



ABSTRACTS



“The Global Rise of Platform Firms in Urban Mobility Markets”

Jason Jackson, Assistant Professor of Political Economy and Urban Planning, MIT

This presentation addresses one of the most pressing policy issues in contemporary market society: the rise of the platform or ‘sharing’ economy and the implications for radical changes in industry organization, market structure and the future of work. It does so through analysis of the global emergence of digitally-enabled ridehailing platform firms in urban mobility markets. Ridehailing firms such as Uber, and their global counterparts such as Grab, Ola,

Taxify and 99 exemplify the rise of the 'gig economy' through the use of digital technologies to reorganize work processes and reorder markets. Indeed, 'Uberization' has itself become a description of on-demand work, with commentators debating the implications across a range of outcomes from productivity to precarity. However, most of this discussion has focused on market contexts in the Global North, particularly the United States. Yet the structure of labor markets in the Global South presents important challenges to the dominant narrative. For example, many observers understandably lament the implications of the gig economy from the perspective of a Fordist past of high employment, and 'good' benefits. Yet in developing countries, high levels of unemployment and underemployment are the labor market norm and informality is pervasive. What are the implications for 'Uberization' in the South?

This research explores this variation in effects and outcomes on markets and workers. It does so through comparative analysis of competing market structures and organizational forms in urban transportation markets, from 'traditional' taxis, motorcycles and rickshaws to 'modern' app-enabled mobility providers. The analysis contrasts the effects of the rise of ridehailing firms in industrialized cities such as New York with those on Bangkok, Dar es Salaam and Jakarta. The discourse around the rise of digital technologies suggests that global corporations wielding sophisticated machine learning algorithms and 'big data' will radically re-shape urban mobility markets in their image. Our analysis challenges this standard prediction by showing how the effects of digital technology enabled firms varies across different social, political and institutional contexts.

“The Future of Measurement”

Roberto Rigobon, Society of Sloan Fellows Professor of Management; Professor of Applied Economics, MIT Sloan

Measurement of the economy and standards of living is becoming harder. How to measure the value of the sharing economy (Uber and Air BnB), the contribution of the gig economy (Amazon Turk), or the value added of the barter economy (Google and Wikipedia)?

From the social point of view, how to measure stress in the households and income inequality when a significant proportion of the products are going to be given for free — or almost free?

For instance, all the discussion of universal basic income depends on the value of the basic basket — how to value it?

In this talk, I will discuss what the pillars of the measurements of the future are, what their characteristics will be, and what can we do to prepare for them.

“Innovation in Brazil: Advancing Development in the 21st Century”

Ezequiel Zylberberg, Research Affiliate, Industrial Performance Center, MIT

Since the early 2000s, state-led and innovation-focused strategies have characterized the approach to development pursued in countries around the world, such as China, India, and South Korea. Brazil, the largest and

most industrialized economy in Latin America, demonstrates both the opportunities and challenges of this approach. Over the course of nearly 20 years, the Brazilian government enacted various policies and programs designed to strengthen the country's capacity to innovate. It increased spending on science and technology, encouraged greater collaboration between industry and universities, and fostered the creation of new institutions whose primary aim was to facilitate greater private research and development (R&D) spending. Despite significant progress to date, there are important challenges to address moving forward.

This talk will focus on the findings of a five-year research project at the MIT Industrial Performance Center (sponsored by SENAI), which culminated in the publication of an edited volume entitled *Innovation in Brazil: Advancing Development in the 21st Century* (Routledge). This volume includes a diverse array of empirical contributions by MIT researchers, as well as academics, policymakers, and industry leaders in Brazil. It makes the case for a bold, forward-looking innovation agenda aimed at addressing persistent challenges and exploiting emerging opportunities to advance development in Brazil.

DETAILS

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