

## The worker in times of change

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### **Abstract**

We adopted as a starting point the assertive that changes in contemporary capitalism happened due to the transition of the industrial society to postindustrial society, from fordism to postfordism. This phase of radical capitalism transformation is set in the centrality of immaterial work, in the social diffusion of work, in the emergence of multiple subjectivities, in Information and Communication Technology and new ways of struggle and resistance of the political subject. In this scenery, which is extended throughout the capitalist world, a new political subject emerges, that should be defined within the framework of specific social terms, from the relationship between the workman and the work and his material condition of struggle, defining a new class composition, a new territoriality of social cooperation.

### **Keywords**

Social cooperation, class composition, postfordism.

### **Introduction**

The goal of this article is contribute to the current debate of the paradigms that seek to explain the transformations of twenty-first century capitalism. New concepts and categories are being employed and are displacing traditional theoretical references, exposing the exhaustion of these theories as support for sociological analyses that for many years served to explain the economic and cultural transformations of the capitalist system. Supported by these new theoretical references, some analyses have been devoted to the identification and analysis of constitutive elements of the current stage of the productive process and the new emerging actors in political struggle.

Any analysis of the current context of the capitalist order, productive relations, and political struggle implies, as suggested by Arendt, connecting thought and real experience. Otherwise, one is at danger of using fragile thread to weave a fabric that will unravel faced with the multiple fragments of social reality. Following this path, some analyses have incorporated elements that renovate materialist thought and delineated a new methodological strategy that brings theory closer to the ground level of the materiality of social life, investigating the transformations that occur in the new composition of reality. By taking this path, this new-fangled approach is founded, theoretically and empirically, not on ideal forms, but rather immersed in the dense complex of experience. Taking this methodological strategy into account, here we employ the thought of philosopher Antonio Negri as a guide to the comprehension of the dimension of these changes and its implications<sup>1</sup>.

### **Theories In The Context Of Change**

Several analytical tendencies that gained analytical credibility in the latter half of the twenty first century interpreted (and still do) capitalist development and its crises as something that transcend social struggles. For these strands, technology stands to explain the transformations of capitalism, in contrast to the notion that the origin f these transformations are not only in technical change but also to be found in the conflicts that arise within and from the world of labor.

The changes undergone in the world of capitalism in the last few decades have undermined several traditional Marxist theories that long claimed to be able to explain the world of labor and the dynamics of social struggle. Several critiques of Marxism emerged in this context.<sup>2</sup> The influence of these critical strands were decisive in the latter half of the twentieth century, and became viable alternatives to explain changes after May 1968<sup>3</sup>. However, their contours are radical as they leave aside the effects of the resistance and social struggles of workers in the development of capitalism.<sup>4</sup>

There is consensus among the authors of this critique that the intense effect of technological innovation in the field of information and communication in current capitalism are a major source of transformation and crisis, causing unemployment worldwide, the deterioration of labor, the monopoly and massification of culture, the privatization of knowledge and the extreme commodification of life (Altamira, 2008). This is the context in which theories of critical Marxism seek to explain the relationship between capital and labor. However, for Negri,<sup>5</sup> this critical stance entails an enormous challenge: that of reinserting this analysis within the field of social struggles so that these analyses can capture the dynamics of social movements and resistance movements and enable a better understanding of the new phase of capitalist development, and its new strategies of domination.

Despite advancing the hypothesis that technological advances are a powerful explanation for the transformation of capital, these theories ultimately minimize the fact that new Technologies indeed radically and objectively alter the nature and forms of labor, contributing to extend to domination and control of capital over all dimensions of life.

For critical Marxist theories, for example, new social movements are not explained by labor forms of the labor force and hence the claim that the new social movements replaces traditional class struggle and dismissed the worker – the proletariat – as a historical protagonist. The explanations for and the dynamics of social movements can be found, according to these analyses, in the emergence of new forms of technocratic power and in the plurality of cultural identities that constitute new subjects. There are the assumptions that distinguish these theories from traditional Marxist strands.

The cultural question and new technologies assume a key role in the analyses of new social movements and of the relationship between capital and labor and the justification is that the basis of social conflicts no longer stem from a single source of domination and exploitation but many. Class relations have been reconfigured and are now one among many. As a result, many are the critiques of traditional Marxist theories<sup>6</sup> that point out their inability to analyze and incorporate the transformation and advances of the era of computer information and the emergence of new actors. Therefore, these approaches also critique the totalizing tendencies of post-war Marxism, insisting that present day complexity and social atomization no longer make it possible to chose a single theoretical and practical approach in constructing a critique of capitalism.

This post-Marxist critique that rejects class as a singular explaining cause of labor and capital relations and at the same time treats the information revolution and new technologies as the driver of a reconfiguration of productive relations and of social movements. Furthermore, it points to identity-related issues such as sex, gender, nature, ethnicity as the basis of social relations.

Theses analyses are based on the hypotheses that the elimination of labor by increasing automation – undermining work as an analytical category and the driver of social struggle – and favor issues of cultural identity. In sum, the class-based analysis has been replaced

by a range of culture-based approaches, none of which predominat. This stance reinforces and sustains the critique of traditional Marxism that negates the autonomy of the individual, such a necessary feature for the configuration of the new social movements. This precisely where traditional Marxist discourse starts losing ground – the moment culture choses the individual as a source of political inspiration.

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In fact, as sociologist César Altamira (2008) concludes, the last few decades witnesses the pulverization of social movements who have embraced a broad array of topics. Given this plurality and social fragmentation, it has become harder to see the emergence of social subjects capable of pointing out an alternative to capitalism, an alternative that may contain the exhaustion of democratic institutions. The institutions of representative democracy, for example, have seen their role of intermediaries between labor and capital minimized. Political parties and labor unions have also lost their capacity and are no longer as capable of articulating with new social conflicts – in other words, few entities seem to present alternatives that might prevent the further deterioration of work<sup>7</sup>.

Nevertheless, the analytical dimension that considers and centralizes multiple topics must take into account the assumption that new thematic issues (all of which culturally-based) do not function as organizing principles of production and the distribution of goods and services, i.e. do not define social relations. It is thus necessary to understand that sexual issues, racism and gender are socially defended

violently due to how capitalism economically utilizes them. Capital, as a system of social relations, is not the enemy only of the social movements that fight for better salaries [...] but of all movements that call for equality in difference [...] as they are approached as opportunities or barriers to accumulation (Altamira, 2008: 28).

Giuseppe Cocco goes on to conclude that

it is a theoretical mistake to state that the emergence of such issues (gender, race, ethnicity and soon) has undermined the class “point of view” and thus opened fissure for capitalist reaction.[...] there “issues” do not emerge as cultural “superstructures” [...] but rather are constituted as social practices (struggles) that critique the material order of labor and its discipline (Cocco, 2008: 72-73).

Capitalism as a system of domination depends on discrimination, whether it be of gender, ethnicity or sexuality, in order to establish hierarchies of control, and thus these are issues that cannot be treated simply as the sum of multiple sectoral cases, capable of occupying the void left by the working class, which is what critical Marxism does.

### **A New Version is Possible**

Despite sharing some common ground with critical Marxism, in the case of the affirmation that technological advances promote radical transformation and that today, with the emergence of new subjects, many are the sources of conflict, the analysis conducted by Antonio Negri<sup>8</sup> provides a new version of social relations. The changes caused by the information revolution have impacted the structure of labor and production, provoking a theoretical and practical transformation of work, albeit without diminishing the centrality of the working class. It is precisely the permanence of the working class amidst the transformation of the world of labor that allows Negri (2004) to state that the reality of the labor now eschews the separation between manual and intellectual work. The blurring of this boundary indicates that the productive process has extended to cover all activities carried out in capitalist society, guaranteeing the reproduction of capital, such changes have led to a new configuration of labor with the reintegration of tasks formerly fragmented and the reinvention

of social relations on a horizontal level, bringing new mechanisms of resistance (such as networks) and new constituent dynamics. Thus a new concept of labor emerges in order to conduct a social critique.

This is the path for new forms of struggle to reveal, in both theory and praxis, its capacity to construct new public spaces and create new rights, giving new political visibility to desires and necessities, thus producing new subjectivities in a scenario of global conflict. New struggles eliminate the traditional separation between economic and political struggles in the effort to forge new forms of life. Hence, economic and political grievances are no longer considered separately – they are part of the same biopolitical<sup>9</sup> struggles, that henceforth encompass all kinds of workers in differentiated positions in the productive system and who form a new meaning for class – no longer limited to the factory workers, attached to the workplace. It is from this perspective that we can consider migration flows as forms of resistance to capitalism's injunction to fixate labor geographically: "human mobility [...] cannot be explained based solely upon economic and exogenous factors; the desire of freedom, of becoming autonomous that leads to the crossing of territorial and legal frontiers, to facing barriers, breaking through fences is a constituent and immanent force" (Corsini, 2007: 89). If the poor and the workers, the migrants and refugees were only the passive victims of injustice, oppression and exploitation, they would not be considered "dangerous classes". Workers and the poor are those who permanently disturb the ontological constitution of power: at each intersection of lines of creativity or escape, action or communication, social subjectivities become more hybrid and mixed, further escaping from the grip of the fusional powers of the control of capital (Negri, 2004).

The changes undergone by capitalism have required a redefinition of the capital-labor relationship and demanded a new set of theories of explanation. These transformations of the productive process in the end of the twentieth century, in addition to promoting the emergence of new information and communication technologies, as mentioned earlier, introduced new subjects into the scenario of social struggle. These new subjects, organized around specific issues, and who are not necessarily connected to each other, have occupied increasing grounds in the fields of social struggle and resistance to capital, conferring new meaning to the category social class, distancing it from the orthodox Marxist class-based format.

These were groups who, if they did not offer an alternative to capitalism, started becoming removed from society, and to the extent their struggle did not gain a global dimension, formed a cycle of struggles that revealed the exhaustion of the Fordist mode of production and the limits of Keynesian strategies. Reaffirming that the "discipline-based hierarchy of the factory did not only articulate itself based on the functions of capitalist command [...], but also within social relations of gender, race [...]" (Cocco, 2008: 71).

These subjects emerge as social practices of the critique of the material order of labor and its discipline, thus contributing to the undermining of mechanisms of Keynesian regulation and hierarchies based on discipline, and Fordist and Taylorist modes of production. This is what Cocco describes as "the subordination of society as a whole to the crumbling order of the factory." (Cocco, 2008: 71) It is also the moment the entry of new subject in the struggle to transform society into a fertile ground to create new rights and enable the emergence of multiple subjectivities.

These changes in the capitalist system signify a shift away from Fordist production in the relationships of the world of labor. In the same way the productive process, by

incorporating other organizing components, compromised traditional Marxist categories based on the separation of the structure and superstructure. As a result, a new form of emerging and globalized capitalism required new categories of analysis in order to comprehend the structural changes of labor and the nature of conflicts.

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The new reality of globalized capitalist production promoted, in Negri's evaluation (2004), the inclusion of all sort of activity in the productive process, from the production culture, desires and affection to the circulation of commodities. This represents a radical change in the productive practice. Labor acquires new meanings in addition to physical and manual exertion, such as knowledge, creativity, desire and affect; all are part and parcel of forms of labor.

These changes reveal the radical alteration introduced in the capitalist productive process, which begins producing, in addition to material goods, immaterial goods and new subjectivities. The multiple dimensions of capital, instrumentalized by technological advances, become intertwined in an extensive network of communication capable of evolving and affecting all aspects of human existence. Reality is undergoing change:

In the industrial society of manufacturing and Fordism the relationship with production is silent, since the machine-tool does not allow intensive cooperation. The introduction of information technology into post-Fordist industry tends to be collaborative and tends to transform labor into the "management of a continuous flow of information [...] The communication and cooperation among operators are an integral part of the nature of labor" (Gorz, 2005: 17). The cognitive system organizes the knowledge distributed among a plurality of people and creates among "multiple actors, a reciprocal interdependence: the languages that organize communication and cooperation [...] enable the sharing of projects and results" (Rullani, 1998: 14)" (Sanson, 2009: 80-81).

This raises a large quantity and variety of interpretations regarding the nature of capitalism and labor. Since the times of Lyotard<sup>10</sup>, Delleuze and Foucault<sup>11</sup>, thinkers have been announcing the failure of traditional labor and capital relations – Fordist organization and Keynesian strategies – and this culminated, since then, in the exhaustion of the theories and categories that sustained the traditional mode of analysis of capitalism, giving rise to many other forms of interpretation.

For Negri (2004) and the abovementioned thinkers, the historical marker of these changes was the of 1968 rebellion. The movement became a reference in terms of the resistance of labor against capital and as the defining moment when several social segments that were not the proletariat entered the political fray. The moment these new social subjects joined the struggle also marked the ascension of crossnational capitalism. This is post-modernism: a moment in which new subject of social struggle reveal a potential for collective action, involving several sectors of workers that are characterized by their mobility and fluidity. They are no longer restricted to the factory floor; they encompass the entire organized global community in networks of circulation and cooperation.

With the new configuration of work, Negri (2004), unlike most theoreticians of post-modernism, reaffirms Marxism as a theoretical base for the waging of a permanent war between labor and capital. However, it points to an antagonism that can only be interpreted from a horizon that underscores the broadening of the spaces of labor, revealing new fields where social struggle and conflict can unravel and conferring importance to the communicational practices that sustain and bind together globalized working and social relations.

These are the assumptions that lead Negri (2004) to identify post-modernism as the time of immersion of constituent power built from bottom to the top and immersed in the politics of the mode of capitalist production. Hence, the statement that, during this period the factory acquires an unprecedented reach, it transcends its traditional grounds and becomes present in society as whole, taking advantage of the creative and communicational power of new globalized capitalism. Only based on these analytical assumption is it possible to comprehend the novelties of new capitalism, the new nature of labor and of new social subjects.

However, the introduction of new subjective categories in the discourse and analysis of capitalist development requires today, in addition to a distancing from the orthodox tenets of Marxism, a new reading of Marx's thought. A new reading that implies the insertion of cultural categories that were maintained in the periphery of Marxist analysis for a long time, except for the case of critical Marxists.

Notions such as gender, race, sexuality, the environment, the moment they were incorporated by Marxist analysis served to broaden the concept of class, which in turn facilitated the comprehension of the struggle against capital.<sup>12</sup> Transformations in labor and the pulverization of conflicts stemming from new social sectors caused a break with the traditional concept of class, as centered as it was around the figure of the proletariat. The new context of labor thus created new social relations, that go beyond those outlined by the traditional configurations of capital. Thus, in line with the hypothesis advanced by Cocco (2008), it would be a mistake to state that the emergence of culture-related topics weakened the class-based perspective and thus created conditions for the capitalist reaction.

In the same way technological advances contributed to the reconfiguration of world, being that the majority blurred the boundaries between the factory, the office and the home. This facilitated the increasing inclusion of female labor and services in the center of productive services as well as the end of the century long separation between manual and intellectual labor. The incorporation of several modes in the productive process and the inclusion of other life phenomena as a labor category.

These novelties entail a restructuring of labor relations, which become reliant on social productive cooperation, which increases and valorizes the capacity of workers to lead the process of labor creating several fronts of command and broadening the antagonistic capacity of workers (Altamira, 2008: 55).

The productive process became began incorporating new social subjects and the sociological analyses of productive relations began including culture-based approaches that emphasize subjective categories. This is the reason why many of the categories used by Marx were revised and others considered anachronical in order to respond to the new dynamics of capitalism in the end of the twentieth century. What happened after these changes was a shift in the structural basis upon which capitalism is founded during the last decades, as Fordism, Taylorism and Keynesianism.

The entire composition of the labor force has changed and its relationships with capital. Furthermore, there is a stronger reaction of the post-Fordist worker against the subjection to capitalism, which Negri (2004) called the new forms of resistances, which is not present in the evaluations and conclusions of critical Marxism, negating the centrality of the working class as the driver of capitalist transformation.

These are the theoretical and practical assumptions that shape the analysis of Negri. A heir to the conceptions of Italian workerism (*operaísmo*)<sup>13</sup>, Negri states that the end of the

mode of regulation which predominated during the post-war period meant the failure of capital to impose a certain form of labor organization confronted with the resistance of the workers' movement (Altamira, 2008: 58).

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The collapse of the mode of production must be interpreted as a crisis of capitalism that requires another form of organizing the capital and labor relationship and broadens the potential of resistance by workers. During this period of capitalist restructuring, there is mounting sociopolitical tension and the level of contradiction, bringing to the battleground a new protagonist, a worker that is not restricted to the factory – a social worker.

In the post-Fordist and post-industrial era, the figure of the social worker emerges with subjective characteristics of difficult subjection to capital, and the new reading of the dynamics of capitalism puts aside the ideas of deterministic and inexorable laws of economics as a vector of the contradictions between capital and work. What implies the rejection of economic analysis and the appointment of subjective social relations as indicators of the changing nature of social struggles elements.

The working class operates on the basis of an antagonistic separation in relation to capital, meaning that the interpretation of Negri, that this is not a logical dialectic, in which the crises of capitalism result not of inexorable laws of economics but the actions of workers facing capital as antagonistic subject. This confrontation led to changes in the political composition and dynamics of workers' struggles. These changes in the labor force in the process of social reproduction are responsible for the political antagonism manifested and demotes work to a subordinate role in industrial capitalist organization, pointing to a new field in which struggles reveal new social subjects

A new dynamic of struggles will lead to the emergence of the "social operator" who rejects the separation between productive and unproductive sectors and articulates the centrality of social figures whose productive dimensions no longer depend on access to wages and industrial work. Once these changes are effected and always based on a reading of the Marxian General Intellect, new definitions for autonomous work arise, referring to linguistic, cognitive and affective production and whose core is not wage-earning but "income-form" (Corsini, 2007: 67-68)

This period, in which the society as a whole is subsumed by capital and labor, has other features previously little considered in the production process, as, for example, its immateriality and its cooperative nature. These are the conditions that characterize the worker in the process of struggle. Struggles no longer have a central role in institutions – political parties, trade unions – and no longer solely depend on technological advances, but rather on the capacity and potential of workers and their struggle to reverse the power of capital. Potential that is revealed by the ability of workers to bring to the field of social struggles immersed new segments in this broad field of work.

The reorganization and rebuilding of workers tend to cause reactions of capital that has always responded through technological innovations, with the clear goal of undermining and disrupting the working class and minimizing the antagonistic subject. These moments of composition, recomposition and decomposition form cycles that characterize the struggle and the emergence of the political subject. Cycles of struggles that, as mentioned before, due to the advances of information technology, extend to all fields of action of society, involving its various segments (Altamira, 2008) meaning that all movements of capitalist society are embedded in the production process. Hence Negri's assertion that, in the current reality of capital nothing is excluded from the same production cycle. In this phase capital no longer has an exterior, where nothing in which it

is possible to find things outside its boundaries. In other words, the rules and techniques created in the factory have permeating all social relations. Nothing is outside capital, and this becomes the only “subject” of social production.<sup>14</sup>

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The factory is no longer confined to a physical space that centralizes factory production. Labor operations extend to the whole of capitalist society, decentralizing and spreading to multiple social fields, blurring the boundaries between public and private, politics and economics. Capitalist society, in its post-Fordist or post-industrial phase becomes a storehouse of all kinds of services and productive actions, adapting to change in capital and setting in a field of struggle and resistance

Therefore, everyone is part of the production process – work activities extend to all dimensions of life. This is the assumption of the assertion that it no longer makes sense to separate work time from lifetime, or, consumption and time of reproduction of labor. According to Lazzarato (1998), Fordism started from the factory floor, now the reference point is the consumer – are consumers (not the workers) pivots of company strategy.

The subsumption of society as a whole by capital means that capital infected and captured various dimensions of life at the time of its production and reproduction. There is no escaping from this path – this is not far from the complaint that Arendt makes concerning modernity and its selection of work as the sole logic of the human condition, which means it is completely impossible abstain from this path (Arendt, 1987). However, whereas Arendt found a critical analysis of the legacy of modernity, which promoted the prevalence of the economy over the political, and a had a negative attitude towards work as a condition of associational life of men, the analysis of Negri (2003) goes in a different direction. For Arendt (1987), work is associated with the human condition of need, which keeps man stuck to the biological cycle of life, requiring from him only his ability to produce, out of the creative process. Negri, however, deals with work in a different conceptual basis than Arendt. First of all, he is not concerned with the place of work: the public and private pair is not a part of his concerns. On top of that, his analysis on work does not have to do with the concepts of necessity and liberty, as in Arendt’s work. Objectively, his analysis focuses on the radical changes that have reshaped the production process and which changed the nature of work – industrial to post-industrial – a scenario in which the capitalist world has lost its national borders and is shaped in a globalized mode. A time that is characterized by the total subsumption of society by capital, where all activities are part of the production process and are subject to exploitation. Negri is concerned to know what the nature of these changes have left behind many theories and practices and began to form a new era – post-industrial, postmodern, post-Fordist; finally, an era in which work radicalizes and expands the condition – pointed and criticized by Arendt – of organizer and promoter of human relations and of human life. Work becomes the common substance of the globalized world and brings challenges to all dimensions of human life: knowledge, power, desire, affection and so on. In this case, work cannot be seen as just any activity, as the production of goods, things that leave no trail and disappear as they arise in the world, as defined by Arendt (1987), but rather as a specific activity, socially acknowledged as a producer of values, an active force of negotiation and assertion, which is present in all relationships between men – it is the production of life. Therefore, there is no way to separate work time and the time of life.

In this sense we can say that the factory of the past gave way to the factory without walls. Exploitation and surplus value have been extended to the whole of society, an extensive

network in which workers are immersed and connected in order to keep the capital flowing. Workers are being exploited in their ability to produce cooperation. And today communication networks for advanced information technology that allow appropriating capital are offered, increasing the communicative capacity of the social worker in any corner of the world.

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Conflicts in the Fordist era industrial motivated capital to interconnect computers, creating an extensive network to subordinate the society of workers and undermine their resistance. Meanwhile, the opposite side of this reality of domination and control capital has used the same very technology as a tool to battle and generate several point of tension and resistance.

Lastly, changes in the capitalist structure include the recognition of a wide variety of jobs essential to the reproduction of capital – as factory work was in the industrial stages of capitalism. Work is thus an increasingly central position in social relations, and this condition occurs mostly from the mobility of its transformative potential, in which the resistance and struggle have broadened their political achievements to resist with creative alternatives to new modes and control of the capital and trapping devices – ranging from the fragmentation of productive deregulation of the labor force. The process of resistance and struggle entirely subsumes society into the current accumulation logic of capitalism, which mobilizes life in the task of appreciating capital.

Information technology has a key role in the struggle of workers in the cooperative process and the production process. In Negri's analysis, technological progress has not only promoted the subjugation of the social worker, but, insofar as this technology became global, capital is compelled to spread this knowledge to the whole of the social fabric, promoting an increasing sociability work through formation of communication networks and creating potential barriers to the co-option of capital. That is why, today communication is for the worker, what wages were to mass workers, in other words, resources are part of the set of assets and services that capital should provide workers for their development. This must be included in the conception of class for every type of worker, housewives and scientists, the employed and unemployed. In sum, all social classes reproduce capital and at the same time resist capital.

This is the paradigmatic basis of the analyses that seek to identify and define the place of the social worker and new forms of resistance that have challenged the theoretical pillars of modern tradition and reaffirmed the theses of Karl Marx.

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**Notes**

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1. A student of Spinoza, Marx and Deleuze, Negri returns to the concept of politics as a clash of forces, as a potency that is the result of certain immanent and internal social dynamics, of the forces that dominate and those that resist. In this sense, according to his analysis, there is no separation between the political, the economical, cultural, the social to the fact that there is nothing that is outside of politics.

2. The intellectuals of the Frankfurt School conducted a critical and reflexive reading of traditional Marxism. Thinkers such as Adorno and Horkheimer affirmed that the development of productive, technical and scientific forces were colossal during the latter half of the eighteenth century, yet it did not entail structural clashes concerning production relations. To the contrary, science and technique became privileged instruments of domination. Another analysis, this one made by Herbert Marcuse – another critic of the Marxist tradition – goes in this same direction as he declares the end of work as determinant in class struggle. In Habermas, “the theory of communicative action is a theory on a new kind of structural conflict, relatively unattached from social classes” (Repa, 2012); economy and labor were excluded from the real of communicative action, and thus he does not consider the emancipation of labor from capital as the main issue.

3. The events of May 1968 did not simply reveal the rebellion of French students, they also symbolized a moment of political and economic crisis, also reflected in the Revolution in Portugal in 1974 and 75, in the labor strife that led to the agony of Franco’s regime, the domestic crisis in the United States amidst the anti-Vietnam War protests and civil rights movement and a series of other events worldwide. May 1968 represented a wave of contestation not only of capitalism, that is its political and ideological implications, its irrational consumerist logic and, ultimately, alienation and exploitation; it was also a profound critique of Soviet socialism and its shortcoming in constructing a truly emancipated society as championed by Marxism. It was a revolution of knowledges in which several issues were mobilized – imperialism, feminism, students, etc. – formulating and disseminating a critique of the extant powers. The students movements became aware that, not unlike a factory, the university is organized as determined by capitalism as it prepares students to fulfill roles in its system. In other words, workers and students are indistinguishable in the eyes of capitalism.

4. The reconstruction of Marxism is inspired by these new social movements which after the 1960s displaced class struggle as the source of antagonism and resistance against capital. (See Altamira, 2008; Cocco, 2001, 2008).

5. Negri reaffirms the thought of Marx as a theoretical base for thinking the changes, constraints and possibilities of politics in the contemporary world.

6. Some latter twentieth century critics (J. Habermas, F. Jameson, D. Harvey) claim that classical Marxism has failed to analyze and

incorporate the advances of new technologies and ignored the implications of automation. This claim displaces the working class from the forefront of the struggle for emancipation. For these critics, the changes in the industrial order undermined the traditional formation of classes while others emerged and became stronger, such as identity-based groups that seek ethnic, gender and sexual affirmation. Habermas states that it is not possible to reduce the conflict of interests to the conflict of class. Jameson concludes that modifications in the industrial order undermined the traditional formation of classes. In his view, a stable class structure comparable to latter-day capitalism is yet to crystallize. A new “collective worker” is yet to emerge, and no longer a working class (Anderson, 1999). And Harvey is even more radical stating that the social-individual has no reason to spend time in long term projects since she is not capable of projecting a better future. Which means that if modernism looked emancipation and freedom, notwithstanding frustration, post-modernism has simply given up on this possibility (Harvey, 2006).

7. Precarious labor is a central element in the new dynamics of capitalist development, which creates a new form of worker vulnerability: a social process that modifies the conditions of stable wage-earning (i.e. salaries which used to be the norm in Fordist times). Precarious labor also implies unstable and socially fragile work. These transformations in the world of labor in globalized capitalism have coupled development and precarious labor which has had the reverse effect of transforming the worker into a constant threat to hierarchies and global divisions upon which capitalista power depends.

8. Negri revives the thinking of Marx to explain the radical transformation of the current stage of capitalist development. However, in his works he acknowledges the influence of Spinoza, Foucault, Deleuze on his analysis of the nature of power, new productive relations and class struggle.

9. In line with the Foucauldian perspective, Negri analyzes the biopolitical nature that originates a new paradigm of power: biopower. Biopower refers to a situation in which what is at stake is the production and reproduction of the population's life. Power assumes the totality of the social body, organizing and managing the productive process and its socialization. Power must therefore be understood in terms of its capacity to organize life, since by using the technology of knowledge it transform life itself into its object. Biopower is the result of the inversion of the dynamics between the powers of the state with the government of populations, which increasingly also encompass several dimensions of human life. As state by Negri: several Foucauldian studies, based on this inversion, propose a distinction between biopower and biopolitics. Biopower expresses command over life through its Technologies and instruments of power. Inversely, biopolitics refers to the critique of command made from below, that is, from the perspective of the subject and freedom (Negri, 2003: 107).

10. Lyotard enters the scene describing a post-Industrial society – a term coined by Daniel Bell in the mid-1950s – as a society that transformed knowledge into the main force of production, no longer conceived as an organic whole nor as the battleground of a dualistic class struggle, but as a network of linguistic communications, as language composed of a multiplicity of immeasurable different games (Anderson, 1999: 32).

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11. The crisis of Marxism of the 1960s contributed to strengthen in Europe, France and Germany in particular, a strand of ideas connected to Nietzsche and Heidegger: post-structuralism. It included names such as Derrida and Foucault, among others. In common they shared a lack of Faith in reason, however from a critical and not conservative perspective. This critique should not be mistaken for a defense of irrationality, “reason is not denounced as such, but to the extent it loses its subversive function and becomes an alibi for power, an agent of heteronomy, an adversary of pleasure or an instrument of repression” (Rouanet, 1987: 242).

12. It is no longer possible nowadays to conceive of the proletariat as an industrial working class of the modern age. The configuration of the proletariat today has been expanded as a category that includes every kind of activity which, directly and indirectly, is exploited by capitalistic norms of production and reproduction.

13. Workerism – a neo-Marxist strand of thought developed in Italy in the 1960s and 1970s encompasses a series of theoretically and empirically-oriented works that are not limited to a school of thought, as it has always had a strong foothold in politics through the movements that became active in Italy during those decades.

14. See Negri, A. e Hardt, M. 2004, 2005; Cocco, 2001.

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