WORKER, THE MARKET IS THE WORST BOSS

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ABSTRACT
The current article scrutinises the capital/labour (or production/appropriation) contradiction within a capitalist society under a neoliberal frame. Here, it is applied to small companies, which are the locus of all entrepreneurship. Current capitalism regards entrepreneurship in such a privileged guise that it has been fostered widely, mostly from the 1990s. Even in times of crisis, such as the one which has been around since the 1970s, it has escalated. Highlighting the chances for autonomy and self-sufficiency, those advocating entrepreneurship are successful in leading the worker into believing he could be capital’s partner. However, since it is not ontologically feasible that different economic systems coexist unrelated and in harmony, we question the real motives behind promoting small business in times of capital concentration and pooling. While recognising the capitalist frame behind Fordist relations, we insist workers’ exploitation intensified throughout the Toyotist period, eased by the restructuring of capital, whose policies render the market much more aggressive. Against such background, we argue that entrepreneurship, instead of granting any freedom whatsoever, enslaves, since capital seizes all the entrepreneur’s time. In the current historical moment, this relationship, which we regard as one of the main means through which the capitalist contradiction moves through, forces the workers into a direct confrontation with the market, thus erasing any social protection in place and the possibility of class struggles, since we are dealing with a “subject devoid of subjectivity”. After looking at the objective conditions under which the entrepreneur is anchored into the economy, we conclude the market is the worst boss.

KEYWORDS:
Entrepreneurship, Capitalism, Labour, Contradiction, Market.

Entrepreneurship, the Toyotist production standard’s primordial form, is a recurring concept in economics, politics and governance. Hence its wide dissemination throughout the media, mostly in State sponsored advertising. Embedded in common sense — and thus legitimated —, this capitalist

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approach is assimilated as a factor for economic growth and social change. Hand in hand with a so-called post-industrial society\(^2\), the entrepreneur person or company is expected to be a means of coordination and connection between subjects and institutions, some of which ontologically opposed to each other. Vale et al (2008, on line), quoting HIRSCHMAN, sum up “entrepreneurial skills” as the proficiency in “bringing about agreements between all parties concerned”, whether they be inventors, partners, capitalists, suppliers, dispensers, workers or the public.

The same authors, based on Leibensten, define the entrepreneur as an “agent able to overcome market gaps and loopholes and thus reaping, on privileged terms, all subsequent benefits” (Vale et al, 2008, on line). In a nutshell, it is all about recognising an opportunity and making it profitable mediant cooperation, as if the market were an idyllic sphere, whereupon bourgeois individualism did not prevail. Nonetheless, capitalist relationships have never embedded such principles as deep as under neoliberalism. From our point of view, entrepreneurship is a strategy to transfer the task of creating jobs to the workers, in order to ensure capitalist “order and progress”; it is a ploy engineered by capital and enabled by the State to baffle class contrasts; it is, objectively, a means to fight unemployment without providing employment relationships in the sense of a contract that establishes that the worker sells his workforce and in return receives a wage and the social protection still legally granted to workers perceived as employees.

It goes without saying that we are not claiming full employment — although it would be entirely fair, since life in our society is conditioned by commodity buying and selling — because we are aware it does not fit capitalism’s ends, especially under neoliberal principles\(^3\). However, if the

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\(^2\) Concept put forward by Daniel Bell, in his 1973 work *The Coming of Post Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting*. Along these lines of interpretation, questioning the centrality of labour, we can highlight other names, such as Ifife (1989) and Habermas (1987), rigorously criticised by Antunes (1999) in *Os sentidos do trabalho* [The meanings of labour], whom we agree with.  

\(^3\) “The age of full employment, combined with wide-raging social policies carried out by a purportedly controlled and organised capitalism, sounds like some kind of mirage, a distant dream. In this context, social polices shift to focus on income transfers as their guiding light, at
current stage of capitalism is unable to create jobs, at least in a socially acceptable proportion bearing in mind the economically active population, and, on the other hand, social inequalities are reaching levels that jeopardise social order, there is a pressing need for a way out, so that capital’s legitimacy is not undermined.

Simultaneously, we can see that, aimed at increasing profits, the capitalist will “bring human labour to a minimum, boost investment in manpower sparing methods” (SOARES, 2008, p.9), but that does not imply capitalist ends could let go of surplus value. Clearly, such compulsory relationship with the worker is a nuisance any capitalist would be pleased to bypass. Notwithstanding, manpower sparing methods cannot bring about surplus value. Hence the importance of finding means to generate added value whose visible relationship is not marked by an employee-status, such as entrepreneurship. To this end, State interference is pivotal, for its task is to establish the legal apparatus which enables the capital relationship to turn the workforce into enterprises. So, the visible relationship between capital and labour under the Fordist standard, whose primordial trade was buying and selling manpower, takes a different shape in the Toyotist period: one that allows for claiming workers’ autonomy within capitalism, or even transmuting workers into capitalists. In Soares’s words (2008),

What is visible/apparent in that relationship is, precisely, the parity between commodity buyers and sellers. Nevertheless, the visible is just part of the picture, not the whole picture. Thus, scrutinising the mediations in that process of “commodity” production and movement may provide us with information beyond our sensory organs. One can posit that in many of such commercial relationships what is traded is manpower commodities (idem, p.10).

Based on this interpretation, our aim is to provide evidence of how, in a capital relationship guided by neoliberalism, regardless of how crucial

the expense of universal and free services. From another angle, if the post-war welfare state had full employment at its roots, it had, likewise, workers’ struggles, inasmuch as social rights do display that contradictory nature indeed, and are the outcome of the subjects’ pressures and counter-pressure. Years of neoliberalism have jeopardised workers’ political organisations, undermining resistance to loss of rights. The frailty of the political forces on the side of labour means the vulnerability of rights and policies, including a clear commodification of health and education services, besides an increase in private provision, in liaison with financial institutions” (BEHRING, 2012, p. 153-154).
labour and the consolidation of the production/appropriation contradiction are, there is a tendency to deny that any wealth generated is the outcome of productive work. This being so, the ways out provided for the crisis — inasmuch as it reflects social issues such as unemployment and labour casualisation — appeal to the autonomy and self-sufficiency of labour, exposing the market as the worst of all bosses.

**Recognisable, despite appearances**

It cannot be denied that contemporary capitalism, on the aftermath of production restructuring, features some changes, which might be seen as innovations or even ruptures. From our point of view, some formats have changed indeed, but labour as the generator of wealth remains at the core.

When highlighting labour as wealth generator, we are not overriding the escape routes engineered by capitalism, in its “speculative and parasitic” frame\(^4\). It stands to reason that the financial sector has grown and capital “now believes it found its profit heaven, with no need to get its hands dirty in production” (CARCANHOLO 2012, P. 325). Yet, that dream, like all dreams, is short-lived. Quoting the same author,

> Regardless of the many changes it went through, there is one thing capitalism has not yet been able to devise: how to create economic wealth, generate surpluses, and, in particular, make a profit out of nothing. It has never been able to, nor it will ever be, generate wealth, as well as its own income, from the ether. Economic wealth is and will remain the outcome of productive work.” (CARCANHOLO, 2012, P. 323)

From such viewpoint, based on Marxist theory, the primordial feature of the current stage of capitalist development

is the contradiction, increasingly intensified, between production and appropriation of market surpluses, or of added-value in its many forms. This is why the productive work category (perceived as that which generates added-value or market surpluses which can be appropriated by capital) gains prominence nowadays (CARCANHOLO, 2012, p. 324).

\(^4\) Term used by Carcanholo (2012).
Forms may change, but capitalist ends remain the same. Changes are restricted to policy matters, and “serve economic interests related to the legislation inherent to capital’s own development in search for wider reproduction” (SOARES, p. 11). Trying to understand how capitalism changes historically, even when moved by workers’ struggles, brings forth images of achievements that quite resemble concessions, since the system ends up owning and benefiting from them. In that sense, Raquel Varela’s overview is illuminating:

“It is a well established fact that the eight hour working shift conquest was met with labour intensification; just a few decades after widespread public education was enshrined, qualified workforce meant lower ages; collective wage agreements were followed by social pacts; when progressive taxation was applied to pubic ends, capital came up with public-private partnerships. It is therefore only fair to assume nothing truly changes… even when it does” (VARELA, 2012, p.71).

Thus, as far as changes promoted by the capital/State partnership — such as entrepreneurship — go, it is always wise to probe its real contents. Capitalism’s pious hopes usually disguise vested interests. Throughout the 1980s — as a reaction to the chaos found in Kenya, in the previous decade, by ILO experts —, especially on the planet’s poorer areas, causal work was pointed out as a solution for unemployment and subemployment. At the time, the solution put forward mean creating jobs at little cost. ILO, together with financial agencies such as the World Bank, started advising support to casual self-employment, overlapping with the socially protected jobs prevailing on the Fordist era. It must be underscored that, on the onset, polices stemming from that point of view were chiefly guided towards creating low cost work for poor workers. But that framework changed from the 1990s onwards, in tune with an economy geared towards flexibility. As employment with formal employment agreements became scarcer, plenty of qualified workers also started to engage on casual production relationships. From then on, it only took a small step for piecemeal work to become widespread, mostly on production areas where it is feasible to exploit absolute added-value, in compliance with the international labour division and, obviously, with an unequal and combined
development rule.

Such “novelty”, orchestrated by the illusion of autonomous work, broadened its scope and summoned an increasing number of workers into becoming bosses — of someone else or themselves alike. As outsourcing extended, worldwide and to different branches of the economy, the offer of autonomy gave way to what became known as entrepreneurship. Let’s face it: a system meant to be legit would never assume it is now unable to buy the only commodity a worker has to sell, so that he can keep on purchasing the commodities he needs to survive and keep on producing according to the order that requires him to do so and would vanish without his workforce. It is vital to persuade workers that their survival can be secured by means of another kind of relationship, whereby, allegedly, there is no need for him to submit to capital. Nonetheless, to become an entrepreneur, besides subjective pre-conditions, it is also required to own production resources, which we shall label as labour resources, for we perceive them as such when owned by the subset performing the work. The real production resources remain in the hands of capitalists, who, in some cases, such as the pivotal areas of informatics, air travel, communications and nuclear weapons, enjoy exclusivity benefits.

It is worth noting that entrepreneur subjects have to meet higher requirements than whose imposed on the “informal sector”\(^5\), avowedly an economy for the poor and unskilled. Although the term entrepreneurship is now widespread and also used to imply low-pay activities, resulting in a typology of companies\(^6\), one cannot state that it is limited to easy access to the market, low productivity, use of local resources, family ownership, reduced scale of business and technologies that favour manpower, features that, according to the ILO, defined the heterogeneity of the “informal sector”.

\(^5\) The inverted comma here is justified in terms of our critique of the Octean approach, which divides the economy into sectors. The afore mentioned critique can be read in detail in Os fios (in)visiveis da produção capitalista (2004) [The Invisible Thread of Capitalist Production], written by us.

\(^6\) In Brazil, the so-called small business is thus categorised, according to SEBRAE: 1) sole micro-entrepreneur, whose gross earning are less than R$ 60.000,00 per year; 2) micro-company, with annual gross earnings of up to R$ 60.000,00 and 3) small company, whose gross earnings range from R$ 360.000,00 to 3.6 million.
Data from a Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) research carried out in Brasil by the Serviço Brasileiro de apoio às Micro e Pequenas empresas [Brazilian Office for Small and Micro Business] — SEBRAE — and by Instituto Brasileiro de Qualidade e Produtividade [Brazilian Office for Quality and Productivity] (IBQP) in 2014 established that, in ten years, the entrepreneurship rate in Brazil has risen from 23%, in 2004, to 34.5% in 2014. On a worldwide scale, Brazil stands out with the highest entrepreneurship rate, nearly 8 percentage points ahead of China, which comes second, with a 26.7% rate. The amount of entrepreneurs amongst the adult population in the country surpasses that of the USA (20%), United Kingdom (17%), Japan (10.5%) and France (8.1%). Amongst developing economies, the Brazilian rate is higher than that of India (10.2%), South Africa (9.6%) and Russia (8.6%). Plus, our interpretation is corroborated with regards to what is required of a person in order to become a businessperson, for SEBRAE’s president states that in 100 Brazilians starting their own business, 71 are motivated by expediency, rather than necessity. Being motivated by expediency is not a mere act of will; it pertains certain objective conditions. Even so, those investors (if one can use such terminology at all) need to work. They will not be able to live off the exploitation of someone else’s labour. Even if they do have employees, generally speaking, they are small employers and will very seldom become capitalists.7

Surely, entrepreneuring demands knowledge, financial resources, access to banks, etc. The invitation to do it is, thus, targeted at a share of workers owning some kind of project, savings or eligible for bank loans. Driven by the illusion of autonomy, by the need to cash in on the funds allocated and by promises made by so-called partnerships — including those that embody the State — the entrepreneur devotes all his energy to the enterprise, regardless of the length of his working hours. There is a target to be met, and the belief that, in the end, the hoped-for independence shall be achieved.

7 The small businessman is not a capitalist as such; still, he is not a worker either, but an hybrid of both — in Marx’s words, “a small boss”. Even though such small bosses usually work harder than their employees, being an employer means he will face labour as if he was a capitalist and thus embark on a direct relationship and endure capital/labour constraints in a rather adverse position. This is so because his business dimension does not allow him to foresee the risks related to that relationship, as does the capitalist.
Unlike self-employment, as an option for poor workers, devoid of the attachment to the economy’s formal center, the eulogy of entrepreneurship seduces the worker through a Habermasian persuasiveness, on the basis of the vast prospects such condition might deliver. After all, more than manpower, such activity depends on other resources. Therefore, in order to invest knowledge, money and time, entrepreneurs must regard moving up on the social ladder as feasible.

We might say both qualified and unqualified workers are led to believe they are or shall be autonomous. The difference lies in the fact that casual work, as an economy devised to engage poor and unskilled workers, is dealt with as a phenomenon external to development, thus with no links to the formal core of the economy. It would seem that activities initially limited to what was labelled “the informal sector” amounted to some sort of adjustment, given the subemployment conditions in place, as shown in the Kenya Report. For those workers, what mattered was to ensure their, and their families’, survival, not necessarily to enter into a contract with the State, banks or companies, neither did those activities matter to the economy’s formal core. That is not so as far as entrepreneurship goes. The entrepreneur must feel closer to capital and further removed from labour, even though practice refutes such intentions. Nonetheless, as long as reality allows the entrepreneur to ignore or accept the subordinate status imposed on him, the more the discourse denying labour as wealth generator is reinforced — as well as social pacts, always a tool to try to overcome capitalist crisis.

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8 ‘this concept of communicative rationality carries with it connotations based ultimately on the central experience of the unconstrained, unifying, consensus bringing force of argumentative speech, in which different participants overcome their merely subjective views and, owing to the mutuality of rationally motivated conviction, assure themselves of both the unity of the objective world and the intersubjectivity of their lifeworlds’ (HABERMAS, 1987, p. 27).
9 Fact-finding mission which looked at the urban employment problem in Kenya, aiming at a diagnosis and putting forward policies to mitigate unemployment and subemployment in the area, as well as in other underdeveloped economies.
10 Nowadays, even these workers have been lured by bank and government agencies, by means of offers that promise advantages.
11 The word “pact” conveys the idea of an agreement between parties. Notwithstanding, according to Varela (2012), some social pacts were imposed. Still, she ponders that “in that case, it is so only as far as the shape is concerned, but not when it comes to content, for it would only be a pact insofar as the workers’ organisations gave up upfront standoffs, in
In that sense, the institutions representing the State act as the entrepreneur’s partners, as if it was a neutral stance, concerned solely with social welfare. However, there is no such thing as State’s neutrality. Its nature is capitalist. “Any attempt to engage in an analysis challenging the neutral nature of the State is usually written down as an ideological shift, thus devoid of scientific validity” (GUEDES; VIANA, 2012, p. 30).

Guedes and Viana (Idem) point out that the State is usually singled out as an abstract entity, neutral towards the whole population. And that is exactly the way it is perceived within the entrepreneurship debate. Federal, state or local governments alike highlight the benefits of entrepreneurship and provide the intermediaries/facilitators needed in order to enable such relationship, portrayed as if the small company was indeed an absolute and life-saving novelty. Life-saving according to whose life? In order to set in and be accepted, the small company is not allowed to escape capital’s logic. Well, since the capitalist’s purpose remains to accumulate capital, the changes which took place denote a complex and contradictory re-founding of capitalist regulation, moving towards a new configuration, that can be described as flexible accumulation, according to Benko (1996). The latter allows many forms to coexist side by side — time wages, piece wages, informal labour, entrepreneurship, association, cooperatives, etc. In the words of Benko (1996), “by conveying a combination of several historical trends in the capitalist production process, it establishes the ‘synergy’ of the production processes at stake on the basis of the primacy of a fluid reframing of those same processes” (idem, p.23). Thanks to such fluidity, capital can dispose of production sites and workers in general, and invest on relationships that disguise labour as a wealth generator. It is then able to pursue “the cohabitation of metropolitan post-Fordism’s ‘noble’ tasks (...) and the maintenance of labour regimes openly despotic” (idem, ibidem). Against the backdrop of all these flexibilities, the small company has been favoured, fostering, still according to the author mentioned above, a mode of consolidating capitalist relations.

exchange for some kind of rights (or a pledge that they will not be lost)” (VARELA, 2012, p.93).
It should be noted that the decentralisation of production has, on the opposite, brought about wealth concentration and centralisation. If, on the one hand, the small company is indeed fostered, on the other hand, great corporations merge in order to retain the surplus value exploited, which allows us to infer that all the talk about the end of labour is groundless. Neither can it be accepted at face value that this type of enterprise is based on the ability to generate ties of cooperation. Such “cooperative” relationship between capital, labour and institutions, in theory, would allow the workers, in some instances, some sort of re-appropriation of their power as direct agents in the labour process, but that does not change the nature of cooperation as the basic form of the capitalist production mode. According to Marx, “such social embodiment of the labour process is no more than a method, employed by capital, to enhance its productive force in order to exploit it more profitably” (1983, p. 266). Still according to Marx (1984),

In tandem with (...) the centralisation or expropriation of many other capitalists by a few, the cooperative type of the labour process develops increasingly, as well as a conscious application of science, the planned exploitation of land, the turning of labour resources into labour resources that can only be used collectively, the economy of all production resources insofar as they are used as production resources for social labour previously agreed, the entanglement of all peoples in the world market network, and therefore the international nature of the capitalist regime (Idem, p. 293).

Well, if centralisation implies the expropriation of many other capitalistas, if not even the capitalist himself — the prevailing term on the relation — enjoys personal independence, how feasible is it that an autonomous small company has the capacity to build cooperation ties between poles entirely apart? Would not be rather the case, quite often, that entrepreneurs are part and parcel of the agreed social labour? Aren’t many of the entrepreneurshipes simply corporate outside departments, whose owners tend to work much harder than if they were employed according to the usual terms of the Fordist period?

We believe entrepreneurship, or, if you will, the small company, instead of delivering the freedom promised to the worker, enhances capitalist
relationships, inasmuch as its aims are fulfilled without recognising the role of labour. Quite often, it is as if goods came into the sphere of circulation by sheer magic. In other words, the timely cancelation of the prevailing moment restricts relations to circulation. And that appears to be the aim of neoliberalism, cherished by all of those colluding to deny labour’s centrality; even if capital’s appropriation of the worker’s time, in that Toyotist period, takes place at a much higher rate than in Fordism, and in a much more precarious fashion.

We insist in underscoring neoliberalism, because, although it is a split form liberalism, it would not be accurate to claim a continuity between the two. The elements conveying continuity — small State, privileging the markets and a clear anthropological notion of the individual, when placed upon their historical context, reveal a different substance. The small state, or minimum state, in reality, is just hypertrophy; the market, for his part, does acquire a huge dimension, becoming society’s sole mediation authority; and individualism is just an attempt to break away from all social politics beyond market relations. In that vein, we regard entrepreneurship as one of the ways the market appropriates all hours in the lives of those who embrace its proposal. It is, as far as we are concerned, a fancy label for qualified, misled and precarious workers, for semantics does not change reality.

Faced with narratives that always seem to favour the worker or the consumer, the globalisation of the economy, mostly by means of privatisations or market de-regulation, leverages the capital/labour contradiction. Meanwhile, while in Adam Smith’s liberalism there is an undoubted recognition of the economical contradiction between classes, neoliberalism’s advocates try to convince us that, just because the labour process has changed, the worker became capital’s partner. Thus, it is utterly preposterous to raise arguments over a class society, labour’s centrality or the exploitation of surplus value. All we are left with is accepting capitalist social relations as natural and, therefore, our current society as the end of history. The advocacy of such so-called “naturalness” is, actually, used as the grounds to refute Marxist social theory as the basis for analysing society,
because, according to neoliberals, it is out of date and thus unfit for tackling today’s problems. Yet, either if one believes or not in the revolutionary essence of Marxist thought, that dimension does indeed demonstrate labour’s centrality — supported by reality —, which explains, on the one hand, our own theoretical and methodological options, and, on the other, why neoliberal loathes them.

It is undisputed that neoliberal society warrants capital plenty of freedom and places severe restrictions on labour. Such restriction are patent, for instance, on the way migrants and refugees are treated. Just to address one of the aspects of the debate, we will turn into “institutional racism”, which is scrutinised, rather accurately, by Pietro Basso (2013). Disagreeing with those who claim racism against immigrants and non-whites is a “bottom-up” process, he states that:

“In my view, the first bidder for the current revival of racism in Europe is, in fact, institutional racism. And its main protagonists are the States themselves, the governments, the members of parliament: with their special legislation and public speeches against immigrants; with their discriminating and arbitrary administrative praxis, that renders immigrants’ lives so bitter and legitimises the rural overexploitation of their labour; with the selection, rather racially based in depth, between “good” and dangerous nationalities, between welcome and unwelcome immigrants; with the obsessive police raids against immigrants and the proliferation of detention camps, within and outside European borders (BASSO, 2013, p. 85-86).

Capital’s freedom assumes, within neoliberalism, its totalising role, showing its real face: a socio-metabolic control mode essentially out of control (MÉSZÁROS, 2002).

The main reason why this system necessarily evades any significant degree of human control is precisely the fact that it has also arisen throughout history as a powerful — actually, the most powerful so far — ‘totalising’ control structure, to whom everything, including human beings, must adapt, and thus attest their ‘productive viability’, or die, if unable to fit in (Idem, p. 96).

In this context, how trustworthy is a way out of the capitalist crisis that grants freedom for those living off their wages? Its should be noted that relationships governed by the markets are based upon inequality. That
element — which Hayek (1990) deems essential for capitalist efficiency and productivity — should be enough to question the liberal rational concept of freedom. As a type of relation mediated by buying and selling manpower, private property and the social division of labour, capital denies any chance for freedom on a daily basis. Inequality fostered by competition between capitals is not restricted to companies, for it spreads to the labour market and, in the end, amounts to an (in)humane relation. “For each winner, there is a multitude of losers, and the winners owe those they crush nothing at all” (GORZ, 1998, p. 50)

Macpherson (1979) states that “individualism originating in the 17th Century comprised an essencial problem: namely, its possessive nature” (idem, p.15). Such possessive nature requires an “approach to the individual as being, essentially, the owner of himself and of his own capacities, owing society nothing for them” (idem, ibidem). As a result, men have tried to live on an “every man for himself” basis, but life is getting unbearable in that society of owners, since the only demands the market respects are norms that simply envisage the hegemony of capitalist domination, not any human aims whatsoever.

It is against this framework that entrepreneurship is fostered, translated into small companies and carrying on its shoulders dreams of freedom objectively unfeasible. Grounded on its progressive dimension and the capacity to create jobs, those small companies only intend to incorporate workers based on uncertainty and fragmentation. It takes more than privately owning some means of production to reach free individuality.

The worker’s private owning of his own means of production is the basis of the small company, and the small company is a required condition for the development of social production and the worker’s free individuality. (…) But it only flourishes, only releases all its energy, achieves the proper classic form whenever the worker is the free private owner of working conditions established by himself, the peasant owns the land he works and the craftsman the tools he handles as a virtuoso (MARX, 1984, p. 292-293).
Certainly, private ownership of the means of production, aforementioned within the scope of the Marxist thought, concerns a level of development that does not share any resemblance with capitalism, especially in the 21st Century. The locus of entrepreneurship and, consequently, of the small company, is capitalist private property, based upon the exploitation of the work of others, the capitalist cooperation method and precarious work, devoid of any social protection, preferably under the guise of a relationship upon which the surplus value can only be unveiled by means of an overall analysis. In this sense, we resorted to the whole, since we perceived it as more than the sum of its parts.

A bit of history

On chapter XXIV of The Capital — on the so called primitive accumulation —, Marx (1984) provides evidence that turning independent workers into wage-earners requires accumulated money and, above all, an historical process separating the means of production from the producers. Notwithstanding, that separation might seem dated, once, nowadays, some of the capitalist production relations are being implemented by workers who own their means of production/labour. Was the polarisation needed between capital and labour eroded by the development of productive forces, and is wage-earning no longer the core of the capitalist production mode? Let’s keep in mind that

The capital relation presupposed the separation between workers and the ownership of the conditions for carrying out the work. As long as capitalist production can stand on its own feet, not only does it preserve that separation, it also reproduces it increasingly. (MARX, 1984, p. 262).

Mostly after the 1990s, when the productive process and the flexible production management techniques tend to fragmentation and factory shifting, some segments of the economy are organised in such fashion that most of their production — primarily its execution — is carried out in small
workshops or through home work, like the footwear\textsuperscript{12} and garment industries in Brazil. Theoretically, the workers own their own business. So they are freelancing, be it as individual entrepreneurs or micro or small business persons, in tune with the logics of entrepreneurship and employability, according to which the worker is granted the choice of being autonomous.

In the light of such reality, one should ask whether the Marxist tradition remains a proper basis to analyse relations within our contemporary capitalist society. That same Marx (1983) has also taught us that commodity development does not eradicate the contradiction, but simply brings about ways upon which it keeps on moving. Couldn’t it be that entrepreneurship is the current ultimate way the contradiction keeps on moving? Couldn’t entrepreneurship be a disguised form of wage-earning, even more demeaning than that embodied in the employee/employer relationship?

Not by chance, entrepreneurship is restricted to some fields of production and segments that do not threaten in any possible way capitalist development. At most, some small companies act like external departments of greater corporations, carrying out activities whose results increase by means of subcontracting and outsourcing. The surplus value extracted is mostly appropriated by the contracting company.

This being so, we must ask: does the fact that certain economic segments have organised so that the worker is granted/allowed the status of owner of his production means imply that the historical fact that workers, “free as birds”, were turned into wage earners is overcome? Does owning their means of production/work turn the workers into autonomous workers, or is such a facade merely an opportunistic expression of capitalist objectives for the time being? Is being one’s own boss or a small boss the same as being free to act as one pleases, or does it entitle even more subordination?

Risdolsky (2001) claims that primitive accumulation is “comprised in the concept of capital”. But that sounds scanty to assign it other essence but

\textsuperscript{12} On changes on the footwear industry, we recommend, amongst the many articles written by Vera Navarro (2006), her book Trabalho e trabalhadores do calçado: a indústria calçadista de Franca [Labour and footwear workers: the footwear industry in Franca] (SP).
an historical one. So, we must ask whether the separation process initiated by primitive accumulation has become a permanent process, or if the systematic revolution in technology and capital concentration has canceled the producers/means of production separation, and yet if labour has achieved autonomy in the light of the current changes in production relations. Ultimately, what we are questioning is whether the private ownership of some means of production/work — pivotal features in entrepreneurship and employability — is a precondition for the worker’s free individuality.

All these questions consign us, inevitably and compulsorily, to reality. For instance, they bring to mind those workers within the production sphere who are hired on a piecework pay basis and are led to believe they are freelancing. That’s the case with seamstresses making clothes for leading brands. Working in cooperatives or from home, they submit to piecework, committing themselves to a pre-established daily load per a previously agreed price. Production does not allow them any creativity whatsoever. Fabrics, designs, sizes are all set by the hiring company. Nonetheless, they are instigated to believe they are freelancers who own their own business, whose growth will only depend on their personal efforts. In our view, the freelancing is on all mishaps and mistakes that might eventually be made; or in the responsibility to deliver an established workload at the end of the deadline. They are freelancers when it comes to sick leave, holidays or being entitled to leisure moments with their families; or to make sure all machinery is in mint condition or pay for it when they start to wear and tear. They are freelancing when it comes to surviving when the company does not need their services anymore. After all, the relationship occurs in the circulation

13 Such inspiration, stemming from Third Italy, where production de-centralisation and employment flexibility, combined with cultural and social features, were instrumental to the emergence of industrial districts, cherishes the entrepreneurship dream. Indeed, Third Italy underwent development levels beyond dispute, but, as an experience, it does not allow one to assume that, under the same conditions, any small company will be able to reach the same results. It is advisable to know the specific conditions that favour such type of production, and not to focus on economic development alone. Those districts, which made use of family relations as a structuring principle of industrial organisation (PIORE; SABEL, 1990), to become the world famous Benetton, had to abide by the capitalist general development guidelines.
sphere, no matter how glaringly evident production is. Clothes are made. Who made them?

If we look carefully at the relationship, it becomes obvious that it is a wage-earning arrangement devoid of an employment bond, which does not deduce production variable and fixed costs and thus benefits capital. It is quite clear those seamstresses are informally employed by the companies they are sewing for. The right word to apply in this situation is “informal work”, commonly used by ILO when describing job opportunities within the “informal sector”, although in a slightly different connotation: for us, it is an informal relation at the formal core of the economy, a strategy to disguise the exploitation of surplus value.

Notwithstanding, so that no one accuses us of ignoring the circulation sphere, the locus of non-productive work, and therefore immune to the exploitation of surplus value, let’s look at entrepreneurship therein. There are countless instances of small companies in the field of commerce, such as many franchises whose closed packages include anticipated costs and profit, to the utter delight of the class conciliation visionaries. The success achieved by some feeds the sweet dreams of many entrepreneurs-to-be, and, in some cases, explains why there are so many of such small companies. However, their lifespan is an assertive disavowal.14 We must regard the small boss as a tradesman; unless we are mistaken, in that field the farce is even more tangible, for he sells work objectified into commodities and not his manpower. If we regard him as a worker, he does not create surplus value.15

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14 According to the Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística [Brazilian Institute for Geography and Statistics] —IBGE, based on data collected in 2010, for each one hundred companies started in Brazil, 48 close within the next three years. Bearing in mind the serious political and economical crisis Brazil is facing right not, it makes sense to expect a much lower survival time.

15 From Carcanholo’s point of view (2012, p. 326), “the exploitation of non-productive labour should also be mentioned; even though it does not enable a rise in surplus or surplus-value produced, it does widen the margin allocated for return on capital, by reducing the relative share appropriated by the workers”. Still, such “exploitation” of non-productive labour must not be taken at face value. The author believes that “[…] the explanation would lay, in unprecedented levels, in the exploitation of labour, be it by means of the relative surplus value, absolute surplus-value (longer working hours, multiple working days, labour intensification), or the over-exploitation of waged and non-waged labour” (CARCANHOLO, 2012, p. 326). All of this fostered by neoliberal policies.
Let’s imagine a small boss with only one employee and a business geared towards selling products from different corporations. Money flows on the cash register in amounts that might impress most wage-earners, not least his employee. Still, his practice, apparently so autonomous, is withheld by the limits imposed by reality. He soon understands he became a worker with more responsibilities and much longer working hours, and that, paradoxically, lost those labour rights he was entitled as an employee, and that the market has a much tighter grip on him than when he was part of a employer/employee relationship. We could say he is paying a huge price for being so close to capital. He put himself in a situation whereupon he is forced to deal directly with companies, banks and the State, and most of the money his labour causes to flow goes to those embodiments of capital. All of his movements are determined by that trinity, through the following relations: compulsory purchase of goods, which, sometimes, might get stranded on his stockpile; loans, on which he depends to be able to pay his supplies, charged with interests; taxes previously established by the State and controlled through the sell of the products — trying to bypass this requirement might lead to heavy fines. And if that was not enough, if the entrepreneur decides to make his workplace a little bit more pleasant, listening to some music, he will see his expenses forcibly accrued with royalties, levied by ECAD\textsuperscript{16}.

We do not mean to praise Fordism, but in that regime there was no attempt to blur the worker’s role in capitalist accumulation. In other words, in most cases, it was impossible to deny the capital/labour contradiction or the exploitation of surplus value and its total service to capital. Roughly speaking, the entrepreneur was a kind of a bulkhead between the worker and the market.

By that, we are not implying that the workers do not have to abide to the market’s settings, but simply pinpointing that Fordism did allow them

\textsuperscript{16} ECAD (Escritório Central de Arrecadação [Collection Central Office]) is a private agency, established in 1976 to collect royalties due for each song played “in public performance” in Brazil, either national or foreign. Then, the money should go to the artists. The agency comprises nine organisations — musicians’, songwriters’, performers’, authors’ and others — that act as unions. It owns 26 collecting units, and employs 780 workers and 45 lawyers. It is obvious that keeping such a structure, added to the amounts assigned to authors, brings about very high costs, which must be paid by someone.
room for struggle. Its opponent was the subject embodied on the employer. Currently, under Toyotism, he is left face to face with the market, a “subject devoid of subjectivity”, in the words of Oliveira (1995, p. 17). According to him, the market/capital, “as a functional mechanism, [which] penetrates ‘from behind’ every single action carried out by human agents, subduing them and driving them towards its own self-evaluation process” (Idem, ibidem).

We could say Toyotism promotes the implementation of the market to the full, because it is — in neoliberal lines — the “only mechanism capable of governing properly a complex economy, based upon the division of labour” (idem, p. 21). For the supporters of global planning,

The market thus surfaces as the mechanism that prevents anarchy, because of the information it provides. Therefore, is represents the system’s common production, operating beyond the scope of men’s will and conscience, so that it effects the regulation of the process much more efficiently than any person or institution would be able to, for the information vital for this direct coordination of the process would be missing (OLIVEIRA, 1995, p. 21).

In practical terms, such full implementation of the market is expressed on the strategies defining entrepreneurship, which convey an idea of employability whereupon society exonerates itself from job creation and transfers that responsibility to the worker. When applied, these concepts, besides contributing to deny labour’s role in capitalist accumulation, are also used to convince the worker that he is in a better situation when compared to the Fordist period, once he is not subjected to an employment relationship. Indeed, the market enforces upon him working hours, targets and responsibilities whose fulfilment does not depend, directly ou indirectly, solely on what goes on on the workplace. His working day is indefinite, for he also acts as manager and administrator. Resorting to Marx, we would say that:

[...] Working hours means, every day, full 24 hours, taking out a few sleeping hours, without which his workforce is totally unable to perform the tasks again. It is taken for granted that the worker, throughout all his life, is nothing more than his manpower, and so, all his available time is essentially and lawfully working time, that hence belongs to capital’s self-valuation (MARX, 1983, p. 211).
Anyway, whatever the outcome of his business, he cannot escape his commitments and has no chance to fight against the state of affairs he is faced with. Struggling is not an option whenever the agent of the process opposing the worker is an “unconscious subject, a subject devoid of subjectivity” (OLIVEIRA, 1995, p. 17). As for the process, it is self-reflexive, “a movement for its own sake: everything relates to it, including humankind, whose manpower becomes a tool for its valorisation” (Idem, p. 16).

From this point of view — that the decisions on how to use the manpower and distribute profits are always guided by the accumulation criterion —, “market automatism paves the way for a total arbitrariness when it comes to distribution and employment, bringing about a tendency for unbalanced and irrational structures” (Idem, p. 63), whose consequences are paid for by the workers, even though the market is warranted by its inherent tendency towards balance. Moreover, it is not by chance, but rather along the lines of liberalism’s ancient logics, that workers are encouraged to “freelance” and thus, in compliance with the prevailing thinking, achieve the longed for freedom. Given the objective conditions displayed and scrutinised, can the worker be really free under capitalism?

The precondition to bring freedom into effect on human life is, here, contrary to modernity’s great philosophies’ claims, to forego all personal freedom and submit totally to an unconscious mechanism: market laws (OLIVEIRA, 1995, p. 65).

Plus, that assertion is not exclusive to workers. Even tough class restrictions force them into submission towards capitalists, the market’s determinations also hit the latter, as individuals. It is on the basis of that economic imperative, totally geared towards value valorisation, that we are trotting, amongst other aims, to demonstrate that the market is the worst of all bosses.

As capital’s productive system generates redundant time, capital takes a rather destructive attitude towards it — insofar as the only way to create jobs would be a widespread reduction in working times, and such measure is unfathomable for capital, whose mechanisms are geared towards achieving the market economy’s essential ends, and never human needs. Jobs bear costs, and are only justified insofar as they foster value’s self-valorisation. In
a society whose best answer to the challenges of scarcity is the market, not by a long shot can we glimpse job creation by means of reducing working hours. It would be naive. Albeit the crisis steams form its own development, capital does not want to keep its effects for itself, as far as unemployment or any related setbacks go. So, it embarks upon production re-structring, whose consequences will always fall on the workers’ shoulders, in varying degrees of intensity, depending on the economic hierarchy, which establishes that some countries decide and others abide, regardless of how globalisation talk always suggests there is one sole market, whereupon financial agents purchase and sell under equal conditions.

The productive re-structring that started on the 1980s and spans to nowadays is the perfect showcase for the meaning of that market, inasmuch as its expansion makes it quite clear how unequal and combined development is, both in terms of the international division of labour and of the freedom to relocate capital, which embody financial capital. According to Husson (1999, 2006), the split/integration dialectics is the major movement in world economics.

With the collapse of bureaucratic societies, we can say capitalism leaves its stamp on the whole planet, subduing it more or less alone and disregarding national boundaries. But it has lost the capacity to spread its logics in depth, and works as a gigantic exclusion machine: instead of taking in social classes and geographic areas, it operates a systematic triage and rejects everything it fails to integrate into its own logics. That is the case with unemployment and exclusion in rich countries, and the growth of the informar sector in poor ones” (HUSSON,1999, p. 117)

The author insists that the flexibilisation project is, in many ways, a project of “wage deconstruction” (idem, p.81). According to his interpretation, economic dynamics, on its own, do not account for the current levels of unemployment. In his reckoning, we should take into account that the essence of jobs has changed, that there is no interest anymore in offering formal jobs in Fordist fashion and that nowadays, alongside all employment types, a culture of precarious work is promoted and disseminated throughout the world. Along those lines, he devises unemployment thus:
It is the poisoned outcome of the refusal to embrace on true production, of capitalism’s denial embodied in not fulfilling a certain amount of needs (which means the related jobs are not created), instead of doing so and in profitability terms that do not meet the norms concerned. Rather, an ever widening social fringe sees its right to work denied, because of the lack of adequate places for capital accumulation. (HUSSON, 1999, p. 89).

The author insists in establishing that, nowadays, capital “rejects everything it cannot fit into its logics, which leads us to question its claimed motivation for fostering small business. To us, it seems that, historically, whenever capitalism was able to assimilate those phenomena falling outside its own rationale, such as full employment or the welfare state benefits, it did do because there was no need to let go of its main purpose: accumulation. On a number of occasions, through capitalism’s history, the State — fully in line with capitalism — submitted plans of social development which, in theory, favoured labour. For instance, the superintendencies of the development of Brazilian northern and northeast regions, which, amongst other aims, purported to pull workers out of informality, the prevailing labour practice in both areas.

Another European example that seems to defy logic is the 1993 Maastricht Treaty\(^{17}\), at a time when the crisis had taken hold everywhere. When the European Union and the single currency were proclaimed as the main leverage for economic integration, building the “Great Market” had the stated purpose of creating millions of jobs. Notwithstanding, as Husson (1999) recalls, the following year the White Book\(^{18}\) is forced to revise those expectations, in a clear illustration of the European compromise’s move to more systematic neoliberal line. Similarly to the afore mentioned book, the author notes that all reference texts refuse the possibility of cutting down

\(^{17}\) “The treaty has set targets in order to facilitate the movement of people, goods, services and capital throughout the continent, aimed at assuring Europe’s political stability after so many times of unrest. So that targets could be met, the treaty was written envisaging three issues. The first would be an approach to social and economic matters enabling the rise development of the bloc; it dealt with farming, the environment, health, education, energy, research and development. The second issue would look at an approach towards common wellbeing, such as external policy and security. Finally, it would bring to the fore policing and judiciary cooperation in criminal matters” (on line).

\(^{18}\) Comprising 279 legal steps required for the completion of the European internal market.
working hours in order to boost employment. “It was quite the opposite: the notion that wages should raise at a slower rate than productivity is regarded as a rule. In other words, the wages’ share is to keep on going down while inequalities roar” (Idem, p. 150).

This rationale heads towards a frame of mind that not only refuses to envisage creating new jobs by means of cutting down working hours, but also aims to reduce paid working hours, which does not mean to let go the worker’s time — preferably, all the time. As far as neoliberals are concerned, “full employment is from now on out of reach, and the welfare state costs too much. Worldwide competition requires dumping those old practices” (HUSSON, 1999, p. 159). On the other hand, the acceptable practices embody innovations based upon neoliberalism’s guidelines, which exacerbate inequalities.

According to Meszáros (online), we believe “capital’s system is no longer in a position to concede anything at all to labour, in contrast to all reformist achievements of the past”. For the author, in the current historical moment, even in countries such France and Germany, amongst others, labour’s most limited targets — such as the 35-hour week — cannot be met, “since they objectively challenge the established socio-economic and political orders (in other terms, the whole decision making system) under which the “country’s economic pie” is produced and distributed" (idem, online).

Therefore, based upon objective conditions, production methods were changed and new management forms were created, attuned to flexibility, and it became possible to bring to live a whole new international division of labour, upon which the very concept of labour tends to disappear.

Unlike Fordist practices, which practically fuse employment and labour and assume some king of regulation, according to whichever labour laws are in force, today’s society prioritises the logics of activity, upon which labour and employment must not be confused and whose “regulation mode jeopardises the very foundations of society” (HUSSON, 1999, p. 162). Actually, this innovative practice, which assumes it is possible for workers to produce autonomously, on their own or in free association, free from the
markets’ determinations, questions the wage-earning as the basis of capitalist society. “It has been mostly instrumental in terms of bringing about, inbetween pure unemployment and standard jobs, that which someone labelled the ‘halo’ of intermediary states of precious work” (Idem, p. 81). We could say that, quite often, the word job is actually rather misplaced, for it is a concept which implies regulation expressed in many spheres, amongst which we highlight social protection.

Within this framework, the interventionist state, which assists banks and corporations while the welfare state vanishes, grows bigger, bringing down the workers’ nominal wages, especially in poorer countries, where low-paid workers, who used to attend public services, are forced to resort to private schemes. In the same sense, Borón (2010) points out that the cooperation share set aside by the G7 for international cooperation was just 0,22 per cent GDP, in shark contrast with the help provided to oligopolistic corporations. “The rich can always rely on the State, whereas the poor will have to make ends meet within the markets. And if the State does make an appearance, it will aim at repressing or disrupting social unrest” (Idem, online). So, we must infer that — in line with Varela’s (2012) remarks on the welfare State in Portugal19 — any achievements whatsoever for labour can only be the outcome of a revolutionary process. Nonetheless, that seems quite far way.

It is under the logics of flexibility, amongst other equally conservative economic policies, that the way forward for the capital/labour relationship is paved worldwide. Flexibility has brought about changes in the contents of labour laws and has given rise, above all, to new modalities of labour exploitation, many of which were developed on the entrepreneurship field. Whereas before, namely on the Fordist period, such relation was crystal clear — capital on one side and labour on the other —, nowadays, the worker,

19 “The welfare state — in other words, the assumption that a share of the workers’ income is not paid as direct wages but indirectly (‘social wages’), in the form of public goods and services, free or almost free and universal — was usually the outcome of revolutionary processes, which should be the starting point for any attempts at understanding their progressive erosion — in some instances torrential, as in the aftermath of the 2008 crisis” (VARELA, 2012, p. 72).
quite often, seems to be self-employed, and it takes some scrutinising of the work itself to be aware of what such a seeming autonomy on the part of the worker is hiding.

Such a murky relationship is also present on the productive/non-productive work interpenetration. On the one hand, non-productive work is on the rise, and, on the other hand, non-productive activities have been transferred to the productive work sphere, which renders a distinction between the two a rather delicate affair, since it takes looking down at the concrete form in order to grasp the social one. Still, that same distinction, “far from being an useless abstraction, is a pivotal issue when analysing capitalism, and shows us, once again, how social forms prevail and change the meaning of things and material processes” (BRAVERMAN, 1987, p. 349). Bearing in mind that the goal of capitalist production is, basically, producing surplus value, any approaches concerned with the employment of a wider array of manpower will be, “as far as the developed capitalist production mode is concerned, old-fashioned, inaccurate and spurious” (MARX, 1978, p. 82).

Capital as such is nonchalant as far as the singularities of each production sphere is concerned. Only higher or lower difficulty levels in selling goods belonging to that or another productive area will establish where it will be invested, how it will be invested and to what extent will it move from one sphere to another or whether its distribution throughout the different production branches will change” (MARX, 1978, p. 43)

This being so, it is up to us, researchers, to unveil the confusion opportunistically promoted by the prevailing literature. To ignore the distinction between productive and non-productive work is dancing to the tune of those who try to obfuscate the exploitation of surplus value, to deny labour’s pivotal role in creating wealth, and naturalise capitalism as the end of history.

Since society remains grounded on the same principles, it makes sense to assume we are simply in the face of a new social division of labour, geared towards the same target, namely to accumulate capital. After all, the social division of labour is a mere technical asset developed to enhance production.
As attested by reality — look at the current relations of production —, the arousal in the capital/labour contradiction is historically pre-determined, namely by the way labour is divided.

According to Margli (1996)

[...] social division of labour within capitalism relentlessly contributes to the existence of a solider class-based society, by fragmenting workers and maintaining most of the population in social poverty. It also favours it by fostering competition, not only between capitalists and workers, but also amongst workers and capitalists themselves (Idem, p. 57).

One could state that, upon such historical moment, a move takes place, aimed at exonerating the capitalist form the necessary exploitation of workers, as well as disqualifying the exploitation of surplus value in the accumulation process, as workers are persuaded to become their own bosses or own small businesses. This being so, instead of confronting the capitalist/employer figure, the worker will see himself as if an economic agent who deals with other agents on the markers, supposedly on equal terms, buying and selling goods.

To achieve this, it is paramount that the conditions to legalise and legitimise the relations required by capital in order to consolidate de new social division of labour are in place. Such conditions must not stem from capital as such: “there are social conditions suitable for the advent and success of capitalism. It requires a certain level of social peace, as well as some kind of neutrality, or frailty, or compliance, from the State” (BRAUDEL, 1987, p. 62). It is thus up to the State to bring forth the legal framework required to establish the new types of labour, as well as talk the worker into believing that those new types, besides offering a way out of the crisis — which is a crisis of capital, but we are supposed to believe it is crisis of labour —, are quite worker-friendly. Hence, the stage is ready to spread entrepreneurship, which, hand in hand with other forms, expresses the vilification of work under neoliberal guidelines.

Very brief final remarks
Because our presentation has both analysed and reached a conclusion, we must be brief in these final remarks, to avoid tiresome repetition.

From our point of view, small business means no exception, novelty or, least of all, rupture. It is simply a form suited for the new productive pattern, geared towards production fragmentation and strategies aimed at denying the centrality of labour in generating wealth. Any other interpretation would entail endorsing the possibility of an harmonious coexistence between opposing economical systems. Something similar to what Toni Negri has labelled constituent power, which would enable the people to “build new institutions, maybe not against those in place, but not necessarily subservient to them” (NEGRI, 1994, p. 35). An unbearable imbroglio.

As far as we’re concerned, small business, as much as big business, must submit to the market’s demands. We could even argue that its capacity to avoid eventual penalties is much lower. While big corporations, protected by the skills of qualified professionals, may skip some taxes and protect themselves against economic upheavals, smaller companies simply try to cope when it is too late to flee them. This is compounded, as we have argued throughout the discussion, by the reduction in variable and fixed costs for capitalist production.

At the end of the day, if you turn workers into companies, both in theoretical and practical terms, it is capital that benefits. Small business is the way capital chose to take possession of the people’s full time, by means of persuasion. Though unaware of it, when the worker is the one who generates the conditions for employment, he swaps all social protection for an ideal of freedom which, ultimately, deprives him from the chance to secure any wins/concessions rom capital. That is the reason why we call the market the worst of all bosses.

As a matter of fact, the small business’ flexibility has been opportunistically used by capital, insofar as, given its smaller output, it is easier to adapt to the demands of the markets, and its participation is a long
way from implying competition. It is not by chance it is regarded as a partner. The sole trader and the micro company are, in most cases, people doing piecework. Small companies may operate as branches of great corporations — the latter are happy to delegate on small business the constraints of dealing directly with exploited and precarious workers. This blur on the production moment does not deprive them from reaping the benefits, in favourable terms, of the distribution of surplus value carried out by the former. In short, capital remains in charge.

We believe entrepreneurs are summoned to try out the same rational driving capitalists, namely to turn a profit thanks to somebody else’s work. However, given their scarce resources, it is like they were offered a tiny portion of a powerful drug providing instant pleasure, and therefore addictive; yet they do not possess the resources needed to feed the habit. Faced with the impossibility to take as much drugs as he wishes, the entrepreneur embarks in a pointless fight, employs all his manpower, incurs debt, and, sometimes, resorts to family members, in order to achieve what he had been promised. Nonetheless, in most cases, all he achieves is more precarisation, for himself and others. At the end of the day, to turn a profit with somebody eles’s labour implies accumulated money. That is how it was since the process of primitive accumulation, and it remains so — though increasingly, as capitalist development also concentrates and centralises capital ever more.

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