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**NOTES**

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**FINAL GRADE**

- Intermediate examination
- Research paper
- Laboratory (Group presentations and Contribution to class discussions)

**THE STARTUP ECONOMY : is the myth over?**

Startup economy is the place where the innovation is proud within the digital society. however, some negative effects are emerging, so the Smith is over or not?

How they organized the protest, which kind of informations the protester are sharing, how they produced their digital contents. How they communicate with their political leader Trump? (He uses Twitter)--> social media have a central role or not?

The digital platform have created a new digital public space where everyone can share political or not informations, every part of our life can be digitalized.

«Michelle Obama calls on Silicon Valley to permanently ban Trump..»--> platforms and social media are not free, we can not share any type of informations--> last month Facebook started to ban all pages related to conspiracy movements.

Who define the rules, which information we can share and which need to be banned?

Let's think to the past revolutions such as the Arabic spring--> social media as a way to change the world, as a tool to give voice to people, instead of using guns in the street people started to use social media and organize their protest -->social media as positive tools to express ourself. Social media can change our world.

*Startup Weekend*--> A global format where younger entrepreneurs can share their ideas, and google considering the best ideas, can provide startup and different economies. Even the offices could become a place where to share informations and a way to support the creativity and innovation of younger. Offices where you can combine the leisure and the work.

Sharing economy--> AirBnb, Uber or Foodora, an opportunity to create a more sustainable environmental system.

Even the political dimension has been affected by the digital technology: let's think about Obama, win the elections by using in a really smart way Facebook, his team was performing an effective email marketing campaign.

There was a positive vision of digital technology, this comes from

**THE CALIFORINIAN IDEOLOGY**

Based on hippie anarchism, economic liberalism, technology determinism. It emerged in California during the 60s, from two different perspectives:

1. Left side: the Hippie beloved that digital technology could create a democratic world, were everyone could share information.
2. The digital technology can help people, can support an new economic growth for Americans

At some point , after ten years, some negative effects arrived : conflict between opportunity to change world but also opportunity to make profit.--> for example, *Cambridge Analytica* and how digital platforms and social media can control our data, the data we shared and we produce, Amazon and its heavy impact on the environment, the exploit of workers in the sharing economy.

**Which kind of model of innovation the startup economy produced?**

People who work there, the **startupper**, defined in many ways. They are de-spatialised workforce. They want to make profit but also work for very cool companies, in the cool environment.

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Which are the conditions that allows them to emerge? Two main changes that allows these workforces to emerge:

- The **general development of skills**: you can become a photographer by simply watching tutorials. You can acquire this skills even if these skills are not related with the digital context
- The **lowering of the capital requirements**: nowadays, you don't need hundred euros to create your start-up

**The Start-upper culture** is based on specific elements:

- Personal self-realization: even students after their degree, decide to become startupper because they want to realize their personal attitude. Not just related to what kind of job you want to do, but related with the kids of person you are or you want to be maybe.
- They want do something meaningful: they want to change the world, they want to have a good impact in the society. How you can combine the two different driving forces? Making profit vs. changing the world.
- Life as a startup: even life can be seen as a startup, many book suggest you to use the same startup tools to create your life.

**The economy of startup**, specific narratives:

1. **The Lean method**--> to think about the product. The have to be focused on the core of the product leaving outside the external structure. Just be focused on their work, you have to focus not he really important part of your life. 8this comes from the happy side of
2. The product will conquer all the markets
3. Failing is a requirement thing for start upper. Learn from mistakes. Failing is not bad. *Fuckup night* in Prague, where they have presented their failure.
4. Entrepreneurs are everywhere: Everyone cn be a good entrepreneur, we have simply to discover the good entrepreneur who is inside of us.
5. You don't have to lose time in compete with others, but you have to create your own organization, your monopoly

**What is a STARTUP?** Different definitions:

- Human institutions designed to create a new product or service under conditions of extreme uncertainty
- Company designed to grow fast
- Is a state of mind--> it is not just adventure, is a way to consider your life, to see the life, or create your future

The startup paradigm emerged in Silicon Valley. The combination of innovation and the financial capitalism accumulation, created the conditions for the startup paradigm economy.

**HOW TO CREATE YOUR STARTUP?**

- **which kind of problem you are solving?** Think to a problem and a solution to this problem. When you have the solution you have the business idea
  - Find other members for your team
  - Develop the product, to see if it works
  - But you need money: first one comes form people next to you: family and friend investment
  - Create a prototype, present your business idea to investors. If they agree on your idea, they invest in your startup--> SEED ROUND, which is the first round of investment.
  - Venture are interested dint he shares of the company. When investors give money, in the return they see a certain percentage of share. They are interested not in the selling in the market, but in the increasing of the financial value of the startup. How we can increase the financial value of our startup?
- > If you have a good marketing campaign, people started to talk about your startup. Probably your startup will be successful.

**HOW WE CAN ASK MONEY?**

- **the pitch**: a small presentation of my business, the innovative side, why it could be a good investment. It comes from the practices called the *Pitch elevator*. The first start upper of Silicon

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Valley, were presenting their idea in an elevator, so they have a limited time, like 5 minute even left, to pass from first floor to second floor.

- How it is possible the value of a startup? There are different methods and metrics to measure it. In general there is not a really rationality aspect among the methods.

The aim of the investors and even the ones of startupper, is the IPO acquisition, increasing the value. The startup are not considered as a classic field that produce a product or service, but they can be considered as financial artifacts. They work in the financial context, which operate in the regime of IPO.

Increasing the value of the company is the main aim, and the main way throughout they can make money. Start-upper aim is to create something new, and be acquired by big companies. Startup is substituting the CV, the curriculum vitae-->how to get a job

«No matter if we do not make profit, what matter is our energy, our spirituality» Adam Neuman, co-funder WeWork.

### **How this irrational system faced the Covid pandemic?**

The pandemic helped the startup economy because the social configuration of the society changed. The lockdown created different types of society: smart working, DAD. This configuration is not new--> the shut-in economy: many people were already locked in their home not for Covid reason, but simply they were already liking this life-style. The platform of sharing economy can work well with this specific configuration, because lockdown allowed digital platforms to increase their profit, not in the first phase but when people started to use this platforms.

Even if this is the real configuration it seems an utopian representation. During the lockdown, people forced to stay home, work at home, study at home. For that people life has changed but for many not so much changed. Some of them started to use digital platform to bring food at home.

New polarized extremes: People inside the new social configuration and people outside the new social configuration.

Jack Dorsey, CEO Twitter: «if workers want to continue to stay home, they can do it for ever». Big companies are sustaining this new social configuration.

At the beginning many platforms loose a lot fo money during the first phase, because they were not prepared to face the pandemic. Such as Amazon which loose a lot of money in the fish phase. Also Uber lost a lot of money.

### **How Uber drivers survived?**

#### **SOME CONCLUSIONS:**

- The start upper investors are interested in the financial value, they don't look at the innovative product. Investors try to support the startup which propose products similar to the successful big companies
- Calculating the potential future scenarios: investors have in mind different future scenarios and if your product match with one of the scenarios, investors can give money
- Thee strategy try to normalize the innovativeness of your startup

Now the production of innovation is changing. Before it was more easy, to obtain money and create your startup economy.

It's quite obvious that digital platform steal data from our lives, exploitation of stable workers paying them really few and pushing them to run in the street and so on--> there is a crisis between the ethic side and the idea of making profit. However it's not so easy to respect driver's rights. The owner of these digital platforms are trying to imagine a new system.

15/01/2021

### **Digital nomads**

Research in Thailand about digital nomads.

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You can work as a free lance, you can eat healthy food, play different sports, explore cultures, you can have also a kind of health lifestyle not only reverend to food, such as doing yoga during working time.

Starting from this everyone would like to be a digital nomad, but is not so easy to become.

Was used by two authors, who wrote a manifesto about changes created by internet and the possibility of knowledge working to work in different places around the world. At that time computer allowed people to work and travel at the same time.

Digital nomad is a sub population of nomadic workers who have distinct motivations. They are typically white, come from western countries and they work in the digital economy .

Why people want to become a digital nomads? Three main motivations:

1- **freedom**--> they want to except from the coercive structures of the contemporary workplace, from he office routine, they want to experience this sense of freedom, but they consider also the work as a way to express their attitude, so not only being free, but also they want to express their attitude toward work. They exist three kind of freedom

- Professional freedom
- Spatial freedom
- Personal freedom
- These three kind of freedom (holistic freedom) allow to combine the possibility to travel and the opportunity where and when to work, that's why digital nomadism is so attractive.

2- **blurred boundaries between work and leisure**--> digital nomad are different from startappers, they want to become rich entrepreneur, while here they want to combine the work and the leisure activity, they prefer toward less but enjoy the life. They do not evaluate work just in monetary words, but in term of coolness (exploring exotic forests for example, is something they consider when choosing their work)

3- the third key element is linked to the **independent nature of digital work**, which enables them to accomplish work tasks while they visit different countries. They can be whoever they want.

In academia digital nomads are identified with different labels, the first studies were divide into two **unconnected stands of researchers**: the first focused on the individual traveler and the second one focused on digital nomadism and labor mobility.

Four key elements that constitutes digital norms lifestyle:

1. **Digital devices**; use of digital devices
2. **Gig work** : they offer their services through digital platform
3. **Nomadic work**
4. **Adventure and global travel**

Where I want to go, which are the best places to be a digital nomad? There is a web site where you can go and explore which are the best places for digital nomadism, most popular cities destination. For each of the place you have different kind of metrics and scores related to each of them. According to these metrics digital nomads decide their destinations.

### RESEARCH QUESTION (Chiang Mai)

Three main research questions:

- how they became DN,
- in their online business are economic sustainable,
- how the digital nomad communities support their members

### METHODOLOGY

- One month of **participant observation**
- **18 semi-structured interviews** with digital nomads, bio hackers, covering manager, digital coaches
- How he had the access? --> how can get in touch with digital nomads? Search for Facebook groups or events and he started to chat with communities managers and members of groups.

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- Perceived as a peer and member of the global digital community, was what allowed to enter in contact with them
- The strategy adopted was similar or digital nomad's strategy.
- Chiang Mai is a **digital nomad hotspot**--> leisure considerations, cost of living, internet and WiFi. They want a healthy lifestyle, so not being in a touristic place but in a safe place.

### CONTEX

- specific are where they spend most of their time, as a physical bubble that provides a sense of protection and distinction, this is the **Nimman Area**, an area with many digital nomad spots.

### MINDSET

- first question posed to digital nomads: Why you are in Chiang Mai? And why you decide to travel in Chiang Mai? The majority of them arrived in Chiang Mai without being completely informed and conscious.
- They go there because you can install your operating system, called **mindset** is a vision of life--> knowledge worked arrived for the first time there, not because Chiang mai offers them job opportunities but the opportunity to be socialized to the digital nomad lifestyle
- Mindset allows you to combine your work activity but also to unlock your spiritual energy.
- No specific skills, no related to something material, but something inside the individual.

Typically digital nomadism is characterized by work activities and leisure activities. However you have also to travel, traveling considered as leisure activity. These activities are compulsory if you want to be a digital nomads. You have to be a constant traveller, you are forced to enjoy this kind of leisure activities.

Digital nomads suffer a sense of aloneness, they travel a lot, they have no time to have strong friendship bonds. They suffer a social disconnection, the fact that they don't find a stable partner. This is one of the element of dark side.

### DO-IT YOURSELF BIOGRAPHIES

--> these actives are compulsory but you can choose among different types of activities. Two groups of activities:

1. Mindfulness: Doing meditation or yoga, events dedicated to how to broke toxic relationship
2. Ethic dimension: digital nomads discuss a lot

When you choose you personalize your lifestyle, like when you choose your apps in your smartphone.

### CAPITALIZING THE MINDSET

You can find a lot of tutorial about how to become a digital nomad. But they sell also the mindset: first element is about how to see the life as a digital nomad, how to acquire the mindset, s how to combine work and leisure. They see though courses the mindset, that's why they capitalized their mindset.

### Main conflicts

The first one: identity play process which can maybe produces a sense of frustration (for example many digital nomad which activities were not sustainable, and they neither have money to come to their old life)

The second one is the conflict related to the fact that working form a beach how much you can concentrate? --> maybe this life can be too much comfortable, you ned to have a certain level of **self-discipline**. His can produce even a sense of frustration, they inspire to enjoy the life but at the same time they have to work.

Another element of conflict is related with the constant traveling, and the nihilist distance form local culture, they don't want to be involved in the local culture. In order to fell always the sense of discovering you have to keep distance.

### CONCLUSIONS

- **Chiang Mai** as a place to be socialized to the digital nomad lifestyle but also to experience
- **Leisure activities** allow communities to the recognize the other members of digital nomad communities

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- The sense of **burn-out**: they have to combine leisure activity with work

22/01/2021

## **China Social Credit Systems**

**GUEST: Chuncheng Liu**

### **Two backgrounds:**

1. State and technology: how important are data, informations for the state to manage population and economy.
2. Trust in society: essential component to sustain the economy and the market in general.

In China there are several social credit systems: Massive aggregation of different kind of services.

- The simplest one is the financial credit system: is a governmental credit report system. It contains basic financial informations of a person (credit card informations). Individual can check their reports freely
- Commercial consumer credit system
- Blacklist systems: based on different government agencies--> people who have to pay their debts. Very high inclusion criteria.
- Municipal credit system. Having a bad score, doesn't affect entirely social life.

China is a very centralized country.

The system shift its logics from Financial--> customers--> policy. Trying to anticipate and manage different aspects of our life to lower the uncertainty of our life.

Public punishment: Providing the list of "bad people" is related to a sense of shame, but also a sense of honor.

### **ARTICLE : What do platform do? Understanding the Gig Economy**

Platforms are seen as **entrepreneurial incubators, digital cages, accelerants of precocity and chameleons adapting to their environment.**

**Alternative image of platform: permissive potentiates** that externalize responsibility and control over economic transactions while still exercising concentrated power.

--> distinct type of governance mechanism and a distinctive economic activity.

### **Platform revolution**

- Their emergence emerged with the Great Recession, who facilitated the companies's expansion by creating a ready pool of workers, who could be matched with value-seeking consumers.
- The platform economy has grown in two ways: 1. Unfold in the traditional economy (personal computer invention, spread of the internet). 2. Began outside the traditional economy, companies which have born completely digital, they use the internet to usurp existing market or Create another one (e-commerce)

### **Five types of works:**

1. **Architects and technologist** of the platform (highly skilled employees). They maintain the digital infrastructure of the platform
2. **Cloud-based consultant** or freelancers who professional services via platform. They are users rather than creators.
3. Gig workers whose services are engaged via platform and performed offline (food delivery)
4. **Microtasking**, workers engaged on Amazon Mechanical Turk. They undertake human intelligence tasks that computers cannot perform. Less training and experiment

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5. Content producers or **influencers** who perform the aspirational labor.

#### 4 IMAGES OF PLATFORM WORK

##### a. Incubators of Entrepreneurialism

The debate around labor platforms has intensified with the emergence of the sharing economy in 2008-2009.

- Sharing economy--> peer-to-peer structures. Capability to reduce transaction costs and foster trust.
- Platform offer advantages over the traditional corporate model--> reducing the need for bureaucratic intermediaries, transaction costs and eliminate barriers. They foster trust among potential transactors

##### b. The digital cage

What happens when the boss is an algorithm?

Surveillance by algorithms, which monitor workers, manage them. Machines are able to control the rhythms and methods of human labour

Platform reduce the worker's capability to resist and challenge the rules by generating a wealth of data about their internal operations, by using normative mechanism in the form of games or symbolic rewards, by encompassing a wider array of workers, they heighten competitive relations.

However, workers can develop forms of resistance against the platform's reputational metrics, forming online alliances.

##### c. Accelerants of Precarity

- This image conceptualize the digital revolution as a continuation of structural trends that have long been underway, in particular to the decline of the standard work arrangement.
- Platform represent a manifestation of. Much broader trend that has enabled firms to externalize risks they had previously been completed to shoulder.
- Platform workers are forced to assume forms of risks and level of Fisks that were previously shouldered by employers and the state.
- Workers are subject to deactivation, evaluation by consumers rate

##### d. Institutional Chameleons

- platform represent a form of work organization whose meaning, nature, and impact are not a function of platforms as such but instead reflect the institutional landscape that surrounds them.

##### e. Permissive Potentates

- platforms represent a new kind of economy activity characterized by high levels of instability.
- Platforms represent a new type of governance mechanism. They exercise power over economic transactions by delegating control among the participants (employers, workers and customers)
- Control is radically distributed while power remains centralized.
- Four distinct features:
  1. Adoption of a business model in which firms have profits through digital intermediation
  2. Transformation of the employment relationship: they offer an open employment relation that relaxes personnel selection criteria and allows workers considerable autonomy
  3. Platform supervisory affordances--> workers must negotiate their performance with customers--> platforms expose workers to an evaluative infrastructure. Platforms allow workers to choose when and for how long they work.
  4. Spatial organization of work: deploying labor effectively requires that workers be spatially dispersed (riders must be positioned in close proximity to potential customers)

**Four main issue to face:**

- **the systemic relation between conventional and platform economies**
- **Algorithmic design**
- **The prospect for collective action**
- **Alternatives approaches to improve labor conditions**

## CONCLUSIONS

1. Platform as super exploitation surveillance
2. States will be successful in establishing meaningful regulation of platforms and workers
3. Social media and labor will grow more intertwined heightening the platform instability
4. platform can be governed and even owned by their users

29/01/21

## GROUP PRESENTATION

- **Introduction** statistic, official reports, statistics
- **Academic literature** theoretical perspective, Google Scholar. How the other scholars define your topic?
- **Research question** what aspect you explore and why it is relevant? --> combine the topic with the post-pandemic society, how Corona affected the topic
- **The case study**
- **Results** (what you discovered)
- **Conclusion** (critical remarks, discussion on what we found out.

### The gig economy

Is not a new phenomena, it emerged 50 years ago more or less.

It emerged in the context of knowledge economy, the production of digital content in the center of innovation and economic success. In order to share information and produce innovation, the two main elements are: space

Big corporations create different teams across the globe outside and inside the corporation, in order to foster the innovativeness of the corporation and this also combine with the new policies of NeoLiberalism, a new type of economy but also of workforce, co-working spaces for example. Knowledge economy is the context in which the gig economy emerged. But the gig economy is not just sharing information, co-working is just a dimension of it.

- Does Gig economy a continuous or acceleration of ongoing trends such as prevarication and outsourcing?
- Are platforms organizing a new type of algorithmically controlled labor process? --> how platforms work. People act directly with an algorithm, not with a boss (completely different from a capitalistic society)
- Precisely how is the platform distinct form the conventional firm in its labor management

Gig economy is labeled in different ways: for example, trust economy, highlights the fact that you don't need to trust the people that is providing the service, you ave just to seen starts number of other. Each of this late identifies different aspects of gig economy--> **reputational economy**, based on meritocratic system, widespread assessment and public information. Wa have the possibility to measure reputation. Before it was just asking topple around us. Now instead, we can visualize, according to other evaluation fo people we don't know, the reputation of specific economic actors.

Is based on a consumer who needs a service and someone on the other side can offer it to him. Two elements between them: the trust, and the efficiency.

**Sharing economy**--> An economic model based in sharing underutilized assets from spaces to skills to stuff for monitor or non-monetary benefits.

**Collaborative economy** --> an economy built on distributed networks of connected individuals and communities as opposed to centralized institutions, transforming how we can produce.

**TWO MAIN DIMENSIONS OF THE GIG ECONOMY:**

1. **Market orientation:** we can divide in non profit oriented, and profit oriented organizations (profit and peer-to-Peer organization, they make profit on the transaction they allow)
2. **Organization:** which could be peer-to- Peer or Business-to Peer.

**On-demand economy (Uber economy)**

The on-demand economy perform through digital infrastructures. Two main characteristics: just in time workforce, cheaper economy. The platform is the digital intermediary, which allow two people to match. The platform is considered as a digital broker. The broker can be even physical as in the case of the prostitution economy in some European countries.

**On-demand economy--> illegal recruitment on food economy**

Workers, mostly illegal migrants that need to work and they offer their body to work in this economy and there is a n intermediary which allows to match the farm which need workers and the illegal migrant who is offering his work.

What is different here among these three types of on-demand economy, is the type of broker. Now the broker is digital, in other economies the broker could be human or physical.

There is an independent work, it is rapidly evolving as digital platforms create large-scale, efficient market place that facilitate direct and even realtime connections between customers who need a service performed and the workers willing to provide that service.

**Venture labour**

All the risks are on the shoulder of the worker, but in a way these risk are re-framed. Risk is not something to avoid, because it allows workers to make profit.

We think that working in a gig economy is a free choice, but--> the young people in Italy are the poorer one.

**DISCUSSION: Why do we share?**

We need to distinguish between platform oriented to business activity vs. Social media  
Gig economy is a new welfare state--> Platforms allow to people to be recognized as workers.  
Now we have not good welfare state or policies that support peel who lose their job, but in some ways they have to survive.

5/02/2021

**GUEST: Luca Recano, activist of social movements**

On the future of Digital Activism: how social media had firstly powered social movements and then been captured by the establishment and what to do now?

**Digital activism**

- Massive social movements and media activism
- Social media and revolts
- The appropriation of digital media culture
- The issues of digital democracy
- Democratic experiences

A famous book title: *The concept of a networked public sphere*, Zeynep Tufekci. The author is a Turkish anthropologist and sociologist of media.

- during the 18 and 19 centuries, new spheres of socialization were born. The innovative features includes public spaces such as parks, traditional mass media and new digital media
- Digital networked public sphere: how digital technologies reconfigure the public sphere
- Co- evolution of both media tools use and social movements. (No global and No war movements between 1999 and 2004 with the spread of independent media centers).

### **Indymedia**

At the end of 90s media activism became one of the main frameworks of social movements themselves. It arrived in Italy in 2000. In 2001 it had an important role of documenting and narrating about police violences and political messages.

2008-2011 a **turning point**, where we felt a rapid shift from the independent media center to the corporate social media--> individual and collective use of these tools. Among the trends there were:

- Crisis of independent media center
- The fast rise of social media platforms as communication and organization tools
- A huge debate about the ration fo cause between social media and social movements and protests. Many of them were considered social media natives.

### **Meaning-full characteristics of social natives protests:**

- Increasing separation between hackers and political collective
- Increasing confusion of opportunities and dangers
- Social media as a territory of conflict: participation, narratives, virality, mapping

Some social movements have been culturally appropriated to express political facts and strategies.