Social Class Perception of Cleaning Employees: The Case of Armut.com Workers in Turkey

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Introduction

Digital labor platforms are one of the many advantages that technological developments provide to businesses today. Thanks to the labour relationships established through digital platforms, businesses have the opportunity to reach the workforce at the skill level they seek, whenever they need it and during the time they need, without incurring any social costs. The digital platform working model also externalizes many risks to the workers, apart from the social costs incurred by employers in traditional business relationships. Contrary to businesses, this creates a disadvantage for workers, leading to losses in terms of working rights and being outside the scope of legal protection in the traditional business relationship.

The unique triple structure and functioning of the digital platform working model made possible by technological developments has an impact on class attitudes and behaviors. In this study, firstly, Armut.com platform, which is one of the largest digital labor platforms in Turkey, has examined the tripartite business relationship and the functioning of the platform. Within this structure and functioning, variables that affect class perception were determined. Then, the class perception of the cleaning workers on the Armut.com digital platform was discussed.

Problem

Digital labor platforms have a tripartite structure that goes beyond traditional business relations. The parties of the digital platform tripartite business relationship are the platform provider, the platform worker and the customer. In this tripartite structure, it is very difficult to determine the legal status of the parties within the framework of the traditional worker-employer relationship in the current national legal regulations. The legal status of the platform employees is specified as self-employed in the membership terms and conditions agreements, with which the tripartite business relationship is established. The basis of this preference is the effort of the platform provider to avoid legal obligations brought by the employer status. However, when the structure and functioning of digital labor platforms are taken into consideration, it is seen that the majority of platform workers do not have the characteristics of the "self-employed" status as the platforms claim. Digital platform workers carry the characteristics of both worker status and self-employed status at the same time, and they often provide services under more precarious conditions compared to worker status. As a result of the struggles of platform workers in many countries, it is seen that the worker status has been expanded to include platform workers through the revisions made in national legal regulations. In Turkey, the platform working model and the precarious working conditions it causes have recently attracted attention, and research on the subject is quite limited. In many countries, it is seen that the legal status of platform workers is the subject of lawsuits and platform workers object to their "self-employed" status. In Turkey, there is no study addressing the perspectives of platform employees regarding the digital platform working

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model. Therefore, in this study, the class perception of Armut.com platform cleaning workers will be discussed.

Goal

In this study, it is aimed to reveal the class perception of Armut.com platform cleaning workers. For this purpose, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with the participants reached by snowball sampling method. In the semi-structured interviews, the research problem was tried to be answered by obtaining in-depth information about the class perception of Armut.com platform cleaning workers.

Original Value

In many countries, platform workers are fighting that their legal status is workers and that they have the right to benefit from protective legal regulations arising from worker status. It is seen that national legal regulations have been revised to meet these demands of platform workers. In Turkey, there are no legal regulations regarding the legal status of platform workers, an objection case against the self-employed status and studies on how platform employees perceive this triangular relationship. Therefore, the findings obtained as a result of the research will contribute to the field in terms of determining how the digital platform working model is seen by the platform workers and how the tripartite business relationship is evaluated in Turkey.

Theoretical Framework

The platform economy consists of activities in which commercial transactions (providing goods and services for payment) or non-commercial transactions (such as voluntary activities, social media) are controlled by digital networks. Among the types of platforms in which commercial (profit-making) activities are carried out within the platform economy, the most important is digital labor platforms, the subject of which is the provision of services for a fee. Digital labor platforms provide a service that simultaneously matches labor supply and demand. Armut.com is one of the largest digital labor platforms in Turkey. Armut.com digital labor platform cleaning, renovation, transportation, repair, private lessons, etc. services are offered. The participants covered in the research are Armut.com platform cleaning workers. Cleaning workers provide services under different conditions than other service categories. While other service categories work by bidding on tasks announced by customers, cleaning workers work by assigning the task to them by the platform at the demand of the customer. Compared to the bidding method, the platform has a relatively higher level of control over the cleaning workers.

Workers who want to provide services on the Armut.com platform must approve the terms and conditions of membership prepared unilaterally by the Armut.com platform on the web page. In addition, the platform requests documents such as criminal records and health reports from the workers at the membership stage. Membership to the platform is free. Platform workers do not have the opportunity to negotiate on the terms and conditions of membership. Among the terms and conditions of membership, the legal status of platform employees is expressed as "self-employed". The customer who wants to receive cleaning service from the Armut.com platform does not have the opportunity to choose the platform worker who will serve. The cleaning worker is assigned by the platform according to certain criteria upon the customer's service demand. These criteria are customer evaluations regarding the services that the platform worker has given before, the number of tasks accepted and the number of tasks rejected, but the Armut.com platform does not guarantee assignment of task to any employee. Although there is information about the length of service and the amount of remuneration to be paid for the assigned task, there is no clear job description. Cleaning workers have the right to accept or reject tasks assigned by the platform. The platform worker who accepts the

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task undertakes to be at the service place and start the service on the specified day and time. If it does not fulfill this commitment without giving an excuse to the Armut.com platform at least 24 hours in advance, the platform has the right to impose various sanctions. These sanctions may include making changes to the worker's profile, deleting the profile, suspending the worker until the deficiency is corrected, preventing the worker from re-registering on the Website, and claiming compensation. The service fee is determined unilaterally by the platform for the number of rooms, keeping pets, etc. criteria. The platform charges a commission fee over the service fee. The commission fee is approximately %50. After-service cleaning worker is evaluated by the customer. Customers can see the customer evaluations of the cleaning worker regarding the services they have previously provided. However, workers do not have the opportunity to evaluate customers. If the cleaning workers contacts the customer in order to circumvention the Armut.com platform and this situation is detected, the Armut platform can remove the cleaning worker from the system and request compensation as much as the damage incurred.

In this process, Armut.com cleaning workers are out of the scope of the rights and guarantees arising from worker status. In Turkey, there are no cases where platform workers objected to their self-employed status by filing an individual lawsuit. The aim of the research is to reveal the class perception of the cleaning workers on the Armut.com digital platform.

The class perception of Armut.com platform cleaning workers will be discussed on two main axes that form the basis of the class view. One of the two main axes that analyze the class structure of society is based on the approaches of Karl Marx and the other is based on the approaches of Max Weber.

While Marx associates class with ownership of the means of production, Weber associates class strarification with status. According to Marx, there are two basic classes in capitalist working relations: the bourgeoisie and the working class. These two classes are in conflict due to the relations of production, that is, depending on whether they own the means of production or not. The bourgeoisie aims to increase the production of surplus value. The dispossessed and impoverished working class, on the other hand, has to make a living by selling its labor power. The bourgeoisie, which aims to accelerate capital accumulation, creates pressure on working conditions and wages by using control mechanisms. This situation ignites the fuse of the conflict. In the final analysis, it is expected to make the socialist revolution and build a classless society through the union of the workers, who are included in the working class from birth (which is a class by itself) and reach class consciousness (being a class for itself).

Weber classifies social stratifications by dividing them into three: class stratification, status stratification and power stratification. Weber who made a class analysis influenced by Marx, finds the idea that the class is formed only by the ownership of the means of production insufficient. He argues that status groups formed in line with the living standards of individuals have the function of preventing a class conflict as described by Marx. At this point, the concept of status stratification comes to the fore. It is accepted that class stratification occurs within the framework of the status groups to which the individuals forming the society belong. Weber focuses on three dimensions of class stratification: negatively privileged, middle and positively privileged class. The negative privileged class consists of the poorest of society and those who do not own property. Middle class; civil servants, self-employed, white-collar workers in the private sector and those with a higher standard of living due to higher income levels. The positive privileged class consists of components such as capital owners, traders and landowners.

Two main approaches will be used in the evaluation of the class perception of the Armut.com platform cleaning workers. Variables affecting the class perception of platform cleaning workers will be discussed under three question categories within the scope of semi-structured interviews. These variables are as follows;

- Demographic characteristics (age-sex),
- Education level,
- Legal status,
- The level of control of the cleaner over the labor process,
- Control patterns on the cleaning worker of the platform provider,
- Income,
- Operation time,
- Occupational health and safety,
- The level of communication between cleaning workers.

It is aimed to reveal the class perception of cleaning workers on the Armut.com digital platform. Depending on this purpose, answers to the following questions were sought in semi-structured interviews;

- How do the cleaning workers on the Armut.com digital platform define their business relationship with the platform?
- How do the cleaning staff on the Armut.com digital platform define their business relationship with customers?
- How is the execution of the work (how it is done, in what period of time, etc.) is carried out within the triple business relationship on the Armut.com digital platform?

Method

Research pattern

The pattern of the study was determined as phenomenology. The main purpose of phenomenology is to describe what kind of meanings participants with specific characteristics attribute to similar experiences. Therefore, the phenomenon handled with the phenomenology pattern in the study is a tripartite business relationship consisting of Armut.com platform-customer and platform cleaning workers. Participants are platform cleaning workers who are in the same tripartite business relationship and have similar experiences. In this study, the class perception of cleaning workers within this experience will be discussed.

Research sample

Snowball sampling method was preferred in the study. In the snowball sampling method, other participants are reached through the first person contacted. The sample size expands in this way. The participants targeted to be reached within the scope of the study are the cleaning workers who provide services on the Armut.com platform, but the Armut.com platform does not directly share the information of the workers. The cleaning workers are assigned by the platform upon the demand of the customer who wants to receive service from the platform. The customer does not have the possibility to choose the cleaning worker himself or to establish an individual communication. This situation prevents direct access to cleaning workers who provide service through the Armut.com platform. For this reason, in the study, firstly, a cleaning worker was reached by getting service from the Armut.com platform and then other participants were reached. The snowball sampling method was blocked from time to time due to the limited communication of platform workers with each other. In this case, the participants were reached by getting support from the trade unions of the cleaning workers. Within the scope of the research, 15 participants were interviewed. 2 out of 15

participants are male. Of the participants, 9 are high school graduates, 2 are associate degree graduates, and 4 are secondary school graduates. Participants are between the ages of 24-49.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the participants

Participants	Gender	Age	Education Status
Participant 1	Woman	34	Secondary education
Participant 2	Woman	25	High school
Participant 3	Woman	25	High school
Participant 4	Woman	40	High school
Participant 5	Woman	29	Secondary education
Participant 6	Woman	26	High school
Participant 7	Woman	33	Associate degree
Participant 8	Woman	34	High school
Participant 9	Male	45	High school
Participant 10	Woman	30	High school
Participant 11	Woman	32	Secondary education
Participant 12	Male	28	High school
Participant 13	Woman	49	Secondary education
Participant 14	Woman	28	High school
Participant 15	Woman	24	Associate degree

Data collection techniques

In the study, data were collected through semi-structured interviews and reflective and descriptive researcher diary techniques. Semi-structured interview is a type of interview in which the participants can answer the questions prepared to be asked in a certain order according to the purpose of the interview, in the order and as they wish. In the research, a series of questions were prepared to be asked to the participating cleaning workers to measure the perceptions of the workers about their own status, and the interviews with the participants were carried out through the Google Meet platform. Semi-structured interview questions were prepared in the light of the information obtained from previous studies on the subject in the literature. Then, the questions were evaluated first by the labor relations specialist, and then by the language and method specialist. The questions prepared after the evaluation were tested with three participants within the scope of the pilot study. Pilot study data were not included in the research. Then, semi-structured interview questions were revised in the light of the data obtained from the three participants, and necessary corrections were made. The questions were finalized with the control of field, method and language experts at the last stage. Before the semi-structured interview, necessary permits were obtained from the cleaning workers. A researcher diary was kept before and after the interview. These diaries were read simultaneously and regularly by the field expert and feedback was given to the researcher.

In the study, the criterion developed by Lincoln and Guba was used to ensure reliability. According to Lincoln and Guba, the accuracy of qualitative research is explained by the concept

of trustworthiness. Lincoln and Guba list trustworthiness criteria as credibility, transferability, reliability and verifiability.

The strategies applied in the study in order to meet these criteria are as follows:

- Data has been diversified through the use of more than one data source.
- The findings obtained from the data were tried to be associated with each other and with the literature and conceptual explanations were made regarding the integrity and consistency of the data.
- The opinions of field and method experts were taken during the whole research process, including the planning of the study, the preparation of data collection tools, namely semi-structured interview questions, the collection of data, the analysis of the data and the presentation of the findings.
- The interview data obtained from the participants were approved by the participants after the casting.
- The findings obtained in the study were shared with the participants.
- Detailed descriptive analysis of context will be included.
- The whole process of data collection techniques and analysis has been reported in detail.

Content analysis was carried out in the study. Content analysis is an inductive analysis in which the themes and categories are not clear at the beginning of the study. The reason why content analysis is preferred is that there is no conceptual framework that can be used to reveal the perceptions of the participants at the beginning of the study. In this study, first of all, the audio recordings obtained through semi-structured interviews were deciphered. Then, the audio recording transcripts of the interviews were verified. With the data obtained from both semi-structured interview data and researcher diaries, the aim is to find the statements regarding the class perception of the participants and to list these important statements as code keys. The expressions in the code key consist of the smallest non-repeating, non-overlapping data pieces. In the process of generating the code key, assistance was received from the field expert. The researcher and the field expert created independent code lists. Then, the two lists were compared and necessary revisions were made on the codes with no consensus. The expressions in the code list were then categorized and the themes were determined at the last stage. As a result of the comparisons, a consensus of 90 % was reached. The themes obtained as a result of the content analysis are discussed under the heading of findings as follows;

- Recruitment,
- Trust issue,
- Gender roles,
- Class position and alienation,
- The right to social security, health and safety
- Working conditions and income,
- Relationship of platform employees with each other.

Findings of the Research

Employees in cleaning services are faced with many economic and social problems. The works performed are among the works included dirtiest, most difficult and most dangerous jobs in the social division of labor. It is necessary to consider the main findings of the study within this framework.

It is possible to classify the findings obtained from the interviews as follows:

- Recruitment,
- Trust issue,
- Gender roles,
- Class position and alienation,
- The right to social security, health and safety
- Working conditions and income,
- Relationship of platform employees with each other,

Recruitment

Armut.com receives applications for cleaning staff from its website. In the application, it proposes a membership agreement for the employees. Members undertake to carry out the works suggested by armut.com.

In fact cleaning services are among the traditional jobs. Depending on the developments within the framework of technological transformations, these jobs are moved to digital platforms. Cleaning workers aim to make a living by selling their labor power over armut.com. In fact, the transfer of these traditional jobs to the digital platform is important in terms of showing the social transformation created by global technological developments:

> *"It was what we've always done. But recently it has been difficult to find a job. A friend of mine applied here and told me. I also told my brother. He also helped me, so I applied* (Participant 3).*"*

Participant 3's statement illustrates the role traditional services have acquired in the network society. This view is in parallel with Manuel Castells' (2000) evaluations of technological developments that weave society like a network. On the other hand, it is seen that those with a relatively low education level receive support from their social environment regarding the use of technology. Similarly, some of the participants received support from their family members for their armut.com membership. This situation also shows the deterministic pressure of technology on society.

> *"They had ads on social media. Previously, they were recruiting through face-to-face interview. They later removed it. They wanted documents such as medical report, criminal record. Now they don't use interview to recruit (* Participant 8).*"*

Social media provides great convenience for cleaning workers to find a job. The platform turns this convenience into an opportunity for its own capital accumulation.

Participants reached armut.com in different ways. 4 of the participants learned about this platform from their family members, 5 from their friends, 2 from the customers they went to clean their homes, and 4 from social media and TV advertisements. Although the participants were young people in the labor force, most of them heard about armut.com from their social circles. This shows that despite all the technological developments, the sector maintains its traditional character:

> *"The costumer, whose house I went to clean before, talked about Armut.com. I was going to that women once a week, she thought that there would be a job opportunity on other days, thanks. Now I am waiting for work to come from platform* (Participant 11).*"*

Paternalistic protectionism has a prominent appearance in domestic worker-employer relations in Turkey. It is seen that there is such a relationship in the statements of participant 11 as well. It is an example of the customer directing the employee to the digital platform.

Another interviewee suggests that customers prefer the digital platform more because they receive cheaper services:

> "The *customer prefers the digital platform to make house cleaning cheaper. Something that's bringing the market down, but what do we do? We can find a job thanks to the platform* (Participant 8)…"

Low cost is preferred more for the customers. This situation negatively affects the competitiveness of the workers. To be result unemployment pressure causes reservation wages to decrease.

Trust issue

The platform shares the personal data of cleaning workers with customers. However, workers do not have any information about customers. Workers are obliged to provide cleaning services at the place assigned by Armut.com.

The platform provides customers with complete confidence. Sharing the information of the cleaning staff also aims at this. However, no guarantee is provided for the worker.

> "*I got a job from armut.com. My son is a taxi driver. I asked him if he would drop me there. He said me don't go there. I said why. He said that person is not reliable. Then I didn't go either. Then I stated that I canceled because I had an urgent job. That person started harassing me on the phone. Then he shared my phone number on obscene apps. Men called me and offered sexual intercourse. I had to change my phone number. Thereupon, I reported the situation to armut.com. They said they would be interested, but they didn't care at all. After the long time, they claimed that I should take this matter to court. Afterwards, I got angry and left my armut.com membership* (Participant 8)."

Participant 8's statements are important in terms of showing the working conditions imposed on the armut.com platform. The platform contains legal vacuums that lead to inappropriate use of personal data. It has a structure that is far from protecting its workers against social risks that may be encountered.

Gender Roles

Cleaning services are seen as a role assigned to women in the patriarchal social order. The gender roles of women remain limited to domestic services. This situation prevents women from accessing the right to education. In addition, it results in exclusion from public sphere.

Women who access the labor market are employed at low wages and in the least preferred jobs. The most concrete example given to these works is cleaning services. The existence of women in the labor market is possible by maintaining the balance in public and private spheres. For this, there is no option other than fulfilling the tasks that exist in daily life practices.

13 of the participants within the scope of the research are women and 2 of them are men. Although there are men who provide cleaning services on Armut.com, it is seen that women concentrate on this area.

> "*Cleaning has always been a woman's job. I already do the cleaning at home. This is how we saw it from our mother and father. This is how it goes* (Participant 2)."

While women (participants) provide paid cleaning services, they also provide the same service free of charge in their homes. This shows that domestic service is considered as invisible labor.

Despite all their workload, female participants state that they are also obliged to perform cleaning services at home:

> "*What will happen if you don't? While you clean another houses, are you not going to take care of your own house? Occasionally, it gets busy, there are times when I don't clean in my house. But I usually clean my own house* (Participant 4)."

Male participants, on the other hand, stated that they helped their wifes, although they were not directly responsible for house cleaning. There is a perception that they are not directly responsible for the cleaning work at home. They state that they are cleaning only to help their wifes. Although they carry out the work that is seen as "women's work" in the society, it is seen that they leave this service to women at home. On the other hand, they think that performing these jobs as paid jobs should not be separated as male or female jobs. It is possible to state that the main reason for this paradox is the paid work relationship.

Class Position and Alienation

Cleaning jobs are not seen among professional occupations in Turkey. Cleaning workers are also not included in the scope of labor law. There is also no legislation in Turkey to cover digital platform employees.

Whether or not the workers are within the scope of the legislation does not pose a problem in terms of their class quality. No matter what platform the cleaners work through, they do not own the means of production. From the Weberian perspective, these people belong to the lowest status groups. Cleaning workers have no choice but to sell their labor force so that they and their families can survive. Therefore, it is necessary to treat them as part of the working class.

Participants define themselves as workers whether they work through their own connections or through a digital platform:

> "*We are workers, of course. We may appear to be self-employed, but we are direct workers* (Participant 3)."

> "*We don't have a shop, we don't have a factory… We are informal workers, but no one sees us* (Participant 7)."

Other participants also use similar expressions. In the digital platform contract, the status of cleaning workers appears to be self-employed. However, this is fake self-employment. Because the right to control the work is in the hands of the platform. Customers rate workers performance. These scores play a key role in recruiting worker by the platform. This control system puts pressure on workers:

> "*I need to smile customer's face. If they are not satisfied with me, armut.com will not give work again. I need a job. There is unemployment outside* (Participant 6)."

Labor control over workers even leads them to deviate from their job description.

> "*Ironing is not normally our job. In fact they just call us to clean up. But what can we do? We're compelled to do whatever they want to get a good score (*Participant 14). "

Braverman (1974) says that there is obligation behind people's work. Participant 14, similar to this view, argues that the obligation lies behind exceeding the limits in the job description.

The workplace of the participants is the homes of the customers, that is, their private spheres. Customers aim to get high efficiency from cleaning workers in order to make their private areas useful. For this, the performance scoring system plays a key role. This system

provides advantages to customers on the one hand, and leads to further exploitation of participants on the other. After a while, it causes the participants to become alienated from work:

> *"I forget what my job is. Cleaning is like a part of my daily life. I feel like I have to make them happy by working harder. Actually, my income does not change, but as long as they are happy, I am happy too* (Participant 15).

The performance scoring system does not always include objective criteria. The system allows the customer to evaluate unilaterally. However, customers can also evaluate according to their instant psychological states.

The level of alienation that cleaning workers are exposed to has a negative impact on their class behavior codes. The workers, which cannot be organized legally, also has difficulties in organizing informally:

> "*How are we going to get together? What are we gonna do? The customers who gave my job. How can I betray them* (Participant 10)?"

It is seen that there is an opposite relationship between alienation and union consciousness. The economic pressure faced by workers hinders even their demand to exercise their most basic social rights. Whereas, both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the Conventions 87 and 98 of the International Labor Organization present them a right to membership of an union. However, access to this right is not actually possible. On the other hand, an unionising of domestic workers is witnessed in Turkey nowadays. Four of the participants are members of the Domestic Workers Solidarity Union (Ev İşçileri Dayanışma Sendikası/Evid-Sen). The motto of this union is "We are *not a dust cloth, we are a domestic worker.*" This slogan is important in terms of showing their class existence. Cleaning workers, who take part in domestic services, also aim to protect and develop their class rights and interests.

> "*We didn't know the 'u' of the union when we set out on this road. We hit the road, a researcher helped us. He did an ILO project, he helped found our union. We started to make our voices heard on social media. I hope we will get to a better point as soon as possible* (Participant 13)."

Unionized cleaning workers have a very small quantative power in the workforce in Turkey. However, they have an important experience in terms of showing class behavior. Their main demands; to build decent work, fair wages and an equal social life. They aim to improve working conditions, which have become increasingly negative during the Covid-19 epidemic. For this reason, it carries out awareness activities for public institutions and organizations, civil society and the public. They aim to include themselves in the scope of social protection. This group, which is small in number, is on the way to reach an important accumulation in terms of quality. They see unionising as the key to being a class for himself.

Right to Social Security, Health and Security

Cleaning workers working in domestic services in Turkey are considered to be partially insured. Customers can pay insurance premiums against the risk of work accidents and occupational diseases via the internet application. However, informal work traditionally prevails in this sector.

According to the results of the interviews, none of the participants have regular insurance. Only two of them stated that a few of their customers had filed insurance claims. No other interviewee can access the social security right.

Actually, both the UDHR, the ILO Convention No. 102 and the Turkish Constitution have regulated social security as a right. However, it is virtually impossible for cleaning workers to access this right. It is possible for them to come face to face with many risks in the long run.

> *"I went to a lawyer's office to clean. Customer me, I already know you before. But you do not know us at all. I have your personal information. But you have no idea about me. "Isn't this a problem for you?" he asked. That's when I said you're right, but I need a job* (Participant 8)!".

The lack of social security of cleaning workers has an important function in the capital accumulation of the platform. The economic problems they are experiencing are an opportunity for the platform. Cleaning workers, who have no information about the reliability of the customer, have to work in an unprotected way in terms of health and safety.

While some of the participants stated that they needed maternity insurance, all of them stated that they needed insurance due to work accidents. In addition, they think that they seek assurance against future risks. Although all of them have dreams of retirement, it has been determined that their hopes for the future are low.

Working Conditions and Income

Cleaning workers working on Armut.com do not have job and income security. The platform has unlimited control over the labor process. According to the terms of the contract, workers must maintain high scores in order to get a job. In order to rise to the top of the algorithm account, workers must get high scores.

In order to make the job and income continuous, it is necessary to fully fulfill the arbitrary practices determined by the platform in the contract. Workers remain in an unconditional commitment to the platform:

> "*I have to follow exactly what Armut.com says. Otherwise, it is not possible for me to find a job* (Participant 1)."

> "*He cuts my relationship whenever he wants, and I go hungry* (Participant 12)."

> "*If I don't do what they say, they'll completely kick me out of the system* (Participant 4)."

Workers are not obliged to accept job suggestions provided by the platform. There is also the possibility of systematic rejection. However, this also has its consequences. This sanction reduces the possibility of assigning tasks to them:

> "*Once I did not agree. After that, they did not give a job for two weeks. Even though I had another job afterwards, I accepted it as compulsory. What else can I do* (Participant 6)?"

The unlimited control authority of the platform over the labor process, combined with the economic dependence of the employees, pushes them to despair. Otherwise, the sanctions imposed lead them to an even more precarious position.

The wages earned by the workers for their work are also very low. The platform determines a fixed fee according to the demands of the customers. While requesting service from the platform, it is determined the price according to many factors such as the number of rooms to

be cleaned, square meters, whether there are pets at home or in the workplace. The platform applies a commission deduction from the determined fee. The commission rate is not clearly stated in the contract. This causes workers to accept the commission condition imposed on them implicitly.

According to the findings obtained from the participants, the average cleaning fee for a 2 + 1 apartment is 193 Turkish Liras. As of 27 May 2021, 1 Euro is 10,31 Turkish Liras. From this point of view, the average cleaning fee for an apartment in Turkey is 18.71 Euros. Armut.com deducts 50 percent of this amount. Accordingly, the net amount earned by the cleaning worker is 9.35 Euros. According to the information obtained from the participants, the cleaning workers reach the cleaning job 10 times a month. In this context, the average monthly income of the workers corresponds to only 935 Euros. In the same period, the net amount of the minimum wage in Turkey is 2825 TL per month. The Euro equivalent of this amount is 274. In short, cleaning workers in Turkey hardly reach even 30 percent of the monthly minimum wage. In the same period, the hunger limit in Turkey was 268.39 Euros; the poverty line is 874.25 Euros. As can be seen, cleaning workers are compelled to work with misery wages.

Working hours of cleaning workers who join the workforce with low wages without security are also uncertain. According to the labor legislation in Turkey, the weekly working time is 45 hours. However, since cleaning workers are not covered by the law, they cannot benefit from this regulation. Therefore, they are not entitled to overtime wages. They can get a fixed fee for service provision. There is no regularity in this fee. The economic dependency relationship is ignored due to the legal vacuum. This situation results in worsening of their working and living conditions.

Cleaning workers also do not have opportunities such as national holidays, general holidays, and weekends. Moreover, for the days when customers can organize their special events, it is determined that they work more on such days.

Relationship of Platform Employees with Each Other

Normally, colleagues in a workplace know each other. However, in platform-based work, it is not possible for workers to know each other. They do not interact in any way with each other. Therefore, it is not possible for them to show solidarity or compete with each other. However, it is possible to talk about an implicit competition phenomenon due to the platform's scoring system. They enter into an indirect competition with people they do not know.

Result

Technology is an element that leads to radical transformations in working relations. Due to the development of the network society, the spread of digital platform-based work is a result of technological progress.

Digital labor platforms are the focus of tripartite business relationships. This tripartite structure consists of platform provider, platform worker and customers. The complex structure regarding the legal status of workers has come to be at the center of labor research. The increase in the number of platform workers in the workforce and the increase in the problems experienced in the labor process form the basis of the increased interest in this field.

The way of working based on digital labor platforms in Turkey is not as common as in European countries. The reason for this is that Turkey has a relatively less developed structure. However, it can still be said that the work based on digital platforms has begun to spread.

Working based on the digital labor platform shows itself in many areas in the world and in Turkey. Cleaning services is also one of the main sectors. Cleaning service is provided through the Armut.com platform operating in Turkey. Armut.com, in addition to providing this service, also offers intermediary services to individual employees. It receives a commission income in return for these services. It offers a wage guarantee for workers in return for service. On the other hand, speeding up the employment processes of the workers is one of the factors behind the preference of this system.

Within the scope of this research, interviews were conducted with cleaning workers in the jobs provided by the Armut.com platform. The data obtained were analyzed from perspective of class. Cleaning workers who work as based on armut.com can be considered to be fake self-employed. Considering the nature of the work done and the relationships between the customer, the platform and the employee, it is concluded that the employees are part of the working class. Because these people have no choice but to sell their labor power to make a living.

There is a gap in Turkish labor law in terms of the legal status of cleaning workers. In order for these people to be included in the scope of social protection, they should be evaluated as a worker. The scope of protection needs to be improved in terms of both labor law and social security.

Armut.com has unlimited control over workers who provide cleaning services based on platform. These powers significantly increase the exploitation of labor. Workers are employed with wages below the hunger and poverty line. This pushes them into poverty.

Digital platforms expose workers to intense alienation. The increase in the level of alienation of cleaning workers is an obstacle to their unionising initiatives. They do not have the opportunity to organize legally. In addition, they have difficulties in social interaction with each other, resulting in worsening working and living conditions. There are also attempts to organize against it. The aims of this organization are: decent work, fair wages and equal conditions. This organizational initiative is among the positive results of the research.

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