

Gender (In)equality and Women's capability in China's Gig Economy: A Case Study on Female 'Gig' Workers in Didi Chuxing

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Abstract

The future of work which is driven by digital technology has sparked controversial debate on the topic of gender (in)equality. Interestingly, there is a growing interest of gender pay gap study in the gig economy following the successful examples of Uber, TaskRabbit and Handy. That said, most of the existing research in the gig economy overlooks women's experience on digital platforms despite the expanding feminist scholarship on gender and work in both formal and informal economies. The PhD research aims at exploring how a triangular relationship between the state, technology and gender affects women's capability through the study of Didi Chuxing, a Chinese on-demand transportation application. It will examine how female drivers articulate their work experiences and shed light on their stories that comprise of both agency and exploitation within and beyond their gig works by drawing upon a qualitative approach, including both in-depth interview and participant observation with female Didi drivers. This research is aspired to contribute to the existing scholarship that analyses flexible work, technology and gender inequality in the gig economy. It includes how digital platforms simultaneously empower and render vulnerable working women, adding a layer of gendered perspective to the 'gig' work research.