

# INPLASY

## Influence of digital work platforms on job quality of international migrants in Latin America: A scoping review

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### ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

**Support** - Hemispheres.

**Review Stage at time of this submission** - Data analysis.

**Conflicts of interest** - None declared.

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**Amendments** - This protocol was registered with the International Platform of Registered Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Protocols (INPLASY) on 16 June 2026 and was last updated on 16 June 2026.

### INTRODUCTION

**Review question / Objective** Although some information exists on the prevalence of migrants on digital work platforms in Global North contexts, there is uncertainty about how the literature accounts for sectoral differences in the job-quality dimensions of this population in Latin America. Accordingly, a scoping review will be conducted using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses Extension (PRISMA-ScR) methodology. In that regard, the main research questions of this paper are:

- How does existing literature describe the influence of sectoral differences in platform work (e.g., ride-hailing, delivery, domestic care) on the working conditions, labor protections, and socioeconomic outcomes of international migrants in Latin America?

- How do these sector-specific patterns and migrant experiences in Latin America compare to those reported in European contexts, including variations by country and migration status?

**Background** While platform work is often associated with flexibility and opportunities for economic inclusion, it also introduces new forms of labor organization that may generate uncertainty and risk. Although the existing literature has examined work in digital contexts, the specific experiences of migrant workers, who typically face intersecting challenges related to legal status, discrimination, and limited access to labor protections, remain underexplored in the Global South, particularly in Latin America.

Digital labor platforms have significantly reshaped the world of work, created new income-generating opportunities, and simultaneously raised concerns about fairness, regulation, and inclusion. For migrant workers, these platforms influence not only economic outcomes but also social integration

processes and the development of labor and migration policies. This review, therefore, systematically examines the literature to evaluate the effects of digital work platforms on the working conditions of migrant workers in Latin America, comparing them with those in Europe. Now, there is no literature review that examines the experiences of migrants in the gig digital economy, nor does it compare cases across Northern and Southern countries.

**Rationale** Platform work has emerged as a significant employment option for international migrants. Additionally, this group is highly represented on digital platforms, suggesting they are the backbone of these infrastructures. These tools provide quasi-formalization in contexts where regular jobs are unavailable.

The benefits of platforms for migrants remain uncertain. On one side, they provide income opportunities for populations excluded from traditional job markets (Niels van Doorn et al., 2022). These platforms serve as an easy entry point into the new country's economy. Additionally, they offer flexibility (Niels van Doorn et al., 2022), allowing migrants to choose when to work. These groups can plan their day, adjust schedules, and even decline work requests if unsatisfied. These digital systems provide migrants with an additional income source when needed (Arriagada et al., 2023).

Platforms also serve as entry points to the labor market (Lam & Triandafyllidou, 2021). As part of the complex, non-linear process of integrating into the labor market—characterized by various stops and starts—platform work can function either as a “stepping-stone” to stability or as a trap leading to unstable, precarious employment work (Lam & Triandafyllidou, 2021). The use of platforms as an initial stepping-stone stems from their low barriers to entry.

However, platforms often offer low job satisfaction to migrants. They experience higher levels of precarity, work long hours, operate informally, and lack social security (Kowalik et al., 2024). Low job satisfaction may stem from a lack of ethnic and social networks (Kowalik et al., 2024). Furthermore, dissatisfaction is more pronounced in specific platforms, such as ride-hailing apps, than in delivery apps. Migrant workers are exposed to significant risks and precarity (Bonhomme et al., s.f.). Despite the promise of higher returns, their labor is controlled through mechanisms that restrain agency, such as algorithmic scoring

systems and micro-penalizations (Bonhomme et al., s. f.).

This review seeks to close the gap by systematically comparing sectoral dynamics across Latin American countries. Similarly, while ride-hailing platforms like Uber dominate discussions, sector-specific challenges in domestic care platforms remain underexplored. Also, most research on platform labor originates in Global North contexts, such as the United Kingdom and the European Union, and often fails to adequately capture the unique challenges of Latin America. These bias risks include “policy misalignment,” such as applying EU-style algorithmic transparency laws without addressing Colombia’s infrastructural barriers (e.g., limited internet access in rural areas).

The scoping review hopes to address the gaps by mapping, synthesizing, and organizing evidence from diverse methodological traditions and theoretical frameworks, covering studies published between 2010 and 2026. By adopting an integrative and cross-stakeholder perspective, it contributes to:

**Academic advancement.** It does that by clarifying conceptual ambiguities and identifying patterns in the research about sectoral differences that shape the working conditions, labor protections, and socioeconomic trajectories of international migrants.

**Methodological insights.** In this way, it signals strengths, limitations, and inconsistencies in the research designs and theoretical models used to study this topic.

**Policy and practice implications.** Providing evidence-based recommendations to inform public policies to improve the job quality of migrants who operate in the digital work platforms.

## METHODS

**Strategy of data synthesis** This review is exploratory in nature, adopting a qualitative rather than quantitative approach. It will primarily utilize a narrative and thematic method for data analysis. Variables will be examined using Rayyan or Excel, according to the specified categories. An inductive coding process will be employed to identify themes and constructs as they emerge, focusing on job quality. The findings will be compiled and presented through tables, conceptual frameworks, and figures, facilitating clear knowledge representation and the identification of research gaps. Finally, a narrative synthesis will integrate the findings, highlighting methodological strengths and weaknesses, theoretical insights, and future research directions.

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**Eligibility criteria** This review will include peer-reviewed articles using qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods designs published in English or Spanish. Eligible documents must focus on international migrant workers using digital platforms in the ride-hailing, delivery, or domestic work sectors in Latin America or Europe. Only articles published between 2010 and 2025 will be considered, ensuring coverage of the evolution of digital work platforms in Latin America over the past decade, including significant phenomena such as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the region's digitalization. The review will exclude non-empirical or non-peer-reviewed publications, theoretical papers, dissertations, blog posts, and other forms of gray literature. Additionally, studies will be excluded if they do not focus on Latin America or migrant workers, address non-digital labor, are duplicates, are inaccessible, or were published before 2010.

#### **Source of evidence screening and selection**

The selection process will be carried out in two different phases. In the first phase, the titles, abstracts, and keywords of the selected papers will be screened against the inclusion and exclusion criteria to determine their appropriateness. Subsequently, the full texts of the selected papers will be reviewed again using the conceptual and methodological considerations established in this text.

Selection bias will be reduced by including work from at least two independent researchers. Potential disagreements will be resolved through discussion and consensus. In some cases, a third researcher will solve the dispute. The selection process will be documented in a Prisma-ScR flow diagram that explains how potential studies were screened, assessed for eligibility, and included in the final review.

This process ensures that only relevant research is included in the review, while also promoting transparency and objectivity.

**Data management** The collected data will be systematically organized to promote transparency, consistency, and reproducibility. Bibliographic information will be exported from the specified databases into Zotero, a reference management tool, to support organization and deduplication. After screening and selecting the papers, relevant details will be extracted using Excel. The variables considered during extraction include author, year, study country, platform, migrant group, theories, contexts, characteristics, and methods.

**Language restriction** English, spanish.

**Country(ies) involved** Colombia.

**Keywords** migration, gig economy, digital platforms.

#### **Contributions of each author**

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