

DIGITAL LABOUR AND PLATFORM CAPITALISM: LABOUR PLATFORM REVIEW¹

Ayşe Nur BÜYÜKYAVUZ DENİZ²

ABSTRACT

In today's world, where information and communication technologies are rapidly developing, cultural and economic relations have also developed and changed. Digital progress has not only changed the cultural habits of individuals but also led to the formation of various economic business lines. Today, individuals spend most of their time on digital media platforms. In doing this, they are not only consumers but also producers. Over time, these applications have begun to be used as an economic gain option for producers and consumers. Therefore, production and consumption have changed their form. Through various intermediary platforms, individuals reach the society in different professions. This development has created new digital business models alongside traditional business models. Therefore, labour forms have changed. This study focuses on employment and labour relations on digital labour platforms. In the study, the ways in which new digital business models are used, including Armut, Hiwell and Cambly intermediary platforms, were examined through digital labour. While doing this, the transforming nature of labour will be examined by explanatory analysis method, based on Marx's concept of labour.

Keywords: Digital Labour, Platform Capitalism, Digital Economy

DİJİTAL EMEK VE PLATFORM KAPİTALİZMİ: EMEK PLATFORMU İNCELEMESİ

Ayşe Nur BÜYÜKYAVUZ DENİZ

ÖZET

Bilgi ve iletişim teknolojilerinin hızla geliştiđi günümüz dünyasında kültürel ve ekonomik ilişkiler de gelişime ve deđişime uğramıştır. Dijital ilerleme bireylerin kültürel alışkanlıklarını deđiřtirmekle kalmamış çeşitli ekonomik iş kollarının oluşmasına da yol açmıştır. Günümüzde bireyler zamanlarının büyük bölümünü dijital medya platformlarında harcamaktadır. Bunu yaparken de yalnızca tüketici deđil aynı zamanda üretici konumundadırlar. Bu uygulamalar zaman içinde üretüketiciler için ekonomik kazanç seçeneđi olarak da kullanılmaya başlamıştır. Dolayısıyla üretim ve tüketim biçim deđiřtirmiştir. Çeşitli aracı platformlar ile bireyler farklı meslek kollarında topluma ulaşmaktadır. Bu gelişim geleneksel iş modellerinin yanında yeni dijital iş modellerini oluşturmuştur. Dolayısıyla emek biçimleri deđişime uğramıştır. Bu çalışma dijital emek platformlarındaki istihdam ve çalışma ilişkilerine odaklanmaktadır. Çalışmada *Armut*, *Hiwell* ve *Cambly* aracı platformları sınırlandırması ile yeni dijital iş modellerinin hangi biçimlerde kullanıldığı dijital emek üzerinden incelenmiştir. Bunu yaparken Marx'ın emek kavramından yola çıkılarak emeğin dönüřen niteliđi açıklayıcı analiz yöntemi ile incelenecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dijital Emek, Platform Kapitalizmi, Dijital Ekonomi

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² Başkent University, Institute of Social Sciences, ORCID ID: 0000-0002-5138-8290, aysenurbz@gmail.com
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INTRODUCTION

With the development of new communication technologies, new business models have started to emerge. New business models have led to changes in the production and consumption patterns of individuals. These developments have brought new debates in the context of political economy of communication. The productive labour of users who produce content on digital network sites and platforms is considered as the dominant capital accumulation. The unpaid labour of producer-consumers is used as a marketing strategy on digital network sites and sold to users as a commodity. Hence users become the main target of marketing strategies. When becoming a member of these digital networking sites and platforms, users agree to the terms of use and privacy policies regarding the commodification of their data. This means that they consent to their data being made available to the media industry. As the number of users increases, the number of data also increases, and the data that is processed and turned into a commodity brings about the creation of advertisements over time. In the process of ad creation, digital data is transformed into capital and adverts are sold to users. The concept of digital labour is a concept that tries to understand the flow of this process and capital systems.

In order to understand the concept of digital labour, the concept of labour should be mentioned first. In this regard, it is necessary to focus on the Marxist labour-value theory. Marx examined the concept of labour on workers engaged in industrial production in the capitalist order. According to Hardt and Negri (2008), the transition to the information economy has also transformed labour. The immateriality of labour is an indicator of this change. Since there is no material permanent labour in today's sectors where production has become information production, the labour related to production is immaterial labour. Immaterial labour is defined as labour that produces goods and services that are not tangible and visible, such as a service, a cultural product, information or communication (Negri, 2008). In today's conditions, where production and service are organized on the basis of information technologies and not dependent on physical space, the labour theory of value is insufficient. This situation brings about the concept of digital labour. However, it is necessary to consider digital labour as a continuation of the concept of labour without completely separating it from the concept of labour.

The concept of audience commodity, first mentioned by Dallas Smythe in his 1977 article "*Communication, the Blind Spot of Western Marxism*" is another issue that needs to be mentioned in order to understand the concept of digital labour. This concept developed by Smythe focuses on the role of the viewer in relation to advertisements. The concept of audience commodity, developed on the commodification of the viewer's act of watching, is integrated with the circulation of capital in the media industry. Thus, mass media are commercialized as they act in an advertisement-based and dependent manner. Smythe's audience commodity has turned into a user commodity with the development of mass media and the internet technology taking a big place in human life.

SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Political economy discussions in communication have developed as the political economy of the internet with the development of internet technology. The concept of digital labour, which is examined in this context, has also become a matter of debate among researchers. As in every field, various definitions are made on this subject. In this study, production and capital accumulation systems are analyzed in order to make the concept more understandable. It is explained how becoming a commodity works as a result of being a producer-consumer on a voluntary basis on social media. The main question of this study is which capital systems digital media volunteers actually benefit from. Being present on digital media voluntarily has turned into profiting from social media today. In fact, this situation is also based on volunteering. Making money from digital media requires analyzing platforms in various categories. This study was analyzed with the limitation of sharing economy. The study is important in understanding the social and economic inequality between capitalists and workers in the production of goods and services through digital labour platforms.

The state of volunteering and earning on platforms returns to digital media owners as capital at the end of the day. The study makes an explanatory analysis on applications called cloud computing, which are based on volunteerism but also aim to generate income for users. In this context, the applications to be analyzed are limited to *Armut*, *Hiwell* and *Cambly* applications. Such applications are among the most preferred applications by users in their categories in cloud computing in the 21st century. These applications are user-based and bring together the labour produced with consumers. Applications that act as intermediaries earn income through the commission they earn on the labour produced. Consequently, the existence of labour producers and service purchasers becomes the commodity of commercial organizations.

Christian Fuchs (2015b), in his book *Digital Labour and Karl Marx*, examines digital labour based on all forms of labour. He considers digital labour as the unpaid labour of digital media users. The fact that individuals take part in both production and consumption processes at the same time ensures the existence of digital media. Thus, according to Fuchs (2015b), digital labour is also included in the global system of exploitation and should be examined together with all these forms of labour. Digital labour should be considered as a whole with the slave labour that mines for the production of information communication technology, with the workers working under difficult conditions in ICT manufacturing and assembly companies, with the labour of engineers working in software companies, with the labour of engineers who create technological innovation in the IT sector, with call center workers. As a result of the labour that passes through all these processes, society reaches the digital world and as a result, there is labour produced in digital media. As a result, digital labour is a concept that needs to be examined by expanding it with all forms of paid and unpaid labour.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE CONCEPT OF DIGITAL LABOUR

The development of new communication technologies has increased the time individuals spend with mass media. As the time spent with technological devices such as computers and telephones has increased, individuals have become dependent on these devices over time. The process of manufacturing these devices and bringing them to individuals is a product of the labour process.

The use of internet technologies is examined in the context of digital labour. In order to understand digital labour, it is first necessary to define the concept of labour. In the Marxist approach, the concept of labour differs from the concept of work. In *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels argue that the concept of work is a conscious productive activity that changes and regulates nature (Marx and Engels, 1845 p. 37). Labour, on the other hand, is related to the relationship between workers and capital owners in class societies and is examined within the capitalist system. Labour is the compulsory state of working to meet basic needs such as eating, drinking and shelter. Thus, labour is a necessarily alienated form of work in which the means and results of production are not under the control of people (Fuchs, 2015a, p. 50). Marx starts the labour process from man's relationship with agriculture and explains the technological transformation of labour by advancing this process to the late industrial period. In this context, labour is the basic element of production.

According to Lazzarato (1996, p. 145), immaterial labour refers to two different aspects of labour: In terms of the informational content of the commodity, immaterial labour refers directly to the changes taking place in the labour processes of workers in large companies in the industrial and tertiary sectors, where the skills required for direct labour increasingly require skills related to cybernetics and computer mastery. Apart from this, immaterial labour, in terms of the activity that produces its cultural content, includes many actions that are not normally considered as work. In other words, immaterial labour is the activity of determining and protecting cultural and artistic standards, fashion, taste, consumer norms and strategically public opinion.

In the capitalist system, the worker becomes alienated from himself and the product he produces in the production process. Because labour is controlled by capital. In this context, the worker becomes alienated from both himself and the product he produces, since he cannot buy the product he produces for the wage he receives at the end of the day. The product in question is no longer the product of the worker, but of the owner of capital. In this case, the worker is not entitled to the profit made by the owner of capital. This situation creates alienation.

Marx (1844) used the concept of alienation for the first time in detail in the chapter "*On Alienated Labour*" in his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*. Here he defines four forms of alienation: a) alienation from the product, b) alienation from the labour process in the form of forced labour (1844, p. 72), c) alienation from oneself: "This is how alienated labour turns: Man's species property, both natural and spiritual, is transformed into an entity alien to him, an instrument of his individual existence. It alienates man's own body from himself, just as it alienates external nature and his spiritual essence, his human being" (Fuchs, 2015b p. 245).

This process, which Marx dealt with in industrial production, was addressed by Christian Fuchs in the context of digital labour. According to Fuchs, the concept of "digital labour" includes all forms of paid and unpaid labour necessary for the existence, production, dissemination and use of digital media (cited in Saraçoğlu, 2015, p. 15). In the context of digital labour, the productions made in new media are exploited by capital. Within the scope of labour theory, the exploitation of digital labour is examined in three elements. The first of these is oppression. Just as company owners put pressure on workers in Marxist theory, users who want to communicate, share, produce content and maintain social relations in digital media are put under pressure by commercial media platforms. People need to actively produce content in order to be visible on social media platforms. When they stay away from social media platforms, they come under psychological pressure in order not to miss the life there, and they have to keep in touch with other people on social media and make their posts continuous. Another element of exploitation is alienation. Just as the worker in industrial production is alienated from himself and the product he produces because he cannot own the product he produces, the content produced in social media and the revenues generated are owned by the application companies, not the users. Finally, with the element of confiscation, company owners confiscate the time users spend on social media applications and the unpaid labour they produce.

Users' memberships, profile information, content, social relations and browsing behaviours on social media platforms turn into a commodity for application companies and the revenues they provide to advertisers by watching advertisements. In addition, e-commerce platforms, online application stores, internet advertising, cloud computing, three-dimensional design printing activities are considered as digital labour. Thus, the presence on these platforms returns to companies as capital.

Digital media applications reach users at international level. In this case, the number of users of applications increases and contributes to the increase in the capital of companies. The Internet age has shaped labour with globalization and eliminated the concept of time and space. Understanding how commodification takes place on social media platforms is important in terms of showing how this process works. This situation requires an explanation of audience (nowadays user) labour.

DALLAS SMYTHE AND THE AUDIENCE META

Dallas Smythe in his 1977 article *Communication: The Blind Spot of Western Marxism*, he expressed his thoughts on the commodification of the act of watching. Smythe's work has made important contributions to the concept of audience/user labour, which can be used to ground labour-value theory. The issue of digital labour is an issue examined in the context of critical political economy. Smythe analyzes the effects of communication actors in terms of the policies that regulate and influence them. He evaluates the structure and policies of communication actors within their social conditions.

In capitalism, the media reduces people to the position of consumers of advertisements. Adorno (2013) directly emphasizes commodification in his book *Culture Industry*. People actually serve the culture industry while fulfilling their personal needs, even when they spend time for entertainment or leisure time. Hence culture is shaped by turning into a commodity within the capitalist system. Cultural commodities reach viewers and users by being strengthened with advertisements. The process results in the purchase of cultural products by viewers and users. Hence capitalism has to utilize the media to protect and maintain its system. Golding and Murdock (1973), focusing on mass media, pointed out that mass media are industrial organizations that produce and distribute commodities (1973, p. 205-206).

Advertising and cultural commodification use people as a tool for the accumulation of economic profit. The target here is human thoughts and actions that do not go beyond capitalism, do not question, do not rebel against the system and play the role of being a tool to ensure the continuation of capitalism. The most important quality of commodities is that they contain hidden informational contents. Commodities are immaterial, inexhaustible, imperishable, on the contrary, they can be stored, processed and always have the possibility of being reproduced (Kıryan, 2015, p. 38). Even if people are not aware of it, when they engage in the act of consuming a product they are exposed to through the media, they actually contribute to both the culture industry and advertisers. The act of consumption returns to advertisers as capital.

Vincent Mosco (2009, p. 137), in a discussion of Smythe's audience commodity, argues that digital systems that precisely measure and track every information transaction are used to improve the process of delivering audiences, listeners, readers, computer and telephone users to advertisers. Interactive systems allow for a comprehensive compilation of consumer behavioural profiles, which makes the targeting of consumers, categorized according to their tastes and incomes, more rigorous than ever (Dyer Wintheford, 1999, p. 118).

In order to analyze how the concept of audience commodity transforms into digital labour in social media, it is necessary to look at Marx's analyzes of capitalism. Marx analyzes the process of capital accumulation in the three volumes of *Capital*. According to Marx, due to the structure of private property, workers do not own the means of production, the products they produce or the profit they generate. These resources are owned by the capitalist. A new good is produced in the field of production: the value of labour power and the value of the means of production are added to the product (Marx cited in Fuchs, 2015b, p. 147). Under capitalism, therefore, people can only access the means they need to survive by buying commodities. This obliges them to sell their labour power as a commodity.

The time spent by viewers in front of the television has started to change its form by being interpreted as the time spent by users in digital media. However, in both ways, the time spent by viewers and users as a result of watching and using is sold to advertisers. Viewers and users become consumers who consume the advertisements shown during this time and become active in the process of reproduction (Fuchs, 2012, p. 701). Communication tools are part of people's means of survival.

Culture and popular culture products can be accessed by purchasing communication tools. However, even if social media platforms are accessed without purchasing, users' data is commodified. People's access to data and data production return to companies as profit. In these applications, user labour creates the content and it is sold to advertisers to reach other users directly. The data is financed by advertisements so that the number of users continues to increase day by day. Users and content creators cannot control and own the labour they produce, they are alienated from it. The labour that creates the audience commodity is exploited because it produces values and products that belong to others. Digital labour is ideologically repressed. Being suppressed, exploited and alienated makes viewer/user labour a limit in itself (Fuchs, 2015b, p. 139).

The concept of labour and audience commodity based on user-based content production has now started to be used as a source of income. Knowing that the content they produce has a financial return, people cooperate with advertisers in this context. This situation is not only limited to content production but also creates new economic models. These developments lead to platform capitalism.

PLATFORM CAPITALISM

Economic policies implemented after the crisis in the 1970s were aimed at reducing the organized power of labour. After the crash in the 1990s, internet-based companies turned to business models that make money from the free resources available to them. It has been observed that technology companies have made significant progress in terms of the power and amount of capital they have. Since 2008, the dominant narrative in advanced capitalist countries has been in favor of change. In particular, there has been a renewed focus on the rise of technology (Srnicsek, 2017, p. 27). With these developments in information technologies, new economic models have emerged.

There are intermediary digital platforms that enable two or more groups to come together and interact. These platforms bring together customers, advertisers, service providers, manufacturers, suppliers, industrial production objects through digital platforms. Langley and Leyshon (2017) *Platform Capitalism: The Intermediation and Capitalization of Digital Economic Circulation*, Langley and Leyshon (2017) classified the circulation areas and types of platform capitalism. According to Langley and Leyshon (2017, p. 16), platform capitalism should be analyzed according to the type of platform. Platforms such as *Amazon*, *Spotify*, *eBay*, *Alibaba*, *Apple* are typically multilateral platforms with closed APIs³ and bilateral vendor platforms with open APIs for developer innovation. They are marketplaces that are planned to sell physical distribution of products and services at a discount to traditional sales via download or streaming, and are easier to reach the international market.

³ An Application Programming Interface (API) is a set of definitions created to enable one software to use functions defined in another software (wikipedia.com).

In user-based applications such as *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *Instagram*, *Youtube*, content is created by social media users and provides multilateral and open APIs for producers. There are applications such as *TaskRabbit*, *Upwork*, *Amazon Mechanical Turk*, which provide marketplaces for transactional and contractual work, freelance and informal labour and know-how. Applications such as *Kickstarter*, *Indiegogo*, *Lending Club*, *Prosper* provide marketplaces for donations, lending or investment. Finally, there are sharing economy applications that constitute the main axis of this study. These applications include applications such as *Uber*, *Airbnb*, *Sidecar*, *RelayRides*, *JustPark*. These applications provide a marketplace for renting or selling underutilized or underutilized assets or services. In addition, through these applications, which are called sharing economy, education, information sharing and service opportunities in various professions are offered. *Armut*, *Hiwell* and *Cambly* applications, which constitute the scope of the study, are analyzed in the category of sharing economy platforms.

In order to fully understand the diversity and impacts of services that fall within the concept of online platforms, it is necessary to take into account the diversity of platforms. The first distinction is between platforms that facilitate access to goods or properties and platforms that provide access to self-employed workers or services. At one end of the spectrum are virtual marketplaces such as *eBay* and property rental sites such as *Airbnb*. At the other end, there are platforms such as *TaskRabbit* and *TakeLessons* that match labour providers with users (Drahokoupil and Fabo, 2016, p. 2). Thus, without being tied to any place, people do their own work by reaching customers or perform their professions thanks to these platforms. However, these people who are not dependent on a company and think that they are doing their own business are actually dependent on platforms. Platforms are in an intermediary position while bringing service providers together with their customers and receive a certain commission. A certain part of the person's earnings goes to the platform owners. In other words, instead of employing permanent and long-term employees in the traditional format, companies adopt a business model that works on a business basis and uses external resources by making project-based contracts. Platforms also offer a medium to those who want to work according to this business model. However, this situation brings along various debates. Some researchers are optimistic and argue that this system is a new service understanding and a democratizing method. While opening a company with large capital and providing services is something that not everyone can do, the service offered through these platforms makes people a part of the chain. Thus, researchers with a positive approach defend post-capitalism. Critics, on the other hand, claim that it creates a free market utopia and that the democratization process remains in words. Because as the number of members of these practices increases, they start to impose more sanctions on service providers and increase the commission rate. Thus, monopolization starts to occur in the market. This turns into a system of exploitation.

Just as there are platforms that organize local labour markets or stock exchanges, there are also platforms that organize or create markets on a local and/or global scale. As a matter of fact, although companies such as *Airbnb* and *Uber* are international companies, these platforms actually reorganize local (labour) markets.

In contrast, platforms like *CoContest* facilitate the connection between demand in one location and remote suppliers, possibly located abroad. A special case is “pure” web platforms such as *Amazon Mechanical Turk*, *Task Rabbit* or *Upwork*, which have no offline component and where tasks such as data entry, programming and website design are done exclusively online (Drahokoupil and Fabo, 2016, p. 2).

For companies like Google and Facebook, data is primarily a resource that can be used to attract advertisers and other interested parties. For companies like *Armut* and *Uber*, data is at the center of beating the competition. It allows such companies to offer better products and services, control employees and optimize algorithms for a more competitive business. Similarly, platforms such as *AWS* and *Predix* are geared towards building and owning the underlying infrastructure needed to collect, analyze and distribute data for other companies to use. A rental fee is charged for these platform services. In each case, collecting large amounts of data is central to the business model, and the platform provides the ideal inference device (Srnicek, 2017, p. 49).

FINDINGS

Review on *Armut*, *Hiwell* and *Cambly*

In this section of the study, the functioning of *Armut*, *Hiwell* and *Cambly* applications and how platform capitalism is realised will be discussed in an explanatory way. These platforms are intermediary applications that bring service providers together with their customers. While providing them with this environment, they generate income through the labour of users.

Armut was founded in 2011 by Başak Başpınar Değim as a service delivery platform. *Armut* application offers service categories to cover many business lines and professional groups from cleaning, transport, renovation works, design to private lessons. People who want to provide services in the *Armut* application create their own profiles in line with the work they do as a member of the application. They enter descriptive information such as details of their work and short CVs from their personal profiles. Users who want to receive service create the service they want to receive as an advertisement. Service providers also offer this advertisement for a certain fee. When the service provider completes the work, it is evaluated by the service recipient in the *Armut* application. This affects its preference rate in other jobs. Thus, the service provider is under double-sided pressure.

Application provides services in more than 2000 categories in Turkey. Globally, it is used in 14 countries in total. It serves as *ProntoPro* in Italy, Romania, Egypt, Spain, Germany, Austria and France, and as *HomeRun* in the United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia (*armut.com*). With its global expansion, the number of service categories has increased to over 4000. The number of service providers has reached 1.4 million. This number shows that more than 12 million customers are served globally (*webrazzi.com*). application is the most preferred application in its application category (*similarweb.com*).

Service providers who create a profile as a member of the *Armut* application can make this offer with a certain deduction from their accounts when they want to bid on an advertisement. At the end of the job, the service provider who receives the job can receive the main money remaining from the commission deducted from the fee paid by the service provider. Therefore, the fee paid by the service recipient reaches the service provider with a commission deduction approaching 30 per cent. The commission rates received by the application when it was first launched are not the same as the commission rates received as of 2023. As the number of users increases, commission rates have also increased. The fees earned by the users who provide services on *Armut* are also not equally distributed. With the reputation gained as a result of criteria such as satisfaction evaluations, job winning percentages, profile completion rates in *Armut*, there are service providers who do the same job for very low fees, as well as those who do it for high prices. Users who provide services through *Armut* are covered by *Armut* up to 2000 TL in case of injuries or property damages related to the service recipient (armut.com). Thus, reaching a certain reputation is a process that requires time and effort.

While the application is 17.19% in desktop web login as an application device, mobile application shows a distribution of 82.81%. This provides easier and quicker access to the application as a platform downloaded to phones. Gender distribution is 57.78% male and 42.22% female. This situation shows that the employee gender is concentrated in men. In addition, the age group using the application constitutes 42.92% of the 25-34 age group (similarweb.com). This distribution is an indication that young and middle-aged people are more intertwined with technology. When the data is analyzed, it is seen that the *Armut* application uses Google display ad network. When users use the keyword "armut", they directly access the application on Google. This shows that when people ask Google for the service they are looking for, they are directed to *Armut*. Although no product advertisement is made, only Google search ads are used to increase visibility. Hence the company has no extra advertising expenses. As the most recent date, during the three-month period between March 2023 and May 2023, the *Armut* application interacted with a total of 9.769 million visitors. The current one-year value of *Armut* is between \$5 million and \$10 million (similarweb.com).

Hiwell application is a psychological counselling application founded by Ali Ozan Özçiçek in 2019. With the application, people receive online therapy from clinical psychologists. With the coronavirus outbreak that started to spread in Turkey in March 2020, the demand for the application has increased. *Hiwell* application shows gender distribution as 57.84% male and 42.16% female users. The 18-24 age group with 22.52%, the 25-34 age group with 37.76% and the 35-44 age group with 18.80% are the age groups that use the application the most. *Hiwell* application receives direct traffic with a rate of 64.25%. Users reach the website directly through Google search, 30.20% through organic searches, 3.71% through referral sources, and 1.84% through search adverts and social media networks (similarweb.com). The keywords searched are; "hiwell", "online therapist", "overthinking disease", "social problem solving", "post-traumatic stress" are the words searched by people who want to cure psychological problems.

Users who want to get psychological support are directed to the *Hiwell* application, which comes to the forefront with advertisements when they search. Although *Hiwell* was established in Istanbul, it has started to receive global investments. They started to develop a therapy application not only in English but also in the native language or preferred language of the person using the application. In addition to Turkish and English, users can choose therapy in Italian, French, Greek and Azerbaijani.

Users who want to receive online therapy with the *Hiwell* application can receive online counselling for one session/50 minutes for 599 TL. Package session options are also available. *Hiwell* has more than 500 specialized psychologists as of 2023. More than 100,000 clients receive therapy (hiwellapp.com). People start therapy by making a preliminary interview with the expert offered by the application according to the test result they have solved. There are certain conditions for becoming a clinical psychologist in *Hiwell*. At least a bachelor's degree in psychology is required, and postgraduate diplomas and trainings provide convenience for expertise. In addition, extensive interviews are conducted for admission. *Hiwell* currently has agreements with companies such as. Companies such as Bluedot, Boosmart, Commint, Enocta and Mobile Action offer their employees online therapy with *Hiwell*. Therefore, the application has corporate agreements. However, recently, with the widespread use of online therapy, rival applications have started to emerge in the market. This situation shows that *Hiwell's* competition in its own category has increased and hence it has focused on social media advertisements.

Cambly is a foreign language learning platform. Founded in 2013 in the USA by Sameer Shariff and Kevin Law. It is an international platform. Users who are members of *Cambly* practice online with the instructor of their choice for a certain fee. Users can choose the duration and days of the lesson according to their budget and time. They can arrange a lesson with whichever instructor is active on the day and time they have planned or they can choose according to the day and time the instructor is active. Thus, this platform offers people the opportunity to learn a language without time and space constraints. Users also have the opportunity to socialise and acculturate through the platform. The gender distribution of *Cambly* users is 44.18% female and 55.81% male. The average age distribution is 28.50% 18-24, 35.88% 25-34, 17.60% 35-44 and 18.03% over 45. The number of active users of *Cambly* in May 2023 was 6.8 million. Users reach *Cambly* directly 80% of the time as it is branded for providing foreign language education through the platform (similarweb.com). *Cambly Kids* has also expanded its target audience with applications such as *Cambly* for organizations and group lessons. *Cambly* has agreements with corporate companies such as Siemens, Allianz, QNB Finansbank, Sodexo, Prometeon (organizations.cambly.com). It gives certificates to users who complete the ten-hour private lesson process. It also has the feature of being an ambassador on the website. By joining this community on the site, any member of the society can earn commission at the end of this work by entering into advertising collaborations with professionals and influencers. Thus, the system brings the members of the society into the capitalist system.

Users who want to become a member of the platform and purchase lessons have to allocate a certain budget. Although *Cambly* offers package options to users with various pricing policies, the prices are on a high scale. For this reason, only a certain segment of the society can benefit from this opportunity. The platform, which focuses on digital media and social media advertisements, is a part of the capitalist order. Thus, users who want to learn a language through this platform serve the capitalist system at the end of the day. Because some of the fees paid by the users go to the owner of the platform, not to the instructors. Instructors and lesson takers become part of this system.

Cambly pays particular attention to digital media advertising. It has advertising partnerships with publicly recognized names. *Cambly* has become a part of the culture industry and generates income through commissions from its users. *Cambly* offers at least one month of membership. During this one-month period, there are three different options: one hour a week, one and a half hours a week and two and a half hours a week. When we look at the fees, the one-month one-hour weekly call selection fee in Turkish lira is 2,261 TL, the one-and-a-half-hour weekly call selection fee is 3,443 TL and the two-and-a-half-hour weekly selection fee is 6,598 TL (cambly.com). Some discounts are available for quarterly or yearly package purchases. However, these discounts are not always valid. With social media advertisements, users can benefit from these discounts at certain time intervals with the discount codes they receive. Under the name of this process and discount codes, language learning education becomes a commodity. With its high price policy, it appeals only to a certain segment of society. Individuals who are instructors at *Cambly* receive a weekly wage in dollars. *Cambly* has a payment policy of \$0.17 per minute (\$10.20 per hour) and *Cambly Kids* has a payment policy of \$0.20 per minute (\$12.00 per hour) (cambly.com). An instructor who teaches 8 hours a day and works seven days a week can earn a maximum of US\$672 per week. Therefore, when the number of *Cambly* members is taken into account, the earnings of the trainers are below the earnings of the platform. Even at maximum working hours, this figure is low. *Cambly* is worth between \$10 billion and \$15 billion a year (similarweb.com). As a result, *Cambly* generates revenue through the presence and active engagement of trainers and users. Without participating in the production and labour process, it only increases its profit as an intermediary and continues to increase its effectiveness in the platform market.

CONCLUSION

In this study, digital labour and platform capitalism are examined. The concept of digital labour is taken within capitalism. While economists approach digital labour more liberally, economists approach it more critically. Digitalization can benefit the exports of the digitalized country and positively affect its economic development. Therefore, national and international investments also positively affect the reputation of the country.

On the other hand, it should be taken into consideration that while all this is happening, this process is actually sustained by labourers. This study focuses on cloud computing platforms through Marxist labour theory of value and user labour.

Users who want to work on platforms and earn income spend their labour and time. Users who work through platforms are not only active there, but also spend a certain period of their lives earning gains related to their professions in order to be visible there. Therefore, in order to see digital labour, it is necessary to look at the labour of users who produce content here or use them as intermediaries and do their work as a process. It is necessary to see their labour in the background.

It is also necessary to address the questions of who controls the surveillance tools and for what purposes, how this power is reproduced through interactive monitoring, who benefits from the monitoring and use, and who is forced to surrender control over personal information in exchange for a minimal convenience or privatization "fee" (Andrejevic, 2002: 244).

With the introduction of digital technologies into human life, it has gone beyond the traditional method of employing workers. Thanks to these platforms, people who cannot provide employment with the traditional method or who do not want to depend on the capitalist system create their own employment. However, while platforms provide this environment for people, they actually create digital capitalism. Labourers who are employed by intermediary platforms never receive the real wage at the end of their work. With the commission received by the platform, the service provider can only receive a part of the fee requested. Therefore, the platform founder earns more income than the service provider only through intermediation and commission without producing any product or service. Since the service providers who do the same job do not earn the same income, an imbalance occurs. Day by day, the gap between the earnings of the platform founder and the labourers who do the work begins to deepen.

This system, also called the sharing economy, is increasing day by day and has reached a level where it can compete with companies that employ employees in the traditional way. It is seen that this situation has started to concretely create a deepening economic gap in the capitalist system. As long as the gap continues to deepen, socio-economic imbalances will gradually increase.

With digital labour exploitation, it is seen that exploitation in the labour and information production sectors is normalized and normalized. As a result, forms of capital are also transforming digital culture.

Platform economy and platform capitalism are an inevitable consequence of the technological age we are in. The concept of time and space has begun to blur in the understanding of work. Due to the existence of platforms and the change in the nature of work and occupational groups, new legal and institutional arrangements should be made in accordance with the nature of the new system. Social and economic security of employees should be ensured. However, for these to be realized, a demand must be created. Thus, studies and discussions on platform capitalism are important at this point.

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