

## THE PROBLEMATIC OF PRECARIATISATION AND WORK CULTURE: A STUDY ON THE SEARCH FOR A BALANCE BETWEEN FLEXIBILITY AND INSECURITY

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### ABSTRACT

In recent years, the "precariat" that is being created as a new class by the opportunities offered by digital technologies and the "precariatization" that is arising as a new emerging class as its consequence are progressively destabilizing the equilibrium between flexibility and insecurity in modern labor markets and the conventional work culture being harmed. This research aims to put in perspective the growing trend of precariatization of work life, the insecurity that this trend generates, the disorganization of labor, and the erosion of work culture. The second objective of the research, alongside this, is to explore the interaction between insecurity and flexibility through the phenomenon of precariatization conceptually and theoretically, and add to the literature on the subject. The research was conducted as a compilation, and the research data were collected through an extensive literature review. Conceptualizations, empirical observations, and policy suggestions of precariatization were analyzed by critically synthesizing the data. Descriptive statistical results indicate that flexibility policies adversely impact workers, such as insecurity and dissatisfaction created by

disorganization. This issue needs to be addressed with new policies to reduce this tension. We know that the quest for a viable equilibrium between insecurity and flexibility is needed so that the precariat would not constitute a novel risky class. Possibly more than ever, employment security matters at a time when flexible labor strategies like home working and remote work are irreversible.

**Keywords:** Telework, Disorganization, Precarious work, Freelancing, Independent Work.

## **PREKARYALAŐMA VE ALIŐMA KLTR SORUNSALI: ESNEKLİK VE GVENCESİZLİK ARASINDA DENGE ARAYIŐLARI ZERİNE BİR İNCELEME**

### **Z**

Son yıllarda, dijital teknolojilerin sunduđu fırsatlarla yeni bir sınıf olarak yaratılan "prekarya" ve bunun sonucu olarak ortaya ıkan yeni bir sınıf olarak ortaya ıkan "prekaryalaŐma", modern iŐgc piyasalarında esneklik ve gvencesizlik arasındaki dengeyi giderek istikrarsızlaŐtırıyor ve geleneksel alıŐma kltr zarar gryor. Bu araŐtırmanın genel amacı, iŐ hayatının gvencesizleŐtirilmesi eđiliminin, bu eđilimin yarattıđı gvencesizliđin, iŐgcnn dađınıklıđının ve iŐ kltrnn aŐınmasının perspektifini ortaya koymaktır. AraŐtırmanın ikinci amacı, bunun yanı sıra gvencesizlik ve esneklik arasındaki etkileŐimi gvencesizlik olgusu aracılıđıyla kavramsal ve teorik olarak incelemek ve konuyla ilgili literatre katkıda bulunmaktır. AraŐtırma bir derleme olarak yrtlmŐ ve araŐtırma verileri kapsamlı bir literatr taraması yoluyla toplanmıŐtır. Verileri eleŐtirel bir Őekilde sentezleyerek gvencesizliđin kavramsallaŐtırmaları, ampirik gzlemleri ve politika önerileri analiz edilmiŐtir. Tanımlayıcı istatistiksel sonular, esneklik politikalarının alıŐanlar zerinde olumsuz etkileri olduđunu, rneđin, dzensizliđin yarattıđı gvencesizlik ve tatminsizlik olduđunu gstermektedir. Bu sorun, bu gerginliđi azaltmak iin yeni politikalar formle etmelidir. Gvencesizlik ve esneklik arasında uygulanabilir bir denge arayıŐının, sre gvencesizliđinin yeni bir riskli sınıf oluŐturmaması iin gerekli olduđunu biliyoruz. Muhtemelen her zamankinden daha fazla, evden alıŐma ve uzaktan alıŐma gibi esnek emek stratejilerinin geri dndrlemez olduđu bir zamanda istihdam gvenliđi önemlidir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Uzaktan alıŐma, Emegn rgtszleŐmesi, Gvencesiz alıŐma, Serbest alıŐma, Bađımsız alıŐma.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Over the past decades, the world of labor has experienced a remarkable change wrought by digitalization, globalization, and the diffusion of flexible labor arrangements. The change has created both opportunities and challenges in the present-day working culture. One of the most poignant phenomena to develop from this situation is precariatization, a dynamic characterized by mounting job insecurity, unstable incomes, absence of social protections, and dismantling traditional labor conventions (Standing, 2011). This research explores the expanding scope of precariatization and destabilizing impacts on the work culture, specifically the unstable equilibrium between flexibility and insecurity. Although flexible forms of work like freelancing and telework provide organizational benefits, they also generate disorganization for workers, psychological strain, and professional alienation (Kalleberg, 2009; Rubery, Grimshaw, & Keizer, 2018; Vosko, 2006). The study directly addresses problem questions such as declining job satisfaction, erosion of work-life boundaries, and the emergence of a new class—the "precariat"—that is increasingly detached from secure work arrangements (Schnell & Noack, 2020). Over 60% of platform workers labor without formal employment contracts or social security protection, recent figures show (Eurofound, 2021), which indicates the severity of the issue. Its justification lies in trying to theorize a sustainable work model in which flexibility is not achieved at the expense of security. It contributes to the broader academic literature by identifying policy solutions that safeguard workers' well-being without compromising flexibility.

This thematically structured study critically assesses the phenomenon of precariatization by mapping contemporary theoretical approaches, organizational practices, and empirical findings. The rise of insecure employment especially draws out the increasing conflict between labor market flexibility and economic immiserization (Standing 2021) for disempowered worker groups. According to current issues, at its core, labor policies are surprisingly incapable of offering adequate security in a more and more flexible labor space. While a wealth of research has emerged concerning the macroeconomic and psychological terrain of precariousness (e.g., the deepening income inequality among workers; De Stefano & Wouters, 2020; Pugh, 2022), there still seems to be a significant gap when constructing appropriate models that allow for an effective balance between flexibility and long-term employment security. Without new policy innovations to create more suitable, decent jobs for precarious workers, this gap risks labor markets that are now more attuned than ever to flexibility.

Entitled to explore the dynamics of precariatization critically, this research discusses current theoretical debates, new empirical evidence, and institutional processes. It pushes to the forefront the heightening contradiction between labor market flexibility and employment insecurity, focusing on marginalized and vulnerable segments of workers (Standing, 2021). A background issue explored is the persistent failure of existing labor policies to ensure adequate protection in extremely flexible labor market settings (Pugh, 2022). Past research has shed light on precariousness's macroeconomic and psychological dimensions, including how it fuels income inequality and compromises worker well-being (Munck, 2021; De Stefano & Wouters, 2020). However, new insecurities have manifested with the rise of digital labor platforms and algorithmic control, necessitating a renegotiation of established protections (Woodcock & Graham, 2020). Recent studies also illustrate that precarious work disproportionately affects women, migrants, and young workers, entrenching existing social inequalities (Kuhn & Maleki, 2021; Mandl et al., 2020). This glaring omission manifests a pressing need for new labor policy models that can secure work conditions without undermining the flexibility that contemporary economies demand.

The relevance of this research lies in the fact that it attempts to fill a vital lacuna in literature: the absence of overall approaches that combine labor flexibility and employment security. Although the literature has been successful in describing the negative consequences of precarious work, including reduced job satisfaction, psychological stress, and disengagement from organizations (Standing, 2011; Schnell & Noack, 2020; Rubery et al., 2018), we still do not have much to draw on concerning specific models mitigating such consequences while still allowing for flexibility. The COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing normalization of gig and remote work have further revealed the structural vulnerabilities of the labor force (Euro found, 2021; De Stefano, 2016). By examining how workers and organizations navigate these competing pressures, this study informs theoretical debates of labor precarity, contributes to the empirical literature with a multidimensional exploration of work culture, and offers actionable insights for developing equitable labor policy. Finally, the research seeks to inform a more sustainable and equitable work model prioritizing institutional sustainability and well-being.

This study critically examines the tension between labor market flexibility and job insecurity, targeting those organizational solutions that create adaptive and inclusive work frameworks. Rather than drawing on sectoral case studies or comparative regional regulations, the investigation is based on a conceptual and theoretical examination of Standing's (2021) reworked theory of the precariat interpretation of the flexicurity model. Standing's model is still at the core of examining

socio-economic vulnerabilities in fragmented labor markets. The flexicurity model, reconsidered in recent publications, is concerned with attempts at balancing flexibility and employment security in the face of increasing economic change. Furthermore, studies on algorithmic management (Woodcock & Graham, 2020) and post-pandemic labor transformation (Benassi & Vlandas, 2022) point to the pressing necessity to respond to new patterns of precarity. These approaches provide an even basis for examining how institutions react to precarious work in the face of technological upheaval and shifting labor norms.

This research explores how sustainable work models can be built with flexibility and employment security trade-offs, promoting workforce equity and organizational resilience. Conceptual analysis is prioritized over evidence-gathering and draws on modern work theories, such as the precariat (Standing, 2021) and emerging flexicurity ideologies. Current research identifies how algorithmic management and platform labor create precariousness (Woodcock & Graham, 2020; Duggan et al., 2021). Post-pandemic work studies emphasize shifting needs for flexibility and protection in work structures. Studies of hybrid working structures (Messenger & Gschwind, 2021) and the impact of digitalization (Degryse, 2020) show emerging threats and opportunities for sustainable work systems. By combining these perspectives, the research offers a theoretical framework to guide future labor reforms in flexibility, security, and resilience in modern economies.

The study includes global perspectives on labor security and flexibility. No comparisons across sectors or countries are made. This allows for generalizable theoretical findings but limits context-specific applicability. It contrasts social protection models and policy discussions to extract universal principles for decent labor standards. There are limitations, however. The lack of empirical data constrains the testing of theoretical claims. The lack of regional or sectoral analysis can overlook local subtleties. Likewise, the conceptual emphasis undermines empirical accuracy since it relies on secondary sources only.

The main research question is: *How do organizations develop sustainable labor models to achieve flexibility and security for equitable outcomes?* Sub-questions include:

*What theoretical perspective best explains the conflict between security and labor flexibility?*

*In what way do current policies mitigate precariat vulnerabilities?*

*Which organizational practices enhance resilience and worker stability?*

*They lead the research to fill theory gaps and inspire future empirical research to validate conceptualized models.*

## **1. CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study considers precarity, a growing uncertainty in labor markets characterized by precarious work, nonstandard earnings, low wages, and limited access to social protections (Standing, 2011). These processes, driven by globalization, neoliberalism, and technology, signal a fundamental transformation of work arrangements. The focal point of this model is the precariat, a class described by Standing as individuals who lack occupational identity, bargaining power, or traditional employee rights, often having fragmented careers through short-term contracts, freelancing, or informal work. Concurrently, the study analyzes labor flexibility as an organizational strategy to deal with volatile markets and enhance efficiency. Flexible working might include telework, precarious work, and temporary contracts, and is also typically sold as promoting autonomy and work-life balance. However, they highlight vulnerabilities without robust institutional safeguards, leading to insecurity, lowered agency, and rising worker vulnerability (Rubery et al., 2018).

Precarity and flexibility are increasingly intertwined in contemporary labor markets, with flexibility often adding to precarity without stabilizing protective measures such as decent contracts, benefits, and workers' representation. This research critically examines the complex interplay between these dynamics, specifically focusing on how workers and organizations negotiate the trade-off between flexibility and stability. It seeks to propose sustainable work models that balance flexibility with decent employment practices, encouraging organizational innovation and protecting vulnerable groups. Through a multidisciplinary lens—drawing from sociology, labor economics, industrial relations, and organizational behavior—the study explores work dynamics within the context of neoliberal capitalism. Existing research highlights how platform economies (Woodcock & Graham, 2020) and algorithmic management (Duggan et al., 2021) intensify precariousness. Moreover, post-pandemic labor reform research stresses the urgency of strong employment protections. By synthesizing these insights, the study aims to guide policy development and organizational action that reconciles flexibility pressures with equity, security, and labor force sustainability imperatives in the long run.

Psychological assessments and interviews demonstrate the way insecurity affects mental health and social inclusion. Quantitative research also attests to an immediate rise in non-standard types of employment—i.e., part-time, temporary, gig, and platform work—particularly in hospitality, education, and transport (Woodcock &

Graham, 2020). Such trends require creative labor policies that reconcile economic flexibility with robust safeguards for workers to reverse the increasing psychosocial and economic inequalities. Besides, precariat working conditions in non-Western contexts, including Turkey, remain under-researched amidst rampant informality, weak union structures, and incomplete observance of labor rights. Structural features such as loose regulation regimes and excessive reliance on platform and temporary work continue to deteriorate precariat conditions (Rani et al., 2021). Filling these knowledge gaps is critical to developing balanced and locally sensitive interventions to mitigate labor precarity worldwide.

This study addresses these lacunae by questioning the interplay between organizational tactics, public policy, and employee coping strategies, and how they co-constitute precarity. The incorporation of non-Western theories gives a broader perspective of labor relations. It integrates psychological and sociological theories to conceptualize how workers make sense and resist precariousness, building on the pioneering theories of Standing (2011) and Kalleberg (2009). Some focus on flexibility to give power to employees in IT or creative industries, where autonomy increases satisfaction (Kalleberg, 2009). However, critical scholars argue that flexibility will often mask exploitation, particularly in involuntary arrangements like gig work, where platforms dodge responsibilities and expose workers (Rubery et al., 2018; Schnell & Noack, 2020).

Recently, the debate on precariousness has begun to gain momentum with policy proposals such as minimum wage increases, mobility benefits, and more reliable worker protection measures (OECD, 2023). Organizational policies focused on inclusive HR practices developed within this framework attempt to alleviate worker precariousness (Broughton et al., 2022). Limited studies have examined the organization's role in supporting vulnerable employees in precariatization (ILO, 2023). The research adopts a comprehensive approach when examining the interaction between employees, employers, and organizations. There is a need to deepen the understanding of how resilience intersects with organizational culture, institutional arrangements, and psychological experiences, namely, employee identity and dignity. In practice, evidence-based reforms such as more transparent employment categorizations, proportionate social protections for non-standard employees, and creating inclusive workplace cultures to build resilience at individual and system levels in precarious work situations need to be developed.

Drawing on Standing's (2011) Precariat Theory and Kalleberg's (2009) Dual Labor Market Theory, this research addresses the structural problems resulting from precariousness. Standing's precariousness represents a politically excluded and



economically precarious group. His basic assumption is that precariousness is a problem of the disorganization of labor resulting from neoliberalism. Kalleberg's dual labor market theory distinguishes "core" workers who provide stable benefits from "peripheral" workers who are precarious (Schnell & Noack, 2020; Vosko, 2006; Rubery et al., 2018). These theories guide the study's inquiry by shedding light on the institutional roots of precariousness.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1. Introduction**

This study investigates the equilibrium between flexibility and insecurity within precariatization and work culture through a systematic review approach (Tutar, 2023). The research aims to provide a comprehensive and impartial synthesis of the existing literature on this subject.

### **2.2. Data Sources and Search Strategy**

The literature review used open-access databases, including Dergipark, Scopus, Web of Science, and university library systems, to identify high-quality and relevant academic studies on the research topic. A systematic search strategy was employed, incorporating targeted keywords such as "precariatization," "work culture," "flexibility," "job insecurity," "labor market trends," and "precarious work." Boolean operators were used to refine search results (Bailey & Madden, 2017; Standing, 2011). Additionally, synonyms and related terms—such as "gig economy" and "workplace dynamics"—were integrated into the search framework to broaden the scope of the review (Wood et al., 2019). This comprehensive methodology ensured the inclusion of recent and academically rigorous sources. The data collection period extended from November 1, 2024, to December 25, 2024. This approach enabled the development of a robust and multidimensional understanding of the core concepts and emerging trends related to precarious employment and labor market transformations. Given the contemporary relevance of the topic, special attention was paid to the currency and applicability of selected sources to ensure alignment with the study's research objectives.

### **2.3. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

The study incorporated articles that met the following criteria:

- Published in English or Turkish,
- Published between 2010 and 2024,
- Focused on precariatization and work culture,

- Addressed both flexibility and precariousness in the labor market.

Conference abstracts, studies lacking full-text availability, and research focused solely on unrelated subjects, such as economic modeling, were excluded from the analysis.

#### **2.4. Data Analysis**

The selected studies were analyzed using thematic analysis and content analysis. Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring patterns and themes, providing insights into the key drivers of precariatization, its impact on work culture, and potential strategies for mitigating precariousness (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Concurrently, content analysis systematically categorized findings under predefined themes, facilitating the synthesis of diverse perspectives (Tutar & Erdem, 2020; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This dual methodological approach enabled a more nuanced understanding of the complexities and implications of precariatization. By integrating these analytical techniques, the study offers a comprehensive and balanced assessment of the interrelationship between work culture and precariatization, contributing to the broader discourse on labor market dynamics and employment precarity.

### **3. RESULTS**

The literature review shows that employers increasingly prioritize cost efficiency over long-term investment in their workforce. This situation worsens the deregulated work culture in the workplace. Kalleberg (2009) argues that the rise of precarious work is both a product of and a solution to volatile global economic conditions. While employers adapt to uncertainty by adopting flexible labor practices, employees bear the burden of this adaptation through income instability and limited career advancement opportunities, as can be better understood from the tables below.

Table 1 summarizes global trends in precariatization since 2000, showing the main developments and their impact levels.

**Table 1:** Main Trends in Work Life by Year and Impact Levels

Year	Key Trends	Global Impact (Severity Level 1-10)
2000	Growth of temporary contracts in developed economies	5
2005	Expansion of gig economy platforms begins	6
2010	Rise of platform-based labor in emerging economies	7
2015	Global financial crisis accelerates flexible work	8
2020	COVID-19 pandemic drives remote and gig work	9
2023	Increased calls for regulation in flexible employment	8

The table delineates key trends in the evolution of work life from 2000 to 2023, assessing their global impact on a scale of 1 to 10. In 2000, the prevalence of temporary contracts surged in developed economies, exerting a moderate impact (Level 5). By 2005, the expansion of gig economy platforms marked the onset of a global shift toward flexible employment structures (Level 6). The prominence of platform-based labor in emerging economies became evident by 2010, further intensifying its global significance (Level 7). The 2015 global financial crisis accelerated the transition toward flexible work arrangements, heightening its impact (Level 8). In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic catalyzed an unprecedented surge in remote and gig work, reaching its peak influence (Level 9). By 2023, growing calls for regulatory measures aimed at flexible employment practices led to a slight moderation of their impact (Level 8).

Between 2000 and 2005, temporary contracts became increasingly prevalent in developed economies as employers sought adaptable labor solutions in response to intensified global competition (Standing, 2011). Despite this shift, traditional employment structures remained dominant, and the severity of precarious employment was moderate (Level 5). During the mid-2000s (2005–2010), the rapid proliferation of gig economy platforms marked a significant transition toward independent contractor models, particularly in service industries such as transportation and delivery. This shift exacerbated worker insecurity, elevating the severity of precarization to Level 6 (Kalleberg, 2009).

From 2010 to 2015, platform-based labor expanded substantially in developing economies, coinciding with heightened labor market volatility following the global financial crisis. The severity of precarization escalated significantly (Level 7–8) as both developed and developing economies experienced increased job insecurity (Rubery et

al., 2018). Between 2020 and 2023, the COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated the prevalence of remote and gig work, pushing the impact of precarization to its peak (Level 9) in 2020. However, by 2023, rising global awareness and advocacy for regulatory reforms significantly reduced precarization severity, lowering it to Level 8 (Eurofound, 2021). These developments underscore the imperative for proactive policy interventions to mitigate the vulnerabilities associated with flexible employment and safeguard workers' stability in an evolving global labor market.

**Table 2:** Decline in Union Membership (%), Precariatization Of The Workforce (Index Level 1-10), Global Labour Insecurity (Severity Level 1-10)

<b>Year</b>	<b>De-Unionization (Union Membership Decline %)</b>	<b>Precarization of Labor (Index Level 1-10)</b>	<b>Global Labor Insecurity (Severity Level 1-10)</b>
<b>2000</b>	2	4	5
<b>2005</b>	4	5	6
<b>2010</b>	5	6	7
<b>2015</b>	6	7	8
<b>2020</b>	7	8	9
<b>2023</b>	8	9	8

The table analyzes the decline in union membership, the rise of precarious labor, and the increasing global labor insecurity from 2000 to 2023, measured on a scale of 1 to 10. Over this period, union membership exhibited a steady decline, with de-unionization levels rising from 2 in 2000 to 8 by 2023. Concurrently, precarious labor—characterized by job instability and uncertainty—intensified, escalating from an index level of 4 in 2000 to 9 in 2023, reflecting a growing dependence on unstable work arrangements. Similarly, global labor insecurity, indicative of workers' economic and social vulnerability, increased significantly, climbing from 5 in 2000 to a peak of 9 in 2020 before slightly receding to 8 in 2023. The COVID-19 pandemic likely contributed to the 2020 peak by exacerbating economic uncertainties and reinforcing precarious work conditions.

This data underscores a clear trend: as union influence diminishes, labor conditions become progressively more unstable and insecure, highlighting the urgent need for regulatory and policy interventions to mitigate workforce challenges. The table also traces global trends in union disorganization, labor disintegration, and economic insecurity between 2000 and 2023. The forces of globalization and the rise of temporary contracts have contributed to an approximate 2% global decline in union membership. Labor disorganization was moderate in the early 2000s, with an index level of 4 out of

10, while labor insecurity, stemming from the transition toward more flexible but precarious work arrangements, was assessed at a severity level of 5 out of 10.

By 2010, the expansion of digital labor platforms and the weakening of traditional labor structures contributed to a further decrease in union membership (4–5% decline). The normalization of precarious employment led to a rise in labor disorganization, reaching 6 out of 10. This period marked a shift in employer-employee relations, diminishing collective bargaining power and exacerbating worker insecurity, which reached a severity level of 7.

Between 2010 and 2015, labor market instability intensified due to the global financial crisis, accelerating labor disorganization and insecurity. Union membership declined further, resulting in a cumulative 6% global reduction. As precarious work spread across various industries, labor disorganization escalated to 7 out of 10. This rising uncertainty heightened workers' anxieties and economic vulnerability, and incidents of labor-related unrest increased, with labor insecurity reaching a severity level of 8.

From 2020 to 2023, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly disrupted labor markets, amplifying disorganization (index level: 8–9) due to the widespread adoption of remote and temporary work. The decentralization of workplaces further impeded unionization, leading to an estimated 7–8% decline in union membership. Labor insecurity peaked at 9 in 2020 as economic instability deepened. However, regulatory discussions and policy reforms in certain regions contributed to a slight alleviation of insecurity by 2023 (significance level: 8). These findings highlight the critical need for structural reforms to address the erosion of traditional labor protections and ensure better stability for workers in an evolving global labor landscape.

**Table 3:** Basic Dynamics and Consequences of Insecurity

Drivers	Description
<b>Globalization</b>	Increased competition leads to flexible and unstable work arrangements.
<b>Technological advancements</b>	Rise of gig platforms offering work with limited protections.
<b>Neoliberal policies</b>	Deregulation favors employer flexibility over worker security.

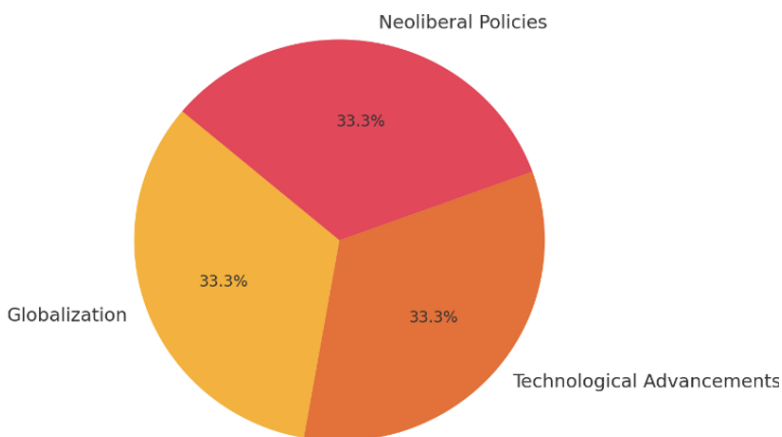
The table identifies three primary drivers of labor insecurity: globalization, technological advancements, and neoliberal policies. Globalization intensifies competition, compelling employers to adopt flexible yet unstable work arrangements. Technological advancements, particularly the expansion of gig platforms, have

facilitated the creation of jobs with minimal protections, favoring short-term engagements over long-term stability. Meanwhile, neoliberal policies emphasize deregulation, affording employers greater flexibility at the expense of worker security. These structural shifts in the global economy have exacerbated precarious work conditions, diminishing worker stability and protection on a global scale. Addressing these challenges necessitates regulatory interventions to balance labor market flexibility with adequate worker security.

According to the findings of this analysis, precariatization and labor precariousness are primarily driven by globalization, economic restructuring, and technological transformation. Globalization and neoliberal economic policies have accelerated labor market deregulation, leading to a surge in non-standard employment arrangements such as temporary contracts, gig work, and freelance employment (Standing, 2011). These shifts predominantly enhance employer flexibility while eroding worker stability and protection.

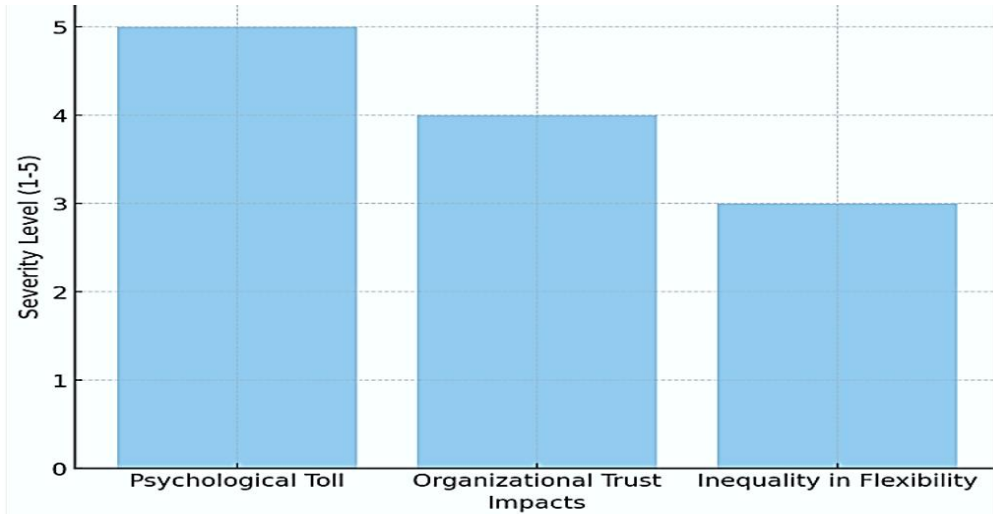
Technological advancements, particularly the rise of platform-based labor within the broader gig economy, have further facilitated the expansion of precarious work by decoupling employment relationships from traditional workplace structures (Kalleberg, 2009; Rubery et al., 2018). The absence of comprehensive social protections and regulatory oversight for gig workers exacerbates their economic vulnerability, particularly in industries heavily reliant on platform-based labor. These findings underscore the urgent need for robust policy frameworks to mitigate the risks associated with precarity and to ensure equitable labor protections in an evolving global economy.

**Figure 1:** Distribution of Factors Triggering Insecurity



Precariatization significantly impacts work culture and employee well-being. Lack of job security and career progression opportunities has been found to lead to increased stress, lower job satisfaction, and reduced organizational commitment. Many precarious employees feel alienated and frustrated due to their limited control over working conditions and unpredictable income streams (Schnell & Noack, 2020; Vosko, 2006). The psychological and social costs of insecurity often lead to burnout, negatively impacting productivity and team cohesion. Furthermore, organizations that rely heavily on flexible working arrangements undermine trust between employees and management, weakening their ability to foster collaborative and flexible work environments (Eurofound, 2021). The unequal distribution of flexibility significantly undermines labor peace, with high-skilled employees

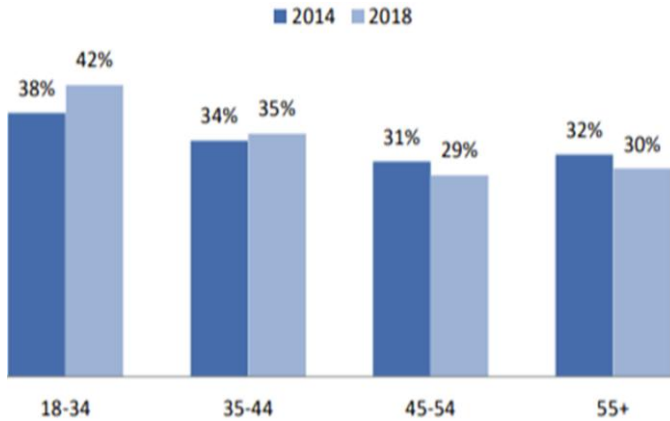
**Figure 2:** Severity of Impacts on Work Culture



Precariatization has negative impacts on work culture and employee well-being. This demonstrates the psychological cost of job insecurity. Insecure work is directly linked to increased stress, anxiety, and reduced job satisfaction. Employees in insecure roles often feel alienated from their organizations because they have limited opportunities to establish meaningful professional identities or relationships. Research also shows that insecure work disrupts organizational cohesion and productivity. It shows that a lack of stability undermines trust between employers and employees. This erosion of trust affects individual employees, and insecure employees are excluded from decision-making processes and long-term planning (Schnell & Noack, 2020; Vosko, 2006; Eurofound, 2021). In this process, high-skilled employees gain autonomy

while low-skilled employees face exploitation, a form of inequality brought about by flexibility.

**Figure 3:** Freelance Work Areas in Different Age Groups. Source: Upwork and Freelance Union 2018



### 3.1. Interpretation of Freelance Work Rates Across Age Groups

The graph compares freelance work rates among different age groups in 2014 and 2018, highlighting notable trends in workforce participation. The most significant increase is observed in the 18–34 age group, where freelance work participation rose from 38% in 2014 to 42% in 2018, reflecting a growing preference for freelance employment among younger workers. Other age groups exhibit marginal or negative changes: the 35–44 age group experienced a slight increase from 34% to 35%, while the 45–54 and 55+ age cohorts saw slight declines in freelance work participation. These trends suggest that younger workers increasingly embrace freelancing, whereas older age groups demonstrate more stable or declining participation rates.

### 3.2. Young Age Group (18–34)

The freelance work rate within this demographic increased from 38% in 2014 to 42% in 2018, indicating a rising inclination toward freelance employment. This trend suggests that digitalization and the expansion of flexible work models may have made freelancing more attractive to younger individuals, who are more adaptive to emerging labor market transformations.

### 3.3. Middle Age Group (35–44)

Freelance work participation in this group exhibited a minor increase, rising from 34% in 2014 to 35% in 2018. This marginal growth implies that traditional employment



structures strongly influence this age group, potentially due to career stability concerns or employer preferences for standard work arrangements.

### **3.4. Middle-Older Age Group (45–54)**

This cohort's freelance work rate declined from 31% in 2014 to 29% in 2018. This decrease may suggest that individuals in this age group favor more conventional employment models, due to more significant concerns about job security, career longevity, or retirement planning.

### **3.5. Older Age Group (55+)**

Freelance work participation among older workers dropped from 32% in 2014 to 30% in 2018. This decline may indicate a lower level of interest in freelancing among older employees or a general reduction in labor market participation as individuals approach retirement age.

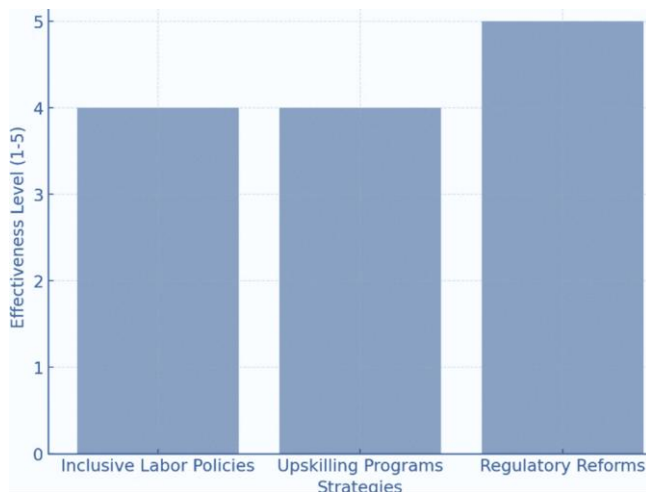
### **3.6. Structural Implications and Policy Considerations**

The rising freelance work rate among the 18–34 age group underscores the impact of technological advancements and the gig economy on younger workers. In contrast, freelance participation rates have remained stable or slightly declined among older cohorts, suggesting that younger individuals are more adaptable to digital work models and flexible employment structures.

This increasing trend in freelancing reflects broader shifts in labor market preferences, particularly the demand for greater flexibility and the evolving nature of employment relationships. However, flexibility in labor markets often comes at the cost of job security. As highlighted in the literature, a critical response is the implementation of inclusive labor policies, skill development programs, and regulatory reforms designed to mitigate the risks associated with precarious work.

For instance, ensuring proportional social benefits and clearly defined contract terms for part-time or temporary workers can enhance security without compromising labor market flexibility. Organizations can also invest in workforce development initiatives that facilitate the transition to more stable employment or provide multiple income-generating opportunities (Schnell & Noack, 2020; Rubery et al., 2018).

**Figure 3:** Effectiveness of Strategies to Reduce Insecurity



Moreover, regulatory reforms targeting non-standard workers are becoming increasingly vital. Policies such as portable welfare systems, minimum wage legislation, and universal healthcare access are fundamental measures to enhance labor security (Standing, 2011). Additionally, innovative policy frameworks, such as introducing a root wage, can help mitigate income volatility and ensure economic stability for individuals engaged in precarious employment.

Despite the challenges posed by flexibility in the labor market, the literature suggests several solutions to balance job security and flexibility. Most research emphasizes providing inclusive labor market policies to eliminate the harmful effects of precarious work. Rubery et al. (2018) argue that health care, retirement savings plans, and leave entitlements commensurate with those of other workers are important for ensuring employee equality and fairness. These policies ensure that social security benefits are provided in non-traditional employment arrangements. Career progression and skill acquisition programs are also panaceas for achieving workforce stability. Schnell and Noack (2020) support providing a platform for employees to acquire new skills to transition to more stable and sustainable forms of employment. This approach benefits individual employees and overall labor market resilience by allowing the workforce to acquire appropriate flexible skills to adapt to changing economic demands.

Scholars recommend regulatory policy reforms to eliminate income and employment insecurity. Standing (2011) states that basic income security and portable benefit plans should provide economic security to workers independent of their employment contracts. According to him, such policy interventions will reduce

workers' dependence on insecure income sources by providing economic security and limiting the dangers of insecure labor. Data from studies on this subject show that despite the factors that cause insecurity (structural and technological change), there is still a long way to go. Measures should extend beyond the employment situation and aim to improve the organization, work, work culture, subjective well-being, and institutional health. Solving the problem of insecurity will not come at the expense of labor market flexibility and job security.

This study suggests comprehensive policies to improve job security. The first question developed in the research, the conflict between security and flexibility, requires the development of suggestions within the framework of Standing's (2011) Precariat Theory and Kalleberg's (2009) Dual Labor Market Theory approaches. These theories show how flexibility can bring opportunities and dangers and reveal the structural sources of insecurity. The second sub-question, how do current policies reduce insecurity risks, is revealed, and the research reveals that the answer to this is that flexible work and security are mandatory elements that complement each other. It reveals the need for more radical solutions beyond policies such as minimum wage. It reveals the need to develop general policy suggestions to ensure employee security. The third sub-question is, which organizational strategies provide resilience and employee stability? This indicates the need for egalitarian human resources practices, training programs, and secured contracts. It reveals the need to consider measures that create trust and stability without eliminating flexibility.

## **DISCUSSION**

Globalization, digitalization, and neoliberal economic policies have significantly reshaped labor markets, resulting in the spread of non-standard forms of employment such as gig work, freelance work, and temporary contracts (Standing, 2011; Kalleberg, 2009). This not only reshapes traditional work patterns but also brings about employment insecurity, especially for low-skilled and marginalized groups. The available data show that flexibility, which means the absence of reliable and robust institutional protection, increases insecurity and poses significant challenges to individual well-being. The results are consistent with the premises of Standing's (2011) theory of precariousness and show that job insecurity is not a conjunctural problem, but a structural problem embedded in the economic logic of capitalism (Schnell & Noack, 2020).

In comparing the current study's findings with previous studies, an apparent convergence is seen in the adverse effect of labor precarity. In line with the same conclusions drawn by Rubery et al. (2018) and Vosko (2006), the current study

reaffirms that precarious employment undermines job satisfaction, mental well-being, and employee-employer trust. The findings are also consistent with those of Schnell and Noack (2020), who emphasized that organizational disintegration and exacerbated stress directly result from long-term insecurity. However, the study is more sophisticated in introducing contemporary labor market developments in non-Western nations, namely Türkiye, where informal employment, weak institutional protection, and fragmented regulation consolidate precarity (Ayparçası, 2022; Özkurt, 2018). One of the key areas of divergence from some Western-centric research is in emerging economies' cultural and legal framework, where workers are more vulnerable because there are no effective mechanisms for enforcement.

Methodologically, past studies relied either on macroeconomic modeling or on interviews at the individual level. The current work, on the other hand, employed a multi-layered approach combining institutional analysis, policy evaluation, and labor sociology. Such methodological differences can be employed to account for variation in the interpretation of precarity between locations. Despite these differences, there is broad agreement across the literature that flexible labor markets heighten socioeconomic inequalities and psychological distress unless counteracted by protective structures.

This research provides several theoretical contributions to precarity research on labor markets. To start, it marries Standing's theory of the precariat with Kalleberg's theory of labor market segmentation to produce a dual-level analytical framework that links structural economic change with experience at the individual level. This integration will explain how institutional reasoning impacts employees' sense of stability and autonomy. In addition, the study will contribute to the theoretical basis of online platform-based work, an area that has not been sufficiently studied in existing literature. Such studies will contribute to showing how labor reproduces precariousness through algorithmic management and labor protections (De Stefano, 2016; Eurofound, 2021; Woodcock & Graham, 2020). Such studies will provide functional data to evaluate the status of precarious platform-based work trends after the pandemic (ILO, 2023; Stewart & Stanford, 2022).

Although it has contributed, the research is not without limitations. Firstly, the emphasis was narrow to policy evaluation and literature analysis, with a tiny primary data collection. Although the research had used intensive secondary sources, subsequent research would be enriched by empirical field research involving direct interviews with precarious workers across different sectors. Second, the nation-specific geographical focus on Turkey and generalizable Western literature results may not represent regional differences within labor dynamics. The context-specific

heterogeneity of labor law enforcement, social welfare capacity, and economic development levels suggests that results may vary significantly across regions. Also, while the study attempted to design a balanced flexibility-security model, it emphasized regulatory and institutional transformation more, rather than relatively downplaying grassroots worker responses or informal solidarity networks (Gallie, 2013; Schnell & Noack, 2020; Woodcock & Graham, 2020). This is something that needs more research. Lastly, while being multidisciplinary, the theory may need to be calibrated to sector-specific studies such as healthcare, education, or logistics, in which precarity assumes specific forms.

This study presents a multidisciplinary analysis of precarity among laborers through integrating its root causes, socio-economic effects, and everyday reactions using an overarching theory- and policy-focused model. The developments of labor markets amid the onslaughts of globalization, technological shifts, and neoliberal hegemony have advanced flexible modes of employment against secure work opportunities for the majority, particularly marginalized and low-skilled workers (Standing, 2011; Kalleberg, 2009; Rubery et al., 2018). Precarity is not just an economic fact but also a psychosocial and institutional one with significant implications for workers' mental well-being, organizational adaptability, and social solidarity (Gallie, 2013; Schnell & Noack, 2020).

The study's originality is its integrative approach—spanning theory, policy, and practice—without losing sight of concrete policy recommendations. These are expanding social protection programs for atypical workers (Vosko, 2006), instating portable benefits (De Stefano, 2016), classifying gig workers as employees to ensure elementary rights (Eurofound, 2021), and investing in digital skills to enable workforce adaptation (Fudge & Owens, 2006). Universal basic income has also been discussed as a potential means of minimizing earnings instability (Ferrera, 2012). These proposals are required by institutions seeking to balance labor flexibility with justice, dignity, and long-term sustainability.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study shows how precariousness significantly impacts labor markets and how neoliberalism, globalization, and technology undermine organizational culture and workforce stability. Employment insecurity is driven by employers increasingly choosing cost-cutting, flexible work models, such as the gig economy and short-term contracts. Short-term contracts have become widespread in advanced economies, and temporary work has intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the meantime, the decline in union coverage and the weakening of collective bargaining in informal

economies further destabilize the workforce. These trends create a critical need for policies that balance flexibility with strong protections, negatively impacting workers. Modern work arrangements combine promise with vulnerability. These results pose a challenge for stakeholders to take action. Policymakers must frame legislation based on current labor realities. Promotional benefits are essential for fairness and an equal work system. Employers must shift from short-term productivity to approaches promoting employee well-being and resilience to protect their interests. In future studies, researchers should focus on sector-specific dynamics for a richer understanding. The future of sustainable work requires a balance where flexibility and security are considered together. At the same time, protecting vulnerable workers and establishing inclusive systems is a pragmatic and ethical imperative.

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