MASTER THESIS

HRM practices permit value creation and capture of online Platform firms: How they change in time and space.

CRISTIAN BARBONETTI
S2409925

Business Administration
Human Resource Management

EXAMINATION COMMITTEE
DR. J. MEIJERINK
PROF. T. BONDAROUK
PROF. A. SAMMARRA
PROF. M. MORI

27-08-2020

Table of Content

INTRODUCTION

The affirmation of new technologies, especially in the last ten years, has led to the creation of new types of work. The world of "gig economy" is an example. This term is generally used to describe the economic system consisting of platform companies (ex UBER eats) which, through intermediation activities, connect requesters (i.e. organizations and consumers) with "gig workers" or "self-employed" workers who they offer work performance (service) to make profits (money circulation is managed by the platform) Meijerink & Keegan (2019). In other words, the platform intermediates between gig workers and those who requester their services. The Workers are considered "autonomous" and they work "with" (not "for") the platform occasionally and not indefinitely (Aloisi, 2016).

Interesting is, precisely because it is not a question of traditional working relationships, how platforms use these actors for own value creation and value capture. According to Lepak et al, (2007), value creation depends on the relative amount of value that is subjectively achieved by a target user (or buyer) that is at the center of value creation —whether individual, organization, or society— and that this subjective value realization must at least translate into the user's willingness to exchange a monetary amount for the value received. It is possible divide value creation in *use value* and *exchange value.* The first represents perceived consumer benefits (this is subjective), while the second is the amount paid for the perceived use value. An important purpose will be to understand which actor creates use value and who experience it and, at the same time, who receive exchange value and from who. Thinking about value creation for the platform, its *use value* is represented by the intermediation activity that it carries out between clients (restaurants and consumers) and workers. Similarly, also the service offered by the workers (we can define it as "job service") for the restaurant is *use value*. The *exchange value* corresponds to the amount of money received by the platform for the intermediation service and by the worker for the "job service".

Value capture is that moment in the time line in which, after creating value, the organization (platform in this case) will want to make profits and keep them as long as possible. During the period in which the service offered starts, the platform will incur higher costs as its goal will be to increase Clients and Workers (through Marketing activities etc.), while when it has reached a sufficient number of Clients and Workers, the goal will be profits. If this is the intent, the platform firm will have to find a way to offset the costs and therefore will have to increase revenues. This can be done through HRM activities such as compensation where commissions paid to workers are reduced, for improving the profit made by the platform firm.

It is very important to highlight that the application of HRM practices can not only create value and then capture it, but it can bring the two into conflict, in the sense that they can work against each other in platform settings. To make it clearer, an HRM practice for creating value implies an increase in costs or a decrease in revenues, and this will inevitably affect platform profits (value capture). To solve the problem, the use of practices is indicated to increase profits. It will be platform goal to use the right HRM practices to balance two values.

This is interesting for human resource management research, as this new work system is different from the traditional (standard) which sees two parties involved: worker and employer (Meijerink & Keegan, 2019). In the latter, in fact, there is the application of HRM practices for maintaining labor relations between the two parties. Although there is no real traditional working relationship, the platforms apply HRM practices, such as staffing, training, compensation, appraisal and autonomy to gig workers. As noted by Meijerink and Keegan (2019) these practices are used to either create value or capture value.

Although some HRM activities can theoretically be linked to value creation and value capture, it is not clear which HRM activities serve which of these two goals, how platform firms balance value creation and value capture through their HRM activities, or if, and when, platform firms decide to shift away value creation to value capture. This is why the current study seeks to answer the following research question the: Which HRM practices, applied by platforms, permit value creation and value capture and how – if at all – does this change across time and space?

The aim of this work is to answer this question by taking into consideration the timeline between value creation and value capture. To make this simpler, the empirical research will focus on the platform firms that deliver food and to distinguish the different placements over the timeline of value creation and value capture, Dutch and Italian cities will be analyzed: cities like L'Aquila regarding value creation (as the service is recently installed), and cities like Rome for value capture (where the service has been started for more time). It is possible, therefore, to see which practices will be applied by the platform and how these vary over time.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Now the theoretical aspects related to this work will be analyzed. First, the literature on the Gig-Economy and the Online Platforms, their development and the actors who participate will be defined. Second aspect analyzed is the Business Model of online labor Platforms by distinguishing revenue and costs. Third, the literature relating to the concepts of value creation and value capture and their interactions with the Platforms. Finally, the theory relating to HRM practices. The division into four parts will help the reader to better understand the elements that make up the work and how they will help to answer the research question.

Gig-Economy and Online Platform

To actually understand what the Gig-Economy is, it is important to define it by relying on existing literature, understand mainly which actors are part of it and see the types of relationships that exist between the latter. What is called Gig-Economy is nothing more than an economic system which uses online platforms to digitally connect workers or "individual service providers" with consumers; it is possible89   define it as a new form of "contingent work" (Harris, 2017). Meijerink & Keegan (2019), define it as an economic system consisting of intermediary platform companies that connect requesters (ie organizations or consumers) with on demand workers in sectors such as transport, cleaning, and programming. Before defining the actors, Stanford's thought should be recalled (Stanford, 2017). He explained there are three features that characterize the Gig-Economy: (1) provision and execution of fixed term tasks (or "gigs"), that is finding tasks by a requester that are relatively short-term and performed by self-employed workers who moves from one job to another; (2) absence of an employment relationship, ie absence of a standard employment relationship between employer and employee; and (3) intermediation by an intermediary Platform Company. After defining the Gig Economy and identifying which are the actors that make it up, it will be easier to analyze the latter individually.

Let's start with Platforms. Kuhn & Maleki, (2017) define them as "profit-making companies that use technology to facilitate the fulfillment of immediate short-term labor needs, either remotely or in person, with workers who are officially considered independent contractors". Having previously defined the Gig Economy as an economic system, it can be said that the main purpose of the platform companies is to match the demand and supply of work by connecting workers and requesters who are distant from each other, but who wish to make

transactions (important term which will be better explained later) Meijerink & Keegan (2019). This connection is defined as intermediation activity and is carried out using internet and related technologies and relying on an algorithm, ie a computational formula that autonomously takes decisions based on statistical models or decision rules without explicit human intervention (Eurofound, 2018). It is a sequence of instructions that tell a computer what to do within a series of precisely defined steps and rules designed to perform a task (Duggan et al, 2019). Their decisions are not constant, but they are rewritten as they work. With the advancement of technology, organizations have begun to use artificial intelligence that simultaneously learns and solves problems in increasingly complicated sectors, from creating products to autonomous management of business processes (Mann & O'Neil, 2016).

The second important component is that made up of requesters or clients, who are the ones who demand for work. They can correspond to companies, families / groups or individuals. They turn to the platform because, for various reasons, they have to outsource a work activity and therefore want to rely on third part to complete it (but let's be clear, with these third part they will not get in touch directly, but through the platform). Precisely for these reasons, the requester is a very important component (as well as the worker) since, without him, the activity carried out by the platform would not exist.

The third component is that made up of workers (or gig-workers) who correspond to those who provide services to requesters. These workers are independent and get work assignments through platform companies. Getting work assignments does not mean that they are employees of the platform, on the contrary, workers are treated as customers or end users of the platform company and in fact (like requesters) they pay the platform an intermediation service fee (Meijerink & Keegan, 2019). Being subjects looking for work, their interest is to earn money as compensation for their job performance. This money is given by the platform to the worker per transaction or gig but is not to be confused as a normal salary that an employer would give to his employee because the platforms recognize workers as self-employed, freelancers. Extensive debates and legal interventions (between workers and platforms) have taken place in recent years, due to the poor definition of the working form, or rather, the platforms give a definition, but the latter does not reflect the reality of the facts. The fact is that, now platform workers are recognized, as mentioned above, as self-employed workers, with the ability to choose whether, when and how much work.

To conclude, I define online platform firms as companies that through their intermediary activity bring together demand and supply of work (clients and workers) from which they make

their profits. This is possible by satisfying the needs of the former through the work performance of the latter.

The Business Model of Online Labor Platforms: Revenues and Costs

The explanation of the actors is very useful to understand in the best possible way how the platform reaches its goal, that is, to make profits. Previously the term transaction was used; this is very important for the platform as with the increase in transactions between customers and requesters, revenues increase (a decisive part in the realization of profits). Revenues increase because the increase in transactions implies an increase in the size of the platform. This means that there will be more and more customers who will use the platform to satisfy their needs. A greater number of customers means that the platform will attract more requesters who will pay their commissions to the platform and consequently there will be additional revenues in addition to those relating to the transactions. The question that arises is: what should the platform do to increase transactions? To increase the number of transactions, the platform will have to increase the number of requesters and clients that are willing to transact via the online labor platform. The platforms aim to enhance and create network effects by increasing the number of requesters and workers who use intermediation services (Gawer and Cusumano, 2002). To do this they use a variety of techniques: rising prices, marketing campaigns, temporary price reductions for applicants and / or higher compensation for workers in the areas where the platform starts operating (Chen et al., 2015). If the platform, through its intermediation activity, offers a better service, the workers will increase, which, in turn, if they offer a better service, they will increase the number of clients. More satisfied clients will increase the use of the platform and this implies greater transactions and therefore greater revenues. This "chain" creates value for the benefit of all actors (Meijerink & Keegan, 2019) and allows the platform to capture value (Gawer and Cusumano, 2002).

It needs underline that creating network effects for increasing revenues also comes at a cost for the platform (e.g. temporary price reductions and marketing campaigns need to be paid by the platform). It will be platform goal use right strategies to make profits and to ensure revenues greater than costs.

What we wanted to understand in this section was what the Platform and other two actors are and what the Gig-Economy is. In next section there will be an illustration of the theory about value creation and value capture and how they interact with Platforms.

Value Creation and Value Capture

Network effects create multiple exchanges / transactions between workers and requesters from which the platform can capture value through the payment of commissions (Gawer and Cusumano, 2002). This, as in normal companies, also allows growth and, in some cases, market domination. So, to further study the Gig-Economy and the work of online platforms, two concepts are important to understand: value creation and value capture.

The literature analyzed for the preparation of this work has a common starting point for the analysis relating to value creation and value capture. The researchers ask themselves the same starting questions: What is value creation? How is it created? How is it captured?

Lepak et al (2007) noted the presence of confusion in the research regarding the value creation process, identifying three points of analysis. The first refers to the fact that it depends more on the point of view in which the analysis is conducted and on the formation from which the researcher comes. The second tells us that the creation of value refers to both the content and the process of creating new value. The third is the confusion between value creation and value capture believing that they are the same thing.

Leaning and updating the work of Bowman and Ambrosini (2000), the same authors (Lepak et al 2007) tell that the creation of value is a process that in turn is composed of two values: use value and exchange value. The first refers to the specific quality of a new service perceived by users in relation to their needs (ex the performance characteristics of the service). The judgments on it are subjective, they concern the individual consumer. In the Gig-Economy, the actors who experience use value are workers and requesters. The former experience use value from the platforms through the intermediation service (the platforms allow them to offer job service) while the latter experience use value from the workers because through the job service they complete the activity outsourced by the clients. For platforms it is important that these two actors experience use value as this will commit them to the platform, which ultimately enables the creation of network effects. It should not be forgotten that like any company, the objective of the platform is to make profits and the creation of use values implies costs that negatively affect the latter.

The exchange value refers to the monetary amount made at a specific time, when the exchange of the service takes place or to the amount paid by the user to the seller for the use value of the service. As for the Gig-Economy with the increase in the size of the platform (i.e. increase in requesters and workers), the number of transactions will also increase. The actors that receive exchange value are: (1) workers, who receive it from the requesters for the workers' service

provided (the platform is the intermediary between the requesters and the workers and also the monetary exchange is managed by the platform) and (2) the platform, which receives exchange value from requesters and/or workers (through commissions) for the intermediation service provided. The growth of transactions and the related exchange value is important for both players because: for platforms this will have a positive impact on profit, while for workers it means that there will be more demand for work and therefore also more earnings.

Profit realization is linked to the concept of value capture. This is different from value creation in that the origin that creates an increase in value may or may not be able to capture or conserve it over the long term. Lepak et al (2007) in this regard introduce the concept of Slippage that occurs when the value created by one source or level of analysis can be captured by another. In the case of the Uber eats platform, for example, slippage occurs when platform reduces worker commission. The worker creates use value (job service) but does not benefit completely because, due to the commission reduced, the platform will gain more. The worker in the case the commission increases, provides high use value levels to a requester, but receives lower exchange value in return. In other words, it can be said that the value captured by the platform (i.e. the profits) is equal to the difference between the exchange value (platform revenues) and the costs that were made for the creation of use value.

In this section the reader was given an elucidation on the concepts of value creation and value capture and how they manifest themselves in the Gig-Economy. The next section will analyze the HRM practices used by the platform related to the concepts of value creation and value capture.

HRM practices of Online Platform

HRM practices refer to those means used by an employer to train, manage and support relationships with their employees (they help the working relationship). Wright & McMahan (1992) state that it has been discovered that HRM practices develop both the skills of employees and motivate them to work for the creation of organizational value (Is it possible to say that this is also applicable to the Platforms' case?). The use of high-investment human resource management systems that include practices for the development of employees' skills improve motivation to work towards organizational goals and provide the necessary discretion to quickly take appropriate actions to achieve these goals. This is linked to a variety of important results, such as employee turnover (Guthrie, 2001), organizational commitment (Whitener, 2001),

operational performance (Youndt et al, 1996) and financial performance (Delery & Doty, 1996).

To simplify the understanding of how HRM practices interact with value creation and capture, those practices that according to the author of this thesis allow this interaction will be examined.

Workforce Planning. In the context of the Gig-Economy these are activities that aim to satisfy the demand and supply of labor (Meijerink & Keegan, 2019). The platforms, through activities such as marketing campaigns, temporary price reduction for requesters or increase in commissions for workers (Chen et al, 2015) seek to implement the network effect with the aim of increasing the number of workers and requesters (Meijerink & Keegan, 2019). What is found is that when the platform creates value, these activities are persistent and the costs of the platform increase, negatively impacting on profits (value capture). When the platform decides to make profits, it adopts policies that aim to reduce these costs (increase price requesters / decrease commission workers).

Recruitment. This activity is linked to the creation of the Network effect and in fact refers to the activity of the platform to attract workers and requesters to the platform (Meijerink & Keegan, 2019). The way to make itself known is of particular importance also in relation to the value creation/capture concepts by the platform and this not only from an economic point of view (costs and revenues), but also in balancing the demand and supply of work (Meijerink & Keegan, 2019) in order to keep them in balance and not create abundance, in some periods, of workers or requesters, and therefore offer a good level of service to customers who meet their needs by increasing their transactions and, consequently, the profits of the platform.

Selection. Platform activities to decide which workers and requesters may or may not join the online platform (Meijerink & Keegan, 2019). It may occur that during the value creation period, requesters and workers do not have to meet particular requirements as the platform aims to increase the number. Arriving at the value capture phase in which the platform has reached a sufficient number of workers and requesters, it can begin to demand more requirements from new candidates to increase the quality of the service offered to customers. In few words, the reasoning behind this practice refers to the increase in severity over time by the platform in the selection of requesters and workers.

Training and Development. These refer to those platform activities that aim to improve the abilities, knowledge and skills of workers and requesters (Meijerink & Keegan, 2019). To ensure a better service by workers that lasts over time, the platform must face costs that negatively impact profits, but at the same time increase the quality of service which will increase the number of transactions which in turn will have a positive impact on profits. The

essential factor of the service offered by the platform is the time; instructing requesters on the delivery of food in the right times to the workers and equipping the latter with supports, allow them to face faster and safer routes to deliver hot food and in the right times granted with the customer.

Performance management. This practice refers to the activity of the platform which, through the setting of performance levels and the use of feedback from requesters and customers, assesses the performance of workers (Meijerink & Keegan, 2019). This is a very important practice as customer ratings can be used for several purposes. One, for example, refers to the possibility for the platform to make sure that the customer experiences use value by the worker (this purpose is pursued in the value creation phase). A second purpose is that relating to the deactivation of the worker account by the algorithm (traditional dismissal) in the event that the feedback is negative, and the workers reject the offers presented by the platform (Duggan et al, 2019). A third purpose, on the other hand, could be linked to value capture through the lock-in effect, which does not allow workers to be able to use the "online reputation" if they wish to go to another platform and therefore will have to accept any conditions of reduction of its commission which will benefit platform firm profits.

Compensation. This practice refers to the activity of the platform which aims to reward the workers in return for their work (Lieman, 2018; Meijerink & Keegan, 2019). The study of this practice is interesting as, together benefits practice (explained later), it can make understand better how to answer the research question. During the creation of value, the platform will reward workers with higher commissions for two reasons: (1) to encourage them to work more and (2) to increase their number until they reach the desired parameters of the company's management. These commissions will vary in proportion to the distances that workers will have to cross to deliver food (new areas of the city that the platform will want to reach will be paid more). The change of this practice over time will be noticeable once the platform captures value as in order to make more profits it will decrease the commissions paid to workers. The same consequence will manifest for the distance as the increase in workers and requesters will allow coverage of all areas thus eliminating the increase in commissions.

Benefits. The activity of the platform which aims to guarantee a constant supply of labor to requesters by asking them to provide workers with secondary benefits (Lieman, 2018; Meijerink & Keegan, 2019). As in compensation, from this practice it is possible to understand how the platform in the value creation phase grants greater benefits to workers. In recruiting new workers and to enlarge the platform, the latter will grant bonuses to those workers who already work with the platform if they bring other people to work with the platform. This

activity will impact on costs which will reduce profits. It is temporary and will occur in situations where the platform will not have enough workers and therefore would not be able to offer good service to customers. The bonuses will be used to incentivize workers to make deliveries over long distances. Once the platform wants to capture value, it will reduce the availability of bonuses as it will have a sufficient number of workers who will accept orders and cover the whole area to make deliveries.

The goal of this work is not limited to verifying which practices allow value creation and capture, but also how these vary in time and space. Previous examples, indirectly, are shown with a demonstration of how practices can change over time through the difference between the moment when the platform starts offering the service and when it wants to make profits; the same practices are used in different periods and relate differently with value creation and capture. A hypothetical example could be that related to the practice of workforce planning because when the platforms try to increase the number of workers, in an initial phase they can face the costs related to bonuses for the recruitment that will negatively impact on the profits. Once enough workers are reached this practice will end and this will positively weigh on profits. The problem can occur if the platform is in the Value Capture phase but needs to increase the number of workers again and therefore this practice would create contrasts between Value creation and Value Capture (what happened during the emergency COVID-19).For space, instead, we can think to the different coverage of the service both in the initial phase in which it is offered by the platform and after a few years from it. At an early stage, the coverage of the service will refer more to the central areas of the city as most of the requesters are there and consequently some areas such as the suburbs are neglected. Practices such as Selection and Recruitment together with the Marketing activity will increase the number of requesters in order to increase the coverage of the service. In addition to these practices, the platform will be able to offer special bonuses to workers who intend to cover greater areas for delivery. It will be up to the platform to use the right HRM practices that allow value creation and capture and balance them in relation to time and space.

This section is important because it informs the reader about what HRM practices are and what function they perform, but the most important thing to understand, for the purposes of the work, is that these are applied by online platforms and can allow value creation and capture, taking into account changing in time and space.

METHODOLOGY

Research has been conducted on Uber Eats, Deliveroo and, Glovo online platform, which operate in the take-away meals sector. The reasons that led the author to choose this platform are multiple. Firstly, the reputation of the platforms that offers the service in different Countries and in different Cities. This has given the possibility to carry out a more correct analysis regarding the distinction of time and space. Secondly, they are platforms that connects, as mentioned above, multiple actors. For research purposes this is important to make an accurate distinction not only on those who use HRM practices and on those who bear them, but to understand in the process of value creation and capture which actors experience these values and by whom above all. Thirdly, the presence in the literature of some research related to the application of HRM practices by platforms that use platforms such as Uber Eats and Deliveroo for empirical research (Meijerink et al, 2019). This gives the opportunity to draw on additional information that may be relevant for this work. Finally, platform World, especially that of food delivery (Uber eats, Deliveroo and Glovo), gives the possibility, given the multiple actors that compose it, to better understand the changes that occur over time and space. Several actors give the opportunity to see how HRM practices are applied by platforms and how they vary in relation to the Value Creation or Value capture phase.

Data Collection

The empirical study is conducted between April 2020 and May 2020 and it is based on semi-structured interviews with multiple stakeholders and document analysis.

Data collected through interviews. Ten interviews are conducted to answer the research question with gig-workers and requesters. They cover all the variables of this work: Value Creation, Value Capture and HRM Practices. These interviews took place in different Dutch (Delft and Enschede) and Italian (Roma, Bologna, L'Aquila, and Avezzano) cities. All interviewees work in the cities analyzed. Some of them were chosen because they are smaller and because the service was recently activated by the platforms. Others were chosen because they are bigger, and the service has been activated for several years. The temporal change was analyzed with respect to the time when the platform started offering the service in the analyzed city and also through changes experienced by the workers. For example, Deliveroo started offering the service in Rome in 2016 while in L'Aquila in 2019; comparing the same HRM

practices in the same year it is possible to observe that Rome, having started offering the service earlier, is in 2019 in the value capture phase while L'Aquila in the value creation phase. Interviews are conducted with two types of actors (gig-workers and requesters). The choice of these two types of actors derives from the fact that on these the platform uses HRM practices, and in fact from their testimonials we can better understand how the practices can allow value creation and capture. It is important to try to get as much information as possible. Questions are asked on platform world knowledge and how they work, and it tries to understand if gig-workers and requesters are aware of the fact that platform uses HRM practices to manage them and their application; this is useful for understanding how they can perceive them and further confirmation of the fact that they allow value creation and capture (important because it shows how the strategies vary over time and how it can affect the autonomy perceived by workers). Again, to these two categories of actors are asked questions about what they think about the life cycle of companies (specifically platforms) and how they think strategic decisions are made by management. This is useful to find out, especially in the workers and requesters that are interviewed in cities where the service has been activated for several years, if a difference is noted between the current period and when the platform started offering the service.

The interviews allow the author of this thesis to answer the research question as in the analysis of the answers all the components that refer to the theory previously illustrated will be identified.

Data collected through document analysis. Finally, documents found online on Uber Eats and Deliveroo platform website and other work carried out in the context of HRM practices applied by online platforms are analyzed. These documents (Web pages, newspaper articles, discussion forums for workers, Uber/Deliveroo employment contracts) provide additional data on human resource management activities and how their use allows value creation and capture, with related diversification in time and space. The use of multiple data sources strengthens the soundness of the data and the trustworthiness of the results (Sandberg, 2005).

Operationalization of Variables

On the basis of the literature previously illustrated, the research question has been divided into several categories which in turn will be divided into sub-categories (see Appendix 1 Operationalization Table) of which a short definition will be provided again with the questions to which the interviewees answered.

First category refers to *Value Creation* and this is divided in two sub-categories.

Use Value. Perceived benefit of a service. The questions answered by the interviewees are for example "How does the platform firm benefit from you as a worker/requester? Has this changed over time?" and "Do requesters, workers and the platform all equally benefit? Has this changed over time?".

Exchange Value. Amount of money paid for a service to a worker or the platform. The questions answered by the interviewees are for example "What price do you get – as a worker – for serving the requester? Has this changed over time? Is this price always the same? Why/why not?" and "Are you satisfied with this? Why?".

Second category refers to *Value Capture* and it is not divided in sub-categories. It is defined as the realization of exchange value (profits) by economic actors. The questions answered by the interviewees are for example "Do you know how platforms make their profits?" and "Did this change over time?".

Third and last category refers to *HRM practices* used by the platform firms to manage workers and requesters. It is divided in seven sub-categories.

Workforce Planning. Reflect the activities to match supply and demand for labor. The questions answered by the interviewees are for example "Which activities does the platform do to make sure that there are sufficient numbers of workers and requesters on the platform?" and "Have these activities changed over time?".

Recruitment. The activity by the platform to attract workers and requesters to the platform. The questions answered by the interviewees are for example "In what way did you get to learn about the online platform XXX?" and "Have these activities changed over time?".

Selection. The activity by the platform to decide which requesters and workers can and cannot join the online platform. The questions answered by the interviewees are for example "Did you have to meet several criteria in order to join the platform? If so, which? Has this changed over time?"

Training and Development. The activity by the platform with aims to improve workers and requesters abilities, knowledge and skills. The questions answered by the interviewees are for example "In what ways does the platform supports workers/requesters in improving their knowledge, skills and/or abilities?" and "Has this changed over time?".

Performance Management. The activity by the platform that through the setting of performance levels and using requester and client feedback, it rates workers performance. The questions answered by the interviewees are for example "In what way is your performance as a worker evaluated? Did this change over time?".

Compensation. The activity by the platform which aims to reward the workers in return for their work. The questions answered by the interviewees are for example "In what way are you rewarded for your work on the platform? Did this change over time?".

Benefits. The activity by the platform which aims to ensure a steady supply of labor to requesters by asking to them to provide workers with secondary benefits (ex. Coupons and discounts). The questions answered by the interviewees are for example "What are side-benefits to working for the platform? Did this change over time?".

As mentioned above, these are general questions from which the author of this thesis tried to derive as much information as possible from the interviewees to answer the research question.

Data Analysis

As previously stated, the sample of the interviews derives from the selection of 8 Gig-workers and 2 Requesters by the author of this thesis. The interviews with workers lasted 6 hours and 22 minutes, while those with requesters 1 hour and 34 minutes. In addition, some of these interviews were carried out with two other students who, like the author of this thesis, worked on projects related to the Gig-Economy, but with different research questions (Angelucci, 2020; Simioli, 2020).Two main considerations have been made on the choice: the first relates to triangulation as a larger sample allows you to compare more information in order to cover more angles; the second relates to reliability as a sample that sees the presence of two types of actors (gig-workers and requesters), will be able to demonstrate that despite the different roles, their information will lead to the same results.

After conducting the 10 interviews, the latter were transcribed. The transcript was sent and so observed by respondents, to see if the latter confirmed what was said in the interviews. After transcribing them, the coding process was carried out through the use of a software program called Atlas.ti.

The analysis carried out is characterized by three distinct phases: open coding, axial coding and selective coding. The first has the aim of "opening" the text and therefore bringing out the ideas and the communication forms it contains (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). To do this, the data were separated and labels were created, so as to be able to conceptualize the answers and taking into account the most important information. The second has the aim of linking the categories to the sub categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), therefore, to reconstruct the fragmented data during the first coding operation. From the third, however, a main category was identified from which the interpretation of the data arises (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In line with the conceptual model

and literature previously illustrated, the categories resulting from selective coding will refer to the three main themes: human capital, social capital and organizational capital.

In line with the literature previously illustrated, the categories resulting from selective coding refer to the three main themes: Value Creation, Value Capture, and HRM practices.

Coding process will clearly present the most important categories to answer the research question (See appendix 2).

RESULTS

In this section will proceed with the presentation of the results reached by the author of this thesis after data collection. To make the work more fluid and more understandable to the reader, the same Operationalization scheme will be used for the analysis. The three main themes will then be analyzed: Value Creation, Value Capture and HRM practices.

Gig-Workers, requesters and Value Creation

Sub- categories analyzed will be Use Value and Exchange Value.

Use Value. From Appendix 1, the reader can easily observe the type of questions asked to the interviewees regarding this topic. As previously observed in the theory, the Use Value leads to the observation of what is the perceived benefit of a service by workers. The interest of the author of this thesis was to see how this has changed over time by the worker and requesters and also to verify how the space component has been affected.

The questions put the interviewees in a position to first ascertain the benefits that the platform could bring to them as workers / requesters, secondly what could be the benefits that they as workers / requesters could bring to the platform and finally ascertain if they thought these benefits were equally distributed among the actors.

The benefits perceived by the workers are more or less similar and refer to: (1) the perceived flexibility of the job (considering also that more than half of the interviewees were students); (2) the possibility of relating with many people, therefore an expansion of their socialization capacity; (3) health improvements; (4) purely economic benefits, as they are doing either their first work experience or a second job to increase their salary; (5) last, which came during the Covid-19 emergency, refers to the possibility of learning new regulations or new behaviors to be observed also in private and not only working life.

The only changes found relatively the time component are those relating to perceived flexibility of work and economic. The first is more related to the algorithm and the findings that the latter makes on workers and requesters. This can be seen from the fact that if workers find themselves repeatedly refusing to deliver orders because they are not economically convenient (i.e. they do not earn from it), the algorithm reduces the possibility of working for workers by offering less slots in the case of Deliveroo (this is also true for Glovo) and less possibility of accepting orders for Uber eats (it must be specified that while for Glovo and Deliveroo the worker has the possibility to reserve the slots, i.e. the time slots in which the worker gives availability to

work, Uber eats does not allow the same thing and entrusts the order to the workers closest to it and with the highest statistics / ratings). The variation of an economic nature, on the other hand, is most evident in the cities where the service started earlier such as Rome, Bologna and Delft; this variation refers to the perception, by workers / requesters, of the decrease in their earnings. In smaller cities such as L'Aquila, although the Deliveroo service has just started, differences have already been noticed after a few months. As far as Enschede is concerned, the workers have started to perceive some differences.

"Relating to people and in the case of emergency situations such as Covid, information on hygiene rules also useful for the private and non-working sphere". **Gig-Worker 4/Deliveroo L'Aquila**
"Surely that of making money by managing time as you see fit is an advantage and even this is limiting because if you are not present for a period then they start to assign you the slots that decide for them. So basically, this flexibility is relative. I don't know the only advantage that I can have is that of being able to maybe take away some whims, pay me something more and not have the need to ask my parents for money. before, these advantages were certainly much stronger and then over time and the increase in Riders has limited us a little".
Gig-worker 6/ Deliveroo L'Aquila

The benefits perceived by the requesters, however, are purely economic and refer to the expansion of their business, the possibility of improving their visibility through the platform and the reduction of costs.

"Certainly, the platform offers two fundamental advantages: the first in terms of costs, since by using the platform, I give a percentage of what I should perceive to the platform itself, however, I have the great privilege of not having to think myself to hire someone to do my deliveries. This advantage connects directly to another which is related to advertising. My business increases its resonance through the platform. Second is the increase in my revenues as the platform gives me the opportunity to totally expand my business ". **Requester 2/Deliveroo L'Aquila**

The benefits that workers can bring to the platform refer more to the importance they have in the platform business. In fact, many workers have observed that they are the key figures that allow platforms to offer their service. The second factor found is the amplification of the brand of the platform thanks to their advertising through backpacks and jackets worn during work. The same for benefits brought by the requesters to the platform. In addition to amplifying these benefits over time, some say they will last forever.

"Useful as it has riders to make deliveries and therefore without us it could not offer its service. Without riders there are no deliveries and therefore we are indispensable for the platform. And what's more, we guarantee greater visibility and therefore advertising". **Gig-Worker2/ Deliveroo Bologna-L'Aquila**
"I don't know, "Capitalism"? I think that this is a new way to make profit, and it is associated with the development of technology. Nowadays you can sell and buy all you want on internet and they have invented a new way to connect people, a new way to link restaurants with clients, precisely clients that want the same product eaten in the restaurant but at home. We are only riders that allow them to do this. Platforms will benefit from me and the other riders forever". **Gig-Workers 8/ Uber eats Enschede**

The consideration of the workers on the benefits they bring to the requesters, are economic (1) through a real amplification of their business and (2) a reduction in costs since if they did not rely on a platform they would have to autonomously provide for delivery of food and the increase in advertising resonance, which the platform instead makes available on its sites and applications.

The temporal variation is always perceived at an economic level, in the sense that if the commissions / percentages received by the platform were to increase, the requesters would not agree over time to continue using the service.

"They benefit from the Glovers by taking advantage of the fact that Glovo is a famous platform and therefore riders also increase the advertising of both the platform and the requesters. Glovers also give them the opportunity to reach their customers at home without the business having to look for their own person to make their deliveries. So, they will definitely have a cost reduction. It therefore increases its visibility also through the glovers by decreasing its costs ". **Gig-Worker 3/ Glovo Roma**

"You are the person that deliver for them without being their employee. They have not to spend money in searching people that deliver for them. They have an important reduction of costs. I think that this could change over time because the platform can increase the commision paid by requesters and for this reason they gain less. If for requesters this investment is useless they stop it". **Gig- Worker7/ Deliveroo-Uber eats Delft**

"I'm really friendly with everyone, they use me to increase their business. Without me they have to pay privately another person to deliver their food. This implies more costs than with the platform. So they haven't to hire new people to deliver their food. This changes over time only if the platform increases the commissions or percentage that restaurants pay to them". **Gig-Worker 8/Uber eats Enschede**

Exchange Value. As stated previously, the exchange value refers to the cash corresponding paid for a service to the worker. The questions in this case refer to aspects such as: (1) corresponding (price) received by the worker for having offered the service and (2) his degree of satisfaction. In this case also there is the component related to the temporal change.

The interviews show differences between the platforms as regards the use of the guaranteed minimum wage as Deliveroo and Glovo grant it (even if in different amounts since the former grants 6 Euros while the second platform 4 Euros), while Uber eats does not. For example, as can be seen on the Deliveroo Italia website, it is possible that in L'Aquila the guaranteed minimum wage is provided, while in Bologna it isn't, and it is also possible that within the same city in some areas it is provided while in others it isn't (Milan center it isn't provided, while Milan suburbs yes). The minimum guaranteed wage in Glovo platform firm is even granted in some slots yes while in others no, depending on the influx of customers on the platform.

The percentage of commissions received for orders depends on the distance between requesters and costumers and varies between platforms. From the interviews one might think that the size of cities can influence the value of commissions, but in reality in their web pages the platforms

and in the various communities, deny this thing. The time factor plays a fundamental role as regards the change in prices and this can be found, for example, in cities such as Rome, where the current pay is on average 7/8 Euros per hour, while as shown by the interviewee 1 at beginning was equal to 10 Euros.

"With deliveroo in Rome I earned 10 euros per hour while with Uber in Enschede it is significantly less than 5 euros per hour." **Gig-Worker 1/ Deliveroo Rome/ Uber eats Enschede**

Although the service has been present in L'Aquila for 9 months more or less, this decrease is demonstrated by the words of the interviewee 6.

"L'Aquila is also a small city so there are those customers who order often, people to whom I delivered both November and February and now I can say the same delivery to the same restaurant has fallen by € 1.50 within 3-4 months. maybe what was previously paid 6 now 4.50. let's say before there was a minimum of payment and therefore any Delivery that was closer than it could happen to you we pay you all now has gone down a lot. It seems to me that the lowest delivery was paid 3.70 whereas before it was 4.50. Gradually everything is decreasing. " **Gig-Worker 6/ Deliveroo L'Aquila**

The reduction also concerns the guaranteed minimum, confirmed by Gig-Worker 2, which worked for the platform both in Bologna and in L'Aquila.

"The guaranteed minimum has changed over time; both the guaranteed minimum, which is the same at the national level but not always available, in fact before it was greater than 6 euros and it was 7.50 euros and both the payment based on the distance traveled since earlier certain routes were paid more but the strange thing is that in my opinion for us (riders) this can only be an impression as the precise calculations do not know how they are carried out ". **Gig-Worker 2 Deliveroo Bologna- L'Aquila**

However, the degree of satisfaction does not seem to be negative despite the reduction in remuneration. This for two fundamental reasons: (1) the interviewees belong to student category and therefore their expectations are not high, and (2) for the interviewees it is a second job and therefore they only need to increase their salary. All respondents agree that if it was in a main job they would have been unsatisfied and would have looked for another job. This in all cities of both nations.

"Before Yes, now we are many workers and they pay us less, Fortunately I have to study and therefore I don't have to pay a rent, otherwise the situation was different. Looking from the groups of the various chats or Facebook groups I have seen many large cities that no longer have the minimum guaranteed. let's say they motivate this with the fact that the orders are there for everyone, always. From what I read, it is so heavy in Milan where, for example, there is the rider from Milano Centro who earns a lot and there are the other Riders of the surrounding areas who do not earn but have that guaranteed minimum and are affected by this thing. " **Gig-Worker 6/ Deliveroo L'Aquila**

"For the work that I'm doing probably yes, but I am a student man; I'll change my work after the graduation. I noticed a decrease of my earnings compared to the first period that I started to work. This for both platforms". **Gig-Worker 7/ Deliveroo-Uber eats Delft**

The requesters analyzed are currently satisfied with the prices agreed with the respective platforms, even if they did not want to say how much the percentage they recognize to them is. Their only fear is related to how the conditions will change when the contract expires as the platforms will grow over time and recruit new requesters.

In conclusion, as far as the creation of value is concerned, the changes that can be found are more of an economic nature, both as regards workers and for requesters. While Deliveroo and Glovo grant a guaranteed minimum wage, Uber eats does not. From the decrease in the minimum wage, from the decrease in commissions paid to workers and from the perception of the increase in costs incurred by requesters in order to continue working with the platform, it is possible to understand how the creation of value changes over time (reduction of platform costs and increase in revenues). Regarding space component, in this case it can be found that the size of the city plays a decisive role, the smaller the city, the earlier the costs decrease by the platforms (the logic is the same for all three platforms analyzed).

Gig-Workers, requesters and Value Capture

As stated several times in this thesis, the value capture refers to the realization of the exchange value (profits) by economic actors.

The questions asked to the interviewees refer to (1) how the platform makes its profits, (2) how it tries to increase them, (3) if differences were noted between the first phase of the service offered and the second, (4) how the workers / requesters reacted to these differences and (5) how much the platform perceives for the service offered.

What appears evident from interviewees' words is that they, in reality, do not have a complete knowledge on how the platforms make their profits and therefore they answered following a logic related to their personal experiences.

From the interviews it emerges that the platforms make their own profits through different methods: (1) from the commissions paid by the requesters, ie a fixed percentage on the orders that customers make to the requesters (agreed with them). However, one must be careful to make a distinction between platforms as this percentage varies according to the platform being examined. For example, as regards Uber eats, in The Netherlands and in Italy, the commission requested from requesters was initially 35% of the order, but then it dropped to 30% due to a global company policy adopted to combat competition from Justeat and take more market. As for Deliveroo, the percentage is between 10% and 20% and this does not change between countries. Glovo, on the other hand, thinks differently as in the cities where he has just started

his service like Avezzano, the percentage is negotiated between a manager of the company and the owner of the restaurant. If the restaurant uses another platform, it will use the percentage agreed with that as the maximum percentage that it is willing to grant to Glovo. It happens that Glovo, given that it must make himself known in the new city, will be willing to grant lower percentages at the beginning, and then increase them to renewals trying to become indispensable for the requester (the contracts are annual). In Rome Glovo, since it has been offering the service for several years, grants a fixed percentage which is equal to that of its competitors. Concepts that apply to all three platforms are those relating to who makes the delivery and if the requester uses multiple platforms. In the first case, if the delivery is made by the requester, the agreed percentage will be lower, while if they will be external workers, it increases. In the second case, however, if the requester uses other platforms, the commission will be higher; (2) through commissions withheld to service fee workers as they too rely on the platform for their work, Uber eats, for example, does so; (3) Standard Delivery Fee or Convenience Fee: Platforms charge a flat delivery fee from their customers irrespective of the order value; (4) marketing and advertising commission to requestrs. Uber Eats, for example, helps requesters to attract more customers and reach a wider customer base by offering brand campaigns aimed at customers, related social posts and email marketing aimed primarily at their riders. Glovo does a very similar thing to Avezzano but only in terms of advertising linked to their Brand, certainly better known than the small restaurant. These fees are established contractually between the parties.

"They definitely take a percentage from the pizzerias / restaurants / Mc Donald's etc for the service they allow them to offer." **Gig-Worker 4/Deliveroo L'Aquila**
"Taking a percentage from the order you made. therefore, orders to McDonald's they take a percentage from the total sum of the order ". **Gig-Worker 5/ Deliveroo L'Aquila**
"Glovo takes a percentage of my turnover, so if I don't receive any order in a month, I have nothing to give to the platform and for the latter is the same to me." **Requester 1/ Glovo Avezzano**

Respondents explained that the platform increases its profits: (1) through a reduction in costs related to new worker attraction campaigns. For example, think of the fact that as soon as Uber eats arrives in a new city, such as Enschede or Delft for example, he rented premises for 15 days where there were managers of the company who provided information on the type of job and collected applications from new workers (mainly students). Another thing to think about is that related to the reduction of the availability of the "referral bonus", or that bonus granted to those workers who bring their friends / acquaintances to work for the platform. It consists of a sum of money which for example in Deliveroo is 50 Euros (does not change between cities) which are given to the worker who brought the new one after the latter made a certain number

of deliveries (see below, in HRM practices, the full explanation). Uber eats, on the other hand, grants 100 Euros. Glovo also adopts this bonus but it is different among the various cities. When enough workers have arrived in the area of interest, these bonuses are blocked. (2) By a reduction in commissions paid to workers (including lowering incentives and promotions). As noted also by the testimonials of all the workers interviewed, commissions have decreased over time at the expense of workers. In L'Aquila, for example, workers have noticed that compared to the beginning, the lowest deliveries have changed from 4.50 Euros before to 3.90 Euros now. The same thing happened in Bologna but compared to L'Aquila this process took longer to manifest (Bologna is a city much larger than L'Aquila). As for the differences between the platforms, Uber eats (The Netherlads) has lower commissions than Deliveroo (Italy) for example, as pointed out by the first interviewee who worked for both platforms but in different countries. As for a comparison between the two in the same city, we can use the observations provided by the interviewee number 7 (Delft). In fact, he explained that if Deliveroo also pays more than Uber eats, the latter recovers with the promotions / incentives it makes available. But even in this case over time all this also decreases as a function of the area coverage that the platform reaches. Consequently, as the platform manages to cover the territory, the incentives made available to riders decrease. (3) Reduction of the guaranteed minimum wages (for the platforms that grant it). In this case also the interviews were very useful as we were able to not only identify which platforms grant it and which do not, but also that this guaranteed minimum is not the same amount in both platforms. Before Glovo granted 6 euros an hour while at the moment it is 4 euros, while Deliveroo has lowered it from 7.50 euros to 6 euros. (4) By the increase in the fees of the requesters. As previously noted, the percentages may vary according to various conditions that may arise over time which may depend for example on the initial bargaining (in the case of a new city in which to offer the service such as Avezzano, the platform is willing to ask for lower percentages), from the use of multiple platforms over time and from the transition from a delivery made by the requester to that entrusted to the riders who collaborate with the platform.

"I think that during the lifecycle Uber increases commissions to both requesters and workers. In fact, many requesters who were there at the beginning over time or have switched to other platforms or have just stopped offering the service. I found an example of this in Enschede from the requesters for whom I deliver food, shops for which I previously made deliveries, now I no longer carry them out because they no longer offer their service through Uber ". **Gig-Worker 1/ Deliveroo Rome – Uber eats Enschede**
"Over time also a drop in the commissions that Glovers give us, as I said earlier." **Gig-Worker 3/ Glovo Rome**
"Or it doesn't do "bring a friend". Anyway, before erasing it, you don't chase that money anymore, reducing costs, still increasing your profits". **Gig-Worker 6/ Deliveroo L'Aquila**

The differences between the two phases have been noticed, as mentioned above, both in large cities where the service has started for more time (e.g. Rome), and in smaller cities where the service has just started (e.g. L'Aquila), taking Deliveroo as the reference platform. This difference also begins to appear on platforms such as Uber, where in Enschede, despite the service has just started, the "bring a friend" incentive has been removed (reactivated for a short period due to Covid-19).

"Yes, as mentioned earlier when they started the fees were cheap and they have also lost a lot of money with marketing campaigns to attract clients, requesters and workers. In the second part, exactly now, they only gain a lot of money. They have a monopoly, they manage the market and all the rules of the game. " **Gig-Worker 7/ Deliveroo-Uber eats Delft**

Again, the reaction of the workers is not totally negative because they are either students or because they are second jobs. For requesters, however, such a situation still does not occur as it is only one year that they are registered on the platform. Both limit themselves to saying that when it is no longer convenient they will leave and start to look for other things (the workers) or they will change the platform to rely on (the requesters).

"Anger and displeasure and many people quit their job because over time it is no longer convenient for them to continue working." **Gig-Worker 2/ Deliveroo Bologna – L'Aquila**
"Unfortunately, they will definitely turn me away because I created myself plans B, and I also have other interests." **Gig-Worker 5/ Deliveroo L'Aquila**

Regarding the last point, workers are not able to estimate how much the platforms for the service offered can perceive, while the requesters only know what percentage they agreed with the platform, but it varies between requesters, city, start time in which the service was offered by the platform, platform itself and time in relation to the size of the city.

In conclusion, from value capture, speaking of profits, it is better to understand the role played by time and space variables. The incoming cash flow for the platforms is guaranteed not only by fixed revenues that refer to the percentages agreed with the requesters, but also by the reduction in costs that the platform obtains after reaching a sufficient number of workers and requests (reduction of commissions for workers and percentage increase agreed with requesters). Therefore, not only does it vary over time, but also in space as in the smaller cities value capture begins earlier than in the larger cities (example L'Aquila is different from Rome in that the second is much larger).

Gig-Workers, requesters and HRM practices

As for Value Creation, this section will be divided into sub-sections. Specifically, will try to understand which HRM practices are relevant in order to answer the research question. Again, it will be essential to understand how these practices vary over time and space.

Workforce Planning. From the questions asked to workers and requesters about this HR practice, it has been found that one of the main activities that the platforms carry out to ensure a sufficient number of workers is that of "referral bonus". At the beginning it seemed like a simple initial promotion with the aim to reach a sufficient number of workers, instead from the words of the interviewees, it was learned that in reality this is a balancing practice. Whenever the platforms are facing a period of insufficiency of workers with respect to the scope of the service, activate this "promotion" (all the platforms examined apply it). This practice therefore has a multiple purpose, both to increase the number of workers and to balance supply and demand of labor. What is important to note is that this practice not only differs between the various platforms, but in some of them it also differs between cities. As for Deliveroo, it grants this bonus only in some cities (both in Italy and in The Netherlands) and this consists, as mentioned above, in the payment of 50 Euros to the worker who brings a new worker to work for the platform (everything happens by entering a code that the one who already works for the platform gives to the new worker). Only after the new worker has made at least 30 deliveries within 60 days from the registering on the platform, the person who referred him will be given 50 Euros (a maximum of 10 references per worker is allowed). As mentioned above, however, this bonus is granted by the platform when it starts offering the service in a new city (all respondents confirmed it) and in periods of worker shortages. In some cities it is currently granted, such as Bologna (although the service has been active for a long time, while in others it is not as L'Aquila where the service has been offered for a short time. Here the variable space comes into play because, being L'Aquila a smaller city, has reached a sufficient level of workers first (this does not exclude that it can be reactivated). As for Uber eats, however, the logic is the same. Only the minimum deliveries to be made are not 30 but 25 and the bonus is € 100. Uber eats seems more advantageous from this point of view than Deliveroo but we must not forget, as mentioned above, that Deliveroo grants the minimum guaranteed while Uber eats does not. As regards Glovo, instead, it uses the same logic but the value of the bonus varies depending on the city. It can occur not only that in some cities it is granted while in others it is not, but even that for example in some cities it has a value and in other cities it is not same. In

conclusion, except Glovo, in the other two platforms the amount of money does not vary over time, but the availability of the platform in granting it changes. In some periods it is allowed, while in others it is not and in some areas / cities yes, while in others it is not.

"To increase the number of riders, all marketing techniques, including all social networks. And the second one that in my opinion is the one that makes the most that refers to the "bring a friend " in which it gives you 50 euros for each person who starts to be a rider by entering your code when registering on the platform. with this system, I have brought my friends who are now operating by Deliveroo in L'Aquila. " **Gig-Worker 2/ Deliveroo Bologna – L'Aquila**

The ability of this practice to balance supply and demand for work emerged from the interviews, as it was noted the willingness of the platforms to recruit requesters first, normally relying on important fast-food companies (multinationals) present in the city (for example Mc Donald's, Burger King etc.), and on the basis of these he recruits the workers. To this observation must be added that on the increase in transactions by customers, there is an increase in orders and therefore a greater need for workers. Precisely for these aspects the practice of the "referral bonus" goes to periods. As the transactions and requesters increase, there is an urgent need for the company to recruit new workers and one of the most effective methods is precisely to incentivize those who already work for the platform to be promoters of this recruitment (obviously with a fee in money). The condition of a minimum number of orders to be delivered for new hires indirectly obliges the workers who introduced him to the platform to stimulate them so as not to lose the bonus. During the Covid-19 emergency period, the number of orders increased, there were more requests from the costumers and consequently more workers was needed. With the practice described above, the platform managed to balance the market by recruiting new workers.

"A second type of promotion concerns the" bring a friend" where they pay you 50 Euros if you involve other people in this work. After new riders have done a minimum number of delivers, the platform give you extra money. This promotion stopped two weeks after my registration and restarted with Corona. I think that the platform needed new riders for the higher work to do. " **Gig-Worker 8 / Uber eats Enschede**

However, it should be noted that this speech is valid in Dutch cities and not in Italian ones as in the former the number of orders has increased, while in the latter it is not. Sociocultural and economic differences may include possible motivations. Demonstration of this phenomenon was given by respondents who work for Uber eats and Deliveroo in Enschede and Delft, and respondents who work for Deliveroo and Glovo in L'Aquila, Bologna, Rome and Avezzano.

"The earnings with Uber I think have increased due to Coronavirus but this is something that in my opinion happens in all countries except in Italy as we are a population that in emergency situations rediscover the pleasure of doing things at home while other populations are different, given the situation and in any case the

Its variation over time depends on the needs of the platform. Smaller cities arrive first at the pre-established balance number (of workers and requesters) and in fact they first suspend the practice and then the possibility for the worker to use it. It must be thought that every time this practice is used, this weighs on the costs of the platforms and therefore will negatively impact on value capture (the company makes less profits).

Recruitment. The "referral bonus" previously described is at the same time a recruiting practice as it is a technique that attracts new workers.

Other ways through which workers and requesters know the platforms are: (1) that relating to advertising campaigns that are carried out on social networks (Facebook and Instagram); (2) TV and press advertising (for example "We are coming to your city); (3) through the leasing of boxes in the 20 days preceding the activation of the service in which employees of the platforms give explanations on the type of work and collect subscriptions (Uber has done it in Delft and in Enschede); (4) finally through the various flyers attached within the requesters who already rely on the platform. The activities described occur in the initial period, the one in which the platform settles in the new city and end once a sufficient number of requesters and workers are reached. In the end, only the costs related to advertising campaigns that aim to attract customers will remain.

*"I choose Uber because it was the most familiar to me. I noticed a lot of publicities (flyers and social media), I knew people and friends that worked for this platform, and finally I was attracted by the Uber brand because they also do taxi services, similar the real taxi but with the app. Uber has gained a huge reputation in the past years. But for me it is a secondary job because I also work for a Casino. It is an extra earnings, second source of income. As I said before, social, publicity, friends, but there was another thing. I saw a lot of riders with green bagpack. As I used Uber as client (customer), I knew also the app and the brand, and for these reasons I send my candidature and after a few days I started to work. " **Gig-Worker 8/ Uber eats Enschede***

The last source of attraction is that which derives from the interest aroused by the Gig-Workers themselves. Backpacks and coats of flashy colors that arouse attention and push people to inquire about the platform and then propose themselves as aspiring candidates. The kit is sold to zero Euro in some platforms (this implies an increase in costs), while in others it is paid (this implies an increase in revenues). This practice of selling at no cost is carried out by Deliveroo and there is no difference between countries, the only thing the worker pays, in case, are all

those additional components that the platform gives the worker the opportunity to buy elsewhere (such as support for the phone and helmet). As for Glovo, the Kit has a cost of 15 Euros, however the platform requires 65 Euros (either given by the worker or deducted from the first wages) as 50 Euros are a deposit for the Kit which will be returned to the worker when he decides to leave the platform and will therefore have to return everything. Uber eats, on the other hand, always supplies the kit for a fee (70 Euros) which are deducted from the first salaries. The Uber eats kit is the most expensive and does not require a deposit; this kit consists of jacket, jacket and pants for the rain and backpack for deliveries. Also in this case, as for the other platforms, the rider can buy other supports for the job directly from the platform store. Regarding requesters, the platforms, in the cities where they want to start offering the service, contact the requesters through their call centers and make appointments between the requester and the area platform agent, in order to have a contact face to face with the requester. On the assumption of the requesters interviewed, with multinationals such as Mc Donald's, they will have contracts on a national scale.

"Before starting to use the platform in working terms, I was a customer, so driven by curiosity I found this platform and after that, I was contacted by their call center ". **Requester 1/ Glovo Avezzano**

Selection. It is a practice little used and at the same time little perceived by the interviewees. In fact, the interviews showed that workers, once attracted, have a high probability of being selected once their application has been submitted. In fact, those requested by the platform are general information relating to (1) personal data, (2) bank account (in the Netherlands there is a compulsory Dutch bank account while in Italy not), (3) the vehicle that intends to use (bicycle or motor vehicle), (4) driving license and insurance (if you opt for the motor vehicle).

A sort of selection test is carried out only by Uber eats, but the workers themselves say that it is impossible not to pass it, given the excessive ease.

"The test is really simple, there are those who do it without even watching the video lessons. The minimum score is 80% of the correct answers but everyone says it is very easy. " **Gig-Worker 1/ Deliveroo Rome – Uber eats Enschede**

As for the requesters, some questions are added on the type of activity and some from the sanitary point of view, but the owners themselves have noticed a selection based on the products offered by the restaurants. As if first of all, they selected exclusive requesters, in order to be more attractive to end customers.

"I didn't have to meet particular criteria. They asked me general questions about my business and the type of products I offer. The only criterion that I think they asked me but not in a formal form is if I worked with another platform to offer my service. I think these also vary depending on the resonance that the platform will acquire over time. The city of L'Aquila is still too young to speak of great variations. " **Requester 2/ Deliveroo L'Aquila**

Training and Development. This practice, like the previous one, tends to be used less by the platforms. As soon as they become part of the platforms, both workers and requesters, they only receive video illustrations on the operation of the application (workers) and the devices supplied by the platforms (requesters).

In addition, videos or emails are occasionally sent from the platforms to workers on how to make a delivery in the best possible way and showing customers to be polite and friendly, while requesters to be people who respect the professional skills (time for example).

During the Covid-19 emergency, the platforms provided workers and requesters with explanations (via email and video) on how to comply with hygiene rules, both in the production of food (for requesters) and for the delivery (for workers).

"At the level of tutorials and various things I have never noticed anything regarding the application as I think it is so elementary that they exclude the possibility of not learning to use it. You will receive illustrative emails / videos on how to make the delivery but more related to how to be more efficient. With the Corona, however, many things have changed. There has been a real bombardment of information (email and illustrative videos) by the platform on the safety of delivery, hygiene, in compliance with the rules, such as delivering food remotely, all this for the safety of customers but especially of workers as we could become those who carry the virus from one side to the other ". **Gig-Worker 4/ Deliveroo L'Aquila**

Performance Management. Through questions that aimed to find out how appraisals of costumers and requesters (for workers) and appraisals of costumers and workers (for requesters) could allow / influence value creation and capture, it was found that this practice seems to be perceived in some way by the workers. For Value Creation it has a great effect because, through appraisals, the platform can understand if the customer experiences use value. This practice remains fairly constant over time and has no relation to the space component. It serves primarily as a means of monitoring workers. The system used by the platforms is broadly the same (thumb up or 5 stars) and does not differ between the different cities analyzed in this thesis.

"So what we see is that only your presence in orders is assessed and the fact of being able to participate in the sessions that you booked in time. Then you leave feedback to the Rider from the customer and this affects somehow Definitely. It especially influences the way Deliveroo allocates sessions and therefore we say that if you are the one who satisfies the customers more statistically, it will give you more possibilities to make other deliveries and therefore gives you access to more slots. I don't really know if these have changed over time, but in any case with the increase of riders they have had a greater impact on job opportunities. " **Gig-Worker 6/ Deliveroo L'Aquila**

No information was provided by the interviewees regarding the difference between the value creation period and the value capture period since these assessments always seem to be the same. Having demonstration from the customers that the service has been performed well,

increases the reputation of the platform and this will inevitably impact on its usage by costumers. More transactions will mean higher revenues for the platform that positively impact on profits (Value Capture).

Compensation. This is the practice that most of all makes us understand in the life cycle of the platforms the difference between value creation and value capture. From the interviews what emerges, is how in the initial phase, in which the platforms start offering the service, workers' compensation seems to be higher, decreasing over time. Some platforms such as Deliveroo, as mentioned above, manage to give the minimum guaranteed wage to workers, but even this will decrease over time (a clear example are the cities of Rome, Bologna and L'Aquila, despite the different size), in some cases it disappears. This does not vary only over time, but also in space, as smaller cities will see a decrease in their commissions much earlier than larger cities, just think that in L'Aquila it started from February 2020. The minimum wage is intended as a sum of money that the platform grants to the worker in the event that the latter has booked for a time slot but in that period of time relating to the booking, no deliveries are commissioned to the worker. In short, the platform grants a remuneration because for that period of time there was no opportunity to work for the worker due to the absence of work. Let it be clear that in the event that the worker receives a delivery to be made and the latter refuses it, the platform would no longer be willing to grant the minimum wage for that specific time slot. The granting of a minimum wage by the platforms is present in Italy (but not granted by all platforms) and not in The Netherlands. However, it should be noted that the platforms, as soon as they settle in the new cities, guarantee a minimum wage of a certain value (7.50 euros), but over time, with the increase of workers and requesters, this minimum wage decreases. The platforms explain the reduction of the minimum wage by saying that over time they will be able to cover the entire area of the city and therefore it will be impossible not to receive orders. In short, with the growth of workers and requesters, with the increase of the costumers' transactions, the minimum wage can be removed because the platforms ensure work for workers.

"At the beginning, as soon as the service started, in addition to having more work available, there was a different management of the minimum guaranteed by the platform. Before, they were 7.50 Euros higher than the 6 Euros now. In the first months, I made a lot of money working very little, I speak to you of 800 or 900 Euros per month without doing almost anything. This is my opinion also because Deliveroo was little known. Today everything has changed as the minimum is lower, if you refuse an order you lose everything and not only the hour as before and they have also lowered the commissions received for each delivery and therefore in my personal experience, they forced me to refuse certain orders due to the excessive distance between where I live and where I have to go to deliver ". **Gig-Worker 4/ Deliveroo L'Aquila**

The remuneration is also different based on the orders because it depends on the distance between the requester that produces food and the customer where it is destined. Farther places are paid more than nearer ones, although sometimes it takes longer to drive on shorter sections than longer ones. Such as in the center of cities where there are many limited traffic areas.

"I see that I have to make a delivery on the other side of L'Aquila and therefore it costs me € 4 and the commission is 4 Euro. I lose because: if I refuse, they don't give me the guaranteed minimum. The compensation in general is calculated based on the distance, so maybe orders that are less paid you have to make a worse route than other orders that are more distant but in more accessible areas. I realize this with the historic center that perhaps the areas are still earthquake , but you have to make particular roads, and in line with the area it is closer to the restaurant and is paid less. But it takes you more time because you have to pass the smaller streets from one side to the other it takes more time than in case the whole new post-earthquake part ". **Gig-Worker 6/ Deliveroo L'Aquila**

The objective of the platforms is to achieve full coverage of the cities where they are established, this will imply an increase in workers who will decrease the number of long routes and therefore reduce (1) on the one hand the costs of the platforms related to longer distances to be covered and (2) on the other hand the increase in transactions (therefore profits) given the increase in coverage of the territory.

Benefits. From the interviews it emerges that also Benefit is a practice that allows to identify the difference between the period relating to Value Creation and that to Value Capture. The interviewees, in their answers, revealed that in the initial phase in which the platform must be known, there is a greater presence of incentives and promotions, while from a certain moment they start to decrease.

Some bonuses are fixed and constant (therefore they imply costs for the platform) such as the 1 euro "fatigue" bonus for those who work by bicycle. The platforms also provided for bonuses relating to weather: (1) Uber and Deliveroo use it in the Netherlands due to the strong wind and rain that characterize the country; (2) in Rome, on the other hand, Glovo uses the "Sole" Bonus in the summer periods which consists in the payment of 50 extra Euros to the worker, if the latter reaches 50 deliveries in the week (this to encourage workers to work in the heat).

"In the moments of greatest drop, there are glovers and so there are incentives such as that if you complete 50 orders during the week you will have a 50 euro bonus". **Gig-Worker 3/ Glovo Rome**

In addition to these, there are bonuses that emerge whenever the platforms amplify the area in which they offer the service. Workers are given extra money when they agree to make deliveries that involve long distances. This type of Bonus ceases when the platform manages to cover the whole area. Once the area is covered, the platforms will apply higher costs to those customers who want the products of distant requesters. Also in this case, however, a distinction must be

made on who makes the delivery: when the delivery was made by the requester himself, the latter will ask the platform to increase the price; when the delivery was made by gig-worker, the platform will increase independently.

"For example one time happened that Uber proposed me to do a deliver from the center to a new zone of Enschede, I never did other order like that, but they paid me 5 Euro extra for this deliver". **Gig-Worker 8/ Uber eats Enschede**

The platforms also give workers the opportunity to take advantage of coupons and discounts. However, they are granted to workers as they are registered on the platform, and therefore do not depend on their performance.

"Yes, there are some discounts that they send you by email. Coupons with shops that sell bike supports or thing useful to do the work better and safe. You put your code and you can use the discount. Bonus weather described before. These are not linked to the performance but you can use them as a rider registered to the platform. Only promotions mentioned before are changed over time ". **Gig-Worker 7/ Deliveroo – Uber eats Delft**

In conclusion, this section gives the reader the opportunity to identify which HRM practices allow value creation and capture. The results of the interviews show how practices such as Workforce Planning, Recruitment, Compensation and Benefits allow both value creation and capture. It is very important to understand how the creation of value involves costs that can negatively impact on the profits of the platforms (in this case value creation and value capture are not aligned). With the right strategies aimed at increasing revenues and reducing costs, such as those illustrated above, the platforms are able to increase profits (in this case value creation and value capture are aligned). The practice relating to Performance management is mainly important for the creation of value as it monitors how the use value is experienced by the actors, while indirectly it affects the correct functioning of the platforms recognized by customers which induces the latter to carry out more transactions (increase of the profits of the platform). As regards the Selection and Training and development practices, they are considered almost non-existent by the interviewees and therefore unable to influence value creation and capture. What is important to note is how the time variable and the space variable are intertwined with each other as in larger cities (e.g. Rome) the platforms will take longer to ensure that the HRM practices used align value creation and capture. In smaller cities (ex. L'Aquila) platforms take less time.

DISCUSSION

In this thesis, the author's goal was to understand which HRM practices allowed value creation and capture; this was joined by the goal of understanding the role of time and space variables. To carry out this analysis, the author relied on the existing literature on the concepts of value creation and value capture (Lepak et al, 2007) and on the literature on the use of HRM practices by online platforms (Meijerink & Keegan, 2019; Lieman, 2018).

Through the analysis of three different platforms (Deliveroo, Uber eats and Glovo) that deal with food-deliver between their businesses, different Dutch and Italian cities were analyzed, different in size and time in which the platforms started to offer their service.

With this study, the author of the thesis shows that online platforms use some HRM practices that allow value creation and capture. Using these practices involves two scenarios. The first sees an alignment between the two phases as the practices used for the creation of value make it possible to create the basis for the acquisition of value and consequently the platforms make profits. The second sees a misalignment between the two as the use of some practices during the value creation phase implies a reduction in profits for the platforms.

Furthermore, the study showed that time and space variables play a fundamental role. In fact, it is shown that in large cities the transition from value creation to value capture is slower and alternating alignment and misalignment scenarios may occur between the two phases until the platforms cover the entire area. In smaller cities, however, the final alignment tends to occur earlier. Sometimes it can also happen that large cities where the service has been offered for several years take longer to reach the final alignment than cities where the service has been offered for a short time, in few words value capture phase occurs earlier in the latter than in the former.

Implications for theory and practices

This research work started from the analysis of the world of online platforms and their functioning; their role as intermediaries between labor supply and demand has been defined, which allows the realization of profits by online platforms (Meijerink & Keegan, 2019). From this definition the main actors that interact with the platforms (requesters and workers) were identified in order to understand the roles that each of them has and how they are managed by the online platforms. From the management of these actors, an attempt was made to identify the two phases of the life cycle of the platforms: (1) value creation, divided into use value and

exchange value, and value capture. As regards the use value, reference is made to the perceived benefit of a service, while the exchange value is the amount of money paid for a service to the worker and the platform (Lepak et al, 2007). The realization of exchange value (profits) by economic actors is what is called value capture (Lepak et al, 2007).

What has been done subsequently, is to see, through the existing literature, which HRM practices allowed value creation and capture, and how these changed in relation to time and space variables. Several studies have emerged from the literature confirming the use of HRM practices by online platforms, but no one specifically analyzes what is the object of the research question of this thesis.

In addition to confirming the implementation of the strategies of HRM practices (Meijerink & Keegan, 2019) the author of this thesis answers the research question showing that not only HRM practices allow value creation and capture, but these change also in relation to time and space. In value creation and capture, some HMR practices are relevant, while others are not. Relevant practices include: (1) Workforce Planning, (2) Recruitment, (3) Performance management, (4) Compensation and (5) Benefits. The first, as explained by the theory, refers to the activities carried out by the platforms to match supply and demand of work (Meijerink & Keegan, 2019). These activities refer to the ways in which the platform tries to ensure a sufficient number of workers and requesters, to increase their number so that they can cover the entire area of the city.

From the analysis of the interviews it emerged that the platforms are more focused, at least at the beginning, in involving the requesters so that they can then move on to the recruitment of workers. Normally, as soon as the platforms enter a new city (independently which it is and independently the country of origin) they try to rely on multinational companies (ex. Mc Donald's) to be able to start working immediately and at a later time, they contact the place requesters through their call centers to make appointments and try to close contracts (that during one year) through the negotiation of the percentage that the platform must keep from the order (it varies in relation to whether the requester works with more platforms or if he himself delivers the order). The activity most used for workers, in addition to various marketing and social advertising campaigns, is that relating to the "referred bonus" which consists in paying a sum of money to those workers who already work for the platform if they manage to bring new workers. Obviously, these cash incentives are not the same for all platforms and beyond that they are conditioned by the achievement of a minimum number of deliveries (which differ between platforms) in a given pre-established time. In terms of value creation and capture, until the entire area of interest reaches a sufficient number of workers and requesters, the platforms

will be forced to use this practice in order to arrive at a definitive alignment between the two. This is because the creation of value inevitably involves costs due to the creation of value which negatively affect the profits of the platforms (value capture). In large cities this process turns out to be very long and could create alternations between alignment and misalignment as, for example, some areas of the city have reached a sufficient number of workers and requesters and therefore the platform can proceed with value capture (eliminating the bonus and have no additional costs in contacting local requesters as once the platform acquires resonance the new requesters will get in touch with it), while in other areas it is essential to continue carrying out these activities. In smaller cities the phase of "definitive" value capture is faster, and consequently the platforms are first in a position to decrease the costs which will, in this case, positively impact on profits. The difference between large cities and small cities in the definitive achievement of the value capture phase could be due to the fact that in small cities many groups of friends may decide to work with the platform and create a sort of "monopoly effect" as they use the "Referred bonus" to enter the platform and by entering all together they are able to bring the platform in which they are registered, to a sufficient number of workers, enough to cover the entire area (what happens in L'Aquila). Once the platform reaches a sufficient number of workers, it will remove the "referred bonus", but the group, being made up of a large number of people, will monopolize the time slots made available by the platform as it will have semi-total coverage. Workers will reduce competition between them to book and earn more because distances in smaller cities are shorter than in larger ones, putting them in different areas will make deliveries more profitable. Simply, each worker will have to travel shorter distances because other areas are covered by friends. Therefore, smaller cities appear to be more advantageous to platforms for the following reasons: (1) cost reduction because the referred bonus takes less time and (2) faster service to customers as the distances between workers and customers are less; it implies an increase in profits (value capture). In addition to this, there is less competition from other platforms because in small cities like L'Aquila, for example, there is only Deliveroo to offer the service, while in larger cities like Rome there are Deliveroo, Uber eats and Glovo. Customers and requesters can rely on a single platform in smaller cities to satisfy their needs, the latter having no competitors will earn more.

It should be noted how the same HRM (Workforce planning) practice, applied in cities of different sizes, can be determined for the faster achievement of the value capture phase. This confirms the theory regarding the use of the practice by platforms, but at the same time amplifies it as it shows that it can produce different effects as regards value creation and capture, taking into account the decisive role of the time and space variables.

The recruitment practice refers to activities to attract workers and requesters to the platform (Meijerink & Keegan, 2019) and is closely linked to the previous one. The same activities mentioned in Workforce planning can be part of the recruitment process. To this must be added the payment of the kit used by the workers to carry out their work. The three platforms analyzed use different policies (the same between the countries in which they perform the service, in this case Italy and The Netherlands, except for Glovo only Italy) which range from the sale at zero cost of the essential kit (backpack, jacket and trousers for rain, and jacket) with the purchase of extra items (helmet and telephone support), upon payment (by credit card or withholding from one's initial earnings) of everything but with a part of the expense relating to the deposit which will be returned once the kit came back if you decide not to work for the platform anymore. Obviously, for platforms that opt for non-zero euro sales, this will positively impact on revenues and also on profits (alignment between the two phases), while in the opposite case, they will be costs and therefore negative. This activity does not change in relation to space but changes may occur over time, as happened for Deliveroo which initially gave the kit for free, while now it requires payment. Platforms may decide to sell the kit to the workers not only to make money, but also to increase their sense of accountability. More responsible workers increase the image of the platform in the eyes of customers and requesters who are therefore more willing to rely on the platform to satisfy their needs. You can think as a sort of "indirect selection", as those who are not willing to work with the platform just because the kit is not free, means that they are not very predisposed to breaking down obstacles and therefore not very motivated to face this type of work. In this case, the selection is identified with the term "indirect" because the online platforms have a very low, almost non-existent use of selection practice. A non-existent selection is opposed to the concept of improving the image of the platform in the eyes of customers and requesters (with consequent growth in platform profits), thus going against the theory. Initially it could be thought that it was due to the fact that the main objective of the platforms was to reach a sufficient number of workers and requesters in the shortest possible time, but in small cities like L'Aquila where this number is reached quickly, despite are in the value capture phase, nothing has changed in the process of selecting new workers.

As regards the practice of Performance Management, it refers to the activity of the platform which, through the setting of performance levels and the use of feedback from requesters and customers, evaluates the performance of workers (Meijerink & Keegan, 2019). This works directly on the creation of value as it serves the platforms to monitor whether that the customer experiences use value by the worker. A customer who expresses positive evaluations on the service offered implies that his number of transactions will increase in order to increase the

visibility of the platform and consequently the profits (indirect effect on value capture). This practice does not change as a function of time and space variables as the platform should always monitor workers to see if the service offered by the latter is satisfactory. Not surprisingly, the platform tends to discredit workers with bad evaluations, as its main purpose, like any company, is to make profits. To make profits, the image of the platform in the eyes of customers must always be the best and efficient workers guarantee this result. This HRM practice used by the platform turns out to be relevant not only for the creation of value, but also indirectly on value capture.

The last two practices refer to Compensation, that is, the activity of the platform that aims to reward workers in exchange for their work, and Benefits, that is the activity of the platform that aims to guarantee a constant supply of labor to requesters through the provision of secondary benefits to workers (Meijerink & Keegan, 2019). These are the two practices that most of all answer the research question of this thesis. This can be seen from the fact that in the initial phase in which the platforms begin to offer the service, they carry out activities that lead them to grant higher commissions to workers, greater incentives (except for the fixed ones which are constant) and some platforms also grant the guaranteed minimum. Over time and as the areas begin to be filled (both in terms of requesters and in terms of workers) commissions are reduced, incentives are eliminated, and, in some cases, the guaranteed minimums are reduced or even eliminated. It is precisely from this reduction in costs and increase in revenues that the transition from value creation and value capture takes place. A fundamental component is that relating to space as smaller cities will take less time to move from one phase to another than larger cities. Regarding Selection - the platform's activity of deciding which requesters and workers can and cannot join the online platform - and Training and Development practices - the platform's activities which aim to improve skills, knowledge and the skills of workers and activities - (Meijerink & Keegan, 2019), data analyzed are not useful for the process of value creation and capture as they are practiced at minimum levels by online platforms. This finding is quite unusual as, normally, the HRM practices used by companies follow a certain line that creates a sort of "efficient chain", while, as noted in this study, in the world of the Gig-Economy it is not the same. As a company establishes itself, it should begin to expect more to maintain the results achieved. In the world of online platforms, the only face-to-face contact with customers is with the workers, is it possible that after having established themselves, the platforms have not thought of handling an HRM practice such as that of selection or that of Training and Development? What we can think is that a practice such as selection can slow down the speed of the platforms in reaching a sufficient number of workers and eventually, if needed, it would

slow down the recruitment process in periods of greatest need for workers (as happened in The Netherlands under the period of Covid-19). There is the impression that the platforms, in this "New Economy" created by them, are convinced that the selection of workers happens by themselves, but not after the recruitment phase but after the workers start working with the platform and all this through the evaluations managed by the algorithms. If the ratings are low, the algorithm will reduce the ability to work on the worker to the point of "forcing" him to leave the platform. An HRM practice such as that of Training and Development, on the other hand, if carried out well, would include training / refresher courses for workers, which however is not possible for platforms as the workers are not employees but freelancers. An "apparent" detachment between platforms and workers must be maintained and to this is added the considerable economic savings on Training and Development by the platforms (positively impacting value capture). This is also possible because the type of work performed is not complex and at the same time quite static. In summary, the utility of this study was to fill a gap in the existing literature by adding content resulting from the union of two topics: that of value creation and capture, and that of HRM practices used by online platforms.

A final reflection to make is that of connecting to the works carried out by Simioli (2020) and Angelucci (2020) as it can be seen how the three works, despite being different but deriving from the same main topic (Gig-Economy), can lead to larger conclusions.

Simioli (2020) in his study explains how the job opportunities offered by online platforms to international university students can improve or hinder their life in work-study management. From the interviews and data extrapolated from the various websites examined, it is clear that most of the workers of the online platforms are students and it is the latter who seek them out. By offering work flexibility, the platforms manage to attract students who are thus able to find an easy balance between study and work. This is also relevant for the concepts of value creation and capture and the cities analyzed are an example of this (they are all university cities). Students need easy-to-earn money and are willing, through their communities, to word of mouth that in terms of HRM practices, amplifies the effect of the "referral bonus", speeds up the recruitment process of new workers who do to be able to get the platforms to a sufficient number of workers and thus pass from the value creation phase to that of value capture (make profits). All this can be easily connected to the work done by Angelucci (2020) relating to the exploration of different types of Multiple Job Holding through the Gig-Economy. From the various interviews it emerged that some interviewees, in addition to being international students, worked for one or more platforms at the same time, or had a main and secondary job (with a platform). Interviewee number 8, for example, was an international student who, in

addition to working for a platform, also works in a casino. The type of work offered together with the use of HRM practices by the platforms makes it so that new people are attracted by the flexibility (pull factor) that makes the process of recruiting new workers faster. This implies the faster achievement of the number of workers able to cover the entire area of the city where the platforms decide to offer the service. This process will imply speeding up the transition from value creation to value capture.

Limitations and directions for future research

As with any study, the results of this should be seen in the light of its limitations. First of all, it is the one relating to the subjects interviewed as there is no fundamental component which is that relating to the management of the platforms. This component would help the author of the thesis to improve triangulation by listening to the considerations of the subjects who decide and apply HRM practices in the platforms. Furthermore, with them, it would have been possible to analyze more technical arguments regarding HRM practices, which was not done with workers and requesters as they do not have technical knowledge of the topic.

The second limitation is that relating to the number of interviews carried out since a greater number for each sample city could have improved or worsened the results of the research. In addition to this, all the workers interviewed were students, while the requesters came only from cities where the service had just started. Interviewing non-student workers and requesters from cities where the service has been offered by the platforms for the longest time would have improved study.

Finally, there is the limit relating to the countries analyzed. In Italy and The Netherlands the platforms behave broadly in the same way, but there is no certainty that this discourse is applied in all the countries in which they operate. The resolution of this limit would increase the generalizability of the study.

As for the directions for future research, first of all is that related to the improvement of the limits found in this thesis, researchers in the HR field could collect data on platform managers and increase the number of interviews relating to workers and requesters, in such a way that they can further confirm the conclusions of this study.

Other research could focus on how value creation and capture react in global crisis situations such as Covid-19, how platforms' use of HRM practices can change and whether cultural and socio-economic differences between countries can influence these choices.

Another research topic could be related to why platforms do not use the same measures in all countries. An example is that relating to the guaranteed minimum wage used in Italy but not in

The Netherlands. Analyzing the reasons for these differences in detail could help to understand how to extend these possibilities in all countries without making distinctions and always considering to protect workers' rights as much as possible. This could also be important to reduce the effects of platforms' lowering of various promotions / incentives when they enter the value capture phase.

Finally, a further branch of research could develop on the small "monopoly effects" created by the groups of workers in the cities where the platforms offer the services. For example, in the city of L'Aquila, 40% of workers refer to a group of friends who have extra-working relationships. They manage to give availability on all the slots that Deliveroo makes available, taking almost all orders and sometimes replacing each other (always having good statistics). Investigating whether similar situations may arise in other cities and studying this "monopoly effect" could be interesting.

CONCLUSION

None research in literature has been devoted to the analysis of the combination of HRM practices used by Online labor Platform firms and value creation and capture concepts. The goal of the thesis was this.

Specifically, the research focused on which practices allow value creation and capture and how they change over time and space. In the analysis, in addition to confirming the existing literature on the use of HRM practices by Online labor Platform firms, the author identifies two possible scenarios: the first, in which HRM practices favor the alignment between value creation phase and that of value capture, and the second, where a misalignment occurs.

Alignment is the ability of HRM practices used for value creation to build the basis for value capture, so Online labor Platform firms generate profits. In the misalignment Online labor Platform firms have a reduction in profits. The practices that allow value creation and capture are: Workforce Planning, Recruitment, Performance Management, Compensation and Benefits. Time and space variables play an important role in the two phases. In fact, in large cities, the transition from value creation phase to value capture seems to be slower and, in addition, alternative scenarios of alignment and misalignment between the two phases may occur until Online labor Platform firms can cover the whole area. Alignment is faster in small cities.

Other practices analyzed in the thesis were Selection and Training and Development, but they seem to be irrelevant for value creation and capture.

Based on the findings of this thesis, the author has proposed indications for future research. In doing so, he hopes that future research will continue to explore how HRM practices are used by Online Platform firms for value creation and capture. Through this, the limits found in this thesis can be reduced and in addition new issues related to the topic can be explored.

REFERENCES

Aloisi, A. (2016), "Commoditized workers: case study research on labor law issues arising from a set of on-demand/gig economy platforms", Comparative Labor Law & Policy Journal, Vol. 37 No. 3, pp. 653-690.

Angelucci, S. (2020). Exploring different types of Multiple Job Holding through the Gig Economy: their Push and Pull factors. In progress. Master Thesis. University of Twente.

Black, J. A. and K. B. Boal (1994). 'Strategic Resources: Traits, Configurations and Paths to Sustainable Competitive Advantage', Strategic Management Journal, 15, pp. 131–148.

Bowman, C., & Ambrosini, V. 2000. Value creation versus value capture: Towards a coherent definition of value in strategy. British Journal of Management, 11: 1–15.

Chen, L., Mislove, A. and Wilson, C. (2015), "Peeking beneath the hood of Uber", Proceedings of the 2015 Internet Measurement Conference, ACM, Tokyo, October 28-30.

Duggan, J., Sherman, U., Carbery, R., & Mcdonnell, A. (2019). App-Work, Algorithmic Management & HRM in the Emerging Gig Economy: A Research Agenda. Academy of Management Proceedings, 2019(1), 15773. doi: 10.5465/ambpp.2019.15773abstract

Delery, J. E., & Doty, D. H. 1996. Modes of theorizing in stra- tegic human resource management: Tests of universal- istic, contingency, and configurational performance pre- dictions. Academy of Management Journal, 39: 802–835.

Eurofound (2018). Automation, Digitalisation and Platforms: Implications for Work and Employment, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg. Available: https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_publication/field_ef_document/ef1800 2en.pdf.

Gawer, A. and Cusumano, M.A. (2002), Platform Leadership: How Intel, Microsoft, and Cisco Drive Industry Innovation, Harvard Business School Press, Boston, MA.

Guthrie, J. P. 2001. High-involvement work practices, turnover, and productivity: Evidence from New Zealand. Academy of Management Journal, 44: 180–190.

Harris, B. (2017). Uber, Lyft, and Regulating the Sharing Economy. Seattle University Law Review, 41(1), 269–285. Available: http://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/sealr41&i=277.

Kuhn, K.M. and Maleki, A. (2017), "Micro-entrepreneurs, dependent contractors, and instaserfs: understanding online labor platform workforces", The Academy of Management Perspectives, Vol. 31 No. 3, pp. 183-200.

Lee, M.K., Kusbit, D., Metsky, E. & Dabbish, L. (2015). Working with Machines: The Impact of Algorithmic and Data-Driven Management on Human Workers. Association for Computing

Machinery: Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems, 1603–1612. DOI: 10.1145/2702123.2702548.

Lepak, D. P., Smith, K. G., & Taylor, M. S. (2007). Value Creation and Value Capture: A Multilevel Perspective. Academy of Management Review, 32(1), 180–194. doi: 10.5465/amr.2007.23464011

Lieman, R. (2018), Uber Voor Alles, Business Contact, Amsterdam

Mann, G. & O'Neil, C. (2016). Hiring Algorithms Are Not Neutral. Harvard Business Review. Available: https://hbr.org/2016/12/hiring-algorithms-are-not-neutral.

Meijerink, J., & Keegan, A. (2019). Conceptualizing human resource management in the gig economy. Journal of Managerial Psychology, 34(4), 214–232. doi: 10.1108/jmp-07-2018-0277

Meijerink, J.G., Keegan, A.E. & Bondarouk, T.V. (2019). HRM without employment in the gig economy: how online platform firms management institutional complexity. Paper presented during the 6th International Workshop on the Sharing Economy, Utrecht University, June 2019.

Sandberg, J. 2005. How do we justify knowledge produced within interpretive approaches? Organizational research methods, 8(1): 41-68.

Simioli M., (2020). "How International Students can manage studies and work together: Under which conditions online labour platforms may improve or hinder students' life". In progress. Master Thesis. University of Twente

Sirmon, D. G., Hitt, M. A., & Ireland, R. D. 2007. Managing firm resources in dynamic environments to create value: Looking inside the black box. Academy of Management Review, 32: 273–292.

Stanford, J. (2017), "The resurgence of gig work: historical and theoretical perspectives", The Economic and Labour Relations Review, Vol. 28 No. 3, pp. 382-401.

Strauss, A. L., & Corbin, J. M. (1998). Basics of qualitative research: techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Whetten, D.A. (1989). What constitutes a theoretical contribution? Academy of Management Review, 14, (4), 490-495.

Wright, P. M., & McMahan, G. C. 1992. Theoretical perspec- tives for strategic human resource management. Journal of Management, 18: 295–320.

Youndt, M. A., Snell, S. A., Dean, J. W., Jr., & Lepak, D. P. 1996. Human resource management, manufacturing strategy, and establishment performance. Academy of Management Journal, 39: 836 – 866.

APPENDIX 1 – Operationalization Table

Variable	Definition	Interview Questions
Value creation – Use Value	*Perceived benefit of a service*	- In which view, what benefits does the platform offer to you as a worker/requester? Did this change over time? - Do you think these advantages last over time? - How does the platform firm benefit from you as a worker/requester? Has this changed over time? - How do requesters benefit from you as a worker? Has this changed over time? - Do requesters, workers and the platform all equally benefit? Has this changed over time?
Value creation – Exchange Value	*Amount of money paid for a service to a worker or the platform*	- What price do you get – as a worker – for serving the requester? Has this changed over time? Is this price always the same? Why/why not? - Are you satisfied with this? Why?

Value Capture	*The realization of exchange value (profits) by economic actors*	- How does the platform seek to increase its revenues and profits? Did this change over time? - Do you know how platforms make their profits? - Do you think that in their initial phase the platforms earn less than in a second period? If so, how? - How do workers and requesters react to this difference? - How much does the platform perceive for the service it offers you?
HRM practices – Workforce Planning	*Reflect the activities to match supply and demand for labor*	- Which activities does the platform do to make sure that there are sufficient numbers of workers and requesters on the platform? - Which activities does the platform do to increase both the number of workers and requesters on the platform? - Have these activities changed over time? - Have you noticed some specific marketing campaigns that get you closer to the platform? Which ones? - Did you notice the platform more interested in engaging requesters or workers?

HRM practices – Recruitment	*The activity by the platform to attract workers and requesters to the platform*	- In what way did you get to learn about the online platform XXX - In what does platform XXX attract new workers and requesters to the platform? - Have these activities changed over time?
HRM practices – Selection	*The activity by the platform to decide which requesters and workers can and cannot join the online platform*	- Did you have to meet several criteria in order to join the platform? If so, which? Has this changed over time? - How strict is the platform in admitting workers/requesters to its platform? Can you give examples? Has this changed over time? - If any, what type of information did you have to share before you could start working on the platform? - Which actions did you have to perform before being able to start working on the platform?
HRM practices – Training and Development	*The activity by the platform with aims to improve workers and requesters abilities, knowledge and skills*	- In what ways does the platform supports workers/requesters in improving their knowledge, skills and/or abilities? - Has this changed over time? - Does the platform offer training opportunities for workers / requesters? Which one?

		• Do these opportunities change over time?
		• Are they constantly supplied or only before to start?
HRM practices – Performance Management	*The activity by the platform that through the setting of performance levels and using requester and client feedback, it rates workers performance*	• In what way is your performance as a worker evaluated? Did this change over time?
		• Which criteria are used to evaluate your performance? - Did these criteria change over time?
		• Who evaluates your performance?
		• How can clients ratings impact your work? Positively or Negatively? Why?
		• Are these ratings more influential when the platform starts offering the service or are they always the same?
HRM practices – Compensation	*The activity by the platform which aims to reward the workers in return for their work*	• In what way are you rewarded for your work on the platform? Did this change over time?
		• What do you earn by working on the platform?
		• Are you satisfied with your earnings?
		• Do you think that your earnings have increased or decreased over time?
		• Has your remuneration changed over time? If so, how?

		- Do workers that have been working on the platform for a longer time than you, earn more or less than you do? - Do earnings differ per order? If so, how/why? - Have you noticed differences in earnings over time? - Does your business earn more through the use of this service?
HRM practices – Benefits	*The activity by the platform which aims to ensure a steady supply of labor to requesters by asking to them to provide workers with secondary benefits (ex. Coupons and discounts)*	- What are side-benefits to working for the platform? Did this change over time? - Do you receive any bonus or other types of incentives? If so, which? Did this change over time? - Do these differ across orders? (For requesters) Does the platform ask you to offer coupons or discounts for workers? Why?

APPENDIX 2 – Coding Process - Variable Explanation

OPEN CODING (ONE EXAMPLE)	AXIAL CODING (CODES)	MEANING	SELECTION CODING (THEMES)
Relationship with people and in the case of emergency situations such as Covid, information on hygiene rules also useful for the private and non-working sphere	USE VALUE	*Perceived benefit of a service*	VALUE CREATION
with deliveroo in Rome I earned 10 euros per hour while with Uber in Enschede it is significantly less than 5 euros per hour	EXCHANGE VALUE	*Amount of money paid for a service to a worker or the platform*	
They definitely take a percentage from the pizzerias / restaurants / mc donald's etc for the service they allow them to offer	PROFITS	*The realization of exchange value (profits) by economic actors*	VALUE CAPTURE
To increase the number of riders, all marketing techniques, including all social networks. And the second one is "bring a friend" in which it gives you 50 euros for each person who starts to be a rider by entering your code when registering on the platform. with this system, I have brought my friends who are now working for deliveroo in L'Aquila	WORKFORCE PLANNING	*Reflect the activities to match supply and demand for labor*	HRM PRACTICES
Before starting to use the platform in working terms, I was a customer, so driven by curiosity I found this platform and after that, I	RECRUITMENT	*The activity by the platform to attract workers and requesters to the platform*	

was contacted by their call center			
The test is really simple, there are those who do it without even watching the video lessons. The minimum score is 80% of the correct answers but everyone says it is very easy	SELECTION	*The activity by the platform to decide which requesters and workers can and cannot join the online platform*	
At the level of tutorials and various things I have never noticed	TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT	*The activity by the platform with aims to improve workers and requesters abilities, knowledge and skills*	
So what we see is that only your presence in orders is assessed and the fact of being able to participate in the sessions that you booked in time	PERFORMANCE MANAGEMNT	*The activity by the platform that through the setting of performance levels and using requester and client feedback, it rates workers performance*	
At the beginning, as soon as the service started, in addition to having more work available, there was a different management of the minimum guaranteed by the platform. Before, they were 7.50 Euros higher than the 6 Euros now	COMPENSATION	*The activity by the platform which aims to reward the workers in return for their work.*	
For example one time happened that Uber proposed me to do a deliver from the center to a new zone of Enschede, I never did other order like that, but they paid me 5 Euro extra for this deliver	BENEFITS	*The activity by the platform which aims to ensure a steady supply of labor to requesters by asking to them to provide workers with secondary benefits (ex. Coupons and discounts)*	