

Fairness in the Latin American platform economy: Assessing labour conditions on digital labour platforms

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Abstract: The platform economy, particularly digital labour platforms, has experienced significant growth in Latin American countries. These platforms, which facilitate specific labour relations known as platform work (Aloisi and De Stefano, 2022), have seen a substantial increase in user registrations. A survey (Alvarez et al, 2020) estimated that 16% of the population is registered on these platforms, with 9.4% reporting the provision of services through them. This phenomenon was further accelerated in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic (Katz et al, 2020; Arreaza et al., 2021), underscoring the growing importance of these platforms in the region. These companies operate in various sectors, including ride-hailing, delivery, and cleaning and care (Griguera and Nava, 2021). The literature has increasingly shedding light on the region (Miguez, 2023; Huepe, 2023) and specific countries such as Chile (Morris, 2021), Brazil (Rebechi et al., 2023), Argentina (Haidar and Garavaglia, 2022), Colombia (Maldonado and Sánchez, 2020), and Mexico (Ortega Herreguerena, 2023). Among the growing body of literature, a key aspect that has been consistently highlighted is the precarious conditions posed by digital labour platforms in the region (Hidalgo et al., 2020; Bridi et al., 2023). This paper takes a unique approach in analysing fairness in platform work in Latin America, drawing from studies conducted by the Fairwork Project. The project assessed the platform economy against five principles: pay, conditions, contracts, management and representation (Graham et al., 2020). The methodological framework involves data collected from publicly available sources, surveys with workers and interviews with platform managers (Heeks et al., 2021). From 2020 until 2024, the project has assessed over 68 platforms in nine countries. The findings reveal how digital labour platforms in the region engineer relations are characterised by low pay, poor health and safety protections, surveillance and unfair decisions in algorithmic management and barriers to workers' representation.

Keywords: Platform work, Digital labour platforms, fair work, Latin America, platform economy

ESP Equidad en la economía de plataformas latinoamericana: Evaluando condiciones laborales en las plataformas digitales de trabajo

Resumen: La economía de plataformas, en particular las plataformas digitales de trabajo, ha experimentado un importante crecimiento en los países de América Latina. Estas plataformas, que facilitan relaciones laborales específicas conocidas como trabajo de plataforma (Aloisi y De Stefano, 2022), han experimentado un aumento sustancial en el registro de usuarios. Una encuesta (Alvarez et al, 2020) estimó que el 16% de la población está registrada en estas plataformas, y el 9,4% reporta la prestación de servicios a través de ellas. Este fenómeno se aceleró aún más a raíz de la pandemia de COVID-19 (Katz et al, 2020; Arreaza et al., 2021), lo que subraya la creciente importancia de estas plataformas en la región. Estas empresas operan en diversos sectores, como el transporte a domicilio, el reparto y la limpieza y el cuidado (Griguera y Nava, 2021). La literatura ha arrojado cada vez más luz sobre la región (Miguez, 2023; Huepe, 2023) y países específicos como Chile (Morris, 2021), Brasil (Rebechi et al., 2023), Argentina (Haidar y Garavaglia, 2022), Colombia (Maldonado y Sánchez, 2020) y México (Ortega Herreguerena, 2023). Entre el creciente corpus de literatura, un aspecto clave que se ha destacado sistemáticamente son las precarias condiciones que plantean las plataformas laborales digitales en la región (Hidalgo et al., 2020; Bridi et al., 2023). Este documento adopta un enfoque único en su análisis de la situación del trabajo de plataforma en América Latina, basándose en estudios realizados por el Proyecto Fairwork. El proyecto evaluó la equidad en la economía de plataforma en relación con cinco principios: remuneración, condiciones, contratos, gestión y representación (Graham et al., 2020). El marco metodológico incluye datos recopilados de fuentes de acceso público, encuestas a trabajadores y entrevistas a gestores de plataformas (Heeks et al., 2021). Desde 2020 hasta 2024, el proyecto ha evaluado más de x plataformas en nueve países. Los hallazgos revelan cómo las plataformas laborales digitales en las relaciones de ingeniería de la región se caracterizan por bajos salarios, escasas protecciones de salud y seguridad, vigilancia y decisiones injustas en la gestión algorítmica y barreras a la representación de los trabajadores.

Palabras clave: Trabajo de plataforma, Plataformas laborales digitales, trabajo justo, América Latina, economía de plataforma.

Summary: 1. Introduction. 2. Background - Platform work and the platform economy in Latin America. 3. Methods: The Fairwork Project approach. 4. Fairness in the Latin American platform economy. 4.1. Pay. 4.2. Conditions. 4.3. Contracts. 4.4. Management. 4.5. Representation. 5. Conclusions. 6. References

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1. Introduction

Latin America boasts a distinct historical trajectory that positions the region in a unique socio-economic context. Some authors have argued that European expansion and development were closely linked to the colonization and the domination of indigenous peoples from the 14th century. While continents like Africa and Asia largely remained colonized until the mid-20th century, Latin America's liberation struggles commenced in the early 19th century. In addition to colonial legacies, imperial domination also constituted a pivotal factor in the region's evolution. Over the last decade, the average growth of the region (including the Caribbean) stood at 0.9% (ECLAC, 2024).

This erratic trajectory, constrained by international structural socio-economic limitations, is evident in the Latin American labour market and its specific sectors. The dependency of these nations and their struggles for socio-economic advancement are directly linked to the subordinate position the region has occupied in the global division of labour. This persistence is observed even with a slow recovery since the Covid-19 pandemic (CEPAL/OIT, 2023). While economic indicators signal a steady and stable evolution, structural challenges endure, and the region has not been able to surpass the employment levels of 2012 (OIT, 2025).

A key characteristic of Latin American labour markets is informality (Antunes, 2011). The rates of workers outside the formal sector have remained stable over the last five years, at approximately 48% (OIT, 2025). Another defining feature is the low quality of jobs. Between 2016 and 2023, the job quality index in the region remained unchanged, and a significant portion of countries experienced a decline in this index (World Bank, 2025). Amidst this landscape, one type of work has seen a notable surge in the region: that mediated by digital labour platforms. However, this does not mean that Latin America can be taken as a homogeneous Labour Market. Studies by organisations such as ECLAC shows how the region was historically embedded in both inter-national and intra-national inequalities (with regional and national cores and peripheries).

The platform economy, particularly digital labour platforms, has experienced significant growth in Latin American countries. A survey (Alvarez et al., 2020) estimated that 16% of the population was registered on these platforms, with 9.4% reporting that they provide services through them. This phenomenon was further accelerated in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic (Katz et al., 2020; Arreaza et al., 2021), thereby underscoring the growing importance of these platforms in the region.

This is part of a broader phenomena of the global rise of digital labour platforms over the past 15 years (Rani, 2021). These platforms, integral to specific labour relations known as platform work (Aloisi and De Stefano, 2022), have experienced a substantial surge in user registrations. They facilitate the supply and demand of labour power in a wide range of services where requesters and workers register on an online interface. The platform orchestrates the supply and demand of labour, delineating the terms, work allocation methods, payment procedures, and management processes, typically relying on automated systems such as algorithms (Grohmann and Salvagni, 2022).

These companies operate in various sectors, including ride-hailing, delivery, and cleaning and care (Griguera and Nava, 2021). Authors commonly categorize these entities based on the geographical scope of their activities (Mourelo and Pereyra, 2020). They can be geographically bounded, with workers and clients situated in shared territories (often termed on-location platforms), or they can coordinate services performed irrespective of the geographical location of workers and clients, a model designated as cloudwork platforms (Valente and Graham, 2025).

The literature has increasingly shedding light on the region (Miguez, 2023; Huepe, 2023) and specific countries such as Chile (Morris, 2021), Brazil (Rebechi et al., 2023), Argentina (Haidar and Garavaglia, 2022), Colombia (Maldonado and Sánchez, 2020), Mexico (Ortega Herreguerena, 2023), Peru (Dinegro, 2021) and Uruguay (Observatorio de Relaciones Laborales, 2025). Among this expanding body of research, a pivotal aspect consistently underscored is the precarious conditions inherent in digital labour platforms within the region (Hidalgo et al., 2020; Bridi et al., 2023; Rosenbaum Carli, 2022). While this literature has presented the challenges of workers in the region, there are still gaps of more comprehensive comparative studies that go beyond case studies and specific sectors in each country. Furthermore, while the growing literature has been shedding light in the precarious nature of platform work in the region, there is still a lack of studies that assess fairness regionally.

This article investigates the working conditions of platform work in Latin America by analysing findings from the Fairwork Project in eight countries, with a primary focus on South American nations. The central research question guiding this analysis was: To what extent are the working conditions on Latin American digital labour platforms fair, and how do the levels of fairness vary across countries, sectors, and thematic areas? Additionally, the study set forth the following specific objectives: to analyse the variation in fairness levels across the participating countries; to determine how fairness levels differ among the various platform sectors; to investigate how the levels of fairness vary based on the platform's geographical base (i.e., whether the platform is Latin American or based in another region); and, finally, to identify the primary challenges arising in each thematic area, corresponding to the five principles of fairness (pay, conditions, contracts, management, and representation).

In total, 68 platforms were assessed across these eight countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Paraguay, and Uruguay. These countries collectively constitute a significant representation of Latin America, though a limitation exists due to the absence of assessments in the Caribbean sub-region. The selected platforms comprise the most prominent ones operating in these areas. This article adopts a distinctive approach to analysing the platform work situation in Latin America, drawing upon studies conducted by the Fairwork Project. The framework developed in consultation with researchers, workers and platforms created a set of standards to measure fairness based on five core principles: pay, conditions, contracts, management, and representation (Graham et al., 2020). The methodological framework encompasses data collected from publicly available sources, surveys with workers, and interviews with platform managers (Heeks et al., 2021).

The paper contributes to the literature on platform work in Latin America in three ways. First, it adopts a common framework across eight countries, which facilitates comparisons among countries, sectors, and thematic areas. Second, it qualifies the analysis of working conditions by focusing on fairness, utilizing five principles, ten thresholds, and over forty specific standards. Third, it enriches the literature by offering a granular account of fairness that extends beyond the general challenges faced by workers, specifically analysing fairness among companies.

The paper is structured into three sections. In the first, we provide a theoretical and empirical background of platform work in Latin America, delving into the literature on digital labour platforms in the region and the characteristics of this particular work arrangement. In the second, we present the Fairwork action-research project and its methodological approach utilized to assess the platforms and design the study. Thereafter, we analyse the fairness in the eight selected countries based on the Fairwork data for each, highlighting the main characteristics of platform work in these nations and the challenges to workers revealed by the findings. Finally, we conclude the paper with reflections on the study's relevance and future directions.

2. Background: Platform work and the platform economy in Latin America

Labour platforms are digital infrastructures that mediate, organize, and often algorithmically manage the exchange of labour and services (Grohmann, 2020). These platforms act as intermediaries between clients or consumers and workers, facilitating tasks such as food delivery, transportation, domestic services, freelance digital work, and more. Platform work refers to labour that is mediated through these digital platforms. It includes a broad spectrum of tasks that are assigned, tracked, and remunerated via platform interfaces. Platform work is characterized by fragmented tasks, algorithmic supervision, and flexible or irregular working hours (Muldoon, Graham and Cant, 2024). In the sphere

of work, there is the perpetuation of a dominant imaginary, which has sustained ways of living, thinking, and producing in society based on digital technologies (Poell, Nieborg, and Duffy, 2021). This extends also to digital labour platforms. Currently, those companies have operated in an unlimited and trans-spatial way, reconfiguring low-cost production networks, especially in Global South countries (Graham and Anwar, 2019; Muldoon, Graham and Cant, 2024), intensifying the exploitation of those who live from work. In the list of hegemonic contemporary technologies, digital platforms are the most common form of programmable infrastructures, which generate new models of work and communication, processed by the logic of algorithmic, financialization, and datafication (Grohmann, 2021, Poell; Nieborg; Van Dijck, 2020).

There is an inseparability with the elements of datafication and financialization (Grohmann, 2020), which are prominent features of the neoliberal model. Thus, financialization, which is a process of value extraction that has been used from digital platforms as tools to inscribe itself within a perspective of accumulation that does not directly involve work. In other words, many of the commercial platforms are corporations that use work processes to extract, above all, data. Data, whether from workers or customers, can usually generate value at abyssal levels. This aspect explains the format operated by many platforms, when selling products at a price far below the market: in addition to this sales process involving the unpaid work of those who make up the logistics, the company also gains from the sale of customer data.

In these terms, the historical perspective of the political economy sees digital platforms as direct developments of the productive restructuring of capitalism, emerging from the revolution of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) within neoliberalism and globalization (Paraná, 2024). Given the condition that the productive models linked to ICT make many of the geographical barriers more flexible, such a productive reconfiguration ended up reorganizing the spaces of production, exploiting even more workers from the countries located in the Global South. In other words, a digital-based economy has made possible an "operational decentralization" of labour, production, circulation, and financial flows (Paraná, 2024). Thus, platforms facilitate the connection of social locations and domains, accelerating processes and capitalizing on economic gains from data and information, even if in a speculative character.

The consequences of digital labour platforms have been a central focus of the socio-economic debate. Consolidating new control mechanisms, the power relations inherent in these platforms have successfully penetrated large business segments, such as transportation, deliveries, and the provision of general services. Scholars have pointed out how platform work is shaped to avoid labour regulations and to institutionalize and amplify precarity in a wide range of sectors globally (Aloisi and De Stefano, 2022; Graham and Anwar, 2019). Platform work intensifies and combines in particular ways dynamics of both exploitation and expropriation, crucial to capitalist accumulation in both periphery and core nations, as Fraser (2016) explains.

In line with the topics of this research, the debate on digital platform work in Latin America is composed of issues such as precariousness, informality, the need for regulation, and collective organisation of work. The literature has emphasised aspects such as the regulatory capacity of states and the mobilisation of social actors (Bensusán & Santos, 2021; Miguez & Menendez, 2021), labour control and the consequent deepening of processes of subordination and precariousness (Rebechi et al., 2022), regulatory policies and structural changes in employment in Latin America (Stecher et al 2025), among others.

Latin America has been a part of these changes, both incorporating general trends of the platformization of work and developing its own particular expressions due to how digital labour platforms evolved, shaped by the possibilities and constraints of the region's labour markets. (Abílio,

2020; Antunes, 2019; Miguez, 2023; Griguera and Nava, 2021), highlighting sufficient elements to infer about the increase in precariousness at work due to the accentuation of informality. By portraying the Latin reality, we are talking about a context of unemployment and underemployment, of a country historically marked by informality, job insecurity, insecurity of lifestyles, insecurity in relation to housing, etc. This makes us a fertile ground for the exploitation of human labour in its most different aspects. A study on labour informality in Latin America in the digital age (Estanque and Peredo, 2023) indicates that the field of labour has recently faced challenges imposed by technological transformations in a globalized character. This phenomenon accentuates, among other aspects, the reduction in the ability to generate regulated work that can be considered "decent", using the foundations agreed upon by the International Labour Organization (ILO).

This dynamic of exploitation is anchored by what we might call an ideological mantle of entrepreneurship, which is nothing more than a set of discourses that attribute to individuals, in isolation, the success or failure of their working hours under a meritocratic rhetoric. In fact, this strategic game of the elites covers up an immense farce around the issue of labour flexibility. In fact, the neologism of precarious entrepreneurship is the one that best summarizes the historical dynamics in which the ideology of work in the platform economy is located (Casilli, 2020).

Informality at work in Latin America has been presented as "entrepreneurship" since the 1990s, especially in a context of neoliberal reforms (Lima and Oliveira, 2021). In the use of the term "entrepreneur", which continues to expand in the common social discourse, informality comes to be seen as synonymous with flexible, competitive work and the responsibility of the worker. It is, therefore, a narrative that tries to justify the precariousness of work, emptying collective action and transferring responsibility for social security to the individual worker. As a result, although the phenomenon applies to a range of activities that are not restricted to those carried out on digital platforms, what they have in common is that on-demand work is now associated with the denial of the employment relationship (Lima and Oliveira, 2021). In this context, many workers not only accept the logic of 'being their own boss', but also say they prefer this format that simply obscures subordinate relationships (Howson et al, 2020).

The expansion of platform work in Latin America reflects broader patterns of labour informality and neoliberal restructuring. As noted by Garavaglia (2022) in her analysis of Argentina, digital labour platforms have proliferated rapidly, especially in urban centers where unemployment and underemployment persist. This growth is shaped by a dual logic: on the one hand, platforms promise flexibility, autonomy, and access to work without bureaucratic intermediaries; on the other, they impose algorithmic forms of control and surveillance that resemble, and often intensify, traditional labour exploitation. The rapid expansion of the platform economy in Latin America has transformed labour markets, urban mobility, and modes of social interaction, particularly among precariously employed and migrant populations. This transformation is not merely technological, it is infrastructural and political.

Across cities like Bogotá, Lima, São Paulo, Buenos Aires, and Santiago, platform-mediated work has become a critical component of informal economies, providing income opportunities to marginalized workers while simultaneously entrenching new forms of labour control and social exclusion. This contradiction is particularly evident in the case of food delivery and transport platforms, which rely heavily on vulnerable and migrant labour. In Bogotá, for instance, Sánchez Vargas et al. (2024) describe the infrastructuring of delivery work as a process of spatial and temporal control that renders workers hyper-visible to platforms and yet invisible to labour protections. Migrant delivery workers are compelled to navigate both the city and the digital interface of platforms under conditions of coercion, exclusion, and legal ambiguity. Their mobility is closely managed through

incentive schemes, performance metrics, and opaque deactivations, which act as informal but effective disciplinary mechanisms.

On the other hand, workers with advanced education degrees have also entered platform work in professional services (such as healthcare, Law, and translation) and high-skilled technology activities (e.g., data science, software engineering, and AI development). This work occurs on both on-location and cloudwork platforms, the latter of which allows jobs to be performed regardless of the workers' and requesters' locations (Valente and Graham, 2025). A study conducted by the ILO about cloudwork in Latin America found that over half of workers (53%) have clients from other regions, earning an average of USD 5.48 per hour (Cravo, 2025). While workers value flexibility on these platforms and the possibility of being paid in foreign currencies, they also face challenges and a lack of labour protections.

A key feature of platform labour in Latin America is the absence or weakness of effective regulatory frameworks. While some countries have proposed legislation aimed at defining the employment status of platform workers, implementation remains limited. Rosenbaum Carli's normative proposal highlights the complexity of regulating "offline" digital platform work, calling for international coordination and the development of new legal categories that go beyond the binary of employment and self-employment. In Colombia, Sánchez Vargas et al. (2022) introduce the concept of technolegal expulsions to describe how platform companies manipulate legal ambiguities and technological tools to sidestep accountability. Rather than merely existing in a legal vacuum, platforms actively produce deregulation by deploying contractual models, algorithmic governance, and data opacity that fragment labour protections. Workers are treated as users of the platform, not as laborers entitled to rights—a practice that contributes to their dispossession and vulnerability. This dynamic is echoed in Lima, where Dinegro (2021) documents the deteriorating working conditions of delivery couriers, who often work over 12 hours a day without social security, health coverage, or job stability. The informality of the sector mirrors national labour market trends, but the platform model adds a layer of digital opacity that complicates both collective organizing and regulatory enforcement.

Despite structural challenges, platform workers across Latin America are not passive recipients of exploitation. As Muñoz and Martinez (2022) argue, self-organization among delivery workers in Peru and Chile reveals the persistence of solidarity and collective agency even in fragmented digital environments. These forms of organization often emerge outside traditional union frameworks, relying instead on WhatsApp groups, informal networks, and social media channels to share information, mobilize protests, and negotiate with platforms. One significant example of such alternatives is the rise of women-led rider cooperatives in Brazil, as studied by Salvagni, Grohmann, and Matos (2022). These initiatives challenge the masculinized and extractive model of platform capitalism by building cooperative structures that prioritize safety, dignity, and gender equity. While still marginal, they represent a form of platform cooperativism that offers a counter-narrative to the dominant logics of commodification and surveillance.

Platform work in Latin America is a complex and evolving field that reflects broader sociological transformations in labour, technology, and regulation. It cannot be understood solely through the lens of innovation or flexibility; it must be approached as a deeply stratified and contested terrain shaped by historical inequalities, neoliberal restructuring, and the transnational dynamics of digital capitalism. While platform firms seek to exploit regulatory loopholes and expand precarious labour regimes, workers across the region are developing new repertoires of resistance and cooperation.

At the same time, understanding platform work in Latin America is essential to comprehending this phenomenon globally. This is since platformized work relations do not reproduce precarity only

in the region or in the Global South, but instead reconfigure and expand class asymmetries and workers' exploitation and expropriation (Fraser, 2016) across geographies, both in core and periphery nations. Latin American platform work models and working conditions are also reproduced or adapted to other regions, both in the Global South and in the Global North, both in the capital-labour contradiction and also in "invisible" and out of the wage-nexus work relations, understanding global workforces as heterogeneous groups (Carbonella and Kasmir, 2020).

3. Methods: The Fairwork Project approach

Launched in 2018 at the Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford, the Fairwork project is now jointly coordinated by the Oxford Internet Institute and the Berlin Social Science Centre. Operating across 41 countries and five continents, Fairwork is an action-oriented research initiative dedicated to enhancing labour standards within the global digital economy. It does so by evaluating working conditions in digital companies through the creation of a Fairwork score for each company evaluated.

Fairwork operates with a clear theory of change grounded in social empathy and ethical awareness. It recognises that consumers—when given the option—often prefer to support companies that treat their workers fairly. By publicly releasing platform scores based on the fairness of the work digital companies provide, Fairwork empowers consumers to make informed, ethical choices, which in turn can motivate companies to improve their practices through market-based pressure. In addition to influencing individual behaviour, Fairwork scores can shape institutional policies in procurement, investment, and partnerships. These scores serve as a credible reference point for organisations seeking to align with fair labour practices in the digital economy. Companies are also encouraged to collaborate with Fairwork to improve their policies and measures towards workers in order to meet each principle and obtain a point.

The project evaluates working conditions across three primary categories of digital labor:

1. Location-based platform work—This includes services delivered via digital platforms that require physical presence, such as ride-hailing, delivery, and household tasks.
2. Cloudwork—Tasks performed entirely online through digital platforms, including microtasking, translation, and graphic design.
3. AI-related work—Activities essential to artificial intelligence development, such as data annotation, data cleaning, and content moderation.

To evaluate digital work companies, Fairwork created a set of standards known as the Fairwork Principles. These were originally tailored for location-based platform work, developed in collaboration with a range of stakeholders—scholars studying digital labour, platform managers, policymakers, and trade unions and workers' associations—through discussions hosted at the International Labour Organization in Geneva and in roundtables held in multiple locations, including Berlin, Johannesburg, and Bangalore.

The five Fairwork Principles (Fairwork, 2025a) are as follows:

1. **Fair Pay:** Workers should earn a decent wage in their local context after deducting work-related costs and accounting for active hours. Timely and complete payment is essential.
2. **Fair Conditions:** Platforms must implement measures to minimize risks associated with the work process and actively safeguard worker health and safety.
3. **Fair Contracts:** Work terms must be clear, concise, and easily accessible. Contracts should be consistent with local legal frameworks, free from clauses that unfairly shield the platform from responsibility, and must allow workers the right to seek redress.

4. **Fair Management:** Platforms are expected to uphold transparent decision-making procedures. Workers should be informed of decisions affecting them, have the right to appeal, and be protected from discriminatory algorithmic management.

5. **Fair Representation:** Workers must have channels to express their concerns and organize collectively, regardless of their employment classification. Platforms are encouraged to engage with worker collectives.

These principles apply universally, regardless of how or where the work is conducted or how workers are classified. Each principle includes two levels: a basic threshold for meeting minimum labour standards and a more advanced threshold if more advanced labour standards are satisfied. Companies can score from 0 to 10 points, awarded only when there is solid evidence that a platform satisfies each criterion. While the core principles remain the same across the three digital labour types, their application is tailored to the unique characteristics of each form of work. As such, separate sets of criteria exist for location-based work, cloudwork, and AI labour (Fairwork 2025b-d).

Fairwork employs a mixed-methods qualitative research approach (Fairwork, 2025e) that combines three main strategies:

1. **Desk Research:** This involves analysing publicly available materials—contracts, platform policies, terms of service, and digital interface features. Researchers also consider legal documents and media reports to assess a company's labour practices. For platforms where direct employer-employee relationships are unclear, other indicators such as public statements or platform design are used to assess compliance.

2. **Engagement with Platform Management:** Fairwork reaches out to company representatives to request documentation and conduct interviews. These conversations aim to understand platform operations and gauge commitment to the Fairwork Principles. If management declines to participate, the assessment proceeds using only desk research and worker interviews.

3. **Worker Interviews:** Fairwork researchers conduct interviews with workers to gather first-hand insights about real-world working conditions and how contracts and terms and conditions are experienced in practice. Participation is voluntary, confidential, and fairly compensated.

- For location-based work, researchers recruit participants both online and in person, through a variety of recruitment strategies, including direct contact, social media outreach, and snowball sampling. Typically, 6–10 workers per platform are interviewed. The purpose of the interviews is not to have a representative sample, but rather a stratified sample, which allow to gauge how the platform policies are experienced by workers with different socio-demographic characteristics.

- For cloudwork, researchers combine platform-based listings and external outreach, aiming to survey a diverse set of at least 10 workers per continent where the platform operates.

- For AI-related tasks, between 30 and 50 workers are interviewed per company, recruited through direct contacts, social media and snowballing.

These three data sources are cross-verified and triangulated to ensure an accurate assessment of platform practices and their associated working conditions. Final scores are determined through a peer-reviewed process involving the local research team, the central team at Oxford or Berlin, as well as reviewers from other participating countries in the Fairwork network. Points are awarded only when strong, corroborated evidence is present, ensuring transparency and academic rigour.

In this article, we assessed the data of 68 platforms in eight countries according to the five principles and ten corresponding thresholds. To answer the research question, we compared scores according to the following categories: 1) countries, 2) geographical base of companies, 3) sectors, 4) principles. For the latter, quantitative and qualitative data were analysed to highlight the primary fairness-related challenges of workers.

4. Fairness in the Latin American platform economy

In this section, we analyse data from the selected countries to comprehend how platforms are performing regarding fairness, based on the five Fairwork principles. This analysis also illuminates the challenges faced by workers in the region. The 68 selected platforms accurately reflect the landscape of digital labour platforms in Latin America. The sample includes a mix of international companies with significant regional reach and national platforms. They were chosen based on their market-leading positions and prominence within their respective countries. The scoring league tables were also constructed to incorporate some sectoral diversity among these companies.

The first group consists of six major firms: Uber (scored in all eight countries), Rappi (present in seven countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Uruguay), PedidosYa (present in six countries: Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, Paraguay, and Uruguay), Cabify (present in five countries: Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Peru, and Uruguay), Didi (present in five countries: Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru), and InDrive (present in five countries: Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Paraguay). Competing with these platform work giants are national companies operating in traditional sectors, such as ride-hailing (e.g., Picap/Colombia; Digitaxi/Ecuador), delivery (e.g., Justo/Chile; AppJusto/Brazil), domestic services (e.g., AseoYa/Colombia), logistics (e.g., Lalamove/Brazil), and professional services (e.g., TuAly/Colombia, GetNinjas/Brazil).

In terms of sample size, the number of platforms per country varied from 5 to 12, with an average of 8.5 (see Table 1). Sector-wise, the distribution shows a prevalent presence of couriers (45.59%) and ride-hailing (42.65%), which aligns with international figures from reports such as the International Labour Organization's World Employment Outlook on digital labour platforms (Rani et al., 2021). Domestic and professional services comprised a relatively small portion of the sample, accounting for approximately 10%. Within the courier sector, food and grocery deliveries constituted the largest number of platforms, confirming these two sub-sectors as the most dynamic within the platform economy.

The average score for the 68 platforms was just 1.13 out of a possible 10 points on the Fairwork principles scale (see Table 3 below). This is particularly concerning given that, as previously stated, the top of this scale doesn't signify a perfect or exemplary platform, but rather one that merely meets fundamental fair work standards. A comparison of country averages reveals considerable variance. Colombia recorded the highest average at 2.25, followed by Uruguay at 1.8, and Ecuador at 1.4.

Colombia's superior scores were primarily driven by four platforms that attained the highest rankings in the region: Hogarú (8), AseoYá (7), Aux, and Cabify (6) (Fairwork Colombia, 2023). Notably, three of these platforms offer domestic services, a sector that is regulated in Colombia. This strongly suggests that robust legal labour protections play a crucial role in ensuring fair standards for platform workers and mitigating technolegal expulsions (Sánchez Vargas, 2022). Cabify, a ride-hailing company, also performed well in Chile (5) but received low scores in Paraguay (1) and Argentina (0) (Fairwork Argentina, 2022a; Fairwork Paraguay, 2022b). This discrepancy indicates that even large international conglomerates implement distinct and often inconsistent labour policies and processes depending on the specific country. The sole exception to Colombian platforms' high rankings was SoyDelivery, a Uruguay-based logistics company with a unique business model (Fairwork Uruguay, 2023).

Table 1 - Number of platforms

| Countries | Number of platforms |
|-----------|---------------------|
| Colombia | 12 |
| Brazil | 10 |
| Peru | 10 |
| Ecuador | 10 |
| Chile | 9 |
| Argentina | 6 |
| Paraguay | 6 |
| Uruguay | 5 |
| Total | 68 |

Source: Authors

Table 2 - Proportion of platforms per sector

| Countries | Proportion |
|------------------------------|----------------|
| Courier | 45.59% |
| Courier-food | 30.88% |
| Courier-Grocery | 5.88% |
| Courier-Logistics | 8.73% |
| Ride-hailing | 42.65% |
| Ride-hailing | 42.65% |
| Domestic Services | 7.35% |
| Domestic Services | 7.35% |
| Professional Services | 2.94% |
| Professional Services | 2.94% |
| Multisector | 1.47% |
| Total | 100.00% |

Source: Authors;

Table 3 - Average scores and per country

| Countries | Average Score |
|--------------|---------------|
| Colombia | 2.25 |
| Uruguay | 1.8 |
| Ecuador | 1.4 |
| Chile | 1.33 |
| Argentina | 0.67 |
| Brazil | 0.6 |
| Paraguay | 0.5 |
| Peru | 0.2 |
| Total | 1.13 |

Source: Authors

Table 4 - Scores per sector per country

| Countries | Sector participation in platforms scored | Average Score |
|-----------------------|--|---------------|
| Argentina | 8.82% | 0.67 |
| Courier | 33.33% | 0 |
| Ride-hailing | 66.67% | 1 |
| Brazil | 14.71% | 0.6 |
| Courier | 60.00% | 0.83 |
| Domestic Services | 10.00% | 1 |
| Professional Services | 10.00% | 0 |
| Ride-hailing | 20.00% | 0 |
| Chile | 13.24% | 1.33 |
| Courier | 55.56% | 1.2 |
| Ride-hailing | 44.44% | 1.5 |
| Colombia | 17.65% | 2.25 |
| Courier | 25.00% | 0 |
| Domestic Services | 25.00% | 7 |
| Multisector | 8.33% | 0 |
| Professional Services | 8.33% | 0 |
| Ride-hailing | 33.33% | 1.5 |
| Ecuador | 14.71% | 1.4 |
| Courier | 40.00% | 0.5 |
| Domestic Services | 10.00% | 3 |
| Ride-hailing | 50.00% | 1.8 |
| Paraguay | 8.82% | 0.5 |
| Courier | 33.33% | 0.5 |
| Ride-hailing | 66.67% | 0.5 |
| Peru | 14.71% | 0.2 |
| Courier | 60.00% | 0.17 |
| Ride-hailing | 40.00% | 0.25 |
| Uruguay | 7.35% | 1.8 |
| Courier | 60.00% | 2.67 |
| Ride-hailing | 40.00% | 0.5 |
| Total | 100.00% | 1.13 |

Source: Authors.

When we examined the geographical origins of these businesses, we found that multinational firms consistently yielded worse results than local companies. Digital labour platforms based in other countries scored an average of just 0.85. Conversely, similar companies with local operations performed significantly better, achieving an average of 1.84. This suggests that proximity and local embeddedness may correlate with improved labour practices. While Latina America's platform work labour markets reproduce a subordinate position in the international division of labour, the dominance of international platforms spreads worse working conditions.

Despite the significant influence of social, economic, and legal contexts in explaining score variations across different countries, some regional commonalities emerged when sectors were

analysed. Domestic service platforms in the region achieved the best scores, particularly in Colombia, as noted, and Ecuador. However, these platforms constituted only 7.35% of the total sample. This indicates that while their performance offers a glimpse into how minimum fair work standards can be adopted in Latin America, it represents only a marginal portion of the broader platform economy.

Observing the two main sectors, ride-hailing platforms generally performed better in most countries, with the exceptions of Brazil and Uruguay. In Uruguay's case, the strong performance of one courier platform, SoyDelivery, likely accounts for this difference (Fairwork Uruguay, 2023). Delivery platforms, on the other hand, generally performed poorly. While they might appear to offer a more accessible earning opportunity due to lower equipment and vehicle costs, these companies are effectively trapping workers in the most adverse labour conditions among all the sectors analysed.

We compared the findings against each of the five principles and their corresponding two thresholds (or points) (see Table 5). Principle Three (Fair Contracts) demonstrated the best average score at 0.17, closely followed by Principle Four (Fair Management) at 0.15. This suggests that companies generally provide rudimentary clarity in their contracts, including terms and conditions and related policies, ensuring they are accessible and understandable to workers (threshold 3.1). However, as said previously, the vast majority of contracts impose a self-employed condition, institutionalizing the informality that historically prevailed in the region. The second point within Principle Three (3.2) exhibited a significantly lower average score, underscoring that companies are far from implementing adequate measures to monitor subcontractors and protect workers against issues like risks stemming from dynamic pricing.

Principles Two (Fair Conditions) and One (Fair Pay) obtained averages around 0.10, but still remained below 70% and 50% of the scores for Principles Three and Four, respectively. Again, the disparity between the first and second points is pronounced. For Principle Two, the few platforms that secured this point provided essential health and safety protections, such as equipment and training, and also offered a safety net and compensation for income loss, such as insurance. In Principle Four, the first threshold (4.1) achieved the second-highest average among all ten points, primarily related to the provision of communication channels and appeal processes. Conversely, threshold 4.2 was awarded significantly less often, indicating that measures promoting equity and transparency in management are a lower priority for these companies.

Table 5 - Scores per principle and threshold

| Countries | P1 | P1.1 | P1.2 | P2 | P2.1 | P2.2 | P3 | P3.1 | P3.2 | P4 | P4.1 | P4.2 | P5 | P5.1 | P5.2 |
|-----------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Argentina | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0,08 | 0,17 | 0 | 0,08 | 0,17 | 0 | 0,17 | 0,17 | 0,17 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Brazil | 0,1 | 0,2 | 0 | 0,00 | 0 | 0 | 0,10 | 0,2 | 0 | 0,10 | 0,2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Chile | 0,11 | 0,11 | 0,11 | 0,17 | 0,33 | 0 | 0,17 | 0,33 | 0 | 0,17 | 0,22 | 0,11 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Colombia | 0,21 | 0,33 | 0,08 | 0,25 | 0,33 | 0,17 | 0,25 | 0,33 | 0,17 | 0,29 | 0,33 | 0,25 | 0,13 | 0,25 | 0 |
| Ecuador | 0,05 | 0,1 | 0 | 0,10 | 0,2 | 0 | 0,25 | 0,5 | 0 | 0,10 | 0,2 | 0 | 0,2 | 0,2 | 0,2 |
| Paraguay | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0,00 | 0 | 0 | 0,08 | 0,17 | 0 | 0,17 | 0,17 | 0,17 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Peru | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0,00 | 0 | 0 | 0,10 | 0,2 | 0 | 0,00 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Uruguay | 0,2 | 0,2 | 0,2 | 0,10 | 0,2 | 0 | 0,30 | 0,6 | 0 | 0,20 | 0,2 | 0,2 | 0,1 | 0,2 | 0 |
| Total | 0,09 | 0,13 | 0,04 | 0,10 | 0,16 | 0,03 | 0,17 | 0,31 | 0,03 | 0,15 | 0,19 | 0,10 | 0,06 | 0,09 | 0,03 |

Source: Authors.

Regarding Principle One, paying the minimum wage (1.1) is not a consistent reality in the region, but even more uncommon is for companies to ensure earnings equivalent to at least the local living wage (1.2). This starkly reinforces how underpayment is a defining characteristic of digital labour platforms in the region. Finally, Principle Five has the lowest average score, a result that unequivocally demonstrates these companies' strong aversion to acknowledging the fundamental right to free association and collective bargaining. In the following sections, we will delve into a detailed discussion of the results for each principle, offering specific examples of challenges encountered by workers in each country. As follows, we analyse the challenges per principle, bringing examples of findings of problems found per each aspect assessed.

4.1. Pay

When comparing the average scores, the principle of Fair Pay was the fourth highest out of the five principles, with an average of 0.09 out of 10 points. Within this principle, research teams analysed whether workers receive at least the local minimum wage (1.1) and the living wage (1.2), as well as whether workers receive their payment in full and on time. Regarding the first criterion, the average for threshold 1.1 was 0.13, while the second had an average of 0.04. This indicates that, if 100 platforms were assessed, only 13 would have achieved point 1.1, and merely four would have attained point 1.2.

This result reveals how platforms are failing to ensure minimum standards of fair pay for workers and how this remains a crucial problem among the assessed digital labour platforms. That was the case of international platforms such as Uber (e.g., in Brazil, Ecuador, Peru and Uruguay), Didi (e.g., in Argentina, Colombia and Peru) and InDrive (e.g., Ecuador, Paraguay, and Peru). Minimum wage is a right which began to be ensured to workers in various countries as early as the 19th century. The promise of digital labour platforms to offer an earning alternative conflicts with the shocking reality of workers struggling to make ends meet in the region, evidenced by the extremely low average scores for achieving both minimum and living wages across the eight countries. The findings confirm how pay is a structural issue for platform workers, as suggested in the literature, but they also underscore the extent of this problem in the countries studied and how exposed Latin American workers are to precarious compensation schemes.

Following its overall better performance, digital labour platforms in Colombia demonstrated the best performance within this principle as well. Still, the Fairwork assessment consistently showed that only a minority of platforms in Colombia meet the basic standards for fair pay. Specifically, only four out of the evaluated platforms—AseoYa, Hogarú, and Aux (all operating in the domestic work sector), along with Cabify (a ride-hailing platform)—were able to provide verifiable evidence that their workers' gross pay met or exceeded the local minimum wage after accounting for all work-related costs (e.g., expenses for equipment, fuel, mobile data, and insurance) and factoring in unpaid time, such as waiting and log-in periods between tasks.

In three countries—Argentina, Paraguay, and Peru—no platform achieved any score for Principle 1. This indicates the severity of the underpayment models workers are subjected to when registering on those platforms. In Brazil, for instance, only two out of 10 platforms—AppJusto and Parafuzo—achieved the 1.1 point, based on evidence that all workers earn at least the minimum hourly wage, considering labour costs, and that remuneration is always on time and in full. AppJusto, a Local Delivery Platform, served as a noteworthy example. The company published a page detailing data on remuneration, including minimum wage, ideal minimum wage, and costs for workers. The platform

also launched a cost and earnings calculator for workers. However, this market's inherent pressures were highlighted when the platform ceased operations in 2024.

4.2. Conditions

Regarding principle two, only few platforms have effectively prioritized essential health and safety protections, demonstrating the significance of providing necessary equipment and training, as well as implementing safety nets to compensate for income loss, including insurance coverage. Colombia leads the region with a score of 0.25, followed by Chile at 0.17. Both Ecuador and Uruguay achieved a score of 0.1, while Argentina recorded a score of 0.08. In contrast, Brazil, Paraguay and Peru scored zero, highlighting a significant gap in comprehensive measures aimed at safeguarding health and safety for workers.

In Colombia, for instance, the persistent and stark contrast regarding working conditions between domestic work platforms and ride-hailing/delivery platforms suggests a strong relationship linked to the "better regulatory backgrounds" for domestic work. Where existing or emerging sector-specific regulations are more robust, platforms are compelled to comply with higher labour standards, leading to tangible improvements in minimum wage adherence and other benefits. Conversely, the "looser regulation" in ride-hailing and delivery creates a regulatory vacuum that allows these platforms to operate with more precarious labour models, resulting in consistently lower scores and greater worker vulnerability to economic shocks like inflation. This highlights that legislative intervention and effective enforcement are potent levers for driving significant improvements in gig economy labour standards, rather than relying solely on voluntary corporate actions.

Chile's regulatory framework has played a crucial role in enhancing working conditions for workers. In recent years, several platforms have made efforts to improve working environments. For example, some platforms now offer benefits like telemedicine and medical care to their workers, although the effectiveness of these benefits is still under evaluation. Moreover, many of these platforms have implemented policies that allow workers to notify them in advance if they are unable to work, ensuring that they do not lose priority for future shifts. This progressive approach reflects a growing recognition of the importance of worker well-being in the broader context of labour regulation.

Digital platforms rooted in the principles of the Popular and Solidarity Economy (PSE) offer a promising solution for creating decent working conditions in environments lacking regulatory frameworks. An exemplary case is Asoclim, a digital cooperative platform based in Ecuador that strives to empower marginalized communities and foster economic autonomy. This approach challenges traditional capitalist market norms by establishing alternative structures that prioritize human and environmental welfare over mere profit maximization. Asoclim adopts a comprehensive strategy for workforce development, providing training in essential areas such as administration, accounting, taxation, service provision, and home maintenance. Additionally, the platform offers crucial education on labour rights, care, and gender equity—key factors in cultivating an inclusive and equitable workplace.

In the digital cooperatives model found, such as in Ecuador, decisions concerning the internal organizational structure are made democratically by the members, fostering a culture of shared governance. These cooperatives actively engage in capacity-building initiatives that generate employment opportunities aligned with women's empowerment, enhancing their financial autonomy and independence. Moreover, through strategic partnerships with various organizations and educational institutions, Asoclim drives transformative change within communities. This collaborative

approach highlights the significance of equitable growth and social responsibility, illustrating that a robust commitment to these principles can pave the way for a more sustainable future. By prioritizing democratic participation and community engagement, Asoclim not only addresses immediate economic needs but also empowers individuals to contribute meaningfully to their local economies.

4.3. Fair Contracts

The analysis of Fairwork reports in Latin America reveals a mixed landscape regarding the fairness of contracts in the platform economy. While some platforms demonstrate progress, many challenges persist, impacting worker security and comprehension. Indeed, principle three (Fair Contracts) demonstrated the best average score among all principles, at 0.17, as shown in Table 5, indicating a rudimentary clarity in contract provision, yet this score remains highly insufficient for truly fair contracts.

A recurring finding is the availability and legibility of terms and conditions. Platforms like Didi (Argentina), AppJusto and iFood (Brazil), Cabify and Urbaner (Peru), and SoyDelivery, Rappi, and Cabify (Uruguay) have successfully provided clear, transparent, and accessible contracts in the local language and easy to understand. However, in several countries, such as Chile, contracts are not always subject to local law, with platforms applying foreign jurisdictions (e.g., Uber and Didi in Peru, Didi, Rappi, Uber, and InDrive in Ecuador, and Indrive, Didi, DidiFood, Uber in Colombia). This practice makes it difficult for workers to seek legal recourse in their countries, creating a barrier to justice.

The second aspect is the presence of abusive clauses and the definition of the employment relationship. In most cases analysed, platforms define workers as independent contractors, implying a lack of recognition of a formal employment relationship and, consequently, of its rights. Beyond this definition, the reports highlight the almost universal presence of clauses that unfairly exempt or limit the platform's liability for negligence, inadequate working conditions, or conflicts with workers. Examples include Argentina, where all evaluated platforms show unilateralism in conflict resolution, and Ecuador and Uruguay, where liability exclusions are constant. No platform in the region has been able to fully demonstrate the absence of these unfair clauses. The lack of transparency in dynamic fare determination and the absence of sufficient prior notice for changes in terms and conditions are also important challenges, as observed in Chile and Peru.

In the case of Brazil, as an example of some changes in favor of this principle, iFood has announced updates to its contracts, including, for example, that all terms are governed by and construed in accordance with Brazilian law, without narrowing down to a specific region. AppJusto provides the history of changes to its contracts on the platform's GitHub, so that everyone has access to all versions of the terms. In summary, while progress is being made in contract accessibility, the persistence of clauses that limit platform liability and the application of foreign laws are fundamental barriers to ensuring truly fair contracts in the Latin American platform economy.

4.4. Fair Management

Fair management in the Latin American platform economy presents a contrasting picture. The lack of direct human contact and the arbitrariness of algorithmic decisions emerge as the most pressing challenges for workers. As per Table 5, principle four (Fair Management) recorded the second-best average score at 0.15, indicating some efforts in providing communication channels and appeal

processes (threshold 4.1), but still falls significantly short of ensuring truly fair and equitable management practices.

One of the main concerns workers across the region express is the difficulty in communicating with platform human representatives. While some platforms, such as Didi (Argentina), AppJusto and iFood (Brazil), AseoYa, Hogarú, Aux, and Cabify (Colombia), DigiTaxi and AzuTaxi (Ecuador), and MUV and SoyDelivery (Paraguay and Uruguay, respectively) have established accessible communication channels and documented appeal processes, the overall situation is more complex. In Chile, while various channels exist, responses are not always quick or efficient, and in cases of deactivation, physical office visits are often required, limiting access. In Peru, no platform could demonstrate the existence of an accessible and reliable channel for workers to interact with human staff.

In Brazil, the research obtained evidence that two platforms—AppJusto and iFood—comply with this principle. AppJusto, for example, has made changes to its policies and practices, including clear sections on deactivation in the contract and in the interface. There are no automatic deactivations and communication is always human. iFood has an anti-discrimination policy under construction, which should be published soon. The platform also launched a Psychological and Legal Support Center, which workers who have been victims of discrimination can access for free. Parafuzo created a communication channel through which professionals can dispute absences, fines and evaluations and through which they will receive a response from the company within two business days.

Another critical challenge lies in the transparency and appeal of algorithmic decisions. Most reports indicate that decisions directly affecting workers, such as task assignment, evaluations, and penalties (including deactivations), are made by algorithms without a transparent appeal process or explanation of the criteria used. This creates a sense of arbitrariness and helplessness among workers, who perceive that platforms prioritize customer interests over their own. In Ecuador, for example, it's mentioned that only some platforms (DigiTaxi and AzuTaxi) have formalized their sanction policies, while in Chile, no evidence was found of documented procedures for appealing decisions such as deactivations or negative ratings.

Finally, the implementation of anti-discrimination and equity policies is an area that requires further development. Although some platforms like Cabify (Chile and Colombia), Hogarú and Aux (Colombia), and MUV (Paraguay) have demonstrated policies and measures to promote diversity and inclusion, the evidence is limited in the rest of the region. None of the ten evaluated platforms in Ecuador has documented and publicly available policies focused on promoting equality and non-discrimination. The lack of transparency in how algorithms can lead to unequal outcomes for disadvantaged groups is a blind spot that needs to be addressed to ensure genuinely fair management.

4.5. Representation

In principle 5, research teams assessed whether documented mechanisms exist for expressing collective concerns, whether freedom of association is respected, and whether platforms demonstrate a willingness to recognize or engage with representative bodies. The reports indicated that, in most cases, platforms refuse to acknowledge formal employment relationships, thereby obstructing any legitimate form of collective representation. When comparing the average scores, the principle of Fair Representation received the lowest rating among the five principles evaluated, with an average of 0.06 out of 10 points. This result can be seen in Table 5.

Although some platforms claim to offer consultation mechanisms—such as surveys or group meetings—these do not constitute formal channels of collective representation. In the case of Argentina, for instance, such mechanisms fail to ensure meaningful worker participation in decisions regarding their working conditions, which continue to be determined unilaterally, without the recognition of unions or independent organizations.

Particularly concerning are the cases of Peru and Colombia, where no platform was able to demonstrate the existence of clear mechanisms for collective voice or any willingness to engage in dialogue with representative bodies. Similar patterns emerge in Brazil and Paraguay, where the absence of formal policies on freedom of association prevents platforms from meeting even the minimum standards under this principle.

Nevertheless, the study also identifies innovative experiences that illustrate the feasibility of alternative models. In Ecuador, DigiTaxi and AzuTaxi—platforms born from partnerships between taxi cooperatives and technology firms—stand out for embedding collective representation practices into their organizational design. Both platforms allow workers to participate actively in operational decisions and have established structures that formally recognize collective bargaining as a core element of their operational model. Uruguay provides an intermediate example. The platform SoyDelivery has implemented specific protocols to channel both individual and collective grievances and acknowledges the workers' right to freely elect their representatives. However, it has yet to promote democratic governance mechanisms or recognize independent collective interlocutors (Fairwork Uruguay, 2023).

Taken together, the findings reveal a persistent and structural deficit in fair representation for workers in the digital platform economy. The lack of formal mechanisms for collective voice, the limited willingness of platform companies to recognize representative actors, and the absence of effective regulatory frameworks contribute to a scenario where unilateral decision-making prevails. This situation not only undermines fundamental principles of decent work—such as freedom of association and collective bargaining—but also reproduces new forms of asymmetry and exclusion within highly digitalized labour environments.

5. Conclusions

This paper presents a comprehensive analysis of the platform economy in Latin America, focusing on eight South American countries. While literature from the Global North tends to emphasize the “gig” nature of these new models, in Latin America, informality and ephemeral employment arrangements were already structural features of labour markets. Platform work in this context does not create informal sectors but rather amplifies informality, promoting new forms of precarity through underpaid and poorly protected services and labour processes.

Based on the Fairwork Project framework, the research teams scored 68 platforms, ranging from international moguls such as Uber and Didi to local companies like Asoclim (Ecuador), Monchis (Paraguay), Chazki (Peru), and Parafuzo (Brazil), among others. Even though the study could not cover the entire region, the number of countries examined provides a relevant and broad overview of the continent. The platform selection encompassed market leaders and international conglomerates operating in Latin America, as well as local firms attempting to establish a platform economy in this sector.

Far beyond its restricted use in the production of technical reports, the Fairwork approach has proven particularly relevant to research on work on digital platforms. By offering a framework capable of articulating normative principles with empirical criteria for assessing working conditions, it provides

categories defined a priori that serve as parameters. Thus, the five principles—fair pay, fair conditions, fair contracts, fair management, and fair representation—convert general aspects of decent work into concrete indicators, enabling measurements and comparisons over time, between countries, and across different sectors. This helps to reduce recurring conceptual ambiguities in debates on precariousness, while strengthening the methodological robustness of research that seeks to qualify the transformations brought about by the platformisation of work. The methodology is also flexible enough to address local specificities: the indicators can be adjusted to the regulatory realities and structural characteristics of each country, which is essential in regions marked by high levels of informality, inequality and the presence of vulnerable groups, as is the case in this section on Latin America.

The paper contributes to the existing literature by offering, for the first time, a regional investigation based on the Fairwork Principles. This framework represents a tested and widely adopted set of standards for evaluating fairness in the platform economy, with ratings conducted in over 40 countries worldwide. The principles cover minimum standards of fair work, from pay to representation, enabling a comparison of the selected platforms and countries based on these principles and their respective thresholds. The approach includes a qualitative examination of each country's landscape, drawing on the data sources presented herein. While the literature on platform work in Latin America typically focuses on country-specific studies, this paper successfully explores both a regional overview and a comparison of labour conditions across individual countries.

While each country's social, economic, and legal contexts influence platform scores, some common trends by industry stand out. The study mostly analyzed delivery and transport platforms, which together represent the majority of the selected companies. Based on this framework, the study offers a regional synthesis of platform work labour conditions, revealing a concerning average score of 1.13 on a scale of 0 to 10 points. This result is lower than the last global average of 1.2 out of 10 points published by the Fairwork Annual Report 2023 (Fairwork, 2024). The findings indicate significant variation in labour conditions among countries. The Colombian case demonstrates that when regulations are in place (e.g., for domestic platforms in that country), scores are higher. The domestic services sector still needs to be better studied, especially when it comes to studies that seek to draw a comparison between countries. However, the data presented here provide evidence that this domestic services sector tends to perform a little better.

In summary, platform work in Latin America is developing in a reality in which informality was already a structural feature of labour markets, now intensified by the digital model that precarious bonds and fragment rights. Regulatory fragility, low pay, and denial of the right to representation stand out as the main challenges faced by digital workers in the region. However, it is noteworthy that when these ratings were conducted, only Chile had a platform work law approved, in 2022. The economic indicators of countries were not a key variable, as strong regional economies, such as Brazil and Argentina, were observed to perform among the worst.

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