



# Boundaryless careers in the gig economy: An oxymoron?

Dominique Kost<sup>1</sup> | Christian Fieseler<sup>2</sup> | Sut I Wong<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Oslo Business School, Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway

<sup>2</sup>Norwegian Business School, BI, Norway

## Correspondence

Dominique Kost, Oslo Business School, Oslo Metropolitan University, Pilestredet 35, 0166 Oslo, Norway.

Email: domkos@oslomet.no

## Funding information

Norges Forskningsråd, Grant/Award Number: 247725/O70

## Abstract

Advocates of the boundaryless career perspective have relied to a great extent on the assumption that actors take responsibility for their own career development and that they consequently take charge of developing their career competencies. In this provocation piece, we debate the obstructions to and potential ways to promote boundaryless careers in the gig economy, which—despite appearing on the surface to offer suitable conditions for boundaryless careers—suffers from numerous conditions that hinder such careers. Thus, boundaryless careers in the gig economy could be an oxymoron. In particular, we conjecture that intraorganisational and interorganisational career boundaries restrict gig workers' development of relevant career competencies and thus limit their mobility. We then put forward the notion that we have to consider moving away from traditional, employer-centric human resource management and introduce new forms of network-based and self-organised human resource management practices (in the form of collaborative communities of practice) in order to diminish these boundaries.

## KEYWORDS

Boundaryless career perspective, career boundaries, competency development, human resource management, gig economy

This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs License, which permits use and distribution in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, the use is non-commercial and no modifications or adaptations are made.

© 2019 The Authors. Human Resource Management Journal published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

The boundaryless career perspective relates to individual career movement—both in terms of physical mobility (i.e., an individual's actual career transitions across boundaries) and in psychological mobility (i.e., an individual's perceived capacity to make transitions such as intrarole and extrarole adjustments; Sullivan & Arthur, 2006). According to this perspective, a boundaryless career is characterised by both intraorganisational and interorganisational mobility—movement within and between organisations, respectively (Arthur, Khapova, & Wilderom, 2005; DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994). Advocates of the boundaryless career perspective have stated that career actors take responsibility for their own careers, including their own competency development (Forrier, Sels, & Stynen, 2009; Miles & Snow, 1996). This perspective is based on four assumptions concerning careers. The first is that career actors have both psychological and physical mobility. Second, when making use of their alleged mobility, these actors engage in career self-management, and this perspective thus emphasises individuals' independence from employers (Forrier et al., 2009; Miles & Snow, 1996; Zeitz, Blau, & Fertig, 2009). The third assumption is that most careers are moving towards being boundaryless and thus towards greater psychological and physical mobility. The fourth assumption is that, in general, people benefit from boundaryless careers (Zeitz et al., 2009). In line with these assumptions, the discussion regarding career development responsibilities has shifted from being organisation-centric to being individual-centric (Roper, Ganesh, & Inkson, 2010).

This raises an important question with regard to both the boundaryless career perspective and the roles HRM has in facilitating boundaryless careers: In a fluid context (e.g., that of a platform organisation) that lacks formal organisational support, to what extent can career actors develop the three career competencies (knowing how, knowing whom, and knowing why) that they need to gain career mobility (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1996)? On the surface, gig work appears to be the prime example of a boundaryless work type, as it has low thresholds for crossing between platforms and/or working for multiple platforms (Gherardi & Murgia, 2013), lacks hierarchical reporting relationships (Storey, Salaman, & Platman, 2005), has relatively low geographical and time constraints (Sturdy & Wright, 2008), and presents a high degree of autonomy in task selection (cf. Ainsworth & Hardy, 2008). These labour arrangements are novel due to the three-way relationship between (a) the workers, who are formally considered independent contractors; (b) the clients; and (c) the platforms, which effectively serve as intermediators (Cappelli & Keller, 2013). In practice, this three-way relationship diffuses formal and contractual responsibilities among gig workers, clients, and platforms.

In this provocation piece, we revisit the four abovementioned assumptions of the boundaryless career perspective to examine the challenges facing gig workers who lack HRM support structures from any organisation. Our aim is to draw attention to the contradictory nature of boundaryless careers in the gig economy by showing that the conditions that should enable such careers actually hinder their development. We argue that the diffusion of formal and contractual responsibilities in the gig economy not only gives rise to intraorganisational and interorganisational career boundaries but also discourages organisations, particularly freelance labour platforms, from providing HRM support that could help gig workers build their career competencies and cross the aforementioned boundaries. We begin by outlining the career boundaries that exist within the so-called boundaryless gig work before discussing the way in which the gig economy obstructs the emergence of HRM practices provided by a single organisation. Finally, we propose several ways in which (often undefined) forms of nontraditional HRM can support individual workers' development of boundaryless careers within the gig economy.

In doing so, we aim to contribute to the literature on boundaryless careers in three ways. First, we challenge the predominant assumptions about agency and mobility in boundaryless careers and raise awareness of the fact that, without some level of formal HRM support, gig workers will have limited chances to undertake actions such as career self-management. Second, after considering the constraints of the new gig-based employment format and the importance of HRM in gig workers' career development, we examine what discourages employer-organised HRM practices to help workers in boundaryless careers actually cross boundaries. Third, we discuss how gig workers' self-organised

communities of practice could constitute nontraditional ways of organising HRM support. By doing so, we challenge the employer-centric HRM literature as those conclusions may not be sufficient to explain the changing employment structure that workers have faced since the introduction of the gig economy. We use an employee-centric HRM perspective by outlining the boundaries that hinder gig workers, and we propose that career actors who lack employer-organised HRM and who exist in a fluid organisational context need to undertake collective efforts to create career opportunities.

Before embarking on this argument, we add an important qualification: The ability to cross the boundaries is highly dependent both on workers' individual skill sets, which, in turn, predict which platform ecosystem those workers will be most active within, and on their aptitudes for boundary crossing (Sturges, 2008). For example, gig workers who have specialised skill sets and those who work for high-end platforms are better equipped than other workers to move in and out of the gig economy, as their skills and competencies are often transferrable—an attribute that contributes to employability (Inkson, Gunz, Ganesh, & Roper, 2012; Vincent, 2016). In this sense, highly skilled workers with nonstandard employment setups tend to be better able to cope with the uncertainty that results from unsteady employment (Spreitzer, Cameron, & Garrett, 2017). Consequently, when compared with low-skilled workers, highly skilled gig workers may experience greater psychological mobility and agency, and they may have a much easier time finding work beyond the gig economy, provided that they are proactive.

## 2 | GIG WORK: THE CHANGING NATURE OF WORK AND A NEW CAREER OPTION

In recent years, digital platforms and ecosystems have disrupted industries by enlisting the work of thousands of dispersed and unorganised workers (Kneese & Rosenblat, 2014). Unlike regular workers, who are covered by relevant employment laws (minimum wage, sick leave, etc.) and taxation codes, platform gig workers are effectively self-employed and thus are responsible for their own economic upkeep and career planning (Codagnone, Abadie, & Biagi, 2016; Farrell & Greig, 2017; Graham, Hjorth, & Lehdonvirta, 2017; Spreitzer et al., 2017). Within the gig economy, a distinction exists between work that is performed online and work that is performed offline, even though both forms are digitally mediated via technology and platforms (De Groen, Maselli, & Fabo, 2016; Huws, Spencer, & Syrdal, 2018). Online work can include crowd work and freelancing via sites such as Amazon Mechanical Turk, Clickworker, and Upwork; such work is predominantly made up of disaggregated small tasks (Horton & Chilton, 2010; Howcroft & Bergvall-Kåreborn, 2018; Lehdonvirta, 2018). Offline work, by contrast, is arranged via a platform (often an app) and is performed through direct contact with customers. Offline gig work includes on-demand labour that is delivered via platforms such as Deliveroo, Uber, and TaskRabbit (Rosenblat & Stark, 2016; Sundararajan, 2016; Tassinari & Maccarrone, 2017).

Gig workers enter into formal agreements with on-demand platforms to provide services to the platforms' clients or task providers. The clients or task providers (hereafter referred to as clients) are the end users, either an individual consumer or an institution, that make a request for an individual gig worker to perform a task (Minter, 2017). On some platforms, the workers actively search for advertised projects of varying scope and requirements and then choose which to pursue by submitting applications with initial bids (which can be based on either fixed prices or hourly wages). However, many location-based labour platforms assign workers to tasks using an algorithm and determine those workers' pay rates (Kuhn & Maleki, 2017). This lack of negotiations between employer and employee in this case indicates that these platforms have the ability to exploit workers when there is a large and competitive pool of applicants. On the one hand, gig-based labour platforms have been welcomed because they have created new jobs (Lampinen & Cheshire, 2016); many workers now rely on such platforms for a majority of their incomes (Schor & Attwood-Charles, 2017). On the other hand, these platforms have been accused of creating subpar working conditions because they do not provide employment benefits, job security, and training or promotion opportunities (Brawley & Pury, 2016; Calo & Rosenblat, 2017; Chen, Mislove, & Wilson, 2015; Kalleberg, 2009).

As an example, gig work supposedly provides workers with the formal flexibility to choose where to work, when to work, and which work to perform (Kuek et al., 2015). However, scholars have questioned the actual flexibility of gig work in practice and highlighted the need for a distinction between worker-controlled and manager-controlled flexibility (Lambert, Haley-Lock, & Henly, 2012; Lehdonvirta, 2018; Shockley & Allen, 2007). As Wood (2016) noted, work scheduling is bound up in power relations. In reality, the flexibility of workers in the remote and largely anonymous gig economy has actually cut off such workers from traditional employment relationships (e.g., with co-workers), which has impacted their relationship building as well as their work performance, productivity, and ability to find meaning in their work (Grant, 2007). In addition, many of the workers who depend on platform-mediated work are becoming increasingly less mobile because the nature and affordances of those platforms dictate the type, frequency, rewards, and context of their gig work (Fuchs & Sevignani, 2013; Kingsley, Gray, & Suri, 2015; Rosenblat & Stark, 2016; Scholz, 2013).

Thus, the gig economy, as we elaborate in the following, is an interesting but a challenging setting, which tests the boundaryless career perspective. Although new, gig-based labour arrangements allow for considerable flexibility, mainstream researchers on boundaryless careers have yet to consider organisational forms in which workers are not defined as employees. As such, the assumptions that underlie boundaryless careers cannot necessarily be applied to all types of gig work. Rather, these assumptions must be adapted, as platform-based organisations, unlike traditional employers, typically do not provide career development or opportunities for movement within or between organisations—which are the core aspects of boundaryless careers (Sullivan & Arthur, 2006). As we argue, both workers and platforms benefit when better career options are developed. Somewhat counterintuitively, gig work platforms have a vested interest in attracting and retaining enough workers to ensure that they remain attractive to clients; this ensures these platforms' long-term viability (Rockmann & Ballinger, 2017). This has practical implications for platform organisations and clients alike; they could use the boundaryless career perspective to identify and overcome the boundaries that restrict gig workers' career advancement; this would cultivate more viable career options for gig workers and thus help to sustain the boundaryless labour model.

### 3 | HOW FAR CAN GIG WORKERS DEVELOP BOUNDARYLESS CAREERS AND CAREER COMPETENCIES IN THE GIG ECONOMY?

Scholars have traditionally considered boundaries to be an inherent and inevitable characteristic of any career, with broader career mobility available only in special cases (Arthur et al., 2005). Although this description is still true of some careers, it no longer reflects the various current conceptions of careers—mainly because it fails to acknowledge the increasing precariousness and market sensitivity of the workforce. Conversely, the concept of the boundaryless career emphasises workers' independence from the traditional (limited) career narrative (Arthur, 1994).

Boundaryless careers are those in which individual workers can move across boundaries between employers and/or work units within employers, develop their careers via extraorganisational networks or information, and reject existing (conventional) career opportunities for work-related or nonwork-related reasons (Arthur, 1994; Eby, Butts, & Lockwood, 2003). From this perspective, career opportunities can transcend any employer, position, or role (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996). Agency and career self-management are two elements that a career actor must possess to pursue a boundaryless career (Forrier et al., 2009; Miles & Snow, 1996; Tams & Arthur, 2010). Several assumptions underlie the boundaryless career perspective, including that boundarylessness is inherent to organisations' new network designs and that people generally benefit from boundaryless careers (Zeitz et al., 2009). Scholars have criticised these assumptions, however, by querying the extent to which these positive aspects can be generalised to all individuals, organisations, and industries (Inkson et al., 2012).

Several authors (e.g., Zeitz et al., 2009) have shown that the positive rhetoric surrounding the boundaryless career perspective only reflects the reality for certain highly educated and highly skilled professionals. In particular, women, minorities, and workers with low education levels often experience boundaryless careers as burdensome due to the lack of psychological and material resources that employers typically provide (Inkson et al., 2012; Pringle

& Mallon, 2003; Zeitz et al., 2009). As Van Buren (2003) argued, researchers on the topic of boundaryless careers have tended to overlook the harmful effects of such careers, especially in the context of a two-tiered workforce in which the upper level consists of people who have valuable and sought-after skills that enable them to demand and receive fair treatment from employers and in which the lower level consists of people whose skills are easily replaceable.

There is also the question of whether careers are largely the product of organisations or of individuals' agency, even though organisational processes clearly impact individual processes and vice versa (Inkson et al., 2012; Lazarova & Taylor, 2009). Scholars have criticised the boundaryless career perspective on this account for ignoring the support structures that allow workers to develop the career competencies that are necessary for success in boundaryless careers (Zeitz et al., 2009). A related question thus arises: How do boundaryless careers unfold? Specifically, how do workers in the gig economy develop career competencies in the absence of support from organisational or institutional HRM?

To pursue boundaryless careers that are independent of any organisation, career actors need to acquire three types of career competencies: knowing how, knowing whom, and knowing why (Arthur, Inkson, & Pringle, 1999; DeFillippi & Arthur, 1996). Knowing-how competencies comprise skills and expertise in specific fields (e.g., computer engineering). Knowing-whom competencies involve the development of career-relevant networks. Finally, the knowing-why competencies concern the career actor's motivation and professional identity. Previous researchers in this area (e.g., Arthur et al., 1999; Mayotte, 2002) have demonstrated that career actors can transfer these competencies between jobs and between employers.

Although career competencies are supposed to be independent of any specific organisation and although researchers on boundaryless careers have largely assigned the responsibility for competency building to the career actors themselves, being part of an organisation makes it easier to acquire some of these competencies. This is because the organisational resources that are needed to build such competencies often require exposure to HRM practices that are typical of traditional employment, such as on-the-job training, internal and external networking events, and certifications in specific skills. These organisational resources are crucial in the development of knowing-how competencies in particular. Furthermore, career actors within an organisation can benefit from networks of co-workers (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1996).

In contrast to the opportunities that organisations provide for the development of career competencies, neither platforms nor their clients provide many such opportunities or other formalised resources to help gig workers develop their career competencies. This is because of the mediated nature of gig work; indeed, some career competencies can be hard to acquire even for those freelancers who work offline. The centre of production for gig workers is the platform; thus, the contact between these workers and clients typically cannot take place outside of the platform (Gandini, 2019). In this way, platforms are "shadow employers" that exert considerable control over their workers by enforcing ranking systems and by applying gamified practices to incentivise maximum performance but offer little in the way of support (Friedman, 2014; Gandini, 2019). Compared with online gig workers, offline freelancers typically have more control over their work, as they often perform that work on location and over longer periods of time. Although offline freelancers do perceive skill development and expertise maintenance to be burdens (Kunda, Barley, & Evans, 2002), many are able to build long-term relationships and maintain professional networks so that they can develop knowing-whom competencies. Direct contact with customers and clients also increases these workers' knowledge of how their actions impact others, which builds their knowing-why competencies (Grant, 2007). Therefore, when compared with online gig workers, offline freelancers are more likely to develop important career competencies that they need to pursue boundaryless careers and thus can cope better with the flexibility of this type of work (Vincent, 2016).

In the next section, we discuss two boundaries in the gig economy that are based on platform structures and work designs (Kuhn & Maleki, 2017). We challenge the underlying assumptions related to mobility and agency by arguing that these boundaries hinder competency development and therefore impede both career mobility and agency. Career boundaries in the gig economy can be intraorganisational and interorganisational. Intraorganisational

boundaries impede both horizontal and vertical career transitions and can be either subjective or objective in nature. Such boundaries constrain horizontal transitions—in which contractors begin to work directly with clients in contexts beyond the confines of the platform (e.g., an Upwork freelancer who begins to work directly with a client). They also restrict vertical (i.e., hierarchical) transitions—in which workers achieve better pay and higher status (e.g., an Uber driver who is hired to work at Uber's corporate office). Interorganisational boundaries, meanwhile, relate to the boundary between the gig economy and traditional work. We argue that there is—at least in principle—a relatively high degree of flexibility in terms of workers' choices among platforms within the gig economy but that interorganisational boundaries can constrain these workers from readily using their experiences to transition into more traditional forms of employment. Furthermore, we propose that both inter- and intraorganisational boundaries impede gig workers' physical mobility (cf. Sullivan & Arthur, 2006).

As an addendum to the introductory qualifications regarding the extent to which the aforementioned boundaries impede gig workers' ability to have boundaryless careers, this ability may also depend on the gig workers' skill sets. Crossing interorganisational boundaries may be easier for those gig workers who have specialised skill sets and those who are serving niche markets than for those gig workers who have generalised (replicable) skill sets (Inkson et al., 2012; Vincent, 2016). Gig workers with specialised skill sets can make their work more visible and build portfolios, so they are more likely than those with generalised skill sets to build career competencies that are transferrable to work outside of the gig economy (Graham et al., 2017; Schwartz, 2018). Intraorganisational boundaries, however, apply to all gig workers—regardless of their skill sets—due to the digital nature of gig work, as neither type of gig worker has access to the platform or the client. Furthermore, gig work is structured in a manner that impedes upward mobility.

Finally, as an important additional qualification, some individuals work in the gig economy while also maintaining full-time traditional employment; they may do this to financially supplement their regular jobs or to fund their studies or hobbies. For these supplemental gig workers, the boundaries described in this article may matter less than for workers who are more reliant on the gig economy, as the flexibility of the gig economy (in terms of when, where, how many, and which assignments they complete) serves to offset these boundaries. However, these boundaries are significant for a growing number of individuals, so any measures that overcome these boundaries are increasingly important.

## 4 | INTRAORGANISATIONAL AND INTERORGANISATIONAL CAREER BOUNDARIES IN THE GIG ECONOMY

### 4.1 | Intraorganisational boundaries

Intraorganisational boundaries are the constraints that hinder gig workers' horizontal transitions (i.e., their ability to start working directly with clients) and their vertical transitions (i.e., their upward mobility). We consider this boundary both subjective and objective: subjective in the sense that its limitation on personal growth opportunities restricts gig workers' sense of mobility and objective because the platform and the gig worker agree on the boundaries between them.

Two important structural aspects, which, at first glance, may seem to increase boundarylessness, actually impede horizontal and vertical transitions. These are, first, the flexibility to freely make decisions regarding which tasks to perform, when to perform them, and for whom to perform them; and, second, the nature of the flat work design (without hierarchies). These structural aspects are core features that supposedly increase gig workers' independence from organisations but that actually hinder their development of career competencies. First, the platforms limit and predefine gig workers' interactions with clients, and any circumvention of these limits is discouraged. In addition, any feedback provided to the workers—if it exists at all—is limited and specifically task related, which restricts the workers' potential for personal growth and learning (Gandini, 2019). The lack of feedback regarding both tasks and performance makes it harder for gig workers to develop knowing-how competencies and to subsequently build self-

esteem in their careers (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994). Second, gig workers face greater challenges than other workers in terms of making sense of their work (Kost, Fieseler, & Wong, 2018); this lack of such opportunities for sense making may further hinder the development of workers' know-why career competencies (Weick & Berlinger, 1989).

The absence of direct contact with clients and with colleagues implies that gig workers have reduced opportunities to build meaningful social networks and knowing-whom competencies that support their career advancement (Seibert, Kraimer, & Liden, 2001). This detracts from their ability to identify with the gig platforms, with the surrounding community, and with their work (Boons, Stam, & Barkema, 2015; Kuhn, 2016). Social networks are fundamental to boundaryless careers because they enable workers to develop knowing-whom competencies and to access other people's knowledge and resources, which helps with the skill maintenance demands that changing technology imposes (Arthur, 1994; Eby et al., 2003).

At the same time, vertical transitions are structurally almost impossible within the gig economy, in which most jobs are designed to be in a flat structure, without hierarchies (Ruggieri, Mosconi, Poponi, & Silvestri, 2016). Gig workers typically do not have supervisors in the traditional sense and consequently cannot advance to supervisory positions. The career of a gig worker thus can largely remain stagnant and often can only develop horizontally, such as when an Uber driver decides to drive for Lyft instead. Platforms have no obligation to provide training and/or career advancement opportunities to help gig workers develop their careers (Minter, 2017). This lack of intraorganisational career development affects not only gig workers' ability to develop knowing-how competencies (e.g., managerial skills) but also their employment opportunities outside of the gig economy (Webster & Beehr, 2013).

## 4.2 | Interorganisational boundaries: Boundaries between the gig economy and employment outside of the gig economy

We also consider boundaries that prevent gig workers from moving outside of the gig economy. Boundaryless careers are characterised by such interorganisational mobility (Arthur et al., 2005). Because gig workers are not bound to any particular organisation, they should in theory be able to freely move in and out of the gig economy. However, due to the aforementioned limitations in career competency development, interorganisational transitions (and thus boundaryless careers) are often difficult for gig workers to achieve.

There are three factors that can lead to the development of such interorganisational boundaries. First, they can result from subjective intraorganisational boundaries that occur at the individual level. Such intraorganisational boundaries hinder the development of transferrable knowing-whom, knowing-how, and knowing-why competencies, which (in the long run) could cause gig workers to believe that they are unable to leave the gig economy. The lack of competency development and/or career advancement training in gig employment (Bidwell & Briscoe, 2010), as well as the lack of opportunities for social interactions that could lead to valuable networking and, eventually, employment opportunities, also serve to increase workers' dependence on gig providers.

Second, the boundaries that prevent career transitions from gig work to regular work could be caused by external factors such as current labour market trends (Bidwell & Briscoe, 2010) or by the geographical and time constraints that arise from personal circumstances, for example, caring for an elderly parent or a child (Deng & Joshi, 2016). Third, these boundaries can be objective, such as when both gig workers and gatekeepers outside of the gig economy enact them. Leaving the gig economy means encountering such gatekeepers, who include recruiters and HRM representatives of potential employers. A gig worker's career path may appear to such gatekeepers as quite complex, as it may involve frequent shifts between positions, organisations, and even occupations (cf. Rowlands & Handy, 2012). Although such diverse work experiences can be seen as being versatile, they can also be seen as unfocused or/and irrelevant to a particular job vacancy.

With jobs in traditional organisations becoming increasingly specialised, job-relevant knowledge and skills have become crucial criteria for HR recruiters to assess person-job fit (Oldham & Hackman, 2010); accordingly, the less codified nature of gig workers might prove disadvantageous to them in such situations. In addition, the distance between clients and gig workers may also prove to be problematic. Traditionally, workers perform according to

employers' expectations (Ashford, Caza, & Reid, 2018). Working across multiple platforms and for numerous clients with little feedback on how they may advance their work, full-time gig workers may seem to not accumulate enough relevant work experience and the necessary references or advance their competencies compared with their peers in more traditional employment setups (Graham et al., 2017). Taken together, individuals with gig work backgrounds might appear less appealing to recruiters of traditional organisations. Under this premise, the resulting repeated rejection or at least increased struggle to secure a placement may also lead gig workers to refrain from applying to jobs outside of the gig economy with the same energy they would otherwise use (cf. Vansteenkiste, Verbruggen, & Sels, 2013).

In the following section, we discuss HRM's role in overcoming the aforementioned boundaries and facilitating boundaryless careers in the gig economy.

## 5 | OBSTRUCTIONS AND ALTERNATIVES TO EMPLOYER-CENTRIC HRM IN THE GIG ECONOMY

As boundaryless career actors often need organisational resources to engage in career development (e.g., Zeitz et al., 2009), we will now discuss how the unclearly delineated formal and contractual responsibilities between platforms and clients within the gig economy discourage both platform and client organisations from providing HRM practices that could increase competency development and ultimately enable boundaryless careers. We also examine how two alternative models of HRM, that is, shared HRM between platforms and clients and self-organised HRM, could ameliorate this conundrum and help foster boundaryless careers in the gig economy.

### 5.1 | Shared HRM between platforms and clients as a solution to the unclear delineation of responsibilities between the parties

Organisations within the gig economy may be discouraged from providing HRM support because of the unclear responsibilities between the platform organisation and the clients (who can be individuals or organisations) contracting the service. In contrast to other types of contract workers who are typically legally bound for longer periods of time, neither the platforms nor the clients define gig workers as employees; although, in practice, both types of workers often complete a similar amount of work across a similar scope (Stewart & Stanford, 2017). This triangular relationship not only gives rise to intraorganisational boundaries and hinders competency development but also diffuses the responsibility for the provision of HRM support to gig workers across both platforms and clients. This diffusion of responsibilities leads to the following question: What is an employer in this context?

Scholars have stressed the need for reconceptualising what constitutes an employer in the context of the gig economy to better regulate gig workers' conditions (Stewart & Stanford, 2017). Due to the triangular relationship between platforms, clients, and gig workers, scholars have suggested the so-called "joint employment," in which all three entities share the responsibilities of employment (Prassl & Risak, 2015; Stewart & Stanford, 2017). For both the research and practice of HRM, this would mean going beyond the model in which one organisation or employer provides HRM support. In the gig economy, HRM would thus exist in a network between platforms, clients, and gig workers instead of within one single organisation (Kinnie & Swart, 2019).

More specifically, platforms and clients could share different aspects of HRM practices to increase gig workers' career competencies. We could imagine at least two alternative models of how such shared HRM may be enacted. First, it is conceivable that platforms and clients each would provide different aspects of HRM practices. Second, a more unified alternative approach would entail platforms and clients sharing the administrative and financial costs of providing an HRM, for instance, in the form of a third-party HR agency. Admittedly, there are strategic reasons particularly on the platforms' side to not let such shared HRM systems become too overburdening for clients that are drawn to the more transactional nature of such platforms. For this reason, the degree to which such a setup may be

truly relational remains to be determined in practice; however, the benefits gig workers could derive for their careers would be numerous.

In particular, such shared HRM setups could work at improving the feedback practices on the platforms that are commonly based on client ratings that do not require explanations for a given score. Consequently, feedback scores are often seen as arbitrary and provide little or no opportunity for learning (Gandini, 2018; Schwartz, 2018). A more structured and learning-oriented feedback system, such as with descriptive feedback of what was satisfactory and what could be improved, could be an idea to involve clients in helping gig workers further develop their skills and see what is appreciated. Although such feedback can serve to develop knowing-how and knowing-why competencies, it can also serve as references for work, and gig workers can refer to specific tasks they completed for clients to enable interorganisational boundary crossing.

In addition, platforms could provide gig workers with information on which specific skill sets their bigger clients may look for or which skill sets would qualify them to advance to larger projects. Tasks could, for example, be organised and presented hierarchically according to which skill sets would be necessary to qualify for different tasks; gig workers would then advance to different levels of tasks. This may guide gig workers in their efforts to develop relevant skill sets (knowing-how competencies) that are aligned with the strategic goals of the platforms. Identifying and providing key skill sets for gig workers could serve as a type of talent management that may improve commitment to the platform and worker motivation (Collings & Mellahi, 2009).

Presenting the required skill sets could be achieved through different ways; platforms could organise networking events in the form of, for example, webinars and present the different skill requirements. For example, Airbnb invites interior stylists or photographers to help hosts take better pictures of their homes and style their apartments in a manner that matches customer preferences. Other platforms host webinars on time management and advice on working remotely for digital labour. Such events would also help gig workers meet other gig workers and professionals (knowing-whom competencies) in the industry to enable opportunities of intraorganisational crossing, such as getting to know working conditions of other gig work platforms (Kuhn & Maleki, 2017). Networking events are thus mutually beneficial: Platforms can use these events to market themselves and may increase commitment among gig workers, whereas gig workers gain insight into skill requirements, which in turn may increase motivation and, in the end, enable the pursuit of their career in the gig economy. Indeed, previous research on freelance workers has consistently shown the importance of social networks for their career development (Antcliff, Saundry, & Stuart, 2007). With that, we will further discuss the roles gig workers can play in providing HRM as a community of practice.

## 5.2 | Self-organised, community-based HRM

In addition to an HRM provision existing in the network between platform and client, we have to consider the possibility that HRM can be provided among a network of gig workers as a community of practice. We argue that gig workers who desire platform resources to support their career development will likely act proactively to form communities of practice or to organise developmental resources among themselves. Such actions would allow workers to increase their career competencies and could even enable them to have boundaryless careers.

Researchers have suggested (e.g., Schwartz, 2018) that gig workers should seek to develop networks with other workers, which would increase their knowing-whom competencies. Gig workers may not be as autonomous as scholars have often assumed; rather, these workers often rely on networks of workers for support, advice, and collaboration (Gray, Suri, Shoaib Ali, & Kulkarni, 2016; Kittur et al., 2013). Gig workers collaborate with each other for a variety of reasons, such as managing administrative tasks (e.g., to help set up an account), rating potential tasks and employers, and recreating the social connections and support that are associated with more traditional office work. All of these efforts fundamentally constitute attempts to satisfy the human need for social interaction, but they can also be beneficial in terms of productivity and efficiency. Researchers have indicated that when gig workers collaborate with colleagues (whether online or offline), they need less time to find tasks and to identify reliable employers (Gray et al., 2016; Schwartz, 2018). Moreover, collaboration helps workers cope with the challenges of such work,

which is often done alone, at home, and in different time zones than other workers and thus without the professional, psychological, and physical support that an office typically provides (Gray et al., 2016). Under certain conditions, online communities can even increase workers' collective bargaining power by helping them to improve their relationships with platforms (Schwartz, 2018).

Utilising such networks, gig workers can develop the knowledge and skills that they need to find the best-paying tasks and to navigate the gig-work system. For example, such online communities can enable gig workers to learn explicit skills (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009). Schwartz (2018), for example, found that creative freelancers actively used occupational communities to provide feedback on ongoing projects, which thus helped them to further develop their knowing-how competencies. Especially for large projects, online communities can provide gig workers with feedback and appraisal (Schwartz, 2018)—two developmental HRM practices that are linked to employee performance (Kuvaas, 2008). Peer-based feedback can also increase workers' knowing-why competencies by increasing their motivation and providing a larger context for their projects.

Additionally, online communities can prevent gig workers from feeling isolated and can give them motivation and a sense of belonging (Gagné & Deci, 2005), which is one of the major psychological challenges gig workers face (Ashford et al., 2018). These communities also enable gig workers to share personal stories and anecdotes, which can help them cope with their job demands (Van den Heuvel, Demerouti, & Peeters, 2015) and increase knowing-why competencies. Taken together, communities of practice could offer invaluable opportunities for gig workers to develop the necessary career competencies to strive for a boundaryless career. Receiving community support to find better-paying and larger projects increases the possibilities for intraorganisational boundary crossing in the sense of being able to take on a larger variety of tasks. At the same time, developing knowing-how competencies through peer feedback and working on bigger tasks, gig workers would develop their skills for work outside of the gig economy and increase chances of interorganisational boundary crossing.

Of course, this model for self-organising HRM within the gig economy is not without hurdles and restrictions. Some platform structures (e.g., those of Upwork and TaskRabbit) foster competition among gig workers; for instance, they force gig workers to bid for tasks or projects so that clients can choose the lowest price or the most qualified worker (Graham et al., 2017). Gig workers on these platforms may not be motivated to help other workers increase their skill sets because this ultimately increases their competition. Often, workers on such bidding-based platforms engage in underbidding practices, which results in a higher ratio of workers to employers (Graham et al., 2017). Nevertheless, there is a need for alternative ways of providing HRM support and developmental practices within the gig economy, which inhibits the employer-centric HRM model due to its flexible work structures and unclear breakdown of employer responsibilities.

Additional self-organised communities of practice are likely to emerge due to workers' common interests or tasks, as well as to help workers cross organisational boundaries and incorporate outside actors; in addition, networking both within and outside of an organisation can help individuals to stay on top of new developments and approaches (Arthur et al., 2005; Eby et al., 2003). This boundary crossing can provide workers with future opportunities by helping them to organise their employment around their professional and social networks (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996). Such communities of practice and collaborations among gig workers can help workers develop the three most important types of career competencies (i.e., knowing-how, knowing-whom, and knowing-why competencies) and thus engage in boundaryless careers.

## 6 | CONCLUSION

Our goal in this article was to discuss boundaryless careers in the gig economy, to explore what obstructs HRM provided by a single employer, and to explore what types of nontraditional HRM could foster boundaryless careers in the gig economy. We demonstrated how the complex relationships among gig workers, platforms, and clients made it difficult to determine by whom HRM should be provided. This discussion raises the question of whether scholars

need to rethink who should provide HRM—not only in the gig economy but also for boundaryless careers more generally. The definitions of job, employer, and employee are changing, and the complexity of employment relationships requires further examination and reconceptualisation. Gig careers are not boundaryless, so platforms and other stakeholders should reflect on workers' career boundaries and other challenges to better facilitate HRM support and thus ensure the long-term sustainability of the gig economy. Hence, the concept of a boundaryless career in the gig economy remains—for now—an oxymoron: Although the fluid platforms of the gig economy appear to be structurally inviting for boundaryless careers, these same fluid structures hinder competency development and HRM provision, which ultimately prevents workers from pursuing boundaryless careers.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project (article) has received funding from the Research Council of Norway within the SAMANSVAR project “Fair Labor in the Digitized Economy” (247725/O70). We would like to thank Professor Ariane Ollier-Malaterre for her encouraging feedback concerning our initial idea. We would also like to thank the editor, Professor Dora Scholarios, and the reviewers for their constructive feedback to improve our paper.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors have declared that there is no conflict of interest.

## ORCID

Dominique Kost  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8084-5833>

Sut I Wong  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0663-4496>

## REFERENCES

- Aguinis, H., & Kraiger, K. (2009). Benefits of training and development for individuals, teams and organizations. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 60, 451–474.
- Ainsworth, S., & Hardy, C. (2008). The enterprising self: An unsuitable job for an older worker. *Organization*, 15(3), 389–405.
- Antcliff, V., Saundry, R., & Stuart, M. (2007). Networks and social capital in the UK television industry: The weakness of weak ties. *Human Relations*, 60(2), 371–393.
- Arthur, M. B. (1994). The boundaryless career: A new perspective for organizational inquiry. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 15(4), 295–306. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.4030150402>
- Arthur, M. B., Inkson, K., & Pringle, J. K. (1999). *The new careers: Individual action and economic change*. London, England: Sage.
- Arthur, M. B., Khapova, S. N., & Wilderom, C. P. M. (2005). Career success in a boundaryless career world. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 26(2), 177–202. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.290>
- Arthur, M. B., & Rousseau, D. M. (1996). *The boundaryless career: A new employment principle for a new organizational era*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Ashford, S. J., Caza, B. B., & Reid, E. M. (2018). From surviving to thriving in the gig economy: A research agenda for individuals in the new world of work. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 38, 23–41.
- Bidwell, M., & Briscoe, F. (2010). The dynamics of interorganizational careers. *Organization Science*, 21(5), 1034–1053. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1090.0492>
- Boons, M., Stam, D., & Barkema, H. G. (2015). Feelings of pride and respect as drivers of ongoing member activity on crowdsourcing platforms. *Journal of Management Studies*, 52(6), 717–741.
- Brawley, A. M., & Pury, C. L. S. (2016). Work experiences on MTurk: Job satisfaction, turnover, and information sharing. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 54, 531–546.
- Calo, R., & Rosenblat, A. (2017). The taking economy: Uber, information, and power. *Columbia Law Review*, 117(6), 1622–1623.

- Cappelli, P., & Keller, J. R. (2013). Classifying work in the new economy. *Academy of Management Review*, 38(4), 575–596. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2011.0302>
- Chen, L., Mislove, A., & Wilson, C. (2015). *Peeking beneath the hood of Uber*. *Proceedings of the 2015 ACM Conference on Internet Measurement* (pp. 495–508). New York, NY: Association for Computing Machinery.
- Codagnone, C., Abadie, F., & Biagi, F. (2016). *The future of work in the "sharing economy": Market efficiency and equitable opportunities or unfair precarisation?* Seville, Spain: Publications Office of the European Union.
- Collings, D.G., & Mellahi, K. (2009). Strategic talent management: A review and research agenda. *Human Resource Management Review*, 19(4), 304–313.
- De Groen, W. P., Maselli, I., & Fabo, B. (2016). *The digital market for local services: A one-night stand for workers? An example from the on-demand economy (Special report)*. Brussels, Belgium: Centre for European Policy Studies.
- DeFillippi, R., & Arthur, M. B. (1994). The boundaryless career: A competency-based perspective. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 15(4), 307–324.
- DeFillippi, R., & Arthur, M. B. (1996). Boundaryless contexts and careers: A competency-based perspective. In M. B. Arthur, & D. M. Rousseau (Eds.), *The boundaryless career: A new employment principle for a new organizational era* (pp. 116–131). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Deng, X. N., & Joshi, K. D. (2016). Why individuals participate in micro-task crowdsourcing work environment: Revealing crowdworkers' perceptions. *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*, 17(10), 648–673.
- Eby, L. T., Butts, M., & Lockwood, L. (2003). Predictors of success in the era of the boundaryless career. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 24(6), 689–708.
- Farrell, D., & Greig, F. (2017). The online platform economy: Has growth peaked? Farrell, Diana and Greig, Fiona, *The online platform economy: Has growth peaked? (November 15, 2017)*. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2911194> or <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2911194>
- Forrier, A., Sels, L., & Stynen, D. (2009). Career mobility at the intersection between agent and structure: A conceptual model. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 82(4), 739–759.
- Friedman, G. (2014). Workers without employers: Shadow corporations and the rise of the gig economy. *Review of Keynesian Economics*, 2(2), 171–188.
- Fuchs, C., & Sevignani, S. (2013). What is digital labour? What is digital work? What's their difference? And why do these questions matter for understanding social media? *TripleC*, 11(2), 237–293.
- Gagné, M., & Deci, E. L. (2005). Self-determination theory and work motivation. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 26(4), 331–362.
- Gandini, A. (2019). Labour process theory and gig economy. *Human Relations*, 72(6), 1039–1056. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726718790002>
- Gherardi, S., & Murgia, A. (2013). By hook or by crook: Flexible workers between exploration and exploitation. In M. Holmqvist, & A. Spicer (Eds.), *Research in the Sociology of Organizations* (Vol. 37). Managing "human resources" by exploiting and exploring people's potentials. (pp. 75–103). York, England: Emerald Group.
- Graham, M., Hjorth, I., & Lehdonvirta, V. (2017). Digital labour and development: Impacts of global digital labour platforms and the gig economy on worker livelihoods. *Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research*, 23(2), 135–162.
- Grant, A. (2007). Relational job design and the motivation to make a prosocial difference. *Academy of Management Review*, 32(2), 393–417.
- Gray, M. L., Suri, S., Shoaib Ali, S., & Kulkarni, D. (2016). *Proceedings of the 19th ACM Conference on Computer-Supported Cooperative Work & Social Computing* (p. 134–147). New York, NY: Association for Computing Machinery.
- Horton, J. J., & Chilton, L. B. (2010). *The labor economics of paid crowdsourcing*. *Proceedings of the 2010 ACM Conference on Electronic Commerce* (pp. 209–218). New York, NY: Association for Computing Machinery.
- Howcroft, D., & Bergvall-Kåreborn, B. (2018). A typology of crowdwork platforms. *Work, Employment and Society*, 33(1), 21–38.
- Huws, U., Spencer, N. H., & Syrdal, D. S. (2018). Online, on call: The spread of digitally organised just-in-time working and its implications for standard employment models. *New Technology, Work and Employment*, 33(2), 113–129.
- Inkson, K., Gunz, H., Ganesh, S., & Roper, J. (2012). Boundaryless careers: Bringing back boundaries. *Organization Studies*, 33(3), 323–340.
- Kalleberg, A. L. (2009). Precarious work, insecure workers: Employment relations in transition. *American Sociological Review*, 74(1), 1–22.
- Kingsley, S., Gray, M., & Suri, S. (2015). Accounting for market frictions and power asymmetries in online labor markets. *Policy & Internet*, 7(4), 383–400. doi:10.1002 /poi3.1111
- Kinnie, N., & Swart, J. (2019). Cross boundary working: Implications for HRM theory, methods, and practice. *Human Resource Management Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12239>

- Kittur, A., Nickerson, J. V., Bernstein, M. S., Gerber, E. M., Shaw, A., Zimmerman, J., ... Horton, J. J. (2013, Month). *The future of crowd work. Proceedings of the 2013 conference on Computer supported cooperative work* (p. 1301 – 1318). New York, NY: Association for Computing Machinery.
- Kneese, T., & Rosenblat, A. (2014). Understanding fair labor practices in a networked age. Open Society Foundations' Future of Work Commissioned Research Papers 2014. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2536619> or <https://doi.org/10.21239/ssrn.2536619>
- Kost, D., Fieseler, C., & Wong, S. I. (2018). Finding meaning in a hopeless place? The construction of meaningfulness in digital microwork. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 82, 101–110. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2018.01.002>
- Kuek, S. C., Paradi-Guilford, C., Fayomi, T., Imaizumi, S., Ipeirotis, P., Pina, P., & Singh, M. (2015). *The global opportunity in online outsourcing*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Kuhn, K. M. (2016). The rise of the “gig economy” and implications for understanding work and workers. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, 9(1), 157–162. doi:10.1017 /iop.2015.129
- Kuhn, K. M., & Maleki, A. (2017). Micro-entrepreneurs, dependent contractors, and instasersfs: Understanding online labor platform workforces. *The Academy of Management Perspectives*, 31(3), 183–200.
- Kunda, G., Barley, S. R., & Evans, J. (2002). Why do contractors contract? The experience of highly skilled technical professionals in a contingent labor market. *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 55(2), 234–261.
- Kuvaas, B. (2008). An exploration of how employee-organization relationship affects the linkage between perception of developmental human resource practices and employee outcomes. *Journal of Management Studies*, 45(1), 1–25.
- Lambert, S. J., Haley-Lock, A., & Henly, J. R. (2012). Schedule flexibility in hourly jobs: Unanticipated consequences and promising directions. *Community, Work & Family*, 15(3), 293–315.
- Lampinen, A., & Cheshire, C. (2016). Hosting via Airbnb: Motivations and financial assurances in monetized network hospitality. In *CHI '16: Proceedings of the 34th Annual ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (pp. 1669–1680). New York, NY: Association for Computing Machinery.
- Lazarova, M., & Taylor, S. (2009). Boundaryless careers, social capital, and knowledge management: Implications for organizational performance. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 30(1), 119–139.
- Lehdonvirta, V. (2018). Flexibility in the gig economy: Managing time on three online piecework platforms. *New Technology, Work and Employment*, 33(1), 13–29.
- Mayotte, G. (2002). Stepping stones to success: Previously developed career competencies and their benefits to career switchers transitioning to teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 19(7), 681–695.
- Miles, R. E., & Snow, C. C. (1996). Twenty-first-century careers. In M. B. Arthur, & D. M. Rousseau (Eds.), *The boundaryless career: A new employment principle for a new organizational era* (pp. 97–115). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Minter, K. (2017). Negotiating labour standards in the gig economy: Airtasker and Unions New South Wales. *The Economic and Labour Relations Review*, 28(3), 438–454. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1035304617724305>
- Oldham, G. R., & Hackman, J. R. (2010). Not what it was and not what it will be: The future of job design research. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 31, 563–479.
- Prassl, J., & Risak, M. (2015). Uber, TaskRabbit, and co.: Platforms as employers: Rethinking the legal analysis of crowdwork. *Comparative Labor Law & Policy Journal*, 37, 619.
- Pringle, J., & Mallon, M. (2003). Challenges for the boundaryless career odyssey. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 14(5), 839–853. doi:10.1080 /0958519032000080839
- Rockmann, K. W., & Ballinger, G. A. (2017). Intrinsic motivation and organizational identification among on-demand workers. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 102(9), 1305–1316. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000224>
- Roper, J., Ganesh, S., & Inkson, K. (2010). Neoliberalism and knowledge interests in boundaryless careers discourse. *Work, Employment and Society*, 24(4), 661–679.
- Rosenblat, A., & Stark, L. (2016). Algorithmic labor and information asymmetries: A case study of Uber's drivers. *International Journal of Communication*, 10(27), 3758–3784.
- Rowlands, L., & Handy, J. (2012). An addictive environment: New Zealand film production workers' subjective experiences of project-based labour. *Human Relations*, 65(5), 657–680.
- Ruggieri, A., Mosconi, E., Poponi, S., & Silvestri, C. (2016). Digital innovation in the job market: An explorative study on cloud working platforms. In T. Torre, A. M. Braccini, & R. Spinelli (Eds.), *Empowering organizations* (Vol. 11). Lecture Notes in Information Systems and Organisation. (pp. 273–283). Cham, Switzerland: Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-23784-8\\_21](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-23784-8_21)
- Scholz, T. (Ed.) (2013). *Digital labor: The Internet as playground and factory*. London, England: Routledge.
- Schor, J. B., & Attwood-Charles, W. (2017). The sharing economy: Labor, inequality and sociability on for-profit platforms. *Sociology Compass*, 11(8), 1–16.
- Schwartz, D. (2018). Embedded in the crowd: Creative freelancers, crowdsourced work, and occupational community. *Work and Occupations*, 45(3), 247–282. doi:10.1177 /0730888418762263

- Seibert, S. E., Kraimer, M. L., & Liden, R. C. (2001). A social capital theory of career success. *Academy of Management Journal*, 44(2), 219–237. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3069452>
- Shockley, K. M., & Allen, T. D. (2007). When flexibility helps: Another look at the availability of flexible work arrangements and work-family conflict. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 71(3), 479–493.
- Spreitzer, G. M., Cameron, L., & Garrett, L. (2017). Alternative work arrangements: Two images of the new world of work. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 4, 473–499.
- Stewart, A., & Stanford, J. (2017). Regulating work in the gig economy: What are the options? *The Economic and Labour Relations Review*, 28(3), 420–437. doi:10.1177 /1035304617722461
- Storey, J., Salaman, G., & Platman, K. (2005). Living with enterprise in an enterprise economy: Freelance and contract workers in the media. *Human Relations*, 58(8), 1033–1054.
- Sturdy, A., & Wright, C. (2008). A consulting diaspora? Enterprising selves as agents of enterprise. *Organization*, 15(3), 427–444.
- Sturges, J. (2008). All in a day's work? Career self-management and the management of the boundary between work and non-work. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 18(2), 118–134. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1748-8583.2007.00054.x>
- Sullivan, S. E., & Arthur, M. B. (2006). The evolution of the boundaryless career concept: Examining physical and psychological mobility. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 69(1), 19–29.
- Sundararajan, A. (2016). *The sharing economy: The end of employment and the rise of crowd-based capitalism*. Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press.
- Tams, S., & Arthur, M. B. (2010). New directions for boundaryless careers: Agency and interdependence in a changing world. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 31(5), 629–646. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.712>
- Tassinari, A., & Maccarrone, V. (2017). The mobilisation of gig economy couriers in Italy: Some lessons for the trade union movement. *Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research*, 23(3), 353–357.
- Van Buren, H. J. I. I. (2003). Boundaryless careers and employability obligations. *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 13(2), 131–149.
- Van den Heuvel, M., Demerouti, E., & Peeters, C. W. (2015). The job crafting intervention: Effects on job resources, self-efficacy, and affective well-being. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 88, 511–532.
- Vansteenkiste, S., Verbruggen, M., & Sels, L. (2013). Being unemployed in the boundaryless career era: Does psychological mobility pay off? *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 82(2), 135–143.
- Vincent, S. (2016). Bourdieu and the gendered social structure of working time: A study of self-employed human resource professionals. *Human Relations*, 69(5), 1163–1184.
- Webster, J. R., & Beehr, T. A. (2013). Antecedents and outcomes of employee perceptions of intra-organizational mobility channels. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 34(7), 919–941. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.1823>
- Weick, K. E., & Berlinger, L. R. (1989). Career improvisation in self-designing organizations. In M. B. Arthur, D. T. Hall, & B. S. Lawrence (Eds.), *Handbook of career theory* (pp. 313–328). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Wood, A. J. (2016). Flexible scheduling, degradation of job quality and barriers to collective voice. *Human Relations*, 69(10), 1989–2010.
- Zeitz, G., Blau, G., & Fertig, J. (2009). Boundaryless careers and institutional resources. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 20(2), 372–398. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585190802670763>

**How to cite this article:** Kost D, Fieseler C, Wong SI. Boundaryless careers in the gig economy: An oxymoron? *Hum Resour Manag J*. 2020;30:100–113. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12265>