The Incidence of Platform Work in Germany

Analysis of a survey commissioned by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

Prof. Dr. Holger Bonin
IZA & University of Kassel

BMAS-OECD-ISSA Workshop on the Future of Social Protection
Berlin, June 12 2017
The Issue

The White Paper Work 4.0 of the federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs pointed out that reliable statistics on the incidence of various types of platform work in Germany are yet missing.

Existing (online) surveys tend to suffer from self-selection problems and therefore rather overestimate the phenomenon.

The number of registered platform users can be misleading, as they may be inactive.
The Survey

Conducted on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (BMAS)

Part of an omnibus telephone survey by Kantar Emnid, which is still ongoing to reach 10.000 interviews. Results today are based on 8.452 interviews.

Population aged 18 or older.

Survey period April 12 to June 20, 2017.
Incidence of Paid Work Assignments Obtained via Platforms or Apps

Are you currently doing this kind of work? 3.1

If you are not doing it now, have you done so in the past? 2.9

Is anybody else in your household doing this kind of work now? 2.4

Data Source: BMAS Survey on new types of work.

Be careful, these are probably still overestimates.
Further observations:

Incidence is systematically growing in level of education

Only small gender differences

High incidence (6%) among pupils

Data Source: BMAS Survey on new types of work.
Types of Paid Work Assignments Obtained via Platforms or Apps

Data Source: BMAS Survey on new types of work.
Platform Work and Crowdworking as Sources of Earnings

Data Source: BMAS Survey on new types of work.

Only workers with periodical earnings
Conclusions

In Germany, platform work and crowdworking, at present, are of only minor importance.

They may grow in the future, especially due to cohort effects.

Platform work appears to be somewhat more important than crowdworking, and seems more important as a source of income.

In a clear majority of cases, both types of work provide only secondary jobs.

Accordingly, for a vast majority of crowdworkers and platform workers the internet is only one among several options to obtain paid work assignments.