Vorsprung durch Technik: 
the future of work, digital technology 
and the politics of the platform economy

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The digitalisation of economic activity

• Four ways of disruption:
  1. The digitalisation of production
  2. The digitalisation of products
  3. The digitalisation of workers
  4. The digitalisation of work
• Focus here on #4, drawing mainly on Uber.
• Framed through the issue of technology.
Differing accounts

- Consumer benefits and worker mutual gains.
- Self-managing independent contractors vs algorithmic management of ‘employees’.
  ‘Before the internet, it would be really difficult to find someone, sit them down for ten minutes and get them to work for you, and then fire them after those ten minutes. But with technology, you can actually find them, pay them the tiny amount of money, and then get rid of them when you don’t need them anymore.’ (CEO of CrowdFlower quoted in De Stefano 2016).
- Embryonic vs mature industry – normalisation or reinforcement scenarios.
- Governmental response: market, regulation, negotiation.

Perceptions, beliefs and actions
For more information

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