

Chinese Riders : Organization and Advocacy

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Chinese)

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Crowdsourcing delivery riders, An explorer of migrant workers' rights issues.

Three years in the takeaway industry, committed to promoting the establishment of rider self-organization, open up voice channels, enhancement of group rights.

Currently learning short video production, hope that through the influence of the emerging short video platform, exploring a way to unite and defend the rights of riders that suits China's national conditions.

The Main Problems faced by the Rider

1. Decreasing salary income year by year
2. A constantly evasive labor relationship
3. The costly workplace injuries
4. Cruel and harsh punishment system
5. The long absence of social security
6. Official trade unions in disguise
7. Deliberately squeezed public opinion space

1. Decreasing Salary Income Year by Year

- Due to the impact of the epidemic, the economic downturn and other reasons, the number of workers dumped into the takeaway industry is increasing every year, 200 million people in flexible employment, takeaway riders reach 13 million
- Large reserve workforce, increased competition, lack of negotiation with platform capital, channels and leverage for bargaining, unit prices and wages are constantly being pushed down
- Estimate: about 10% reduction per year for the last three years
- High Risk, high income → high risk, low income
- It is the most important reason for collective incidents such as rider strikes

2. A constantly evasive Labor Relationship

- September 2021 – *<Legal research report on the employment patterns of takeaway platforms>* Thousands of legal documents: less than 1% recognition rate
- Subcontracting of business layers, no employment contract or sign with a purse company
- Mid 2020 – 2021 – The issue of rider rights was widely publicized at the beginning of the year, in March 2021 – a representative of the two sessions proposed to confirm the labor relations of riders and pay social security
- April 30, 2021, Nanjing issued a document to clarify the special delivery riders for labor relations, crowdsourcing and other riders for labor, contracting relationship
- July 26, 2021, Seven major regulatory authorities jointly issued an article shouting at the platform capital. Contractors and stations across the country then forced riders to register as “Individual Businesses”

3. The costly Workplace Injuries

- Difficulty in confirming labor relations, difficult to enjoy work injury insurance benefits, especially crowdsourced riders
- Only \$3–\$5 per day for commercial insurance such as employer’s liability insurance, complex identification process, maximum benefit amount < 600,000¥, low reimbursement for hospitalization and other types of reimbursement, insurance premiums were deducted
- The system disregards the actual situation, distribution time is tight (rainstorms and other bad weather often do not adjust the delivery time), compressed year by year, more fines for overtime and bad reviews, riders lack the right to appeal, often in a hurry, accidents are frequent
- First half of 2017, official set of data: In Shanghai, on average, every 2.5 days, 1 takeaway rider was killed or injured

4. Cruel and harsh Punishment System

- Special delivery riders have the most fines, usually ranging from 50 to 500¥, which can be stacked. And it is usually difficult to appeal.
- Institutional fines: for example, over-distance point delivery, must be within 200 meters of the customer positioning click "has been delivered", even if the customer positioning error, must first be sent to the actual location of the customer, and then run to the positioning place point delivery, sometimes several kilometers apart, a fine of 500 yuan; such as pre-orders, must be in the system shows the time before and after 8 minutes point delivery, early delivery is also considered a violation; another example is the customer complaints "bad attitude", can not appeal, a fine of 100 ~ 200¥ these full of bugs or riders no fault of the penalty rules, the only explanation is "to generate revenue with fines", the fine as a fixed income platform
- According to the law, both the platform and the site are not administrative subjects and are not eligible for fines

5. The Long Absence of Social Security

- Without institutional or legislative confirmation of labor relations, it is difficult to promote employers to pay social security for riders. Only a few cities such as Shenzhen have issued documents suggesting that employers “can” buy insurance for riders for work-related injuries, but so far no implementation has been seen.
- Split opinion within riders.
 - 1) Older riders with families and children have a strong will for social security
 - 2) Young people such as the post-00s do not trust the social security system, coupled with delayed retirement and a large increase in the threshold of health insurance, prefer not to rely on and cooperate
- There is almost no protection for high temperature allowance, overtime on holidays, etc.

6. Official trade unions in disguise

- For many years, some cities have issued documents to promote the “three new” industries (express delivery, take-away, online car, etc.) to fight workers into the association. Beijing, Shenzhen and other individual places to promote, but only to sweep the code registration, holiday occasionally condolences and other superficial, almost no impact on the rider’s work life
- Riders defend their rights, unions are always absent
- Monopolizing the use of the “union” banner and cracking down on riders who set up their own unions

7. Deliberately squeezed public opinion space

- The takeaway industry has a certain role as a “reservoir” for the unemployed, and as it relates to social stability, the relevant public opinion has been officially suppressed, and many serious discussions cannot be reported in the press.
- Criticism of the platform’s rider self-publishing was threatened, restricted and blocked
- The cold winter of the general environment of speech
- Loss of basic space for discourse, increased barriers to rider solidarity and sense of resistance leadership

How riders are organized?

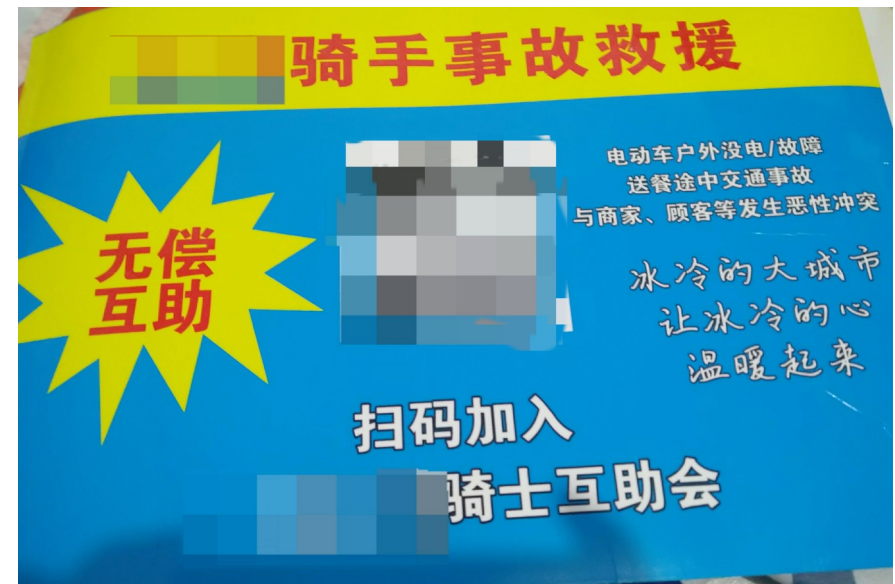
1. The Role of the Internet
2. Mutual Aid Group
3. Startup Team
4. Hometown Association
5. Broad "alliances"

1. The Role of the Internet

- Almost all of the rider groups that have emerged with an organizational nature use some of the advantages of the Internet: easy communication, fast dissemination of information, large reach, and not easily detectable
- Racer, Jitterbug, WeChat group has become the main tool for riders to gather collective action, establish self-organization and voice
- Reliable connections essential for work, life

2. Mutual Aid Group

- Self-organization of work sharing, accident rescue, dispute help, recreation and leisure established by riders in the same city and region
- Need for more consistent and strong organizers, high mobility in the industry, average career life of riders in some areas is 6-9 months



3. Startup Team

- Some riders become regional V by speaking out for the industry on the Internet and helping their peers defend their rights, transforming into self-media entrepreneurs, convening some riders in the same city to start a collective business, using a short video platform to integrate organization-voice-defense-rights-profit, some also gaining support and cooperation from regulatory authorities
- Mostly established by riders who have business experience and have been owners
- Some have lost their original purpose of speaking out for the industry and fighting for their rights, and have even become official mouthpieces
- Gao Moumou, a rider who was featured in Time magazine and was credited with fighting the epidemic in Wuhan, went to Beijing to start his own business with official support and became a puppet as a "typical" person who received a lot of support and revenue. After Chen Moumou, the head of the rider alliance, was cracked down on for criticizing the platform, he gloated and scrambled for "turf."

4. Hometown Association

- Some of the site's riders have the characteristics of the old country with the old country, commonality in language, culture and habits is obvious, easy to group, the establishment of mutual aid nature of the old country will be relatively easy.
- Sustained and strong organizers are still needed to play a further supportive role

5. Broad “alliances”

- Some of the riders in the same city WeChat group, the rider short video blogger’s fan group, etc., also has a certain “mutual aid exchange” function, play, for example, call for collective action, docking lawyer assistance and other roles
- Generally low targeting, random, unstable

Riders fight against the biggest challenges

1. Platform: constant creation of new work types, division of riders, layers of subcontracting, hiding behind the scenes manipulation, strong legal team and control and influence over the media
2. Government: collusion and patronage of capital, sensitivity and suppression of rider organizations, disregard for laws and regulations and lack of supervision, constant compression of the space of public opinion, monitoring of the foreign working population since the epidemic, people not easily gathered
3. Internal: high mobility, atomization, complex structure, organizer's dilemma

1. The challenge of platform capital against rider resistance

- Continuously establish new types of work, divide riders: special delivery, crowdsourcing, crosstown, fun run, smooth run, new and old riders treatment differences
- Layers of subcontracting, hiding behind the scenes manipulation: deceiving some riders, confusing the struggle objectives
- Strong legal team: Riders' rights more difficult to defend, protesters threatened with warnings
- Control and influence on the media: Internet media is monopolized by the Tencent system, the Ali system, etc., and is the gold owner behind the main distribution platforms, which will limit the spread of protest voices

2. Government challenges to rider protests

- Collusion and Partiality to Capital: A Unified Front of Government and Capital
- Sensitivity and suppression of rider organization: hitting and pulling at the same time
- Ignorance of laws and regulations and lack of supervision: Letting capitalists break the law
- The continuous compression of the space of public opinion: various 404, the official media repeatedly lose their voice
- Surveillance of foreign working population since the epidemic, people not easily gathered: strengthening control of citizens, especially workers, in the name of epidemic prevention

3. Challenges within riders and organizers

- High mobility: transitional industry, 6–9 month career cycle, difficulty in organizing
- Atomization: “Individualism” has become dominant over the decades, with some riders distrusting or resisting the collective, preferring to be alone or immersed in virtual worlds
- Complex structure: different industries, different classes, different education personnel are dumped into the takeaway industry, unity is more difficult

3. Challenges within riders and organizers

- Organizer's Dilemma:
- Under the domination of bureaucratic capitalism, the lack of basic political rights such as speech, association and procession, the spontaneity of riders is clearly limited, and the intervention and assistance of third parties are repeatedly focused on suppression
- Organizers need to integrate into the riders and carry out advocacy, organizing and resistance work as a rider subject. It can ensure a certain degree of safety in action, but also grasp the plight and demands of riders in time, and gain the trust of the group, and enhance the integration of the identity of workers and organizers
- The need for strong and consistent teams, relatively adequate staffing, resources and funding, and the current general difficulties
- Difficulties in exchanging information and communicating experiences between different organizers, a certain amount of hillbillyism hinders
- Some organizers and followers are too political and ideological in their discourse, and with the current environment and class power contrast, they are both easily suppressed and difficult to be understood and recognized by riders

Progress and achievements of the rider resistance

1 Formal advances:

- 1 A number of spontaneous rider organizations have emerged in several cities, with an increased sense of solidarity and resistance
- 2 Beijing, Shenzhen and many other places to carry out the work of riders into the union, or establish a party branch
- 3 Confirming the labor relations of riders has become an official issue, with some cities issuing documents to clarify labor relations. The issue of social security for riders is getting more attention. Rumor has it that the head of Meituan was interviewed in mid-November and again mentioned paying social security to riders, possibly to fill the hole in the national social security
- 4 Public sympathy and respect for riders is enhanced

Progress and achievements of the rider resistance

2 Practical regressions:

- 1 No real improvement in the level of rider organization – no “independent unions”, some influential self-organizations have been stifled, and there has been no force to talk to management
- 2 Wages continue to fall, the level of systemic oppression and penalty mechanisms, and workplace injury problems have not improved
- 3 During the epidemic period, people’s livelihoods were depleted and the industry was seriously involved in the rolls, many riders lowered their demands for rights and interests to survive, or lost confidence in the prospect of fighting

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Progress and achievements of the rider resistance

4 Officials, capital resistance too much, rider rights issues seen, public opinion gradually cold

5 Organizers and followers are incompetent and disorganized, and it is difficult to raise the level of resistance in a sustained and strong manner.

How to fight for international solidarity ?

1. Information contact: a secure tool to keep in touch and communicate on a regular basis
2. Experience strategy: regular experience sharing and strategy exchange
3. Action Conduction: Riders in a certain area can consciously summarize their action strategy and experience after winning a fight on a certain issue, and guide riders in other eligible areas to launch actions one after another.
4. International organizations: Establish an international union of riders to coordinate research, analysis, guidance and assistance for greater efficiency and impetus
5. International media: Build international rider media or channels, or present the survival and struggle of riders in different countries and regions in the form of a media matrix
6. Funding resources: fundraising to help riders' rights organizations that have difficulties in funding and resources

Neutrals

Negative Allies

High-ranking riders.
Hardworking workers in other industries who are less well off, such as online taxi drivers, truck drivers, couriers, social justice activists, students, intellectuals with underclass care or progressive ideals

A core of veteran riders linked to the interests of the site.
Most hitmen in traditional industries.
Most labor security and media outlets.
The vast majority of the population

Negative Opponents

Entrepreneurs and capitalists of other industries.
Opponents of labor self-organization such as official unions and government-run social work agencies.
Grass-roots community management units.
Official and capitalist media mouthpieces

Active Opponents

Industry interest groups such as platform capital and outsourcing sites.
Power organs, stability maintenance organs.
Some small pinkos and extreme statists who spontaneously help maintain stability.

Active Allies

Most middle and lower level riders.
Labor issue activists, groups.
Social justice activists, students, intellectuals who are concerned about the rights of migrant workers.
International riders, labor groups with links



Attachment: Rider Ally Spectrum (2020 system)



Proletarians of the world, unite!