
From Exploitation to Resistance: Migrant Women Contesting Digital Labor Through Feminist Strategies

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Abstract

This paper examines how the precarization of migrant women's labor is intensified by the rise of digital labor platforms and what is the role of transnational feminist movements in shaping labor protections for these women in Latin America. Through a qualitative methodology that combines critical literature review, analysis of official data, and case studies, the research explores two interconnected dimensions: how platform capitalism reproduces structural exclusions, and how transnational feminist movements mobilize to challenge these inequalities and advocate for labor justice.

The first dimension investigates the role of digital platforms such as Uber, iFood, and OnlyFans in reshaping labor markets. While often framed as spaces of autonomy and entrepreneurship, these platforms often operate as sites of survival for migrant women, marked by algorithmic control, bodily commodification, and systemic exclusion from formal labor protections. The study proposes a typology of vulnerability in the gig economy-regulated informal labor (e.g., domestic work), algorithm-driven platform labor (e.g., delivery services), and extreme precarity (e.g., digital sex work). Migrant women are disproportionately affected, facing layered barriers such as racialized discrimination, legal precarity, and language exclusion, which deepen their marginalization across both Global North and South contexts. The second dimension explores the role of transnational feminist movements, particularly in Latin America, in contesting these labor injustices. Focusing on the ratification and implementation of ILO Convention 189, digital feminist campaigns like #NiUnaMenos, and the grassroots organizing of migrant women through networks such as CONLACTRAHO, the study demonstrates how feminist actors build multi-scalar alliances that reframe domestic and care work as political struggles. These movements challenge the invisibility and devaluation of migrant women's labor by linking local realities to global advocacy, pushing for structural reforms that go beyond legal formalization.

Findings reveal that while feminist mobilization has led to important legal and symbolic victories, significant obstacles remain—such as weak institutional enforcement, restrictive migration policies, and the privatized nature of care work. Across both digital and physical labor regimes, migrant women remain at the margins of labor rights frameworks, yet at the center of transformative feminist action.

By bridging the debates on digital labor, migration, and feminist organizing, this paper highlights the need for intersectional and transnational approaches to labor justice. Migrant women are not only subjects of structural vulnerability but also key agents in the collective reimagining of more inclusive and equitable labor systems.

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