

INTRODUCTION

Work and *periphery overflow* in contemporary capitalism

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■ Doi: 10.54871/ct26ps03

Historically, work has been a structuring force in the lives of “flesh and bone” people (Capogrossi and Palermo, 2020), as it not only ensures a means of sustenance but also acts as an essential component in the construction of identities, life trajectories, and individual and collective projects. In spite of the shift in its form and limits, work continues to play a central role in the organization of both everyday life and the logic of capital valorization in the capitalist production system.

Although it is possible to identify certain consistent patterns throughout time, it is imperative to devote some effort to analyzing

specific historical processes that determine how the logic of capital accumulation has mutated up to this day. The notion of “mutation” is particularly relevant to think about these changes, as it alludes to transformations which take place upon preexisting structures rather than involve radical breaks. That is to say, contemporary forms of capitalism result from a series of mutations which reorganize its internal logic without completely doing away with its historical foundations. The capitalist mode of production presents a flexible organization, so it can host heterogeneous or even contradictory work configurations. For example, work practices typical of the nineteenth century coexist with algorithmic systems which act like supervisors in fragmented and diverse work settings.

Thus, it is possible to claim that contemporary capitalism has been brewing for several decades due to the deployment of neoliberal policies. In Latin America, these policies resulted in the privatization of public companies, cuts in welfare programs, deregulation of capital, the financialization of the economy, and, most importantly, the *production of neoliberalized populations*. This last outcome should be highlighted because it shapes values, meanings, practices, and future expectations. In the process of financial valorization which has taken place over the last five decades, financial capital has had a key role in the assignment of surplus and the transfer of income from salaried workers to concentrated capital. This trend led to an insatiable search for enormous profit, according to Capogrossi and Izquierdo Quintana (2021), through the sustained increase of financial capital’s power to attribute responsibilities to workers, in a production-consumption cycle that responds to the existential interests of elite groups rather than the sustenance of the human condition, including the relationship with the environment (pp. 2-3).

The first neoliberal experiment took place in the periphery, more precisely in Chile, in 1973, when a group of technocrats educated at the University of Chicago, and thus known as the Chicago Boys, counseled Augusto Pinochet’s regime in the planning of an economic, social and political refoundation. This new model was based

on the principle that the market alone could regulate the economic and social spheres through impartial mechanisms that allocated resources and value. The only way in which such radical reconfiguration could be achieved was through the overthrow of the democratic system (Rumié Rojo, 2019).¹

The Chilean experiment was then exported to other countries, with the support of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which, through loans and debt restructuring, imposed an economic disciplining on the so-called “Third World” countries, even if this meant resorting to authoritarian methods.² In this way, what started in the peripheries of capitalism eventually spread to the centers, although with different subtleties in terms of the living conditions of workers, as in countries with stronger economies subjects tend to have more resources to fight off unpredictability and uncertainty when building their life projects.

¹ The formation of the Chilean neoliberal technocracy can be traced back to the 1950s. The president of the Department of Economy of the Chicago University then, Theodore Schultz, signed a cooperation agreement with the Department of Economic Science of the Catholic University of Chile. This agreement involved the postgraduate education of a group of Chilean students in the United States. Thus, between the signing of the agreement in 1955 and 1963, about 30 young Chilean economists received education in the Chicago University. These would become the Chicago Boys, “a group of technocrats who proclaimed themselves as apolitical-even if they had strong bonds with the political right-, and representatives of the modern economic science, who had the goal of changing, through a monetarist and neoliberal vision, the political and economic bases that had constituted Chile since 1938” (Rumié Rojo, 2019, p. 150, original text in Spanish).

² The Latin American military dictatorships of the 1960s and 1970s, for example in Brazil (1964), Chile (1973), Uruguay (1973) and Argentina (1976), consolidated processes of state terrorism: systematic repression of social and political dissidence, and implementation of structural reforms which paved the way for the neoliberal model in the region. These authoritarian regimes not only suppressed civil rights but also served as laboratories for the restructuring of national economies to align with the interests of the market. Basualdo and Esponda have significantly contributed to the study of this phenomenon in Argentina by explaining the relationship between civil society and military actors who worked together to reshape the national project. One of the arguments that supports this thesis is the existence of clandestine detention centers within several companies in Argentina, where union representatives questioning the imposed economic and social order were abducted, illegally arrested, and disappeared.

The swift advancement of capitalism, however, was resisted by unions and political organizations. One such instance took place in 1984 when British coalmine workers went on strike against privatizations put forward by Margaret Thatcher's government. The conflict, which lasted for about a year, ended with the miners' defeat and this had deep consequences for the British working classes. In this context, Thatcher's controversial phrase, "there's no such thing as society", gained relevance. The suffocation of the British working classes showed that one of the main aims of the neoliberal project was to impede workers' organization and reduce state intervention to a minimum in terms of government aid. This paradigm rapidly expanded to western Europe and, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, to eastern Europe as well, all of which meant a sudden transition from planned communist economies to neoliberal capitalism.

Five decades of a neoliberal logic at planetary level, albeit with tensions, highs and lows, and attempts of resistance by opposing political projects,³ have created a recurrent horizon for workers around the world: a future threatened by everyday attacks on the ways of making a living. What we mean by this is that food, energy and water resources, essential to the sustenance of human life, have become the target of disputes and are threatened by corporate interests and geopolitical conflicts. The possibility of individuals of planning a life project with a logical amount of certainty and predictability is constantly challenged. The question is not how to survive

³ At the beginning of the 21st century, Latin America consolidated a process of confrontation with neoliberal policies. This special historical moment was characterized by an unprecedented political affinity in the countries of the region, under the leaderships of Néstor Kirchner (Argentina), Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (Brazil), Hugo Chávez (Venezuela), Nicanor Duarte Frutos (Paraguay) and Tabaré Vázquez (Uruguay). One of the most significant landmarks of this political process took place on November 5th, 2005, during the Summit of the Americas in Mar del Plata (Argentina). This event has gone down in history as the birth of "No to FTAA" political movement. In this summit, Latin America unanimously rejected the United States attempt to impose the creation of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), an initiative strongly backed by George W. Bush.

but how to resist and regain the right to make a living without the constant threat of losing it.

In order to delve into these issues, it is necessary to consider some analytical categories that have helped to expose structural inequality processes at global level. These categories were originally created to explain why, in the aftermath of the Second World War and decolonization, certain regions of the world accumulated wealth while others struggled under the impositions of a capitalist system, which entailed not only producing and extracting resources but also the shaping of certain worldviews. In this context, Raúl Prebisch⁴ suggested the use of the center and periphery categories not only to expose the uneven development in countries around the world, but also to propose a Latin American approach to unequal exchange. He was particularly concerned about the periphery's uncritical adoption of theories produced in the centers:

Certain circles in the periphery show an unconditional subordination to theories formulated in the center. I am not denying the value of these theories. What I claim is that they do not reflect the reality of the peripheral experience, which I have described in several of my works. It is no wonder then that the concept of the periphery be considered a mere change in name, or that the periphery be given the role of elaborating its own theory which must differ from the thought of the centers. None of that: the phenomena of peripheral capitalism needs to be understood in the context of a global theory of capitalist development. (Prebisch, 1988: 208)

⁴ Raúl Prebisch (1901–1986) was an Argentine economist and one of the leading figures in the development of Latin American economic thought of the 20th century. Known by his proposal of the center-periphery inequality theory, Prebisch held that the international economic system structurally favors developed (central) countries, to the detriment of developing (peripheral) countries. He was Executive Secretary of ECLAC and backed Import substitution industrialization (ISI). His ideas paved the way for what later would become the Dependency Theory.

Between the 1940s and the 1970s, in his capacity as member of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Raúl Prebisch gradually built on and refined the concept of “peripheral capitalism”, focusing on the mechanisms that explain the distribution of the benefits of technological progress. Prebisch set out to analyze how surplus was generated and subsequently allocated among the upper and middle strata of society (Prebisch, 1976). In the 1970s, after years of refining his theory, his main hypothesis proposed that allowing peripheral capitalism to follow its own trajectory did not necessarily guarantee an even distribution of the surplus. Prebisch held that, on the contrary, it has been historically proved that development tends to exclude a high percentage of the population while the concentration of wealth in peripheral countries takes place in the upper strata of society, which tend to imitate the consumption habits of the centers.

Along this line of inquiry, sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein built upon the center-periphery model to produce his World-systems Theory. According to this approach, capitalism can only be properly understood not on a country by country basis, but as a unified and hierarchical global economic system. According to Wallerstein, since the 16th century there exists a systemic structure divided into a core, which concentrates capital, technology and political power, a periphery, which supplies raw materials and cheap labor, and a semi-periphery, which occupies an intermediate position. This international division of labor is not static but tends to reproduce structural inequalities over time. Thus underdevelopment is not an earlier stage with respect to development, but a functional and necessary condition for the maintenance of the global capitalist system: a necessary condition for the structuring of power relations based on the international division of labor (Wallerstein, 2006).

Prebisch also held that development has been possible in the peripheries only when the centers have gone through systemic crises. In those periods, the peripheries have been able to circumvent the logics of international markets. Even if these relationships are his-

torically specific and dynamic, the hegemony of the centers usually tends to prevail (Prebisch, 1976).

Prebisch's center-periphery model, as well as Wallerstein's, also includes the power variable. In an article titled "Dependence, Interdependence and Development", posthumously published in the 1980s in the ECLAC⁵ Journal, Prebisch claims that during the industrialization process in the peripheries—in the aftermath of the 1929 crisis—, the prevalence of the centers was maintained, even if it acquired new characteristics. Thus, apart from the absorption of the income of the raw material producers carried out by the importers and the public companies there was an appropriation of incomes carried out by transnational companies, which took an active part in the processes of industrialization. This modified the composition of the dominant groups, as these sectors of the peripheral countries began to establish networks with the dominant groups from other centers. This process favored the design of political and economic strategies in common (Prebisch, 1988).

Beyond integrating new dimensions into the analysis of peripheral capitalism, Prebisch also identified the obstacles to the development of the periphery. Among these he observed the propensity towards an imitative capitalism, the primary appropriation of surplus by the upper strata, the consequences of the redistributive struggle in the periphery (inflation, contraction and unemployment), and the limits of the democratization process in the countries of the region (Gabay, 2004, p. 8).

For both Prebisch and Wallerstein, "periphery" does not only refer to a geographical location but also to a structural position in the global economic system. While Prebisch focuses on the internal mechanisms of surplus appropriation and the limits of national development, Wallerstein calls attention to the way in which the struc-

⁵ The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), is a UNO dependent institution created in 1948 with the aim of contributing to the development of the region, coordinating actions among Latin American countries, and promoting economic thought that considers the interests of the global south.

ture of the world-system determines beforehand which types of functions and benefits each region can have access to. Both authors incorporate-and complement- albeit in varying degrees, the dimension of power and the reproduction of inequality as important variables in their analyses.

The categories of the center periphery scheme are historical because they emerge in a specific social political and economic context -maybe this is their drawback- but they are also analytic categories loaded with heuristic potential which allow us to revisit tensions and recreate them in order to understand the specificities of the actual face of contemporary capitalism. In this sense we consider that it is possible to recover their analytic value to point out the inequalities of the different social economic formations, as we will see throughout the articles in this book, and to reflect upon how current capitalism impacts on the lives of real people, on the paths of those who have fewer and fewer possibilities to project a future or who must rethink their trajectories in order to live in contexts where vulnerability is the norm.

Our proposal is that, given the current forms of capital accumulation, it is possible to identify a *peripheral overflow*. What are the implications of thinking that the peripheral logics have become global? This is an ongoing process where the dynamics typically associated to the periphery -precarization, informality, expropriation, structural violence, etc.- are no longer confined to the geographical or economic margins of the capitalist world-system flooding the planet and redefining the map of capital. The concept of peripheral overflow accounts for uncontrollable movement; the cannibalistic advance of capital towards all regions of the planet. This process not only extends the logics of exploitation and extractivism typically associated to the periphery but also consolidates a generalized peripheralization as a global status quo. In this context, peripheral overflow

becomes a source key of value extraction for those who concentrate capital without needing to be located in those countries which are historically considered peripheral according to the model proposed by ECLAC. This process implies the global expansion of informality and extreme exploitation conditions which affect workers without access to social security or basic labor rights. As Nancy Fraser states, these forms of expropriation are not residual or circumscribed to traditional peripheries. On the contrary, they have become constitutive of contemporary global capitalism. This entails the plundering of natural resources and ancestral wisdom and even the appropriation of forms of care work and social reproduction.

In the same vein, Carbonella and Kashmir suggest that, in order to understand the current dynamic of capitalism, it is essential to denaturalize received representations of class that express a contrast, in a very schematic form, between qualified stable and well paid workers of central countries and non-qualified, racialized and exploited workers of the peripheries. Instead they suggest analyzing how borders between center and periphery become blurred and how the logics of precarization and expropriation are distributed across borders configuring a global cartography of inequality which defies classical analytical categories.

One of the most distinctive traits of this process of peripheral overflow, which is related to the hegemony of information technology and electronic capital, is the role of technologies in the consolidation of heterogeneous processes of work informalization. Be it Mexico, India, France or Spain, we can see the growth of an enormous mass of digital economy⁶ workers whose conditions are progressively degraded. Digital technologies only a company but also accelerate

⁶ By digital economy we mean a process centered around the expansion of businesses based on information technology, data and the internet. It is necessary to point out that the digital economy is increasingly interacting with more and more productive sectors (goods manufacturing, services, transport, extractive industries, etc.) (Srnicsek, 2018: 12). In Mariano Zukerfeld's words, "a growing number of workers have the production of some form of digital information as a main occupation, and one or several digital technologies as a main means of work" (Zukerfeld, 2020, p. 3).

and amplify the periphery overflow acting like a key mechanism in the expansion and normalization of precarity at a global scale. This global form of informalization is expressed through a dual process. On the one hand, the growing number of platform workers find in them access to the labor market and the possibility of generating an income, in a context of growing unemployment and loss of labor rights. On the other hand, technological clusters employ highly qualified people around the world with flexible contracts with salaries which depend on the achievement of objectives and whose work hours are longer than the average.

The compulsory digitalization of practically all aspects of life-work, health, education, leisure and interpersonal relations- has become the exceptional condition that paved the way for the consolidation of the undeniable hegemony of this new “business model” (Srnicek, 2018). In this sense, even if strict or direct imposition of work schedules does not exist, algorithms, and the underlying operative logic of platforms exert constant pressure on workers, forcing them to be online in a continuous way. An even more significant aspect is the promise of freedom to manage your own time, which is offered but does not necessarily mean an increase in time devoted to leisure, rest or recreation. On the contrary, in some of studies we observe that the promise of freedom is in fact oriented to making workers devote more time to work-related tasks (Palermo and Ventrici, 2023). From this perspective, we could see an extension of the working hours: workers know when they start work but not the time when they end.

Another significant element that goes across these processes of periphery overflow is the role of States in the consolidation of informalization. In the peripheries, as conceived by Prebisch, the states had a central role in the promotion of development; in the periphery overflow of the present day, the state becomes a manager of precarity, as it is naturalized.

Isabell Lorey holds that precarity is no longer constituted by employment insecurity or insufficient social security. Precarity en-

compasses the totality of existence, of bodies, of subjectivization modes. It is a threat which suffocates but also opens new possibilities of living and working if we stop thinking about it in terms of lack: “precarization entails living with the unpredictable, with contingency.” (Lorey, 2016, p. 17. Original text in Spanish). This is an interesting dimension because it serves to focus on people’s modes of being in the world. Lorey considers that the social Fordist state, with its extension of social protection, has meant a historical exception in the development of capitalism. In fact what has been hegemonic throughout the centuries has been the precarity of life and work. With the neoliberal paradigm, “the normality of the minimum” (Lorey, 2016, pp. 78-79) becomes central. According to Lorey, thus it is expected that individuals *adapt and modulate their lives actively through a minimum of insurance progressively cut, and which in such a way will become easily governed* (2016, p. 79). It is in the framework of these ways of being in the world marked by precarity that ways of making a living are reinvented (Denning, 2010)

In line with the above, Narotzky and Besnier (2020) hold that the capitalist production mode developed alternate moments of crisis and stability, enabling in this last instance the design of life projects which are foreseeable and livable. Work becomes a substantial dimension for this stability as, in a certain way, cushions the blows of the crises allowing a relative sense of projection into the future. However, the 2008 financial crisis accelerated the processes of precarization and uncertainty at a global level. Nancy Fraser (2023) coined the notion of “cannibal capitalism” to explain the current context. The concept makes reference to a social system that devours subjects and erodes the bases of the very existence of capitalism. Her proposal builds on the analogy of an institutionalized food frenzy, the main course of which is people’s lives. Capitalist production does not create the conditions for its own sustainability, but relies on external economic forms, on hidden abodes, which are the “vital supports of accumulation.”

Among these hidden abodes, the work done mostly by women and other feminized subjects plays a central role in the organization of social reproduction (Fraser, 2023). According to Arruzza y Bhattacharya (2020), this activity does not fall under the forms of capitalist work. Nevertheless, this key pillar is put at risk by the neoliberalization of social reproduction and its expansive and continuous tendency of capital accumulation. This implies the dismantling of public policies and a growing burden on families, especially on women. As these processes advance, families, communities, and especially women, are increasingly exploited. We are facing a capitalist crisis which affects all regions in the world, causing growing inequalities, loss of rights, the collapse of care systems, the mercantilization of certain aspects of social reproduction, migratory crises, lethal epidemics⁷, new war conflicts and the emergence of dehumanizing “new right” parties.⁸

As Fraser (2023) points out, in this context of crisis and accelerated precarization, the neoliberal logic not only reinforces inequality but also reshapes the structure of work and its fundamental values. The neoliberal rationality dismantled the traditional structure of work as a steady job, while at the same time reconfiguring the significance and values associated with it. The neoliberal political rationality and the resulting subjectivity linked to financialization, or in contemporary terms, the appeal to “monetization”, is shaping the world of work, and, at the same time, consolidating new subjectivities. In this context, there emerges a concept of freedom that is no longer associated with labor rights, but with a right to appropriate scarce resources, together with a rejection of the State, all under the premise of the autonomy of free individuals.

Within this framework, neoliberal restructuring not only reconfigures the world of work but also paves the way for new work rela-

⁷ On March 11, 2020, the WHO declared the state of pandemic on account of the spread of COVID-19.

⁸ Wendy Brown (2022) proposes the notion of “new rights” or antidemocratic rights to characterize the emergence of new extreme right leaderships around the world.

tionships, as Carbonella and Kashmir point out. Thus, informalization, criminalization and militarization of workers, child labor, and new forms of slavery become widespread and generalized. What is particular about this historical period is the extreme and violent form that dispossession takes. It can be claimed that this process has given way to new seizures on subjectivity. Carbonella and Kashmir (2020) point out that these seizures are not limited to the genesis of capitalism, analyzed and defined by Marx as “primitive accumulation” (Marx 1986). At present, the contemporary seizing of lands, properties, rights and community property are facilitated by technological advances and the emergence of digital platforms, algorithms and artificial intelligence, which allow capital to control bodies, lands and wealth remotely, without the States’ intervention. At the same time, these dynamics contribute to the cannibalization of leisure and rest, care and social reproduction. Undoubtedly, this is a significant turn in the capital/work relationship, a turn that not only redefines relationships but also transforms the links between countries which were considered central and those which were considered peripheral, promoting a homogeneity in the forms of consumption of the workforce as commodity. Capital accumulation is still carried out today through exploitation; however, we are facing an unprecedented *periphery overflow*: here and there, a body of working class, which is free to be exploited, grows, as “racialized others” emerge, who can be deprived of their natural resources, tools, bodies, sexual capacities, and children, among other resources (Fraser, 2023). From this perspective, mechanisms of accumulation are tightly related to forms of domination, to the establishment of hierarchies that discriminate between citizens with rights as opposed to subjected peoples, people who are enslaved or members of subordinated groups. These last are prone to more aggressive forms of cannibalism. The relevance of Fraser’s proposal is the distinction between expropriation and exploitation as a function of not only accumulation but also domination, which highlights the importance of the political institutions of the States, which offer or deny protection within capitalist society

(Fraser, 2023: 73). The States build “the classing gaze” (Finch, 1993) and determine which are the expropriable and which the exploitable subjects; they “manage the minimum” (Lorey, 2016). In this context, we face the expansion of precarization and vulnerability processes at an unprecedented scale and intensity.

All around the world, one can see a wide range of work experiences marked by the processes detailed above. Thus, people live their lives in this ever more adverse, more cannibalistic, more voracious context, to the detriment of leisure, care, and natural resources. Workers around the world must cope with these pressures on a daily basis, which is a hindrance to the design of predictable and sustainable life projects. This, in turn, prevents any certainty in the building of future agendas, which leads to a decline in quality of life, and prevents access to basic social and political rights, causing individual trajectories to be increasingly uncertain. It is necessary, however, to point out certain subtleties as the old structures of European states, albeit eroded, continue to offer a small-albeit declining- amount of sustainability and certainty. In other regions, where peripheral traits have been consolidating for decades, the management of the bare minimum is not guaranteed. It is in these places, under the constant threat of losing the means to support basic biological needs, where new creative ways of sustenance are sought, resorting to practices and institutions based on commonality. Thus, we see the emergence of new ways of making a living that resort to cooperative practices and solidarity, international unions, and the consolidation of organizational processes around a social economy. In a context where formal employment is progressively destroyed, street vending, delivery and transport platform jobs, paid or outsourced cleaning work, textile workshops, construction work, garbage collection for recycling, to name a few, are some of the strategies that ensure the reproduction of life and help resist everyday oppression. In some cases, these activities are structured through community relations and expose vital strategies which intertwine the collective and the individual spheres. Probably a distinctive mark that manifests itself

in the bodies of workers is the possibility of designing life projects through community bonds.⁹ Communal care is a long standing practice; even if children are looked after by women, they are also part of assembly processes and share community spaces where they share the care of older siblings and other family members. Another activity that reinforces commonality is food preparation. This takes place both in private homes as well as in shared spaces. Thus, collective practices in relation to hosting are reinforced. The articulation between community and care work underscores the relevance of commonality, without which life would be impossible. In agreement with Cristina Vega, Raquel Martínez-Buján and Myriam Paredes (2018) we could argue that, in certain peripheries, life sustenance is intrinsically related to the construction of community.

For decades, the flexibilización of labor and also of life as a whole, has forced flesh and bone people to find new ways to produce and reproduce their existence, and consolidates informal, legal and illegal work forms (Palermo y Capogrossi, 2020). We believe that what is new in contemporary capitalism lies in the expansion of the periphery to all corners of the world, of course bearing in mind the diverse forms that this expansion takes in different contexts and local realities.

The aim of this book is to present and deepen the analyses that seek to account for the visible and occult mechanisms behind the dynamics of contemporary capitalism in different parts of the world. Throughout its pages, we expect to offer an integral panorama that exposes the complex economic, political and social interactions that shape the reality of workers in a context of globalization. As Eric Woolf proposed in “Europe and the peoples without history”, it is

⁹ These practices are very diverse. Sometimes they are linked to self managed processes which depend on affinity and subject selection; sometimes they work as an extension of the extended family; yet some other times they become intertwined with public services or private organizations. Collective care emerges from collective organizations and it usually becomes materialized in different networks. In most of the cases, they manage to break with individual isolation.

essential to analyze the dynamics of capitalism from a global and interconnected perspective, acknowledging “non European” societies as active actors in the construction of world history (Wolf, 1987). Understanding the emergence of this periphery overflow around the globe is essential to read the social, economic and political relationships that shape and support contemporary capitalism and the ways of being in the world. As Wolf proposed, the analysis of the peripheries and their importance to those in power is crucial to understand the structures and inequalities that characterize global dynamics (Wolf, 1987). It is not our intention to limit the possible avenues to address the issue. On the contrary, we intend this book to contribute to the continuous process of dialog and reflection with researchers from all over the world. We would like to offer a point of departure for those who, from different perspectives and fields, study and analyze the life and work conditions of the global working class.

Our aim is to promote an encounter among those who study the world of work, in the hope of opening up new paths for exchange and collaboration. We intend to build future agendas where science and academia can elaborate a diagnosis about contemporary capitalism’s hegemonic trends and produce tools for the regulation and transformation that can foster the democratization of well-being. Furthermore, we aspire to face the issues that run across the experience of work in different parts of the world, and thus arrive at possible answers, which are present in the actual life experiences, paths taken and practices of workers in their contexts.

Overall, this book intends to be a bridge between theory and praxis, braiding the academic analyses with the everyday struggles of workers in the hope of contributing to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of global capitalism and its impact on the working classes.

This collectively produced book offers a critical, situated and plural view on the contemporary transformation of work, a view which explores multiple dimensions articulating gender, class, territory, technology and political economy. In the face of the hegemonic nar-

rative of salaried work as universal and normative, the texts compiled here show how the shapes that work and making a living take are actually constructed in extremely unequal contexts, marked by regimes of precarity, exclusion and constant reinvention.

Far from offering a univocal perspective, this volume is organized into five sections that dialog among themselves and open up questions about the tensions between production and reproduction, formality and informality, globalization and rootedness, disciplining and agency. From feminist struggles to migrant strategies, from global franchises to street vending, from dismantled factories to digital platforms, this book paints a fragmentary but potent panorama of the contemporary forms of work in different regions.

The variety of geographies -Latin America, the Caribbean, southern Asia, southern and eastern Europe-, and ethnographic, historical and theoretical perspectives of the contributions presented in this book offer a comprehensive understanding of work as a total social phenomenon. Today, in times of work crisis, expansion of informal work and the reconfiguration of the technology of economy, this book is an invitation to critically consider what it means to “work”, who gets to work and how, and how life is reproduced. The contents are organized around five major topics:

1. Work and gender

The first section of this book deals with the intersection between the transformations of work and gender relationships, and offers critical insight situated in different regions. Through studies carried out in Argentina, Mexico, Uruguay and India, the chapters in this section problematize the sexual division of work, challenge its naturalization, and show the ways in which women and dissident subjects struggle for meanings, spaces and conditions in the economy. From a subversion of female roles at work, to the participation of men in domestic work, this section presents a comprehensive conception of work, which includes both production and reproduction, and combines feminist debates with social and economic analyses.

This section's nature is not merely descriptive; it is an invitation to revise traditional preconceptions about work from an intersectional perspective which is aware of hierarchies in gender, class, race, age and territory.

2. Globalization, productive transformation and work culture

The second part focuses on the concrete effects of the processes of economic globalization on the world of labor, with an emphasis on how productive transformations affect work culture in diverse contexts. Through case studies from Bolivia, Portugal, Spain, France and Bangladesh, the chapters analyze workers' experiences in the mining, or textile sectors and the food production chain. The chapters evidence tensions between technical modernization and the persistence of informal or precarious modes, while at the same time show how subjects make meaning, identities and memories in their life trajectories. This section also highlights the heterogeneous ways in which workers become inserted in the global production circuits and expose the impact of industrial dismantling, structural inequalities and the struggles over the value of work, all in the context of what we call periphery overflow.

3. Migrations in the global peripheries

In this section, the focus moves to human displacement and its links to work in contexts of structural inequality. From Canada to Argentina, to the south of Europe, the chapters in this section examine migratory regimes, work policies and the life strategies of those who move in search for better living conditions. The texts here show how international mobility not only produces new ways of precarity and work segmentation but also reenacts old colonial logics in the management of the workforce. Migrant trajectories are analyzed from a critical perspective which considers networks of legality, racialization, informality and exploitation affecting workers of the global south. This section exposes how contemporary migrations are

marked by the logics of capitalist accumulation which go beyond the limits of the nation-state.

4. New technologies, platformization and work

The fourth section is devoted to the changes that digital technologies have brought about in the ways of working, with a special emphasis on the processes of platformization. Case studies from Cuba, Brazil and Argentina explore the experiences of influencers, app workers, workers in the event organization sector, and other actors in the digital or informal economy. Far from the promise of modernization and autonomy, the studies reveal how platforms reproduce and intensify already existing inequalities, erode labor rights, and reorganize control over time and the body. Thus, the focus here is on the life experiences of flesh and bone people, and the meanings of freedom and autonomy attributed to those experiences. This section highlights how the “new”, in terms of technology, frequently recycles traditional forms of exploitation, adapted to flexible, fragmented and unregulated frameworks.

5. Informality and ways of making a living

The fifth part of the book deals with everyday forms of life reproduction in the margins of formal employment, and shows strategies for making a living which emerge in urban areas. From young artists in Mexico to street vendors in Argentine urban peripheries, the chapters explore how informal employment is produced, appropriated and resignified. Far from being a “residue” or an anomaly, informality appears here as a structuring condition of contemporary economies, and dialogues with cultural, familial and territorial transformations. This section proposes a focus on processes, considering the dynamics that shape the ways of making a living in contexts marked by precarity and exclusion, but also by agency, creativity and the daily struggle for dignity.

6. Work/employment crisis and organization

The last section of the book presents analyses of the structural effects of the work and employment crisis, as well as the social and organizational responses to sustained precarization. Through studies situated in southern Europe and Latin America, the texts explore different aspects of the collapse of traditional employment: chronic unemployment, the mercantilization of public policies, the deterioration of salaries and the mutations of the working classes. A study conducted in Greece analyzes the making of new common sense about minimal expectations, which defines the link between citizenship and work. In Spain, another key case in the south of Europe, a study shows that the management of long-term unemployment is an activation dispositif devoted to control rather than inclusion. In Latin America, the analysis moves towards the reconfiguration of the industrial working class, looking into the shapes that organization takes in the face of uneven development. Finally, an Italian study examines the automobile industry workers' struggles which confront the logics of capitalist hyperextractivism.

The itinerary along the six sections of the book accounts for the complexity and heterogeneity of the work experience today all over the world. The contributions by 33 researchers collected here, situated in Argentina, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Cuba, Spain, France, Greece, India, Italy, Mexico, Portugal and Uruguay, invite us to think critically about the present of work and its multiple forms of organization. In this scenario, marked by a *periphery overflow* and structural instability, one can see the emergence of the attempts of workers to build more livable, sustainable and predictable lives. Finally, the book closes with an epilogue that proposes rethinking the centrality of work from the peripheries, showing how global capitalist models are sustained by invisible, unpaid forms of work that are marked by relations of expropriation, gender, race, and colonialism. The critique is directed both at capitalism and at the limits of the social sciences of work in understanding this complexity.

To conclude, we would like to thank all authors committed to this ambitious work for their time, expertise and dedication. Their collaboration has been essential to bring this project to life. Also, we would like to express our gratitude to CLACSO, to the Centro de Estudios e Investigaciones Laborales (CEIL-CONICET) from Argentina, to the Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios sobre Cultura y Sociedad (CIECS-CONICET/UNC) from Argentina, and to the Complutense University of Madrid. These prestigious institutions have provided necessary logistic and intellectual support to materialize our project and publish this volume.

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