

**Improving Microwork = Improving the Labour Market.
Outlining the Patterns of Dualisation in Microwork.**

A Master's Thesis.

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Abstract

Microwork, a sub-type of platform labour, which encompasses the completion of online short, fragmented tasks via microworking platforms is notably absent from the discourse or the attempts to regulate the platform economy. Resembling the Marxist piece-wage model of employment, microwork pays per completed task, is fragmentary, removed from the bigger context, and location-independent. These conditions create difficulties in mobilising workers to fight for their rights and fall outside of the false self-employment regulatory focus. Following the institutional theory of dualisation, this paper argues that the precarious conditions experienced by microworkers can be attributed to the inequalities in the labour market as a whole. A thematic analysis of 45 interviews with microworkers from Germany, Portugal, and Spain showcases there are qualitative differences within the variety of microtasks available, and that on the level of the national economy, labour market outsiders tend to engage in qualitatively inferior tasks that offer lower pay and less secure working terms. Moreover, the insiders engaging in microwork are less vulnerable to experiencing the negative consequences of its risks. These results imply the need to address job insecurity and employment difficulties experienced in the secondary labour market sector, as well as the necessity of improving the quality of microwork in general.

Keywords: microwork, platform economy, dualisation, institutional theory

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Chapter 1: Introduction

March 11th, 2024 marks a significant milestone in the European Union's efforts to regulate the platform economy (Council of Europe, 2024; European Parliament, 2023). On that day, a new directive was confirmed by the Council of Europe (2024), which agreed to put a stop to the false self-employment many platform workers are forced to subordinate to, mandate the obligatory transparency of algorithmic management systems, and ban the automated supervision of platform workers. The directive, although certainly a step in the right direction, will nevertheless likely fail to encompass the interest of all platform workers.

Platform workers are the people working on, or perhaps for, digital labour platforms, which in the EU's understanding are the entities that at the request of at least one actor, client or worker, using digital infrastructures, provide commercial services (Silberman, 2023). In economic terms, a platform is a matchmaker that matches the supply with demand (Evans & Schmalensee, 2016).

The past decade of academic debates was marked by concerns with false sharing and entrepreneurship narratives promoted by the platforms (Oei, 2018), as well as the precarious employment conditions perpetuated in this economic model (Rosenblat, 2019). Therefore, the contents of the EU's directive could be at least partially attributed to the resonance of scholarly advocacy against the be your own boss attitude, microentrepreneurship, and self-responsibility of workers in individual-firm relationships (Prassl, 2018). Platforms, posing as mere technological mediators between workers and clients, are becoming recognised as agents of new neoliberal industrial relations, where platforms can make a profit from workers' labour while removing their share of responsibility in the contract (Zwick, 2018).

An opposing perspective is the view that platforms delegate the control of a commercial transaction equally to all three platforms involved – worker, client, platform – facilitating a new relationship, in which a worker seizes control over how and when they want to perform their labour (Vallas & Schor, 2020). At the same time, the platforms take over the tasks of supervising the workers, for example through algorithmic management or digital affordances. The gigs performed in the physical realm can be monitored through GPS and controlled through push notifications (Zwick, 2018), while the actions of those working in the online infrastructures are defined by the very design of the platforms, by adding and removing different options, create norms on how to work (Ens & Márton, 2024). For

example, Poshmark, a platform for selling second-hand clothing, shows its clients the listings that were most recently shared and re-shared, similarly to how content is displayed on social media (Ens & Márton, 2024). This affordance, by design, prompts sellers to engage in excessive re-sharing of their listings on the website and dedicate a huge amount of time to activities that skew the Poshmark algorithmic to make their offers more visible. Since refusing to engage in re-sharing means that nobody would see their clothes, sellers have no control over how they want to advertise their listings – they must behave as the platform wants them to. The case of Poshmark illustrates another strand of the literature that warns us against the algorithmic power that enables the owners of the algorithms to define how people think and behave (Cheney-Lippold, 2011). In the context of labour, algorithms are seen as the element of the digital infrastructure, which as a whole re-organises the labour – the way it is performed, and the way the worker understand themselves, their employer, their work, and the relation between all three (Gandini, 2019).

These academic debates might have prompted the regulatory bodies to take a stance and lead the digital economy by devising their own rules and conditions of platform labour relations. The literature on neoliberalism and false narratives brought attention to the self-employment dilemma, while the discourse on technological control in platform labour highlighted the dangers of algorithmic management.

However, the upcoming EU directive might still be insufficient to improve the general situation of all of the platform workers. The European Union's regulatory pursuits, similar to the attempts to regulate microwork undertaken in France and Spain, fail to encompass the interest of location-independent remote workers (Aloisi, 2022). Microworkers, also known as crowdworkers, are remote workers who complete short, typically low-time consuming and low-skill requiring, tasks such as classification of pictures or transcription (Lehdonvirta, 2016). Despite the short-term nature and low wages offered by the platform, some workers earn their living primarily through microwork (Irani, 2015), while others complete microtasks to supplement their main income (Berg et al., 2018).

While microwork takes place in an online setting, therefore rendering the restrictions on algorithmic management relevant to the work structure of microworkers, some of the characteristics of microwork make it difficult for it to be encompassed in the scope of the directive. Not being bound by requirements to wear a specific uniform or interact with clients, having the possibility to both easily begin a task and quit it at whatever point, doing

work sporadically, at different times of the day and the year, microworkers' output and their relationship with the platforms and requesters are difficult to capture.

The owner of a German microworking platform said once that people do microwork for fun, to pass their free time (Altenried, 2020). Conversely, Karnani and McKague (2019) claim microwork can be a tool of empowerment for the uneducated, underqualified and impoverished population struggling with finding employment. Alternatively, microwork is viewed as a source of precarious employment that undervalues workers' time, promotes stress and anxiety through unfair dismissals, and abuses workers' trust by obscuring the context of the tasks and penalising workers for faults in the technical design of the tasks (Berg et al., 2018). Microworkers are often unfairly automatically removed from the platform when an algorithm marks their activity as potentially suspicious, or when they make too many mistakes at work (Irani, 2015). While it would certainly be beneficial for the workers if the directive puts an end to these unfair automatic practices, the ban on algorithmic management might either make the already empowering work more attractive and less stressful or merely alleviate barely a portion of the issues faced by the precarious microworkers.

It is puzzling to determine where these vastly different perceptions of microwork stem from, which is the reason why the assessment and proper regulatory treatment of the situation of microworkers are so difficult. By acknowledging the precarious situation of some microworkers, one must not neglect those who treat microwork as a relaxing hobby performed for the pleasure of being rewarded with monetary gains (Jiang & Wagner, 2024). The answer to this problem might be quite simple – there are indeed two kinds of microwork and the reason for the gap between them originates in the segmentation of workers in their national labour markets (Giustini, 2023). To better understand the divides among the workers, it is thus necessary to turn for explanation to the theory of dualisation of labour markets.

Dualisation of the labour markets is a process, in which the market bifurcates into two qualitatively different segments (Nicolaisen et al., 2019). The primary sector involves big and reputable companies that offer attractive payments, employment protections such as severance pay, employment benefits such as paid holidays and sick leave, and career growth opportunities (Urbaniec, 2024). The primary sector is notoriously difficult to enter as a newcomer and most often encompasses highly skilled white and blue-collar workers. The outsiders working outside of the primary sector, on the other hand, tend to be young people, immigrants, mothers, and more generally less educated people with low qualifications, who

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are offered temporary contracts with unfavourable terms and little to no benefits that are enjoyed by their counterparts in the primary sector (Urbaniec, 2024). The dualisation of European labour markets has been a process planned and sanctioned by the European governments (Rizza et al., 2022) as well as the European supranational regulatory bodies (Cardoso & Branco, 2018).

This paper intends to uncover whether the inequalities and precarity of microwork can be attributed to European labour market policies. To this aim, it will analyse 45 interviews conducted with microworkers from Germany, Spain, and Portugal – countries whose dualist reforms share similarities in their passive employment policy style and differences in the aim, context and outcomes of their regulations (Rizza et al., 2022). Moreover, these countries host some of the largest and most dense populations of microworkers in Europe (Morgan et al., 2023). Therefore, their labour policy heritage will serve as a case used in answering the following research question:

RQ: How does the dualisation of the European labour markets contribute to the microworkers' experiences of microwork?

To answer the research question, this thesis will rely on the interview data collected in 2022 for the ERC project GHOSTWORK by researchers of the Erasmus University Rotterdam. The database contains 137 interviews conducted with microworkers located in several European countries. Out of this data set, 15 interviews each from Germany, Spain and Portugal were randomly selected, adding up to 45 interviews.

Relying on a thematic analysis approach, the study investigates the differences in the experiences of microworkers, as well as in their position within the primary and secondary labour markets. The next chapter will discuss the relevant literature on the topic, as well as the theoretical framework guiding the research. It will follow with an explanation and justification of the methodological approach. Finally, it will present the results, discuss them in the context of literature, and conclude with policy and research recommendations.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this section, relevant background information about microwork and its regulation will be first introduced. Then, the theoretical framework of institutional dualisation will be discussed.

Peculiarities of microwork

The critical academic discourse on platform labour has gathered the attention of politicians, who previously, influenced by liberal accounts of the digital economy, preferred to grant platforms freedom in their growth until they learned more about the critical perspectives on the problem (Bietti, 2023). On-site platform workers, due to the physical locatedness of their tasks, are visible to the public, for example to the customers ordering UberEats or to the drivers passing by Deliveroo bikers on the street. In contrast, microworkers are largely placeless– not only in the sense that they can work digitally from any place on Earth but also in their absence from physical reality and the public discourse (Lehdonvirta, 2016).

Microworking platforms are designed to minimise communication among workers, which individualises their experiences and prevents them from developing a shared identity (Lehdonvirta, 2016). Compared to the drivers who drive in the same streets and recognise themselves by uniforms, microworkers have little possibility of undertaking collective action and making themselves heard (Lehdonvirta, 2016).

Moreover, the fragmented and brief nature of the legal relation between the task requesters and microworkers helps to undermine the labour performed by the workers, similar to how the industrial capitalists of the 19th century overexploited the domestic textile labour of women (Altenried, 2020). Especially in the weaving sector, piece wages, that is wages determined by the quality and quantity of the output rather than the hours worked, were notoriously too low, forcing women and working youth to prolong and intensify their work to ensure being paid (Marx, 1990). Moreover, the fragmentation of labour creates a perception that low wages for piece work are acceptable since the tasks are too simple to be properly compensated (Gray & Suri, 2019). This sort of arrangement not only removes the employer's responsibility to supervise and organise labour efficiently but also isolates the workers from an environment in which they could compare their outputs with other workers or collectively bargain for better arrangements.

Consequently, microworkers, although located in the very real world, find themselves to be invisible – to the outer world, but also to their contractors and colleagues (Koslowski, 2016). The most famous microwork platform, Amazon Mechanical Turk, alienates the workers to the point they are most often unaware of what the results of their task completion will be used for, and often do not know the identity of the task requesters (Bergvall-Kåreborn & Howcroft, 2014). This invisibility problem of microwork has led to practically non-existent regulations or regulatory efforts towards bettering the situation of microworkers (Aloisi, 2022). A possible remedy to this problem, put forward by Cherry (2020), encompasses the creation of a special sectoral regulation that would provide a new legal classification to properly describe the situation of microworkers and devise a special benefit scheme and protection that will specifically fit the context of microwork (Cherry, 2020). The challenge in this approach, however, lies in the accommodation of the needs of the diverse microworking population – high and low-skilled workers (Giustini, 2023) with varying employment status (Morgan et al., 2023) and different personal circumstances, e.g. living in remote areas or dealing with disabilities.

Arguably, microwork might play an essential role in the fight against poverty. Microwork is considered part of a practice known as business process outsourcing (BPO), which most often encompasses outsourcing information-related processes to markets with cheaper labour (Karnani & McKague, 2019). Although Karnani and McKague (2019) claim that microworking projects can greatly empower impoverished workers from rural areas of developing countries by providing them with simple, easy-to-complete tasks, it is nevertheless questionable whether microwork can be a sustainable form of earning for underprivileged individuals. Some think microwork is a suitable employment alternative for people who otherwise would not get hired with regular contracts (Giustini, 2023). For those struggling to find employment or to make ends meet, income from microwork can serve as a great financial aid; however, microwork opportunities are uncertain, and the skills learned throughout completion of tasks might not always be transferable to other jobs.

Furthermore, particularly in the Western context, microwork, instead of being a form of professional activation, serves most often as an extra job people decide to take to cover high costs of living or mitigate the poor pay in their primary jobs (Altenried, 2020). In such a setting, it could be doubted whether microwork should be praised as a convenient side gig or treated as a symptom of deteriorating working conditions and employment security.

In a search for a concrete, normative approach to regulating microwork, one could look into the report of the International Labour Organisation by Berg et al. (2018), which proposes 3 criteria for improving the working conditions in microwork: expanding the social benefits to all kinds of labour relations, reducing the complexity of social contribution systems, as well as dedicating more funds towards the social protection of microworkers. These steps would bring microwork's status closer to the so-called standard employment relationship; one, in which most often a full-time worker is entitled to a permanent work contract, social protections, job stability, growth opportunities, and a reasonable work intensity (Nicolaisen et al., 2019). The issue, however, lies in determining whether such extensive protections would be compatible with the forms for microwork that are known today. Eventual regulation that would follow the ILO's recommendations likely forces platforms and microworkers to register workers as a workforce hired to complete tasks shared by the platforms' clients. In this case, taxable income or working schedule could become the regulatory outcomes that would be unwelcomed by many of the casual microworkers.

Institutionalising change

The notion of state and supranational involvement being necessary for shaping the platform labour in a desired direction stems from the presumptions of the institutional theory, which encompasses the idea that institutions – the most prominent one being the state – have the power to create the rules and norms that serve as social scripts affecting the internal functioning of organisations (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). A practical example of institutionalisation could be the case of maternity and paternity leave. In the United Kingdom, in order to encourage fathers to share some of the parental duties and become more engaged in childraising, the government devised a paternity leave, which fathers could take after transferring part of the maternity leave to themselves (Mitchell, 2023). However, regulation turned out to be a failure, as the role of a mother is deemed too pivotal to transfer the maternity leave to fathers, and because taking a paternity leave is not a normalised workplace practice (Mitchell, 2023). The passivity and the unfortunate design of the regulation only reinforce the patriarchal model of parenting. In contrast, Portugal introduced mandatory paternity leave alongside maternity leave, incentivising employers and workers alike to treat both mother and father as important parents (Marques et al., 2021).

Historically, it was always the state, with its normative, coercive, and derogatory power, and nonetheless influenced by political and economic currents, who shaped and deployed new employment relationships (Howell, 2021). For example, when in the 1980s many of the neoliberal states began to liberalise the labour market and dismantle the institutionally guaranteed job protections and collective bargaining privileges, they simultaneously empowered companies to redefine work arrangements, whilst nevertheless bounding them to adhere to some protection standards such as a minimum wage (Howell, 2021). And in the digital economy, it is ultimately the state that grants platforms freedom to make their organisation of labour more flexible, due to the hopes for professional activation of the unemployed and the raised competitiveness of national labour markets (Urbaniec, 2024).

It would be therefore not unreasonable to expect the state, or the supranational bodies such as the European Union, to take similar initiative in defining the employment status of microworkers, considering they are also the institutions that allowed flexible task-based employment to develop and flourish in the first place (Urbaniec, 2024). Looking into the new platform work directive approved by the Council of Europe (2024), which agreed to put a stop to the false self-employment many platform workers are forced to subordinate to, mandate the obligatory transparency of algorithmic management systems, and ban the automated monitoring of platform workers might leave microwork regulation advocates disappointed. Concerned majorly with establishing proper distinctions between self-employment and platform-worker relationships regarding work autonomy (European Commission, 2021), the directive does not address microworkers for whom gaining employment status might be incompatible with their work structure. For example, because of its irregular character, workers might opt to do microwork only in periods when they need to have extra cash on hand. In this instance, going through the employment process and having one's income taxed defeats the initial goal of earning quick and easy money.

Moreover, even though the directive aims to stop the practice of algorithmic management and provide algorithmic transparency, it will remain ineffective as long as it does not specify more specific measures to counter the problems faced by microworkers, which stem from algorithmic management (Veale et al., 2023). Among these problems, Veale and co-authors (2023) distinguish unaccountable non-payments, account suspension, and lack of proper communication with the platforms and the requesters. It is important to explain in

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detail what kind of workers, and what kind of issues will be tackled by the directive, as otherwise the platforms might selectively apply the provisions (Veale et al., 2023). This reasoning can be justified by the historical example of the 1935 Wagner Act in the United States, which granted workers rights to unionising and collective bargaining, yet left out piece-wage domestic workers (Gray & Suri, 2019). Although in this age and part of the world domestic workers are rarely performing piecework anymore, it should still be mentioned that a legislative protecting domestic workers in the US was introduced for the first time in 2010 in the state of New York (Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights, 2010). By marginalizing groups of workers at the very beginning of regulation, their exclusion from legislation becomes normalised, and consequently, it is less likely their interest will be considered in the near future.

Taking into account the history of liberalisation of the European labour markets, and the consequential flexibilization of labour, reductions in social and job security, and stagnation in wage growth (Howell, 2021), a new perspective crystallises itself. Although, as discussed above, regulation of microwork can be improved by addressing in what ways platforms create unstable working conditions, it might also be worthwhile to consider how the inequalities within microwork were facilitated by the existing institutional provisions. In order to do so, this thesis will explore the origins of microwork precarity through an analytical lens of dualisation of labour markets theory.

Dualisation of European labour markets

The prevailing distinction between formally employed, and therefore entitled to the benefits systems and protections, and the atypical workers have been gradually sanctioned in the European governments throughout the 1980s and 1990s, following the diminishing competitiveness of big industries and growth in the service sector (Palier & Thelen, 2010). With the welfare state growing unsustainable and facing the liberalisation demands from the service industry, many European governments decided to open the possibility of deregulated temporary employment (Rizza et al., 2022).

These developments in the labour market are conceptualized in academia as dualism – a distinct division between insiders with standard employment and outsiders with atypical, flexible contracts (Eichhorst & Marx, 2011). In the broadest understanding, in a dualised market the insiders can enjoy extensive job security schemes and protections, the atypical

workers usually find themselves in an underprivileged position and have limited opportunities to attain permanent employment (Eichhorst & Marx, 2011). Reading into dualisation in more complexity, dualism reveals itself as a compilation of processes – deepening of social divides and widening of inequalities – that operate not only within the general labour market but also within different professions, sectors, as well as in the outsider segments (Nicolaisen et al., 2019). For example, the high-skilled workers who enter the secondary labour market out of choice will often be offered better part-time working conditions, as opposed to workers in the sectors where permanent contracts are unattainable (Nicolaisen et al., 2019).

The dualisation of labour markets has been increasingly rising in prominence since the 1980s, and the policies strengthening the segmentation were typically implemented after the economic, social and economic crises (Cardoso & Branco, 2018). Dualist policies in a variety of forms were approved by a multitude of European governments: in the Mediterranean countries, such as Portugal, Spanish, and Italy (Cardoso & Branco, 2018), in Western labour market giants - Germany and France (Palier & Thelen, 2010) and the Netherlands (Eichhorst & Marx, 2021), as well as in the countries of the former Soviet Bloc (Trif et al., 2016).

What gave rise to dualisation, aside from the liberal ideology (Cardoso & Branco, 2018) is, as argued by Eichhorst and Marx (2011), the institutional power of traditional employment protections. As liberal-oriented regulators found themselves unable to undermine the authority of labour unions and strip the senior workers of their protections, they decided to focus their regulatory efforts on targeting weaker, marginalised groups of workers. Those included migrants and working mothers (Palier & Thelen, 2010), youth new-coming to the labour market (Cardoso & Branco, 2018), and people struggling with unemployment (Eichhorst & Marx, 2021).

While microwork shares the characteristics of marginalised outsider work, such as temporality, insecurity, lack of social protections, low seniority levels and inefficient unionisation efforts (Palier & Thelen, 2010), it might circumvent the very foundations of dualisation by allowing full-time protected workers to erase the boundary between the two segments and have additional, time-flexible work. However, such multiplication of labour – the heterogeneity of the working population, the type of work available, the number of jobs on the market, and the amount of labour that needs to be performed by an individual (Altenried, 2020) – suggests that the quality of employment the primary labour is

diminishing. It is thus interesting to investigate how the dualisation of the labour markets contributes to the popularity, shape, and experience of microwork.

This thesis focuses on the experiences of microwork in three European countries – Germany, Portugal, and Spain, all of which were chosen for their history of dualist regulation and because, according to a survey by Morgan et al. (2023), they host some of the largest and most dense populations of European microworkers. The selected countries can be characterised by passive labour policies that focus on deregulating the labour market and giving employers more freedom to define the terms of employment contracts (Rizza et al., 2022). Nevertheless, each of these states introduced their dualist reforms differently – the summaries of regulatory backgrounds will be discussed below. In the analysis of the interview data, each of these cases will be applied to create an understanding of the regulatory conditions that influence the experience of microwork in each country.

Germany

The German labour market pre-dualisation was by no means saturated with secure and stable employment; rather, the limited availability of insider jobs was mitigated by excluding women from the workforce and by incentivising older workers to retire (Eichhorst & Marx, 2011). The declining competitiveness of the German economy and stagnation in national exports by the end of 1970s and in the 1980s (Rizza et al., 2022), as well as the rising demands towards opening the labour market to women, prompted policymakers to normalise the flexible employment agreements, which supplied the market with additional workers while preventing the state from collapsing under the burden of supporting too many new labourers (Eichhorst & Marx, 2011). Similarly, the reunification of Western and Eastern Germany, and more particularly the problem of unemployment in the former DDR, prompted the German government to further extend the scope of temporary contracts and to enable corporations to hire and fire temporary workers on terms more favourable to employers.

The turn of millennia brought the growing political pressure to further strengthen the country's economic resilience, which was responded to by the Hartz Reforms – a series of regulations that most notably introduced mini-jobs that were exempted from taxes and social security (Voss, 2018). Mini-jobs can be defined as short-term job opportunities requiring low skill, traditionally performed by students and housewives who want to substitute their budgets (Palier & Thelen, 2010). As Eichhorst and Marx (2011) note, the institutionalisation of mini-jobs facilitated the creation of unfavourable working conditions for those who were

forced to perform mini-jobs; companies introduced fixed-term contracts during which contractors had to finish their job assignments bearing all the responsibilities and duties of regular employees, without the employment benefits. Nevertheless, the negative consequences of dualisation were partially mitigated by the 2014 reform on statutory minimal wage, designed to protect standard and temporary workers alike (Marx & Starke, 2017).

In the 2000s, while the wages of part-time temporary workers were in decline, mini-jobbers did not suffer the consequences of their precarious employment, as they were often financially reliant on their spouses and families and appreciated some tax-free additional income (Eichhorst & Marx, 2011). Overall, the effects of German labour market reforms are evaluated quite positively by Voss (2018) – at the costs of the secondary workers, the primary segment could not only enjoy relatively stable protections but also low service prices and growing exports. Whether the marginalised workers share these benefits of economic growth remains unclear.

Portugal

Since 1985, Portugal has been the leader in the OECD countries in terms of the protection of labour market insiders (Rueda, 2014). The protections for labour market outsiders were notably worse; nevertheless, throughout the 2000s, only around 20% of all work contracts were signed temporarily - which was extraordinary when compared to the other countries of the European Union (Cardoso & Branco, 2018). Moreover, those not covered by the extensive social protection schemes could usually rely on their families and women's domestic labour to mitigate the lack of protection (Valadas, 2011). This dualised welfare model is thought to be the factor that allowed Portugal to keep one of the lowest unemployment rates in Europe throughout the 1980s and 1990s (Lopes, 2003).

The times were nevertheless changing – the traditional family structures were eroding, birth rates declining (Valadas, 2011), and the growing portion of the population was showing deficits in work qualifications (Cardoso & Branco, 2018). A tangible transformation began in 2011, when Portugal, faced with the sovereign debt crisis that began in 2009, filed for financial help from Troika - the European Commission (EC), the European Central Bank (ECB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) – and signed Memorandum of Understanding with the group as part of the loan conditions (Cardoso & Branco, 2018). The 2011 Memorandum of Understanding had two particular goals – liberalisation of the labour market and fighting labour market dualisation. These were intended so that Portugal would

boost its economic competitiveness as well as lower the unemployment rates.

To address the dualised labour market, new reforms reduced severance payments, facilitated collective dismissal, promoted dismissals of senior and underqualified workers, cut down on unemployment benefits, and prolonged the duration of fixed-term contracts (Cardoso & Branco, 2018). These measures were designed with the hope of encouraging employers to hire more workers on a permanent basis, as the risks and costs of employment were significantly reduced. However, the regulation did not bring the intended results. While the protections for labour market insiders were drastically diminished, the outsiders' social protection rates fell to one of the lowest in the Eurozone, and temporary contracts began to dominate the Portuguese employment relationships. The overarching consequences of these reforms were the deteriorating working conditions in the market as a whole as well as further widening the gap between primary and secondary employment (Cardoso & Branco, 2018).

Spain

Spanish state, similar to Portugal, until the 2000s was one of the European leaders in insider protection and job stability (Valadas, 2011), and, also just like Portugal, offered very poor protections for the workers in the secondary market (Eichhorst & Marx, 2021).

Throughout the 2000s, the Spanish government undertook several attempts to address the problems of unemployment in youth and the need for the activation of women in the workforce, mostly through policies promoting gender equality and restricting temporary contracts (Rizza et al., 2022). The sovereign debt crisis prompted Spain to undertake more drastic measures to fight unemployment and increase labour market flexibility. These took the form of two Royal Decrees of 2010 and 2012 (Voss, 2018). The decrees reduced dismissal costs, promoted collective dismissal, dismantled collective bargaining, and granted employers the discretion to freely modify the working agreements they made with the workers. Although labour market insiders ended up stripped of their protections as intended, outsiders suffered even more severe consequences – not only were they now even easier to dismiss, but they were also subject to more pay changes.

Until 2013, more than 1.7 million permanent contracts in Spain were terminated and the share of involuntary part-time work increased by 27 per cent (Voss, 2018) Spain saw one of the biggest widening and deepening of inequalities in Europe at the time (Rizza et al., 2022). This phenomenon was called *de-dualisation* by Eichhorst and Marx (2021), as the

labour market became more homogenised in the prevalence of the secondary type of employment.

Looking at the regulatory backgrounds of Germany, Portugal, and Spain some common elements – such as the liberalising pro-employer regulations; and some differences – economic competitiveness, unemployment, and external pressures as catalysts for labour reforms – come to prominence. This paper argues that the outcomes of dualisation in each country are reflected in the demographics and the motivations of their domestic microworkers.

Dualisation of microwork

Following the overview of the dualisation in the national context, this thesis also aims to discuss and argue for the existence of dualisation within microwork itself. Dualisation in the secondary market is nothing new, and it manifests itself as a bifurcation between good quality voluntary opportunities, from which workers can easily graduate into the insider segment, and the dead-end precarious forms of employment (Nicolaisen, 2019). This split in how the secondary market is experienced by people from various socio-economic backgrounds can create dilemmas on how to address its inequalities in the public discourse and the regulation. It is worth considering to what extent the narrative presented by the winners of such working arrangements should outweigh the struggles experienced by its losers. Moreover, the supposed interest of market outsiders is most often not argued for by themselves but for the enterprises benefiting from such working arrangements. In their article, Schor and Vallas (2021) discuss how most positive preconceptions about the platform economy, such as the empowerment it offers to marginalised and discriminated groups are part of the rhetorics promoted by the platforms to incentivise workers, customers, and investors to contribute to the expansion of their businesses. Some of the platform owners go as far as to claim that most of their workers perform tasks mainly for fun, leisure and pleasure (Altenried, 2020). In reality platforms, rather than empowering workers with space and means for entrepreneurship, often trap their users into unproductive activities during which they need to dedicate a portion of time and effort that is incomparable to the low financial gains (Ens & Márton, 2024). Consequently, the workers who report the highest levels of satisfaction with platform work are not those who were supposedly empowered by new income opportunities, but those who could already afford a comfortable lifestyle prior to joining the digital secondary economy (Schor et al., 2020).

To properly analyse the dualism within and around microwork, this thesis will utilise the distinction of microwork dualisation forwarded by Giustini (2023) who distinguished between the inter-dualisation – the emergence of the hyper unregulated form of employment (microwork) within the non-regulated employment sector; and intra-dualisation, which describes the gap between the superior and inferior tasks offered by the platforms.

The category of inter-dualisation matches with the conception of dualisation as a process of creating and reinforcing inequalities, proposed by Nicolaison et al. (2019). Inter-dualisation transforms the existing disadvantages of outsider work – unprivileged work status, lack of opportunities in income and career growth, lack of training and welfare opportunities, as well as the threat of dismissal – into even more precarious working conditions (Giustini, 2023). With a lack of clear boundary between being a worker or an entrepreneurial contractor, with piece wages, skills untransferable to other jobs, and the possibility of unfair automated account deactivation (Giustini, 2023), microwork reaches an unprecedented level of unfairness.

Intra-dualisation, on the other hand, describes the processes that contribute to the qualitative segmentation between the types of tasks offered by the platforms. The so-called superior tasks, while maintaining the scattered character of microwork, require a lot more skill than the inferior tasks, are more creative, and less dull and repetitive. They tend to pay more per task and they are most often completed by highly educated men who have knowledge of languages, a background in IT, and expertise in engineering or other technical fields. Some examples of qualitatively superior tasks proposed by Giustini (2023) include translation and website testing. In contrast, qualitatively inferior tasks have lower entry barriers and require no knowledge or skills. These can include requests such as image classification and web search evaluation. Those tasks are most often performed by women and people with difficulties in finding employment due to low qualifications (Giustini, 2023).

Workers in the privileged position within the microworking world tend to hold much more positive opinions about platforms; sentiment, which with the precarious microworkers do not agree (Giustini, 2023). It, therefore, appears that the overall evaluation of the microworking experience depends on the kind of tasks the worker engages with and that people with better work qualifications in the general labour market have an advantage in competing in the microwork economy.

To summarise the points discussed in this chapter, this paper will investigate how microwork emerges in the process of inter-dualisation institutionalised by the state in Germany, Portugal, and Spain, and how it internally bifurcates into segmented unequal work arrangements. It is expected that the national labour market policies influence who performs microwork, and that there is a qualitative difference in the tasks performed by labour market insiders and outsiders.

Chapter 3: Methodology

In this section, the details of the research design the rationale behind different choices will be explained.

Secondary analysis of interview data

This study made use of existing interview data collected in 2022 for the ERC project GHOSTWORK by researchers of the Erasmus University Rotterdam. The aim of this project, conducted by 3 different researchers, was to describe the work conditions experienced by microworkers and discover how those influence their well-being (Ghost Work, n.d.). In this specific interview sample, the researchers conducted online interviews with 137 active microworkers from different European countries, to gather more profound insights regarding the specifications and the experiences of microwork. The interviews were conducted in an open semi-structured manner, with some of the core questions being asked across the whole dataset and some topics being uniquely developed and discussed, depending on the interview context.

Secondary analysis of qualitative data is the research method, in which the researcher refrains from embarking on gathering their own data, and instead decides to study the pre-existing data from qualitative interviews and responses to open-question surveys (Heaton, 2008). As Heaton (2008) explains, the usefulness of this method stems from its potential to help verify the validity of the existing research, as well as help create a deeper understanding of the data by examining it with different questions and through different theoretical lenses.

Although secondary analysis is valued for both pragmatic reasons, as it helps to make savings on the research funding, and for its capacity to create a new perspective to understand the existing data, the method has been criticised for removing the researcher from the context of research, for creating unreasonable positivists expectations for the verification of the

qualitative data, and for the legal ambiguities that arise in some of the cases of the re-use of research data (Heaton, 2008).

For this thesis, the most relevant limitation that should be addressed is the risk of decontextualisation of data. Although knowledge of the social context of the interviews seems to provide the researchers with the subtleties in the data that would otherwise get lost, not all scholars perceive this aspect of research to be of particular importance. As Berg (2008) argues, although the social context in which the interviews were conducted is immensely valuable, for the sake of objectivity, researchers should always put the highest emphasis on analysing what was actually expressed by the study participants, and avoid dedicating too much attention towards interpreting contextual clues.

However, what makes this methodological option particularly beneficial for this thesis is the fact that the data was collected by experienced researchers who gained access to large groups of microworkers that would otherwise be unattainable for an individual master's student. Moreover, being tutored and supervised by the designers of the Ghost Work project allowed me to compensate for the lack of contextual understanding of the interviews, as I could ask them questions that helped to situate the data in the context it was recorded.

Sample

This paper examined 45 interviews from three European countries: Germany and Portugal, and Spain. Each country will be equally represented in the sample. A descriptive overview of the interviewees can be found in Appendix A.

As for the rationale behind choosing to examine the participants from Germany, Portugal, and Spain, the choice was motivated by the well-documented labour market dualisation policies of these states extensively debated in the literature (Rizza et al., 2022; Voss, 2018), as well as the findings of the research by Morgan et al. (2023), which highlights the differences in the prevalence of microwork between more and less densely populated European countries. Although the prevalence of microwork in a country is less pivotal to answering the research question, the volume of the labour market is relevant in explaining economic trends in the country context (Du & Yang, 2015; Lisenkova et al., 2013).

Moreover, research by Drobnič et al. (2010) shows that in the Southern European economies, the experienced working conditions, specifically job security and pay, have the

most significant effect on the life satisfaction of workers. Meanwhile, in the Northern and Western countries, which have generally more affluent economies, life satisfaction scores higher, and it is also more often affected by job autonomy and career prospects (Drobnič et al., 2010). These findings follow the distinction conceptualised by Rizza et al. (2022) who argue that the Mediterranean countries and Germany alongside France form their own specific groups distinguished by their labour market policies and outcomes. It is therefore expected to find more similarities between Spanish and Portuguese microworkers than between the German ones and the rest of the sample. Since Spanish and Portuguese labour markets are more liberalised and the quality of both permanent and temporary contracts has deteriorated over the years, there might be less inequality between microworkers, compared to the German sample where the divides between primary and secondary labour markets are more pronounced.

Grounded research approach

The grounded theory research encompasses an inductive research design that allows the theories, concepts and phenomena to emerge from the data with the use of rigorous coding procedures (Zapf, 2016). Grounded theory increases the complexity of the research (Zapf, 2016), as the researchers embark on their analysis process without strict theoretical frameworks and predefined coding schemes, which makes this approach more cognitively demanding (Lune & Berg, 2017). Although often accused of being highly subjective, grounded research theory is particularly useful in studying unknown, under-researched subjects, and helps to define the direction for future research to take (Dougherty, 2017).

The standard grounded theory analysis procedure includes open, axial, and selective coding (Zapf, 2016) – steps that will be followed in this thesis as well. In the the open coding phase, researcher loosely identifies themes that appear from the initial readings of the data, while the axial coding involves examining the prevalence and the characteristics of each previously identified theme (Dougherty, 2017). After finding which themes are the most representative for the dataset, irrelevant themes are removed and the less developed ones are merged with the bigger categories that emerged in the axial coding procedure (Dougherty, 2017). The coding tree, which graphically represents the themes prevalent in the data, can be found in Appendix B.

Chapter 4: Research findings

This chapter will describe and analyse the research outcomes systematically. It will cover what kind of tasks are being performed on the platforms, what the conditions of microwork are, what kind of people perform it, and explain how their experiences differ depending on their position within the national labour market and the microworking sector they operate in.

Superior and inferior tasks

Microwork, as discussed in the introduction, encompasses small, fragmented tasks that typically can be completed in a short period of time. The definition is very broad, and new types of microworking tasks might be emerging day by day. In the data sample, a significant variety of tasks was found.

Data intelligence

Data intelligence describes the type of microwork that collects microworker's personal information, typically for research and commercial purposes. Data intelligence tasks might include filling out surveys about one's demographics and preferences, installing monitoring software on one's phone to collect data about one's day-to-day habits and sleeping patterns, as well as submitting photos and videos of oneself. Such tasks require little to no skill to complete and are most often performed by people who are more dependent on the platform's income. Some of the platforms mentioned in the sample, where these kinds of tasks can be found, include Amazon Mechanical Turk, Prolific, Toluna and Clickworker.

Due to the very low pay, a worker must complete a huge volume of data intelligence tasks in order to reach the minimum monetary threshold for transferring money to their bank account. Because of the low effort required to perform such tasks, many of the interviewees liked to do them while commuting or during breaks from work, capitalising on the free time they had.

Most notably, interviewees employed in stable, well-paying jobs in the financial and technical sectors refuse to perform this kind of work. Even though survey-filling exercises little cognitive capacities and most people working in the primary sector are not pressured to subsidise their daily expenses with microwork, they perceive low task rates as a sign of disrespect towards the workers and therefore refuse to engage in them out of principle.

In contrast, the less privileged microworkers, although equally critical of the low pay, do not resign from data intelligence tasks. They might apply some selection criteria, such as refusing extremely undervalued tasks that pay less than 1 euro, which is a much lower threshold. Other than that, some interviewees try gaming the system by installing special scripts that notify the workers about the tasks available, helping them to be the first to complete a task.

Scripts can be downloaded from online communities for microworkers. Notably, some platforms such as Amazon Mechanical Turk can detect the add-ons a microworker has in their browser, which might result in account suspension, supposedly because the website recognizes such users as robots. While some scripts are designed to help workers complete as many tasks as possible, they can also be of use in selecting tasks worthy of one's time. Interviewee 12 from Germany uses a script on Prolific that calculates how the task rates convert to the pay per hour, which aids him in deciding which tasks he would like to perform:

I have like, a little tracker installed that calculates the pay per hour, so that's also important. Yeah, so, less than 8€ I don't do it, basically.

The insecurity of data intelligence tasks stems from various obstacles, engineered to check if the worker is paying attention if they do not complete the tasks too quickly, and whether they are being reliable in the answers they provide. Many of such tasks are intended for very specific demographics, which are often undisclosed before beginning the tasks, which results in workers not being paid for their time. For example, a survey might target people with specific income or educational backgrounds, as these are the potential customers a requester is searching for data on. Instead of stating their intention in the very beginning, some requesters will have microworkers answer a long list of demographic questions only to tell them after they submit this part, or even the whole survey, that they were never eligible to participate in the first place.

Another issue concerns the fact that requesters often do not specify what the data will be used for. Microworkers agree to sell their personal information of various degrees of sensitivity but their consent is uninformed. And in some cases, the nature of tasks can be alarmingly suspicious.

Sometimes I did a lot of strange things, actually. I remember doing like, a video that I had to run, actually, but I had to run without my-- like they wanted to see my feet. It was well paid. I didn't know what is the purpose of that, but I really enjoyed it; and I asked them if they could tell me what were their results or what did they learn about it. Yeah, I didn't get an answer.

Interviewee 13, Spain

For this Spanish student, microwork was the only work experience she had outside of an unpaid internship. While she experienced little financial pressure, she also had no opportunities for flexible employment in the secondary sector to combine with her studies. Motivated by the attractive payment compared to the other tasks, and perhaps naivete stemming from inexperience, she has shared her sensitive footage with unknown actors. Due to the lack of transparency, requesters have power over microworkers to withhold from them how their data will be used. Although anyone can choose what kind of details they would like to share, some people might be uneducated on the topic of data privacy and unaware of the dangers of sharing one's data with strangers. As people working in white-collar jobs are more likely to receive at least some training on disclosing sensitive information at work, they might be better equipped to evaluate what kind of data should remain confidential. Therefore, underprivileged microworkers might be at higher risk of suffering from misuse of their personal data.

Classification and evaluation tasks

The second category of tasks that emerged from the interview sample involves classification and evaluation of content. This involves choosing appropriate keywords, categorising content according to guidelines, e.g. identifying explicit violence and judging the relevance of web search results. Such tasks can be found on platforms Clickworker, UHRS, Picoworkers, and Toloka.

While this type of microwork shares some similarities with data intelligence tasks, for example, both are typically short, sporadic, poorly paid, and taken out of context, classification tasks rely heavily on the human ability to make judgments. Therefore, they are very fundamental to the development of artificial intelligence and language models – this characteristic is something that motivates many of the interviewees to engage with microwork. For people who are not working in technical jobs, microwork, therefore, is a way

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of getting a little bit closer to Big Tech, a world that is fascinating but otherwise inaccessible for those without specialist skills. Microworkers participating in tasks of this kind feel proud to contribute to something they perceive important. A Ghanaian programmer in Germany who struggles with finding employment due to the lack of fluency in the German language recounts how microwork allows him to keep up with technology:

That is the main reason why I'm online. Aside the fact that I love the job that I do because I love programming, because if I'm not working, I'm also learning on my own. Technology is very fast advancing each and every day things are coming up and so you have to keep up with the work and look for a job also influences it.

Interviewee 10, Germany

Classification tasks were the most popular leisure activity among the interviewees. Perceived as a non-strenuous form of brain exercise, microwork is often chosen as an alternative to scrolling social media or watching Netflix. The monetary gains, albeit small, motivate interviewees to keep engaging in tasks. However, despite microwork being perceived as a way of productively passing free time, for many of the interviewees, income generated from this kind of task played a significant, even though not primary, role.

The key to understanding this perception lies in how microwork compares to the jobs in the secondary labour market, which interviewees would need to take in order to earn extra money. This problem was particularly salient in the Spanish and Portuguese samples, in which many interviewees viewed microwork as a smart alternative to working two or three jobs. Despite not living in poverty, their regular jobs did not generate enough income to cover full living costs or spare money for savings. For students and young people in the Mediterranean region, the labour market does not offer enough part-time jobs that could be flexibly adapted to a student lifestyle, nor full-time jobs for the youth beginning their professional careers. Therefore, performing easy, low-effort tasks is an attractive option in highly liberalised labour markets, where covering one's living expenses with one wage is difficult and where the secondary labour market sector is largely unregulated.

However, despite not being able to perceive microwork fully as work, most microworkers exhibit a very professional and diligent attitude, one that could be expected from an employee or a self-employed professional. This raises the question of whether

microwork is undervalued thanks to the illusion of leisure time it creates. For some microworkers, describing their attitude towards microwork with one word creates difficulties:

No, I don't see it like a hobby. Maybe a hobby to 30% and 70% it's work because I'm very dutiful. I'm very focused on my duty.

Interviewee 13, Germany

In Germany, many qualified interviewees perform classification tasks in their free time to save money for investments. Similarly to their Portuguese and Spanish counterparts, the ease of the tasks incentivises them to expand their income. However, several of the interviewees in the sample live in precarious situations and use microwork to mitigate the consequences of their employment difficulties. These are mostly immigrants who struggle to find employment in the German labour market. For some, the barrier is a lack of fluency in the language, for others instability of available employment. For these people, it is not only difficult to establish a work-life balance and limit their screen time but they also suffer more deeply from rejection, task cancellation, and payment complications. The costs of one's work being rejected or deemed inadequate can be valued in lost time, and money, and in negative psychological consequences.

Okay, so how is my schedule? So morning I wake up, the first thing I do is open my phone, look like that and see if there is any rejection. But the first thing I check is rejection. 'Are there any rejections? Oh my God'. My day I'm going to have really bad things but if I find bad approve a rate. If they approve my hits I will have really very good and beautiful day. And if I get just one rejection it's like I'm going to cry.

Interviewee 14, Germany

The less vulnerable workers would either react to rejections by not working with a particular platform or a requester again, accepting the rejections, or paying more attention to how they perform their work.

It also appears that the precarious microworkers feel pressure to finish more tasks in a day, and therefore they might tend to make more mistakes, which results in more stress and less pay. Moreover, they suffer more from the delays in payments, as they are more in need of immediate payment. Considering transfer costs some of the interviewees have to pay in order

to move the money to their bank accounts, those who cannot afford to wait until they gather a larger sum have to bear more costs.

The experience of classification tasks is itself largely dualised due to the attitudes the workers from different backgrounds bring. The less pressured microworkers feel to earn extra money, the more selective they are about the tasks they choose, as they can afford to spend time searching for reliable platforms. Moreover, when they are motivated by the desire to stay productive and learn something about technological developments, monetary gains appear more as a reward for spending their time wisely, rather than an income one needs to survive.

Specialised tasks

The last category encompasses specialised tasks such as translation, translation evaluation, audio transcription, audio recording, SEO text writing, and web testing. Platforms used by the microworkers in the sample include Appen, TranscribeGuru, Textbroker, and uTest. These sorts of tasks out of all described resemble the traditionally organised work the most. As not all the microworkers are capable of doing translation or transcription tasks up to the requesters' standards, many of them get scouted by the companies to participate in the project long term. When working on Appen, microworkers are often added to project group chats and communicate with project managers, akin to freelancers with very flexible schedules. Moreover, in case of issues, Appen and requesters alike were said to be very responsive – something unseen on other microworking platforms, where workers' message either go unanswered or they have to wait long periods of time for the response.

Despite the freedom to perform their tasks whenever they want, they typically have to adhere to work commitments such as deadlines or the volume of work finished per week. Working these tasks up to 15 hours a week can bring additional euros to the budget of Portuguese microworkers – all while the Portuguese minimum wage is 700 euro.

These tasks are the most prevalent in the Portuguese sample. Due to the Portuguese language being largely underrepresented in transcription software and AI projects, Portuguese speakers are very sought after to help develop new technologies. Some of the Portuguese interviewees claim that popular platforms such as Amazon Mechanical Platform, which offer other kinds of tasks are either inaccessible in Portugal or offer no tasks for the residents of

Portugal. Therefore, by not being able to use more precarious microworking platforms, some Portuguese microworkers might have been saved from working for a lower rate.

People engaging in specialised tasks are mostly uninterested in other kinds of microwork, as it does not pay well enough and the communication with the platform and the requesters is non-existent, compared to the specialised microworking platforms. Moreover, the only microworkers in the data set, who managed to earn a full income from platforms were the ones working on specialised tasks. Their good situation within the microworking market does not, however, mean that they experience good working conditions in general:

*Because I was working 8 hours on that company, and then I had to work on the other companies to not lose, to not be fired on the other projects. Yeah, I was working like 12, 13, 14 hours per day. *laughter* Yes, it was very hard. That's one other problem, because when I get multiple projects at a time, I have to take at least most of them or else they can fire me. Yeah, I was like on the project in November when this one starts and I stopped working, there because I couldn't handle any more projects. And the manager told me, okay, that's fine, you can rest. Okay. In other words, she told me, okay, we will find to go and do other things.*

Interviewee 9, Portugal

Microwork, being an unstable form of employment, is thus by its essence an insecure job which demands workers to be resourceful and mindful in planning their expenses and professional activities. Similarly to more traditional freelancing, there can be times with a lot of tasks available and periods when work is hard to find. Therefore, even if someone can navigate the microworking platforms very well and receive good pay, it is never particularly easy to sustain oneself and earn a steady source of income.

Divides among microworkers

This section will further elaborate on the hinted above differences in the personal situation and the labour market context, in which microworkers live.

Excluded from the labour market

A prominent group of microworkers emerging from the data consists of people who, for a variety of reasons, find themselves excluded from the traditional labour market.

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For the interviewees who are incapacitated to work due to physical injuries or disabilities, microwork allows them to subsidise their income from welfare benefits, which elevates their standards of living and helps them satisfy their need to stay professionally active. Government pension eases some of the financial hardships faced by the incapacitated people, however, it is rarely high enough to cover all the life expenses. An especially difficult situation is that of the disabled persons who have no experience in the labour market, and therefore no savings and low employability prospects.

I am on disability payments, so I don't make that much money, which is part of the reason why I got into the microwork as well, I want to say, to kind of supplement the small income I have, because, obviously, I haven't worked for very long in my life, and yeah. And I'm just always on the lookout like, hey, how can I improve my situation?

Interviewee 4, Germany

Having physical disabilities also comes with challenges such as the inability to work regular hours or keep up with productivity quotas equally every day. Thus, microwork is a much more accessible earning option compared to traditional and temporary jobs in which employers are more likely to control the spatial-temporal whereabouts of their employees.

Notably, although some workers in this group were previously working primarily physical jobs, rendering their experiences inadequate for regular remote employment possibilities, microwork was also an option chosen by the incapacitated interviewees previously employed in white-collar jobs. Interviewee 15, from Spain, despite coming from business management and external commerce educational and professional background, could no longer work their job after being injured and thus, turned to microwork:

And this summer I have been working, but I got an injury in my knee. So I have been the whole year not able to physically work. So I took advantage of the time to...I made profit out of my injury to be able to make a profit online. And that's how I started working online, researching on my own. I searched on the Internet different ways to make money online.

Although for many jobs physical presence of employees is either required or desirable, it remains quite puzzling why, despite the developments in digital connectivity, there are no more remote opportunities available for positions that rely purely on workers'

knowledge and expertise. Certainly, microwork could be praised for professionally activating groups of people who are otherwise difficult to employ – however, one could think that modern technology would render these difficulties irrelevant.

Besides the physically incapacitated microworkers, some interviewees struggle with mental health issues that can be aggravated by the working conditions they experience in the labour market. Severe stress, loud and overstimulating environments, as well as a fast pace of living and high expectations employers have for their subordinates all create circumstances that are difficult to bear for people with mental health conditions. In this lens, microwork is not only an employment type that bypasses the unwanted social interaction, commute, or fear of deadlines, but also serves as a low-threshold, low-risk form of professional activation for people who otherwise barely manage to get out of their bed.

But that was something that I just found very attractive because it was easier to access. It was a way to get some extra pocket money without really having to do much because I could choose what I wanted to do. I'm also dependent on how much time I had and how I felt that day. [...] I suffered from depression and anxiety for most of the last year [...]. I was locked on for, like half the year here and there wasn't much I could do or felt like doing. So that was one way of regaining some sense of agency, perhaps for myself because I had this chance to just do a small task, receive a small compensation and to feel like sense of maybe achievements or have an award. I mean, I wouldn't credit that for my mental health today, but maybe it was a small little stepping stone that just helps to bring some sort of routine or feeling of achievement into my day-to-day.

Interviewee 8, Germany

While one must acknowledge the role of microworking platforms in bringing job opportunities to marginalised groups, it is nevertheless worthy of pondering why the labour market does not offer more accommodations to the needs of people with physical and mental conditions.

Poor job choice variety in the labour market

Besides the workers who experience exclusion from the labour market due to their health issues, there is a group of people whose lifestyles and preferences are incompatible

with what jobs are offered on the labour market. These people might find themselves in a life situation that diminishes their employability, for example, they are moving to a small town to care for their sick parent or having a small child at home to raise. Being confined to home due to the responsibilities to their relatives, as well as the exhaustion that comes from performing care labour, prompt individuals who find themselves in such situations to be resourceful in their work search. Interviewee 12 from Portugal, although still formally employed at the time of the interview, explains she decided to start doing transcription microtasks, and why she is contemplating quitting her job:

Working experience, okay. So I work full time as a flight attendant. Actually, nothing to do with my formal education, but I've been doing this for more than ten years now. Planning on quitting this job because it becomes very exhausting to me, and now that I became a mom recently, is not really fitting my needs. That's why I'm also looking for other opportunities.

Additionally, she considered the possibility of reducing her working hours to a part-time format and using the time she would spend at home with her child to complete microtasks. Therefore, even though she would formally scale down her employment, in practice her life would still be filled up with work. For those resigning from their full-time positions, working less is often not the goal in itself – they still prefer to work more and save more money, but on the conditions that are better suited to their life circumstances.

A related group of microworkers consists of students struggling to find a side job with flexible hours to fit around their studies and people with unconventional careers, often in creative domains such as acting, writing, and crafting, who cannot live off the income earned in their preferred jobs. While for these people monetary gains are not the main priority, as they put either their education or their passion first, they acknowledge their need for an additional income to relieve their budget. Moreover, as the availability of work in the creative field is largely unstable, depending on the number of commissions or projects a person takes, it is often necessary for these workers to dedicate themselves to microwork while they are not involved in their main pursuits.

I write books. So when I'm working on a book, for example, I don't give too much time to spend on the platform because I need to write every day. So I spend my time on it. So last year, I was writing a novel, and I was writing one, maybe 2 hours in the

morning. And then after that, I was working on my own things and I was doing other things. This year since I already finished this novel, now I have much more free time and I'm dedicating more time to this work [microwork]. I could say that it's around almost like a full time job.

Interviewee 2, Spain

Temporary jobs, despite the finite contract duration, will thus often not provide enough flexibility for the people who need a lot of free time during their creative processes, or who might need to take time off when faced with inspirations, a big bulk of commissioned orders, or a role in an upcoming theatre play. Even when a contract can be relatively easy to terminate, looking for a new job and onboarding all take time. Moreover, despite the high dualisation and liberalisation of the labour market in Portugal, where temporary employment possibilities outnumber permanent contracts, employers still expect their employees to be available full-time.

But like I said, here in Portugal, it's a bit hard to find, I don't know, work part-time, for people like my age. When I was 16, 18, I could get some jobs, but they were more like full time and I couldn't do them.

Interviewee 1, Portugal

For students, who are often committed to their studies and either live with their parents or largely rely on their parents' income, microwork is a way of relieving their families and earning 'beer money' – income to spend on their personal entertainment.

And basically I do these tasks for just part-time -as a part-time - and I earn some...to earn some beer money kind of thing. So yeah. It takes quite a bit of time for me, but still, I earn an easy amount of money or whatever.

Interviewee 9, Germany

However, despite none of the student-interviewees experiencing pressure to work, there were some significant differences in the context of their choice to do microwork, depending on their location. In Germany, interviewees held student assistant and tutor positions at their universities and thus looked for an extra boost to their income that would require minimal effort and commitment. Hence, they often learned about microwork through

a Reddit sub-forum r/beermoney, dedicated to discussing no-hustle opportunities to make some additional money. The community description, which reads ‘*You shouldn't expect to make a living, but it is possible to make extra cash on the side for your habits/needs.*’ encompasses the motivation driving German students to do microwork.

In Spain and Portugal, on the other hand, students expressed frustration with finding quality part-time jobs that were compatible with their lifestyles and provided good working conditions. Although not financially pressed to work to support their living, students in the Mediterranean region also wished to make some money for their entertainment or to save it for the future. Therefore, in this context, performing microwork is a smart alternative to working a demanding job that forces students to sacrifice their study time. As some microworking platforms have their mobile apps, students can capitalise on the time they spend commuting or taking breaks from studying, which frees them to enjoy going out with their friends or relaxing in general.

Echoing some of the conclusions drawn in the previous section, it appears that the way the labour market is currently structured leaves out some of people. While the groups of microworkers discussed in the paragraphs above have significantly more freedom to choose other employment than microwork, they would be forced to sacrifice their commitments to their relatives, education, and creative careers.

Precarity and immigration

An important part of the results chapter is dedicated to the immigrants, who were represented in the sample among microworkers from all 3 countries. Nevertheless, microworking migrants were the most prevalent in the German sample – they also had the worst labour market and/or microwork experiences, regardless of their qualifications and education levels.

The biggest contributor to the lack of success in the German labour market is the lack of proficiency in the German language, which is a prerequisite in white and blue-collar jobs alike. This problem was not expressed by the immigrants living in other countries; however, they either came from the same or similar language background – Brazilian living in Portugal, Italian living in Spain – or were native in a language that many tourists and rich immigrants spoke in – this was true for the Germans living in Spanish tourist destinations. A Serbian interviewee working a corporate job in Spain claimed she arrived in the country

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when international companies were opening their offices there, and speaking good English was a more important prerequisite than speaking Spanish.

In contrast, the immigrant interviewees represented in the German sample were native languages of different language groups, which might make it more difficult to achieve fluency in German. Finishing studies at German universities in highly technical subjects related to computer science was as little of an aid in getting employment, as having diverse professional qualifications, even in back-office jobs that require no contact with clients. For some immigrants, this language level prerequisite is rooted in employers' aversion to hiring foreigners:

The few feedbacks that I got from about two or three companies, they based it on language because they said they deal with outside customers and most of their customers are German companies and so they need someone who is fluent. But the tasks that I do are not front end, where I have to communicate with businesses. I'm basically a programmer developer. I just thought it was kind of just a cheesy excuse to see we are just not giving the job there. For most of the companies, they just not reply, they just don't give a reason why.

Interviewee 10, Germany

While it was unclear what the level of German each of the immigrant interviewees spoke, it is concerning how high the threshold for entering the labour market is. For these microworkers, the story of migrations is deeply entangled with their struggles with finding employment. Meanwhile, the change of residence was either irrelevant to the job history and work experiences of immigrants living in Portugal and Spain or played a positive role by enabling them to access more work opportunities. For example, a German living in Mallorca was qualified for a variety of relatively well-paid surveys targeted specifically towards the Germans living in this location, as companies wanted to gather commercial intelligence about this group. This showcases that the struggles of immigrants in Germany are not a universal migrant struggle, and might require more attention from the policy makers.

Work spilling into other spheres of life

Among the interviewed microworkers, some held comfortable positions in sectors such as finance, aviation, and ICT, wishing to create more means for investments. Office

jobs, since they most often require the use of a computer, allow workers to generate additional income from microwork, while still being paid on the clock. In some jobs, people make use of the idle time when they are confined to the office:

So occasionally I will have to work very long hours, and it's not because I have to work a lot, but it's because I have to wait for somebody else to finish their work first until I can move on. [...] And during that time, I usually was reading the news, reading stock markets and whatnot. [...] And so I signed up to several crowd working platforms.

Interviewee 11, Germany

Meanwhile, other interviewees working jobs requiring high intellectual effort chose to perform microwork during breaks throughout the workday, as a form of stimulating yet productive relaxation. Interviewees often mentioned that if not for microwork, they would spend their time watching TV series or scrolling social media, which they viewed as a significantly worse alternative to microwork.

Others, notably in Spain, owned property and earned their income passively through rentals. There are also people living off their savings, or retirement pension, motivated to spend their time in a productive manner and stay in touch with the developments in the tech industry. While money generated through microwork is a nice add-on to spend on gifts or holidays, many interviewees were reluctant to classify microwork as work, feeling as if it did not require enough time and effort compared to a regular job. At the same time, not everyone accepted microwork as a hobby or leisure activity, acknowledging it is something different from the things they would do to relax.

It's not a second job because I quit the job that I had to get on Remotask. But it's... I can't consider it a job. It's like a paying activity. Like you said. It's something that I'm doing, it's like a hobby that's not so... It doesn't give me so many rewards like dopamine, like gaming or something else. But it's a hobby that I have that is getting me paid.

Interviewee 15, Portugal

Therefore, many interviewees, independent of their socio-economic status, would allow microwork to take over their free time, which makes them feel productive yet not quite at work.

Although some microworkers showed they had excellent boundary-making practices in terms of work-life balance and applied rules for themselves about how long and at what time they wanted to complete tasks, others struggled with keeping microwork's influence over their lives under control. Microwork can be completed at any time of the day; however, there is no guarantee that the tasks will be always available. As many requesters are based overseas, tasks often appear at night, prompting some of the microworkers to disrupt their sleeping schedule to check on tasks.

*I woke up and I see the time. 'Oh this is the time normally usually this appears'. [...]
 But this is a good one because if I could be at the beginning, there was a lot of hits
 and in 1 hour I could do €25.*

Interviewee 5, Spain

Moreover, due to high competition, microworkers must race to complete tasks until they disappear from the website. A common bad practice experienced by the interviewees is that of the requesters not rewarding the workers for their work if they have completed the tasks after the required number of respondents was reached. That means that microworkers would be either automatically kicked out of the task or by the end they would learn about being disqualified from receiving financial rewards. Microworkers can also be penalised for completing tasks too fast, which makes the algorithm assume they do not pay proper attention to the content of tasks. Considering how low the pay for most microworking opportunities is, forcing people to spend more time working than necessary appears to be unethical.

Most of the interviewees have found themselves in such a situation at least once. The more affluent microworkers would simply opt out of the platforms where they faced mistreatment. However, those in the direst need of money or either in unstable employment or unemployed would take rejection from tasks very harshly. Besides the time commitment going to waste, microworkers felt the most insecure about their own self-worth. Being treated in a disrespectful way by the platforms and requesters bears detrimental effects on the people who already lack confidence in their skills and abilities. Therefore, it appears that the

negative aspects of microwork might resonate harder among the marginalised groups of people.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The aim of the study was to investigate how the dualisation of European labour markets contributes to the experiences of microwork among microworkers from Germany, Portugal, and Spain. The analysis of data shows that the microworkers belonging to marginalised social groups that are excluded from the primary labour markets are more exposed to hardships of microwork, while the people coming to platforms from the insider sector are not as affected by the problems of microwork, such as account suspension and late or missing payments. Labour market insiders are selective about the kind of microwork they perform and opt for tasks that offer higher pay, while the outsiders can be less discriminate in their choices. Despite being worse off at microwork compared to their regularly employed peers, the outsiders value microwork, as the labour market either does not offer them jobs accommodated to their special needs, or they struggle with finding employment in general. Therefore, microwork, despite offering precarious conditions, is often an alternative to unemployment or low-quality side jobs.

Theoretical implications

There are several theoretical implications worth discussing. First, this thesis supports Giustini's (2023) theory on the dualisation of microwork, which encompasses the idea that microwork aggregates the existing primary and secondary sector divide of the labour market, as well as internally bifurcates into superior and inferior work categories. In her study, Giustini (2023) found that precarious microwork targets the population of workers who are already marginalised and struggle with finding employment in the secondary labour market, while the better tasks are intended for and attract high-skilled educated individuals. While these findings were mostly confirmed in this paper, it is worth noting that the situation of market outsiders in the sample is diverse. Some microworkers are excluded from the labour market due to incapacitation of work, and others could theoretically find employment, albeit at the cost of their other commitments. Therefore, the issue with the labour market might be not only that it is closed to certain groups of people but also that it does not match the needs and expectations who find themselves in non-standard situations.

This argument resonates with the research by Dunn (2020) who investigated the motivations of gig workers in engaging in platform economy, and their overall evaluation of the quality of jobs they took. The results show that gig workers were motivated by the layoffs in their regular jobs, the need to live close to their family despite the lack of vacancies in the area, or the necessity for flexible work that would match their study schedule (Dunn, 2020). Although the evaluations of job quality varied among workers, most of them claimed they would continue to engage in gig work until their situation would no longer require it.

A different look on the labour market outsiders' participation in microwork can be shed by Jäger and co-authors (2024), who argue that workers who argue that workers in low-paying jobs grossly underestimate the pay offered by other companies, and only adjust their job search strategies after they are informed about the realistic overview of their employment possibilities. Many of the interviewees whose data was examined in this thesis began doing microwork after briefly researching options on how to earn money online. Perhaps for some of them, there are better remote employment possibilities, or better quality microworking tasks available, yet they have no idea how to search for them. Therefore, the decision to perform microwork might be an outcome of being uninformed about the labour market and one's employability.

Turning to a different strand of research, this paper found that the problems of microworkers discussed by Veale et al. (2023) were also prevalent in the sample. Microworkers did indeed face unjustified account suspension, unfair automated decision-making, for example when they would be kicked out of a task for being too quick, and lack of communication from platforms and requesters when trying to address these issues. However, the interviewees working on Appen and other platforms offering transcription, translation, and SEO writing tasks expressed their satisfaction communicating with the platforms and requesters, who were quick and eager to solve their problems. Therefore, the problems proposed by Veale et al. (2023) are not equally faced by all the microworkers and are rather unfairly experienced by the less fortunate who found themselves working on unethical platforms.

Moreover, the negative aspects of microwork, such as low pay, can be mitigated when workers perceive their microworking activities as leisure (Jiang & Wagner, 2024), which was the case for some of the interviewees. In this leisure lens, microwork is perceived as a productive activity that bears fruit in the form of monetary gains; meanwhile, other leisure

activities, such as watching movies, hanging out with friends or playing video games are thought to not only incur financial costs (Jiang & Wagner, 2024). Although none of the interviewees in the sample was against having fun with their friends, they perceived microwork as a superior activity to watching movies or scrolling social media. While there is nothing wrong with wanting to earn money, it is nevertheless concerning how microworkers seem to be lacking in active, fulfilling hobbies, which leaves a void that can be filled by microwork. A study by Jiang et al. (2021) showcases that many microworkers working for Amazon Mechanical Turk are motivated by boredom and a desire to structure their time with microactivities that are easy to complete, and therefore bring immediate satisfaction. It is therefore interesting to explore the psychological condition of microworkers, and the overall quality of their life, outside of work. It appears that microwork could potentially be related to some bigger, overarching societal issues, such as lack of time and energy to develop individual hobbies.

This research also reinforces an observation made by Dustin (2018), who argues that German dualisation policies were very effective in protecting the interest of labour market insiders, who can enjoy job security and protections, as well as low prices for the services offered by the underprivileged workers in the secondary labour market. In the sample, the experiences of native German microworkers and immigrants were starkly different, with the second group facing more disadvantages of microwork and struggling to find good employment in the German labour market. In contrast, native German microworkers, if they were not students, most often enjoyed good stable employment and participated in microwork to save money for investments and stay productive.

Meanwhile, Portuguese and Spanish microworkers, who are more homogeneously unstably employed compared to Germans (Cardoso & Branco, 2018; Rizza et al., 2022) exhibited fewer differences in their experiences of microwork. High costs of living prompt most people to search for secondary sources of income, even when they already have a relatively good job. However, due to the secondary labour market being largely deregulated, the job offer is not attractive, with poor working conditions or requirements such as full-time availability. In this optic, Portuguese and Spanish microworkers choose an alternative to a side-job which they would otherwise have to get anyway. By contrast, marginalised microworkers in Germany often turn to platforms when they cannot find any employment. Rather than arguing that microworkers in one country have better experiences compared to

other countries, this study recognises the qualitatively different dynamics of microwork, depending on the regulatory environment of the country a person is located in.

Practical implications

Considering how microwork can be an attractive work option in light of the lack of better employment prospects, the claims of microwork's emancipatory and empowering potential proposed by Karnani and McKague (2019) provide a promising outlook for the future of microwork. In their paper, Karnani and McKague (2019) discuss impact sourcing, which is the platform's practice of employing marginalised and disadvantaged workers living in rural areas. Rather than capitalising on the precarious situation of the poor, impact sourcing platforms plan their work organisation to facilitate work engagement and promotion prospects for the underskilled and unemployed. While the authors (2019) discuss the concept in the context of the developing world and discuss some successful initiatives, other accounts report that some platforms double down on impact sourcing to increase profits, worsening the situation of people they were meant to empower (Muldoon et al., 2023). Moreover, as argued by López and Sánchez (2024), impact sourcing misplaces the efforts of helping marginalised people, as instead of improving their access to good work, labour rights and education, it provides them with low-wage work opportunities with the assumption that any work is better than none.

Nevertheless the criticism, microwork platforms could potentially be designed in a socially responsible way to improve the situation of marginalised workers. For example, microtasks could be designed in a way that would facilitate workers' learning and help them gradually build up skills for more complex jobs. Moreover, instead of treating microwork as a solution to unemployment, platforms could serve as temporary employment placeholders for the time when microworkers would undergo professional training. Therefore, microwork would be a transitional step in a bigger social scheme for job activation of the underprivileged people.

Another project to undertake that could potentially improve the situation of microworkers might be the development of platform quality criteria and official platform ratings, which could not only inform microworkers where to spend their time and effort but also steer the platforms into improving their overall fairness and quality. Such an initiative can be observed on the website www.fair.work founded to improve working conditions in the

platform economy by sharing platform ratings, reports, and other publications, informing the public about the precarity and challenges of digital labour. Fairwork devised its own methodologies, each specifically tailored to assess on-site platform labour, crowdwork, and AI-focused microwork, and is in the process of creating similar criteria for online sex work.

On a state level, besides supporting Fairwork in the financial and PR aspects, regulators could take inspiration from the principles of fair online platform labour proposed by the organisation (Fairwork, n.d.). Some of these principles include paying workers on time the equivalent of at least minimum wage, mitigating overwork through platform design, and drafting clear and comprehensible contracts and terms of work. By following these principles throughout the legislative process, regulators could improve their effectiveness at addressing the interest of microworkers.

Limitations and future research

This thesis is largely limited in the scope it could potentially encompass. To better understand the contribution that labour market dualisation brought to microwork, it could be worthwhile to compare clusters of countries that exhibited similar dualisation policy patterns in the past. Based on the framework outlined by Rizza et al. (2022), these blocks can be classified as follows: continental Europe (France and Germany; dualisation driven by desire for economic competitiveness), Southern Regime (Italy and Spain; focused on fighting unemployment), Nordic model (Sweden and Denmark; professional activation as the main policy tool), and the United Kingdom (de-regulation followed by the lack of employability policies). Questions that naturally follow are: What are the origins of microwork in countries with labour markets that developed in a different regulatory context? Would the experience of microwork differ in countries that underwent post-socialist liberal transformation?

Secondly, this thesis could have perhaps looked into how microwork is, if it is at all, regulated in each country represented in the sample to better situate the experiences of microworkers in the regulatory context they live in. Moreover, as this study touches on the narratives of microwork as non-work expressed by the interviewees, more research into narratives of microwork could unveil where these narratives come from and what are their implications. This branch of inquiry is inspired by the work of Oei (2018) who examines the evolution of the gig work narratives and the role they play in the attitudes of workers, customers, and regulators.

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Conclusion

Perhaps regulation of microwork, although necessary to improve the working conditions of microworkers, is just a part of a much bigger socio-economic project that must be undertaken by supranational institutions, states, and private companies. Such a project could encompass policies aimed at the overall improvement of the labour market – the quality of jobs it offers, as well as the capacities of the working population. It is truly a shame that in the age of digital connectivity, many people looking for online work have no better option than microwork, and that many employers still do not offer proper facilities for workers with physical and mental disabilities. In part, microwork is exactly what marginalised people search for – flexible, accessible work with low entry barriers. Could the employers meet, or be aided to meet, these criteria while creating more secure and fulfilling job posts?

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Appendix A – Sample description

Germany						
#	Country of origin	Employment	Most used platforms	Gender	Education	Age
Interviewee 1	Bulgaria	Part-time employee in various places	UHRS, Clickworker, Microworkers	Male	Bachelor's degree	37
Interviewee 2	Vietnam	PhD student	Amazon Mechanical Turk	Female	Master's degree	38
Interviewee 3	Yugoslavia	Miscellaneous video production industry job	Amazon Mechanical Turk, Microworkers	Male	Bachelor's degree	50+
Interviewee 4	Germany	Disability pension, content creator	Amazon Mechanical Turk, UserTesting, Prolific, UHRS	Female	High-school degree	38
Interviewee 5	Germany	Aviation industry	Clickworker, Prolific	Male	Apprenticeship	57
Interviewee 6	Germany	Unemployed	Toluna, Prolific, Clickworker	Male	Middle-school degree	27
Interviewee 7	Germany	SEO freelancer	Clickworker, Textbroker	Male	Master's degree	45+
Interviewee 8	Germany	Student	Clickworker, UHRS	Female	High-school degree	23
Interviewee 9	Germany	Student	Prolific, Testable Minds	Male	High-school degree	27
Interviewee 10	Ghana	Unemployed	Picoworkers, Respondents.io, Toluna, Ipsos	Male	Master's degree	30
Interviewee 11	Germany	Banker	Clickworker	Male	Master's degree	37
Interviewee 12	Germany	Student	Amazon Mechanical Turk, Prolific	Male	High-school degree	22
Interviewee 13	Germany	Warehouse supervisor and docent	German platforms	Male	Master's degree	49
Interviewee	Tunisia	Accountant	Clickbank,	Male	University education	30

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OUTLINING THE PATTERNS OF DUALISATION IN MICROWORK.

14		(informal employment)	Mechanical Turk			
Interviewee 15	Ghana	Software development	Clickworker, Appen, Picoworkers	Female	Master's degree	37
Portugal						
#	Country of origin	Employment	Most used platforms	Gender	Education	Age
Interviewee 1	Brazil	Substitute teacher	Clickworker	Female	PhD	44
Interviewee 2	Portugal	Student	Prolific	Female	High-school degree	19
Interviewee 3	Portugal	Software developer	Prolific, Appen	Male	University education	25
Interviewee 4	Portugal	SAP consultant	Appen	Male	Master's degree	26
Interviewee 5	Portugal	Retired	Appen, Teamwork, Prolific	Female	Master's degree	68
Interviewee 6	Portugal	Landlord in tourist sector	Appen, Toloka, UHRS	Male	High-school degree	50
Interviewee 7	Portugal	Unemployed	Appen, OneForma, Clickworker	Female	High-school degree	44
Interviewee 8	Portugal	Tester	Utest, Appen, Clickworker	Male	Master's degree	x
Interviewee 9	Portugal	Microworker	Appen	Male	University education	x
Interviewee 10	Brazil	Microworker; incapability to work pension	Appen, Clickwork, Tolokka	Female	Master's degree	38+
Interviewee 11	Portugal	Freelance craftsmanship	Appen, TranscribeGuru	Female	University education	37
Interviewee 12	Portugal	Flight attendant	Appen	Female	Master's degree	30
Interviewee 13	Portugal	Journalist	Surveytime, Surveyi Portugal	Male	University education	45
Interviewee 14	Portugal	Student	Microworkers	Male	High-school degree	20
Interviewee 15	Portugal	Unemployed	Remotasks	Male	High-school degree	18
Spain						

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OUTLINING THE PATTERNS OF DUALISATION IN MICROWORK.

#	Country of origin	Employment	Most used platforms	Gender	Education	Age
Interviewee 1	Spain	Stay-at-home mother	Clickworker, Appen, Nevo	Female	High-school degree	25
Interviewee 2	Italy	Tutor, writer, microworker	Clickworker	Male	Master's degree	x
Interviewee 3	Spain	Unemployed	Prolific	Male	University education	56
Interviewee 4	Argentina	Systems analyst	Appen, Clickworker	Female	Professional qualification	33
Interviewee 5	Spain	Receptionist	Clickworkers, Microworkers, UHRS	Male	Middle-school degree	51
Interviewee 6	Germany	Cocktail bar owner	OneForma, Appen, Clickworker	Female	Bachelor's degree	35
Interviewee 7	Spain	Student	Appen	Female	High-school degree	22
Interviewee 8	Spain	Gas station clerk	Humanatic, Clickworker	Male	Bachelor's degree	26
Interviewee 9	Germany	Translator, microworker	OneForma, PakteraEdge, Appen	Female	University degree	42
Interviewee 10	Serbia	Undisclosed corporate job	Clickworker, uTest	Female	Bachelor's degree	58
Interviewee 11	Spain	Private teacher, student in a psychology practice	Clickworker	Female	Bachelor's degree	24
Interviewee 12	Spain	Unemployed	Clickworker, Appen	Female	Professional qualifications	50
Interviewee 13	Spain	Student in an internship	Clickworker	Female	Bachelor's degree	22
Interviewee 14	Spain	Theater actress	Clickworker, Toloka	Female	Professional qualifications	25
Interviewee 15	Spain	Incapability to work pension	Clickworker	Male	Master's degree	36

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 OUTLINING THE PATTERNS OF DUALISATION IN MICROWORK.

Appendix B – Coding tree

<https://imgur.com/a/k71dCgI>

