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Perceptions of Precariousness and Entrepreneurship among Informal Workers in the Platform Economy

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Abstract

This essay explores how Brazilian workers engaged in modalities of informal labour, who make intensive use of social media, attribute meaning to the concepts of precariousness and entrepreneurship. The paper draws on over a decade of research with workers across various segments of the service sector (including events, beauty, transportation, domestic cleaning, food production, and sales) and employs a combination of research methods, including ethnographic observation, systematic monitoring of social media, in-depth interviews, and focus groups. The empirical data presented in this essay reveal a discrepancy between the definitions of entrepreneurship and precariousness predominantly found in the social sciences literature and those observed in the field. The analysis of the meanings of precarity and entrepreneurship among informal workers suggests a triumph of the individual over the collective – a shift possibly tied to new technological ecosystems that have, in recent years, taken on infrastructural dimensions.

Keywords: Informal work | social media | political subjectivity | platform economy

About the author

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1. Introduction

Early on a warm April morning, I leave my apartment building to head to a campus of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (or UFRJ, as those of us who live in the city usually call it). When my Uber driver stops by the front entrance of my building, I get into the car, greet him by his name and confirm our destination. Right in the beginning of the ride, Carlos[1] starts making conversation, pointing out how the roads are unusually clear. He, then, asks me whether I am a student or a lecturer at the university. “I am a researcher”, I reply concisely, trying to figure out whether his question is part of a script of polite conversation or genuine curiosity. As more questions are raised, I am convinced that my driver – a Black man with a strong *carioca* accent (originating from the city of Rio de Janeiro) who seems in his late forties – was sincerely interested in learning more about my visit to the UFRJ.

As our conversation evolves, Carlos wants to know about my research field. As soon as he hears that I spent the last few years conducting research among workers in the informal sector, including app drivers, Carlos says I should interview him. I laugh, but I realize my driver is serious about the interview when he insists: “I have so much to say! Come on, ask me something”. I check the Uber app and find that we only have twelve minutes before reaching my destination. Then I ask: “Is there anything in particular you think I should know?” And as the rest of the journey goes on, Carlos mostly interviews himself.

Carlos has been working with Uber for approximately four years. He tells me that, during this period, the activity has gone through a lot of changes: “You know, with the economic crisis more people have turned to Uber to make ends meet. That’s ok, but now you have to work more hours to make the same amount of money you did in the past”. I ask Carlos how many hours he usually works per day. “Twelve hours a day, every day”, he adds. “No day off, then?”, I ask, adding that his work routine sounds tough to me. He explains that it isn’t as bad as it seems, for two main reasons. First, he enjoys driving and talking to passengers all day (“most of the time, anyway”). Carlos also says that twelve-hour shifts involve a lot of sitting around and waiting for “the good rides” to show on his app. And before I can ask if that doesn’t feel kind of boring, he pulls a second smartphone from his pocket (besides the one fixed on his car’s dashboard): “You see, there’s a whole world of possibilities inside this device”.

As Carlos keeps on talking, I learn that he is a zootechnician by training and that he worked a nine-to-five job in the agrochemical industry before driving with Uber. He describes his previous job as “too much work, low income, and zero growth perspective”. Carlos than says that he has recently started a side business. Despite his effort to

1 To protect their identities, I use pseudonyms for people who appear in this essay.

explain to me the kind of product he is developing, I am only able to retain that it has something to do with beekeeping. On the other hand, it is clear to me that Carlos has grand expectations of making good profits out of his new project: “Uber is a temporary thing, and working on my own business has been my plan all along”, he says.

As we stop at the traffic lights next to the university building, Carlos still finds time to tell me that his confidence in his success comes from his studies. Again, he points to his smartphone and says that, in between rides, studying is all he does. “What exactly are your studies about?”, I want to know. The answer is right on the tip of his tongue: “Digital marketing”.

As I unbuckle my seat belt, getting ready to step out of the car, I still hear Carlos say, almost as if giving me a precious career advice: “You know that having a digital marketing strategy on social media is what defines success or failure, right? It’s just simple as that. You make the most of social media and you accomplish your goals”. I leave wishing him good luck and head to the university’s Economics Department, where I am supposed to deliver a talk on my recent findings about the intersection of social media use and political subjectivities among informal workers.

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In recent years, even though I wasn’t actively seeking research material in my daily activities, I frequently heard reports and opinions that, like Carlos’s, had clear connections to my academic interests. One example of that occurred during a birthday party, as I was getting to know some of the host’s relatives. In that occasion, a man I had just been introduced, André, told me that he worked with app-based deliveries. It did not take long before André took out his mobile phone from his pocket to tell me that he was investing in “content production” on Instagram. For him, new, more advantageous job opportunities would soon emerge from social media.

A friend who had been silently observing our conversation commented in a mocking tone, “I bet you carry some form of mysterious energy that attracts this kind of story.” My explanation for these “coincidences”, however, was considerably less esoteric. As far as I understand, these stories came to me with regularity, without me necessarily seeking them out, because they were part of a broader phenomenon that academics, society, and public authorities have not yet been able to map fully. Here I refer to the fact that social media platforms have penetrated so deeply into the lives of Brazilians that they have assumed an infrastructural role in our labour market, including in the informal sector.

My explanation for the scope of this hyper-connected informality phenomenon is based on around thirteen years of research involving women and men who work in various

sectors of the Brazilian labour market, including events, beauty, food, transport, and domestic cleaning. During this period, I interviewed men and women – most of whom live in Rio de Janeiro – to understand the impact of social media on their daily work lives, perceptions, and plans for the future. As illustrated by my conversation with Carlos, the use of social media significantly affects how they experience work and their world views.

As I have argued elsewhere (Marins, forthcoming), entire segments of workers who, at first glance, seem to have little to do with these platforms, when observed closely, reveal extremely tight relationships between the daily struggle for survival and the digital structures managed by major tech companies based in Silicon Valley. For many, platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and WhatsApp are used intensively as a means to endure extended periods of labour. For others, they are a source of learning, a way to purchase essential supplies for their work, or the primary channel for promoting and selling the services and products they offer.

Readers could rightly object that the impact of social media on the lives of these workers is not homogeneous. In addition to variations in how individuals use these platforms, the experience of a worker like Carlos, whose income does not directly depend, let's say, on his Instagram account, differs from that of a baker who relies on this platform to learn baking techniques, display her creations, and communicate with her clientele, for example. Even considering these distinctions, my research identified patterns that run across multiple sectors of the informal labour force, and this essay seeks to reflect on one of these patterns. More specifically, my aim here is to discuss how workers engaged in informal work and who make intensive use of social media perceive the notions of precariousness and entrepreneurship.

Precariousness and entrepreneurship, as well as related terms and expressions (precarisation, precarious work, entrepreneur of the self, etc.), are categories that have been gaining increasing relevance in recent years. In the academic field, particularly in the social sciences, they are widely used by authors who denounce the deterioration of working conditions, and the erosion of labour protections developed in the 20th century. However, there are still insufficient studies analysing how these categories are mobilized by the very actors who are the subjects of sociological analysis. In addition to contributing to filling this gap in the literature, the analysis of the meanings of precariousness and entrepreneurship by informal workers can provide valuable insights into the electoral behaviour of middle-class segments without access to labour benefits, whose votes, in recent electoral cycles, have fluctuated between opposing political camps (Costa 2022).

In this essay, I aim to analyse the meanings of precariousness and entrepreneurship by observing how these two concepts appear in my research field. To do so, I divided the text into three parts, in addition to this introduction and the final considerations. In the first part, I briefly present the context of the research, and the methodology used. Next, I describe part of my field material, aiming to establish a dialogue with existing analyses in the academic production. This discussion section, in turn, has three subsections. The first presents, concisely, how these analytical categories are represented in the literature, though without the intent of providing a comprehensive review of these studies. The second subsection summarizes how the categories of precariousness and entrepreneurship are applied in my research field. The third and final part of the discussion offers an exploratory analysis of these meanings within the context of the platform economy, questioning how social media platforms, as part of the essential infrastructure of the informal labour market, contribute to the emergence of new political subjectivities among workers.

2. Research Context and Methodological Notes

The empirical data underlying this essay were gathered over more than a decade (2011–2023), employing a combination of research techniques, including ethnographic observation, systematic social media monitoring, in-depth interviews, and focus groups. Although this process drew on investigative tools traditionally associated with various fields in the social sciences, the research as a whole adhered to ethnographic principles. As such, it sought to integrate multiple dimensions of workers' lives, not separating labour activities from other aspects of daily life, such as family relations, diverse social networks, and leisure activities. It also aimed to capture workers' perceptions and aspirations in both material and symbolic terms. Additionally, the ethnographic approach allowed a continued reformulation of research questions based on data constructed throughout the investigation, rather than mere validation or invalidation of hypotheses.

The method of observing and interacting with workers through social media platforms, including its potential and limitations, has been previously problematized in earlier article (Marins 2020). Nevertheless, it seems important to note that, specifically for this essay, Instagram played a particularly significant role, as it granted me access to a considerable number of workers who shared a substantial volume of audiovisual content documenting their daily lives through accounts dedicated to their labour activities. The platform's functionalities enabled direct engagement with these workers over the years. The systematic monitoring of social media also significantly influenced the design of interview scripts for in-depth interviews and focus groups. In this sense, Instagram was also widely used for participant recruitment, though in-depth interviews

were likewise conducted with workers recruited through other means (especially vicinal networks).

This research involved workers from various segments of informal labour, including app-based ride-hailing, social events, personal care, domestic work, food production and sales. They belong to the vast population of Brazilians without access to stable income or fundamental labour rights guaranteed under the Consolidação das Leis do Trabalho (CLT).[2] All of the workers featured in the investigation made an intensive use of social media: daily, they produce, share, and consume content through platforms like Instagram and WhatsApp.

Brazil is one of the world's largest consumer markets for digital social media platforms. According to the *Digital Brazil: 2024* report, Brazilian internet users aged 16 to 64 spend an average of nine hours and thirteen minutes online daily—a figure that includes connection time via mobile devices as well as other platforms like TVs, tablets, and computers. The same report ranks WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube as the most popular smartphone apps in Brazil. When considering smartphone usage alone, Brazilians rank second globally in internet engagement: five hours and nineteen minutes per day (just one minute less than the leading country, the Philippines). Despite these staggering numbers, research on the effects of digital platforms on social life in Brazil remains incipient. Even rarer are studies examining the relationship between social media platforms and labour in the country.

3. Discussion

3.1 Precarity and Entrepreneurship in the Social Sciences

Despite the complexity involved in establishing criteria to classify academic works based on their influence in the field, it is undeniable that in recent years, certain sociological analyses have gained significant prominence. In this regard, studies problematizing the notions of precarity and entrepreneurship gained traction in the second decade of the 21st century, accompanying the rise of neoliberalism as a guiding principle for social and economic policies. Although not an entirely novel concept in the social sciences, around the turn of the 21st century – particularly in the late 2000s, following

2 The Consolidação das Leis do Trabalho, or Consolidation of Labour Laws, Brazil's foundational labour legislation, was enacted in 1943. It codifies rights and regulations governing formal employment, including working hours, minimum wage, paid leave, termination rules, and social security benefits. Reforms in 2017 (*reforma trabalhista*, or labour reform) introduced flexibility to some provisions, though the CLT still represents a benchmark of protections tied to formal employment – safeguards from which informal workers remain excluded.

the 2008 financial crisis – the idea of precarious labour began to dominate global analyses of work. Sociologist Arne Kalleberg, for example, published an influential 2009 article framing precarity as a process stemming from transformations in employment relations in industrialized countries (Kalleberg 2009). Just two years later, one of the most prominent contemporary scholars in labour sociology, Guy Standing, argued that wage stagnation combined with the flexibilisation of European productive structures had given rise to a new class of workers. The British economist termed this growing population the "precariat", characterized by labour market instability, lack of social protections, and low wages (Standing 2014).

In Brazil, academic literature denouncing the precarisation of workers' living conditions also proliferated during this period. Social scientists such as Graça Druck, Valquíria Padilha, Cinara Rosenfield, Ricardo Antunes, Ruy Braga, and Giovanni Alves contributed to a robust body of literature on precarious labour in both industrial and service sectors (Druck 2011; Padilha 2009; Rosenfield 2011; Antunes 2011; Braga 2014; Alves 2009). More recently, with the global expansion of digital platforms (Srnicek 2017), academic efforts to analyse labour precarity have regained momentum, often referencing the post-WWII employment model (Ravenelle 2019; Crouch 2019; Calo and Rosenblat 2017; Huws 2015; Vallas and Schor 2020; Woodcock 2021; Abílio 2020; Antunes 2018; Machado and Pilan Zanoni 2022).

Like many fruitful analytical categories, the notion of precarious labour lacks a univocal definition, encompassing instead a multiplicity of meanings in the literature. For instance, in Brazilian academic production, Irene Galeazzi highlights two dimensions of precarious work: the erosion of labour rights and guarantees, as well as the quality of work activity itself (Galeazzi 2006). Padilha (2009) associates precarity with the absence of pleasure, stability, and financial security in labour, while Marley Rosana Araújo and Kátia Regina Morais frame it as rising unemployment and contractual instability (Araújo and Morais 2017). Druck (2011) offers a broader approach, emphasizing its multidimensional nature – including the economic, political, social, and cultural aspects attached to precarious work.

The academic trajectory of the entrepreneurship concept follows a similar chronology, particularly in critical scholarship. In his seminal 1979 Collège de France lectures, Michel Foucault analyses "entrepreneurship of the self" as a phenomenon emerging from neoliberal expansion (Foucault 2004). By the late 1990s, scholars like Nikolas Rose examined related notions, such as the construction of the "entrepreneurial individual" in social psychology – a subject who shapes life around professional goals and perpetual self-improvement (Rose 1996). Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello later identify in the "new spirit of capitalism" a shift in how entrepreneurship is valued: from

the industrial capitalist focused on long-term profit to an individualized, risk-taking innovator (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005).

With *The New Way of the World*, philosopher Pierre Dardot and sociologist Christian Laval reinvigorated the existing debates around this concept, positioning entrepreneurship as central to understanding neoliberal social transformations (Dardot and Laval 2017 [2009]). Sociologist Niamh Mulcahy argues for a process of "financial subjectivation" emerging in the 1970s, where individuals reconceived themselves as entrepreneurial subjects, strategizing survival and financial planning in tandem with global markets (Mulcahy 2016). Her analysis reveals mechanisms – such as household debt expansion and financialized services – that replace welfare-state dependencies (Mulcahy 2017).

In Brazil, critical scholarship on entrepreneurship has also expanded across disciplines, including psychology (Oliveira et al. 2016), law (Damião et al. 2014), media studies (Casaqui 2020), and management (Barros and Pereira 2008; Costa et al. 2011). Much of this work links entrepreneurship to labour precarity, often adopting a denunciatory tone. Economist Luciano Vasapollo, for example, has been influential among Brazilian scholars and contends that small entrepreneurs are "nothing more than capital's strategy to expel labour, creating induced tertiary-sector activities marked by low pay and absent social security" (Vasapollo 2012: 47, own translation).[3] Here, entrepreneurship appears as a dispositive masking precarity (Oliveira et al. 2016) or, in Ricardo Antunes' terms, a "disguised form of labour exploitation" (Antunes 2018: 15, own translation).[4]

As sociologist Leonardo Fontes summarizes in a 2023 review, precarity is often framed as a project that is eroding workers' material conditions, while entrepreneurship is frequently seen as a smokescreen that serves a project of governing the poor (Fontes 2023). On the other hand, studies foregrounding the social contexts in which labour is carried out – whether urban spaces or digital platforms (Marins 2020; Marins et al. 2022; Marins 2024) – tend to diverge from the dominating branch of literature. Guided by the principle that theories must be tested against real life as it unfolds in specific places (Barth 2000), ethnographers of informal labour have analysed its understudied material, symbolic, and cultural dimensions.

For instance, drawing on fieldwork among informal workers in Pernambuco, Wecisley Espírito Santo challenges the neoliberal individualization thesis, showing how family and community structure entrepreneurial practices (Espírito Santo 2020). Juan Molina and Hernán Palermo, studying Argentine platform delivery workers, highlight how they

3 *"[n]ão são nada mais do que o resultado da escolha do capital de expulsar o trabalho, criando uma atividade induzida de caráter terciário, mal remunerada, desprovida das contribuições para a seguridade social".*

4 "[*f*]*orma disfarçada assumida pela exploração do trabalho*".

associate digital labour with ideals of freedom and autonomy (Molina and Palermo 2023). Leonardo Fontes' research in Brazilian urban peripheries reveals moral motivations behind popular entrepreneurship, including desires for autonomy and escape from exploitative work relations (Fontes 2024). Anthropologist Kathleen Millar, based on fieldwork at Rio de Janeiro's Jardim Gramacho landfill, argues that waste pickers – though stigmatized and exposed to physical risks – cannot be reduced to a logic of scarcity (Millar 2017). Her data uncovers social relations, subjectivities, and shared values, framing their labour as a distinct "way of life". Like other ethnographic works, this essay's findings reveal tensions between scholarly conceptions of entrepreneurship and precarity and their on-the-ground manifestations.

3.2 Precarity and Entrepreneurship in the Field

Before addressing the meanings of precarity and entrepreneurship themselves, it is worth noting that these two categories are not employed symmetrically in the field. Terms like precarity, precarious labour, and related expressions did not emerge spontaneously in the discourse of my interlocutors. In contrast, entrepreneurship was widely invoked, though its meanings varied, as I will discuss below.

Given that years of engagement with workers revealed a general absence of references to precarity, I began directly questioning them about this concept, which has been extensively used in the social sciences to describe recent labour transformations. When asked point-blank, "Do you consider yourself a precarious worker?", my interlocutors consistently rejected the idea – either due to limited familiarity with the term or because they associated precarity with the hardships of others, not their own.

This refusal to identify as precarious workers did not mean they were unaware of their vulnerability in the informal labour market, nor did it imply indifference to the protections of formal employment. On the contrary, in informal conversations, focus groups, and interviews, they frequently expressed deep concern about the lack of safety nets when unable to work, often recounting dire situations they or their peers had faced: the Uber driver who lost his income for weeks after a traffic accident, the manicurist recovering from surgery for months, the domestic worker whose mother was forced to stop working due to health issues at fifty. These were just a few of the stories I encountered.

If workers were acutely aware of the risks of informal labour and emphasized the need for pension systems to secure their livelihoods during periods of incapacity, why did they resist the label of precarity? Broadly, their rejection was tied to how they perceived formal employment.

While most interlocutors had experienced wage labour at some point, a smaller subset had never been formally employed but drew on others' experiences to discuss "registered work" (*trabalho de carteira assinada*). With rare exceptions, based on these direct or indirect experiences, they dismissed the possibility of returning to formal jobs. For many, salaried work meant losing the freedom to set their schedules, submitting to a boss, and earning low wages. For women, the inability to balance caregiving with rigid formal work hours was a central concern.

Contracts governed by the CLT seemed distant not only materially but aspirationally. Workers were sceptical about available jobs, given the labour market's trajectory. As one domestic worker poignantly noted:

> I don't see attractive formal jobs appearing in the future. I see educated people – architects, lawyers – unemployed or earning next to nothing, sometimes less than me. The daughter of a former employer struggled to find a job and had to settle for a worthless salary. Should I believe there'll be jobs for me? No way. […] I can't complain. I earn more as a freelancer than I did with a registered job. I don't depend on a boss – if things get bad, I quit and have other houses to work in. I wouldn't trade this (personal communication).

If precarity in the literature carries a political dimension (Schaap et al. 2022) that naturalizes wage labour as an economic necessity, social duty, and moral practice (Weeks 2011), this empirical data might reflect what Verónica Gago terms "popular pragmatism" (Gago 2017). As formal employment recedes from the material and aspirational horizons of peripheral communities, notions of entrepreneurship have filled the void. Yet attitudes toward entrepreneurship were not homogeneous. Certain patterns, however, were clear – notably its pervasive symbolic appeal. Unlike precarity, ideas linked to entrepreneurship were actively mobilized in the field. In interviews, private conversations, focus groups, and social media content, "entrepreneurship" and related terms were not only familiar but often positively charged.

Many workers claimed the identity of "entrepreneurs", emphasizing the absence of a boss, the relative autonomy to set schedules, and the flexibility to adapt work to family life. Crucially, "entrepreneurship" referred not to their social position but to the values they attached to their labour. To "be entrepreneurial" meant taking responsibility for their small ventures' success, relentlessly seeking improvement, "giving their best" daily, and creatively overcoming obstacles. As a manicurist working from a makeshift home salon in a Rio favela explained:

> I'm an entrepreneur because I'm always trying to do better. I noticed clients wanted snacks, so I bought a fridge. I used empty shelves to sell soap and

> other small items. Being entrepreneurial means never settling (personal communication).

Phrases like “never settle” (*não se acomode*) “leave your comfort zone”, (*saia da zona de conforto*) and “evolve or repeat” (*foco na evolução*) were recurring mantras – even among those who didn’t fully identify as entrepreneurs. Ride-hailing drivers, for instance, often denied being entrepreneurs, citing their dependence on opaque platform algorithms and exploitative fees. Yet they still asserted that their approach to work – studying platform dynamics, strategizing which rides to accept, or offering better service – directly impacted their earnings. Their taking sole responsibility for outcomes was what they called, especially online, an “entrepreneurial mindset”.

3.3 New Meanings in the Platform Economy

The positive valuation of self-employment is certainly not new in Brazil, where informality has long been historically high. Indeed, much of what the fieldwork reveals aligns with existing social science analyses that have been around for decades. However, the research data suggests that the intensive use of social media – what I have termed hyperconnectivity in my research project – is closely tied to the construction (or at least the reinforcement) of a cultural and ideological framework that celebrates entrepreneurship.

This begins with the very architecture of social media platforms. Designed for users to express personal viewpoints by creating and publicizing content that reflects their own perceptions and experiences, these platforms employ algorithmic systems that incentivize individualism. In pursuit of engagement – a vague yet widely circulated industry term referring to content’s ability to retain user attention – informal workers dedicate substantial time, energy, and often financial resources to producing attention-grabbing content. Beyond the inherently solitary nature of this effort, social media creates competitive mechanisms that pit individuals against one another, for example, through the metrics they generate.

One example of these new competitive dynamics can be seen in how workers who are active on social media compare themselves to their peers based on follower counts. Bakers, drivers, barbers, and domestic workers who have amassed thousands of Instagram followers are treated as industry benchmarks, becoming aspirational models for others and establishing new hierarchies that, in turn, produce novel forms of inequality among peripheral workers. Over years of observing these workers, I noted how they constantly monitor these metrics. My interlocutors celebrate when platform analytics indicate a growing audience, yet they also participate in networks of blame

gossip (Elias 2000 [1965]), questioning – and often morally condemning – their peers' methods for gaining followers.

Another aspect of social media use that appears to significantly bolster entrepreneurial values among workers is the type of content these platforms amplify. Although the algorithms governing these platforms form an opaque system (Burrell 2016), preventing researchers from fully understanding the criteria behind content moderation (Gillespie 2022), ethnographic research shows that content framing entrepreneurship in a favourable light enjoys broad reach within the studied universe. Whether this is a direct result of decisions made by Silicon Valley executives – who notoriously espouse ideologies centred on individual empowerment and the weakening of state capacities (Barbrook and Cameron 1996) – or reflects preexisting ideological patterns among Brazilian informal workers is difficult to determine. But ultimately, I am convinced that platforms have introduced significant innovations in this regard.

The rise of so-called digital influencers, motivational coaches, and other figures who have gained prominence on these platforms among workers can also be interpreted as a sign of the expansion of a Silicon Valley-forged ethos that emphasizes meritocratic possibilities in the digital age (Levy 2010). Across all segments studied – from app-based drivers to bakers – my interlocutors demonstrated familiarity with individuals who, working in the same field, crafted positive narratives about their own trajectories. These figures routinely share rhetorics of overcoming (Marins 2018), reinforcing a culture of social ascent based on individual effort at the expense of collective struggle.

3.4 Concluding remarks

As numerous researchers, scholars, and political analysts have noted, traditional political organizations – particularly left-wing unions and political parties – have grown increasingly detached from the working classes in the 21st century. In a significant portion of their writings, resentment, resignation, and hopelessness emerge as dominant sentiments among fragmented and marginalized populations, deemed incapable of political mobilization to defend their class interests. The encounter with Carlos described in this essay's introduction, along with countless other situations observed in the field over recent years, offers an alternative interpretive key. Without denying the growing fragmentation of working classes reshaped by digital technologies, this study identifies the coexistence of antagonistic sentiments, asymmetrically distributed.

An analysis of the meanings of precarity and entrepreneurship among informal workers suggests a triumph of the individual over the collective – a shift possibly tied to new technological ecosystems that have, in recent years, taken on infrastructural dimensions. Among these workers, optimism, hope, and determination intertwine with resentment,

resignation, and despair. While the latter sentiments appear directed at political institutions and the actors who hold power within them, enthusiasm, determination, and hope are primarily channelled toward individuals embedded in circuits of everyday labour-sharing on social media. In this essay, I have approached this phenomenon in an exploratory manner, hoping that further data and research projects will deepen our understanding of shifting political subjectivities in the platform economy.

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