

## **Surviving, but not Thriving? Lives of immigrants in the platform economy**

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In recent years, there has been a growth in non-standard working arrangements (ie. Contract work, solo self-employment, multiple job holding). This is increasingly prevalent with the influx of the gig economy workers. Research in this area, as it relates to immigrant workers, has been understudied. In general, little is known about the demographics of the workers in the gig economy and more specifically, the platform economy, and why they chose to pursue it. Often lauded as an increased form of income mobility or method to obtain a flexible schedule, there is a lack of research on the long-term effects of this form of work on newcomers, and this is fertile ground of research for immigration scholars, economists, and policy makers alike.

This research is a qualitative study using in-depth interviews to understand the factors, behaviour, and decision-making processes that immigrants go through when deciding to engage in the platform economy, and subsequent effects on their well-being. The benefit of this study is to better understand if this form of employment can lead to the outcome of workers being marginally attached to the labour market, and the factors that can lead to these outcomes. These findings can reveal if precarity in the platform economy is further exacerbated amongst immigrants, as it leaves them in a stage of being comfortable enough to survive, but not actually enough to allow them to thrive in the labour market.

### **Biography**

Laura Lam is a researcher currently completing her Master of Arts in Immigration and Settlement Studies at Ryerson University, and an incoming Ph.D. student at the University of Toronto in Fall 2020. With her background in marketing and storytelling, she has been an advocate for impact-driven businesses, and has worked in a marketing capacity with various startups and accelerators. She is now a researcher studying the nexus of entrepreneurship, employment and the integration experience of newcomers to Canada. She completed her Bachelor of Commerce from the University of British Columbia, with a specialization in marketing and sustainability.