

Global Conference on Measuring New Forms of Employment

Brussels, 4 - 5 July 2024

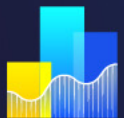


#MeasuringEmployment

Challenges in measuring digital platform employment – the Finnish experience

Session 5. Digital Platform Employment national experiences

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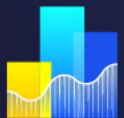
Once upon a time

- Uber & Wolt launched their activities in Finland in 2014
- Foodora followed in 2015, Airbnb gradually in the 2010's...
- In the mid-2010's, DPE was still quite unknown for many
- However, the debate around was accelerating
- In the wildest visions practically everyone would work via digital platforms in the future and employment relationships would become relics
- A need to capture this emerging phenomenon in statistics



First attempt to measure DPE: 2017

- Additional questions in the 2017 LFS, Statistics Finland
- Population aged 15 to 64 yrs
- CATI
- C. 40,000 respondents
- 7 % had earned income via platforms in the past 12 monts
- 0,3 % had earned at least $\frac{1}{4}$ of their paid income via platforms in the past 12 months



In 2017, we first tested cognitively...

Question tested

- Goods and services are exchanged via digital platforms operating on the internet, such as Airbnb, UpWork and Uber. Do you use such digital platforms to get job opportunities or earnings?

Yes/ No

Outcomes

- "What is platform?" (Electronical reservation system in internet? Facebook groups selling and buying things?)
- "No, I'm not a Uber-driver"
- => Very general question did not obviously work, but with a specific definition the question would become lengthy and complicated
- => Respondents tended to stick on the examples given, not thinking beyond



In 2017, we went in the field with...

Question

- In the last 12 months, have you worked or otherwise earned income through the following platforms:
 1. Airbnb
 2. Uber
 3. Tori.fi/Huuto.net
 4. Solved
 5. Some other? (+ Open question on the name of the platform)
 6. None(Multiple alternatives allowed)

"Some other" most typically

- Different kinds of online flea markets, Facebook, car and home sales websites
- Invoicing companies
- Investment and lottery web pages
- "My own (company's) website"
- The potential link to platforms was sometimes very vague

...and we narrowed down with ...

If done platform work:

- In the last 12 months, how much of your personal earned income came from work via these platforms?
1=Most or all
2=About one half
3=About one quarter
4=Less than a quarter?



Our second attempt to measure DPE: 2022

- Eurostat DPE Pilot
- In connection of 2022 LFS
- Population aged 15 to 64 yrs
- CAWI & CATI
- C. 19,000 respondents
- Co-funded by Eurostat
- 3,9 % had earned income via platforms in the past 12 months
- 0,4 % had earned at least $\frac{1}{4}$ of their paid income via platforms in the last month



Eurostat approach used in 2022

Introduction

- “Now, I would like to ask you questions about work that can be carried out or received through an Internet Platform or App for phones or tablets.
- I am referring to work for pay or profit, provided through or mediated by online platforms, such as Uber, Foodora, Airbnb, Upwork or Tori.fi. This does not include remote work or the use of software to make phone or video calls.
- Please answer to the following questions even if they refer to a job already described (in previous questions), or a job done sporadically.”

Detailed questions

- **In the last 12 months**, did you use an Internet Platform or App for phones or tablets to carry out any of the following services or work for pay or profit:
- Taxi services, using for example Uber or Yango?
- Delivery of food or any other goods, using for example Wolt or Foodora?
- Altogether 12 specific types of platform work plus “some other work via platforms”
- For each “yes”, the name of the platform was asked



Our solution for asking the name(s) of the platform(s) used in 2022

Method

- Name of platform/ app through which the work/service was **primarily** carried out?
- Was work/service carried out through **any other** platform or app?
- Was there **still another** platform or app through which work was carried out?
- Drop-down menu with 75 platform companies plus "some other" after every step
- In case "some other" => open question

Outcomes

- Technically the drop-down menu worked well
- Still, not possible to create an exhaustive list
- New platforms kept on popping up even during the fieldwork
- Name of the platform was a crucial tool for checking the data and filter out false positives (at least a part of them 😊)

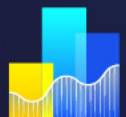
Experiences on the DPE pilot 2022

Challenges

- A long list of questions
=> frustration especially by those who had not worked on platforms
- (Too) long introduction and questions
=> people did not stay focused
- Examples help to concretise what is meant by DPE, on the one hand..
- ...on the other, some respondents stick to those examples only, not thinking beyond

Outcomes

- Data is not of extremely good quality
- Quite a lot of false positives
=> Need to clean the data afterwards



Filtering out false positives manually, pilot 2022

- Using names of the platforms given by respondent
- If needed, relevant information from core LFS (eg. main job, number of jobs, status of employment, occupation, employer, duration of employment relationship...)

Eg. A 60-years-old teacher with no second job, having worked for the municipal school for 20 years, but says using platforms for teaching tasks => no DPE

- Doable due to the small number of positive responses
- Finally 12 % of positives were classified as false positives



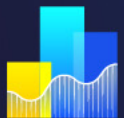
Cleaning up the data 2022 1/2: Some errors...

Lack of understanding the concept

- Persons reporting use of digital tools as DPE work (e.g. Zoom, Teams, Google translator, Doodle etc.)
- Persons having used DPE services as consumers
- Persons reporting non-DPE-companies

Lack of concentration

- Persons not reporting positively when certain type of task (e.g. taxi services) was asked, but replied positively at the end to “some other” and gave name of a platform specific for that task (e.g. Uber)
- Persons reporting positive to a certain type of task (e.g. translation services) but giving the name specific for a totally different type of tasks (e.g. Foodora)



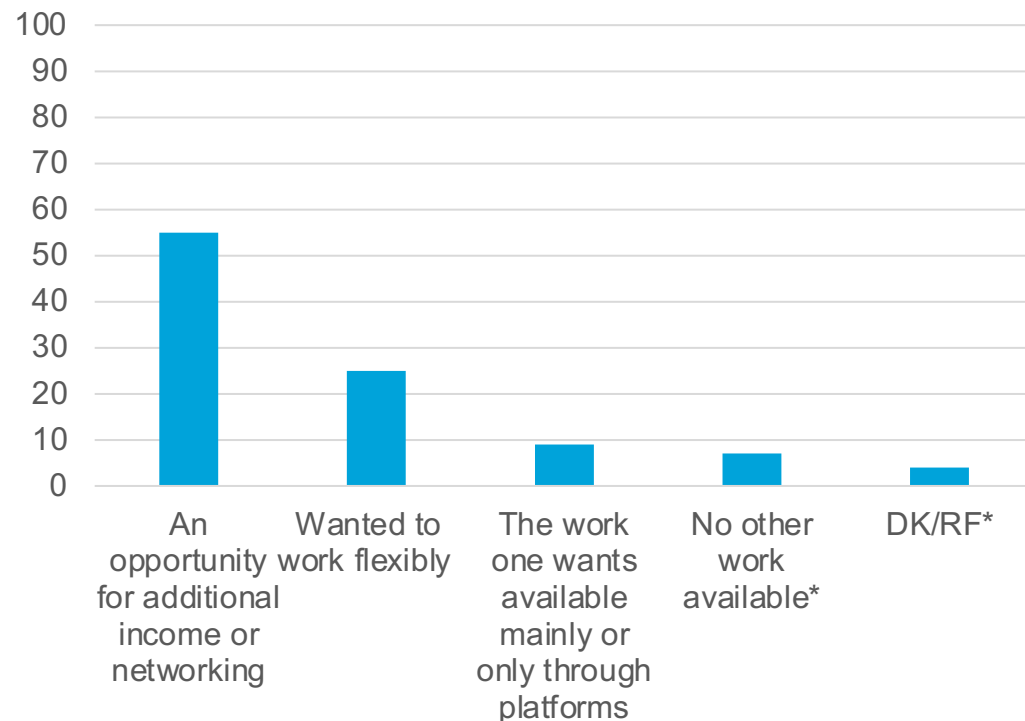
Cleaning up the data 2022 2/2: ...and blurring boundaries

- Short-term vs. long-term renting out accommodation with work input
=> only platforms typically used for short-time rentals considered as DPE
- Employment services operating on a platform
 - ↔ TAW-agencies using digital solutions (platforms)
 - ↔ Digital platform companies operating like TAW agencies
- Social media: a variety in the amounts and types of profit/pay: money, products, services, vouchers, reductions...
- A conscious way to earn some pay or profit vs. a leisure time activity which eventually produces some income
- Microwork with a tiny "income"
- Digital bulletin board for advertisements vs. a platform organising activities?
- **The degree of control (if any) exercised by the platform?**



Main reason for doing DPE

DPE Pilot 2022 Finland, share of those having done DPE in the last month, %



- **Opportunity for additional income or networking** more common for women, those of Finnish origin and those aged under 35
- **Opportunity to work flexibly** more common for women, those of foreign origin* and those aged over 35
- **Only available work** more common for men, those of foreign origin* and those aged over 35*
- **The work one wants available only via platforms** – no significant differences
- *Results are only indicative



Comparison: 2017 and 2022

- One general question in 2017:
7% had done DPE in the past 12 months
=> 0.3 % had earned at least a quarter of income via platforms **in the past 12 months**
- Several detailed question in 2022:
4 % had done DPE in the past 12 months
=> 0.4 % had earned at least a quarter of income **in the past month**



Some conclusions

- Stand-alone general question leads to more false positives than several specific questions...
- ...but several detailed questions create frustration in respondents
- Need to find balance:
A few questions needed, still, as few as possible
One general question on DPE + more specific questions for those concerned?



Other challenges in measuring DPE

- Lack of a precise and universal statistical concept
- Continuous evolvement of the phenomenon
- Still relatively unknown for many
- DPE-workers most probably underpresented in surveys (young, migrants...)
- Check-up questions a necessity
- Too small a number of positive responses for further analysis
- Depending on the concepts and methodology, the results of the prevalence of DPE at a certain time at a certain place may vary to a great extent



What next?

- Probably not even possible to find a perfect way to measure DPE
- Still, keep on searching the least inadequate way
- Be open to different data sources and methods
- NSO population and household surveys to measure the prevalence of DPE
- Targeted surveys to capture the working conditions and characteristics of DPE
- In the EU, worth to explore the possibilities provided by the EU Directive on Administrative Cooperation (DAC7) for Digital Platforms
- Need for common statistical standards of DPE!





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Thank you



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