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# Gendered Inequality on Digital Labour Platforms in the Global South: Towards a freedom-based inclusion

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**Abstract** The gig economy promises flexible work arrangements and decent income, but it currently maintains a gender gap in employment. This paper analyses how gig platform work exacerbates gender inequalities experienced by women gig workers in the global South. The paper argues that the digital nature of these platforms not only accelerates the already existing inequalities outside of digital platforms, but also compromises the freedom of women on these platforms. Through the lens of intersectionality, the paper contributes a philosophical lens on the notions of freedom through an empirical study. Fifteen (n=15) female gig workers who use a digital cleaning gig platform were interviewed in Cape Town, South Africa. The main research question is: How does the intersectionality of race, gender and class for black female gig workers affect their freedom and compromise human dignity. The paper proposes a freedom-based inclusion for human dignity in digital platform-driven gig economy.

**Keywords:** Gig Economy, Gender, Intersectionality, Exclusion, Freedom

## 1. Introduction

Digital labour platforms promise to profoundly disrupt normal labour relations, providing platform workers greater agency, dignity, and autonomy over their work lives. While scholars have challenged this promise and its fundamental claims, the critique is largely Euro-American in its nature. Perspectives from the global South, where digital labour platforms are rising in popularity, tend to be missing. Despite this dearth of critical perspectives grounded in the social, economic, and historical realities of the global South, digital labour platforms continue to informalize and precarize labour conditions particularly for women who work in highly feminized economic sectors such as domestic cleaning services.

The global South has become one of the most used terms in contemporary academic discourse and has been more popularly used than its so-called predecessor's terms, namely "Third World" and "Developing Countries". What all three terms share is that they have never been used to refer to European or North America economies but have rather been used as political labels for countries linked with historical, colonial exploits. Sajed [1] sheds light into this conceptual endeavor of the terms by arguing that the global South is in fact not about a Southern geographical location, it is about any country on the globe (whether it is North, South, West or East) that has experienced the misfortunes of colonialization. In addition, it involves countries which have or are fighting against the compromise of the human dignity of their populations and the compromise of democracy in the nations. The compromise of human dignity and democracies has become a struggle for centuries and has further become a fight for the attainment of freedom [1].

This attainment of freedom is pertinent in the global South countries, such as South Africa and Brazil. Both countries have sustained the reputation of being two of the most unequal societies in the world. Both countries have been ranked as "mostly unfree", which is the second lowest category for economic freedom ranking in the world, [2]. Moreover, in terms of democracy index, South Africa is ranked 45, Brazil: 49, placing both countries

in the category of flawed democracies. The importance of outlining the freedom and democratic indexes serves as foundation for context of the discussion about freedom later in the paper.

Given the above, the inequality in South Africa and Brazil could permeate into the digital gig economy when it comes to technology and access. The gig economy (as a by-product of technological development) has ushered in labour-market activities that connect supply and demand through digital platforms [3]. Gig work can be classified as on-demand-work, or crowdwork. On-demand-work refers to services that are provided physically, with the provider and purchaser in close geographic proximity [4]. Whereas crowdwork are gig tasks that are conducted online [3]. These gig tasks mentioned are organised on digital gig platforms, by companies that set out the platforms' terms of service [5]. The companies act as intermediaries between the gig workers and those that purchase their services. The gig economy has helped give people more flexibility during work, because the work has no fixed hours [6]. Consumers have been provided with access to different services by the click of a button. However, even though the click of a button seems to be easy access, the gap between the rich and the poor even in digital space narrows down access to the gig economy only to those who have the technology [and literacy] to do so, speaking to the [gender] inequalities within the traditional labour market [7].

African women are 15% less likely to own a mobile phone than men are, and 41% less likely to have access and use of the internet [8], this is solely based on their gender. These gendered social norms that disadvantage and constrain women's entry and movement within the labour market may also be experienced digitally, where male relatives restrict women from using any digital technology [4, 9]. Restriction from technology use towards women results in them being disadvantaged by being excluded, because technology tools need an individual to use them practically to gain expertise and understand them better [4, 9].

Even though this study is focused on the population of black women, as they are the ones in this study who largely use the digital cleaning gig platform to get employment, there too lies further exclusions, as not all of them have access to the technology and digital literacy they need to get employment to supply cleaning services. On the one hand, with the demand side, it is a particular class of families who also have the access to technology and digital literacy to demand the service. On the other hand, there is also the exclusion of families who could benefit from such a service for their household but are excluded from demanding such a service because they cannot afford it.

The severity of South Africa's inequality is such that even the women who have the technology to access the digital gig economy to offer their cleaning services for instance, still experience exclusion, human indignity and unfreedoms. Hunt and Samman [10] establish that because women have other responsibilities such as childcare, even though they can access digital gig economy to supply services they are not able to work as many hours as their male counter parts who access digital gig platforms and get paid less. In addition, Hunt and Samman [10] states that men are able to offer services even in areas that would be considered a high crime area for women, which also narrows places where women can offer their cleaning services, as in the case for a cleaning digital gig economy which has a large number of women suppliers. Thus, women workers are excluded from opportunities that men receive in the digital gig economy. Ultimately, the research aims to propose an inclusion in the digital gig economy platform for women which will assist them to embrace the freedoms that will honor their right to human dignity. In fact, this will make their inclusion both on digital and societal platforms worthwhile as it will embrace the intersection of their gendered and racial discrimination.

## **2. Theoretical Framing - Intersectionality**

The theoretical lens for this research is intersectionality, a feministic concept used to expose the marginalization of black women under sexism and racism [11]. It focuses on how wide a spectrum of human identities (such as gender, race, class, ability, sexual orientation, religion, and more) interact on simultaneous levels [12]. Zheng and Walsham [13] have made a call for the adoption of intersectionality as it sensitizes digital researchers to incorporate in their analysis the social positioning of actors within multiple hegemonies, hierarchies, and systems of power, and to problematize taken-for-granted boundaries in designing research questions and research approach. Intersectionality is therefore an important theoretical lens for this research as black women gig workers have been placed within a global South context. South African feminist Hassim [14] reveals that historically, South African women of color have experiences within the intersection of race, gender and class, creating three layers of discrimination. All of which, according to American feminist Hirschmann [15] have been built upon masculine understandings of social construction. In addition, Hirschmann [15] emphasizes that historical male domination, which is part and parcel of social construction, is the space where a woman is expected to create her reality. Her reality exists and is built upon a dominating masculine construction.

With the introduction of the digital gig economy as a platform of employment for black women, the three layers of discrimination as mentioned by Hirschmann [15] are evident, as this third dimension of class is portrayed through the dimension of digital access or lack thereof. It is class that provides or denies digital access, hence, it can be an inclusion or exclusion to the digital. In the midst of this three-layered intersection, what continues to persist is the fact that for inclusion to occur, women need to attain freedom(s). Therefore, what value does inclusion have if it does not enhance freedom(s)? Satlaelo [16] quotes the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill [17], which states the following “Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms. To promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons, or categories of persons, disadvantaged by unfair discrimination may be taken”. The South African Constitution echoes the same sentiments regarding rights and freedoms, in addition, the rights of human dignity for all. As a result, constitutionally, South Africa illustrates the image of a freedom-based inclusion. Nevertheless, this needs to be implemented and not remain as an idea.

### **3. The Gig Economy and notions of freedom**

In South Africa, women experience high levels of segregation in the gig economy and most of the negative experiences they face are because they are black, and they are female [10]. These experiences of women in the digital gig platform will be discussed within the following areas specifically, gendered pay gap, insecurity, and recognition. Further, these themes will also be looked at through the lens of negative and positive freedoms.

#### **3.1 Gendered Pay Gap**

Gender pay gap can be defined as working-class women being paid less than working-class men in the Labourmarket [18], [19]. Different researchers have shown several figures to define gender pay gaps between men and women [19]. Previous studies done in the United States highlighted men earn 7% more per hour than women on average [18], this is in-line with gender earning gaps within defined jobs [20], [21]. The Census Bureau shows the annual pay of full-time workers, where women earn 80 cents for every dollar men are paid [19]. Another statistic looks at hourly pay and does not exclude part-time workers. It finds that relative to men, women are typically paid 83 cents on the dollar [18], [19]. Different researchers have shown several figures to define gender pay gaps between men and women [19]. Previous studies done in the United States highlighted men earn 7% more per hour than women on average [18], this is in-line with gender earning gaps within defined jobs [20], [21].

The gender pay gap mentioned above can be explained by a couple of varied factors [18]. Firstly, it can be explained by racial discrimination, relative to white male wages, black and Hispanic women are the most disadvantaged [19]. Asian and white women are paid less than their male counterparts are, but they earn better than black and Hispanic women do. This is a representation of the feministic theory of intersectionality, where those with more intersectionality are at a greater disadvantage [11]. There is an overlap of disadvantages for black women because they are disadvantaged by being black and by virtue of being a woman [11].

Secondly, women tend to take jobs that require a lower cadre of skills due to less experience in jobs requiring higher skill levels, so they earn less per hour than their male counterparts [10] do. In many developing countries, social norms have disadvantaged women because they are still beliefs that women should stay home, and men should go to school and later work in the Labour market [22]. According to studies done in the United States men tend to have more experience especially when it comes to driving because they drive for longer hours each week and conduct more trips than a typical female and so they tend to earn more per hour as this lends them higher on the learning curve [18].

#### **3.2 Insecurity**

Insecurity is a feeling of inadequacy and uncertainty; it produces anxiety to handle certain situations [23]. Studies show women normally experience more insecurity than men do [5]. In gig work women experience insecurity in many different forms. Women are normally harassed by passengers while they work [24]. A survey from International Finance Corporation [25] stated that a percentage 64% of females from six different countries complained of not joining the ride-hailing sector in the gig economy for fear of exacerbated harassment induced by passengers [7]. This shows that women experience more vulnerabilities and they make them reluctant to work certain jobs that men work.

In Indonesia, some digital platforms had policy makers make regulation adjustments to their digital platforms against women being harassed at work [7]. These policies were adjusted to ensure the security of women while they work in digital platforms. Women in Indonesia feel safer to work after the regulations were adjusted than they did before [7]. The introduction of the National Commission of Violence Act against Women as the digital platforms code of conduct has lessened the level of harassment during work. This is because perpetrators fear the implications of being reported if they harass women while they work [7].

Studies show women believe digital gig platforms have a responsibility to ensure there is economic security of gig workers in all digital gig platforms, and they should give gig workers more flexibility over their work schedules [4], [7], [10]. If this is improved, women believe they will feel more secure and safe at work [7]. Some digital gig platform's actions to give a scored based feature on the application has improved the harassment levels at work because customers can be rated after each piece of work has been completed [7].

### **3.3 Recognition**

Women are generally less recognized than men within digital platforms [26]. This is because women are perceived to be less educated than men, thus have less skill and experience [22]. Studies have highlighted that woman that drive or take part in parcel and food deliveries experience a higher cancellation rate from customers than their male counterparts [24]. Customers do most of these cancellations because they perceive women will not be competent enough to carry out the expected task for the customer. This lack of recognition demoralizes women and results in them choosing jobs that require less skill i.e., domestic work because those are the types of jobs women are expected to do; even though they will earn less. Women have been segregated for a long time in society and this has caused them to be a vulnerable group that is afraid of challenging the status quo, because they perceive they will not be heard due to experiences and still present experiences, which have normalized discrimination towards women.

Gendered pay gap, insecurity and recognition are themes which come from the challenges black women experience in the digital gig economy. The notion of freedom is not always the easiest concept to define, because with cultural and moral relativism, the term can have a different meaning in different contexts. Thus, this calls for a fitting starting point that would at least embrace diverse contexts to some common ground. It is through Berlin's [27] articulation of his "Two Concepts of Liberty [freedom]" that this can be achieved. These two concepts of freedom (liberty) are negative and positive freedom.

### **3.4 Gig economy platforms and freedoms**

#### **3.4.1 Negative freedom**

The word "negative" in this case does not denote a freedom that is harmful, bad, undesirable, but denotes a negation, a so-called required absence for this freedom to be attained. Berlin [27] illustrates that this is in fact a freedom attained from the absence of an external source, such as coercion, as coercion can be an external hindrance that interferes with one's ability to execute [an act] in a situation where they could have executed that act. Essentially for Berlin [27], this external coercion disarms the ability to execute, hence infringing on one's freedom.

The gendered pay gap, insecurity and [lack of] recognition are all evidence of the ongoing presence of masculine socialization as mentioned by Hirschmann [15] earlier on in the paper. It serves as an external system that infringes on the freedom of the female worker, enforcing patriarchal stereotypes which discourage women to work outside of the home. The insecurity they experience is because of feeling unsafe because of the harassment cases some of them experience. Moreover, the lack of recognition is a lack of the acknowledgment of their capabilities. All of which not only infringe on the freedom of women but further exclude them from their right to human dignity. Also situated in the global South is the narrative of Malaysia, which also sees its women workers negotiating their agency in a society that has been built upon masculine, Muslim, social construction. Ong [28] illustrates that women were historically forbidden from working outside the home space "where they belong", they belong within the authority and protection of the husband which is in the home. Outside the home women were seen as been outside the protection and authority of their husband, and that could place them in positions of vulnerability. Similarly, the negative freedom of the women in Malaysia is disregarded in this case, excluding them from their right to human dignity.

It follows that the digital gig platform escalates the compromise of women’s negative freedom because is it built upon the existing patriarchal social construction in society. The challenge with contemporary workspaces such as the digital gig economy is that with the rapid development of technology comes with the pressure to prioritize technological competency. To illustrate this, Wood et al [29] mention how the function of digital work platforms could easily fall into the trap of promoting bad working conditions because not enough is known regarding its complex disembodied platform which work with embodied human beings. Wood et al [29] lists the bad working conditions as “low pay, social isolation, working unsocial and irregular hours, overwork, sleep deprivation and exhaustion, [29, p. 937], all of which are the products of oppressive work systems for women, whether they are physical social spaces or digital, virtual platforms.

### 3.4.2 Positive Freedom

The second notion of freedom as mentioned by Berlin is a pro-active freedom, the freedom to self-actualize, to be one’s own master [27]. Further, this kind of freedom is heavily laden on the foundations of subjectivity, not objectivity, a moral agency that is necessary to navigate through society. It is a freedom which stems from one’s inner being, drive, motivation, and mindset. This freedom could shed some light going forward, when it comes to the experiences of women in the digital gig economy. However, the findings of the study will determine how this freedom can be applied.

## 4. Findings

The findings of this paper will be organised according to the previously discussed three themes of the challenges experienced by women in digital gig economy, namely, gendered pay gap, insecurity, and recognition. The data collection was conducted in 2021 (June to September). NVivo 11 was used to facilitated thematic analysis was used [32]. The purposively selected sample of 15 African women was analysed and data saturation was reached at 15<sup>th</sup> interview beyond which, no further data collection took place.

### 4.1 Demographics

The responses provided by the women gig works will be presented with ID numbers S01 to S15 to represents all the 15 interviewed respondents. The ID numbers provided serve as a protection of the identity of the respondents. All interviewed women were African (black), working on a single gig work platform living in the Western Cape Province of South Africa.

**Table 1.** Demographics of the participants

ID	Age	Marital Status	Experience on platform (years)
S01	40	Married	2
S02	38	Single	3
S03	30	Married	2
S04	27	Divorced	3
S05	40	Married	5
S06	38	Single	3
S07	26	Single	3
S08	36	Single	7
S09	35	Single	2,5
S10	32	Married	2
S11	25	Single	1
S12	42	Single	3
S13	36	Divorced	2
S14	31	Single	3
S15	35	Single	3

### 4.2 Gendered pay gap

When it came to gendered pay gap as a challenge for black women in digital gig economies, this is what the findings were as given by the respondents. In this section of the theme unequal pay for equal work presented that most women feel they get less pay compared to men despite of doing the same level of work. Men are given priority for jobs that require a higher calibre of skills and pays higher. This can be confirmed by the response given by S13 below:

*"I feel as a female we get less pay than men despite of sometimes doing the same level of work. That is why I ended up in the digital cleaning gig platform and not like Uber, I wanted to work with Uber because I feel they earn more. Even at office job you notice men will have higher position than lady not because the lady is not competent but because she is female. It is a society issue but it's unfair to us ladies." -- S13*

In fact, most respondents feel that when it comes to their pay in general, their income is not enough to cater for their expenses especially those related to transport costs, rentals and child-care support. This was seen from responses given by S01, S03, S05 and S08.

*"It is never enough but I try to find work each week so that I provide for my family. It also depends on how much I made the previous week. I also feel money we get is not enough for us to cater for childcare expenses." - S01*

*"It is not really enough; you know there is always so much needed in the home and the money we get is truly regarded as a fair wage but with the responsibilities I have it seems like it never fits." -- S03*

*"Money is a problem as you know honestly speaking it is never enough for me. I would need more to balance things." -- S05*

*"I do think the pay rates could be increased I guess as humans we base all this on our own expenses especially things like rentals."-- S08*

*"Income is never enough rentals here in Cape Town are very expensive which just makes it the more difficult to cater for the family." -- S14*

Other respondents showed that the income is not enough, but it is better than what they received in full-time employment because they can earn money each week. They also mention that digital gig platforms are more flexible and allow one to work when they are free. This can be confirmed by the response given by S08.

*"The income I get is really not enough for me I do wish I could receive more. At some point, I had an office job, it provided very good money, and now people thought I was crazy to join the gig world, but I honestly had no choice times have been rough lately. I still feel if compared to my monthly salary that I used to get I earn more now though it is not enough but its more and the work is flexible." -- S08*

### **4.3 Insecurity**

As per the literature review, harassment is one of the challenges which even with the respondents' highlight was creating an insecurity in their work. Most respondents stated that they had experienced harassment due to the colour of their skin and the mere fact that they were female. Below the aforementioned can be seen by the responses given by S03 and S05.

*"Well, it depends what type of harassment. If it is sexually no I have not but something like verbal harassment, I have, and it felt quite uncomfortable to keep working. The lady was white, and I honestly feel most of it was because of the colour of my skin because I am black. I don't know why they request us if they want to be that rude. I did something in a way she did not like, and she was generally in a bad mood on the day. So, the white lady was quite rude about the whole situation, and I had to eventually cancel the booking and reported to the digital cleaning gig platform because I no longer felt safe." -- S03*

*"Well, I cannot really call it harassment but once I went to work for this white man and he said things that made me feel uncomfortable. He reminded me of Apartheid and how they were more superior to me that's why I do their dirty jobs. Maybe, it was harassment, but I told him I did not like the way he was addressing me. He was saying white will always be better, I don't really know what harassing that's maybe why I just thought it's rude and not like harassing." -- S05*

On the other hand, some respondents categorize themselves as being either lucky or blessed because they have never experienced any form of harassment at work. They have worked for good and polite people. This can be confirmed by S06 response below:

*"No, I have been lucky enough to be safe each time I worked. I have never experienced harassment of any kind while working. I have met the most amazing people during the time I clean homes. One time a lady gave me a*



*carton of muffins and beans with transport money to carry back home. Honestly, they are still good people out there. I think sometimes someone will be harassed because of their dressing or conduct in that home.”-- S06*

The safety of the respondents provides more insight regarding their feelings of insecurities when it comes to their experiences on digital gig economy platforms. Most respondents feel scared to go to homes to clean especially for the first time, because they do not know if they will meet someone who may harm them at that household. They feel that because they cannot perform a background check on their clients they are at risk. This can be seen by the response given by S01 and S04.

*“It is scary to go to homes when you do not know the people there, but you just must go, so you can survive. So far, I’m glad I have been safe. I wish we could background check the clients we do services for beforehand as well.” --S01*

*“Most times, it is quite scary especially considering how far I have to travel to get work. Most houses I go to I have no idea who I am going to meet until I get there. I feel If they gave us an opportunity to background check the clients it would really be helpful.” -- S04*

Some respondents feel the digital cleaning gig platform could do more to ensure their safety while they work. Yes, they confirm that there is something being done but it is not enough for them they feel vulnerable and want more to be done. Respondents feel the level of safety at work impacts the efficiency they will have at finishing the tasks assigned to them. If they feel unsafe, they will be less efficient at performing their duties. This can be seen in the responses given by S12, S02 and S05.

*“I feel the digital cleaning gig platforms could really do more to ensure we benefit, and we are safe at work. Things like introducing panic buttons would help us because in the case that I am not safe it automatically means I don’t work as efficiently as expected.” -- S12*

*“I do not think I can say they can ever do enough to ensure we are safe. We are mostly females working in a very scary environment so they should keep doing more for us.” -- S02*

*“They say they ensure where we go will be safe and we can call if we feel otherwise. But I don’t think this is enough they could really do more.” -- S05*

Respondents confirmed that they still travel to work even when they are afraid because they need the money to take care of their families. This can be seen by the response by S15 below

*“I still go to work even when I feel unsafe because I need the money to take care of my family. I always have my mobile phone with me in case of emergency I will call my relatives to help me.” -- S15*

#### **4.4 Recognition**

Findings presented by the theme of recognition showed that because of how society visualize women, most women have lost opportunities to work due to their gender, race and or background. Their work experience or skills becomes overlooked, leading to them not being recognized as capable for the job. It also showed that some experiences black female gig workers experience is not because they have done something wrong while working but due to stereotyping, they may be expected to fail and so the slightest mistake will cause them harm. This can be confirmed by responses given by S01 and S03.

*“I feel that as a female we earn less than men despite of sometimes doing the same level of work. That is why I ended up in digital cleaning gig platform and not like the digital driving platform, I wanted that platform, but I could not get it because I do not have money to get me a driver’s license, I grew up in the rural areas all I have ever know is household work because I’m female driving is for men. So, the digital cleaning gig platform became all I could go for. All the boys in my family went to school and now can drive but as girls we were disadvantaged.” -- S01*

*“The lady was white, and I honestly feel most of her attitude was because of the color of my skin because I am black and not because I did something wrong.” -- S03*

Findings showed that women feel the way jobs are allocated is unfair because more females are working in domestic work than males. They think it's because domestic work is considered a job for the unskilled, thus it is predominantly female dominated. This can be seen by the response given by S15.

*"I feel there is a level of unfairness in the way things are in the way jobs are given. If we look at Sweep South, they are so many black and female ladies. Very few males work in domestic work, and it's characterized with being unskilled. If we want to work in higher skilled jobs, we not given such opportunities which is not fair." -- S15*

## 5. Freedom as the basis of Inclusivity

The concept of freedom in the global South countries, first as a democracy and then as the type of economy the country has is quite telling of the kind of freedom the country would embrace on an individual level for its citizens. With such a flawed democracy (as shown earlier by the Economic Index), South Africa has a lot to grapple with regarding its colonial past, and hence as a nation has a lesson of freedom to transfer to the South African citizen, both male and female. As things stand, the South African constitution [30] is a symbol of hope for the nation, the fact that it has been so well articulated, it used to be an idea, but this idea is now shared in a physical and electronic document for every South African to see. In its inclusive nature it represents the promise that an inclusive society can be imagined, and hence can be realized. Even as technological development has thrown in complexities such as the digital divide and challenges that black women face in digital gig economies, a way forward is possible. Berlin's concepts of freedom are valuable in that they set the bases of freedom, from then on what is added or removed will be what is best suitable for the human subject it is designed for. In this case, these concepts of freedom (liberty) require both an African and a feminist perspective, customizing the freedom accordingly to pertain to black South African women in the digital gig economy.

Siame's [31] rendition of positive and negative freedom is written from the African context and affirms that the freedom of a nation is the freedom for the individual citizen. He illustrates that with a colonial past, the emancipation of Zambia is the emancipation of the Zambian individual. The independence of the nation is the independence of the individual. Conversely, Isaiah Berlin, who is of the view that national freedom is separate from individual freedom, reveals by this standpoint that his take on freedom is not custom made for the African government and its citizens. Likewise, it follows that until South Africa is fully free from the colonial, masculine construction of society on the physical front, this will permeate in the digital front as well. It follows that Hirschmann [15] mention of women to socially construct themselves from the vantage point of postcolonial feminism [15, p. 140] is quite important, as this will allow women to distance themselves from colonial ideals which still fester in African communities. The negative and positive freedom still have an important place, because together, they affirm the statement "I am not restricted by anyone, I am my own master." To have both the "freedom from" and "freedom to" is an essential position for South African women in digital gig spaces. To avoid the criticism that Berlin's freedom receives, which is that it is a binary kind of freedom. This binary nature can be broken by the feature of the African and feminine perspectives into the freedom of black South African women. It is this kind of freedom needed by the black South African woman to be included in the physical or digital spaces she enters. It is a freedom which connects her to her right to human dignity.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This paper critically analyses how digital labour platforms, particularly domestic cleaning gig platforms, tend to worsen gender inequalities in the global South for women gig workers. Our in-depth interviews with black women domestic cleaning gig workers provide further empirical evidence of technologically aided structural unfairness that society and policymakers should seek to transform to secure decency in platform labour platforms. This research also illustrates intersectionality as an important analytical lens to visibilize multi-layered and interconnected struggles of the marginalised particularly in contexts where inequality is pervasive. While digital labour platforms have the potential to contribute positively to the livelihoods of marginalized women, there is a need for a sustained global South-based critical analysis to shine the light on the negative consequences of new technologies. This critical analysis reflects and focusses on the extent to which positive and negative freedoms of the vulnerable women are impacted by technology, interlaced with African-centred feminine perspectives of decency and dignity to recentre a holistic view humanness in the future of work. A major limitation to this study is that it considered the views of purposively selected women based in a narrow geographical location (Western Cape, South Africa) working on the same platform. Future studies should consider a more heterogenous sample across a various regions of the country.

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