capitalist development was situated between theory and empirical work:

> historically-evolved spatial configuration (both the fact of spatial differentiation and its particular nature) has its influence on the course taken by accumulation itself. […] The fact that those relations occur over space matters. It is not just that 'space is socially constructed' - social processes are constructed over space. (Massey, 1984, 53-55)

Massey's call for a locally situated understanding of the production of space resonates with the rise of urban platformization today. It is a way to understand how economic processes are constructed over space (Featherstone & Painter, 2013). As for Lefebvre's call to re-center the urban question towards everyday life, Massey's understanding of economic objects was that social relations form a space upon which they stretch out. Local geographies of employment and production are part of economic relations, as local labour is part of globalizing economic processes. Many (Featherstone & Painter, 2013; Peck, 2015) consider Massey's work on local specificities as a precursor to labour geography, as she advocates for a more detailed analysis of geographical specificities of labour (Peck, 2013). Drawing on both Massey and Lefebvre, Hart's idea of relational comparison (2002) views 'place' as bundles of relations and 'power-infused connections' with a variety of other places and scales around the world.

As wealth, populations, and powers (political and economic) are concentrated in the larger metropolitan spaces, this densification of capital, qualified workers, migrant workers, and overall appetite for technologies has catapulted the urban space at the forefront. It is the main target for new technology companies looking to expand to new markets. As Robinson puts it, wide-ranging historical processes like platformization are producing many other sociospatial relations (J. Robinson, 2022).

Food delivery platforms are playing a role in shaping the upper class neighborhoods, as pointed out by a recent study geo-locating the trajectories of riders (Gregory & Maldonado, 2020). Concentration of the consumption of food delivery activities (e.g. driving and food orders) in wealthier parts of Toronto and Paris shows the connection between the commodification and privatization of social reproduction and the gentrification of major cities. For example, in Toronto, the surge areas for couriers are mostly found downtown. Similarly, most couriers in Paris are commuting to the intra-muros to deliver.

The goal of urban administrations moved from social redistribution of wealth to competitivity. Within a global arena, cities compete for transnational capital, migration of wealthy groups of workers, investors, headquarters and management (Kipfer & Keil, 2002). Global and world city theories emerged in the early 2000s to understand subnational capitalist development in relation to globalization. It has tended towards the 'success' of global cities such as New York, Los Angeles, London and Paris, rather than the poorer and 'declining' mega-cities like Mexico, Delhi or Lagos (Robinson, 2006). One of the critiques of this approach is that it tended to focus on a certain form of economic success while marginalizing other everyday urban experiences (McFarlane, 2010, 2021). Since the 1990s onward, the global cities are seen as key nodes of global financial capitalism, but they are also key sites of migration (Sassen, 2011).

In the recent years, immigrant-related issues in advanced-capitalist countries are more and more prevalent (van Eck, 2022). Many countries are adopting nation-wide responses to irregular migration, expelling those without legal residence status. Although the two sites of fieldwork for this thesis are in global cities, Toronto and Paris, the central focus is on the everyday life of

migrants, informal economies and the roles subalterns play in shaping Western paradigm models of 'success':

> […] irregular migrants work in key centres of the global political economy (global cities and export processing zones, for example) in industries characterized by subcontracted employment arrangements (agriculture, construction, and manufacturing) and/or in isolated and typically unorganized workplaces (hospitality, tourism and domestic service). Under these conditions, irregular migrants are incorporated into the political community as economic participants but denied the status of insiders (McNevin, 2006: 140)

As many have argued, the duality of globalization is that it increases freedom of movement for capital while reducing freedom for labour (Choudry & Smith, 2016). Looking at urban platform-mediated gig work through a globalization lens can give perspective to some of the local issues at hand. The globalization process is paired with another important historical process: neoliberalization.

2.1.2 Neoliberalizing cities

In most major cities in advanced capitalist countries, the arrival of Uber is a consequence of neoliberal urban and state politics. The UberFiles showed that Uber lobbied for state regulations to be changed to fit its model which charges high fees for customers and offers low pay for workers. Uber is the paradigmatic case of Silicon Valley mentalities and monopolistic tendencies. The company pushes for the erosion of workers' rights and various tax heaven schemes (Liu, 2020; Rosenblat, 2018).

Dyer-Whiteford's (2015) 'Cyber-proletariat' offers a review of the genesis of Silicon Valley companies like Uber. In the fourth chapter of his book, he argues that the Santa Clara area moved

from an agrarian district to a cybernetic economy in the wake of the Second World War. Military-industrial corporations, armed with state defense program contracts, first funded the Valley's technological development. It led to the evolution of Silicon Valley culture, 'the Californian Ideology', which is: "an ostensibly laid-back but actually highly aggressive anti-regulatory free enterprise that narcissistically identified its own lucrative technological success as socially liberatory" (Dyer-Whiteford, 2015: 64). This is also the central argument of this thesis: the exploitation of migrant workers is disguised, presented as societal progress, but hidden by pseudo-revolutionary technological change.

Before diving into the question of deregulation, a discussion on the role of technology in capitalist development is needed. Grabher, using Polanyi's framework, argues that platform capitalism emerged today because of three intertwined drivers that propel the great transformation towards marketization: technology, science, and state (Grabher, 2020a). Per Polanyi's historical-sociological analysis of markets, in the 19th century onwards, the state is no longer a safeguard for monopoly but a mediator and a facilitator of enterprises and innovations (Polanyi, 1944). Hence, markets "are expressions of an intricate interplay between technological affordances, performative effects of science, and deliberate efforts to furnish political and societal institutions" (Grabher, 2020a). This speaks directly to Macron's VivaTech speech discussed in the introduction on the role of the French state in harvesting innovation.

By turning to Polanyi to conceptualize platforms and new forms of markets in contemporary capitalism, we can see how the "platform is to this digital era what the factory was to the industrial era", or the new great transformation (Kenney et al., 2020; Polanyi, 1944). There is a crucial role

for science and technologies in legitimizing markets, tended by a Liberal state (Polanyi, 1944). Grabher argues that a Polanyian frame is useful to characterize the emergence of digital platforms from three angles that drive the great transformation towards marketization: technology, science and state (Grabher, 2020a).

Grabher shows the interconnectedness of technology, science and state through many key examples (Grabher, 2020a). Firstly, today's equivalent of the steam engine (the *technology*) is the digital infrastructures upon which platforms are built – big data, clouds, algorithms, AI, etc. The data produced by platform labour is reinvested into the app, or what Doorn and Badger called dual-value production (van Doorn & Badger, 2020). Secondly, the platform economy emerged within an era characterized by the prevalence of networks (the *science*).[12] This notion is central to the Marxist dialectic of *fixity* versus *motion* in the production of urban spaces. I discuss this contradiction in the subsequent section. Finally, the third driver of platform capitalism today, in relation to the two previous drivers, is 'enforced' laissez-faire economics (the *state*). As I will explore now, neoliberalism was key for the rise of platform capitalism as we know it today. An understanding of platform-market dynamics cannot be conceived outside state actions (Grabher, 2020b).

Portraying Silicon Valley enterprises as part of a neoliberal project is a first step to building the theoretical framework needed to understand platform labour today. Some have argued that neoliberalism, as an analytical frame, has lost its relevance in the last couple of years (Birch & Springer, 2019). Going over some of the debates regarding the many conceptualizations of what

[12] As Castells (1998) mentioned before contemporary platform capitalism, the 'network society' is a feedback loop of value-creation where more participants bring in more creation in a network effect (Castells, 1998).

constitutes ‘neoliberalism’ will help explain the mechanisms behind platform capitalism. The various national and local contexts, in which labour platforms arrive, operate, and transform modern capitalism, are key to understand contemporary platform capitalism.

Understanding the development of the platform economy as a consequence and an accelerator of a neoliberal growth model is, per some of the latest research, one of the important tasks ahead (Strüver & Bauriedl, 2022). Macron’s government, for example, is a prime example of Polanyi’s triad of technology, science and state. For Amable and Palombarini (2021), Macron’s strategy was a rapid and complete transformation of French capitalism towards a (techno)-neoliberal model. In their book ‘The Last Neoliberal’ (2021), they note that the ‘uberization’ of major sectors of the economy by the Macron government accelerated the decline of the working class and weakened the social bases in both the traditional Left and Right camps. His government simultaneously financed the tech sector with a billion-dollar investment, while working behind curtains to deregulate traditional sectors like the taxi industry. The culmination of Macron’s program was revealed in the UberFiles, when secret deals between Macron’s government and Uber executives were leaked.[13] Macron’s program extended beyond neoliberal deregulation, as there was also a tightening of migration policies through deeper European integration (Amable & Palombarini, 2021). There, France exercised its vote by striking down pro-worker regulations at the European council.

To understand the concrete consequences of neoliberalism, many argued for the concept of ‘actually existing neoliberalism’ (Brenner et al., 2010, 2011). The theoretical utopia that is

[13] https://www.theguardian.com/news/2022/jul/10/emmanuel-macron-secretly-aided-uber-lobbying-drive-france-leak-reveals

neoliberalism is applied in a variety of ways around the world. Neoliberal doctrines follow a path-dependency trajectory – the socio-spatial and historical conditions of nation-states. Following these authors, the different national restructurings come in a one-size-fits-all model that does not consider states and markets as compatible; this results in uneven and incoherent spatial development. This is done via two key moments, where the role of the state is to: 1) dismantle existing institutional arrangements; and 2) creating new market-oriented infrastructures pushing for economic growth (Peck & Tickell, 1994, 2002).

The current reorganization of labour through platformization follows the same path-dependency trajectory, as companies tend to promote an all-encompassing business model, but must adapt to each national and urban context where they want to grow. This is known as actually existing platformization (van Doorn et al., 2021: 44). Platforms' relationships with the state, for example Uber with Macron, is to "privilege self-regulation and self-certification over governmental oversight" (Grabher, 2020a). Specific cases of deregulations for platforms to arrive, then take over entire markets, is found in many urban areas. The case of Uber in Montreal, for example, is a paradigmatic case of neoliberal platform governance. The company hired ex-Prime minister Jean Charest's law firm to lobby and deregulate the traditional taxi industry (Baril, 2019). The endgame of the company was to put in place a new labour law (Projet de loi 100) which ended many social protections for taxi drivers. Thousands of drivers lost what was essentially a pension fund (the 'medallion' values). It was also the end of the minimum wage (or the cap in the number of drivers). The City of Montreal, the government of Quebec and the Uber firm worked together to put the platform's plan in place.

Hackworth's 'Neoliberal City' presents the City as an administrative institution that has shifted towards a more entrepreneurial governance rather than distributive, to stay competitive within global capitalist imperatives (Hackworth, 2006). He argued that there is an urban geography to neoliberalism, and that the practices within are sometimes at odds with theoretical neoliberalism. Meaning that actual application and consequences of neoliberalization and its resistance always differ from the envisioned project that emerged decades ago in Chicago: "Beneath theses abstractions lie palpable changes – many of them negative – for real people in cities. Those people have been removed from welfare rolls, public housing, and unionized jobs in the direct –more often indirect – name of neoliberalism. Some of these people have begun to organize a resistance movement to these changes" (Hackworth, 2006: 173). Moreover, traditional taxi drivers were for the most part racialized immigrants with thousands of dollars of debt invested in a cab and licence. This example showed the real consequences of platform 'deregulation'.

This duality between theory and practice sparked debates that have been going on for decades. Twelve years ago, '*Social Anthropology*' (2012) published a special edition on neoliberalism. In that edition, sociologist Wacquant opposed two polarized ways of conceptualizing 'actually existing neoliberalism' as a : "hegemonic economic conception anchored by (neoclassical and neo-Marxist) variants of market rule, on the one side, and an insurgent approach fuelled by loose derivations of the Foucauldian notion of governmentality" (Wacquant, 2012: 68). In a somewhat similar sense, Hilgers (2012) pushed for a 'historicity of the neoliberal state' framing the production of neoliberalism at a global scale following the various trajectories of the states (Hilgers, 2012). Both ways aim to create a *via media* approach between an economistic perspective and a governmentality perspective. Wacquant's approach to neoliberalism is that it harnesses the

state to impose the stamp of the markets onto citizenship (Wacquant, 2012). Although a governmentality approach differs from a political economy approach, we can still draw some parallel between work on citizenship and the penal system in the United-States (Wacquant, 2007, 2009) with migrant labour. One key feature of the neoliberal migration regime in Canada is that it is gendered and racialized (Choudry & Smith, 2016).

Jessop distinguishes various approaches to conceptualizing neoliberalism (Jessop, 2013). Exemplified today in the Uber case, neoliberalism can be interpreted as the form taken by a capitalist offensive against organized labour (Jessop, 2002). A way to understand neoliberalism also concerns a specific epoch, which is one of globalization, free trade agreements and transnational production (Kalb, 2012). Jessop notes that it has had many forms. For this thesis, it is about regime changes: "Breaking with the post-war Atlantic Fordist settlements, based on an institutionalised compromise between capital and labour, a committed and newly empowered elite alliance introduced liberalisation, deregulation, privatisation, market proxies in the public sector, internationalisation and cuts in direct taxation" (Jessop, 2013: 71). Tensions between capital and labour are still driving platformization today. According to Jessop, the goal at the time was to shift the balance of power, from labour towards capital, through stagnant wages, increased debts and cuts in welfare and benefits.

For Peck & Theodore (2012), both a political economy and a governmentality approach must pay attention to the distinctive spatialities of neoliberalism and the variety of 'actually existing neoliberalism(s)' (Peck & Theodore, 2012). They argue that Marxist approaches to neoliberalism do not, in fact, diminish the role of the state: "historical geographies of neoliberalism continue to

tell different stories, revealing distinctive forms of spatiality that cut to the heart of how neoliberalisation works as a contradictory process of state-authorised market transformation" (2012: 182). Kalb (2012) also points out that Marxism is not solely economic and does not ignore the role of the state in neoliberalization. Kalb's approach situates neoliberalism in time, noting that in the OECD countries since 1970, increased productivity was felt in the pockets of capital owners, whereas labour income remained stagnant. As he puts it: "While neoliberalism, like law, is a formal framework of governance, capitalism is the wider relational field of forces that upholds, animates and rules it." (Kalb, 2012: 327). Therefore, following a Marxist political economy approach has led van Doorn, Mos and Bosma (2021) to the concept of 'actually existing platformization' (van Doorn et al., 2021). Platformization, as for neoliberalization, is not monolithic, but rather path-dependent and institutionally embedded in national and urban settings.

Khan (2016) notes the influence the neoliberal 'Chicago School' of economics had in rejecting interventionism in regards to antitrust laws, entry barriers and market power (Khan, 2016). This neoliberal vision of self-regulating technoscientifc markets on the issues of predatory pricing and vertical integration led to Amazon's monopolistic dominance. The same can be said for Uber and Uber Eats. Those platforms create the illusion of a free, self-regulating market, found within their digital infrastructure (Srnicek, 2017). Even pro-free market economists at the NYU's Stern Business School have rung the alarm on the current lack of competition in digital capitalism due to the lack of regulation on big tech (Galloway, 2020; Philippon, 2019; Sundararajan, 2016). They argued that market competition has decreased in the U.S. over the last 20 years (e.g. cellphone plans, plane tickets and computer hardware) (Philippon, 2019). This was one of the promises of neoliberalism, to keep markets safe and free. The labour's share of capital (ratio between wage

relative to surplus-value) has decreased dramatically because of new technologies and their ability to collect rents (Philippon, 2019; Sundararajan, 2016).

As deregulation lead to market concentration and more 'market power' for technology platforms, new forms of employments – such as platform-mediated gig work – can set wages back because employees have fewer and fewer alternatives. As Mattern claims in her book '*A city is not a computer*', there is a need to move beyond those pre-given logics:

> whether and how smart cities address urban problems; how smart cities embody neoliberal ideology; models of smart city development, whether from the ground up or via grafted retrofits; models of digital civic engagement; and the various technologies that constitute the nodes and control centers of smart urban networks. I have no need or desire to duplicate this work. In fact, after more than a decade of writing about similar themes in article form, I've pretty much had it with "smartness." I'm annoyed by its elasticity, ubiquity, and deceptiveness—and its sullying association with real estate development, "technosolutionism" and neoliberalism (Mattern, 2021)

Modern technology platforms are ubiquitous for customers' lives, as these firms came to "form part of the infrastructure of their lives" (Culpepper & Thelen, 2020: 295). This means policies regarding them are often lax. The discourse around state regulations and technologies is that laws come at the cost of consumer convenience, choice and innovation. In other words, using their leverage, modern platforms can avoid state laws because of how important they are to citizens. This is what Culpepper and Thelen (2020) called 'platform power'. The platforms are "weaponizing their users when threatened with regulation" (Culpepper & Thelen, 2020: 309). These modern technological companies, with the help of massive fundraising, aim to control markets through mergers and acquisitions of local companies. This way, they can exercise that 'platform power' over social space (van Dijck et al., 2019). This power is exercised in multiple ways, notably through the pushing of new public urban policies and models, such as the 'Smart

City' (Spicer et al., 2023). The next section covers the last conceptual implication for this thesis, platform urbanism.

2.1.3 Platform urbanism

A recent new focal point taken on by critical urban studies is the analysis of 'platform urbanism' programs (Barns, 2019; Sadowski, 2020a; Shapiro, 2022). This connects the technological developments put forward by platforms to capitalist urbanization. It has emerged following many decades of urban theory research based on historical and geographical sociospatial transformations of modern capitalism. One of the latest stages of capitalist urbanization we see in cities today is platform-mediated labour. It is currently reshaping cities in various ways through partnerships between global private firms, states and precarious migrant workers. As I have explored in the previous section, platform capitalism emerged because of three intertwined key drivers, technology, science, and state. Neoliberal urbanism, with all its historical features (Brenner et al., 2011), is not abolished by platform urbanism, it is parallel to it. The developments of platform capitalism and neoliberal policies are synchronous and transform urban spaces and scales. After reviewing neoliberalism urbanism, I now dive into platform urbanism. How are platforms producing urban spaces?

Harvey raised questions, more than two decades ago, on whether the increasing *motion* of capital overcomes the *fixity* of urban place-making. For Harvey, motion entails the deconstruction of fixed infrastructures and institutional barriers to accumulation, allowing capital to flow globally. The

spatial fix, he argued, describes capitalism's addiction for geographical expansion and growth (Harvey, 2001b, 2001a). As Brenner (2019) also noted more recently, the consolidation of entrepreneurial forms of urban governance has been inextricably intertwined with a fundamental reconstitution of state territorial regulation:

> The contradictory interplay between fixity and motion - between the need for territorial organization (territorialization) and the equally foundational drive toward sociospatial creative destruction (deterritorialization) - thus offers a powerful analytical basis for deciphering the production and perpetual reorganization of sociospatial configurations under capitalism (Brenner, 2019: 51)

A parallel idea to the spatial fix is one of a 'technological fix'. This was used to describe capitalism's second addiction: technological change. Per Harvey, capitalism needs geographical expansion as much as it needs technological change (Harvey, 2001a). Between 2016 and 2019, I spent three years looking into Uber's arrival in Montreal. Using conceptual tools from critical urban studies (Brenner et al., 2011), I characterized the development of Uber in Montreal in relation to neoliberal creative destruction (Baril, 2019). Using news media articles and interviews, I traced a full timeline of Uber's strategy. The company's goal was a full dismantling of institutional regulations put in place during the Keynesian-Fordist era and a creation of new laws (e.g. '*Projet de Loi 100'*), favoring a free development of the platform economy in Canadian cities (Zwick & Spicer, 2021). The government called for a 'modernization of the taxi industry' while taking away thousands of dollars from individual license owners (mostly racialized immigrants from Haiti and Africa). In the platform debate today, the role of technologies and neoliberal politics remain the same as ten years ago. The goal is to take down barriers to accumulation.

Labour platforms are integral part of the current production of urban spaces. Going back to Lefebvre, who devoted much of his attention to the urban, the platforms are a result and a driver

of capitalist production. For Barns (2019), a "Lefebvrian way of thinking about the production of the urban helps to frame successive waves of urban technological change—extending beyond deterministic impact narratives, by interlinking spatial form, its representations, and social process" (Barns, 2019: 55). It is assumed by many that the urban is not a 'bounded site' or closed 'settlement unit', but rather an assemblage of fluid and variegated sociospatial relations (Brenner, 2019; Lefebvre, 1970).

Lefebvre invited us to look at the urban space as a site where political strategies from labour, markets, unions, state and scales collide. A Lefebvrian perspective then considers platformization as the latest succession of technological wave in modern capitalist urbanization. The objective of platforms is to extract and accumulate as much value from each urban area they occupy, but during this process, labour platforms are reshaping sociospatial relations of everyday urban life and urban labour. In *The Right to the City* for example, Lefebvre distinguishes three types of urbanism: a) urbanism by architects and writers whom intentions are to create lively communities, b) urbanism by public administrators through technoscientific pragmatism and c) urbanism by promoters who conceive and create for markets and profits (Lefebvre, 2009). These three types of urbanism all merge, and collide, in what many now call platform urbanism (Barns, 2019; Sadowski, 2020a), This means that the second and third type (platforms, public administrators and promoters) are taking over the first type of urbanism (one that creates lively communities).

Through this type of analysis, one that bridges the rising literature on 'platform urbanism' and the work of Lefebvre, Barns argues that platforms play an important role in the changing fabric of the *urban fabric*. In her book *'Platform Urbanism'*, Barns notes: "platforms, too, govern our spaces—

not only by 'hacking' existing regulatory conditions governing the spatial contexts in which populations live and work, […]. The nature of platform governance also acts powerfully to reshape perceptions and representations of mobility, connection, transaction and spatial awareness." (Barns, 2019: 56). Toronto was at the center of such project recently. The failed Sidewalk Labs project, in partnership with the City of Toronto, is one recent example of how platform companies, Sidewalk Labs and Google, tried to act directly to transform urban governance and everyday lives using data, AI and other technologies (Barns, 2019, 2020).

This has been seen elsewhere in other cities and with other platforms. Söderström & Mermet (2020), with a comparison perspective, grasp the role of platform urbanism in transforming the urban. They argued that Airbnb is also now deeply implicated in the production of urban spaces. From Reykjavík to Cape Town (Söderström & Mermet, 2020), the platform is reshaping everyday life everywhere it operates. Airbnb is changing Reykjavík's urban fabric in its materiality – through a new commodification of 'homes', of everyday life – rhythms of touristic neighborhoods, and socioeconomic dynamics – rental prices and rent gaps (Söderström & Mermet, 2020). Through tactics at various scales, such as building global tax heaven scheme, lobbying for weaker state laws, hiring key political actors and profiting of precarious labour force, Airbnb is actively transforming the production of urban space.

In their recent piece on urban epistemology, Brenner & Schmid (2015) argued that cities are increasingly governed through a 'rationality' of technoscientific management ideologies . According to this technoscientific ideology, cities are seen, not as variegated flows of people, things, and capital, but as habitational spaces that can be organized through universal and

replicable technological models. Similarly, in her recent book '*A city is not a computer',* Mattern (2021) argues that technologies and artificial intelligence are increasingly applied to all aspects of urban everyday life. Through the metaphor of the urban 'dashboards', Mattern argue that it structures the agency of their users (Mattern, 2021). This purely technical governing of cities is a new ground for platforms to insert themselves. However, it is not done impartially, but by chosen variables where some are important and other not. Mattern joins Ruha Benjamin's critic of data and algorithmic governing which are racialized and uneven especially in urban spaces (Benjamin, 2019).

As mentioned earlier, Lefebvre argued that the production of urban and state spaces occur via different agents of the state (Lefebvre, 2003a). 'Platform urbanism' places technological innovations in production, transportation, communications, or services at the center of growth and development. This is a key new tool for capitalist urbanization. They are people who oversee, conceptualize and divide a space that is increasingly urbanized, centralized, hierarchized and fragmented. This important conception of space as relational and processual, rather than a fixed 'container' of social relations, is a key starting point for an analysis of technologies, states and cities. Lefebvre's extended his theory of the production of urban spaces to the production of state spaces (Lefebvre, 1976, 2003a). Lefebvre also identified two illusions that keep a veil over the production of space: an illusion of transparency, or space as apolitical, innocent, incapable of hiding something and free of traps; and a realistic illusion, or space as natural, simplicity, earthy, where the rational is naturalized (1991: 29-30). States produce territoriality by imposing their 'rationality' and productivity on space. He considered "dominated (and dominant) space, which is to say a space transformed- and mediated- by technology, by practice" (2003a :164). The

intertwined relationship between the state, the urban and 'platformized' capitalist development is what allows international flows of capital in and out of national spaces. Jeannot & Cottin-Marx (2022) precisely discussed the platformization of the state, noting that the increasing state-platform partnerships are degrading public services (Jeannot & Cottin-Marx, 2022). But is also the flow of people through cities which constitute platformization. The next section outlines the key conceptual innovation put forth by this thesis, citizen-rentier-ship.

2.2 Citizen-*rentier*-ship (CRS)

I have explored above the theoretical importance of the relations between platforms and local and national governments. This is key to the arrival and thriving of labour platforms in urban areas (Artioli, 2019). Many 'levels' of governance also play a companion role for migrants' social movements, along with traditional unions. McNevin's article considers that, for the sans-papiers in France, the: "strategies and technologies which define them (their containment within informal economies; the random policing which maintains them in a position of vulnerability) are also implicated in the constitution of insider-citizens, whose relative privilege now reflects the specific practices made possible in and through the spaces of the global political economy" (McNevin, 2006: 141). Indeed, the immigrants' fights for papers in Paris and Toronto are part of a larger struggle for the right to city by racialized workers from the Global South in Euro-America.

A key concept of this thesis is what I called 'citizen-rentier-ship' (CRS). Features of citizenship and rentiership are articulated to provide a way forward to understand urban platform capitalism.

I will define CRS and how it can be a useful conceptual tool to understand how platforms extract value in modern technoscientific capitalism. Just like land rent is key for sociospatial process of capitalist urbanization, rents extracted from citizenship precarity through technological infrastructures are key for the urban platform economy market in Paris and Toronto. Citizen-rentier-ship, in both cases, is defined as **rents extracted by platforms, and other actors, through technological infrastructures from workers in precarious citizenship situations**. As I will conceptualize in the next section, the intertwined relationships between technological platforms, states and (migrant) workers materialize in platform food delivery in the form of surplus-value extracted technologically because of precarious citizenship conditions. Many have already argued that platforms in advanced capitalist countries would not be able to generate revenues without precarious migrant labourers (Altenried, 2022; Alyanak et al., 2023; van Doorn, 2022).

Following Fuchs' agenda in '*Digital Labour and Karl* Marx' (2014), we can ask which different forms of surplus value creations are out there because of new digital infrastructures (Fuchs, 2014). Revenues are generated by platforms from workers in two ways: i) cutting pay and increasing unpaid labour time, and ii) increasing the 'booking' fees and the number of riders paying the 'booking' fees for it.

The first way to generate revenues from workers is through pay cuts and increasing the unpaid labour time (or surplus labour). Marx's working day is divided in two parts. First part is what he called the *necessary* labour time, where the worker "produces only the value of his labour-power,

that is, the value of his means of subsistence" (Marx, 1887: 152). This portion of the day is paid. Platforms like Uber have been lowering pay to generate more revenues.[14]

The other part of the working day is what Marx called surplus labour, when the worker "creates surplus-value which, for the capitalist, has all the charms of a creation out of nothing" (Marx, 1887:152). It also encompasses all the unpaid action that comes into paid labour. For platform labour, technology managed to capture and expand this 'unpaid' surplus labour throughout every hour of the working day. This is possible, notably, through the illusion of a free market where workers can go in and sell their labour (Srnicek, 2017). Workers log into the platform (the app) and offer labour power as 'independent contractors'. However, the algorithmic allocation of food delivery orders has unpaid waiting time between each order. It does not matter if this is done strategically or randomly, because, as I will show in Chapter 4 and 5, workers have no choice but to accept it. Depending on the volume of orders, workers accept most of the orders that the platform offers.

A plethora of factors, notably citizenship, comes into play regarding accepting this unpaid waiting time. In Marx, the alienation in capitalism makes the worker "double free", on the one hand forced to sell labour-power in the labour market, neither forming part of the means of production, nor owning the means of production, as with 'self-employed peasant proprietors' (Fuchs, 2014). This is in part why platform cooperatives argue that giving back the algorithms to workers (un-black boxing the allocation of work) can free workers from platform exploitation. A platform coop model

[14] https://www.forbes.com/sites/lensherman/2023/12/15/ubers-ceo-hides-driver-pay-cuts-to-boost-profits/?sh=493911433ba4

means that workers are proprietors of the digital infrastructure used for food delivery – in other words the means of production.

'Unfree Labour?' by Choudry and Smith applies the notion of unfreedom to migrant workers in Canada (Choudry & Smith, 2016). It is part of everyday bordering practices (Roxham Road in Canada, the Italian road to Paris, etc.) and everyday policing (sans-papiers street '*contrôles*' in France). Researchers, in Europe and Canada, argue that migrants end up in no-choice situations because of public policies and neoliberal labour markets: "labour exploitation becomes intensified, even transformed, under neoliberal migration, into super- or hyperexploitation" (37). Moreover, it is the creation of a dual labour market that preoccupy the authors above. On the one side, we have highly paid, protected and unionized workers in state agencies and large corporations. It was aptly named hyper-precarious migrant platform labour by a group of researchers in the U.K. (Lewis et al., 2015). On one side, we see highly paid, protected and unionized workers in state agencies and large corporations secured for 'citizens' following decades of resistance by traditional unions and social movements. On the other side, low-wage insecure work such as platform food delivery work is taken up by precarious migrants.

Through platforms' infrastructures, new components emerge as key parts of CRS, as I will show through the interviews with riders who worked sans-papiers and newcomers. The noun suffix '–ship' implies either: a state or condition of being, friend-ship, relation-ship; a position or status, professor-ship, dictator-ship or; a skill or ability, horseman-ship, craftsman-ship. In the case of CRS, it refers to both a position of control and an ability. CRS, it refers to both the position of

control over a scarce and protected resource (citizenship) that creates a capacity to extract rents off precarity.

Isin and Nyers define citizenship as: "an 'institution' mediating rights between the subjects of politics and the polity to which these subjects belong" (Isin & Nyers, 2014: 1). The term 'institution' refers to all forms of governing bodies under which the 'political subjects' fall. As Isin and Nyers further elaborate, not all subjects are considered 'citizens' by the state. Citizenship is inherently far-reaching and contested, as we will see through the fight for papers by Paris' Uber Eats sans-papiers food couriers following deactivation or by international students in Toronto. Citizenship is built on the idea of freedom of movements between few selected member-states. This is a right reserved only for those with access to papers. Increasing security of the European borders for example has led to the continent being aptly named 'Fortress Europe' (Jones, 2017; Walia, 2021). The history of migrants in Europe, in France, and in North America, in Canada, is a matter shaped by (neo)colonial pasts. The expansion of colonies and France's grip over Northern and Western Africa during the 19th century 'scramble for Africa' still resonate today. Historically, the French state first allured immigrants to the country through scholarships and labour opportunities (Agier et al., 2008; Fanon, 1952). I will highlight the national arts of Chapter 4 dives deeper into France's migration systems governing Paris system and Toronto in later chapters. its history,

It is not random that most of the racialized platform workers are international students from India (in Toronto) and undocumented migrants from the African continent (in Paris). Many Africans migrate to France, in part, through asylum, family reunion or clandestine routes. Many end up

sans-papiers for bureaucratic reasons, as citizenship for Africans in France is complex and difficult to obtain (Agier et al., 2008). In Canada, international students are often lured by private colleges to come study, for high tuitions. They are put in precarious situations, notably because of the increasing price of housing, transportations and food, and need to work multiple jobs to make ends meet. The notion of citizen-rentier-ship that I will develop below is specifically based on interviews with precarious food delivery workers in Toronto (mostly international students) and Paris (mostly sans-papiers).

The global citizenship regime is structured in a way that the movement of the poorer is restricted through bordering technology, document control, surveillance, violence, and so on (Jones, 2017). This way, states can control movement, but also labour market. As Lewis & al. (2015) noted, migration, forced or unforced - economic or social, is central to highly precarious work experiences at the "bottom end" of labour markets in Western capitalist countries (Lewis et al., 2015). Irregular migration is also playing a key role in the development of advanced capitalist countries' economies. These authors qualified the migration journeys and the experience of migrants in the labour markets as 'hyper-precarious'. They mention that this concept builds around the notion of 'unfreedom' as there are: "multidimensional constraints resulting from compromised labour market position, socio-legal status, transnational social reproduction and gender relations that combine to structure migrants' entry into and continuation in forced labour situations" (2015: 582). Migrant workers accept online unpaid time which often exceed their expectations and provide a pool of labour that is willing to deliver far, fast and for cheap. Doorn, Ferrari & Graham (2022) recently called for a refocusing of the literature on gig work towards the platform-mediated commodification of migrant labour (van Doorn et al., 2022).

As I mentioned earlier, Marx identified two ways of producing surplus value. Per an orthodox Marxist framework, exploitation has quantitative definition: it is the exchange value of the labour time that the worker generates in excess of the labour time for which the worker is paid (Marx, 1887). Platform technologies are used today to boost the capacity to exploit workers. For example, the capitalist pays a worker the labour time equivalent of six hours, while the workers might work 10 hours. Then, exploitation is defined as the difference, the extra value appropriated by the capitalist. In platform labour, the capitalist platform only pays the workers for time on delivery, and at a fixed rate per delivery (it is only the distance from the restaurant to the customers). This means exploitation is all the unpaid labour time that the workers need to do to complete one paid order (waiting time, distance from the rider's location to the restaurant, stairs or elevators at the customer's location, etc.).

In a qualitative sense, exploitation also means that workers are not paid what their labour is worth. Riders 'bodies' are exploited, not just because of the labour time exchanged for pay. The pay for the work done by urban food couriers does not consider the dangers of the road. A courier can get into an accident, break his or her arm, or even die strike by a car. Therefore, the pay does not reflect the bodily dangers of the profession the same way it does with other dangerous professions like a police officer, a miner, a power lineman or even a truck driver. Per Fanon, colonial racism is at the heart of exploitation:

> All forms of exploitation resemble one another. They all seek the source of their necessity in some edict of a Biblical nature. All forms of exploitation are identical because all of them are applied against the same against the same 'object': man. When one tries to examine the structure of this or that form of exploitation from an abstract point of view, one simply turns one's back on the major, basic problem, which is that of restoring man to his proper place. Colonial racism is no different from any other racism. (Fanon, 1952: 86)

This book is Fanon's first theorization of racism as part of a cultural system of oppression inherited from the colonial era. Racialized workers are today more subject to this type of exploitation in Euro-American cities. Hence, platform capitalism is the result of colonialism and racial capitalism.

The second way of extracting surplus value is through rent seeking (or charging a fee to use the digital infrastructures). Key features of rentiership, and the ways it can be used as a potential conceptual tool to understand how value is extracted in modern platform labour, is central to CRS. Exploitation and resistance of sans-papiers migrant workers has been around for a long time in France (Barron et al., 2011; de Blic & Lafaye, 2013). The previous section highlighted how different layers of precarity intersect with citizenship, I will now turn to rentiership as a form of surplus-value extraction by modern platforms through technological infrastructures (Sadowski, 2020b) and its potential link to citizenship and migrants in the city. As Sayer mentioned, one of the effects of neoliberalism across Euro-America was the promotion of rentiership. In its simplest definition, rents are: "the 'value' extracted from the socio-natural world as the result of the ownership and control of a particular resource (or asset), primarily because of that resource's inherent or constructed degree of scarcity or quality" (Birch & Ward, 2023).

Per a Marxist understanding of the term 'rent', rent seeking is not a process that produces value, but rather appropriates that value from someone. For example, a factory owner, who needs to lease land for the factory from a landlord, extracts surplus value from the production process. The profit is then shared with the landlord in the form of rent, rather than created when the landlord charges rent for the land. As Marx explains in Capital Vol 1:

> The capitalist who produces surplus-value – i.e., who extracts unpaid labour directly from the labourers, and fixes it in commodities, is, indeed, the first appropriator, but by no means the ultimate owner, of this surplus-value. He has to share it with capitalists, with landowners, &c., who fulfil other functions in the complex of social production. Surplus-value, therefore, splits up into various parts. Its fragments fall to various categories of persons, and take various forms, independent the one of the other, such as profit, interest, merchants' profit, rent. (Marx, 1887: 400)

In the case of platform delivery companies, they act as both a capitalist employer – employing waged-labourers and extracting surplus-value from the labour process – and as a landlord – who owns and rents a particular asset which is the digital infrastructure. Per Harvey, monopoly rent are enabled by 1) the quality and scarcity of an asset – like a rare piece of land, or 2) by a denial of access – like a worker having to pay a fee at the gate to enter the factory (Harvey, 2001b). Citizenship status, and the hierarchal permits system in general, acts as both the quality and scarce asset that a worker owns or not, and through access or denial of entry in the labour market of Global North country.

Financial gains in economic rents come from any kind of lending, renting or ownership over an asset, that then becomes an unearned income for the investor. An unearned income is the capacity to extract by "those who control an already existing asset, such as land or a building or equipment or intellectual property, that others lack but need or want, and who can therefore be charged for its use" (Sayer, 2020: 4). Sayer then asks: "How is the classic figure of the industrial capitalist different from that of the rentier?" (7). In the classical sense, owners are provided with unearned income from the renting of a piece of privatized land, but the "capital–labour relation involves a special kind of property relation in which owners of property in the form of means of production – capitalists in the classic sense – employ wage-labourers to produce goods and services for sale, on the condition that they produce enough to cover not only their wages and other costs of

production but to provide the owner with profit" (Sayer, 2020: 7). To understand this dual role, we need to look at how and where platforms like Uber 'technically' work.

Let's say a customer pays $10 for a delivery, not including tips. Uber charges $8 in service fees to the customer. What the riders will see in their app is a 2$ fare and tips. Uber collects all fees (customers and restaurants) on the riders' behalf. Riders, therefore, also pay Uber a service fee for using the platform, but do not see this fee being taken. It is what Uber calls a 'booking fee'. This can be found in the 'More Details' section of the rider's app. The total of the base pay that riders find when offered an order is based on estimated delivery time, driving distance and, address, total mileage, and possible tips. However, the pay is also modulated per a 'personalisation' of fares. Using data extracted from workers' own labour the platforms not only offer the lowest wages possible, but they are also giving out 'unpredictable, variable and discriminatory' wages (Dubal, 2023).

Using behavioral patterns to modulate riders pay and offer the lowest fare possible has made gig work in major urban areas precarious work. Workers in Toronto, for example, are making way below hourly minimum wage when we factor in waiting time. Uber has called 'engaged' time time spent by the worker delivering or transporting a passenger, carefully omitting the unpaid, waiting between fares. All around the world, riders are fighting for better pay and to be recognized as employees.[15] They have shown that platforms engage in traditional employment relationships, notably through control of pay, surveillance, disciplining, and so on. By being misclassified as

[15] https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/toronto-ride-hail-drivers-to-strike-in-wake-of-making-just-6-37-an-hour-new-report-finds-1.6765371

independent-contractors, riders cannot access benefits that employees typically get. This, however, does not mean the platforms do not engage in rent seeking.

For Birch, within technoscientific capitalism, start-up technology firms like Uber Eats can extract various forms of 'rent' from the intellectual property rights over their infrastructures (Birch, 2020). In the Uber Eats case, for example, the company has monopolistic control over the markets found within the app, which includes customers seeking meals, restaurants selling meals and riders selling labour (Birch, 2020; Srnicek, 2017). This form of rentiership entails the:

> "thing-ification" of knowledge—its reification—as part of the coproduction of understandings of value and valuation practices; the transformation of that "thing" into an asset as a way to organize, govern, and manage value and valuation over time; and the extraction of value (i.e., rent) through different modes of ownership and control. (Birch, 2020: 13)

Rentiership, as a value extraction process, comes from ownership and monopoly control over an asset or resource, because of that resource's inherent or constructed productivity or scarcity. The various social actors of the food delivery industry for example can "pursue rentiership through their control over different techno-economic conditions, practices, and formations, often entailing intense struggles with other social actors" (Birch, Ward & Tretter 2022: 410). The expansion of intellectual property rights (IPRs) ensure to platform owners the ability to "extract rent from other people's assets rather than their own (e.g., Uber)" (Birch & Muniesa, 2020: 23).

Marx argued that the value created by workers is greater than the wages that they are paid. The Marxist labour theory of value posed that, throughout the labour process, a surplus value is appropriated by capitalists as profit. This concept is central to Marx's critique of capitalist mode of production. This doctoral thesis project is not to reject the traditional understanding of the labour

theory of value. Food riders are indeed paid less than the value they produced. Rather, my goal here is to point out that new technologies are creating rentiership opportunities that were not here before. Digital infrastructures, automation of management and artificial intelligence services in the platform economy led to what Birch framed as 'assetization' - turning things into assets in technoscientific capitalism (Birch, 2020; Birch & Muniesa, 2020). The asset involved in this case is citizenship – or 'an access to the labour market' which relates to what some have already pointed out regarding human capital and rent (Cooper & Waldby, 2014). It creates "forms of 'rentiership' in which monopoly control - derived from government fiat - enables the extraction of economic rents" (Birch & Muniesa, 2020: 6). The question left is: how is this new from historical precarious migrant labour? As I will show in Chapter 4 and 5, some examples include the states charge fees and taxes to food couriers who must create a 'small business' (auto-entrepreneur) status to be able to deliver with a platform. The platform companies take a cut in the form of a fee to use the platform from the profit generate by the delivery or the transport done by the workers. The subletter takes a percentage from the earnings of the sans-papier renting the account. The e-bike rental companies and the public transportation system ask for monthly payment to use its infrastructures. The French and Canadian states' role in securing for Uber Eats and others the opportunity to extract rents off the rights to use the platforms even for non-citizens will be key here.

I have shown ways revenues are generated by platforms from workers: i) increasing unpaid labour time, and ii) increasing the number of riders paying the 'booking' fees. Precarious migrant workers in Canada or France must work more for less to be able to pay either the owner of the account, housing, tuition fees, and the various tools necessary to deliver. Platforms also profit from this rent by charging for the right to use the app and by having a large pool of workers forced to stay online

and unpaid as much as possible to make up for the money they pay to rent the profile. A third way of generating revenue by platforms from workers that will not be covered in this thesis is what Doorn & Badger named 'dual value production' - or the value extracted from riders' data before, during and after the food delivering process (van Doorn & Badger, 2020).

The Paris case will show how sub-markets of citizenship-for-rent are also nothing new: passport scams, false identities and visas for sale have historical precedent. This has been around since early stages of post-colonial migration. However, as it is now platformized in the forms of in-app profiles to rent, sans-papiers find themselves in a position where many actors (state agencies, platforms and subletters) have control over the scarce resource that is citizenship and can extract rents. I use the term 'subletter' to refer to the owner of the account on the various platforms, like someone who owns and rents property. The Toronto case highlights a migratory 'pipeline' between the Global South and Canada where some workers are brought in on temporary conditions (IMP, TFPW) which keeps them in a precarious situation. These workers also face little choice upon arrival and labour platforms have positioned themselves in this trajectory.

Going back to the title of this chapter, exploitation in Euro-American urban spaces can be qualified as racialized and "automated" through new labour algorithms. Why is the urban so important and why is it 'racialized'? Algorithmic allocation of work and surveillance are integral part of the platform economy. Ruha Benjamin's book '*Race after Technology'* argues that racial bias is coded into technologies (Benjamin, 2019). Per Benjamin, racialized people are *already* living in a dystopian technological future: "bankers using financial technologies to prey on Black homeowners, law enforcement using surveillance technologies to control Black neighborhoods"

(82). The racialized and administrative bias faced by many is rooted in colonial and capitalist exploitation that needs these workforces for profit. This also happens in platform labour. Law scholar Dubal (2023), in a multi-year workers inquiry, found that the data collected by platforms is used to modulate pay in what she called 'algorithmic wage discrimination' (Dubal, 2023).

As I will argue throughout the rest of this thesis, it is because of one other component that is often left out of discussions on labour platforms: the migration/citizenship issue. Chapters 4 and 5 connect these sociohistorical contexts to their national 'cases' of racialiazation and the treatment of racialized immigrants past and present. Not only is the urban the key site for technological companies to test new 'neoliberal' or 'platformized' ways to manage their labour force, but it is also where most of international migration flows. This creates a pool of precarious labour that have little choice where and when to work. Platforms like Uber Eats have manage to position themselves within this flow, profiting for ambiguous labour laws and citizenship conditions. It is built on historical capitalist urbanization and colonialism – as we will see through interviews with Indian riders in Toronto or African riders in Paris for example. The resistance however is not invisible or inexistent. Food delivery riders, immigrant or not, contribute to the fight for the right to the city.

2.3 Social movements, unions, and worker's agency

The current reorganization of the economy through various technological processes has sparked debates on the place of the workers in this new system, from the study of the uneven development of labour at a global scale and its digital transformation (Larsson & Teigland, 2020;

Taylor & Rioux, 2018). For Herod, workers are active geographical agents. Labour is both object and subject of history and geography (Herod, 1997, 2018). Labour, like capital, seeks to creates its own 'spatial fix' and is conceived as 'sentience'. This body of work will be important to consider the second part of this thesis: resistance to platforms, notably by migrant workers and traditional unions.

The supply-chain of cheap labourers that exists in rich countries is one of the keys to the platforms' path towards profitability. Platform companies are not the ones bringing-in precarious migrants to do low paid risky work. It is rather the combination of neoliberalization – destruction of social protection for workers, creation of new arrangements allowing for informal employment and the racialized citizenship system - that restrict access to parts of the labour markets. Grassroots social movements and traditional unions have been advocating for better protection for the most precarious workers – notably immigrants.

Castree, Coe, Samers & Ward in "*Spaces of Work"* (2004) offer a detailed theorization of social relations in the division of labour. They note four structural problems linked to the labour markets: i) demographics work outside of capitalist relations (what determines the possible supply of labour); ii) the allocation of work operates per social characteristics (demand of labour or "who works where"); ii) the control of labour and its productivity are subject to social movements, solidarity and resistance (agency) and; iv) social reproduction and the overall happiness of workers are also built outside of labour (Castree et al., 2004: 37-39). These four structural problems are ones which platforms are facing and have no power over. Some of these positions are controversial

within strands of Marxism who may see these social and demographic concerns as part of a totality of capitalism.

These authors also characterize the state, in capitalist work relations, as a social regulator for various conflicts and wages. The state is not only a manager of the contradictions of capital, but also a major employer. More importantly, they argue that the mediating role of the state frames conditions for the private sector, for migration flows and the various aspects of social reproduction (healthcare, housing, education, and so on). To save on labour costs and ensure the maximum available workers, platforms resort to various mechanisms like promoting flexibility, but also allowing undocumented workers renting profiles, minors enrolling, profile sharing and so on. As Tucker (2020) frames it:

> food delivery platforms might benefit from their ability to collect rents from two clients, they are often limited in what they can charge. The limited extraction of rents from clients makes the extraction of surplus value from ground workers crucial to the platform capitalist's ability to turn a profit or staunch the losses incurred in scaling up. (Tucker, 2020: 195)

However, platforms are also collecting a booking fee from workers. This rent is hidden in the interface and is the main reason why they are both the rentier of a digital infrastructure and an employer in the traditional sense. As mentioned, the privatization and platformization of social reproduction are key on-going processes that led to the major reorganization of food delivery markets. Bakker and Silvey (2008) aim to spatially expand the conception of social reproduction to not only to the "care economy", but to wider questions of power, production, global political economy, and race. Their theorization of social reproduction helps us better understand how it functions for capital, how its organization shapes markets and how diverse social/geographical locations: "understand and navigate their role in social reproduction in relation to both the states

and markets and in terms of their own value systems and human agency" (Bakker & Silvey, 2008: 3). The privatization of social reproduction discussed by Bakker and Silvey has been colliding in the recent decade with the platformization of labour. Governments opting out or contracting out of their role in social reproduction, but also increased marketization and informalization of care (Katz, 2004). Huws (2019), when discussing this issue, mentions reproductive household work such as cooking, cleaning, babysitting or dog walking is increasingly taken over by private companies where immigrants, often racialized, are over-represented (Huws, 2019). Reproductive work, per McDowell, has different sites and locations and is highly hierarchal and segmented (typically women of color, new migrants and native women for certain types of work) (McDowell, 2010, 2015, 2016). Workers' agency, especially for non-white migrant women workers remains under-theorized.

One very important, multi-situated study, by a team of researchers in Euro-America attempt to show how "non-citizenship" status shapes migrant work and employment and how labour geographies could pay attention to this process (Buckley et al., 2017). They argue that the state's various arms produce precarious employment among temporary "non-citizen" workers. They recommend ethnographical methods such as oral history for understanding the agency of those working under conditions of precarious non-citizenship. Strauss, in Canada, also connects migration and work with state-sponsored precarity, intersectionality and constrained agency (Strauss, 2016, 2019). Along with Schwiter and England, Strauss (2017) link at-home care work with migration and labour market policies, specifically with the state's role in facilitating the entry of migrants for live-in care work (Strauss et al., 2017), which connects to the case of gig-work in Canada and France. For Choudry and Smith, we need to 'reshape and reimagine' solidarity, class

struggles and exploitation by deepening and broadening our notions of work to include migrant labour:

> This kind of solidarity cannot be built without meaningful engagement with the racialized and gendered nature of class articulations in Canada and elsewhere. It cannot be conducted within outmoded confines of business unionism and its devotion to nationally bounded labour policies. Nor can it be found within social democratic politics, which imprison Canadian left thinking and action in the neoliberal moment, demanding, at most, only piecemeal social welfare reforms within a national context—demands directed only at citizens and permanent residents (Choudry & Smith, 2016: 57)

The next section considers the labour geography project and how it can help conceptualize solidarity and resistance within platform-mediated gig-work in the contexts of migrant labour in France and Canada.

2.3.1 *Labour Geography: Individual, collective, and constrained agency*

This chapter has highlighted many ways in which migrant workers are a key part of the platform economy. I now move from algorithmic and racialized exploitation to resistance in platform-mediated labour. As I have and will argue throughout this thesis, geography always plays a part in the various trajectories of plaformized exploitation and resistance. The concept of 'constrained agency' is a good starting point:

> Workers cannot be understood as solely victims of the whims and power of capital and the state (that is, lacking any capacity to shape the geographies of capitalism. Nor, however, can they be viewed as the "free agents" of economic theory, as their opportunities to act are fundamentally shaped by uneven power relations and the multi-scalar regulatory context of contemporary relations of production (Strauss et al., 2017: 465)

To make sense of agency in platform gig work, many (Anwar & Graham, 2020; Tassinari & Maccarrone, 2020; Triandafyllidou & Lam, 2021; Wells et al., 2020) have been using Katz's triad

of agency. Those include: *resilience* (small acts that help individuals and groups to cope with everyday realities, but do not change existing social relations), *reworking* (reflects people's efforts to materially improve their conditions of existence, but still are enfolded into hegemonic social relations) and *resistance* (refers to direct challenges to capitalist social relations by workers) (Katz, 2004).

The current reorganization of global work, consumption, and labour, with technologies and new mobile apps, are changing the way people eat or transport, but are still part of capitalism and its social relations. This as multiple components identified as: a) algorithmic allocation of work, b) digital tracking and monitoring technologies to enforce and control pace, c) customer ratings into performance management systems, d) use of exclusivity clauses in platform worker contracts, e) require workers to wear platform-branded uniforms and equipment, f) setting of prices for services, g) setting of pay rates for work conducted and h) extraction of commission on every transaction (Moore & Joyce, 2020). These aspects are all affected by citizenship status, gender, time and place of delivery, platforms they worked for, what should change and how they mobilize against them.

Richardson (2020), who argues that platform interface marketization is key to understanding how a company, in this case Frichti's competitor Deliveroo, 'black boxes' the act of delivering. In other words, how its invisibility increases its flexibility. Borrowing from economic sociology, Richardson argues that due to the algorithmic management of the competition between riders and the re-working of the platform's interface, workers are coerced into a trifold flexibility ('coercive flexibility') (Richardson, 2020). However, the black box approach has been critiqued by advocates of the 'hidden abode' approach previously discussed. Others argue: "the tendency toward

technological determinism evident in black box account of platforms persistently downplays the importance of the social relations of employment for understanding the operation of different forms of managerialism in practice" (Moore & Joyce, 2020: 30). These forms of racialized and algorithmic management are not all-seeing.

Coe and Jordhus-Lier (2010) note that labour geography has tended to conflate worker agency with union agency. They proposed that "agency always needs to be 'grounded' or re-embedded in the space-time contexts of which it is a constituent process" (Coe & Jordhus-Lier, 2010: 218). The re-embedding of agency, proposed by Coe and Jordhus-Lier, involves:

> Understanding the ways in which labour agency is embedded is important because, to rephrase Marx, workers might be shaping economic geographies, but not necessarily with maps of their own making. Agency is always relational, and never completely autonomous. (Coe & Jordhus-Lier, 2010: 221)

I have shown in the previous sections that, for social geographers, citizenship and precarity are processual and relational. These two concepts are linked to socio-historical contexts in which they occur. One lesson on the space/policy relationship from Dikeç is that: "both governance and resistance are spatial, place-making practices. In this sense, there is an ongoing contestation for space" (Dikeç, 2007: 7). I will now explore how agency must be understood as an embedded, processual, contested process, that is multi-situated and variegated per contexts. Many contributions to the labour geography project are applicable to gig work, for example the concept of 'constrained agency'.

Per Coe and Jordhus-Lier, re-embedding agency must occur in four types of markets: global production networks (GPN), state, local communities and labour market intermediaries. Coe and

Jordhus- description of some key points called ‘for-profit labour market intermediaries’ are strikingly similar in many aspects to the platform economy:

a) *Internationalization* dynamics and spread of certain forms of labour flexibility;
b) *Intermediation* in all sectors, promoting ‘flexibility packages’ for clerical and blue-collar;
c) *Neoliberalization* of labour market and the various actors and agents spreading practices
d) *Creation* of new labour market geographies at a range of interconnected spatial scales through the global expansion strategies of leading agencies; and facilitation of migrant worker movements across national borders

These four aspects materialized in platform-mediated food delivery today. Flexibility packages across territories, occupations, actors’ networks and new practices is nothing new. What is new is the platformization of it all. The four processes identified above are part of a general dismantling of labour markets in Euro-America that favored employers and weakened social nets.

In 2018, a special issue of *Work organisation, labour & globalisation* covered many cases of in labour law and platform labour in Europe (Hiessl, 2018; Waas et al., 2018). One of the main themes of this issue was the transformation of labour management in the platform economy and labour laws in Europe. It was argued, among other things, that disintermediation, or the cutting of costs for finding and hiring labour, allowed companies to operate in Europe (Ichino, 2018). Labour platforms are a new tool for the reduction of intermediation costs, but is a labour platform like Uber Eats ‘legally’ considered an employer, an intermediary or a digital firm? In Italy, jurisprudence qualifies what constitute an employer as the use of directive power – an element of subordination, finding disciplinary methods (Loffredo & Tufo, 2018). In this case, Uber Eats is an employer, or co-employer. France have been at the forefront of addressing employment issues regarding labour platform (Lenaerts et al., 2018). After recognizing the limitations of its labour law, the state created a new employment category which gives ‘self-employed’ benefits and union rights. Platform delivery workers have been reclassified in 2016 to be included in the accident

insurance occurring during work where the responsibility falls to the platforms.[16] However, this reclassification does not address the case of sans-papiers couriers for whom none of the measures help. Their labour, sometimes 7 days per week, makes them even more vulnerable to injuries.[17]

In Canada, it has been argued that Uber driving plays a part in migrants finding 'their own work' (Jamil, 2017; Jamil & Noisieux, 2018). Labour market intermediaries and constrained agency in 'crowdwork' and place-specific platform work can offer a spatial analysis of internationalized labour market, where firms can deterritorialize work or fragment tasks (Ettlinger, 2017). Many other models of the organization of the food delivery market have been put forward, where tripartite or quadripartite analysis are analyzed (Lenaerts et al., 2018; Tucker, 2020). However, online food services delivery market is much more complex and diverse than just the usual main 'players'. Tucker's article, for example, is concerned with the political economy of the market and the economic interactions between restaurants, consumers and workers. The Paris case shows that the 'workers' found in the app are not always the ones doing the work. Profile switching within the app can also be found in Toronto. The urban question emerges as a key component for the analysis of international platform economy. While alluring newly arriving migrants in search for work, modern platforms are at the intersection of digital and racial capitalism. However, platformized exploitation of newcomers is only one side of the coin. This other side, resistance to labour platformization, will be put forward in more details in the last chapter.

[16] https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000032983213/

[17] https://www.francetvinfo.fr/live/message/5f2/80f/1c8/256/bf8/888/d43/f76.html

2.3.2 Local struggles and traditional unions

Local struggles are embedded in local contexts of capitalist urbanization. Platforms play an increasingly important role in each urban context. Resistance to labour platformization can be a way to understand how platforms are adapting to localities, morphing with what is available and are fighting for survival in many saturated urban markets. Research from the 'South' regarding platform-mediated riders' collectives have emerged. Recent academic papers from Latin America have shown how platform delivery riders organize, with the help of many traditional unions and in a transnational manner, develop solidarity projects and contest deregulation and neoliberal models (Miguez & Menendez, 2021; Munoz & Martinez, 2022; Vargas et al., 2022).

In Canada, critical labour scholars like Camfield argued that to build a working-class movement, unions need to reinvent themselves, ideologically and structurally, and learn lessons from other forms of labour organizing (Camfield, 2011). Workers individually and collectively are organizing against these platforms, in urban, globalized and neoliberalized settings. We also see new roles for traditional unions who need to position themselves in the platform debates. Pro-employer unions versus pro-labour unions are nothing new. In the gig economy, some sides with the platform in the independent-contractor debate (CFDT in France, UFCW in Canada) while others with the workers (CUPW in Canada, CGT in France).

I have discussed at length the importance of migrant labour in the platform economy, but what about the importance of migrant labour in its resistance? Labour rights struggles in scholarships on the right to the city are paying more attention to the role of immigrants in these battles:

> […] cities are increasingly important venues for organizing for the labour rights of marginalized populations, but they also show that not all cities are created equal. Labour rights advocacy is easier and more successful in some cities than in others. This is due to differences such as in the history and legacy of past labour rights struggles, local economic, political, and demographic dynamics, the presence and strength of advocacy organizations and other supportive institutions, and the relationships between cities and their respective regions and states. (Graauw & Gleeson, 2017)

The differences in terms of history, legacy of past labour rights struggles, local economic, political and demographic dynamics between Paris and Toronto are striking. Traditional unions in France like the CGT, CNT and FO are not only implicated in the current platform struggles, but also have been part of the sans-papiers strikes for multiple decades (Gomes, 2022; Nicholls, 2013). The vast history of labour rights movements in France is not to forget when analyzing current platform issues. In Canada, similar traditional unions are part of the on-going fights for gig workers like CUPW and UFCW. Grassroots organizations are also part of the historical contexts in which platforms insert themselves like couriers' collectives (TokTokTok in Paris now CLAP, Herrier in Toronto now GWU!). The variety of cities and contexts make a dual-city case study of resistance campaigns important.

Contemporary 'platform urbanism' is not simple a way to develop cities in a 'user friendly' manner. It is where platforms, capital and technology produce space and are antagonists to local resistance and sometimes government regulation. Analyzing the agency of workers in the platform economy, Wells and al. (2020) want to expand labour geography to the platform economy by "analyzing the uneven emergence of platform-based worker struggles" (5). They argue that the D.C. airport is a place where agency of mainly non-white drivers is shaped by contestation. However, the Uber workplace and geofencing technology is also important in conditioning workers' action capacity for resistance. Similarly, Munn (2017: 18) notes that the agency of the

drivers converges, but never coincide, because of Uber's aggressive data-driven modes of governance. Johnston (2020a) also analyzes the spatial collective action of Uber workers. She notes three important strategies: works councils, collective bargaining, and multi-enterprise agreements. These three studies will be key in the last chapter of this thesis which focuses on resistance and unions.

In the case of the platform economy, lobbying is an essential part of the arrival of technology companies and the erosion of workers' rights in cities around the world. Uber and Lyft managed to secure its growth future in California through Proposition 22 which was submitted to vote in the 2020 U.S. elections. The goal of this proposition was to counter the AB5, a law put in place in California to ensure workers minimum wage and safety net benefits. This was the most expensive lobbying campaign is U.S. history with 200M$ spent to roll-back the gains made by gig-workers, and notably by many grassroots organizations that fought a long time for those rights. Proposition 22 signed the end of decent healthcare benefits – in the middle of a pandemic – while also reducing to sub-minimum wage adjusted earning rate way below (5.64$/hour) what was published by Lyft. (Jacobs and Reich 2020).

Similarly, research critical research from China - the biggest food delivery market globally also considers workers' perspective regarding resistance to algorithmic management, notably via organized strikes across the country (Chuang, 2020; Huang, 2021; Lin et al., 2021). Recent strikes in the U.K. by Uber Eats, Deliveroo, JustEat and Stuart couriers led the company to offer astronomically high fares to counter the social movement.[18] Over-flowing of orders in restaurants

[18] https://braveneweurope.com/a-middle-finger-to-the-apps-uk-sees-historic-riders-strike

like McDonald's is reminiscing of the GrubHub promotional catastrophe that occurred in New York City couple of years ago. This was done in part with IWGB, a traditional workers union that has a long history of organizing the most precarious in the country.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

"We have to stop immigration. We must forbid family reunion and marriages. Do we need more immigrants? No." – Manuel Valls, France's ex-Prime Minister, December 2021 on proposed immigration reforms

This chapter reviews the methodological framework(s) used to conduct this study. There is not much research in urban geography that has tackled the current platformized of migrant labour, citizenship and food delivery, in a critical comparative perspective. A discussion on research methods for this type of geographical analysis will help show how the contemporary urban platformization of labour is happening in many cities in Euro-America in a variety of ways. Therefore, one of the central themes of this thesis is the importance of scales and comparison. A discussion of the concept of scale will follow, which will lead to a proposition of using relational comparison to make sense of platform urbanism.

In the Fall of 2019, as I started my PhD, I chose to follow up with the work I had done previously during my Master's thesis on Uber and urban neoliberal policies in Montreal. The decision to study Uber's newest project, Uber Eats, seemed logical at the time because there was a saturation of research on Uber, but almost nothing on Uber Eats (to my knowledge). During that year, food delivery was not as important for the platform economy as passenger driving. Only a couple of months later, this line of work was catapulted by the COVID pandemic at the forefront of news

media outlets, academic papers and documentaries. The chain of events we witnessed (lockdowns, restaurant closures, increase in deliveries, social distancing and then re-openings) kept people in and out of their households, while food delivery workers kept bringing meals to homes throughout most of 2020 and 2021. I started my fieldwork with two research questions in mind: 1) How do couriers, notably urban migrants, come to work in, exercise agency, and experience the platform-mediated online food delivery labour markets? 2) How do social movements by food delivery couriers, advocacy group and labour union members play a role in shaping platform mediated gig work?

To answer these questions, I chose to conduct a case-study based on multiple 'cases' (Yin, 2017). The goal of this comparison is to use qualitative methods to better understand how the platformization of reproductive work came to be so important in urban spaces before and after the pandemic, notably because of migrant work. In response to "platformized" exploitation, local and national labour unions and grassroots organizations are rising against capitalist corporations and are hurdles for these global platforms and their growth agendas.

This research will contribute to the understanding of a modern social phenomenon, platform-mediated food delivery work, through a workers' inquiry (Woodcock, 2021b). It will look into how the commodification of urban migrant labour-power is achieved by platforms through forms of regulatory breaks for platforms, notably rentiership (Birch et al., 2022). The previous chapter explained how this research is situated at the intersection of urban and labour studies. Epistemologically, it is part of the latest branch of political economy in critical urban studies concerned with platform urbanism, and of the labour geography project (Brogan & Tufts, 2017)

concerned with the latest transformation that is platform gig work. Through an exploratory fieldwork in two Euro-American cities, Toronto and Paris, the goal of this research project was an inquiry into platform food delivery and its resistance. This thesis is built on primary research conducted by myself over the last 3 years. All the data found here is original. This research looks at the role of migrant workers and labour unions in resisting exploitation, making the process of platformization bounded by social space. This process also occurs at a time when it is not only labour and its spatial distribution that is increasingly taken up by digital platforms, but also communications, transportations, consumption, urbanism and politics.

Methodologically, several choices oriented how this research was conducted, because of the exploratory nature of many issues at hand - migrant platform workers, their resistance, account subletting, citizenship and data ownership. This chapter will first discuss two important methodological debates in geography: scale and comparison. It will show why I chose a multi-scalar comparison between different layers governance in two Euro-American cities: a) how exploitation takes place a variety of scales from the subletting relation between two individuals, to the city scale with a plethora of side-companies trying to get into the food delivery industry, to national and global scale firms in quest on monopoly control of different markets; b) how resistance takes place at a variety of scale from grassroots organizing for local issues, to national unionization campaign, to global struggles against platformized exploitation.

Second, a meta-analysis of the existing research on food delivery platform workers will compare methodologies and highlight some gaps in the literature, notably on citizenship. As it was argued recently by Doorn, Ferrari & Graham (2022) in their recent piece on migrants in the platform

economy, we need a refocusing of the literature on gig work towards platform-mediated commodification of migrant labour. They also argued that we need a policy change that "acknowledges how employment and welfare regulation interact with immigration policies at a national and international level. This means we should expand our political horizon and augment gig worker reclassification efforts with struggles for broader worker protections, redistributive social policies, and immigration reforms geared toward global social justice and solidarity" (Doorn, Ferrari & Graham 2022: 7).

Third, this chapter will outline the design for this two-city case study; before and after the fieldwork, which deeply impacted the direction of the research. It will also discuss the changes made in the analysis and the findings, all the way down to the last stage of the research journey.

3.1 Conceptualizing scales in urban geography

As this research is multi-sited, a discussion on the notion of scale is unavoidable. In his theoretical discussion on the concept of *scale* in geography, Brenner notes a changing pattern toward the urban in its use as a research method: the "problematique of geographical scale—its spatial organization, social production, political contestation, and historical reconfiguration—was now re-extensively positioned at the very heart of the urban question" (Brenner, 2019: 99). The production of geographical scales, per Brenner, is now inherently attached to capitalist urbanization and the urban question.

Scale has been a key concept in human and physical geography for a long time. Lefebvre's relational conceptualization of space – as produced through a multitude of social practices, institutions, conceptions and imaginaries across all scales – inspired many to rethink the way we see time and space. As Brenner as argued, networks and economic activities we're being simultaneously reorganized:

> […] contemporary round of global restructuring has radically reconfigured the scalar organization of territorialization processes under capitalism, relativizing the primacy of the national scale while simultaneously enhancing the role of subnational and supranational scales (Brenner, 2004: 44)

More importantly, Lefebvre's theorization of the urban, in a context of rescaling, led to a rethinking of the central role of urbanization in modern capitalism. As Kipfer argued (2009), the urban, in Lefebvre's work, is not simply a scale nor an object/container (the city), but a form and a mediation between micro and macro levels (Kipfer, 2009; Lefebvre, 1970). For Lefebvre, the word level (*niveau*) refers to the distinction between aspects of life, where the global level (G), and the private level (P), are mediated by the urban mixed level (M). We can see here the central role played by the urban level in Lefebvre's theory.

Scale (*échelle*), on the other hand, has more of a territorial connotation and is commonly known as demarcated scalar hierarchies. However, scale is not solely the organization of territory. The concept of scale is a "basis for deciphering the vertical differentiation and stratification of sociospatial relations among (for instance) global, supranational, national, regional, and/or local levels" (Brenner 2019: 266), which resemble the layers of a *mille-feuille* pastry. Using this conception of scale to make sense of the various strategies clashing in urban Toronto and Paris, I join what many have already started in platform studies.

In the recent years, more studies outside the discipline have mobilized the concept of scale – or scalar analysis as a method. We have seen the growth of multi-scalar comparison and multi-city comparison methods in urban studies (Macfarlane, 2010; J. Robinson, 2022) and platform economy studies (Tassinari & Maccarrone, 2020). This section will review some of the methodological issues when using the concept of scale in urban comparison of platform-mediated gig work. It will show its pertinence for a relational comparison of platform labour exploitation and its resistance.

One method underdeveloped in the growing body of literature on food delivery work is scalar analysis. There is a need to integrate the roles played by the intertwined and co-constituted political, social and economic scales in the platformization of urban labour. Many have already argued that platformization must be situated in the various contexts of state regulation (van Doorn et al., 2021, 2022). The units of analysis of a multiple-location case study, such as the urban regions of Toronto and Paris, are therefore not limited to city administrative boundaries, but rather by the product of numerous relations at a variety of scales. The thesis builds on the methodology put forward by comparative urban studies for both the Canadian and European contexts to offer a scalar analysis of platform labour and its resistance. Boudreau & al. (2007) note that Toronto has several differences with Europe in its urban form, notably the bourgeoisie's role and the stages of capitalist urbanization, but that it also has "astonishing similarities with European metropolitan regions" (Boudreau et al., 2007: 38).

A simple vertical structuration of sociospatial relations makes scale "intelligible in everyday life, and essential as tools of sociohistorical inquiry" (Brenner, 2019: 104). However, it is not solely limited to the body, the household, the city, the global, but also the overlapping political, economic, and social scales. In his article on Uber driving, Bissell (2021) changes pace from international political economy and turns to the individual scale (the 'body'). He asks how capitalist exploitation is embodied by workers in Australia (Bissell, 2021). He notes that political economy, one of the main fields looking at platform delivery gig work, is mainly preoccupied with new markets, laws and regulation, but lacks the 'affective' impacts for workers. His cultural geography research jumps from global algorithmic exploitation to individual affective impacts. This example of scalar methodological choice at the 'lowest' vertical level allows the researcher to have a deep understanding of the agency of Uber drivers. Similarly, Kuttler everyday life of taxi drivers in Mumbai primarily focuses on individual scale, in the urban context (Kuttler, 2022). This is what Coe and Jordhus-Lier called re-embedded agency, which we covered in Chapter 2: "How workers are differentially positioned within their families and communities, within the structures of state institutions and within the global networks of production and reproduction" (Coe & Jordhus-Lier, 2010: 229).

Mapping the various scales of agency and the impacts of the reorganization of work into algorithmic management in different contexts is a major component of the methodology regarding research on platform labour. For example, recent work by Triandafyllidou and Lam (2022) offers a typology of the objectives and perception of migrant gig workers in Toronto's platform labour market. They divide the structural barriers in the labour market in three "scales". They determined factors for starting platform food delivery at the macro level, which is outside of the worker's

control, at the meso level, which concerns the various connections within the migration trajectories and at the micro, which is the individual choices and aspirations, what they want to achieve and how they cope with state structural disadvantages (Lam & Triandafyllidou, 2022; Triandafyllidou & Lam, 2021).

Focusing on the "neighborhood" scale is work by Gregory and Maldonado (2020) on food delivery in Edinburgh. They showed a divide between the northern and southern neighborhoods of the city using riders' trajectories and geolocation (Gregory & Maldonado, 2020). The riders' routes were more directed towards richer, more gentrified, neighborhoods. They managed to show where the platformization of social reproduction is most advanced or where people can afford more home delivery. A spatial analysis of food delivery in Paris or Toronto would be a potentially great research topic as the geography of both cities greatly differs.

As Huws noted, the household 'level' is where the reproduction of labour power takes place. It is a site of primitive accumulation, of production of commodities for the market, of consumption and of social reproduction (Huws, 2019). These few examples have highlighted how scale is partially mentioned as a factor or context in some research on platform labour. For this thesis, following Brenner's book on the production of scale in new urban spaces, scalar considerations are placed at the center of capitalist urbanization, which is itself driven in part by platformization. Chapter 2 highlighted the historical precedent for urban-labour exploitation and resistance. This chapter will lay some conceptual methodological foundations for making links between what is occurring in different urban areas regarding platform labour and resistance.

3.1.1 Towards a relational comparison of the resistance to platform capitalism

Taking on both Lefebvre's and Massey's work on space, Hart's relational comparison emerged as a tool to understand contemporary changes in urban areas. As for Massey, who argued that economic processes are shaped by space, and vice-versa, Hart's relational comparison focuses on *how* processes are constituted in relation to one another (Hart, 2002, 2018).

It is through critical analysis of everyday life as an essential part of larger processes that Lefebvre, Massey or Hart find relations in the production of space. These relations occur over layered spaces and scales in interconnected ways. As Peck & Theodore (2015) showed in their book 'Fast Policy', ideas and policies travel. The made the argument that transnational networks of actors make policies travel along with the relational character of urban policy:

> In their acquisition of extralocal salience, policy models reveal their character as "relational" constructions; they do not simply travel, intact, from sites of invention to sites of emulation, like some superior export product, or to borrow the parlance of the field, as "silver bullets." Instead, through their very movement they (re)make connections between these sites, evolving in form and effect as they go. (Peck & Theodore, 2015: xxiv)

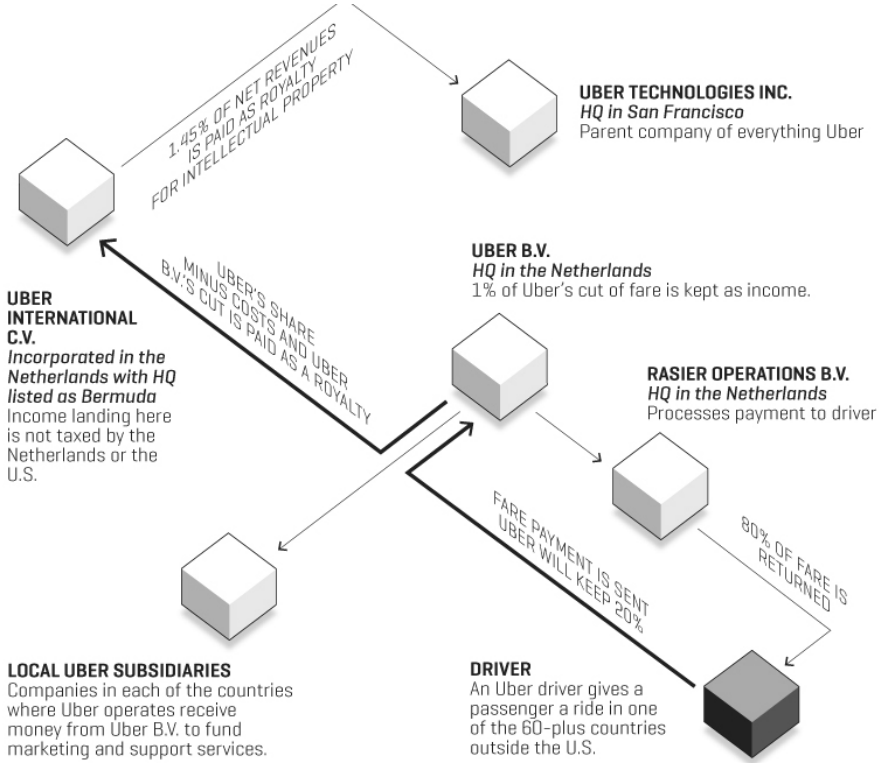
The relational character of policy models is also found in platform governance. Labour platforms learn by trial and errors from city to city. They morph their strategies to fit local contexts and bodies of governance and sometimes can't fit local regulations, as we have seen with the Uber Files last year.

Methodologically, this means looking at how platforms interacted with local and national governments in Toronto and Paris and the various scales of governments (i.e. City of Toronto,

GTA, Ontario and Canada; Ville de Paris, Île-de-France, France and the EU). Lobbying strategies by Uber and Airbnb to dismantle local and national regulations has been analyzed in the recent years in Canada for example (Brossat, 2018; Cassell & Deutsch, 2020; Söderström & Mermet, 2020; Vultur & Enel, 2020). The 'City of Toronto' and the 'Ville de Paris' are hosts to the headquarters of major global platforms. For example, Uber Canada Inc. has its corporate head offices in downtown Toronto, and Uber France Inc. has its corporate head offices downtown Paris. Headquarters of Uber Technologies Inc. are in San Francisco, California. However, the company uses a tax evasion scheme that has ramification from the Netherlands to Bermuda.

When a fare is completed on Uber Eats, the total amount is sent to a company called Uber B.V., registered in the Netherlands (see Figure 1 below). The fare is returned to the rider by third parties (Uber uses more than 50 Dutch payment companies such as Rasier) and to Uber's local subsidiaries (e.g. Uber Canada Inc. or Uber France Inc.). The rest of the generated revenues go to a shell company called Uber International C.V. incorporated in Bermuda. The parent company 'Uber Technologies Inc.' in San Francisco charges Uber International C.V. for IPR's. This scheme allows the company to avoid taxes in France, Canada, the Netherlands and California.

Figure 1: Global organizational structure of Uber



(Fortune 2015)[19]

A typical 'vertical ordering' of governing scales makes an international and multiscalar analysis like Uber's organizational structure more intelligible. Laying out sociospatial relations horizontally (see above) allows us to illustrate the roles of places, regions, and territories, along with using a vertical ordering of these relations to differentiate each level and roles (e.g. body, local, metropolitan, national, supranational, global). However, there is a multiplicity of other parties, groups and actors that play a role in shaping urban platform labour. Their importance cannot be limited to their place in a scalar hierarchy.

[19] https://fortune.com/2015/10/22/uber-tax-shell/

Hence, looking at the production of urban space relationally means considering resistance as an equally important process. Social movements, traditional unions, activists and grassroots organizations are globally connected. One movement's tactics can inspire another one across the Atlantic, for example a wildcat strike, the blocking of key restaurants, hubs or ghost kitchens, street protests or mass logging off. Moreover, grassroots and union leaders are directly discussing tactics with other groups in other countries. This will be discussed in more detailed in Chapter 6 and will lead to a central proposition to this thesis – that local struggles against platform capitalism are globally connected. Local actors follow the development of struggles against similar platforms. As Woodcock (2021) also pointed out, gig workers' social movements are increasingly internationally connected (Woodcock, 2021b). They talk to each other and exchange tactics, organize summits and inspire legislative push. Lawmakers in one country are using regulations in others to push for new platform labour laws. In some cases, they are fighting against the same company (e.g. Uber). I suggest in Chapter 6 that using relational comparison can help us better understand how local struggles shape Uber Eats globally.

The production of urban spaces is not solely the result of capitalist development. It is also the result of resistance. This will offer insights to better understand how global capitalist urbanization is connected to local cases of platformization. The goal of a multiple case study like this one is therefore to compare some key recurring aspects: actors, events, policies, similarities and differences (Baxter, 2016).

3.1.2 *Research on labour in platform capitalism*

The growing popularity of food delivery has boosted the number of publications and news media articles on the issue. We have seen many social movements by gig workers globally (re)centering the fight around algorithmic distribution of labour and the misclassification of workers. This has also been the central focus of much of the academics working of food delivery platforms. This section will look at the various methodologies used by researchers that specifically focus on platform-mediated food delivery experience and resistance around the world. Per Kurt Vandaele literature review in the latest "Routledge Handbook of the Gig Economy" (2022), the bulk of empirical research on platform food delivery is divided between the unpacking of algorithmic management, the mapping of individual and collective resistance and the characterization of new emerging forms of representation and cooperatives organization (Vandaele, 2022). He also argues that food delivery platforms are facing pressure from various actors, exposing their vulnerability in labour markets. As algorithmic management is redefining labour relations and how control and power are exercised, ethnographic work from political economy have shown how solidarity, social movements and collective grassroots organization are emerging out of platform exploitation (Cant, 2019, 2020; Heiland, 2021a, 2021b; Tassinari & Maccarrone, 2020; Vandaele, 2020; Woodcock & Cant, 2022).

In 2020, a special issue on platform management and organizational models of the journal Sociologica published a series of discussions on platform capitalism and monopoly. The biggest technology companies like Apple are often refer to as ecosystems (Grabher, 2020b). Some (Stark & Pais, 2020) asked if platforms are markets, hierarchies, networks, all three, or none. For this

thesis, I consider that they are hierarchal organizations that provide market 'illusions' through a digital infrastructure. On the labour side of things, Stark and Pais have argued that platforms are not hierarchies or markets, but rather their own organizational form (Stark & Pais, 2020). The frequent changes in the TOS and the operating rules experienced by workers (Griesbach et al., 2019; Ravenelle, 2019) makes this form of algorithmic extremely hierarchal from a worker's perspective, even if they claim to be decentralized and non-hierarchical.

If the urban is a site where the forces of the market, the state and the civil society collide, the platforms, as an organizational form, are more than just 'markets' where for instance labour can be bought and sold (Stark & Pais, 2020). Focusing on cryptocurrency trading platforms, Caliskan argues that in a market the consumer is concerned with the quality of the product, whereas on a platform, the consumer is more concerned about the quality of the platform, "buyers choose platforms first, then comes the product" (Caliskan, 2020). If a person wants to buy bitcoins, there is a plethora of cryptocurrency trading platforms to choose from. Choosing the platforms because of the quality of the platform, a promo code, a friend's recommendation, and so on, not because of the quality of the bitcoin. The same thing happens when someone wants to order a McDonald's burger from a food delivery platform, choosing between Uber Eats, Deliveroo or DoorDash.

Ratings and rankings are important components of algorithmic control, as Stark and Pais also mention. However, one lesser discussed aspect of the frequent changes in the TOS is the conditions of activation of the account for migrant workers. As I will show in Chapter 4 and 5, many riders found themselves facing regulatory changes and bureaucratic state's procedures, automated in the API, which increased their precarity and led many to (forced) undocumented labour. Although the

procedures found in the platforms' API are not hierarchal, they are in fact state's bureaucratic procedures, found in the TOS and automated.

Trying to understand how delivery riders can help and reach each other despite the platforms' algorithmic control and 'geofencing' (keeping workers physically away from each other through algorithmic dispatch to prevent organizing), sociospatial studies of gig worker movements have highlighted resistance strategies in the platformized workplace (Wells et al., 2020; Woodcock & Cant, 2022). Algorithmic management is also remodeling some of the traditional sociospatial work relations between employers and workers such as deskilling, tasks management, surveillance, anti-union strategies and productivity notably via data collection instantly re-integrated within the platform infrastructure (Griesbach et al., 2019; van Doorn & Badger, 2020). As Heiland argued, food riders contribute to the production of urban spaces by negotiating and creating resistance (Heiland, 2021b, 2021a).

In France, the dialectical relationship between exploitation and resistance by bike couriers is a common theme among sociologists (Jan 2018; Lebas 2019; Lemozy 2019; 2020). One key aspect of two-wheel delivery in Paris that needs deeper analysis is the contribution of the *sans-papiers* workforce to traditional unions and grassroots resistance. Aunis & Stevens (2021) worked on riders' practices, on the visibility of food couriers in public spaces in France and on the labour process of food delivery. An intersectional perspective is a starting point for an analysis on how young urban migrants, sometimes in precarious citizenship condition, come in and work in the food delivery markets of Paris and Toronto. In the UK, Popan & Anaya-Boig (2021) mention the undocumented workforce in their multiple case studies between Spain and Latin America and how

their citizenship condition is central to their experience of food delivery labour (Popan & Anaya-Boig, 2021). Also from the UK is Cant's book, 'Riding for Deliveroo' (2019) which notes briefly the contribution of the precarious migrant workers during the mobilization and strikes against Deliveroo in Brighton (Cant, 2019).

Australian researchers, have put forward ethnographic studies with migrant workers' (Riordan, 2022b, 2022a). By using 'shadowing' as an ethnographic methodology, Riordan showed that the experiences of migrant workers during the pandemic was tainted by multiplied injustices. The pandemic not only increased the precarity for these workers, but also confirmed what many fieldworks observed: migrant workers in the food delivery platform economy do not use the app as a supplemental revenue but as full-time work. Their situation is more precarious and dependant to algorithmic allocation of work which can be unpredictable. The research can be split between political economy, health and safety, migration studies, psychology and tourism (see below).

Figure 2: Research projects on platform food delivery work and workers

Author(s)	Platform(s)	Country/City	Interviews
Aguilera, Dablanc, Rallet (2018)	Deliveroo, Foodora, UberEats	France (Paris)	n/a
Aunis & Stevens (2021)	Deliveroo, UberEats, Frichti	France (Poitiers)	24
Badger (2022)	n/a	UK (London)	14
Bissell (2021)	n/a	Australia (Melbourne, Victoria)	30
Cant (2020)	Deliveroo	UK (Brighton)	18
Cataldo (2021)	Glovo, Foodys, Just Eat, etc.	Italy (Catania)	120
Chhiev, Phun, Yen & Yai (2021)	YPP Express, MealTemple, etc.	Cambodia (Phnom Penh)	n/a
Chuang (2019)	Waimai,	China	n/a
Dablanc, Morganti, al. (2017)	n/a	Europe	n/a
Doorn & Vijay (2021)	n/a	New York, Berlin, Amsterdam	151
Gregory & Maldonado (2019)	Deliveroo	Scotland (Edinburgh)	25
Griesbach, Reich, al. (2019)	Instacart, UberEats, GrubHub	United-States	55
Heiland (2020; 2021)	Foodora, Deliveroo	Germany (7 cities)	35
Herr (2017;2020)	Deliveroo, Foodora, UberEats	Austria (Vienna)	18
Huang (2021)	n/a	China	52
Jan (2018)	Deliveroo	France	12
Lam & Triandafyllidou (2022)	UberEats, DoorDash, Skip	Canada (Toronto)	35
Lebas (2019)	Deliveroo, UberEats	France (Lille)	8
Lemozy (2019)	Deliveroo,	France (Paris)	3
Lin, Peng, Ching & Baum (2021)	n/a	China	50
Miguez & Menendez (2021)	Glovo, Rappi	Argentina, Latin America	n/a
Munoz & Martinez (2022)	Glovo, Rappi, UberEats	Peru (Lima); Chile (Santiago)	20;12
Muszynski (2022)	Glovo, Just Eat	Poland, Italy	36
Newlands (2022)	Foodora	Norway; Sweden	41
Orr & al. (2023)	UberEats	Australia	40
Pancharoen & Phuaphansawat (2021)	n/a	Thailand	3
Parwez & Ranjan (2022)	Zomato, Swiggy	India	21
Payraudeau (2021)	DoorDash, UberEats, Instacart	USA	12
Popan & Anaya-Boig (2021)	Deliveroo, Glovo, Rappi	UK (Manchester)	15
Richardson (2020)	Deliveroo	UK (Newcastle)	n/a
Riordan (2022)	n/a	Australia (Brisbane)	21
Rosenblat (2018)	UberEats, Postmate	USA	n/a
Tassinari & Maccarrone (2020)	Deliveroo, Foodora	UK (London, Brighton), Italy (Turin)	18
Timko (2019)	Deliveroo	Netherland (Nijmegen), Germany (Berlin)	13
Vandaele (2020)	Deliveroo, UberEats	Belgium, Netherland	8
Vargas, Castaneda, Hernandez (2022)	Rappi	Colombia	n/a
Veen, Barrat & Good (2020)	Deliveroo, UberEats	Australia	41
Vieira (2020)	Glovo	Spain (Barcelona)	12
Woodcock (2021)	Deliveroo	UK (London)	10
Ya-Wen Lei (2021)	Meituan, Ele.me	China	68

Selected list of articles on food delivery riders around the world, last updated Fall 2022

Looking at alternatives to platform capitalism such as delivery cooperatives is also another important trait to political economy of gig work (Schor, 2020). As I mentioned in the previous chapter, platform coops are arguing for food couriers to take control of the 'means of production'. This means we need to un-blackbox this technology. Making algorithms accessible and understandable, and potentially owned by couriers themselves through a cooperative model, is a path forward in the resistance to platform capitalism. Looking at data redistribution and ways algorithms can be unveiled to workers (Scholz, 2017; Sofia et al., 2021; van Doorn & Badger, 2020) is one way forward. Dyer-Whiteford, Kjøsen & Steinhoff (2019) contest the idea that artificial intelligence and automation "can easily be detached, disentangled and re-appropriated from capitalism" rather, they argue that it's a part of the "traditional power tension between capital and labour" – in other words 'resistance' (Dyer-Witheford et al., 2019: 7-69).

3.2 Research design

This next section of this chapter will present the research design. It will detail the various choices made during the conception, the fieldwork, and the analysis. This research project is situated in qualitative social studies. Doing inductive research implies building theory from the fieldwork. Bent Flyvbjerg five misunderstandings of case-study research was a helpful starting point for designing this project (Flyvbjerg, 2006). A multi-case study research of platform-mediated gig-work meant that I would be conducting personally many semi-structured interviews, field observations and informal discussions. My role as a researcher in this multiple case study

was first to report a very sensitive issue within this expansion process – i.e. migrant work in urban spaces.

The reason behind the choice of cities for this thesis (Paris, France and Toronto, Canada) is multi-faceted. With their similarities, and their differences, both cities complete each other for analysing migrant platform work regarding immigration contexts, platformization and resistance movements. Both have a key role to play in their respective national economies as metropolis. This means they are key spaces to find employment. This also means they are important spaces in global migration networks and the movement of people at various scales. The role of these global cities in terms of migration nodes and employment nodes (both highly paid/highly recruited and precarious/dangerous) is a central focus of geographers and postcolonial research (Ong, 1999; Sassen, 2011). Paris and Toronto are where national and international migrants arrive, settle and find work. In France and Canada, it is also where the presence of platforms is most apparent. The platformization of labour also has similarities and differences (sometimes a second or third income, often a full-time job for precarious migrants). The political contexts also share similarities that have been identified before in a relational manner (Kipfer & Saberi, 2016).

As a white male researcher, interviewing migrant food couriers, sometimes in very precarious financial-housing-citizenship conditions must be reflected upon given the specific positionality and subjectivities involved. Migrant Workers Alliance for Change (MWAC), a Toronto-based member-led organization of migrant workers, provides a series of methodological question regarding studying and researching migrant issues, notably: How will you support migrant workers? Have you considered how you will ensure anonymity for migrant workers where

necessary? Have you considered how your project may re-traumatize workers or staff, and what supports have you put in place should that happen? Will you be compensating migrant workers or their organizations for their time? How does your project fit in with the public campaigns and demands of migrant workers already under way?[20]

Keeping all these questions in mind and applying this worker methodology was one of the goals of this project. Then, it was to shed some lights on the newly formed algorithmic exploitation in the food delivery industry, but also share resistance efforts by migrant workers which are often forgotten. The idea for this thesis (CRS) came to fruition after the fieldworks were completed. Resistance to labour platformization also became later a useful tool for explaining the messy, uneven and patched expansion of platform food delivery markets.

3.2.1 Fieldwork and sampling strategy

As Brenner (2004) argued, within globalization, the state plays a new role of mediator. Contrary to the common conception that the state's power is bounded by a zero-sum, globalization is not eroding the nation-state but changing forms of governance between scales (e.g. supra-national, infra-national) through urban locational policies, while simultaneously embedding the global and the local (glocalization) (Swyngedouw, 2004). Scales are neither a zero-sum of mutually exclusive operations, but rather intermeshed and coevolving (Brenner, 2019). Therefore,

[20] https://migrantworkersalliance.org/

the local level will be important for this thesis regarding both where some powers are situated, what the roles of City administrations are and where workers resist.

The first city chosen for this thesis is the 'City of Toronto' (composed of 158 social planning neighbourhoods). It is where most orders occur. However, as in most cities, this is not where most of the workers live. The Toronto couriers/drivers are for the most part based outside the City of Toronto in one of the four districts (Etobicoke, North York, East York and Scarborough) and/or part of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), which is itself composed of 25 incorporated municipalities (in either regional municipalities of Durham, Peel, York or Halton) – see Figure 3.

The urban forms, fabric and mobilities of both cities are very different: the City of Toronto (630 km2) being six times the size of the City of Paris (105 km2); while having similar population size (Toronto 2.93 millions; Paris 2.16 million). While the GTA (7'125 km2 and 6.7 million people) compared to Greater Paris (814 km2 and 7.1 million people).

During the years before starting my fieldwork I asked many times if platform food delivery riders needed a new 'method' of investigation. Is the platform economy new enough that we need new ways to reach out to couriers? Does algorithmic dispatching make couriers unreachable in-person? The exploratory nature of this research forced me to first gather information through online and in-person participatory observation. During the summer of 2021, I did 2 months of part-time food delivery on bike in Toronto for the platform Uber Eats. I got to experience first-hand the life of a food courier.

Figure 3: City of Toronto and Greater Toronto Area

(City of Toronto, map.toronto.ca)

The 'Ten cities of Toronto' launched in 2020 mapped and categorized the GTA: the Wealthy city, the Urban city, and the Suburban city.[21] Within those three categories were 10 types of profiles found in the GTA, bundling the 158 social planning neighbourhoods and juxtaposing wealth and poverty, security and instability, old and new developments, and so on. The GTA is increasingly diverse, but also segregated.

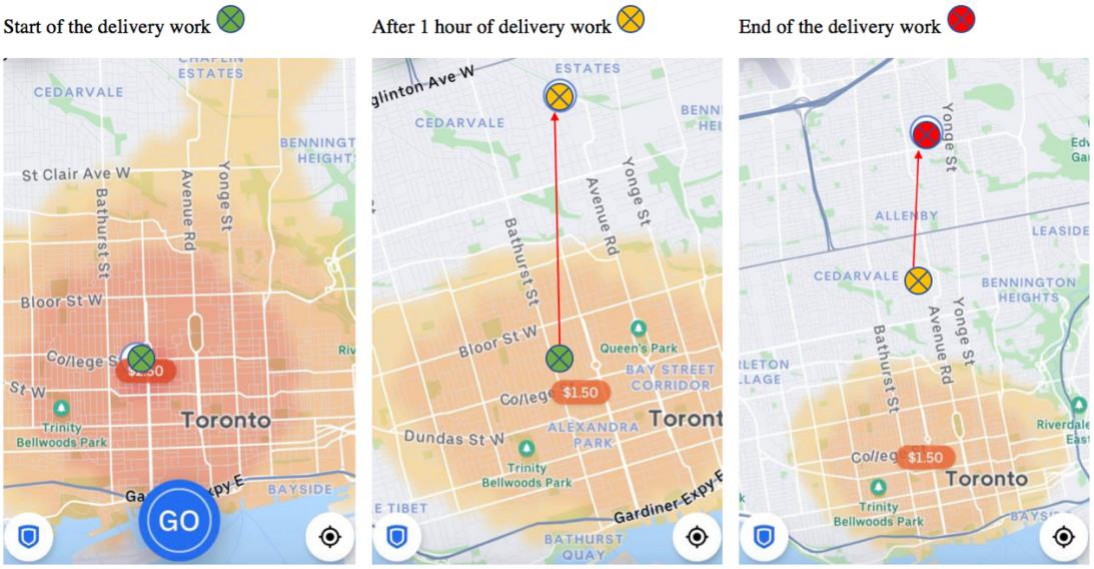
As a Canadian citizen living in Toronto, in-person participatory observation was mandatory for me. This is why, in the Summer of 2021, I enrolled on Uber Eats and started delivering food in the City of Toronto's limits, mainly in Old Toronto. Participant observation, per Kearns, is when the

[21] https://canadiangeographic.ca/articles/the-geographer-that-mapped-the-cities-within-the-city/

researcher is either observer-as-participant (a newcomer to a place i.e. food delivery) or participant-as-observer (seeking to understand personally a place by for example becoming a courier) (Kearns, 2016: 319). It was only possible in Toronto for obvious reasons – I did not apply for a work permit in France. It would also have brought in more ethical problems, notably concerning injuries occurring while doing fieldwork in another country (we can't forget this is a dangerous job and couriers get injured all the time).

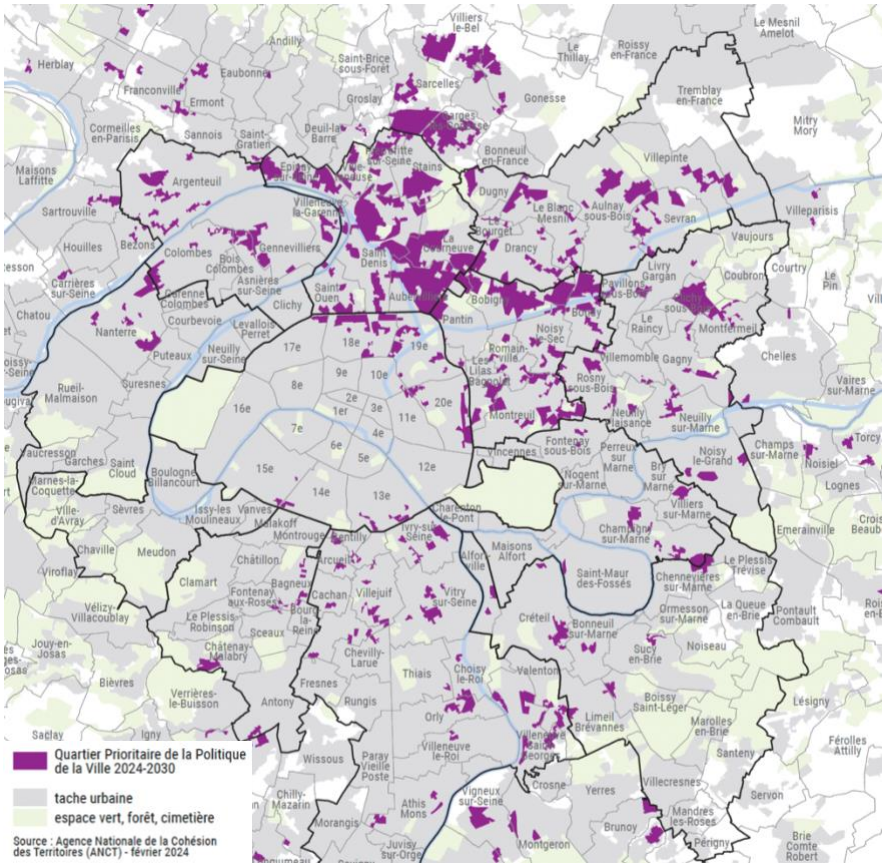
I took my roommate's delivery bag (he worked for Uber Eats as well) and rode the streets. However, just because you sign in downtown Toronto does not mean you will only deliver there (see Figure 5). On one afternoon, I sign into the Uber Eats near Kensington market. After a couple hours of delivery (I did not refuse any orders), I find myself almost an hour away from my initial space. The rhythm of work and urban cycling strategies seemed a little bit different in Paris, which I will discuss more in Chapter 4. In-person participatory observation was key to understand the typical day of work for a Toronto couriers. This also helped meeting drivers and was part of my sampling strategy. The latter was done for example in Paris by Lemozy (2019) as a food courier on bike, Munn (2017) and Rosenblat (2018) as Uber drivers, and many more (Lemozy, 2019; Munn, 2017; Rosenblat, 2018). The former method (not using personal experience as data), is what I choose for this study. I also had quick talks with customers, but because most of them just wanted to get their food it did not feel productive compared to talking for sometimes ten or twenty minutes with a fellow courier in a restaurant lobby or in a public park as we waited for orders.

Figure 4: Algorithmic dispatch in the City of Toronto (2021)



Similarly, the second city chosen for this case is the '*Ville de Paris'*. The idea most commonly known for Paris is the 'intra-muros' districts (composed of 20 '*arrondissements*') and surrounded by a highway (the '*périphérique'*). As for Toronto, most of the food couriers live outside the '*périphérique'* in the northern suburbs (the '*banlieues*') of '*Grand Paris'* in the '*Île-de-France*' region. Figure 4 below shows the City of Paris (arrondissement 1 to 20) and the Grand Paris (black line), as well as the Quartiers Prioritaires de la Ville (QPV). The QPVs are part of an urban policy put in place in 2015 by the French government to identify and list the neighbourhoods in urgent need of renovations. There are 1'500 QPVs in France.

Figure 5: *Quartiers Prioritaires de la Ville* (QPV) for the 'Grand Paris' (2023)



(APUR 2023)

The QPVs are mostly the poorer neighbourhoods on the outskirts of cities. They were largely used as scapegoats during the 2022 Presidential campaign by the Right (Pécresse, Zémour, and Le Pen) for many of France's problems. QPVs count around 5.5 million inhabitants as of 2022, and are largely not participating in the elections.[22] As for Toronto, many of the couriers I met in Paris told me they were travelling from those QPVs like Aubervilliers, Saint-Denis, Drancy or Aulney-sous-Bois by train (the RER) to reach Paris every day and work in food delivery. Similarly, the couriers

[22] https://www.lemonde.fr/election-presidentielle-2022/article/2022/01/31/election-presidentielle-2022-les-quartiers-populaires-au-c-ur-de-la-campagne_6111651_6059010.html

in Toronto travel from Etobicoke, Mississauga or Scarborough to reach Toronto by train (the GO train) and work. In both cases, rents are more affordable and it gives more proximity with families or communities that are already established.

The other type of observation I did was online. Some data used for this thesis comes from social media, or 'new media' and digital methods (Caliandro, 2018; Winders, 2016). Following the online questionnaire, I started online observations on Facebook, Uberpeople, Reddit and Twitter. After 3 years of compiling screenshots, posts, tweets and forum discussions between couriers, it helped draw a portrait of the food delivery situations in Toronto and Paris. It also helped finding workers' opinions on many issues in delivering. As Caliandro (2018) notes, social medias give the researcher access to everyday life and everyday practices of the public. He outlines two methods for considering online social media communities: a) "observing and describing the processes of online communication enacted by social media and digital devices" (follow the medium) and b) "observing and understanding the online social formations emerging from different practices of the use of digital devices enacted by users as well as the meanings they attribute to activities deploying such social formations" (follow the natives). Following a hashtag on Twitter or trend on Reddit means that "one has to investigate and understand the practical uses social actors make of those" (Caliandro, 2018: 559). This can be protests organization, downtown spontaneous meetings, sharing 'hot spots' for deliveries or showing solidarity.

Winders (2016) mentions that to think spatially about new medias, geographers must ask: "When people are 'on' their smartphones, where exactly are they? Some argue that this focus is part of a 'digital turn' in geography over the past two decades and the increasing importance of science in

technology and social media. What are those spaces/places like, and how geographers study them? How do we think geographically about social media?" (Winders, 2016: 338). For example, before my interviews with sans-papiers riders, a lot of online research was done on France's Facebook groups, blogs and forums. These online observations led me to better understand the sub-markets of account renting.

The second step I took to gather 'exploratory' data was to set up an online questionnaire for food couriers in Toronto. The goal was to gather original data on couriers and provide useful insights on sociodemographic trends and opinions (McGuirk & O'Neill, 2016). As there is currently almost no data available regarding age, race, gender, home, birthplace, workplace, citizenship status, education, it was crucial to try to draw a portrait of who is delivering food. The categories used in the survey were: 1) attributes (respondent characteristics), 2) behavior (work habits), 3) attitudes (thoughts on delivering) and 4) beliefs (on the future of work) (McGuirk & O'Neill, 2016: 248). The goal was to have an easy-to-fill questionnaire, shared online in multiple Facebook groups, Twitter feeds, Reddit trends and Uberpeople forums. This did not mean establishing statistical representation of the food couriers in Toronto, but it did show some sociodemographic characteristics on who is active in the online groups versus on the grounds. It was also a useful tool to compare these characteristics with the semi-structured interview interviewees. As I will mention in Chapter 5, of the 45 respondents, 23 were immigrants. On the ground, in the City of Toronto, it felt much higher than 50%. This would make sense with the questionnaire as most Canadians delivery by car in the Toronto suburbs, whereas migrant workers delivery with the e-bikes (this way you can start working almost right away and do not need a license and a car) in Old Toronto.

The main source of data for this thesis comes from semi-structured interviews with couriers, courier-activists, union organizers and other platform/coop professionals. These interviews were used to map the experiences of couriers and the resistance efforts in Toronto and Paris. A total of 25 semi-structured interviews were conducted, 12 in Paris and 13 in Toronto. Some were done via zoom (10) and the rest 'in-person' (15). The interview protocol can be found at the end both in French and English (see Annex A).

For the 12 interviews conducted in Paris, the interviewees were recruited via purposive sampling for the key actors and random sampling and snowball technique for the couriers (Startford & Bradshaw, 2016). The purposive sampling started with the main organizations and spokespersons in Paris (*Collectif des Livreurs Autonomes de Paris* - CLAP, *Confédération Général du Travail* - CGT, CycleCoop, Frichti union). Interviews with 4 organizers that were vocals in mainstream medias and online were conducted via zoom and in-person without financial compensation. They range between 45 minutes and 90 minutes This then led me to *La Maison des Coursiers*, a NGO sponsored by the City of Paris. This is a space where couriers can stop relax, have a coffee, but also get help for paperwork regarding citizenship. This space is where I recruited 8 migrant couriers for in-person and zoom interviews. I offered 20€ in exchange for their precious time (twice the French minimum wage). The interviews range from 20 minutes to 50 minutes.

For the 13 interviews conducted in Toronto, I used the same process, starting with spokespersons with many organizations (*Gig Workers United* - GWU, *Canadian Union of Postal Workers* - CUPW, Foodora union). The interviews with 4 organizers were conducted via zoom and range

between 60 minutes to 90 minutes. The 8 interviews conducted with food couriers were done via random sampling in-person, in the streets of Toronto while biking up and down Bloor street which is a popular zoom for couriers. Couriers were offered 20$ in exchange for their time. The interviews range from 20 minutes to 50 minutes. All textual translations from French to English are my own. Names of all interviewees have been changed to protect their identities.

Lastly, the final source of data used for the thesis is through a side research project with the *Institut National de la Recherche Scientifique* (INRS) in Montreal. In the Spring of 2022, I was hired as a research assistant to analyse and compare interviews with food couriers from Montreal. The goal was to understand the experiences and goals of youth food couriers in the city and the future of work and platforms in Quebec. The researchers at the INRS conducted more than 40 interviews with Uber Eats couriers and Uber drivers in Montreal and Quebec City. My task was to analyze 16 of these interviews (those conducted specifically with Uber Eats couriers in Montreal). The interviews range from 30 minutes to 60 minutes, where interviewees were asked about their relationship to work, platforms, migration, clients, algorithms and urban spaces. This project led to an intra-national comparison of platform-mediated food delivery between Montreal and Toronto. In the end, interpreting these 16 interviews for the INRS was helpful for my own research as many of the questions asked by these researchers were similar. Although these interviews will not be part of this thesis, they helped get a sense of Montreal's food delivery industry in comparison to Toronto's. This led to two articles written be myself and my colleague at the INRS comparing both markets, similarities and differences, and future perspectives.

3.2.2 Challenges and limitations of the study

The initial goal was to talk to 20 riders and actors per city, with the aim is to reach a critical number of the 'right' people interviewed (Startford & Bradshaw, 2016: 125). However, because the whole research was done out of pocket, I was only able to talk to at least 12 riders and actors per city. The lack of time and money was one of the limiting factors. York University's research cost funds help with plane tickets, accommodation and intervieweefees. The second limitation is a selection bias for Paris during Spring of 2022. Most sans-papiers riders were recruited at the *Maison des Couriers* (MDC) which is not as 'randomized' as in Toronto where I recruited riders in the streets. This, however, turned out to be a good opportunity to focus on migration, as most of the couriers go there to get citizenship and work paper counselling. There has been other case study research conducted with similar methodologies in other cities, but very little work is done specifically on 'migrant-couriers resistance'. Interviewees are mostly 'native' couriers, some traditional union organizers, social actors and elected officials (Lebas, 2019; Tassinari & Maccarrone, 2020; Veen et al., 2020; Woodcock, 2021b).

During the Summer of 2022, I did most of my interviews in Toronto with couriers. I was biking up and down Bloor avenue and asking food couriers if they wanted to do an interview. This is a third limitation of my sampling. The length of some of the interviews was affected by this method as most were waiting for orders and had to pause. The riders had to log-off for the interview, but it was clear many did not want it to last for too long. Moreover, one other limitation of this method is the recruitment period for the Toronto couriers in Canada. Many said they only do this work during the summer because they are on school break. They are therefore not limited by the

international student permits that limits them to 20 hours per week. The sample 'pool' is therefore flooded by international students. It is also a time where the bikers can bike freely, not limited by the snow and cold of winter. For Paris, the sample is not that much impacted by weather as winter in Paris is only sometimes a little bit rainy. Doing this method in the winter would probably give out a different sample.

The fifth limitation to this research concerns gender. The workplace, especially food delivery, is a gendered space.[23] There is some availability of data on racial and gender discrimination within platform labour (Ge et al., 2016), but it is hard to know the ratio of women couriers from existing data sources. My sampling does not include any women couriers, which is a serious limitation. Underrepresentation does not mean inexistence, but due to the lack of time and money I had to go with the sample that the fieldworks gave me. Lastly, it is important to note that as a francophone Montrealer doing research in Paris was a personal choice. I had been studying in Toronto for a couple of year and got to know more about this city and the platforms present here. As for the case of Paris, France is one major part of the history and the culture in Quebec. I have had the chance to visit friends and family in Paris over the years before deciding to make this city my second fieldwork. I kept general facts in a notebook, screenshots from the hiring process of signing up for work as a delivery courier, along with dozens of informal talks with fellow couriers during waiting periods in restaurants lobbies like this or while getting coffee between lunch and dinner.

[23] See for example, "Gender inequality in the gig economy" Fletcher (2021) https://autonomy.work/portfolio/fletcher-gig-economy/ and "Deliveroo cyclists speak out about harassment" (2021) https://road.cc/content/news/deliveroo-cyclists-speak-out-about-harassment-283381

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the ethics process a little bit. However, I was able to conduct my interviews in-person on time during 2022 as restrictions were getting lifted. Following the interviews conducted in Toronto and Paris, the fieldwork led me to pick the three specific platforms for this thesis: Frichti and sans-papiers resistance in Paris; Foodora, and the unionization campaign in Toronto; and Uber Eats and its resistance in both Paris and Toronto. The people I met during my fieldwork all discussed the importance of the past social movements (Paris' Frichti and Toronto's Foodora), how they got involved and what was the outcome of these movements. This will be explored at length in Chapter 6.

3.2.3. Ethics approval process and practice

This research on migrant work in urban areas has important ethical components. Conducting research on citizenship precarity and illegal work can be a used as a 'can-opener' for immigration enforcement to track and/or find where and how undocumented workers live. The illegality of some practices like app-sharing, app-renting, gaming the system, tax fraud, and so on can lead to deactivation or worst deportation. Platform food delivery workers are facing two powers: the state and the platforms. Both might be looking into research like this one to crack down on undocumentation, subletters and hackers. The names of the couriers were changed to protect their identity. All the workers were made aware of this, and of the previous 'dangers' of according me an interview. As most riders in Paris were from Sub-Saharan Africa and could speak French, the interviews were all conducted in French and later translated to English by myself. The interviews in Toronto were conducted in English, as most were with international students or permanent residents. I must acknowledge my standpoint as an educated white male researcher

from Canada and the dynamics of power and privilege that might have taken place during the interviews.

Moreover, the interviews found in Chapter 4-6 were conducted in-person during the COVID-19 pandemic. A second ethics request had to be filled, in addition to the traditional Research ethics forms involving human participants. "As part of ongoing efforts to mitigate risks of COVID-19 transmission and exposure, for any in-person activity that involves interaction with or proximity to other people, as part of your proposal you are required to complete and submit a Health and Safety Plan." Thanks to York's Research and Fieldwork Cost Fund, I was able to buy airplane tickets for Paris, book accommodation and give interviewees 20€ in exchange for their participation. Appendix A, B, C and D contain the ethics course certificate, the ethics approval, and the rider questionnaire and table for this thesis. The overall approach taken for this thesis is situated in qualitative human geography, as the bulk of the data was collected through questionnaires, interviews, and observations. Ontologically, it builds on several other research by labour geographers and critical urban geographers that centered their work around workers' voices. It sets to put forth workers experiences (without speaking *for* them) while also advocating for policy changes that could have real impacts on their daily lives.

Finally, the chosen methods for this thesis reinforce one another with the variety of data collected in the study. Findings in the online questionnaires helped define and refine the interviews. My participant observation allowed me to understand the labour process of a delivery worker. I chose to conduct a case-study based on multiple cases, Paris and Toronto, to highlight the reach and impact of platform labour across Euro-America (Yin, 2017). The online and in-person

observations, online questionnaires and one on one semi-structured interviews (see appendix D) weave together to understand the large puzzle that is migrant labour in the gig economy.

CHAPTER IV: THE PARIS CASE

"Integration is not working. Immigration must be chosen and qualitative. We must have zero tolerance towards undocumented." – France's Republican Senator Buffet, November 2023, on potential immigration reform

I have introduced in Chapter 2 the concept of citizen-rentier-ship (CRS), or the platformized capitalist process through which some actors (i.e. individual subletters, labour platforms, third parties, etc.) can extract rents from the precarious citizenship conditions of the workers engaged in platform work. The central focus of this chapter will be these experiences of workers delivering in the food delivery industry of Paris. The initial question: "How do food delivery couriers, notably migrants, come to work in and experience platform-mediated food delivery in Toronto and Paris?" was intended to explore the concepts of misclassification, algorithmic control, automated management and data asymmetry between workers and platforms. After the fieldwork in Paris and Toronto it became clear, to me, that migration and citizenship had to be taken into more consideration. While talking to riders on the streets of Paris and Toronto, it also became clear that for many workers, the status of their migration was a central aspect of their everyday lives.

This chapter will analyze the data from the fieldwork conducted in Paris through critical urban studies and citizenship and migration studies. Most of the workers met during this fieldwork reiterated the importance of their status as *why* they do platform food delivery. Citizenship is not only as a simple stamp from the state, but is also as a changing and evolving process that grants access to various parts of society. Is is foundational to the food delivery industry's reproduction. Many of the quotations used in this chapter are from these interviews, and the names of the couriers have been changed to protect their identities.

4.1 Platform Labour and Hyper-Precarity in Europe

In this chapter, I revisit some of the concepts that are used to analyse the interviews, notably hyper-precarity trap, unfree labour, informality and its links to urban platform economy. It will explore the role of citizenship for platform labour, especially those who do it while being undocumented or in very precarious situations. Two types of platform work will by analyzed. Sans-papiers come to work in Paris' food delivery market as a last resort and mostly through subletting. The subletting markets of accounts is based on a complicit role of the state, hypocrisy of the employers (the platforms) and the migration trajectories. Those are all important factors to consider when analyzing the food delivery market and the experience of undocumented workers.

Submarkets of citizenship-for-rent are nothing new in France, they are simply now done through platformized infrastructure which provide discretion and anonymity for the person that wants to rent a profile. I have identified four components which drastically increases the precarity in the 'undocumented platform economy', making insecure lives even more insecure: i) paying for the

right to work, which refers to a monetary costs that put daily earnings well below minimum wage; ii) dependency on the subletters, which is a unique power dynamics between an account owner and a worker; iii) scams and steals, making a France, already hard to navigate for migrants, even harder; and iv) insecurity while delivering, which refers to current studies on the dangers of food delivery and its link to necrocapitalism. These four components work together to create an environment where sans-papiers riders must work at-all-cost, despite exploitative and dangerous conditions. This is paired with other factors such as precarious housing conditions, policing, hunger, fatigue, lack of sleep, and more.

Migrant labour in Paris also has a few cases of 'regular' routes to regularisation. These cases will also be part of this chapter and of Chapter 6, which discuss the French platforms Frichti and Stuart. These two French companies were at the heart of two sans-papiers protests in 2021 and 2022 discussed in Chapter 6. Whether state sponsored (Frichti) or state owned (Stuart), these two platforms have been hiring directly or through subcontracting sans-papiers riders to put in exploitative conditions. This tactic by companies is nothing new in France, as it is now platformized, it creates another layer between employer and worker which allows for a lack of accountability. However, their resistance through strikes and protests led many of the riders to access work permit via a deal between the platforms and the state.

Immigrants in France are an integral part of the production of space by their labour, but also fundamental to resistance against capitalist exploitation. Firstly, I will start this section by drawing a portrait of platform food delivery in Paris. Secondly, I will discuss migration regimes in France and its link to colonial history. Thirdly, I will connect both these section by exploring the role of

migrant workers in platform work in Paris. This will introduce my analysis of the interviews conducted in Paris with migrant food couriers and union and labour activists.

4.1.1 Platform work in Paris

A total of 84,280 food couriers were registered to vote during the 2022 rider unionization campaign in France.[24] The Fédération nationale des autoentrepreneurs et microentrepreneurs (FNAE) won the elections (28,45% or 390 votes) even though most couriers didn't know who they were. Then came the CGT (27,26%) and the CFDT (22,32%).[25] To be able to sit at the roundtable, unions needed at least 5% of the votes, even if the votes only represented 1,83% of the riders. This vote was organized by the ARPE (Autorité des relations sociales des plateformes d'emploi) – a group put in place by the government to regulate relations between traditional unions, food couriers and platforms. Therefore, the goal of the 'unionization' vote was to choose which union would be representing the riders. Only 1.83% of food couriers voted. The winner would be part of a social dialogue with the government and the API (Association des Plateformes d'Indépendantes) – an advocacy group for platforms that engages in lobbying activity to maintain the independent status which includes Deliveroo, Uber Eats and Stuart.

The couriers that were registered to vote work for a plethora of platforms. In Paris only, to name a few, operate Uber Eats, Delivero, Gorillas, JustEat, Gerti, Stuart, Frichti, Picard, Flink, Cajoo,

[24] https://www.lefigaro.fr/social/travailleurs-des-plateformes-le-scrutin-est-clos-participation-tres-faible-des-livreurs-et-vtc-20220516

[25] https://www.ouest-france.fr/economie/emploi/elections-professionnelles-chez-les-livreurs-et-les-vtc-une-participation-decevante-76be7568-d529-11ec-bd06-4e730397c904

Frichti, GoPuff, Yango. Meal delivery platforms are different then grocery delivery platforms - which typically don't hire independent contractors but employees because they know in advance when and where the groceries need to be delivered. The home-cooked meals, frozen meals and groceries delivery include: Getir, Gorillas, Picard, Flink and Cajoo, Stuart and Frichti. Companies like Flink, Gorillas and Getir hire their workers through a CDI (Contrat à Durée Indéterminée). In early 2022, Gorillas – a German platform – acquired the French meal and grocery delivery platform Frichti for €250 millions. Then, only a couple of months later, Getir – a Turkish delivery company – acquires Gorillas for €1.2 billion. In 2023, there was again a lot of movements between these platforms. Cajoo, a French grocery delivery platform, was acquired by Flink – another German delivery platform – this led to the major partnership with the grocery chain Carrefour to be extended to Flink.[26] Later that summer, 'Getir-Gorillas-Frichti', announced it was leaving France, citing financial difficulties. As of now, Flink still operates in Paris with around 20 'dark stores' – this is the equivalent of a dark kitchen, meaning it is like a grocery store but only for platform deliveries. Similarly to a dark kitchen, which is a restaurant with no customers, dark stores are subject to various urbanism regulations. Paris is currently looking into regulating the dark store market. Food delivery platforms rise and fall in Paris, with start-ups getting created and then bought by competitors every year. As Liu (2020) points out in her book 'Abolish Silicon Valley', the goal of most start-ups is not to become the next Uber, but rather to grow enough to get swallowed by another group at the highest price (Liu, 2020), as we can see in the current French grocery delivery market.

[26] https://www.lefigaro.fr/societes/livraisons-rapides-l-allemand-flink-va-acquerir-son-concurrent-francais-cajoo-20220516

In this thesis, I focus on restaurant-type meals that are delivered in Paris via the main platforms: Uber Eats, Deliveroo, JustEat, Stuart and Frichti. The restaurant meal delivery market also as a lot of moving parts. Earlier in 2022, one of Uber Eats major competitors, the European delivery platform Deliveroo, was found guilty by the French tribunals in Paris of fraud for the 2015-2017 period. Deliveroo first arrived in France in 2015 and was growing rapidly at the time. On April 19th 2022, the company was fined 375000€ and two CEOs were sentenced to twelve months in prison for their actions.[27] In Paris, Uber Eats and Deliveroo are the biggest players. Since the COVID pandemic, both companies are also the ones who drastically decreased pay for riders.

France's national postal service and bank, *La Poste*, acquired the delivery start-up Stuart with the intention of "offering longer term employment contracts (currently 14% of workers have a full-time employment contract) as well as a social protection package (details unknown) to Stuart's independent workers" (Lenaerts et al., 2018: 67). When the *La Poste* group took over Stuart in 2017, the platform was only a small meal delivery start-up operating in Paris, London, Madrid, Barcelona and Lyon. Three years later, in 2020, Stuart can be used everywhere in Europe. Stuart is now fully owned by *La Poste*, through the French government (34%) and the national *Caisse de Dépôt* (66%). Stuart is one of the three biggest platforms used for subletting food delivery accounts, the other two being Uber Eats and Deliveroo.[28] The average time a rider will deliver for Stuart is 4 months.

[27] For details of the trial, see Lebas' blog (2019): https://moblivreurs.hypotheses.org/24

[28] https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/16/business/uber-eats-deliveroo-glovo-migrants.html

Per the latest report of the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) that surveyed over 24,000 workers in 14 countries, 70% of platform-mediated delivery workers are aged below 44 years old and 51% make less than minimum wage. During the pandemic, Paris, like many other cities in the world, saw a drastic rise in food delivery orders, which meant more work opportunities, especially for the bigger platforms like Uber Eats or Deliveroo that do not cap the number of riders they hire. Recent journalistic coverage by *Brut.* in Paris mentioned pump and dump strategy employed by Uber Eats and Deliveroo to face the exponential demand created by the pandemic. In 2020, Uber Eats had 35 000 riders and Deliveroo 14 000 riders. In 2021, Uber Eats increased the number of riders to 50 000 (then 65 000 in 2022). For Deliveroo, 2021 also saw a drastic rise in the number of riders with 22 000. Before looking at migrant labour in the platform economy, I now turn towards aspects of migration France.

4.1.2 Immigration in France

The intertwined relationship between capitalism, colonialism and migration has led to an uneven sociospatial development of urban spaces in Euro-America. Historically, the French state first allured migrants to the country through scholarships programs and labour opportunities. Migration towards France accelerated during the 'Trentes Glorieuses' (1945-1975) as part of colonial rites of passage and schooling projects (Agier et al., 2008; Fanon, 1952). In 1974, French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing signed the end of family migration, which simultaneously marked the start of sans-papiers struggles in the country. This 'postcolonial' phase of migration began when many sought asylum or travelled clandestine routes. Citizenship for Africans in France is difficult to obtain. Per McNevin (2006), we need to challenge the idea that France has ever been

an “uncontested political boundary” (McNevin, 2006: 144), or what other have also called ‘post-colonial Amnesia’ (Forkert et al., 2020) :

> Sans-Papiers establish their claim to membership by emphasizing their immanence within the French political community, both in its territorial and transnational manifestations. They draw on the history of French colonialism in Africa and elsewhere to establish a connection between the transnational practices of the French state and its impacts on flow of people, ideas and patterns of exclusion in which the Sans-Papiers are placed (McNevin 2006: 144)

Another key moment for the French migration regime is in 2003 when French President Nicolas Sarkozy signs a law that extended the CRA (*Centre de Rétention Administratif*) - a prison-type detention center - retention period. It also marked the creation of surveillance files with fingerprinting and photographing, in addition to numerous new fees and deportation powers. There are many pathways that lead to lack or loss of documentation. It can be either through a failed asylum, an ending youth scholarship program, an illegal crossing or a family visit overstay. Tassin (2020) mentions the possible arrest and detention once a migrant gets the obligation to leave the country notice - “*Obligation de quitter le territoire Français*” (OQTF). This must be done by his or her own means. Sans-papiers in France are targeted and stopped regularly during raids (either into households, street arrests, workplaces or at the prefecture). Many are then put in administrative detention for up to 16 hours. They are then moved to a CRA where they could stay locked-up for up to 19 days. CRAs are where migrants are held by French administrative officials to determine if they are getting asylum, temporary work visas, ‘no-status’ or deported. They can only be deported if the French authorities find and prove their country of origin and secure a *laissez-passer* from the authorities of that country. If not, they are released without documentation and again have 7 days to leave France by their own means. As many do not, or cannot go back, they can be re-

arrested and the loop starts again with some mentioning that they are going through their 5th or 6th detention (Tassin, 2020).

In France, the starting point of any analysis of migrant labour can start with the State (Barron et al., 2011; de Blic & Lafaye, 2013). Distribution and the territorialization of migrants across Euro-American cities are done in an inherently racialized and segregated manner. Racialized groups, especially newcomers, are confined to certain neighborhoods and certain types of work, policed and marginalized (Dikeç, 2007). This contrasts with 'white citizens' who occupy central and bourgeois neighborhoods along with secure, unionized higher paying jobs. This sociospatial process is paired with a generalized rise of racism and anti-immigrant policies everywhere in Europe and North America (Kipfer & Saberi, 2016; S. McGuirk & Pine, 2020). 'Migrantification' (Forkert et al., 2020) argues that no one is born a migrant, it is a constructed and given identity to some by media and politicians, who were displaced by war, conflicts and environmental changes.

There are various types of migrants. First, we need to distinguish regular migrants from irregular migrants. According to Spencer and Triandafyllidou (2020), irregularity - in its contemporary and fluid form is conceptualized as a: "multi-faceted status with life changing implications for individuals as well as a driver of innovative policy change that has created friction in multi-level governance relationships particularly between local and national authorities" (Spencer & Triandafyllidou, 2020). As I will explore in this chapter, migrants become irregular for a plethora of reasons. 'Regular' migrants, on the other hand, may come to a country via work or study permits, family sponsorships, asylum-seeking, refugee status and so on. Many also come through irregular routes and then later get 'regularized', as we will see in the Frichti case. However, regular or irregular, many racialized newcomers face daily intimidation and backlash from host population

because of the ‘migratification’ identity described by Forkert and al. (2020). They analyzed the process of being made into a ‘migrant’ in Italy and the UK, which we can also apply to the cases of France and Canada.

Over the last decade, France and Europe in general have seen migrants crossing the sea in record numbers. The overall militarization of the borders decreased the crossings from more than one million per year in 2015 to 84,345 in 2018. This, however, also increased the death rate with 4,184 lives lost in the Mediterranean Sea in 2018 and 2019. The routes to Europe are becoming more dangerous and victim-blaming narratives are omnipresent (Walia, 2021). More generally, there is a ‘concerted amnesia’ around Europe's colonial history and regarding migrants within its land which some called ‘postcolonial innocence’ (Forkert et al., 2020). Strict border control mixed with pragmatist discourses and an overall tech-friendly climate in France has allowed tech companies to experiment with new forms of employment and surveillance. France’s capitalist urbanization history is a contested process. There lies governance but also resistance strategies of migrants and racialized people (Dikeç, 2007). Asylum seeking is on the rise in France with a 31% growth between 2021 and 2022, as well as deportations which increased by 15% during that same period.[29]

Following this European ‘migrant crisis’, growing right-wing ideologies led the 2016 and 2022 presidential campaigns in France. Anti-immigration and nationalist ideas by Le Pen and Zemmour, such as the ‘great replacement’, re-migration and zones of ‘non-France’ further contributed to delegitimize the presence of the migrants in France. Anti-immigration discourses do not only come from the far-right. Since 2016, the Macron government has led a repressive migration policy

[29] https://www.lepoint.fr/politique/les-demandes-d-asile-et-les-expulsions-ont-augmente-en-2022--26-01-2023-2506354_20.php

campaign, in complete opposition to the '*République, En Marche*' political program (Amable & Palombarini, 2021). This is coupled with a deregulation of the labour market and a weakening of tradition unions on the Left. As McNevin (2006) puts it, "migrants are policed as outsiders even though they are economically incorporated into political communities through informal neoliberal labour markets" (McNevin, 2006: 136). The case of France's sans-papiers is at the forefront of the mobilization of European states is tracking down illegal immigration. Countries in what many called 'Fortress Europe' (Jones, 2017; Walia, 2021) have also started using AI to crack down on immigration from new filtering tools for asylum seekers (Nalbandian, 2022) all the way to 'smart borders' (Jones, 2017).

Once you choose to stay undocumented, without valid papers, credit and debit cards, the work and housing opportunities diminish drastically. Precarious housing situations are common for sans-papiers. Most merge towards Paris to find a place to stay and look for jobs. Per many, sans-papiers are omnipresent in precarious informal work such as window cleaning or construction (Dimitriadis, 2022), and even more so in Paris' food delivery market. As McNevin (2006) mentions:

> […] strategies and technologies of citizenship are being played out, constructing privilege and marginality in new ways. They are enacted by state agencies as they reconfigure their practices of sovereignty and by irregular migrants as they resist old and new technologies of exclusion (McNevin, 2006: 147)

Despite structural surveillance and repression, sans-papiers in France are not docile bodies. In 2019, during the famous Yellow Vests movement, groups of undocumented workers took to the streets. They called themselves the Black Vests (*les "Gilets Noirs"*). The goal of this movement was to bring some of the mainstream attention towards a forgotten part of the workforce in the

country: the undocumented workers. This movement follows a long history of sans-papiers strikes and protests in France (see for example the Manifesto of the Sans-Papiers, 2004).

In their 'historical' fieldwork with sans-papiers strikers, organizers and state legislators, Barron, Bory, Jounin & Tourette (2011) propose two analytical keys for the analysis of sans-papiers social movements in France. Firstly, sans-papiers social movements reveal the contradictions in the migration policies and the overall interdependency between the 'regularized' and the sans-papiers. They also reveal the how much margin the state gives the companies in the management of migrant workforces and their hypocrisy as employers. Sans-papiers couriers experience both the unequal distribution of state protections in the workplace and the recent mobilization of various state agencies to track them down and limit their rights in France since 2000's. Secondly, sans-papiers social movements reveal the difficulty of traditional unions to create a collective claim for an individual issue like citizenship. They reveal the distance between white union activists and, for example, black-African sans-papiers strikers (Barron et al., 2011). The African diaspora today represents 47.5% of France's total immigration in 2021, as reported by the INSEE.[30]

A report by GISTI ("*Groupe d'Information et de Soutien des Immigré-es*") analyzes the impacts of the *Circulaire Valls*, a migration policy put in place by the ex-Interior Minister Manuel Valls in 2012. The goal of this measure was to clarify the ways undocumented migrants can access regularization in France. Regularization primarily occurs through work, but also scholarships, family reunion or asylum. One of the main features of the Circulaire Valls is the addition of new

[30] France's Minister of Interior G. Darmanin reported in 2021 that 600'000 to 700'000 sans-papiers we're currently living in France, see: https://www.bfmtv.com/politique/la-france-compte-600-000-a-700-000-sans-papiers-selon-darmanin_AD-202111210291.html

rules and categories for workers to access papers. However, platform labour falls short of most of the categories leading to documentation (i.e. under contract, temporary or under multiple temporary contracts).

The Circulaire Valls, which was not updated since 2012 well before platform-mediated food delivery, doesn't include gig work as a possible category leading to regularization. Misclassifying gig work, which is considered by many activist groups like the CLAP (*Collectif des Livreurs Autonomes de Paris*) and the CGT (*Confédération Générale du Travail*) waged labour. Per the Circulaire Valls, not only you have to be under waged contract (CDI - "*contrat de travail à durée indéterminée*" or CDD "*contrat de travail à durée déterminée*"), you also must have been in France for 5 years, worked at least 8 of the last 24 months (or 30 months over the last 5 years), with proof. This total of labour should also be the equivalent of the minimum wage, the SMIC (*Salaire Minimum de Croissance*). It is crucial to mention the relationship between the employer and the state.

4.1.3 Migrant labour in Paris' platform economy

Doorn, Ferrari & Graham (2022) argued in their recent piece on migrants in the platform economy that we need a policy change that "acknowledges how employment and welfare regulation interacts with immigration policies at a national and international level. This means we should expand our political horizon and augment gig worker reclassification efforts with struggles for broader worker protections, redistributive social policies, and immigration reforms geared toward global social justice and solidarity" (Doorn et al., 2022: 7). In France, undocumented

workers in precarious economic or housing situations must rent profiles from 'documented' citizens on various platforms. There are two ways you can work sans-papiers[31] in food delivery in Paris: 1) by renting (subletting) someone else's profile on a food delivery platform. This is usually done through friends, family, members of the same migrant community or online markets on popular social media groups like Facebook or WhatsApp. You must pay weekly fees to that person. 2) by getting directly hired as a sans-papiers by a platform that will open an account only with the passport from the country of origin.

Early in December of 2023, riders across more than 60 towns and cities in the country went on strike to demand better pay and a transparent algorithmic allocation of work. These strikes came shortly after France's Minister of Labor, Olivier Dussopt, signed a new deal to regulate platform labor with a proposed hourly wage for riders of 11,75€ per hour. This proposal was criticized by the grassroots organization called CLAP and the traditional union CGT who both pointed out that this hourly wage only applied to hours 'on-delivery' and excluded the critical unpaid waiting time between orders. The French government and the platforms' association could claim riders have a minimum wage, when in reality unpaid wait time can bring hourly earnings to below minimum wage. This conveniently came after mass deactivations of 'fraudulent' accounts at Uber Eats and Deliveroo. Crackdown on rented accounts occurred after platforms had to hire many additional workers during the pandemic due to the surge in orders.

[31] As for the term "sans-papiers", is a rejection strategy used by undocumented migrants to refuse the 'illegality' stamp imposed by the state, its constructed nature, and potential to be changed (McNevin, 2006). The term is preferred by this group to show that it is only 'refused papers' and bureaucracy that put them in this situation. I went for this term, not italicized and no brackets for easier reading

At the start of the pandemic, according to many spokespersons, most platforms got rid of their caps - the total number of riders. This means that anyone who signed up would be recruited. Platforms ensured they would have sufficient workers to deliver the tens of thousands of orders that started to flow in once restaurants reopened for delivery. Knowing people needed jobs, especially those without citizenship, many platforms also took the opportunity to lower the pay floor. This not only created an important turnaround in the workforce toward immigrants. In many cities in France, there was an explosion of rented accounts. There was a strong correlation between the lowering of the pay and the rise of subletting. It was suggested that between a third and half of the couriers in France are now renting accounts (Popan, 2023). This aligns with many of the interviews I conducted in Paris with key spokespersons who suggested also that a major part of the platform delivery workforce in Paris could be undocumented. As Popan noted: "Students were gradually replaced by second generation migrants on motorcycles, working excessive hours as dependent self-employed. In the last few years, most food couriers are extremely precarious and vulnerable undocumented male migrants" (2023: 8).

A vast selection of platforms are currently operating in Paris and even though not all are hiring undocumented workers, for the most part they are hiring migrant workers (Aguilera et al., 2022). As Altenried (2022) argued, the platform economy as we know it would not exist without migrant labour. In a recent study, researchers found that, in 2021, Paris' couriers were 86% foreign nationals (Aguilera et al., 2022). Moreover, 85% of them are from North-Africa and Sub-Saharan-Africa, which speaks to France's colonial history. Popan's work (2023) in Lyon suggested that between a third and half of the couriers in France rent or buy accounts (Popan, 2023). This aligns

with many of the interviews I conducted in Paris with key spokespersons who suggested also that half of the platform delivery workforce in Paris could be undocumented.

Migrants working in the gig economy experience various forms of precarity that are 'layered' into everyday life. Here, precarity is a relational process that is multicausal and multisituated. The informality of working food delivery through subletting or via a platform that hired sans-papiers is paired with difficulties because of irregularity in all aspects of everyday life. Precarious labour typically found in the platform economy is added to other forms of precarity experienced by migrants such as housing, financial and legal (i.e. sans-papiers). Using Lewis and Waite's (2015) 'hyper-precarious trap' concept, Schenner, Cavanna & Ollus (2019) found that immigrants end up in precarious work conditions because of legal, economic and social reasons. For these authors, it is the State that is creating precarity by limiting asylum-seekers, for example, to certain parts of the labour market:

> the state's reluctance to acknowledge asylum-seekers as workers is highly likely to contribute to their experiences of unlawful employment practices, a trend reported in 2017. It is not necessarily asylum-seekers' exposure to the nature of employment per se which contributes to their experience of the 'hyper-precarity trap', but rather the failure of the state to guarantee lawful employment opportunities (Schenner et al., 2019)

By failing to support the asylum-seekers, it itself welcomed, the state creates various degrees of entrapment qualified as hyper-precarity traps. Via a three-country case study, Schenner, Cavanna and Ollus (2019) found various factors leading to this entrapment, which also differ per the national contexts in which they occur. For example, in Austria it is done through insecurities around employment opportunities and an overall neoliberal labour market climate. In Finland, the lack of support by the state for asylum-seekers makes their socio-legal status precarious. Finally, in Italy, it is the migration trajectory, in combination with employment available in rural areas, that are

mostly at play. Their article shows that hyper-precarity also applies to those who have access to labour markets through a 'regularized' route, such as asylum-seekers.

Migration leads them to exploitative situations that is staged by the state in a structural manner. For these authors, it is the State that is creating precarity by limiting asylum-seekers to certain parts of the labour market (Schenner et al., 2019). Similarly, van Doorn (2022) characterizes precarity as an unequal distribution of state protections within society (van Doorn, 2022). Migrant labour in the gig economy, along with the informal aspect of this type of job, experience various forms of precarity that are 'layered' in their everyday life (van Doorn, 2022). Sans-papiers couriers experience both the unequal distribution of state protections in the workplace and the recent mobilization of various state agencies to track them down and limit their rights in France since 2000's (Barron et al., 2011). Hence, precarity in platform-mediated food delivery is to be understood as relational, multicausal and multisituated (Huang, 2021; Payraudeau, 2021; Popan & Anaya-Boig, 2021). Precarious labour typically found in the platform economy is another form of precarity added to the everyday lives of precarious migrants in Europe.

The case of undocumented food couriers has not received as much attention in the media and in academic research as other issues such as misclassification, algorithmic management, and resistance. Platform food delivery, as a new form of employment, is now easily accessible to sans-papiers because of the platforms' infrastructure, low barriers to entry and facility to hide identity. Informality within food delivery markets has benefited platforms who could scale up rapidly and before regulations (van Doorn, 2022), and by having a large portion of sans-papiers in their workforces. Using aggressive competitive tactics that result in the more precariousness for migrant

workers, platforms have changed some of the employment facets of urban migrant labour (van Doorn & Vijay, 2021). The delivery workers interview in Paris for this section are all Black men from Sub-Sahara Africa who recently arrived in Paris. Some of them ended up undocumented for various bureaucratic reasons. It is new that undocumented workers took on platform labour, as one spokesperson for the CLAP explains:

> First it was students doing the work, but when platforms lowered the pay a few years ago, they quickly left and went back to McDonald's or babysitting. Then it was the guys from the '*banlieues*' for a while. And now, it is the sans-papiers. (Interview with CLAP spokesperson – *Jan. 2022*)

In the recent years, the food delivery platform start-ups praised by Macron have used the hiring of sans-papiers directly to boost productivity and lower costs. The slogan 'be your own boss' built around the independent-contractor status (named "*auto-entrepreuneur*" in France) was used to target suburban racialized youth in search of jobs. One community worker I met in Paris at the MDC – a place for couriers to rest, have coffee and, as many are undocumented, get legal advice – mentions:

> The *auto-entrepreneur* discourse, from the beginning, was marketed for youth in the suburbs. They don't have jobs, but we are going to make them a revenue. They will be their own bosses. From the start, it is clear on this point and food delivery platform are profiting from it. In this system, to be regularized through employment you must have pay slips, but to have pay slips and work, you must have papers or temporary stay-visa. It is the snake biting its tail. The *auto-entrepreneur* wave, in a larger sense, was created not necessarily for migration, but it does have a racist dimension to it. – (Interview with employee at MDC– *Feb. 2022*)

As reported by many journalists during the UberFiles leak, Macron wanted Uber for France because of the "potential of the new, deregulated economy; his job, he insisted, was to help "the outsiders, the innovators". Banning Uber, he would tell Mediapart,[32] would have been tantamount

[32] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ZWZF0jRslk&ab_channel=Mediapart

to sending unemployed youths from the run-down *banlieues* 'back there to sell drugs'." [33] However, the situation has changed greatly since 2014 in France. Following Europe's migration 'crisis', Uber Eats riders in 2023 are now mostly newcomers, many sans-papiers. Riders often open their own account with someone else's papers. Scanning a visa, passport or other identity card on the app allows the sans-papier rider to work on his 'own' account. However, this does not mean he doesn't have to pay for the right to work.

The French state charges couriers for the *'auto-entrepreneur'* status that the platforms have created. Not only does the *auto-entrepreneur* status keep sans-papiers couriers off the Circulaire Valls and access to papers, but it also costs them something. The Circulaire Valls is a measure put in place by the ex-Minister of Interior Manuel Valls in 2012. The employers must accumulate proof of work for their workers in order to lead them to regularization. Then, they must submit a demand to the state to get papers for the worker. Per the Circulaire Valls, you must be under an official waged contract with proof from the employer. However, platform food delivery falls short of most categories, because workers are classified as independent-contractors. This loophole connects to racial capitalism and colonialism in many ways.

Recently, work on 'racial platform capitalism' describes how platformization and racialization are interlocked (Bernard, 2023; Gebrial, 2022; McMillan Cottom, 2020). First, labour platforms marketed a specific type of work for the unemployed and racialized youth in partnership with the state in the 'banlieues'.[34] Second, hardship and the conditions of migration for Africans, along

[33] https://www.theguardian.com/news/2022/jul/10/emmanuel-macron-secretly-aided-uber-lobbying-drive-france-leak-reveals
[34] Ibib.

with every day racism experienced by Black men in France, make platform food delivery work appealing as there is no barrier to entry, no interview, no need to speak French or English.

4.2 Experiences of food couriers in Paris

Interviews with experts, community organizers and food delivery workers show how citizenship precariousness profit many parties in the platform economy. The goal of the Circulaire Valls was to clarify the ways undocumented migrants could access documents in France. As regularization primarily occurs through work, one of the additions of new rules and categories for workers to access papers. For law scholar B. Gomes, misclassification of riders into independent-contractors, instead of employees, is at the heart of the issue (Gomes, 2022). There is an obvious hypocrisy behind the targeted hiring of sans-papiers by platform start-ups in France, but to lead undocumented workers towards 'regularisation', Gomes argues, we need to either consider couriers as employees or update the Circulaire Valls with a clause that considers the work done by sans-papiers via those platforms. As I will show in Chapter 6, it is also how the two main resistance strategies diverge (a *migrant rights* strategy versus a *labour rights* strategy).

Per the latest ETUI survey, food delivery is still a field with predominantly men. The goal of this section will be to highlight some of the components of CRS: 1) paying for the right to work, 2) interdependency with the subletters, 3) scams and steals, and 4) health and safety concerns while delivering. Siaka, the first rider interviewed in Paris, became undocumented, homeless and without work opportunity after failing the French asylum program:

> I failed. I did not get asylum. They gave me a house where I was staying. They were giving me a little bit of money every month. When I lost asylum, they released me. […] I was watching riders outside, sometimes I was sleeping at my friend's house, a day or a night. I had no choice. The first time I delivered it was through somebody else's name for Stuart. – (Interview with Siaka – *Feb. 2022)*

Siaka blames himself for failing asylum. However, as Schenner, Cavanna & Ollus (2019) argue, the state has a responsibility that goes beyond the simple filtering of asylum-seekers. Failed asylum, or even delays in the procedures, increase vulnerability to precarious work. When Siaka lost his asylum, he lost his housing, his allowance and his 'legal' access to the labour market. He was sleeping on various friends' couches until he found a profile to rent on the food delivery platform Stuart.

In many of the interviews, the French state is directly pointed to as being a key player in creating precarious citizenship and exploiting it. Siaka's case shows how, on the one hand, the state is responsible for his lack of documentation and therefore his susceptibility to precarious work. On the other hand, informality in the State's food delivery sector is also allowing him to work through somebody else's papers, but at a certain price. Another rider, Erio, an undocumented minor, came to Paris through the Italian route using a youth scholarship program:

> They took me in as a minor. I was going to school. I had a diploma, I even worked for the City. They gave me a CDI [employment contract]. When it was time to sign my paper, the officer at the *prefecture* said no. You are not a minor anymore. We release you. – (Interview with Erio – *Feb. 2022)*

As for Siaka, this feeling of 'being released' into the country without papers, access to housing, financial aid, or access to the labour market was terrifying. At the time of the interview, Erio was also without housing and paying 100€ per week to rent a profile on Deliveroo from someone else. This is at the heart of the hyper-precarious trap couriers face. Per McNevin's interviews (2006),

sans-papiers recognize the relationship between their reality as irregular migrants in France, and the cheap and compliant labour used by the French economy. In McNevin's article, many argue that they are economically integrated into the labour market, despite the absence of formal recognition:

> Most of us entered France legally. We have been arbitrarily thrown into illegality both by the hardening of successive laws which enabled the authorities to stop renewing our permit to stay, and by restrictions introduced on the right to asylum which is now given only sparingly. We pay our taxes, our rent, our bills and our social security contributions—when we are allowed regular employment! When we are not unemployed or in casual employment, we work hard in the rag trade, the leather trade, the construction industry, catering, cleaning (Interview in McNevin 2006: 145)

The current proposal for a new immigration reform, by ex-Interior Minister G. Darmanin, will impact migration in two main ways. On the one hand, the law will harden the conditions of stay for immigrants in France. On the other hand, its goal is also to regularize sans-papiers workers in what the government calls 'sectors under tension' – which means with labor shortage. However, platform food delivery is not included. The quote above, found in a 2006 article on sans-papiers resistance, connects to the cases of Siaka and Erio. They both entered France legally and were then thrown into illegality by various changing regulations regarding asylum. The difference here is that rather than working trade, construction, or cleaning, they deliver via a platform. Sans-papiers couriers not only recognize their crucial role in the French economy, but also the position they have been put in and the absence of choice they faced. As Bakar mentioned:

> The future could be bright. If riders know the place they occupy in this capitalist world. When they'll know their rights, and that they can ask for them. Things will change. (Interview with Bakar – *Feb. 2022*)

This not only connects to the hyper-precarity trap framework, but also to the notion of unfree labour as part of the 'consciousness' being expressed. Thomas' review of the notion of unfree labour (in Choudry & Smith, 2016) notes a couple key points on the contemporary understanding

of unfree labour and global migration: i) nation-states have sought to tighten the connection between immigration policies and labour market needs; France's latest immigration law project plans to 'take some pressure' off key sectors of the labour markets where labour shortage is the most felt. ii) Unfree is in relation to a wide range of conditions that may restrict or constrain one's capacity to sell one's labour power, for example lack of citizenship, everyday racial discrimination, etc. iii) It involves the exchange of labour for money through "varied forms of coercion and manipulation designed to make workers work harder, for longer [hours] and for less money, as a dependency relationship with the owner of the account. iv) Migrant workers (noncitizens) constitute a form of unfree wage labour as their ability to circulate in a labour market is limited (Thomas, 2016)

A contemporary understanding of unfree labour is not limited to one's ability to sell labour power, but rather encompasses a variety of racial dimensions, global migration conditions and finally, platformized relationship with a 'rentier' that grants access to the labour market. Without papers, irregular migrants have little choice to whom they can sell their labour-power. Upon arrival, as it was described by many, you get offered to rent an account on a platform. Food delivery is first and foremost about survival:

> I started because I did not have a choice. Maybe after I will try to find out if they are exploiting me [Deliveroo], but for now all I care about is that I need money. I am hungry, so I work. I need to work for my needs, after I will look if Deliveroo is good or bad. (Interview with Erio – *Feb. 2022*)

As Erio states, food delivery is not a choice, but is one of the only available options. Sans-papiers riders interviewed for this research also worked multiple jobs in construction or window cleaning, but in most cases, only for a few hours per week. Subletting an account, even if it costs hundreds of euros per week, can boost the number of hours they can work.

It is also impossible for him to have time and energy to inquire about the working conditions put in place by the platform. Due to the illegal nature of this type of work and the high turnover among riders, it is impossible to know how many sans-papiers are renting platform delivery accounts in Paris. Bakar, another rider, mentions that subletting an account for a food delivery is also about survival:

> When you arrive in a new country, you have no parents, nobody. You come here and you can work. You think it is a good opportunity to immediately start working. I did not have the papers. I had to survive. I was subletting accounts. You don't care about suffering or inequalities. All you want is to work to be able to eat. You squat corners to sleep, because you can't have a house, you have no papers. – (Interview with Bakar – *Feb. 2022*)

The three examples above show how food delivery platforms manage to be positioned in the trajectories of migrants in Europe. This is the first key component of the subletting market. Paying for the right to work makes you need to work more. It illustrates how platforms are built on a workforce that needs to stay online and unpaid, multiple days a week. Subletting accounts is an important component of the functioning of the platform economy in Paris, as one organizer for the CLAP (*Collectif des Livreurs Autonomes de Paris*) mentioned.

Subletting an account to stay afloat is only one way toward survival-oriented work. Work by Waite and Lewis (2017) on survival-oriented labour in the platform economy understands this type of work as transactional labour: "individuals undertaking work—domestic labour, garden chores, sexual favors, and so on—in the belief that they are engaging in an exchange for a good or service; for example, food, accommodation, or clothing" (Waite & Lewis, 2017: 966). In this case, transactional labour between migrants takes place in the form of citizenship rental. Along access to the labour market, this entails access to a bank account - from which the owner of the account

then redistributes the money to the sans-papiers riders in cash. In many ways, the food delivery market acts as a life-jacket for newcomers in Paris. The lack of regulations and the precarious citizenship statuses of the workforce enable this submarket of CRS to exist. Adil, who rented a profile on the platform Uber Eats from someone via a Facebook group, mentions:

> It did not help me [subletting an account]. It was desperate. When you come to a new country, those are the things that builds you. It is only about survival. – (Interview with Adil – *Feb. 2022*)

Erio, Bakar and Adil say they have no other choice but to sublet an account and deliver meals to be able to eat and survive. 'Transactional labour' between citizens and undocumented migrants increases interdependency between the owner of the account and the sans-papiers rider. For this thesis, no 'account owners' were interviewed. In a recent piece for *The Conversation*, a group of researchers in the U.K. managed to conduct a series of interviews with people renting their accounts to undocumented riders.[35] They concluded that a plethora of people could be renting their accounts, from ex-irregular migrants who managed to get papers to residents born or raised in the country. For Erio, a young sans-papiers rider renting an account in Paris, the relationship with the owner of the account is rough:

> When you are in Paris, you must pretend you are a criminal. I work for someone. The money, he doesn't always give it to me. If I talk to him softly: « Please, can I have my money » he will not give it. You must act violent: « Give me the money! ». He'll say: « tomorrow ». He won't call me. He will say: « I don't have network », « my card doesn't work », « there's no money in my account ». (Interview with Erio – *Feb. 2022*)

Barron, Bory, Jonin & Tourette (2011), in their account of sans-papiers strikes in France, note complacency by the employers who were at the center of these social movements regarding sans-papiers and their status. These employers, like factories on the outskirts of Paris operating and

[35] https://theconversation.com/im-always-delivering-food-while-hungry-how-undocumented-migrants-find-work-as-substitute-couriers-in-the-uk-201695

hiring undocumented workers, profited from an 'unfree' workforce, while also being implicated with the state in the fight against "illegal" immigration. This type of hypocrisy can also be found in the current public discourses by the platforms' CEO (Ness, 2023). Barron and al. (2011) also argued that the tightening of the migration policies and the growth of street arrests ("*contrôles*") has increased the interdependency between workers with papers and workers without (Jobard et al., 2012). This dependence on "legal" workers creates a difficult situation for the sans-papier who at the mercy of scammers and contributed to this contemporary understanding of unfree labour. This was experienced by Bakar:

> You have nothing. The guy that is renting you the account knows that. He takes advantage of that. He knows you need it, so he will try to profit to the maximum. – (Interview with Bakar – *Feb. 2022*)

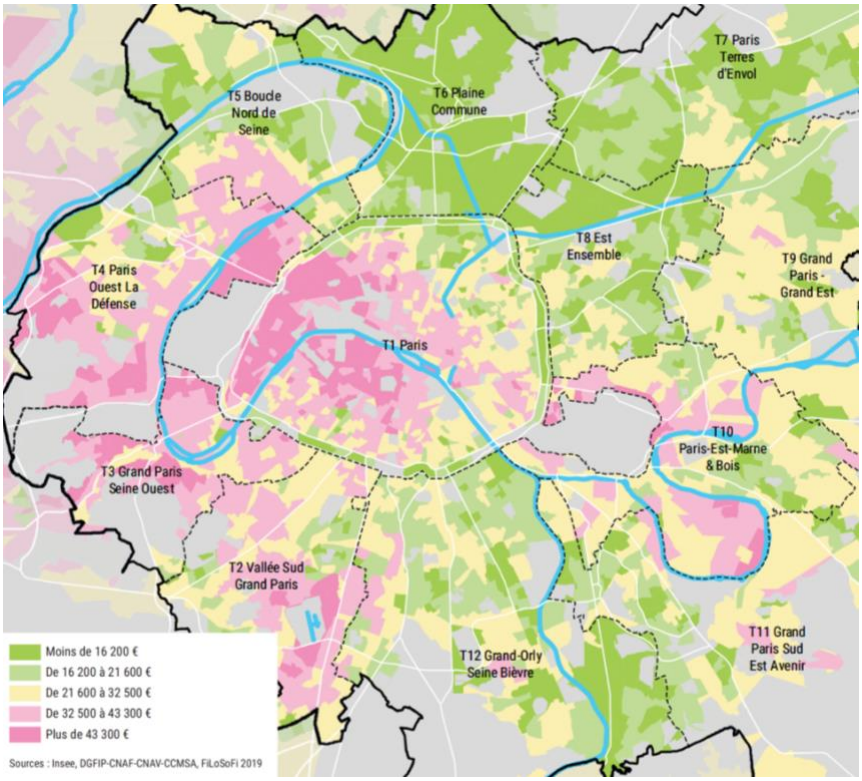
This interdependency is the second component of the subletting market. The power, in the hand of the owner of the account, is used for profit. For example, the account owner can change the password, keep the money for himself, change the price of the rental, and so on. Siaka also experienced a similar situation when subletting his account:

> Working for someone that gives you a little bit of money was difficult. This guy was never giving me all the money. I was seeing in the account 20€, 30€ disappearing. Others, they don't sleep, just work. It is his account, you are his. If he wants, he deletes you and you can't connect anymore. Some do that, they work for nothing. (Interview with Siaka – *Feb. 2022)*

In 2017, for Siaka, the price for subletting a Stuart account was 50€ per week. In 2020, Adil rented his account for 150€ per week. We see inflation in the price of sublet accounts and a growing demand for these accounts, especially during the pandemic. When few jobs were available and orders were surging, this led many to having to pay higher prices to work.

To this, we also need to factor-in travel expenses, as most live in the suburbs. The workers I talked too were for the most part living in the North of Paris, either couch surfing, staying at a friend's place or leasing their own apartment (as not all were without papers). The northern suburbs of Paris are amongst the lower income districts of the Ile-de-France and the commute can take up to an hour (see Figure 4 below). The *Navigo* metro card costs 100€ per month, and the price of renting or buying an E-bike can cost up to 100€ per month.

Figure 6: Annual median revenue (in euros) for the Greater Paris (2019)



INSEE (2023)

In the previous chapter, I briefly touched on some research that found that the geography of food delivery in European cities is concentrated in areas where revenues are the highest. In my own fieldwork, I found that most of the riders I talked to, formally in semi-structured interviews and informally on the streets, lived outside the 'périphérique' (T1 on the map above). Most of the riders

also delivered in the City of Paris where a) revenues are the highest and b) most workers are located. Commuting from T5, T6 or T7, the northern suburbs, to come and work in the City of Paris takes time. For that reason, most food deliver couriers must spend all day in Paris. They arrive for the busy lunch hour (11:00 to 14:00), then wait – unpaid – for the dinner rush (17:00 to 21:00). Some riders even come earlier to catch the breakfast hours. Spending all day in Paris, waiting for orders, unpaid, is stressful and tiring. It also brings down the hourly wage to below the SMIC, as reported by many journalists who 'tested' a day or a week in the life of a food courier.[36]

Commuting from the suburbs to the center of Paris also means you must bring your e-bike with you. An e-bike can be bought or rented. If you buy the e-bike, usually between 500€ and 2000€, you expose yourself to losing all this money if it gets stolen:

> My first bike in Paris was stolen. It was 1200€ from Decathlon. The second one, also stolen, 1500€ at Decathlon. I was working for Frichti when I got my bikes stolen. I ended my day at 11:00pm, went to the train station, locked it. The next day it is gone. My lock is broken on the ground. During rush hour, it is difficult to bring your e-bike on the train. People scream at you, so you have to lock it and walk home. (Interview with Adil – *Feb. 2022*)

For Adil, buying two e-bikes – which would later get stolen, meant losing thousands of euros. The other option is to rent an e-bike via a subscription base rental company. Most of the time, however, it must be done via someone else's credit card, either a friend or the owner of the delivery account, as sans-papiers don't have a bank account. This also increases dependency on the 'regular' citizens. Adil recounts his time renting a profile on Uber Eats:

> I was working one week. He didn't give me the money. He told me to work one more week. The week after that, he didn't give me the money of the previous week. I worked another week. After 2 weeks, he gave me nothing. (Interview with Adil – *Feb. 2022*)

[36] https://www.nouvelobs.com/societe/20210418.OBS42931/pour-l-obs-l-ecrivain-julien-blanc-gras-devient-liveur-uber-eats-une-semaine-de-grande-solitude.html *We have seen countless journalists do these types of reporting over the years across France, US, UK, Canada, Australia, etc.

Some subletters would advertise a delivery account on Facebook that comes with a subscription to Véligo or Vélib. Scams are not the only hurdle riders face; steals are also very common. It most secured well-paying jobs where you must deliver or move around, the material is lent to you. 'Independent-contractorship' allows platforms to put that burden on the riders. Many opt for the rental option, which does not penalize stolen bikes:

> The money you make is all about you and your effort. No fixed rate. With delivery, if you don't have an e-bike, you don't make money. I was with Veligo, but the contract ended. Now I rent with Swapfiets. It's a new company. You have no choice; you need to rent. It was 100€ per month, now it is 110€ per month. (Interview with Konan – *Feb. 2022*)

Even the option of renting an e-bike is getting difficult. E-bike rental platforms have figured out that they are being used for delivery. Hence, new rules are put in place to make the renting of e-bike pi food riders difficult or even more costly. Companies like Véligo have put caps in the distances or number of trips per day. Véligo also tried to formally forbid its users to do delivery work with the e-bikes. However, walking around Paris you quickly realize just how many riders use Véligo or Vélib. The other option is finding a scooter, but this puts you in the target of police checkups. As platform-mediated food delivery positioned itself in migration journeys, road laws put in place restrict some riders:

> I can't buy a motorcycle; I am afraid on the road. I would also need a permit for the moto. Maybe I will buy a scooter and deliver with it. A person that works 5 days per week, saturdays and sundays, to start. They are also from Soudan. They all bought the scooter. Before it was for parcels, now Uber Eats for a month. They are also refugees (Interview with Abdo – *Feb. 2022)*

This is yet another point where platform economy and citizenship status intersect (Soriano, 2022). Scams are the third key aspect of the subletting market. Account scams in the food delivery industry are only one of the many examples of how undocumented workers are taken advantage

of. Despite scams and steals, the food delivery industry is also built on solidarity among immigrants of the same region and on various community networks in the neighborhood. This journey is what led Konan, another rider from Paris who came to France from Italy through a legal road:

> All the people that come here sans-papiers, if you don't have the papers you don't have a job. When you come here, if you don't have a job we propose delivery to you. I did that with people from Ivory Coast, Guinea, Mali, etc. If you have a card from Italy you can open a Deliveroo account, an Uber Eats account or a Stuart account. If you don't have that, you must sublet from someone. (Interview with Konan – *Feb. 2022*)

Filmmaker Akafou's latest movie 'After the crossing' (2020), takes a deep dive into the informal and emotional journey that is migration through Europe. He follows Ivoirians in Italy in their goal to reach Paris, while also looking back at their time in Libya, on the Mediterranean Sea and in the Italian 'campo'. Reaching Paris is a treacherous road field with scams. Upon his arrival in Paris, the protagonist, as for many undocumented migrants, finds himself without housing, jobless and with only a small backpack and a phone. Finding an account on a major app is a sort of life jacket for many newcomers:

> I had a friend doing delivery. When he got the papers, he stopped, but found someone who needed his account. It's been a year, and the other guy still has it. Still working. For me, I want to stop delivery, and someone also wants my account. I have the papers now. (Interview with Abdo – *Feb. 2022*)

However, finding an account is only one part of the task. Insecurity at work is one of the main concerns for undocumented riders. Insecurity at work is one of the main concerns for undocumented riders. This is the fourth key component of the subletting market. The general devaluation of the work done by racialized immigrants is an integral part of urban socioeconomic development (Strauss, 2019). Neoliberal labour markets allowed for the bottom end of urban development to be built on the most precarious. Urban cyclists and platform riders face the same

dangers: sudden car door openings, cars blindly turning into the bike lane, trucks parked in the bike lanes, oblivious pedestrians, and clients:

> If I fall and I spill the drinks and the meal, the client pays 14€. Okay, but if I am injured. You take your food; you are not happy. I say: "But I fell, I had a bike accident". They are still going to call Deliveroo and say: "the rider was like this and that". Your food is worth more than my life, because I am Black, I am an outsider, sans-papiers. They pay us cheap, we don't have insurance, clients don't like us. And then, Deliveroo will close your account and you can't work, because of one client. It happens every day, to everybody. (Interview with Erio – *Feb 2022*)

This is something Fanon touched on many decades ago, when discussing race and class in the colonial context (Fanon, 1961). For Fanon (as well as for Erio above), being Black in France is at the heart of the exploitation, physical dangers, faced by riders. Fanon writes:

> But that does not prevent the idea of race from mingling with that of class: The first is concrete and particular, the second is universal and abstract; […] the first is the result of a psychobiological syncretism and the second is a methodical construction based on experience. (Fanon, 1952: 130)

The pressure platforms exert on their riders for faster delivery exacerbates the danger of their job, making delivering more difficult and injuries more frequent. Many sans-papiers couriers in the interviews mention not wanting to go to the hospital following an injury, fearing deportation:

> I hurt myself. I did not have the papers. I was scared. I did not go to the hospital. (Interview with Siaka – *Feb. 2022)*

> If I had the papers, I would have a good job. If you are dead while delivering, it doesn't matter, you are sans-papiers. Nobody knows you. (Interview with Erio – *Feb. 2022*)

Orr & al. (2022) use the concept of necropolitics to understand how various systems of oppression (migration status, economic, and/or racialization) put riders in difficult and dangerous situations. They accept working conditions that can lead to physical injuries and even death. France also saw

several deadly incidents that killed food delivery riders in the recent years, most notably the death of a 16-year-old in Lille.[37]

The cases of Siaka, Erio, Adil, Bakar and Konan showed the difficulty of subletting an account in Paris' food delivery industry. It is one of the ways sans-papiers found to stay afloat when arriving in France undocumented or, as many mentioned, after being 'released' by the state. Subletting an account in Paris' food delivery industry is only one of the ways sans-papiers found. For Barron et al., the URSSAF (*Union de recouvrement des cotisations de sécurité sociale et d'allocations familiales*) – which is the agency in charge of tax collection - acts as a can-opener for the state in the crackdown on irregular migration. However, in the case of food platforms, if the account automatically pays its taxes to the URSAAF, it does not matter who does the work. The responsibility to verify the identity of the worker falls back to the platform. Unlike 'under the table' work, platform labour adds a veil which can then be used by the platform in times of crisis, such as the COVID pandemic, when a lot of workers are needed, and it is in its best interest not to verify the identity.

Four key components of the subletting of accounts have emerged, which allow for CRS to contribute to the reproduction of the platform economy. From the interviews with sans-papiers couriers, I noted: 1) paying for the right to work, 2) interdependency with the subletters, 3) scams and steals, and 4) insecurities while delivering. The other way to work in the food delivery industry

[37] It is suspected that he was renting an account as he was found wearing a Deliveroo delivery bag: https://www.sudouest.fr/faits-divers/lille-le-cycliste-ecrase-par-un-camion-n-etait-pas-un-livreur-officiel-et-etait-mineur-7684595.php
On necropolitics in the food delivery sector, also see: https://actu.fr/ile-de-france/paris_75056/une-marche-blanche-a-paris-apres-la-mort-de-rumel-ahmed-livreur-a-velo-percute-par-un-camion_41626572.html

without papers is when a platform hires directly its workers knowing they don't have visas. This will be the topic of the next section. The other way to work in the food delivery industry without papers is when a platform, usually a start-up, decides to hire its workers knowing they do not have visas.

4.2.1 Hired by a food delivery platform

On January 17th, 2022, French president Emmanuel Macron and Minister Bruno Le Maire proudly shared on Twitter that 1 million new companies were created for the year 2021, 'a historical record'. That same year, Uber Eats and Deliveroo both registered record numbers of riders to face the growing demand in food delivery orders. Of these 1 million new companies, 10% are food couriers (or 100 000 new accounts, as each account is one 'independent-contractor' registred as a 'micro-entreprise').[38] All these new accounts are deemed self-employed ('*auto-entrepreneur*') which must be registered as new companies through the state. In 2015, to simplify the process, the French government merged the *'micro-entreprise'* and '*auto-entreprise'* regimes to create one single entity. As they are self-employed, food couriers are paid through billings, and not salaries. Therefore, the Circulaire Valls does not apply to them, because in order to qualify you must have an employer that accumulates proof of employment for the worker. This connection between immigration and independent status creates a pool of cheap labour for platforms. It is key to understand that sans-papiers couriers cannot obtain papers through food delivery work because of misclassification.

[38] https://www.francetvinfo.fr/replay-radio/le-vrai-du-faux/est-ce-qu-un-million-d-entreprises-ont-ete-creees-en-france-en-2021-comme-l-affirme-emmanuel-macron_4906229.html

In 2023, the cost to be an auto-entrepreuneur was split into three main fees: a) *Cotisation Foncière des Entreprises* (CFE) starting at 227€, b) taxes and benefits for the URSAAF and c) delivery license ('*attestation de capacité de transport*'). Many sans-papiers will choose the regular bikes or the e-bikes to avoid that last fee, which comes with a mandatory formation but only applies to motorized vehicles. It allows the Macron government to claim it 'created' 1 million new companies during its tenure, which is disguised in precarious, undocumented couriers trying to survive.

I have covered in the previous section how undocumented newcomers are charged with a rent by 'regularized' citizen to access the labour market via platform labour. The platform, unlike a typical workplace where you need to show up and your identity is verified, allows this citizenship-for-rent market to exist. Crossing the borders from your home country all the way to France is only one step of the journey. Once you arrive in Paris as an irregular migrant, finding housing, work and safety is difficult. Borders act as a mechanism that ensure the exploitation of the irregular immigrant workforce. In this section, I will show how platform companies are directly implicated in the exploitation of undocumented workers. Interviews with couriers who were directly hired by a food delivery platform will show how start-ups are willing to go through great lengths to get a competitive edge against their rivals – including hiring and exploiting sans-papiers.

As studies by Waite & Lewis show, migrant work in the platform economy is more than the many discourses on flexibility. The labour done by hyper-precarious migrants in irregular situations is often what they called survival-oriented. On the other hand, it is important not to taint workers voices only through miserabilism. Resistance to platform exploitation by sans-papiers workers is

happening and is part of a long historical tradition of migrant struggles and sans-papiers strikes in France and elsewhere:

> The strategies of the Sans-Papiers reflect the reconfigured spatial practices in and through which their identities as immanent outsiders have been constructed. In this respect their struggle is in, of and for the city. The dimensions of this city are cast in the context of a global political economy and the transnational practices of a colonial and neoliberal state. This is a city that is imperfectly represented by the term globalization and for which we have no solid conceptual grasp and no clear set of vocabulary. (McNevin 2006: 147)

In France, targeted hiring of sans-papiers by firms for cheap and compliant labour is a well-known strategy. Per Barron, Bory, Jonin & Tourette (2011), this strategy occurred at various moments in metropolitan France's history, for example factories on the outskirt of Paris in the early 2000's. Sans-papiers workers occupied jobs with limited visibility in public spaces. Construction, for example, is still a major part of undeclared labour in Europe for undocumented workers or factory work (Dimitriadis, 2022). The next case study, of a food delivery platform called Frichti, will explore how this strategy was put in place.

Frichti was founded in 2015 after raising 1.1M$ from investors. Over the next 4 years (2016-2019) it managed to find more investors and raise 55M$ more (Crunchbase 2022). It marketed itself as an eco-friendly, locally sourced, fast meals and groceries delivery platform. In 2019, Frichti saw media backlash for the first time when journalists managed to reveal how monthly competitions between workers were used to boost productivity. Siaka, after only two months of renting an account, was hired by Frichti having to present only its Ivorian passport:

> One brother was an 'auto-entrepreneur' for Stuart. He rented me his account so I worked. But I did not last long. I did 2 months like this and then I had the solution to open my own account with Frichti. Someone told me that Frichti was recruiting simply with your passport from home. I said: "Oh! Even if you don't have the papers?". If you have a passport from your country, they recruit you. (Interview with Siaka – *Feb. 2022*)

The fine line between having your own account and having to rent an account is key. There is a plethora of situations in which migrant workers find themselves having to rent an account to someone. When it is someone they know – family, friends or someone form the same community – it provides more safety than having to pay a stranger for the right to use his account. Many can even borrow an account from a cousin or a friend that doesn't use it anymore (sometimes because they accessed papers and found a 'real' job). The sub-market of accounts-for-rent is filled with scammers and exploitative relationships as we have seen in the previous section. However, the case of Frichti is different in the sense that the platform knowingly hired sans-papiers. In a sense, many managed to 'cross that line' between having to rent an account to having your own account when Fritchi hired sans-papiers. This was also Konan's experience:

> I was without papers at the time, only with an Italian ID. I was in Italy, before coming to France. I came to Italy in Jan. 2016. Then I left for France in 2017 from Ivory Coast. I had no relations with Frichti. I got my account. I started working. […] I like delivery, but not with Frichti. They give me 5 hours in the mornings, then 2 hours to rest, and sometimes 4 hours at night. I can send money to my family back in Ivory Coast. Every month a little something. I do my effort. (Interview with Konan – Feb. 2022)

Following this first bad press moment, many more journalists considered the case of Frichti and revealed that a large portion of its workforce was undocumented. Interviews show how the company knowingly hired sans-papiers. Adil, as for Siaka, went to Frichti for work when he heard the company was hiring without documents:

> We heard that Frichti was hiring and because it was a new platform, they needed new riders. We went and asked for work. (Interview with Adil – *Feb. 2022*)

In the summer of 2020, following some news media articles and nationally televised mentions of the company's practices, Frichti deactived 200 of its sans-papiers riders without notice. This sparked outraged by couriers who believed that their work for the company could count as declared labour - for which they paid taxes to the URSSAF, and eventually lead them to regularization. This

is a part of the Circulaire Valls where employer must accumulate proof of work for the sans-papiers to then submit a demand to the prefecture to get papers for the worker. However, this was not in Frichti's plans, as Siaka recounts:

> For years, we worked for Frichti, they knew we didn't have the papers. They hired us only with our passports. Today, after years they had many clients because of us. We worked in the rain, on the ice. We fall, we get injured, we did it all. We fought through and now Frichti wants to let us go without the papers. We thought they could help us get regularized, but now they just want to get rid of us. (Interview with Siaka – *Feb. 2022*)

> We first need the papers. Then we need the work. It is complex with all the informatics systems and it is all in French. (Interview with Youny, from Soudan – Feb. 2022)

Half of the Frichti strikers, with help from the CGT, got temporary work visas following negotiations between the platform and the government:

> This type of job must count as proof of labour in France and, normally, lead you to papers. We found out that it is easier to get papers as an employee versus as an independent-contractor. Papers are one thing, we also fought for better working conditions. It is not because they are sans-papiers that they don't want better conditions. (Interview with spokesperson for the CLAP – *Mar. 2022*)

Indirectly, the French state is both producing undocumented workers and profiting off them through the independent-contractor status, fees, taxes, subletting markets (through Stuart) and exploitative working conditions. Pump and dump strategies by platforms are evident and the migration trajectories are not only tainted by various bureaucratic procedures that lead to the undocumented status, but also by exploitation. We need to keep in mind two major aspects. First, that precarity isn't simple an economic condition or an unequal distribution of state protection, but also structural exploitation by labour platforms, states, e-bike rental companies, subletters, and more, which all take advantage of citizenship precarity. Second, as Barron and colleagues showed, recent mobilization of state agencies to limit sans-papiers' rights in France since 2000's has led many to hide. The platformization of work has allowed many to find work. This, however, comes

to a price, because labour platforms have the upper hand and can lower the pay, take a percentage off riders' tips, do mass deactivation, and so on. This led to three main demands by sans-papiers riders (rights before deactivation, regularization through work by updating the Circulaire Valls and better pay), which we will cover in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER V: THE TORONTO CASE

"The problem is we have 6'000 kilometers worth of undefended shared border with the United States. People will choose to cross elsewhere." – Justin Trudeau, Canada's Prime Minister, February 2023 on illegal crossings

This chapter investigates the various cases of platform-mediated food delivery in Toronto. I have shown through the Paris case how CRS occurs in various ways. From transactional labour between irregular migrants and regular citizens, or via exploitation by platforms, this process takes place in the form of rents extracted from citizenship precarity. The Toronto case is different in the sense that submarkets of documents to rent is not as prevalent. There is no wide-open informal black market of platform delivery accounts to rent. However, migrant delivery couriers in Toronto are also over-represented in the food delivery sector. In large part, they are asylum-seekers, international students and permanent residents. Under-employment and unemployment that leads to hyper-precarity for newcomers have existed for a long time in Canada. To capture what is new about platformized type of exploitation, this empirical study of food delivery in Toronto will show how various forms of unfreedom put immigrant workers in hyper-precarious situations. As for the Paris case, I will first review platform work in Canada, the immigration system and migrant labour in Toronto's food delivery industry. I then dive into the fieldwork results and compare CRS in Canada with France.

5.1 Delivering for labour platforms in Canada

Going back to the key points made by Thomas (2016) on unfree labour, we must note again that unfree labour is not solely one's economically coerced ability to sell labour power, but rather all the racial dimensions, global migration conditions, housing discriminations, rentiership and platformized relationships that come with platform-mediated food delivery. It is an algorithm that decides if the one's papers are valid or not. E-bike rentals, that are essential for delivery, are based on a subscription model that charges for the rental. Moreover, unfreedom is in relation to conditions that may restrict or constrain one's capacity to sell one's labour power, for example conditions of stay for international students, housing scarcity and discrimination, and so on. Firstly, I will be drawing a portrait of platform food delivery in Toronto. Secondly, I will discuss the various features of migration regimes in Canada. As for the Paris case, it has links to British colonial history. Current racial capitalism is built on a long history of exploitation. The racist and nationalist components of this history permeate today's labour market. Thirdly, I will connect both these sections and explore the role of migrant workers in platform-mediated work in Toronto. This will also introduce my analysis of the interviews conducted in Toronto with migrant food riders and labour activists.

5.1.1 Platform work in Toronto

Food delivery and ride sharing services are highly visible sectors of the platform economy. In Toronto, we can see couriers biking around the city in highly precarious gear and very hazardous road conditions. As for Paris, couriers in Toronto work for a plethora of app (Uber Eats, DoorDash,

SkipTheDishes, HungryPanda, FanTuan, FoodOnDelivery, FoodHWY, LangYangYang, PenguinPickUp, Postmates, to name a few). In April 2020, a survey conducted after the pandemic by Restaurants Canada found that food delivery represented 28% of all restaurant sales. This was conducted as lockdowns were still enforced and people were relying on delivery workers. A similar reporting from DoorDash Canada sees the trend upward of third-party app ordering for 2022: "On average, consumers ordered delivery from a restaurant via a third-party app 4.4 times per month and via a restaurant's app or website 3.52 times per month"[39] – in comparison to the previous year.

As for many other cities around the world, the biggest food delivery platform in Toronto is Uber Eats. Interestingly, the Uber Eats app was first launched globally in 2015 in the City of Toronto.[40] Following a multi-cities test run within the original Uber driving app, Toronto was picked as the first place to test a standalone food delivery app because of how popular the add-on option was. Toronto being the first city to have the Uber Eats app speaks to how important food delivery is to citizens. Over the course of the next 8 years, the company grew massively to become the main player in Toronto, and globally.

This trend in consumer behavior was followed by a shift in the workforce. In 2019, in Canada, 28% of workers aged 18 and above worked for online platforms (Ziegler et al., 2020). We have seen a rise of 'gig work' in major cities over the last 10 years, notably in Toronto (15%) and Montreal (13%) (Jeon et al., 2019). The *Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives* (CCPA) estimated at 19% the amount of gig workers doing food delivery in the Greater Toronto Area. The

[39] http://www.restaurantscanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/2022-State-of-Online-Ordering-Report-EN-CA.pdf
[40] https://www.wired.com/2015/12/Uber Eats-is-ubers-first-app-thats-not-about-rides/

polling firm Angus-Reid estimates that 6% of gig workers are working on food delivery apps. Combining these reports allows us to estimate that the rider workforce is between 24 000 and 76 000 in the GTA before the pandemic. The next section will review some of the conditions of stay and the migration regimes for Canada.

5.1.2 Immigration in Canada

As in Paris, the most precarious workforce in Toronto is racialized and immigrant. This is put in evidence by historical precedent, as pointed out by Choudry and Smith: "Capitalism is a racialized phenomenon evidenced in immigration, labour market, and wider social policies in Canada. […] The Canadian state actively produces and reproduces unfree migrant and immigrant labour in distinctly racialized terms. Filtering workers from source countries in the global South through labour unfreedom, neoliberal migration in Canada relies upon, reinforces, and even extends global economic apartheid" (Choudry & Smith, 2016: 40).

Four years ago, Preston and Akbar (2020) find that newcomers in Ontario arrive via a work permit (61%) or a study permit (25%). Half of international students in Canada are in Ontario, versus 17% in Quebec (Preston & Akbar, 2020). The Migrant Rights association notes that, in 2022, the number of work and study permits were at their highest ever, "without any increase in access to permanent rights for low-waged migrants" (more than 853,000 work and study permits were issued in 2022), for a grand total of 1.2 million migrants on permits, plus 500,000 undocumented.[41] More

[41] https://migrantrights.ca/latest-news/

importantly, they note that these migrants don't have access to healthcare and social services and are confined to low-waged, insecure jobs such as food delivery.

A recent report by the Institute for Canadian Citizenship mentions that there is a steady decline in citizenship uptake over the last 20 years. Only 45.7% of permanent residents become citizens in 2021, compared to 60% in 2016 and 75% in 2001.[42] A plethora of terms have been used to define food delivery. Gig work, in Canada, encompasses all people 'who would file T2125 tax forms for the self-employed, but who do not have business numbers' (Jeon et al., 2019; Ziegler et al., 2020). Hence, platform-mediated gig work is focusing on those deemed self-employed who work on modern labour platforms.

The immigration enforcement agency of Canada, the Canadian Border and Security Agency (CBSA), has made headlines sporadically in the recent years for conducting deportations. In the years following the pandemic, the CBSA, as many other sectors of the economy, had major shortages of border agents. The Customs and Immigration Union estimated in 2022 that the CBSA was down between 1'000 and 3'000 agents at all levels of operation. This also meant that hiring criteria were revised downwards to fill the vacant positions. As demonstrated by an immigration lawyer I interviewed, at the higher levels of Immigration Canada, this was seen by many in the field as a downgrading of immigration processes.

The hiring process for members of the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB) – the people who decide whether someone is deported – has also seen a lowering of the criteria. People

[42] https://inclusion.ca/article/newcomers-falling-out-of-love-with-canadian-citizenship/

from the private sector, without backgrounds in immigration laws, labour laws or even law in general, are seen in a promotional video by the IRB, discussing the perks of the job.[43] Per immigration Canada, "In June 2022, the Government of Canada made changes to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act to allow for the selection of immigrants based on key attributes that support economic priorities, such as specific work experience or knowledge of French."[44]

The immigration regime in Canada is often deemed complex and difficult to navigate. Between 2005 and 2015, the Harper government, through a range of tighten immigration policies, made it more difficult for a class of workers to gain status in Canada (Choudry & Smith, 2016). This is materialized through more conditions under which citizenship can be revoked, increased difficulty of the test, necessity for greater ability to speak French or English. This class of workers, very often racialized immigrants, play an important role in the Canadian labour market notably in agriculture, factory work and homecare. Canadian labour studies look at the various effects of the migration policies on immigrant workers and how they organize, "as opposed to a large swath of current scholarship that downplays or ignores the struggles of racialized migrant and immigrant workers" (Choudry & Smith, 2016: 21). This means the number of non-citizens has also gone up.

Per Swerts (2014) 'non-citizen' "covers a range of legal statuses and denominations that includes resident and non-resident aliens, refugees, asylum seekers, victims of trafficking, foreign students, temporary visitors, stateless people, immigrants who have applied to become nationals, undocumented migrants" (Swerts, 2014: 295) and so on. As for France's sans-papiers, Canada's

[43] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y5_Fy_KO660&ab_channel=CISRCanada

[44] https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2023/05/canada-launches-new-process-to-welcome-skilled-newcomers-with-work-experience-in-priority-jobs-as-permanent-residents.html

'non-citizens' are integrated in many spheres of economic and social life. They participate in the urban informal and formal economy. Irregular crossings at the Canada-US border have made the headlines in the recent years. From February 2017 to March 2022, it was numbered at 63,291 illegal crossings per the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada. However, most newcomers in Canada come through the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) or the International Mobility Program (IMP)– with around 1.4 million people on temporary work or study permits in 2021.[45] A total of 621,565 students held a study permit as of December 31st, 2021. One student-worker's testimony in a recent article illustrates best how Canada's immigration system is built on racial capitalism:

> When we can't pay the exorbitant tuition fees, we get punished," stated Kamal, who is stuck in limbo with a working permit in one hand and a removal order in the other. In an interview with New Canadian Media, the former computer science student who is now working in a restaurant said that the immigration system "is designed to keep us permanently temporary. "The precarious immigration status keeps us in a limbo. It doesn't let us unleash our full potential and we suffer from mental health, can't get reunited with our family and it puts our lives on hold.[46]

The overall discourse on the TFWP is that it allows employers to fill jobs during labour shortages. The foreign workers are tied up to one employer and must obtain temporary work permit before starting to work. These permits are given per labour market assessments when the need for hiring internationally is justified. In 2008, a third of foreign workers were hired through the TFWP, whereas today they only represent about 10% of migrant workers. The IMP, on the other hand, allows employers to hire foreign workers without a labour market assessment. The responsibility falls on the worker to obtain a work permit or study permit under the many different agreements Canada has with other countries.

[45] https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/article-canada-immigration-population-boom/

[46] https://investmentmigration.org/news/canada-migrants-call-on-trudeau-to-fulfil-his-promise-to-regularize-the-undocumented/

Canadian citizenship grants access to the labour market and is based on a 'point system' of selection, which stresses "skills such as education, training, and knowledge of French and English in assessing and assigning points to potential applicants for admittance to Canada", and this system favors "male applicants from countries with educational opportunities in French and English" (Abu-Laban, 2014: 276). This also means lower points applicants must first take part in bottom-end jobs of the labour market upon arrival if their education is not recognized by the state. The origins of the Canadian state, French and British, make it first and foremost a 'white settler colony'(Abu-Laban, 2014).

The filtering of migrant applications in Canada was also an opportunity for technoscientific management to push for the integration of new technologies. As Nalbandian (2022) argues, the states are increasingly turning towards AI for their migration policies and programs: "Such policies and programs may have very different goals; they may aim to restrict movement and control migration or access to asylum; they may seek to speed up the processing of economic migration or to support enforcement inland, but they may also aim to provide more efficient assistance to asylum seekers" (Nalbandian, 2022). When AI programs are put in place to scrape and analyze big data, results can be racialized and discriminatory. In Canada, this is exemplified by the 'Chinook tool' (Chartier-Edwards et al., 2024), an automation program aiming at sorting and filtering migrant applications. A group of researchers at the INRS found that the algorithms within the Chinook tool put in place by the Canadian Ministry of Immigration massively refused African-Francophones applications (Roberge et al., 2019, 2020).

Undocumented, temporary foreign workers, international students, spouses undergoing sponsorship process, refugee and asylum claimants are facing what Villegas (2020) calls 'legal violence' (Villegas, 2020). We see low acceptance rates, detentions and deportation where migrants are blamed for their precarious status. Both France and Canada profit from the labour of precarious status migrants and their economic, financial and housing situation. However, most of the academic focus is on temporary foreign worker's programs, in-house care workers and farmworkers.

5.1.3 Migrant labour in Toronto's platform economy

Similar to gig work in Paris, food delivery gig work in Toronto is increasingly done by immigrants. It is difficult to estimate the percentage of migrants working in food delivery because of the extremely fast turnover rate. We know that racialized immigrants are overrepresented in platform work (Jeon et al., 2019). As for the Paris case, the volume of food delivery orders in Toronto skyrocketed during the pandemic. Per many grassroots organizations like GWU, this was an opportunity for food delivery platforms to lower the pay floor. With a worsening of working conditions came a flowing out of 'Canadian' students and part-time workers from the workforce. As for the Paris case, those workers were gradually replaced by immigrants, notably international students, and temporary work permit holders. Two Toronto-based researchers identified different pathways that lead immigrants to platform food delivery per interaction between structural barriers (at macro, meso and micro 'levels') and migrant objectives and level of agency (Lam & Triandafyllidou, 2022; Triandafyllidou & Lam, 2021).

In Canada, we see international students put in precarious financial situations by their conditions of stay, having tens of thousands of dollars in tuition debts. To make ends meet, they are finding second jobs are bike couriers. By biking around the city, staying online for ten hours a day during the summer hoping to make up for the rest of the school year. By combining the findings of the various authors above, I apply the concepts of unfree labour, hyper-precarity trap and informality to the cases of food couriers in Canada, as I did for France.

The stories of immigrant food riders are similar in Toronto: structural arrangements that prevent many from accessing decent paying job, absence of choice and exploitation by platforms. Such arrangements include, for example, conditions of stay for international students in Canada who must pay tuition fees of up to $35,000 per year. They are, however, limited to a maximum of 20 hours of work per week during the semester. For Uber Eats, that means 20 hours of 'online' time on an app that sometimes only offers a fare or two per hour. As a result, during the summer, international students must work as many hours as possible to earn a decent income and make up for this lack during the rest of the year. For permanent residents, the non-recognition of diplomas and training in the country-of-origin pushes many towards Uber Eats. They can do this work temporarily and independently while waiting to finish new training or diploma recognition processes.

More notably, the recruitment of international students, who pay five times the tuitions fees paid by domestic students, skyrocketed in the last couple of years. Alpha college, for example, made headlines in 2022 when international students blocked the entrance to protest their courses being

deferred.[47] A staggering 100% of Alpha college's students are international students, 99% of them from India. Alpha college's buildings have a capacity of 400 students. A growth of 342% at Alpha college (to a student body of around 5'000) has forced the school to defer the classes for many students, while cashing in on tuitions. This specific group of racialized workers would have to work more than 50h/week at minimum wage to pay the tens of thousands of dollars asked by these private, for profit, colleges. In 2022, international students brought 22 billion $ to Canada only in tuition fees.[48] As Chapter 6 will show, exploitation does not mean that solidarity and resistance to labour platformization can't be built among couriers and migrant food couriers.

These colleges can bring in thousands of students via a recruitment system all the way to India. Recruiters in India are 'sharking' for international students through immigration agencies promising quality education and well-paying jobs. Similar to the clandestine migrant sharks in Africa promising safe passage to Europe for a price, these immigration agencies charge a fee for their services to both the students and the colleges. These education agencies are guaranteeing visas to Canada for a high price, some paid directly by Canadian colleges to recruit students. However, we know that permanent residency is hard to obtain in Canada as only last year the Immigration Minister had a visa backlog of 160'000 applications waiting to be processed. The case of the company ApplyBoard, shows how many companies are sharking for international students in India, but also globally. Canada's Immigration Minister announced in January 2024 a

[47] https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/international-students-alpha-college-scarborough-1.6465125

[48] https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/why-is-canada-capping-foreign-students-who-will-be-impacted-2024-01-22/

new limit to the number of international students notably reduction in the number of study permits issued of 35%.[49]

All three of these categories have features of urban that either limit the workers to certain parts of the labour market or push them towards platform delivery, as I will show with the interviews with food couriers in Toronto. Similarly to the Paris case, where thousands of undocumented immigrants are looking for work to pay increasing costs of rent, international students in Toronto need multiple job in addition to loans to make ends meet. The housing crisis in both cities is at the heart of the issue. Recent reporting by CBC showed the realities of international students in Toronto paying an exorbitant price to live in desperate housing conditions, four or five people per room, 12-15 students per houses, sometimes even switching turns on who gets the bed for the night.[50] This is reminiscing of France's '*Marchands de sommeil*' ('Sleep merchants') who are known to abuse sans-papiers.

The data for this section comes from 2 sources: an online questionnaire of 46 respondents, all food delivery couriers in the GTA and 12 semi-structured interviews. Of those 58 GTA food couriers, 23 are 'non-citizen' (12 permanent residents, 3 on work visas, 7 on study visas and 1 refugee) – notably, out of the 23 non-citizens, 15 are from India. Most of them deliver in Old Toronto (Downtown), East York, North York, Etobicoke or Scarborough either by E-bike (9) or car (14). I also consulted with an immigration lawyer, a city official and community worker as part of another

[49] https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/international-student-visas-1.7092512

[50] CBC, The Fifth Estate, Oct. 13th, 2022. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dNrXA5m7ROM&ab_channel=TheFifthEstate

research project with the *CERC Migration & Integration* to better understand the structure of immigration in Canada.

The first question that this section will answer is: who is profiting from citizenship precarity in Toronto? Food delivery platforms, e-bike rental platforms, landlords, state agencies and more all pay a role. I have identified four issues that allow platformized forms of exploitation to thrive in Toronto: i) cost of living, ii) conditions of stay for international students, iii) conditions of stay for permanent residents/work permits and iv) health and safety concerns. Unlike the Paris case, where accounts can be sublet exist because of the large portion of undocumented workers – which comes with an access to the labour market, the Toronto case can be characterize as a more traditional form of exploitation of immigrants. The interviews I collected with immigrant riders, union activists, lawyers and others will show how the structural arrangements of migration regimes in Canada pushed many newcomers towards platform food delivery. Expanding CRS to the Canadian case would be valuable and possible with more interviews with couriers – especially if undocumented.

5.2 Experiences of food delivery couriers in Toronto

This section will empirically show platformized forms of exploitation of migrant labour in Toronto. Interviews with food couriers will highlight how and why delivering for labour platforms can lead to hyper-precarious situations. Riman is a 20-year-old international student from Nepal.

He's doing is undergrad in computer science in Saskatoon. He decided to come and stay in Toronto for the summer in hope of finding work:

> I moved to this city 2 months ago. I wanted a job. I couldn't find one. I thought food delivery might be one of the easiest to do, because I am all on my own. I don't like it. I need money. My tuition fees are like 25 000$ per year. It is expensive. I got many years to go. My rent in Toronto is expensive and I got to save money. Next summer I am not coming back. (Interview with Riman – *July 2022*)

Riman, along with his two friends from Nepal, came to Canada on study visas. Unlike many in the Paris case, Riman and his friends came to Canada through a 'regular' route. A Toronto student on international study visa has the right to work, although the students are limited to 20 hours per week during the semester. Riman is in school in Saskatchewan for computer science. He decided to come spend the Summer in Toronto to work full-time multiple job before the semester starts again. He and his two friends and roomates deliver for Uber Eats and study in Saskatoon. Riman also works at a LCBO around 20 hours per week. The rest of his time he is online on Uber Eats:

> It depends how much I can endure. I would probably say like 3 to 4 hours at the time. Then I go back home, charge the bike, charge the phone. Then I come back. I am trying to do lunch and dinner, but before I didn't know if it was time to go or not time to go. I would go all day. I used to go 2:00pm to 6:00pm which is peak off-time. Now I am coming to realize the best hours. (Interview with Riman – *July 2022*)

The online and unpaid time on Uber Eats exceeds Riman's expectations at first. To cover tuition fees, they must work as much as possible during the summer. This is where Uber Eats managed to place itself in the trajectories of migrant students. Riman, along with his two roommates, could be online up to 60 hours per week on the Uber Eats app during the summer.

Alecks, another international student that I met during fieldwork, told me a similar story. For him, who came in 2018 as a 22-years-old international student from Jordan, Uber Eats is knows that and is profiting off this no choice situation:

> In my opinion, what I see is that they are just exploiting us because they are making good money, but they don't pay good for the riders. Now, everything is expensive. They still don't pay that good for the riders. I feel like that. They must give more for the delivery because sometimes we get like 4 kilometers on the e-bike they only pay 3$ or 3,50$. That is nothing. (Interview with Alecks – *July 2022*)

Per many, Uber Eats is aware that many of their couriers use e-bike and modulate the prices because they know riders will accept 3$ for 4km, because of the e-bikes. The cost of living in Toronto, the high tuition fees for international students and the lack of work opportunities mean that Uber Eats is often the only option. Although we cannot claim that platforms know their workers are in precarious situations and knowingly take advantage of it, we can reiterate two major facts concerning food delivery in Toronto, which are the same as in the Paris case: i) students and other part-time riders have been replaced by precarious, racialized immigrant men; ii) wages for riders have been lowered considerably everywhere in the GTA and in Ile-de-France per many grassroots organizations. The over-recruitment of precarious migrant workers means that labour platforms have the upper hand and can lower the pay, take a percentage off riders' tips or threaten deactivation:

> I started with 3400$ tuition fees per month for the English courses, after that it was 8000$ per semester for the engineering program. I was doing the 20 hours per week on Uber Eats. I can do more now because I have residency. I do 20-25 hours, but I am also working as an engineer, so I am doing Uber Eats on the side. I got the job 4 months ago. (Interview with Alecks – *July 2022*)

One of the interviews from my summer fieldwork in Toronto took place in a park on the corner of Bloor and Christie. I sat down with three Indian cousins, all international students, recently arrived in Toronto. All of them are 19-years old and are from the same region in India, a same small village in the North. They all arrived at the same time in Canada and have a year left in school:

> At the end of next year our study will end. Then we will get work visa and stay in Canada. With a work permit, we will not do Uber Eats that is for sure. Factory work. Driving trucks.

> We cannot drive trucks on study permit. After school, we will all drive trucks. (Interview with Ryad – *July 2022*)

They live 9 people in a 4 bedrooms' house in Etobicoke. Not all 9 are international students, but all came to Toronto as international students. Some are already driving freight trucks, because they have both the work permits and the U.S. visas so that they can drive the trucks to the United-States. Per many, this is a common trajectory on Indian international students in Toronto. Every day of the summer, the three cousins take the GO train in the morning, with their Zoomo E-bikes and come to do delivery for Uber Eats:

> We meet around 50 Indians doing Uber Eats per day and every day it is new people. We can earn income with delivery. In Canada, when we search for job, everyone demands experience. They tell us they want experience. Uber Eats is the only thing where we don't need it, and don't need to listen to anyone, it is our self-employment. (Interview with Ryad – *July 2022*)

The three cousins I met in a park near Bloor Street study at different colleges. One is at Seneca college in North York, while the other at Canadore in Scarborough. All three of them live in Etobicoke which is a long commute (see Figure 2). To be accepted in these colleges, the international students are also required to submit a minimum score to prove their proficiency in English. However, we know from various reporting that English proficiency tests are filled with sham companies charging $100-$300 for fake tests or telling students if they pay, they can have a sufficient mark for their college application. Moreover, the estimated annual cost of attendance at Canadore College for an international student is $25,000 per year, and between $19,000 to $24,000 for Seneca College. Added to that is easily $12,000 per year for housing. They feel that Uber Eats is the only job available to them:

> In Canada, when we search for job, everyone demands experience. They tell us they want experience. UberEats is the only thing where we don't need it, and don't need to listen to anyone, it is our self-employment. (Interview with Moha - *July 2022*)

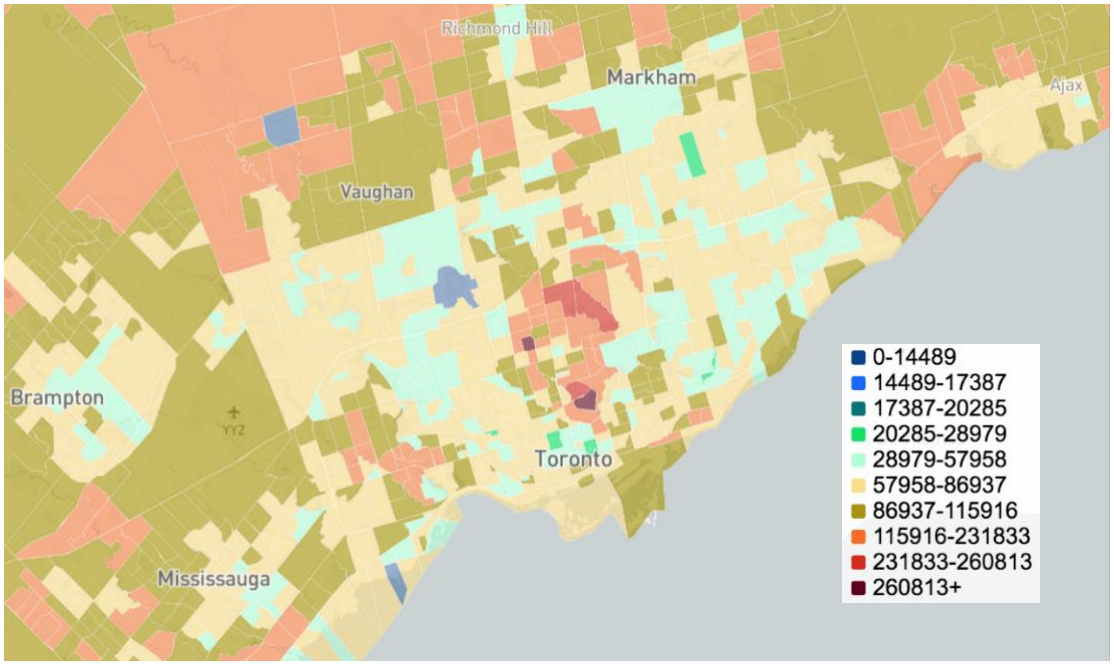
It seemed important to all three during the interview that their search for other jobs was always stopped by the 'lack of experience'. With Uber Eats, they didn't go through an interview. As for the Paris case, regular bikes are not enough to make money and e-bikes are often stolen. Therefore, Zoomo seemed to be the better option. The subscription model force them to pay 120$ for the first month, and then 240$ per month to rent an E-bike with Zoomo. A battery on these types on bikes allows them to work for about 40km which means that when it is empty, they must go back home via the GO train with the bike on board or find a place to charge it. This is sometimes enough to work both lunch and dinner.

Jagroot, another rider I met, also came to Toronto as an Indian international student from India. He bought an e-bike when he arrived in hope of making good money working full time with Uber Eats during off semester breaks. However, he got his bike stolen. He also couldn't do it during the winter in the regular bike. Doing Uber Eats full time before starting school and during the summer allowed him to pay his tuition fees and expensive Toronto rent. He found some loopholes in the app, notably that he sometimes got paid even though he cancelled the order. He did that a couple of times, before getting his account shutdown. Luckily, as he told me off the record, he could borrow another account from his cousin. He told me that in Toronto migrants from the same community were sharing accounts. If your papers expire or your account was shut down, you could sometimes count on someone else's to keep working. We don't know if Uber Eats knows that or takes advantage of that in any ways like in the Paris case with pump and dump strategies.

As for the Paris case, most of the riders interviewed during my fieldwork lived outside the City of Toronto. Many take the Go train from Mississauga, Vaughan or Ajax to reach the center, where most of the orders occur. This also means that many must stay online and unpaid during the down time (2pm to 6pm), because for most of the riders it is not worth going home between lunch time and dinner time – the busiest times of the day. We see again the importance of urban questions, spatial organization for food delivery workers. The City of Toronto is where revenues are the highest and it is where people go to work the most (see Figure 7). On many occasions, returning home late from work or school downtown, I saw groups of dozens of food couriers with their E-bikes waiting for the GO train or the UPX train after 10pm. Recent GWU campaigns have focused on getting riders the right to ride the late GO trains and UPX trains with their e-bikes after an evening of deliveries.[51] Many riders told me that they do this commute every day, which is very tiring and expensive.

[51] https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/this-go-train-line-has-drawn-ire-for-the-recent-influx-of-bike-couriers-we/article_9ad9bcee-d349-11ee-aa75-b7ad59e35b64.html

Figure 7: Annual median revenue (in dollars) for the Greater Toronto Area (2023)



(Datalab 2023)

As for the Paris case, the Toronto platform food delivery market has been taken on by the most precarious groups. Per the same recent reporting by CBC, Indian international students are committing suicide at alarmingly high rates, sending more than 4-5 bodies, per only one funeral service, from Canada to India every month. This speaks directly to necropolitics, as for the recent coverages of deaths of sans-papiers in Paris. The massive influx of international students to for-profit private and PPP colleges has created a large pool of workers for platforms to draw from. As precarity rises amongst international students because of the lowering of the pay, the difficulty to find decent-paying jobs and the prices of rent, platforms are lowering the pay floor and the number of orders for couriers. For Viyan, who came to Toronto 3 years ago as a Kurdish political refugee, delivery was also the first option. He works between 60 and 70 hours per week on DoorDash and Uber Eats:

> You are coming to Canada, you are immigrant, refugee, international student, it doesn't matter if you are working 3 or 4 hours in a day. You stop, you do something else, but someone else will come. Every year it is like this. Everyone who starts and do it, stop. Sometimes people don't stop, but they will work 2 hours in a week. (Interview with Viyan – *July 2022*)

Viyan has been in Canada for three years. Doing Uber Eats was an obvious choice if you didn't know English. For him, the two main issues in this line of work are safety concerns and algorithmic management:

> It is dangerous, you don't have enough safety. It doesn't matter how much precautions you take, you bike through traffic, between vehicles, cars. I think the problem is with the app. The algorithm they created; they control it. People think maybe you are doing your job, you are free, but it is not like that. The app doesn't make you make money. They control you. You are working for example for 5 hours, after 5 hours, the app doesn't give you orders, you waste your time, you waste your money. You can't prove it. You are working like a slave for the algorithm, you can't do anything. You have no control. The algorithm does it. It decides. (Interview with Viyan – *July 2022*)

When I asked Viyan why he was still doing it, despite hating it so much, he told me it was supposed to be his last year, but after losing all his money in crypto he found no choice but to keep going. He also bought his e-bike for 6000$. For Viyan, you don't make more money per hour with the e-bike because of the algorithm; you simply can work much longer days. Many have discussed the role of technology platforms in the increasing rate of exploitation (Gandini, 2019). Recently, the edited volume 'Marx and the Robots' by Butollo and Nuss mentioned:

> On the one hand, then, the capitalist production of goods implies the aspect of exploitation, or rather the increase in the rate of exploitation as the cause of increased profits or productivity. On the other hand, there is the aspect of general-social productivity: the shortening of labour time necessary for production through technological progress, mainly by the improvement of machine systems in industry. (Butollo & Nuss, 2022)

The main difference in this case, is that unpaid waiting time between the algorithmic dispatch of order increases the exploitation of workers who are stuck in a situation where they either do multi-apping (Popan, 2023) or accept lower and lower hourly wage. The E-bike (rented out by the

worker) may provide the opportunity to work longer, it does not however give more orders per hour. With the increased number of migrant workers signing up on the apps, per many spokespersons in the GTA, the platforms' algorithmic dispatch is handing out orders evenly to a greater number of workers, meaning a lower wage per hour. This is couple with many other factors that increase precarity such as hazardous roads, policing, extreme weather events and more.

Health and safety concerns are important keys for food delivery in Canada. During the pandemic, thousands of immigrants in Canada did not access health care and CERB (Canada Emergency Response Benefit), while occupying frontline jobs like food delivery work. Structural disadvantages put in place by the state to take advantage of migrants are nothing new. Farm-workers or care-workers for example most often end up in dangerous, unhealthy, unsanitary or exploitative working conditions (Choudry & Smith, 2016). The conditions of stay for the people interviewed for this thesis are different. During the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, international students and non-resident students were not eligible for the CESB (Canada Emergency Student Benefits).

For Mounir, permanent resident through the francophone branch of Ontario immigration, Uber Eats was the only way he could get his children to school and work as much as possible:

> I am a dentist in Morroco. Here, I worked for 4 days in a bread factory, night shifts. Now I only do delivery with Uber Eats. You have to work a lot. You are online all day, you need to charge your phone, your e-bike. You go home and wait for two maybe four hours, charge, then go back and deliver. It takes a lot of time. (Interview with Mounir – *July 2022*)

Mounir argues that doing food delivery full time is better for him than working night shifts at the factory. He can log out for a couple of hours to drop his children at school. He also does not see a future for him in this industry. It is only temporary. Three of the 'Canadian-born' riders

interviewed for their part in the resistance movement against Foodora and Uber Eats mentioned that over the last 3 years the workforce changed a lot:

> When I started this job, it wasn't migrants. I was mostly students. Overtime more people who were doing this job were immigrants. (Interview with spokesperson for GWU – Nov. 2021)

This started with the targeted hiring of migrant by Foodora, as for the Frichti case:

> We noticed that Foodora was recruiting enclaves of specific ethnic and linguistic communities all at once, in groups. They were doing in-takes of different groups of language speakers and ethnic groups. I would be seeing a lot of Chinese students working right now and that weren't working before for Foodora. I would talk to them and they would say: "Oh yeah I just got signed up couple of weeks ago." Interesting because people we know are trying to get hired and can't. (Interview with Rick ex-Foodora rider – Nov. 2021)

Informal work and non-standard employment are linked to various forms and degrees of labour market segmentation. They are often described but are not synonymous (Huws & Surie, 2023). Specific sectors of the labour market can be taken on by precarious migrants, either voluntarily, through communities or targeted hiring such as the Frichti and Foodora cases. As for a recruitment agency, for example, the targeted hiring of migrant workers allows to put in exploitative condition and anti-union strategies notably because of the new non-standard employment arrangements. It was reported in Paris by the CLAP, as well as in Toronto by GWU, that the platforms directly take a fee from the rider's fares for a 'booking service'. Instead of engaging in direct employer-employee relationship with the riders, the platforms rather act as a both a traditional employer and a rentier. They operated through algorithmic disciplining and surveillance, while also charging a rent for the right to use their infrastructures.

Modern food delivery platforms contribute to the production of urban spaces in a variety of ways. They have managed to be positioned at the crossroads of technological innovation discourses –

put forth by politicians like Macron and Trudeau – and the migration/labour nexus discourses in the context of border security. The most obvious thing to come out of this two-year fieldwork was the importance of global urban spaces for both technology platforms and migrant labour. Paris and Toronto host the largest portions of newcomers relative to the rest of their respective countries. Both cities are also key locations (targets) for global firms like Uber Eats in terms of consumer markets et pool of cheap labour which allows them to lower prices as much as possible and achieve monopoly. Because they play such a big role in giving job to thousands of riders (many in precarious citizenship conditions), they can profit via what citizen-rentier-ship, the rents extracted from precarious migrant labour. A notable challenge faced by immigrant riders in Toronto is their reliance on alternative modes of transportation, such as E-bikes and bikes, due to many requirements of owning a car or scooter. Despite their efforts, profitability remains difficult for most, leading to additional hardships. Adding to this, recent measure taken by the Go train management of deploying security agents to regulate E-bike boarding has exacerbated the difficulties faced by migrant riders who reside in more affordable, distant areas but must travel to urban centers to secure enough delivery orders.

This shows the complex interplay between migration, labour, transportation, and urban geography, necessitating a better understanding of the intersecting factors shaping the experiences of immigrant workers in cities. This process is thriving because in Paris, many pay for the right to work, or experience interdependency with the subletters, scams, bike stealing and health and safety concerns while delivering. In Paris and Toronto Uber Eats it regularly asks for riders to update the work permit document, it knows and profits from its sans-papiers workforce when the demand is too high (pump and dump). In Toronto, it is the costs of living, structural conditions of stay for

international students, structural conditions of stay for permanent residents/work permits and again many health and safety concerns.

CHAPTER VI: RESISTANCE

"Employers are telling us that without the use of irregular workers, many sectors of the economy would not function." – Olivier Dussopt, France's Minister of Labour, November 2022 on immigration reforms

I established in the previous two chapters how labour platforms can boost their revenues by exploiting precarious migrant labourers. Via two separate cases, I noted similarities and differences in national policies, social and political histories, as well as local geographies of work, habiting and labour struggle. Large parts of the platform workforces are in precarious citizenship condition which creates cycles of hyper-precarity in both Toronto and Paris. However, migrant workers in those two major Euro-American cities are also resisting the exploitation that characterizes modern racial platform capitalism. Chapter 3 touched on scalar implications and global ramifications of Uber as a multi-national corporation. In this chapter, I suggest that resistance can be analysed through relational comparison lens. Social movements talk to each other, learn from each other, and, in this case, have a common target. To build a relational comparison of the resistance movements, I build on Hart's 2002 analysis of connections and alliances across social spaces and scales. The relational comparison has two focal points: i) the platforms found in both cases (e.g. Uber Eats) are in some ways co-constituted by local actions; ii) resistance by platform workers who learn and/or contact each other, develops in relation to one another.

Modern platform labour is now characterized by low paid migrant labour, but workers are not always compliant, and their struggles contribute to the production of urban spaces. Those migrant workers' grassroots organizations are also supported by local rider collectives and traditional unions. Using labour geography will help us make sense of this renewal of traditional unions' strategy – from focusing on unionizing citizens/employees to including and supporting migrants/independent contractors.

6.1 Traditional unions and organizing in the food delivery industry

Food delivery platforms are in competition with each other. They battle for a spot in the urban markets of major cities in advanced capitalist countries. Those are highly competitive spaces. The density of population allows for start-ups to launch and grow fast, but the number of competitors is also high. Platforms must not only compete for customers, but also for restaurants and workers. For almost a decade now, many have shown that the revenues generated on most platforms does not lead to profitability (Shapiro, 2023). To achieve positive margins, they must squeeze as much as possible from their clients, restaurants and workers. Many start-ups even resorted to unlawful labour practices to gain a competitive edge over the other players in their markets.[52]

At Uber, the arrival of Dara Khosrowshahi in 2018 marked the beginning of a long road to profitability for the company – which they only achieved for the first time in Q1 of 2024 – and

[52] https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2022/04/19/deliveroo-condamne-a-une-amende-de-375-000-euros-pour-travail-dissimule_6122785_3224.html

was characterized by cuts for drivers' wages and increases in service fees for customers.[53] In Toronto, RideFairTO and the Rideshare Drivers Association of Ontario (RDAO) calculated that drivers earn $6.37 per hour when the unpaid driving time and the car and phone expenses are accounted for. The boiling point was reach with the global Valentine's Day strike by drivers and riders across the United-States, United-Kingdom, and Canada, protesting their working conditions. This recent example is a reminder that platform workers are connected and can organize as a global movement (Woodcock, 2021b). The present chapter turns to the other side of the dialectical tension found in racial platform capitalism(s): resistance. Many recurring themes need to be addressed to build a relational comparison of platform resistance. In this section, I will focus on migrant workers' push back to exploitation, traditional union involvement, exchanging tactics and labour internationalism.

Resistance by platform workers takes many different forms around the world. According to the latest statistical analysis conducted by Umney et al. (2024), 62% of gig workers' protests in Europe were related to pay issues; followed by 30% for employment status (i.e. misclassification). Protesting deactivation represented 6.7% of the total collective actions. In North America, the numbers are similar with 59.6% of the protests related to pay, and 37% regarding employment status (misclassification) (Umney et al., 2024). Those types of protests include collective withdrawals of labour, public demonstrations, legal actions, and institutionalisation (for example state partnered creation of works councils). These are led by either traditional unions, grassroots organizations, workers' collectives, informal groups of workers and/or law firms.

[53] https://www.forbes.com/sites/lensherman/2023/12/15/ubers-ceo-hides-driver-pay-cuts-to-boost-profits/?sh=4a6ba4a03ba4

In France, groups of undocumented workers represented by grassroots collectives or traditional unions have been part of the mainstream gig work protests. For many years, they have been sounding the alarm on the precarious working conditions they face. In Canada, although the fight against racial platform capitalism is not directly link to conditions of migration, it cannot be disconnected from the conditions of stay for a large part of the workforce - immigrant students and temporary work permit holders. For this chapter, three cases of social unrest will be analyzed: i) France's Frichti-Stuart strikes, ii) Canada's Foodora union drive, and iii) resistance faced by Uber Eats in both Toronto and Paris.

By combining the cases of France and Canada, I will show similarities and differences in the fight against platform capitalism, notably through a comparison of the Frichti-Stuart case and the Foodora case. Common factors found in both cases will shed the light on the potential connections among different rider social movements. It will also explore how various branches of the state(s) played a role throughout the mobilization. Lastly, traditional unions and grassroots organizations were key in many moments of the social mobilization in both France and Canada. Analysis found in the first half of the chapter will lead to a second important conceptualization and contribution put forth in this thesis: resistance to racial platform capitalism is relational. Through their different genesis, along with three common development factors: a) strategies, b) limitations and c) spaces of resistance (digital and physical), these different social movements across the Atlantic had similar and interconnected trajectories.

Firstly, this chapter will review the strikes by Frichti's sans-papiers couriers in Paris. Their fight for papers following mass deactivation will connect Chapter 4 and the components of CRS to

resistance. Through interviews with sans-papiers riders that protested the mass deactivations, I will highlight how the platform tried to take advantage of their precarious citizenship situation but faced backlash and resistance. I discuss spontaneous sans-papiers movements, strategies and limits, the role of undocumentation, and future perspectives. The movement at Frichti sparked a second movement at Stuart. More interviews with key actors from traditional unions and grassroots organizations will highlight their role in the sans-papiers' movement and the platform workers' movement in general.

Secondly, the union drive by Foodora couriers in Toronto will show the importance of traditional unions - either a socialist union on the worker's side or a corporate union on the platforms side. This is a common theme in platform resistance literature. It was also seen in the Paris case, notably following the creation of the ARPE (*Autorité de régulation des plateformes d'emploi*) where platforms and unions were invited to a social dialogue. The first gig workers' election in France led to many unions competing against each other to represent gig workers. This section will also discuss the importance of physical and digital spaces for the union drive in Canada, as well as some of the strategies and limits faced by the movement. As for France, there is a notable importance of the sociospatial histories of labour unrest within contemporary forms organizing, even in a new digital workplaces like platform labour. Finally, the role of immigrants in pushing back against exploitation was key for the movement.

Thirdly, the on-going cases of resistance against Uber Eats in both cities will feature some hurdles faced by workers who are trying to organize against racial platform capitalism. Dematerialized and multisituated organizations such as Uber Eats are harded to target in comparison to smaller

local/national firms like Frichti or Foodora. The multiple challenges ahead, both in Paris and Toronto, will be discussed, as well as the relational aspects of this fight. The notorious 'move fast break things' mentalities, the multiple cases of trial and errors, and the neoliberal labour markets are met by resistance. Local workers and unions are contesting these new forms of spatial organizations put forth by these companies. For Tucker: "understanding the political economy of platform-mediated work also brings a healthy dose of realism to top-down proposals for regulatory and radical reforms that ignore unequal power relations or the role of worker self-organization" (Tucker 2020: 198).

Resistance by platform workers is an important 'place-making' sociospatial practice that reshapes both Toronto and Paris. This resistance sometimes goes against state ideologies. In France, it follows Macron's political project which included a meticulous deregulation of the labour market and a weakening of traditional unions. Macron's backdoor deal with Uber, made public by The Guardian in the recent Uber Files scandal, was in part put in place to deal with the notorious *banlieues* problem. Instead of dealing drugs, he said, Uber Eats gave them work, gave them the chance to 'be their own bosses'. The overall rise of neoliberal labour markets in Atlantic Euro-America has created favorable conditions for Uber Eats to profit from precarious workers, especially migrants (undocumented or not) and poorer groups in the outskirts of the Grand Paris.

At the start of the pandemic, many food delivery platforms got rid of their 'caps' (their total number of riders). This was seen in France and in Canada. With this move, platforms made sure they would have sufficient workers to deliver the tens of thousands of orders that started to flow in. However, this also meant that the number of orders per hour and the pay floor (the lowest fare a rider can get

for a delivery) would drop significantly. Many people needed jobs, especially those without citizenship (for example CERB/CESB was not available to those waiting for papers in Canada). This not only created a turnaround in the workforce toward immigrants, that have no other choice, but it also lowered the social mobilization against many of them. It was a win-win situation for major labour platforms across the Atlantic:

> In all France I observed the arrival of Dark Kitchens. There was also the explosion of rented accounts to colleagues. They are not competitors; I don't blame them. All they want is work. They are getting exploited. The riders were getting exploited, now they are exploited even more because of subletting. There is a strong correlation between the lowering of the pay and the rise of subletting. If we could have the numbers, but the platforms are keeping it a secret. The high turnover rate, the new colleagues every time, it is hard to unionize them. (Interview with Jeremy CGT-Syndicat des Livreurs – *Jan. 2022*)

Dark Kitchens and 'Dark Kitchen platforms' were on the rise in Paris. In Toronto, fast food chains like Wendy's started putting food trucks for delivery only in various parking lots downtown. Coincidently, undocumented workers in France and international students in Canada found work in platform food delivery. This industry took in thousands of precarious migrant workers while at the same time lowering the pay floor significantly. The unpaid waiting time was also raised as more and more couriers could sign in. In Paris, the degradation of working conditions was seen mostly at Delivero and Uber Eats:

> Around the middle of 2020, we saw a drastic degradation of working conditions and pay rates. At Deliveroo, we lost the €4,50 minimum pay for orders. We also saw a new algorithm in 2019 that cancelled the 'shifts' which were guaranteeing orders to riders. At Uber Eats, it was not as significant, but still very important. Conditions are so low people are just leaving. It brought a level of precarity so high that the people that were angry and carrying the fight left. They went to do other things and the more precarious among the precarious took over. A lot of sans-papiers who have no other choice arrived. However, that does not mean there is no resistance. From what I have seen there are sans-papiers mobilized against the degradation of working conditions. (Interview with spokesperson for CGT-National, - *Mar. 2022*)

Similarly in Canada, the degradation of working conditions for food couriers in Toronto led to Canadian students and artists flowing out of the industry, and international students and temporary work permit holders flowing in. At Uber Eats, in 2020, the end of boost offers was the first sign. Before 2020, riders could get 1.5x-2.5x pay rates on orders downtown when the demand was high. This lowered the overall pay floor on orders especially during surge. For smaller platforms with less leverage and smaller pool of workers, they had to find other ways, notably keeping the rates fixed over the years.

While the prices for housing, transportation, and food were rising, pay rates at Foodora, Door Dash, Skip The Dishes and Uber Eats stayed roughly the same, if not worst. This degradation of working conditions could have been a contributing factor to the changing of the workforce. However, despite poor working conditions, riders are not docile bodies, they also resist. The rest of the chapter will dive into each case of resistance.

6.1.1 Fight for papers at Frichti and Stuart in Paris

As lockdowns ended, and people in Paris started going out again, many platforms cracked down on sans-papiers workers in their ranks. The case of Frichti shows how some of these workers refused this pump and dump strategy, what were the factors limiting their movements and what is the future of sans-papiers riders' unions and collectives. Following mass deactivation by the platform Frichti, sans-papiers riders claimed:

> "If we, Paris' sans-papier colony decide to withdraw our labour from food delivery, app-companies won't be able to keep providing meals, because most people don't want to bike around the city for hours and deliver." [54]

After the sudden deactivation of 200 accounts, the sans-papiers riders went to the CLAP (*Collectif des Livreurs Autonomes de Paris*) for help. Their goal (the sans-papiers strikers) was to have their labour recognized by the state. One of the spokespersons for the CLAP recounts the first days of the sans-papiers strike at Frichti:

> We defended them at first. It was after the first lockdown. They worked during the lockdown, then out of the blue, they got fired because an article at Libération said: "Out of the 600 riders, 300 are sans-papiers". At that time, we organized with them: "You got exposed to COVID, you worked, now you're fired." We had court actions with the sans-papiers workers. We learned that many sans-papiers got an independent-contractor license number, but that is supposed to be done with a working visa. How did they get it? The platform managed to go around the legislation and obtained them the micro-entrepreneur status. (Interview with spokesperson for the CLAP – *Mar. 2022*)

The way labour is distributed to workers at Frichti had two mechanisms that directly contradicted the independent-contractor status: 1) control (of pay and scheduling), and 2) discipline and surveillance (in-app and in-person). Those two features are key indicators of misclassification of workers as independent contractors instead of employees. Frichti, unlike Uber Eats, as a shift system:

> Frichti, I don't like it much, I have lots of time off. Frichti gives you 5 hours in the morning, then time to recover. Sometimes 4 more hours at night. In between, I do groceries for 2 hours during break. (Interview with Konan – Jan. 2022)

You are given several hours where you need to work, just like an employee. Piece rate work at Frichti is very demanding, the loads are heavy, and the riders need to pay the extra to either buy

[54] Le Média - Aug. 12, 2020, « *Les Travailleurs Jetables de Frichti* » (Online).

or rent an electric bike. The calculation of the pay is also complex and hidden from workers. During this period, the rider must complete as many batches of orders as possible:

> Frichti doesn't pay-per-order, but in bulk. One shift is 5 hours of work between 6:00am-8:00am to 1:00pm. Once you are done with your hours, they count the number of batches of 12-pack orders you did. It is the number of those bags you delivered and the distance you covered. That is your pay. At 4:00pm you see your pay. It's always like this, that's also why you need the electric bike. (Interview with Adil – Jan. 2022)

As I explained in the previous chapters, most sans-papiers workers were directly hired by the platform with their passports. This strategy is nothing new in France. Barron, Bory, Jonin & Tourette (2011) review the history of sans-papiers labour and strikes in France. In their historical account, they encountered many cases where companies hired undocumented workers to put exploitative working conditions in place. They go over the case of Modeluxe, an industrial laundry factory on the outskirt of Paris. In 2006, the factory was brought into the national spotlights by journalists that revealed that around 50 of Modeluxe's workers were undocumented; a third of the workforce had been hired with passports, tax accounts or housing leases. The company decided to fire all its undocumented workers following this 'bad press' moment. With the help of the CGT, the fired sans-papiers went on strike for multiple days. The factory was occupied and blocked. This led to the regularization of many of them as the company had no choice but to vouch for them and their papers.

The 2006 Modeluxe case, for example, is similar in many ways to the 2020 strikes at Frichti. As for Modeluxe, the outrage and anger of the riders deactivated following a bad press moment sparked a social movement. This shows the trajectories of sans-papiers strikes in France. These spontaneous movements are not new, but rather part of a long history of migrants' rights in France. Frichti executives claimed they did not know the status of the workers, but as we have seen in the

previous chapter, the riders all said they were hired directly by the platform with their passports. Where Frichti chose to locate its hubs (1er, 3e, 15e & 16e arrondissements) was also where the richest live. The riders had to protest and block the supply chain of the hubs in the arrondissements known as the 'Beaux Quartiers'.[55] One spokesperson, in charge organizing of food delivery riders in France, recalls when the sans-papiers riders at Frichti came to the CGT:

> At Frichti, it was a time when the startup was smaller. Half of the workers blocked 1 out of the 4 hubs. It was also a startup that was only in Paris. The balance of power was immediate and visible. It gave weight to the action of the workers. Moreover, it was a platform that was mostly used by bosses and white collars who were ordering lunches at noon. At these elements gave the Frichti strikers great visibility and a strong economic power. They blocked the Frichti hubs in the 1st and then in the 16th, nothing was getting out of there. Half of the business was gone, blocked, in downtown Paris. Even if it was spontaneous, they built that. It was organized by riders. (Interview with spokesperson for CGT-National, - *Mar. 2022*)

The Frichti case shows that the platform targeted sans-papiers during hire, put exploitative work conditions, then fired the sans-papiers when medias pressure started to grow. The CLAP argued that Frichti was not only able to go around the state's regulation regarding the micro-entrepreneur status to give numbers to sans-papiers, but that they also engaged in traditional employment relation by controlling pay and schedules. Therefore, the strategy used by the CLAP was to challenge this unlawful use of the independent contractor status to the Prudhommes (France's labour court). This meant that the judicial process would take a long time but could potentially set a precedent for the upcoming fight against other food delivery platforms. This is when the 200 sans-papiers strikers split:

> We started the movement. Then came the CLAP. However, we weren't getting along on many things, and they ended up in conflict with us. We did not have the same objectives. Our first objective was to get the papers. To be regularized. Some colleagues realized they had other things in mind, like going to the Prudhommes. That was not our objective, our objective was the papers.
>
> *Then you got the papers?*

[55] https://actu.fr/ile-de-france/paris_75056/a-paris-la-colere-des-livreurs-sans-papiers-de-frichti_34142797.html

> Yes, 100 of us. It is the same movement. It is the movement that started it all in France. We did it ourselves. After, we went to help or brothers at Stuart who also go the papers. (Interview with Bakar – Jan. 2022)

The group was split in three. The 100 of the 200 strikers who went to the CGT got temporary work visas.[56] The second half of the group was split in two, only 66 riders went to the Prudhommes with the CLAP.[57] The rest left. The '*Conseil des Prudhommes*' is a labour court where employment disputes are resolved by a judge. The employees can defend their rights when a contract is broken or following an abusive firing. The decision by the CLAP to bring the sans-papiers to the Prudhommes was in part to hold the start-up accountable for its actions. By going in with as much proof as possible that the platform was acting as an employer through geolocalisation, surveillance, top-down pay structures and shifts scheduling, the collective aimed to create a precedent for the upcoming fight against the other bigger labour platforms.

On the other side, the case of the CGT sans-papiers strikers was quickly solved with the platform negotiating temporary work visas, directly with the government and the union. This does not guarantee residency or citizenship. It means that every year, those 100 riders can apply to renew their work permit. As one community worker mentioned:

> I have riders who got their temporary work permit with Frichti, but they need to be renewed every year. They were around 100 to get it. It was the first time that independent contractor got a CERFA.[58] It was the bosses at the start-up that negotiated with the State. Not all sans-papiers at Frichti got it, but to have 100 is very rare, especially in the unions-riders words it is exceptional. There was conflict between the unions for how we should proceed. Some

[56] https://www.bfmtv.com/economie/100-livreurs-sans-papiers-de-frichti-en-voie-d-etre-regularises_AD-202007220135.html

[57] https://www.lemonde.fr/economie/article/2021/05/07/la-bataille-des-livreurs-sans-papiers-de-frichti-se-poursuit-aux-prud-hommes_6079500_3234.html

[58] The CERFA is short for an official form where documents, like temporary work permits, are certified by the "*Centre d'enregistrement et de révision des formulaires administratifs".* Many riders showing up at the MDC needed help to fill the many forms asked by CERFA.

> organizations were happy with the 100 saying: « We'll find solutions later ». Others we're saying: « No. We need all of them to get papers ». (Interview with employee at MDC– *Feb. 2022*)

The MDC (Maison des coursiers), is a space put in place by the City of Paris for delivery workers to stop by, charge their phone, have a coffee and rest between orders. This space quickly turned into a space for riders to get help with immigration papers from the community workers on site. This physical space was also used subsequently by various unions to set up information clinics for sans-papiers to get help regarding their situations. Near the end of 2022, the City of Paris terminated its funding of the MDC citing budget cuts.

Going back to the Frichti case, by agreeing to 'deal' visas with the platform, the CGT made sure that they respected the objectives of the strikers, as shown in the interview with Bakar. Per French labour law scholar Gomes, this is where two main resistance strategies clash, between a *migrant rights* strategy versus a *labour rights* strategy (Gomes, 2022). The organizing of sans-papiers strikes is part of the CGT's history and is one reason that can explain why the Frichti settlement was swift. This distance between the CGT and the CLAP emerged before the Frichti conflict, per a CLAP spokesperson:

> We had help and funds from the CGT-SAP (*Service à la Personne*) for protest gear and train tickets to Bordeaux or Nantes, but that's it. Now, we are a little in conflict with unions. Back then, apart from CGT-SAP, the CGT Federation didn't care about us. We were not enough workers for them to be interested in us. After all, they are in a membership signing and user/fees logic. Now, with the CLAP in the medias, they want us. However, because they can't, they are trying to erase us, as if we are in competition. (Interview with spokesperson for the CLAP – *Mar. 2022*)

The duality of fighting for *workers' rights* (i.e. CLAP) versus for *migrants' rights* (i.e. CGT) shows why it is key to have a coordinated strategy that includes both. The Platform Work Directive that

was recently adopted by the European Council aims to reclassify riders (from independent contractors to employees). However, as I have explored in Chapter 4, a large part of the riders in Paris are renting accounts. If France is forced to reclassify its food riders into employees, thousands of sans-papiers could lose access to their subletted accounts. The riders that I interviewed all know that platform work is exploitative. They have or had no other choice. This is why we need unions and grassroots groups to argue together for both labour and migration rights.

Historically, traditional unions have had a 'clientelism' tendency. Memberships and union fees are their bread and butter. It was therefore not surprising to hear that, at first, the 'misclassified' platform delivery couriers were not considered as an interesting pool of workers to potentially unionize. This is why the move from the few traditional unions, like the CGT, towards sans-papiers riders speaks to their history of organizing undocumented workers. More importantly, the union membership system in France greatly differs from the one in Canada. Unionization is per person, not per sector. One single store can have five different unions representing the workers. Two workers on the same assembly line can be unionized with two different unions. The politics of representation are therefore complex. In the case of food delivery, representation of couriers by traditional unions is difficult as they are still considered independent contractors and a large portion is undocumented. However, as one spokesperson for the CLAP explained, unions are still present and part of a roundtable with the state and the platforms:

> The CFDT, for example, relay everything the government is saying. Every laws that the state puts in place for the platforms, they agree with. They have no members, but they can still sit at the table, participate in the 'social dialogue' which is a joke. They have no problem with the fact that during these dialogues, the platforms can create these yellow unions. (Interview with spokesperson for the CLAP – *Mar. 2022*)

The CFDT (*Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail*) came in third in the recent riders' elections. As state above, its role is the relay government positions. This is a similar situation to the winner of the riders' elections, the FNAE (*Fédération Nationale des Auto-Entrepreneurs et microentrepreneurs*), who was unbeknownst to most workers and groups like the CLAP. The sans-papiers strikes at Frichti follow the socio-historical trajectories of sans-papiers strikes in France. It highlights the double role played by the French state in putting sans-papiers in undocumented status and maintaining riders in misclassified and precarious labour status.

Despite their precarious status, Frichti sans-papiers riders took the streets. The strike was possible because of a small, closed, core of strikers. As one of the Frichti strike says:

> When you wanted to see a friend, you would go to your hub. We still feel close. Us, Frichti riders, we were banned from the hubs because of per-say criminal activities. Now, we go sit, relax, charge the phones, the batteries for the bikes. We can communicate with the others. We hope it'll change and that they will hire us again as employees. To be an independent-contractor is really tiring. (Interview with Adil – Jan. 2022)

For many riders, the physical space that was the hub (where you pick up orders) facilitated the organizing. As I will show in the Foodora case, physical space was one of the keys for the union drive. The second key space for organizing the movement was digital. Many mentioned the importance of WhatsApp group chats to organize the strikes and the negotiations. This was also an important aspect of the union drive at Foodora.

In McNevin's article, one sans-papiers mentions: "We came to France, because we had been told that France was the homeland of the Rights of Man". They insist accordingly that "the principles of humanity often proclaimed by the government be implemented" (Manifesto of the Sans-Papiers,

cited in McNevin 2006: 144). A similar duality was felt by Frichti sans-papiers riders. They knew something was wrong in the actions taken by the platform:

> We said: "No, France is a country of law". We knew that if we could find people to direct us, because of the laws in France, we would get the papers. It is not normal what they are doing. We are not going to stay with our arms crossed. That's how it all started. (Interview with Siaka – Jan. 2022)

The resistance to racial platform capitalism, by sans-papiers workers, is facing numerous other hurdles. One of the main limitations to building a social movement from the ground up and by undocumented workers is deportation. According to three Frichti riders, the fear of deportation was the greatest hurdle to their mobilization:

> Many did leave because of the protests. Some had their accounts blocked and then went on to find other accounts to work. They stopped and left. They didn't have confidence in the movement. (Interview with Konan – Jan. 2022)

> Some did not want to protest, you know? The people are scared that if we protest, because we are sans-papiers, they will send us back home. (Interview with Bakar - Jan. 2022)

> They were some people that were scared, they said: "No, we don't have the papers, they will deport us." I said they won't do that. We did not do anything wrong. We only worked. (Interview with Siaka – Jan. 2022)

This exemplifies the dual role played by the French state in keeping workers undocumented with tighter migration laws, while also pushing the independent contractor status nationally and at the European level. Secondly, the subletting market is also a hurdle to mobilization. As a large portion of riders in Paris are still delivering via subletting, it is not in the interest of the subletters to have a social movement that could expose them, which would not only put their exploitation in the spotlights, but would also make them lose clients:

> The owners of the accounts put pressure on us. When you start a movement, he takes his account back directly. It is hard. (Interview with Bakar - Jan. 2022)

> We see little motivation. Many riders work in Paris subletting accounts, so it is hard to organize them. They don't want to lose this opportunity. We don't want to force them to

> join the movement, because it is what gives them something to eat. We hope it'll change one day. (Interview with Adil – Jan. 2022)

The strikes at Frichti ignited a second sans-papiers couriers' social movement. In the Fall of 2021, the state-owned platform Stuart was under the scrutiny following a new partnership with the grocery stores chain giant Monoprix. Along with the help of the CGT - which already had many workers unionized within Monoprix - the laid-off sans-papiers couriers mobilized.

This case differs from the Frichti case. The riders were part of a long chain of sub-contracting: Monoprix (which is held by the French corporation Casino) was hiring a subcontracting company called Pickup Logistics, which is itself owned by LaPoste. Pickup was then hiring Stuart to home deliver the Monoprix groceries. This contracting chain allowed for Stuart to put in exploitative conditions for sans-papiers couriers. This culminated in the case of one rider who got his cargo bike stolen in front of the store, only then to have the company asking for a 1'800€ payback for the stolen bike. This led to 200 sans-papiers riders to strike:

> The Stuart conflict was all about the subcontracting of the subcontracting of the subcontracting. They got in contact with CGT elected representatives that we have at Monoprix. In this case, it allowed for a direct top-down organizing which paid off. In the Frichti conflict, it was very rare case that I personally never seen in France in the last years: a spontaneous conflict which led to a massive regularization. There was nothing for them originally. (Interview with spokesperson for CGT-National, - March 2022)

The two cases of sans-papiers courier strikes differ in many ways. Frichti was an organic, bottom-up type, which solely originated from the sans-papiers, and led to papers. Even though the CGT and the CLAP were involved at multiple point in time, the movement was an act of citizenship (Ataç et al., 2016). Stuart was top-down type, which was made possible by various branches of the CGT that already existed at Monoprix. However, this movement also led many to get temporary

papers. Looking forward, the organizing of the sans-papiers riders for Uber Eats and Deliveroo is a completely different task:

> The proportion of the sans-papiers is irregular. Frichti, we know it was 1 out of 2. Stuart, we know it was 9 out of 10. Uber Eats and Deliveroo, we have no idea, and it is different everywhere. If we manage to block production completely in a coordinated manner, maybe. The Stuart case was about subcontracting, which did not threaten the 'independent contractor' model of labour platforms. Frichti, that was not the case, it directly threatening that model. (Interview with spokesperson for CGT-National, - March 2022)

The unknown proportion and repartition of sans-papiers workers in labour platforms in Paris is one of the biggest hurdles to their resistance, along with subletting and subcontracting. Resistance comes at a price. By organizing with unions such as the CGT or groups such as the CLAP, sans-papiers riders in Paris risk exposing themselves to immigration enforcement or police. The Frichti and Stuart cases have shown that when they face arbitrary deactivation, undocumented workers can organize and resist. However, for Deliveroo and Uber Eats riders delivering through rented accounts in Paris, starting a social movement and risking losing one of the only work opportunities is risky. This will be explored further in section 6.2.

The role of traditional unions in sans-papiers struggles and other platform-specific labour issues is still developing. This speaks to the distance between sans-papiers and institutions of the French Left (Amable & Palombarini, 2021). Auto-organization of anti-racist struggles have a certain autonomy from traditional French Left unions. One lesson from the space/policy relationship argued by Dikeç is: "[…] both governance and resistance are spatial, place-making practices. In this sense, there is an ongoing contestation for space: what the official policy discourse constitutes as 'badlands' also become sites and organizing principles of political mobilization with democratic ideals "(Dikeç, 2007: 7). The QPVs for example are one of the recent examples of state urban

policy that aims to ‘restore’ poorer neighbourhoods while also being used as scapegoats by the Right (many called these areas zones of non-France or mentioned that money spent there was useless). The QPVs also have very low participation rates in elections. The Left has been steadily losing votes in these neighbourhoods. The distance between the traditional French Left like the and the anti-racist struggles shows how important their fight is, but also isolated. Traditional unions like the CGT will favor class over race, which is part of their history and connection to the *Parti Communiste Français* (PCF):

> The union activity that we do is to say: “We are a class union for the masses. We unionize on no categorical bases. We unionize every worker, every employee.” There are irreducible differences such as a White man will always be White and a Black man will always be Black. How we see things, how we grew up is different. What connects us is our class interest. (Interview with spokesperson for CGT-National, - March 2022)

Barron, Bory, Jounin & Tourette (2011) also noted a distance between traditional white unions and black sans-papiers throughout 1980s-2000s. The distance between anti-racist struggles and class struggles in France is notable in platform labour as well. The fight for papers at Frichti illustrates this. When sans-papiers workers went to the CLAP for help, they couldn’t direct the struggle towards what they wanted, which was their job back, security and better pay. Some stayed and went to the Prud’hommes, which directly challenges the labour platforms’ model. Some went to the CGT and got the papers, along with their own union within the CGT structures. It is common to hear things such as: “the sans-papiers don’t care about working conditions, all they want is the papers”.

Resistance practices of sans-papiers riders, in this case, wasn’t place-making in the banlieues, but rather highly publicized and visible strikes in downtown Paris:

> When it all started, we would block the main hub. Many called the police so we would clear, but there was no violence. The police would come and ask us: "What is going on?" We would say that we used to work for them during COVID, after COVID, but they got rid of us so here we are protesting. The police understood, but they would tell us that if we protest, we need to make sure there was not too much noise because of the neighbors. The hub in the 16th we had many, but the police was okay with it. (Interview with Adil – Jan. 2022)

Riders blocked the hub in the 16th arrondissement for multiple days. The 16th 'arrondissement' in Paris is located on the rich 'West' side of the city, near the Eiffel Tower, the Arc of Triumph and the Louis Vuitton Foundation. The spatial organization of the platform industry in Paris, the centrality and proximity of platforms' hubs, and the concentration of upper classes customers versus 'banlieues' workers are all part of tensions for the right to the city. Migrant workers taking over those spaces and contributing to the production of those spaces as well. There is a certain way of producing centrality in resistance (i.e. political bourgeois neighborhoods evident in the case of Frichti's hubs in the 1st, 15th, 17th and blocked by sans-papiers protesters). Those spaces are historically charged, between les Beaux Quartiers and the proletarian spaces:

> If Paris is any example, the proletariat has not yet created a space. The merchant bourgeoisie, the intellectuals, and politicians modeled the city. The industrialists demolished it. The working class never had any space other than that of its expropriation, its deportation: segregation. (Lefebvre, 2003: 128)

As we have seen in the Frichti and Stuart case, sans-papiers do mobilize for better pay, rights before deactivation and, also, for regularization through labour. Going back to what Erio told me during one of my first interview in Paris regarding Deliveroo is key: "How can a sans-papiers have the time to consider how Deliveroo is exploiting him when he struggles to get enough money to eat?" For now, he needs to deliver this food he can't eat to even avoid being hungry.

Figure 8: Protest by sans-papiers couriers following deactivations at Frichti

(Mediapart 2021)

6.1.2 Union drive at Foodora in Toronto

The Canadian context differs in terms of organization of unions, food delivery industries and migrants in the workforce. For the Toronto case, the first social movement analyzed did not emerge specifically from an anti-racist immigrant struggles for citizenship or for a fight for papers. However, that does not mean that immigrant riders were not implicated in the union drive or the following fights against racial platform capitalism. The Foodora union drive was, as for the Frichti case, an organic and grassroots movement that started with downtown riders organizing. It expanded to the rest of the GTA, including more precarious migrant and racialized workers. The role of traditional unions, as for France's cases, was also key in the union drive at Foodora. After the Foodora drive, Toronto's food delivery workforce changed to welcome more immigrants than

ever, notably hyper-precarious international students – as presented in Chapter 5. Per Choudry and Smith, traditional unions must adapt their strategies to take that into account:

> A fundamental question is not whether traditional union structures and practices can carry this fight forward […] but rather how the labour movement will rebuild to adapt to the new understandings of the ways capitalism reshapes work and migration, and what it might learn from community-based im/migrant labour struggles. (Choudry & Smith, 2016)

When I started my PhD journey in Toronto in the Fall of 2019, Foodora was one of the most recognizable food delivery companies in Canada with the pink bags and pink suits of their riders riding the streets. This section will investigate how Foodora was structured in Toronto before leaving the country, the strategies during the union drive, the importance of digital and physical spaces, limitations, and the future perspectives.

As many riders mentioned, the Foodora offices were an important physical space for riders to group and connect. There was a definite sense of solidarity amongst Foodora riders, even before the union drive:

> When I was working Foodora, the couriers would talk to each other all the time. That original group created that feeling. Everyone else picked it up. It was weird the difference between wearing a pink backpack and wearing a black backpack. It was huge. I would talk with another Foodora courier, but I would never talk to another Uber Eats courier. It wasn't because of anything to do with loyalty to the company, it was just the culture of those apps. (Interview with ex-Foodora rider 1 – Nov. 2021)

At the time, the connection is strong among the riders. As mentioned by Rick, there is this 'pink' solidarity that is palpable. The offices played an important role, but also many group chats. These digital spaces were used by riders to discuss the how busy the days were, how many orders they got and how good the pay was. As a food delivery company, Foodora was operating the same way as Frichti, by offering 'shifts' to their riders in a hierarchical manner, and considering performance and acceptance rates:

> We had a few high performant couriers who always had the most priority access, who would get huge blocks of shifts every week when the shifts dropped. Then for lower priority couriers who was struggling, those high performing couriers would trade them the shifts so that they could access them too. (Interview with ex-Foodora rider 1 – Nov. 2021)

Riders at Foodora also used resilience strategies like shift trading. These were ways to mitigate some of the control by the platform. It quickly became obvious they would need and/or want more than just resilience. For Katz (2004), *resilience* consists of small acts that help individuals and groups to cope with everyday realities, but without challenging the existing social relations and structures under which they are working and/being exploited. The strategy then moved to *reworking*, when riders started reflecting on their materially and tried to improve their conditions of existence. This was still done within hegemonic social relations, as for the Frichti riders, people were asking for better working conditions. While *resistance* refers to direct challenges to capitalist social relations, it would include parts of the fight against racial platform capitalism that aim at taking down platforms or starting cooperatives for example (Katz, 2004).

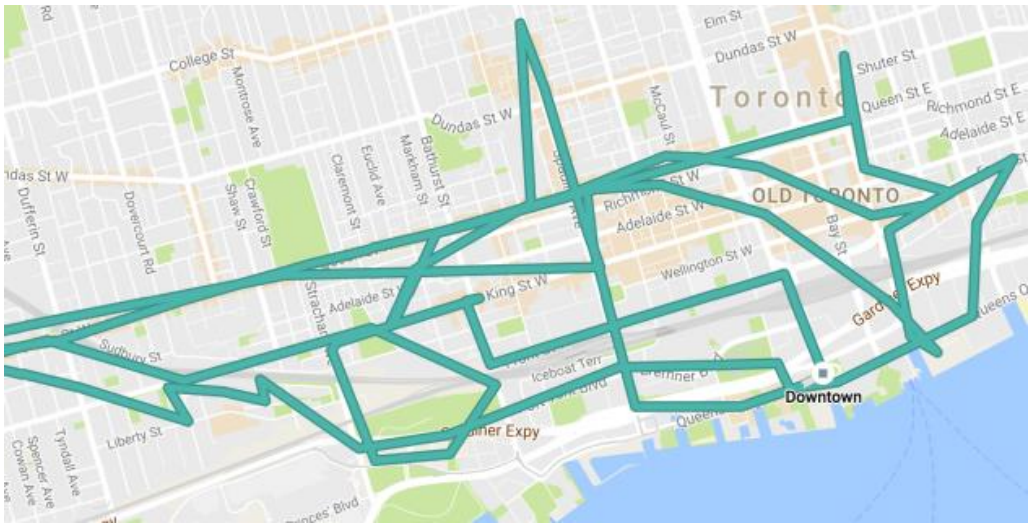
I will show in the following section how reworking and resistance strategies at Foodora were interconnected with other movements around the globe, engaging in a relational comparison of resistance to platform capitalism. The particularities of Frichti and Foodora, in the ways in which the workforce was treated in those early 'startup' years, are key to understand how and why workers decided to challenge the platforms' model and engage in reworking strategies:

> Foodora had a metric called Utilization Rate (UTR). What it meant was your average orders per hour. They had a target of 2.5 UTR as good. 2.5 UTR is brisk. If you are in the middle of the downtown core and the very shortest distances between condo buildings and restaurants you can easily do 3-4 UTR on a normal bike at a normal pace. But if you are in the East end of Toronto or happen to get deliveries that are long you must keep a very steady pace to get 2.5 UTR. (Interview with ex-Foodora rider 1 – Nov. 2021)

Foodora's UTR was precursory to a lot of the productive mechanisms used by platforms today. Acceptance rates, customers' ratings, time of delivering, and so on. Averaging the number of orders per hour was the simplest way to show riders the expected productivity. Today, it is impossible for riders to know how orders are given out, especially at Uber Eats.

Back in 2017 (see Figure 6), a rider for Foodora could get away with riding a regular bike, only in downtown Toronto during peak hours (lunch and dinner). As the food delivery industry evolved over the years, and the algorithm at Uber Eats got multiple updates, it is now virtually impossible to deliver on a regular bike because of the distances you must cover and the hours you must stay logged in to make some money. In a recent interview, Uber's CEO slipped and admitted that the platform does engage in 'algorithmic wage discrimination'. This means that behavioral data is collected from workers by the platform, only to then offer each riders the lowest fare they are likely to accept. This creates a cycle of poverty for the most precarious workers, who have no choice but to always accept the lowest fare.

Figure 6: Geodata from a rider for Foodora/Uber Eats (2017)



(*Open messenger blog*, Online)

The social movement at Foodora was launched following a series of moves that created anger in their ranks: access to shifts, priority ranking - how unpredictable it could be, tipping and pay rates - which never increased over the years. Those were 'control' issues at Foodora which, at the time, led many to question their status as independent contractor. The union drive in Toronto occurred at the same time as other riders with Foodora were launching their own union drives (Australia, Spain, Sweden, Norway, Germany, etc.) (Newlands, 2022a, 2022b). Food couriers, fighting the same platform at the same time in different cities around the world were talking. In their fight against Foodora (and its owner DeliveryHero), they were exchanging tactics:

> We were in touch with other delivery organizations owned by DeliveryHero, which was the parent company that owns Foodora. The Norwegian Foodora had organized, and we were talking to them. Spain had a drive going as well so we were talking to them. There were some solidarity groups in Germany. DeliveryHero's headquarters were in Germany. We were talking to groups in Germany, CUPW helped us make connections to folks in Germany. (Interview with ex-Foodora rider 1 – Nov. 2021)

Back then, DeliveryHero had hands in multiple countries, through multiple companies. In Spain and Italy, they were mostly known for Glovo. In Sweden and Norway, it was through Foodora, and in Asia and Germany they were known with FoodPanda. This multinational corporation was changing people's habits around the world with a new way to order food. Capitalist urbanization, as a process, is built on multiple forces in relation with one another, but so is its resistance. Multiple elements to the socio-spatial practices of local resistance movements were not only similar but connected at a global scale.

The distribution of labour to workers had two common mechanisms to the Frichti case that directly contradicted the independent-contractor status: i) control of pay and scheduling and ii) in-app and in-person disciplining and surveillance. Control and discipline are two mechanisms that connect

platform work to traditional employment. The only difference is where the employer-employee relationship occurs, which is mostly within the app. As for Frichti, the pay structure at Foodora in Toronto was fixed. The pay rate per order, plus a 1$ per km bonus, was controlled by Foodora. Pay-rolling, as for a traditional company, was given out via paychecks every two weeks. Riders in Toronto knew that other countries managed to bargain a pay floor for their Foodora workforces.

Contrarily to Foodora, riders with Uber Eats see their live earnings in their profile. After every order, a rider can withdraw earnings and send it to their bank account. This is a key point that was argued by the union during the drive. For the fight against misclassification going forward, the status that was won during the union drive at Foodora (the 'dependant contractor' clause) will have to be differently argued by Uber Eats riders, as the labour processes differ.

Finally, came the tips issue. This was a main concern for couriers before and during the strike. Foodora's app did not have an option for customers to add tips when the order was delivered. A client had to add manually tip when they placed the order and not after. A courier could go above and beyond for a client, detouring for kilometers to pick up something else, or if the customer typed in the wrong address, and no tips could be added. It also meant clients would be hesitant to tip *before* the delivery:

> We went to the company to make this change so many times over the 4 years that I was there. It was obviously doable, because the other apps could do it, but they just never did. That kind of thing was a great example how a small change for the company would have made a huge change for the couriers and would have made couriers much less likely to unionize. It was so easy for us to go up to other couriers and say: "Doesn't suck that people can't tip after ordering, we should have a union." (Interview with ex-Foodora rider 2 – Nov. 2021)

As for Frichti and Uber Eats, the pay structures at Foodora were ‘black boxed’. In other words, these companies are hiding from workers the ways orders or shifts are handed out, while also using it as a discipline mechanism:

> There was no seniority or record of your shift access. You could do two full years at the highest level of performing, relying on Foodora for your primary source of income, give them 60 hours per week, and then if one week you dipped below, the next week you would be in the lower shift batch. That was inhumane and it was rough of people. (Interview with ex-Foodora rider 2 – Nov. 2021)

This practice by Foodora is still found today in Uber Eats’ algorithmic management of workers. Per many, the ‘acceptance’ rate is key for riders to receive more orders – even though this has not been confirmed (it’s been even denied by Uber). The tracking of riders and the need to accept orders was one of the first of its kind. It is now found in all the major platforms around the globe and is one of the main concerns of food couriers’ social movements. Foodora also had several female riders at the time. There was frequent sexual harassment on the job, in a few specific restaurants with several of their employees that were known to be harassing women riders. This was an important grievance by the movement that contributed to starting the movement.

Lastly, health and safety concerns are part of every food delivery platform labour movement. We have seen countless riders across the world getting killed while on delivery. Every time this happens, the different grassroots organizations and unions share the news across their networks (CLAP, GWU, CGT, CUPW). Per Orr and al. (2022), necrocapitalism in the food delivery industry is one of the keys to revenues. They use the concept of necropolitics to understand how various systems of oppression (migration status, economic, and/or racialization) put riders in difficult and

dangerous situations. They accept working conditions that can lead to physical injuries and even death.[59] This is common to both the Paris and Toronto delivery industries.

For many riders, an injury is most likely going to happen. The ability to get social security and benefits when getting injured on the job is something most riders fear no matter if they deliver for Uber Eats or Deliveroo in Paris or Toronto:

> I burned through all my savings because I broke my arm. I had some compensation from the WSIB which was a fluke because Foodora was the only Gig company that had that. They only had that because the company they had purchased Herrier they had that. (Interview with spokesperson for GWU – Nov. 2021)

The Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) offer compensations to injured riders. Only some of the riders got it from Foodora. At the time, it existed because of a parcel delivery company called 'Herrier'. This company used to be a downtown bike-messenger delivery business that was bought by Foodora. The Herrier couriers that migrated to Foodora were a big part of the union drive. They also brought-in the WSIB package. Having this core of riders that knew each other was key. Interestingly, in the Paris case, many of the CLAP founding members were also traditional downtown bike-messengers for a company called TokTokTok. When came the rise of platformized labour, TokTokTok was also bought by JustEat, who then brought in the riders. It is also very important to note that JustEat riders are the only 'unionized' couriers in France and are considered employees. Their rise in the food delivery market over the years is also linked to the degradation of working conditions in the main platforms, as one unionized JustEat courier notes:

> I have seen the rise in the number of sans-papiers in the last years working for the main platforms. At JustEat, where we are employees and unionized, we are mostly white. At

[59] A rider in Toronto, also a member of GWU, died in early March 2024 while on delivery on St Clair Ave E. Only a couple of weeks prior to this, a rider in France died while on delivery. The CLAP states: "After counting the deliveries, euros, articles, and kilometers for many years, we are now counting the dead. But the worst is when we stopped counting them."

> Deliveroo or Uber Eats, we do not see many white people anymore. In Paris, because precarity is higher, for many reasons, we see fewer white people and student riders. (Interview with spokesperson for CGT – March 2022)

The JustEats couriers are paid an hourly wage and have access to benefits and social security, as mentioned earlier by a spokesperson for the CGT. As for the early Foodora couriers who also had access to some compensation by WSIB. The core bike cultures of traditional downtown messengers were central to these two grassroots organizations who led two groundbreaking union drives, one in Paris and one in Toronto. They were also 'globally' connected through the same culture of videos and movies featuring underground events like the AlleyCats.[60] The sense of upward mobility at Foodora was only temporary and only for a selected few from Herrier:

> Foodora had parties, like company parties were couriers and office staff hung out. I think the first one was in Kensington they rented it out and people would hangout. A lot of people in the office also did courier work. The main guy, the guy who hired me over the phone, he was a courier in the Herrier days, and he somehow levelled up to being that hiring guy. The sentiment a lot of us had was that this was a good place to work. We are making good money; the company is growing, and it looks like there's upward mobility. I could go work in the offices later, maybe. (Interview with spokesperson for GWU – Nov. 2021)

Quickly, couriers realized that the company had two objectives in mind: grow as much and as fast as possible in Canada to try to achieve the holy-grail 'monopoly status' (Srnicek, 2017); extract as much value from this new acquired market and, eventually sell to the highest bidder from global competitors (Liu, 2020). Expansion and profits would come at the cost of working conditions. As working conditions were deteriorating, pay wasn't increasing even after 5 years, control and discipline were strong, a small group of couriers that knew each other and were seeing each other daily at the Foodora offices got together:

[60] AlleyCats are geocache bike competitions organized in urban centers by groups of messengers and other bike enthausiasts. They originated in Toronto, but are seen throughout the world. You pay like entrance fee, usually 10-20, and then you are given a manifest with locations to reach. The money goes to a courier fund to help couriers who are injured.

> The Foodora office was in a great location, just off King and Spadina. That is central to Toronto. It was easy to have a break in your shift there because you're always there. It would be great if there could be a little space for couriers to sit and hangout, have a coffee charge your batteries, fix their bikes.

As for the Frichti case, having a physical space to organizing was important, especially in this type of work where social relations are dematerialized and digitalized. As for the Frichti case, the riders went to traditional unions for help. With the help of CUPW, the legal battle reclassified Foodora couriers as dependant-contractor started:

> We had some discussions in January 2019. We started secret groundwork and then, on May 1st, they were opening the first protest in Toronto. It was all public then, CUPW intention to unionize them. On April 30th, everything was still secret. The union machine, sign the cards, got into second gear. During that summer, the employer reacted with a fear campaign. We got the cards, asked for the vote, which was kept secret while we were in court for the dependent versus independent status. The judge ruled they were dependent contractors, even stating that we need to look at Labour Laws with 2020 glasses, because those texts were written a long time ago. (Interview with spokesperson at CUPW – December 2021)

During the union drive, the platform Foodora tried various anti-union tactics, most notably in-app 'Vote No' advertisings. By using its app to spread anti-union messages, Foodora engaged in dubious tactic. This was immediately challenged by the strikers, and they filled a complaint for unlawful practices. The second tactic was the targeted hiring of immigrants. Even before the pandemic started, more and more immigrants started to appear in the ranks at Foodora. This coincidentally started during the union drive, as one rider told me:

> I don't know how they were finding people, maybe through community centers and employment agencies. They would be advertising in YMCAs. I would be seeing a lot of Chinese students working, and that weren't working before for Foodora. I would talk to them, and they would say: "Oh yeah I just got signed up couple of weeks ago." Interesting, because people we know are trying to get hired. We were trying to get people hired to get union votes. They would tell our people they are not hiring, but then they hire 15 Chinese students whose English is like 3rd or 4th language. (Interview with ex-Foodora rider 1 – Nov. 2021)

The targeted hiring of immigrant students and newcomers in Toronto by a 'smaller' food delivery platform resemble the case of the 'small' start-up Frichti in Paris. I already highlighted how this platform directly hired sans-papiers workers to put in exploitative working conditions. For the Canadian case, there is an obvious hypocrisy behind the targeted hiring of migrants by the platform. By using precarity, informality, and ambiguity, this labour platforms manage tame the resistance against it. The outreach at Foodora, who was hiring more non-Anglophone workers, made the union drive more difficult. This was a strategy that was on-going before the union drive:

> I wouldn't say that they did that specifically against the union. I think that was just part of the business model. When I started this job, it wasn't immigrants. I was mostly Canadian students; it was a good bag type of people, artists. Overtime more people who were doing this job were migrants. But during the union drive, it still wasn't overwhelmingly migrants. It wasn't anti- or pro- union; this is just what the workforce is. There are big cohorts of migrants. We need to re-chat to them. We need to get migrants in on this. (Interview with spokesperson for GWU – Nov. 2021)

As stated by this spokesperson for GWU, the progressive transformation of the workforce towards precarious immigrants meant they needed to change their outreach strategy. Finding leaders within the different migrant riders' communities was a key part of the strategy and is still going forward. They also needed to extend their reach outside of the downtown core. Many riders were doing deliveries for the platform outside the 'City of Toronto' for very low pay and longer distances. Today, outreach in the downtown core, where most of my interviews with Uber Eats riders occurred as well, is the most obvious next step. Many neighborhoods are part of the fight against platform capitalism going forward:

> We see a lot of guys from India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. For us, focusing on that frontier, which we are making good progress in. That has been a little easier than the East Asian migrants for a few reasons. One, South Asians all speak good English, they learn it as second or third language. Finding common grounds and understanding. That's a group that in the Foodora campaign we struggle. (Interview with spokesperson for GWU – Nov. 2021)

This struggle mentioned above played in favor of Foodora during the union drive. However, it still did not stop the vote and the case was moved to the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB). The OLRB heard the Foodora case, following the union vote, which was won in a landslide. The board heard from both parties (CUPW and Foodora). They ruled that the platform was indeed engaging in many practices resembling what Ontario regulation calls 'dependant contractor'. This meant that the group could move forward and unionize with CUPW. Foodora then quickly appealed the OLRB ruling. After the platform lost its appeal, and left, it had to compensate riders across the whole country. Many at the time were already dual-apping – sometimes triple-apping or quadruple-apping (adding DoorDash, SkipTheDishes and/or Uber Eats). Even though it was clear that Foodora did not tolerate it upon signing the digital hiring contract. This was one of the arguments used by the company to keep the independent-contractor status.

Not long after the rulings, Foodora announced it was leaving Canada, stating financial difficulties, unprofitability of the markets and (unintentionally?) sending a message to other cities who could be thinking about unionization. The necessity of a new local union office once Foodora left, a new campaign must be started:

> If tomorrow we launch a drive against Uber Eats, I must go back to the OLRB. The labour procedures and working conditions at Uber Eats are not the same as Foodora's. A judgement saying that these drivers are dependent contractors is not guaranteed for union recognition. I can have the cards signed, have 40%, go to the vote with 100% 'Yes' and maybe that time the Board will say 'No', they are independent. (Interview with spokesperson for CUPW – December 2021)

The lessons from the Foodora case travelled to the current campaign: the fight against Uber Eats, SkiptheDishes and DoorDash. Those three companies are the main players operating in the GTA.

The case of Uber Eats is interesting for this thesis, as it operates in both Toronto and Paris. The next section will investigate Uber Eats and the resistance against it.

6.2 Too big to fail? Resisting Uber Eats across the Atlantic

I established earlier how platform urbanism can be looked at through relational comparison. The Foodora case showed socio-relations between resistance movements across many countries. Those were involved in similar fights against the same, or branches of the same, company. It also showed how local bike messenger groups who started many of these movements were connected to a global culture with similar sociospatial practices. This section turns to Uber Eats, the biggest food delivery company in Europe and North America. It plays a role in changing labour laws and regulations, but also migration trajectories. Uber Eats manages to recruit, exploit and profit in the two cities presented in this thesis. The influence of the platform, as well as the structural conditions put in place by the state, led to ambiguity in the regulations and informality in this sector of the labour market. This is where Uber Eats is benefiting: by positioning itself as a key 'step' in the migration trajectories in France (Aguilera et al., 2022) and Canada (Lam & Triandafyllidou, 2022) as the only available option for the most precarious. On resistance movements, Graauw and Gleeson note:

> in studying the significance of cities for campaigns to expand the labour rights of marginalized populations, it is important to realize that there is no singular urban context in which such campaigns take place. Urban contexts vary, and to understand how advocates today organize at the urban level, form local coalitions, and pitch their policy reforms to local policy makers, we need to understand a city's historic trajectory and its current economic, political, and demographic situation. (Graauw & Gleeson, 2017)

To build an international political economy of platformization, we must include an urban perspective, but also relational aspects of resistance. Historical processes are shaped by many of the inter-related contexts where they occur - an actually existing platformization of the urban, as developed by researchers (van Doorn et al., 2021). Going back to Hart's methodological strategy of relational comparison, I approach racial, gender and class conditions within platform capitalism as relationally produced in specific local contexts. Processes like the platformization of labour spread in complex, multiscalar and variegated manners. To fully understand one case of platformization, in a specific lobal urban area, it is key to look deep into how it has formed, but also how it is related and connected to another one elsewhere. As Hart noted:

> a focus on multiple, interconnected trajectories of socio-spatial change encourages attention to how emancipatory alternatives might prefigure within already existing capitalisms. At the same time, this sort of approach sounds strong warnings against any sort of abstract, idealized definition of alternatives simply or primarily in terms of institutional design or legal forms. Insistent attention to situated practice and the exercise of power means that any alternative must be firmly grounded within existing material and cultural conditions (Hart, 2002: 292)

Examples covered by Hart in her 2002 book highlighted connections between Newcastle (ZA) and Taiwan. Hart noted how "battles going on in Taiwanese factories, as well as in the courtrooms, local government offices, and streets of Newcastle – assume locally specific and sometimes idiosyncratic forms, but they are far more generally significant, and illuminate a much larger set of issues" (167). What I have argued with the Foodora case of resistance, and will argue with the Uber Eats case, is that these locally specific moments of resistance are connected to a larger set of issues and are in relational to one another. As for Taiwanese knitwear production in Newcastle, the platformization of urban labour in Paris and Toronto is both generating, and is undermined, by local labour conflicts. This was argued in similar fashion by Woodcock (2021), who mentioned that the lack of communication and negotiation from platforms led to escalating workers' actions

globally around shared issues. Woodcock claimed that despite a dematerialized workplace, gig workers are connected. Through a relational comparison approach that focuses on *how* processes are constituted in relation to one another, we can see more clearly both:

i) The process of platformization as relationally constructed over space and time. Platforms like Uber Eats learn and adapt from their trial and errors, from one city to another. But they are also shaped if not co-constituted by local and national practices. Unlike a purely institutionalist perspective, I have considered the role of grassroots organizing in impacting these large transnational corporate networks.

ii) The resistance to platformization as relationally constructed. Unions and other organizations learn from one another, exchange tips and warn other cities from anti-worker tactics or lobbying. I chose to focus on resistance to platform urbanism *à la* Uber Eats through a relational perspective that moves beyond the usual actors and themes (i.e. misclassification, data collection, algorithmic management, etc.) and that instead considers grassroots social movements as integral part of the urban process.

Woodcock's latest book *The Fight Against Platform Capitalism* (2021) offers a great starting point to this type of analysis. He noted throughout his fieldwork that platform workers, despite the digital nature of this type of labour, despite geofencing (algorithmically keeping workers apart) by platforms, are not isolated. It only appears that self-employed platform workers are isolated and that algorithms are changing traditional capital and labour relations. At the ground-level, agency, solidarity, and collective actions arise in response to new forms of capitalist exploitation. Even in the 'new' cases of algorithmic control and self-employment status are met with resistance. Following Hart (2002), instead of asking "*what* are the rules embodied or embedded in particular

institutional forms, the focus is on *how* negotiation takes place within and among social arenas – the emphasis, in other words, is on practice, process, and the exercise of power rather than on pre-given logics" (170). Similarly, Woodcock as argued that a new trend in platform work is the internationalization of platforms, which has laid the basis for new transnational solidarity (2021).

By bringing together the works of Hart and Woodcock, this section aims to open a new discussion on using relational comparison within urban platform labour studies. Cities are changed around the world in similar ways, sometimes by the same multinational corporation. Söderström and Mermet have also used relational comparison to understand platform urbanism. As for other processes, "[…] everyday effects of digital platforms on cities and on their regulatory policies. […] platform urbanism is a form of 'actually existing smart urbanism' that reshapes the materiality, daily lives and governance of cities" (Söderström & Mermet, 2020). I differ from 'actually existing smart urbanism' which centers the analysis around a technoscientific conception of the urban. Seeing the platform companies as sitting in the 'control rooms' of cities is one way to look at the issue from an exercise of power viewpoint, as Hart would qualify it. I, instead, turn to the other side of the relationship, from the workers' point of view.

I turn to the most recent social movement of riders against Uber. In France, the *#UberEatsEnColère* movement is protesting mass deactivations and low pay. In Canada, the *GigWorkersUnited* (GWU) campaign is rallying riders across the GTA against unpaid time and low wages. How are these two movements connected? How can we look at resistance to platform urbanism *à la* Uber Eats relationally? What does the future of the resistance against platform capitalism look like?

In both Toronto and Paris, the mobilization against Uber Eats is difficult. This is a tough project to conceptualize because the platform is often seen as 'too big to fail' or the riders as too spread out and disconnected. For local actors, Uber is the main target on both sides of the Atlantic. With Hart's relational comparison methodology, and current work on the international struggles against platform work, this thesis argues that the local events and issues of the grassroots actors mobilized against Uber Eats have a potential to reshape global platform capitalism. The platformization of transportation of people or meals have a deeply impacted the cities in which these companies arrive. This was covered at length by the growing body of literature on platforms and platforms food delivery (see sections 2.1.4 and 3.1.3). However, I suggest in this thesis that it is not a unilateral relationship where one giant corporation is impacting local workers, actors, institutions and citizens. Strikes, protests and events in Paris and Toronto also have an influence on Uber Eats, local events impacting global processes.

The rest of this section is divided between the Uber Files, the platform cooperative movement and the fight against Uber Eats Canada inc. and Uber Eats France inc. (as seen in Figure 1). Using relational comparison methodology throughout, it will show, as for the Foodora case, examples of multi-sited and inter-connected practices in the fight against racial platform capitalism, such as union internationalism, national and international migrants rights, labour rights strategies, and roles for new technologies in resistance.

A relation comparison analysis of the resistance to Uber starts with the recent Uber Files. The legislative battles that took place in France and Canada, among other places, were exposed. In the

Summer of 2022 and gathered by The Guardian, 124'000 company documents known as the Uber Files make headlines around to world. They showed how Uber infiltrated branches of governments, news media outlets, academic circles, and more. A whistleblower and career lobbyist at Uber exposed how the company took over Europe, Africa and the Middle East through a company culture that was "deeply unfair and anti-democratic".[61] Intense and unlawful lobbying was part of Uber's strategy from the get-go. Macron himself did not hide his ties to Uber and its French lobbyists.[62] The company strategically targeted 1'800 individuals for lobbying in 29 countries.[63]

The massive Uber Files scandal showed how the company had a global strategy to tear down regulatory barriers to its capacity to extract value is as many cities and countries as possible. The Uber Files showed exactly how the company managed to evade laws and regulations. Most notoriously, Uber used a tool called Greyball to hide its cabs for law enforcement. The office employees at Uber were also told to use a 'killswitch' to shut down and delete all computers if they ever got raided by police.

The unions had to scale up their approach to match the global reach of their target. Unions have adopted similar lobbying strategies only less aggressive. As one spokesperson for the CGT mentioned me, from the start, one of the weak points of the movement against platform capitalism was the lack of a global *riposte*:

> It is complicated to organize at the international level. Actors in each country has a different central subject to their fight. It seems that many are fighting judicial battles. Which is

[61] www.theguardian.com/news/2022/jul/11/uber-files-whistleblower-lobbyist-mark-macgann
[62] www.theguardian.com/news/2022/jul/12/emmanuel-macron-proud-of-supporting-ubers-lobbying-drive-in-france
[63] www.theguardian.com/news/2022/jul/15/the-worldwide-scale-of-the-uber-files-in-numbers

> something that platforms also want, to keep their status. It is hard to bring in a global response. (Interview with spokesperson for CGT-National, - March 2022)

Union internationalism has been organizing and doing its fair share of lobbying. For France, the CGT is involved with the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF). They bring in their workers' voices at the European level. For example, the recent platform work directive adopted by the European council had many unions representatives pushing for a firm regulation of platform work. Member states like France severely weakened the text – the results of Macron's cabinet still being largely pro-platform. However, a framework was adopted and is set to restrict platforms across Europe. On the other side of the Atlantic, CUPW is still much involved with the GWU movement. Their goal is to grow the GWU movement outside the GTA and across Canada. They are in sporadic discussions with the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) and the UNI Global Union. Consulting with ITF and UNI can bring in new tactics that were tested before elsewhere in the world. Both were also present and vocal during the platform work directive debates.[64]

Union internationalism involving far-reaching organizations like ETF, ETUC, ITF and UNI will be a key for the gig work social movement going forward. It will be an important part for gig workers' resistance to platformized forms of exploitation and for migrant labour rights. The strategies will need to merge (labour rights and migrant rights) not only at the local level but also at the global level. These *reworking* strategies show not only similarities between France and

[64] https://www.etf-europe.org/platform-directive-a-win-for-platform-workers-and-their-unions/ https://www.etuc.org/en/pressrelease/platform-work-trade-unions-win-millions-workers

Canada but also connections between the two cases. The goal now for this global strategy is to bring to North America a similar resolution that was just passed in Europe.[65]

It also raises the question of migrants' rights internationally. Union internationalism has been vocal on gig workers' rights, but not as vocal on the situations of hyper-precarious migrant gig workers. Kipfer (2022) notes two moments of political anti-racism strategies in France: autonomy (organizational self-determination) and alliance (with other left-wing and working class organizations) (Kipfer, 2022). I have explored spontaneous grassroots social movements of sans-papiers riders in Paris, who self-organized against racial platform capitalism. The alliances they formed, with organizations like the CGT and the CLAP, were also key for their resistance. However, a global response to *racial* platform capitalism is still underdeveloped in union internationalism. This speaks to a disconnect between traditional unions and decolonial anti-racist movements. In other words, sans-papiers couriers in France are from post-colonial Africa for the same reason hyper-precarious international student couriers in Canada are from India – the colonial histories of the modern states like Canada and France:

> the colonial state and the modern state did not develop along two trajectories in isolation from each other. Rather, these coeval formations emerged as jarringly distinct, yet also uncannily similar, through complex *relational* processes (Mongia, 2018)

In a genealogy of the modern colonial state the metropoles and the colonies cannot be treated as separate. Although this is not the main concern of this thesis, it is vital to mention colonial history in shaping current migration patterns and migration policy, and thus also some of the ways; in

[65] Ibid.

which precarious migrants are recruited to low paid and dangerous jobs like food delivery. It is also why I chose to engage in a political relational comparison (Kipfer, 2022).

A second important connection within platform resistance is through the creation of riders' cooperatives. The idea of creating at-large food delivery cooperatives is seen in most cities like Toronto and Paris. After the departure of Foodora, for example, the group that received a settlement from the company had this idea of creating their own food delivery cooperative platform. They also wanted to build a local union with office spaces and launch a market study to possibly create this coop platform. Along with another group of riders in Montreal ("*La Roue Libre*") and Vancouver ("Shift"), they were in contact with the French technology cooperative COOPCycle. COOPcycle provides digital infrastructures to couriers' collectives. They have projects everywhere in the world with grassroots collectives of couriers who want to launch their own delivery services. As van Doorn and Badger (2020) argued, this is a way to reappropriate data and unveil algorithmic control, retake control of the means of production. The COOPCycle open software idea not only shows that cooperative projects exist in both France and Canada, but that they are also connected. COOPCycle was first approached by Canadian couriers who wanted the technologies:

> We were in discussion with people in Toronto who wanted the software. We had problems at first in Canada because of various tax issues. I know that in Canada we are in contact with various unions and other resistance groups too. (Interview with spokesperson for COOPCycle – Jan 2022)

The case of COOPCycle shows common practices and international relationships in the world of alternatives to platform capitalism. They also have various Slack groups for bug solving, or law advice, when setting up a new coop platform. The *resistance* strategy is a direct challenge to

capitalist social relations by workers who aim to take data ownership and organize new ways to deliver food (Lenaerts et al., 2018).

Although they share practices and connections, the fight against Uber Eats Canada differs from the one against Uber Eats France. Uber's lobbying at the Canadian municipal, provincial and national levels is one of the main hurdles to many grassroots collectives who are trying to get their voices heard politically. Changes regarding bike lanes, parking permit, police ticketing, misclassification and benefits, and pensions are all tied to different levels of governance. Many groups like GWU engage regularly with the City of Toronto (same for the CLAP and the City of Paris). In Toronto, the situation of international students has made headlines in the first months of 2024. The government's response was to cap the number of new students for the upcoming year. Uber Eats low pay was also in the news. It has been reported by RideFairTO, and by many other groups like GWU, that workers can log in and stay online and unpaid for hours, bringing their hourly wage to only a couple of dollars per hour. The upcoming fight against Uber Eats Canada will have to center around those international students.[66]

Over the course of 2022 and 2023, unions in France have clashed with platforms following low pay and deactivations of Uber Eats riders in Paris. I have explored present and past resistance movements by sans-papiers workers in Paris, against Frichti, Stuart, and Uber. I noted similarities, differences, and connections. Recently, the riders united around *#UberEatsEnColère* with a series of protests that started in the Fall of 2022. This movement expanded following a new immigration

[66] https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/commentary/article-gig-work-platforms-are-destructive-and-exploitative-something-must-be/

reform proposed by Interior Minister G. Darmanin.[67] On one hand, the law will harden the conditions of stay for immigrants in France. On the other hand, its goal is also to regularize sans-papiers workers in what the government calls 'sectors under tension' – meaning with labor shortage. However, platform food delivery is not included as potential work leading to papers. Simultaneously, Uber Eats deactivated thousands of riders' accounts during the Fall of 2022 and Winter 2023. One worker from the MDC explained me how Uber Eats launched deactivations:

> Uber Eats started asking for the URSSAF attestations that confirm you paid your taxes. They hire them as independent contractors, then ask to see if they paid their taxes? Many got deactivated because of that. We had many riders coming for that issue in one week. Then, many got deactivated because they said: "You deliver with a scooter, you told us it was a bike." The riders come in saying: "How do I prove them it's a bike, I sent a picture with me and my bike. What more can I do?" We sent them towards the unions. (Interview with employee at MDC– *Feb. 2022*)

The various deactivation tactics used by Uber are contested by riders and unions. Unions in France are increasingly implicated in the fights for papers. As Tucker mentions, "the goal of a political economy of platform-mediated work is not simply to describe the processes through which capital extracts surplus value from labour, but to suggest how platform workers might resist their exploitation" (Tucker, 2020: 198). We have seen numerous movements over the last years, initiated by Uber Eats sans-papiers riders and supported by the CLAP, CGT, CNT, FO and more. With the rise of migrant workers in all sectors of the economy in both France and Canada, this is a serious question ask of traditional unions: What role will they play in defending precarious migrant workers? Barron et al. mentioned, more than 12 years ago, the visible distance between traditional French unions defending mostly 'white' citizens and undocumented workers mostly

[67] Mazuir, V. (December 2023) *Projet de loi immigration : ce qu'il faut savoir*. LesEchos

Black migrants striking for status, whom are also already under strict scrutiny by state and urban policies. As Hart mentioned:

> The challenge then is how to forge connections and alliances across arenas of social practice and spatial scales - a challenge that compels attention to multi-layered and interconnected articulations and trajectories that have gone into the making of what has come to be termed 'globalization' (Hart, 2002: 293)

Historically, unions are mainly focused on the labour rights of citizens and employees. In the case of food riders, they are often neither. In Paris and Toronto, when riders' collectives first went to labour unions looking for support, the general response by the unions was to decline. As stated previously, misclassification as independent contractor makes them less 'desirable' for many unions who do not see a fee opportunity. Clientelism, per many interviews with key actors, has kept food delivery away from traditional unions. Over the course of 2022, unions and platforms have started to clash following mass deactivation of Uber Eats riders in Paris:

> Relations with platforms are difficult. We had a few reunions, but they speak double-tongued to us. Nothing changed over the years. In our daily work where we help riders, we have riders disconnected every day, without any reason. We have limited contacts with Uber Eats, asking why, showing precise facts. Riders are asking to be re-integrated, sometimes we can help but it's not much. In general, we try to apply pressure to the platforms. (Interview with spokesperson for the CLAP – *Mar. 2022*)

With the help of unions and grassroots organizations such as the CLAP, deactivated riders- many of which are sans-papiers, organized strikes and protests in Paris. They had three main demands for the state and the platforms: 1) rights before deactivation, which is something employees in all sectors have, however the platformization of labour makes it extremely easy for the platform to 'fire' a rider by simply deactivating the account. 2) regularization through work, by updating the Circulaire Valls and allowing for platform delivery work to count as work done for an employer, or by ending misclassification which would qualify riders for possible regularization. 3) better pay,

as the market was saturated with riders the platforms sized the chance to decrease pay rates which made the precarious lives of sans-papiers riders even more precarious.

France's Minister of Labour Olivier Dussopt signed a new deal with two main associations: the platforms' association (API) and the unions that were part of the 'social dialogue' at the ARPE which is the FNAE (the 'winner' of the riders' election). The proposed hourly wage for riders of 11,75€ per hour was criticized by the CLAP who pointed out that this only applies to hours on-delivery and excludes waiting time. This way, they can claim that the riders can reach the SMIC. The riders can spend hours waiting for orders. As many have mentioned, they must take the RER from the suburbs where rents are cheaper. Stuck inside the City of Paris, waiting between orders in not a choice. The other part of the deal concerns deactivations. The government mentioned that with this agreement with the platforms and the unions the riders can have 'a more human deactivation'. As stated by the press release, the platforms must inform the riders of their deactivation before cutting off the account. This deal conveniently comes after the mass deactivations at Uber Eats and Deliveroo who hired thousands of additional workers during the pandemic. This pump and dump strategy by the platforms was allowed by the yellow unions and the government during a time of crisis. The deactivated sans-papiers riders worked non-stop for two years and now, they find themselves without the support of traditional unions or government branches.

Throughout this chapter, I have explored the importance of unions and riders' collectives, but also of migrant workers' grassroots initiatives. It is key to reiterate how vital their fight is for the right to the city of migrant workers. The urban is a key site for platformization, as I have shown in

Chapter 4 and 5, but it is also the arena for social movements to resist platform capitalism. Global platforms are built on historical racial capitalism and take advantage of ambiguous state labour laws and urban informality. In Paris, it is often while the rider is sans-papiers and have no other choice but to rent and accept exploitative conditions. In Toronto, it is often while the rider is on a study or work permit and is facing financial hardship, tuition fees, expensive rent, and so on. They managed to position themselves in a precise time window of the migration journeys of many. The urban spaces are *where* many migrant workers work, live and exercise agency, which was at the heart of this research project on platform labour. It is where platforms experiment with new forms of control and discipline. It is where riders resist it. First, I have included a citizenship component to this new-ish form of exploitation (CRS). With this chapter, I revisited what others have done regarding social movements within platform labour, but again adding a citizenship component.

Figure 9: International students food couriers protesting in Toronto

(Facebook 2023)

Figure 10: Uber Eats sans-papiers riders protesting in Paris

(Élucid 2023)

CHAPTER VII: CONCLUSION

"After midnight tonight, police and border officers will enforce the agreement, and return irregular border crossers to the closest port of entry with the United States." – Justin Trudeau, Canada's Prime Minister, March 2023 on the closing of Roxham Road

This thesis has made contributions to several academic disciplines, particularly in digital and labour geographies, migration and citizenship studies, as well as science and technology studies. By reaffirming the critical role of migration in the platformization of urban labour, it added to the existing body of literature situated between platform-work and migration. Through a dual-city comparison utilizing established research methodologies such as qualitative methods and relational comparison, the primary objective of this project was to shed light on racial exploitation and labor resistance within platform capitalism. The thesis applied various existing conceptual frameworks on resistance, migration, rentiership, and unionism to a new empirical phenomenon known as platform gig work.

Globally interconnected cities like Toronto, Canada, and Paris, France, are characterized by a concentration of corporate headquarters, financial activities, and various high-end business services (i.e. AI management, HR, marketing). Simultaneously, they serve as destinations for immigrants seeking work opportunities. One repercussion of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the devitalization of many major city centers. This phenomenon has been driven by the implementation of new remote work arrangements, business closures, and a decrease in pedestrian,

vehicular, and bicycle traffic in these areas. While remote work gained popularity during the pandemic, it has since become permanent for many companies. Consequently, this shift has altered the dynamics of downtown areas, particularly impacting services like food delivery during lunch hour. Those changes have been observed in Toronto[68] as well as in Paris.[69] If businesses continue to embrace long-term remote work policies, there may be diminished demand for office spaces, resulting in vacant buildings and decreased economic activity, notably work for couriers during downtown lunchtime. This serves as a reminder that bursts of specific economic activities are temporary and moving fast.

The period following the COVID-19 pandemic also meant significant changes in immigration policies and public discourse, particularly in France and Canada. In France, Minister Darmanin's immigration reforms sparked debates within French politicians with calls from the Right for mass deportations and stricter border controls. While the current Darmanin law aims to regularize some undocumented workers, it only applies to sectors facing labor shortages, leading to protests from food delivery couriers who felt excluded from this new path to citizenship. The food delivery sectors in Paris and Toronto rely on an abundant pool of labor, with platforms constantly accepting part-time riders to ensure fast delivery at low costs. Undocumented riders are left out of both the immigration reforms and the potential new labor laws following the European council's platform work directive, leaving them without a pathway to regularization.

[68] https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/future-remote-work-downtown-toronto-1.6671479#:~:text=Future%20of%20remote%20and%20hybrid,t%20interested%20in%20hybrid%20schedules.
[69] https://www.latribune.fr/opinions/tribunes/immobilier-comment-les-mobilites-post-covid-rebattent-les-cartes-948363.html

Similarly in Canada, public debates focus on immigration issues including the border deal with the United States and concerns about illegal migration. The portrayal of the border as porous and open by public figures led to heightened dangers for migrants attempting to cross, resulting in tragic incidents such as the deaths of eight migrants near the Canada-U.S. border. Trudeau's government doubled down in 2024 by adding a cap to new temporary workers and residents. The MWAC called for the government to stop using temporary migrants as scapegoats for the housing and labour crisis. These events underscore the violent role of borders in restricting the movement of migrants and perpetuating exploitative working conditions due to fear of deportation and structural disadvantages.

Migrant platform food delivery riders have increasingly come into the spotlight, with growing media coverage, academic research, and protests highlighting issues of hyper-exploitation and resistance. The rise of anti-immigration and nationalist sentiments further marginalizes migrant workers, documented or undocumented, in both Paris and Toronto. Modern food delivery platforms have capitalized on precarious migrant labourers in cities across Europe and North America, often operating without regard for regulations under the motto "Ask for forgiveness, not permission". The platformization of everyday life is an increasingly important process driving urban capitalist development. As argued throughout this thesis, this process is built partly on precarious migrant labour. Workers in precarious citizenship conditions are presented with this seemingly frictionless opportunity to work upon their arrival in France or Canada. They can "be their own bosses", but at what cost? The next section reviews the findings and the limitations of this thesis.

7.1 Review of findings

This thesis explored the dialectical relationship between *exploitation* and *resistance* found in modern platform food delivery labour. It set out to answer two questions: i) How do food delivery couriers, notably urban immigrants, come to work in, exercise agency, and experience the platform-mediated food delivery markets? ii) How do social movements by food delivery couriers, advocacy groups and labour unions play a role in shaping platform-mediated urban gig work?

Two main transformations were identified: i) the expansion of forms of citizen-*rentier*-ship (CRS), or rents extracted by those various actors with access to the labour market from those in precarious citizenship situations as a result of the platformization of urban work. This contributes by adding a theoretical innovation to the body of literature on platform-mediated gig-work. These components of migration and citizenship precarity are key conditions for the thriving of urban platforms in Paris and Toronto. Platforms seek monopolistic control of markets. They sometimes resort to exploitative and sometimes illegal practices to achieve profitability. They also sit between regulatory ambiguities from the Canadian and French states regarding temporary citizens, account subletting, and precarious working conditions. This is paired with many coping mechanisms by riders, notably *resilience* strategies. ii) The workers' resistance to exploitation by labour platforms, which are global and relationally connected struggles directed sometimes at a common actor or firm. This adds to the literature on social movements, traditional unions and workers' agency within platform capitalism. Riders' collectives, sans-papiers movements and migrant workers contribute to the evolution of urban platformization. Their role is often left out of conversations

regarding social movements against modern platforms, including *reworking* and *resistance* strategies. Using Hart's relational comparison to characterize gig workers social movement is a theoretical innovation put forth by this thesis. The resistance strategies are also split between a labour rights approach and a migrant rights approach. Moving forward, it will be key for the movement to unify and consider both to achieve effective changes.

Chapter 1 contextualized the plight of immigrant riders in Toronto and Paris, illustrating how their situation has reached a critical point during the period of this research. In both cities, deteriorating working conditions have push many of the most vulnerable immigrants to turn to food delivery as a means of survival. In Paris, where a significant portion of sans-papiers migrants from Africa converge in search of employment, many find themselves renting food delivery accounts upon arrival. It is therefore crucial to connect the history of (neo-)colonialism between France and Africa when analyzing contemporary issues such as platform labour. Similarly, in Toronto, historical colonial ties play a significant role in shaping migration dynamics today. The bureaucratic hurdles faced by immigrants, whether they hold work permits, study permits - many international students from India, or are permanent residents, often relegate them to precarious situations with limited access to the labour market. They also face housing difficulties and insufficient social protections which led many to take on platform food delivery to make ends meet. Canada's colonial history plays a key role in the exploitation of precarious migrants. The important other colonial question in Canada, which was not the focus of this study, is the settler colonial/Indigenous question. It is still ongoing and not a relic of the past.

Chapter 2 introduced the theoretical framework for the research. Through some of Lefebvre's work, I examined the trajectories of modern food delivery platforms, how they contribute to the production of urban spaces and how they are built on algorithmic and racialized exploitation. Modern platforms are part of a lineage of technological improvements to the management of labour, but also of neoliberalization of the state and the urban that teared down laws and regulation regarding employment. Following decades of neoliberal state policies, platform capitalism found fertile grounds in urban Euro-America. The approach for this thesis is part of an intertwined development between neoliberal urbanism and platform urbanism that has emerged following urban theory research based on historical and geographical sociospatial transformations of modern capitalism. Labour platforms are the newest feature of these processes contributing to the production of urban spaces. I conceptualized the platform as both a traditional employer and a renter. They are reshaping sociospatial relations of everyday urban life and labour, while also being part of the erosion of workers' rights and state protections. This thesis has argued that upcoming theories of urban platform labour must recenter around the questions of migration and citizenship to fully grasps the crux of the issue.

Chapter 3 laid out the methodology used for investigating platform food delivery labour in two urban contexts. A two-city case study was used to not only spot similarities and differences between two different socio-historical contexts, but also to understand how they are in relation. The development of 'racial platform capitalism' is a process, constituted in relation to other key processes. By producing many new sociospatial relations, labour platforms and their managers are contributing to the production of urban spaces in a messy, unequal and variegated manner. This chapter reviewed the fast-growing body of literature on platform-mediated gig-work and its

resistance. While the focus has been mostly on algorithmic management, traditional labour unions, labour laws and gig worker social movements, some discussions on the role played by migrants in the platform economy were useful. Very little work, however, was done on resistance by migrant riders. Moreover, the idea of engaging in relational comparison (Hart 2002) for platform resistance found is a methodological innovation by this thesis to the field of urban studies.

Chapter 4 dove into the everyday lives of precarious food riders in Paris. First, a discussion on platform work in Paris and migration regime in France laid foundations for the chapter. Then, it looked at two ways sans-papiers food couriers find work in Paris: subletting an account and being hired directly by a platform. This pivotal part of the thesis shows the many ways CRS can occur in Paris. Four key components of the subletting market from the interviews with sans-papiers couriers that contribute to the reproduction of the urban platform economy were identified: i) paying for the right to work, ii) interdependency with the subletters, iii) scams and bike stealing and iv) health and insecurity while delivering. Sans-papiers in Paris are also sometimes hired directly by the platforms, as I have shown through interviews with Frichti and Stuart couriers. Using the hyper-precarity trap framework put forth by researchers focusing on labour by asylum-seekers, it showed how undocumented immigrants engage in food delivery for survival. A discussion on the Circulaire Valls and the immigration reform also showed that sans-papiers couriers cannot obtain papers through food delivery work, because of misclassification.

Chapter 5 looked at the Toronto case. First, a discussion on platform work in Toronto, and migration regime in Canada laid foundations for the chapter. Undocumentation among food couriers is potentially not as pervasive as in Paris. Through interviews with riders in Toronto, four

components that allow platforms to have a large precarious workforce in Toronto were identified: i) cost of living, ii) conditions of stay for international students, iii) conditions of stay for permanent residents/work permits and iv) health and safety concerns. Structural conditions of immigration put up by the Canadian government have pushed international students and newcomers on PR or work permits towards food delivery. It has allowed companies like Uber Eats to build large pools of workers that have no other choice but to deliver at the lowest pay.

Chapter 6 focuses on the other side of the relationship between riders and platforms: the *resistance* to hyper-exploitation in racial platform capitalism. Building on older forms of exploitation, this 'new' way to extract surplus labour faces different forms of resistance. The cases of Frichti, Stuart, Foodora and Uber Eats showed how couriers and migrant couriers fought for papers and better working conditions. Historically, unions have mostly argued for the rights of citizens and employees. In this case, misclassified workers as independent-contractors, and often non-citizen riders, have gone to unions and grassroots organizations for help. We can thus identify a duality of struggle torn between a labour rights strategy and a migrant rights strategy. Urban social movements by riders have forced traditional unions to pay attention to workers. This is a new form of resistance to 'platform urbanism *à la* Uber Eats', analyzed through relational perspective connected practices by grassroots groups in Toronto and Paris.

7.2 Policy implications and future research

Forms of racialized exploitation have been around for a very long time. Are labour platforms making it hyper? It is often presented as a completely new form of employment with the potential to solve all issues from global environmental changes to poverty – known as techno-solutionism. I view CRS as an old form of racialized exploitation of precarious immigrants simply multiplied by technology – as we have seen with account subletting, algorithmic management, surplus labour extraction, arbitrary deactivations without notice, and so on. It is built on centuries-old capitalist processes of racial labour exploitation; the technological platform-mediated facet only makes it hyper. Urban precarity in global cities has been subject to much research over the last century. This thesis couldn't cover every aspect of urban platform labour. Looking forward, one of the most striking similarities between the two cases is how messy, uneven and random the development of urban platforms has been over the last decade. The Uber Files have highlighted that governments are ready to accept any behavior from platform managers.

The lack of oversight regarding how platforms operate in France and Canada must be reformed, and those reforms must be enforced. Both France and Canada need a comprehensive understanding of platform work that covers labour and migration questions alike; otherwise, these types of exploitation will keep occurring. If the platform work directive is adopted in France (which seems unlikely with a Macron government), what will happen to all the undocumented workers renting accounts? Enforcing employment status, instead of *laissez-aller* independent contractor status, could take away work opportunities for thousands of sans-papiers. This is why a comprehensive

plan that considers both migrants' rights and workers' rights is needed. Similarly, if a plan to cap the number of Uber Eats riders in Canada is adopted, what will happen to all the international students depending on platform work, even if it means making less than minimum wage. Ending misclassification in France or Canada is one step in one direction, but it won't solve anything if there are still huge gaps in differential citizenship status and access to labour markets.

Finally, the dialectical relation between exploitation and resistance is at the hearth of capitalist urbanization. It is on these processes that racial platform capitalism is built. Platforms like Uber Eats need us more than we need them. Alternatives to giant corporations like cooperatives are possible. Cooperatives are a potential good path forward, but they are also subject to the pressures of capitalism. It is not uncommon to see, through competition for order and work, the pressures become internal to the relations among workers in a coop. The technological innovation that allows customers, restaurants, and riders to exchange via a digital infrastructure does not have to be exploitative. Hopefully, in the coming years, rider collectives, cooperatives, and labour unions can be the ones to move fast and break things regarding the status quo in urban exploitation.

Traditional unions in fast-changing Euro-American cities must include migrant workers in their upcoming fights against platformized forms of labour. Algorithmic control is pushing back social movements and workers are kept apart by geofencing and anti-union strategies. In the coming years, we will need unions to strike for citizenship and for misclassified workers. Unionism, while sometimes still institutionalized and under much clientelism, need to adapt and help precarious gig workers like food couriers. A more open and borderless world for migrant workers can easily

dismantle exploitative processes like forms of rentiership. With the current nationalist political border reorganizations in France and Canada and the rise of the far-right, it is an uphill battle.

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Appendix A

Research Ethics Approval

YORK
UNIVERSITÉ
UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF RESEARCH ETHICS (ORE)
309 York Lanes

4700 Keele St.
Toronto ON
Canada M3J 1P3
Tel 416 736 5914
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www.research.yorku.ca

Certificate #:	**STU 2021-135**
Approval Period:	**11/05/21-11/05/22**

ETHICS APPROVAL

To: **Emile Baril**
Graduate Student of Geography
emile.baril@gmail.com

From: Alison M. Collins-Mrakas, Director, Research Ethics
(on behalf of You-ta Chuang, Chair, Human Participants Review Committee)

Date: Friday, November 5, 2021

Title: **Food delivery and urban resistance: case study of platform work in Toronto and Paris**

Risk Level: ☒ Minimal Risk ☐ More than Minimal Risk

Level of Review: ☒ Delegated Review ☐ Full Committee Review

I am writing to inform you that this research project, **"Food delivery and urban resistance: case study of platform work in Toronto and Paris"** has received ethics review and approval by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines.

Note that approval is granted for one year. Ongoing research – research that extends beyond one year – must be renewed prior to the expiry date.

Any changes to the approved protocol must be reviewed and approved through the amendment process by submission of an amendment application to the HPRC prior to its implementation.

Any adverse or unanticipated events in the research should be reported to the Office of Research ethics (ore@yorku.ca) as soon as possible.

For further information on researcher responsibilities as it pertains to this approved research ethics protocol, please refer to the attached document, **"RESEARCH ETHICS: PROCEDURES to ENSURE ONGOING COMPLIANCE".**

***Please note** that due to ongoing changes with the pandemic, all researchers must review the procedures on the YuBetter website (Section: Coming to Campus) as there may be changes to protocol requirements.*

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at: 416-736-5914 or via email at: acollins@yorku.ca.

Yours sincerely,

Alison M. Collins-Mrakas M.Sc., LLM
Director,
Office of Research Ethics

PANEL ON
RESEARCH ETHICS
Navigating the ethics of human research

TCPS 2: CORE

Certificate of Completion

This document certifies that

Emile Baril

has completed the Tri-Council Policy Statement:
Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans
Course on Research Ethics (TCPS 2: CORE)

Date of Issue: **17 May, 2021**

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form

For the Study: Food delivery and Urban Resistance: Case study of platform gig work in Toronto

Researcher name:
Emile Baril - PhD Candidate, York University
emilebar@yorku.ca
Geography department, York University, #S900
4700 Keele Street, Toronto ON, M3J1P3

What You Will Be Asked to Do in the Research:
Semi-structured interviews with organizers, couriers, elected officials and other platforms and unions professionals will help us map the changes in regulations and mobilization. The interviews with couriers will also complete the trajectories leading to gig work and implication in mobilization. The estimated time commitment for the participant is between 30min and 1h30min.

Risks and Discomforts:
- There is a potential discomfort that may result from participation in the research in relation to bad workplace experiences.
- We do not foresee any risks or discomfort from your participation in the research.

Benefits of the Research and Benefits to You:
- The participation in this research will have great benefits for knowledge building regarding gig workers. There are no immediate benefits for the participants.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision not to volunteer, to stop participating, or to refuse to answer questions will not influence the nature of the ongoing relationship you may have with the researchers or study staff, or the nature of your relationship with York University either now, or in the future.

In the event you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed wherever possible. Should you wish to withdraw after the study, you will have the option to also withdraw your data up until the analysis is complete.

Confidentiality:
- The interview will be audio-recorded.
- The data (electronic and hard copy) will be securely stored with the researcher.
- The data will be destroyed following the completion of the thesis.

Unless you choose otherwise all information you supply during the research will be held in confidence and unless you specifically indicate your consent, your name will not appear in any report or publication of the research.

The audio tapes of the interview (your data) will be safely stored in a locked drive and only the researcher will have access to this information.

The data will be stored until the completion of the thesis in May of 2025.
Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law.

This study will use ZOOM interviews to collect data, which is an externally hosted cloud-based service. When information is transmitted over the internet privacy cannot be guaranteed. There is always a risk your responses may be intercepted by a third party (e.g., government agencies, hackers). Further, while York University researchers will not collect or use IP addresses or other information which could link your participation to your computer or electronic devices without informing you, there is a small risk with any platform such as this of data that is collected on external servers falling outside the control of the research team. If you are concerned about this, we would be happy to make alternative arrangements (where possible) for you to participate, perhaps via telephone. Please contact the researcher for further information.

Recordings (audio/video) will be saved in a password protected file to research team members' local computer, not the cloud based service

Please note that it is the expectation that participants agree not to make any unauthorized recordings of the content of a meeting / data collection session

Questions About the Research? If you have questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please feel free to contact me at emilebar@yorku.ca or my supervisor, Steven Tufts at tufts@yorku.ca. You may also contact the Graduate Program in Geography at gradgeo@yorku.ca and/or Telephone: 416-736-5220 / Fax: 416-736-5750.

This research has received ethics review and approval by the Delegated Ethics Review Committee, which is delegated authority to review research ethics protocols by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board, and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in the study, please contact the Sr. Manager & Policy Advisor for the Office of Research Ethics, 5th Floor, Kaneff Tower, York University (telephone 416-736-5914 or e-mail ore@yorku.ca).

Legal Rights and Signatures:

I _____, consent to participate in the study conducted by Emile Baril. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

Signature_____ **Date**_____
Participant

Signature_____ **Date**_____
Principal Investigator

Additional consent (where applicable)

1. **Audio recording**

☐ I consent to the audio-recording of my interview(s).

I _____ consent to the use of images of me (including photographs, video and other moving images), my environment and property in the following ways (please check all that apply):

In academic articles	☐ N	☐ Y
In print, digital and slide form	☐ N	☐ Y
In academic presentations	☐ N	☐ Y
In media	☐ N	☐ Y
In thesis materials	☐ N	☐ Y

Signature: Date:

Appendix C

Sample Questions Riders Interviews

Section 1: Information about the interviewee

Age? Ethnicity? Gender?
Which company do you mostly work for? Second? Third?
Where do you live?
Where do you work?
What did you do before food delivery?
How long have you been doing delivery?
    Why this?
How many hours a week do you do deliveries?
Do you have a degree?
    In Canada?
Is this you main/only job?
Did this change in the last couple of years/months/weeks?
What other changes have you observed in Toronto?
Do you have more, less or the same number of pings since COVID-19?
    Why do you think?
Do you make more, less or the same amount of money since COVID-19?
    Why do you think?

Section 2: Organization of the food delivery industry

What are the main issues in this line of work?
    Have they changed over the last couple of years/months/weeks?
What is your relationship with the company that hires you?
    Did this relation change in the last couple of years/months/weeks?
Is this relation mainly with algorithms/autoreply or do you also talk/write to people?
Do you feel tracked? Do you feel that your pace is controlled by the companies?
Any difference between companies?
Are there too many couriers in Toronto? Too much competition among workers?
Do you sometimes willingly accept lower wages than what you would like because of that?
Do you need this type of work to pay rent? Food?
Is the ratings system by customer affecting? Is it enforced by the companies?
Do you feel platforms communicate enough with you?
Do you feel pressure to accept orders?
Do you feel you need to maintain a certain pace?
    A certain customer rating?
    Accept a certain number of orders?
Do you feel safe as a food courier?

Do you have sufficient access to bathrooms during your online time?
Some areas better than others?
Do you have an exclusivity clause?
Do you have requirement to wear platform-branded uniforms and equipment?
Do you feel commission is high enough?
What do you think of the current prices for services?
What do you think of the current commission on transaction?
What do you think of the 2020 pay cuts?
Do you feel your work conditions need to change?
In what ways?
Do you know couriers that changed apps?
Why?
Do you know couriers who quitted?
Why?

Section 3: Political and social implications of platform/couriers

What do you think of the CUPW/CGT efforts to unionize gig workers?
Should protests be organized by a mainstream unions like CUPW/CGT?
Or other organization?
Did you join any of those formations?
Why?
What do you think of the rider collectives (GWU/CLAP)?
Do you know couriers implicated in a union/grassroots organization?
Do you follow any other gig worker movements in other cities around the world?
Why?
What have you learned from them?
What should be the focus of food courier mobilization?
What do you think should be the role of the City of Toronto/Paris?
What do you think should be the role of the Government of Canada/France?
Do you feel connected to other couriers?
How?
Do you use forums like reddit or uberpeople? Twitter? Facebook Groups?
If so, for organizing purposes? Protests? Meetings?
How do you see the future of the food delivery industry?
Did I forget something? Anything else you would like to add?

Appendix D

List of Interviewees

Paris

Name	**Date of interview**	**Country of origin**	**Platform(s) or workplace**	**Age**
Siaka	Feb. 12th, 2022	Ivory Coast	Stuart, Uber Eats, Frichti	50
Erio	Feb. 13th, 2022	Benin	Deliveroo, Uber Eats	21
Bakar	Feb. 13th, 2022	Ivory Coast	Uber Eats, Frichti	33
Abdo	Feb. 17th, 2022	Sudan	Uber Eats	31
Youny	Feb. 18th, 2022	Sudan	Deliveroo	25
Adil	Feb. 18th, 2022	Ivory Coast	Deliveroo, Frichti	30
Konan	Feb. 20th, 2022	Mali	Frichti	28
Jeremy	Jan. 31st, 2022	France	Uber Eats, Deliveroo, CGT	32
Édouard	Mar. 2nd, 2022	France	Deliveroo, CLAP	34
Ludo	Mar. 22nd, 2022	France	Deliveroo, CGT	33
Circé	Feb. 17th, 2022	France	MDC	N/A
Alex	Jan. 15th, 2022	France	COOPCycle	N/A

Toronto

Name	Date of interview	Country of origin	Platform(s) or workplace	Age
Mounir	Jul. 11th, 2022	Morocco	Uber Eats	46
Viyan	Jul. 12th, 2022	Kurdistan	Uber Eats, Door Dash	34
Moha	Jul. 12th, 2022	India	Uber Eats, Skip The Dishes	25
Riman	Jul. 15th, 2022	Nepal	Uber Eats	21
Ryad	Jul. 16th, 2022	India	Uber Eats	23
Amar	Jul. 16th, 2022	India	Uber Eats	22
Khari	Jul. 16th, 2022	India	Uber Eats	24
Alecks	Jul. 19th, 2022	Jordan	Uber Eats	27
Jagroot	Jul. 23rd, 2022	India	Uber Eats, Door Dash	31
Ivan	Nov. 11th, 2021	Canada	Foodora, Uber Eats, Door Dash	26
Matt	Nov. 4th, 2021	Canada	Foodora, Uber Eats	35
Ricky	Nov. 15th, 2021	Canada	Foodora	33
Jean	Dec. 3rd, 2021	Canada	CUPW	N/A
Mary	Aug. 10th, 2022	Canada	HASA	N/A