



## *The impacts of changes in the world of work: A reality for workers in Brazil*

### *Los impactos de las transformaciones en el mundo del trabajo: una realidad para los trabajadores de Brasil*

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**Abstract:** This present work will analyze the transformations in the relations of the world of work in the Brazilian context. Based on the investigation, it is a focus on a qualitative approach that excels in identifying the production of scientific material on the impacts of changes in the world of work: a reality of workers in Brazil. One based on literature review, from database of publications such as magazines, congress, scielo, Elseve, Scopus and others. The research has as a general objective, to analyze the transformations in the relations of the world of work, in the Brazilian context. We will also discuss specific goals that will clarify the entire work process. Through the following specific objectives: Understanding the work category in Marx. Identify the productive restructuring process and analyze the impacts of work on the working class in contemporary Brazil.

**Keywords:** *Labour; Capitalism; Working class.*

**Resumen:** El presente trabajo analizará las transformaciones de las relaciones del mundo del trabajo, en el contexto brasileño. Basado en la investigación que es un enfoque en el enfoque cualitativo que se destaca en la identificación de la producción de material científico sobre los impactos de las transformaciones en el mundo del trabajo: una realidad de los trabajadores en Brasil. A partir de una revisión bibliográfica, de publicaciones de bases de datos como: Scielo, Elseve, Scopus, Congress, entre otras. La investigación tiene como objetivo general, analizar las transformaciones de las relaciones del mundo del trabajo, en el contexto brasileño. También hablaremos de los objetivos específicos que aclararán todo el proceso de trabajo. A través de los siguientes objetivos específicos: Comprender la categoría del trabajo en Marx. Identificar el proceso de reestructuración productiva y analizar los impactos del trabajo en la clase obrera en el Brasil contemporáneo.

**Palabras clave:** *Trabajo; Capitalismo; Clase obrera.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This present work will analyze the transformations in the relations of the world of work, in the Brazilian context. Based on the research that is a focus on the qualitative approach that aims to identify the production of scientific material about the impacts of the transformations in the world of work: a reality of workers in Brazil. Still based on the research method, it will be based on dialectical historical materialism, which is one of the philosophical currents that Social Service uses for its own performance.

The interest in the theme arose from the need to understand the precariousness to which the workers of Brazil are subjected in the face of an extremely exploitative capitalist system. The general objective of this research is to analyze the transformations in the relations in the world of work in the Brazilian context. We will also discuss the specific objectives that will clarify the entire work process. Through the following specific objectives: Understand the labor category in Marx.

Identify the process of productive restructuring and analyze the impacts of work on the working class in contemporary Brazil. In this way, the work aims to contribute, by means of a literature review, to clarify issues that are far beyond what is apparently seen in daily work. The aim of the research is to make possible a great deal of knowledge about the debated issue, revealing to us the visualization of issues embedded in the work process, which takes place due to the capitalist system.

With this study it was possible to observe that the precariousness of labor is intertwined with a logic of extreme exploitation of the labor force.

It is through capitalist modes of production and productive restructuring that workers become vulnerable, becoming submissive to the capitalist system. Therefore, being subject to accept working conditions such as: outsourcing, part-time, modern sub-proletariat, informal work, contract work, etc. Bringing to workers insecurity and fear, of being part of a capitalist reserve army. In other words, of being unemployed and not having a fixed salary, therefore inequality is inseparable from poverty and lack of employment.

## **FUNDAMENTAÇÃO TEÓRICA**

The transformations in the world of work are far beyond what we apparently see in our daily lives. That is why it is necessary to search for the understanding of an extremely complex category that is the category of work. Work is the indispensable activity for human reproduction, "This is the ineliminable basis of the world of men." (Lessa, 2011). Besides being the foundation of social being, so it is that all and any

society and refers to the relationship of man with nature; enabling man to transform nature to meet their own human needs<sup>1</sup>.

According to Lessa (2011), through work, men not only materially build society, but also lay the foundations to build themselves as individuals. That is, through work man becomes an authentic social being capable of living in society and articulate rules of coexistence for the maintenance of general coexistence.

In Silva (2013), the category of work comes from a Marxist perspective, in which man and nature relate to each other in a perspective of constant modification of nature. Work in this way is a process of action, modifications, transformations that "drives, regulates and controls their material exchange with nature." (Silva 2013 apud MARX, 1985, p.202).

This way Silva (2013) elucidates the process of modifying nature through man's work process and its constant transformations of nature.

The labor process [...] is activity directed toward the end of creating use values, of appropriating natural elements to human needs; it is the eternal necessary condition of the material exchange between man and nature; it is the eternal natural condition of human life, without depending, therefore, on any form of this life, being rather common to all its social forms. (Silva, 2013 apud Marx, 1985).

However, man is the only thinking being with teleological capacity, that is, only man is able to plan, architect, imagine what will be done in advance.

According to Netto and Braz (2012, p.46) work can only be done by man. For he is the only being with teleological capacity, i.e., only men possess rationality, he is the only being that plans his actions before executing them, unlike irrational animals that act by previously planned instincts of nature, i.e., irrational animals are born with a certain function to perform, for example, the bee only makes the honeycomb and will never be able to perform another activity.

According to Silva (2013) work expresses the human condition of rational beings, it is through work that man plans his actions and creations. Man does not act by instinct, he seeks much more than the immediate need, he plans before performing his actions so that the end result is achieved through his work. Thus, Iamamoto (2006) elucidates the difference between rational and irrational animals, and how the thinking human being stands out in this rationality process.

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<sup>1</sup>As Marx clarifies, these needs can be for subsistence or correspond to a fantasy, therefore it can be related to the objective aspects of the human being, or to the subjective dimension. Work" satisfies human needs of any kind. The nature of these needs, whether they originate in the stomach or in the phantasy, changes nothing in the thing" (1996, p.165, our emphasis).

According to Iamamoto (2006), teleological capacity is man's ability to project in his mind the final result. In this way Iamamoto (2006, p.40) explains:

A Spider performs operations similar to those of a weaver, and the bee puts more of a human architect to shame with the construction of the combs of his hives. But what distinguishes him beforehand, the worst architect of the bee is that he built the comb in his head, before he built it in wax.

According to Silva (2013) work is an essential activity for human life, because it is essential for the maintenance of human life enabling the production of the means of life and the biopsychosocial needs of men, that is, man produces objects and among others.

To supply not only his own needs, but also those of the whole society. In this way, work is intertwined with the ability to produce and reproduce use value into exchange value; transforming work into merchandise.

However, work will be dominated by the capitalist production models, which are based on the search for more profitability and competitiveness, at this moment the social reproduction of men loses its centrality to capital. This allows capital to use labor under two main levels: "quality of work" and "work as merchandise. For Tavares (2017) the commodity allows us to conclude that the production and circulation of commodities do not presuppose for its existence the capitalist mode of production.

Thus Silva (2013) explains to us:

The labor process, when it occurs as a process of consumption of labor power by the capitalist, presents two characteristic phenomena. The worker is under capitalist control, to whom his labor belongs. The capitalist makes sure that the work is carried out in an appropriate manner and that the means of production are used appropriately, not wasting raw materials and saving the working tools, so that only that which is indispensable for the execution of the work is used.

Furthermore, the product is the property of the capitalist, not of the immediate producer, the worker. The capitalist pays, for example, the daily value of labor power. Its use, like that of any other merchandise [...] when the worker enters the capitalist's workshop, the value-of-use of his labor power belongs to him, its use, the work. (Silva, 2013 apud Marx 1985, p.208).

To better understand the transformations in the world of work, it is necessary to understand the historical process of civilizations. We know that throughout the history of mankind, work has been fundamental to the evolution of mankind, which has enabled several transformations for men through their deeds. That is why work has become indispensable for human survival, despite all of man's evolution. According to historical records, we had some forms of society, such as:

The primitive society, which in a rudimentary way, hunted, fished and survived in the midst of nature in a primitive way even as their own names already say. Later, Silva (2007) shows us the slavery period marked in Greek and Roman society, then the servile work in the feudal period and finally the capitalist society that took on the character of wage labor, i.e., the exchange of labor for money, the so-called salary. For Silva (2020) man survived in various societies until the arrival of the new modern and with it the emergence of productive restructuring, which encompasses several changes, mainly by the introduction of globalization and innovations.

Thus, Neves (1997) relates the relations between capital and labor that make up capitalist society, and its contradictions in the face of alienation and expropriation of working class labor. Elucidating the relations instituted between the State, companies and unions. At that time, the State had a regulatory, unifying, and organizing role in both social and political relations.

According to Neves (1997), the capitalist model unleashed the globalization process, bringing with it a perspective of a new form of economic organization. Thus, the productive restructuring brings a series of transformations, implements new technologies, creates the outsourcing process, reflecting directly on labor relations and on the class that lives from work. In this way the productive restructuring is a productive model that sharpens in the flexibilization of work by advent of the fordist/taylorist crisis of production.

According to Tavares (2017) The new production system, Toyotism, assumes some characteristics of Fordism, in order to find flexible methods. This system was based on developing subcontracting relationships, and on the organization of production that was based on the flexibility of work and workers.

With the arrival of these production models would also bring the globalization process and with it its consequences. Globalization makes everyone equal. It is argued that the technical-operational changes are essential to the insertion of the peripheral countries to the international economy, ignoring the specificities of each one (Tavares, 2017 p.15).

In this way, unemployment would cease to be conjunctural and become structural, which would give possibilities to capitalism to form a large industrial reserve<sup>2</sup> army, that is, with the increase of the reserve army, the working class absorbs the impacts of the transformations that occur in the accumulation process. This would ignite the signs of the social issue in its most varied expressions, promoting the precariousness and alienation of the class that lives from labor.

Thus, we will begin this discussion of precarization by saying that according to Alves (2007), "Precarization" is distinguished from "precariousness". Emphasizing that we will see some concepts and

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<sup>2</sup>The formation of an industrial reserve army performs an important function for capital. It corresponds to a large and growing mass of unemployed. According to Marx (1996, p.271-273) its form unfolds in three conditions: liquid, latent and stagnant.

precarization, which determines the structures of the capitalist mode of production. In this way Alves (2007, p.112) brings the following reflections on social precarity.

[...]The main historical form of social precarity is the system of wage labor that has predominated in bourgeois societies for centuries[...] The expansion of capital's mode of sociometabolic reproduction has meant the expanded constitution of a relative overpopulation, totally at the mercy of the logic of the market, or of what Polanyi characterized as a "satanic mill" (Alves, 2007, p.112).

However, precariousness takes away from the worker the conditions of dignity at work. Making the working class, weak, fragmented<sup>3</sup> and alienated. According to Alcoforado (2015), the precariousness attributed to these forms of work alienates workers in such a way that workers who used to fight for labor rights, currently seek the right to be exploited as long as they are inserted in the world of work.

In this sense Antunes (2015, p.41-42) adds:

The most brutal result of these transformations is the expansion, without precedent in the modern era, of structural unemployment, which affects the world on a global scale. We can summarize that there is a contradictory process that, on the one hand, reduces the industrial and manufacturing workforce, and on the other, increases the sub-proletariat, precarious work and wage-earning in the service sector. It incorporates female labor and excludes younger and older people. There is, therefore, a process of greater heterogenization, fragmentation and complexification of the working class. (ANTUNES,2015, p.41-42).

In this way, the worker will be satisfied with being exploited, that is, the worker will allow himself to be exploited through his work, as long as he is employed at the end of the month and can pay his bills or buy food for his basic maintenance. For it is very precarious to live without having a paid job in the contemporary world.

According to Arruda (2011) The precariousness of work in Brazil has risen to a level of extreme demeaning of the social being, who, through work, is exploited and alienated, to the point of being analogous to slaves. This precariousness process is rooted since the beginning of capitalism, which accentuates a predatory and inhumane work extracting from the worker his labor force and his dignity,

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<sup>3</sup>Alienation - concerns the non-appropriation, by individuals, of the material and spiritual wealth socially produced. In alienation, individuals do not recognize, in social reality, their action; they do not recognize themselves as historical subjects. The realities resulting from their intervention appear to them as something foreign and hostile. Man's estrangement from himself, from the fruits of his labor and from other men, is an expression of alienation.

therefore such working conditions appropriate the surplus value making the relationship between employer and employee unsustainable.

Thus Arruda (2011) adds "[...] when and in the way that interests him to ensure the gains of capital" and states:

"[...] means of production which the worker employs in the actual process of labor are, of course, the property of the capitalist - they stand as capital in the face of labor, which is the vital manifestation of the worker. But on the other hand, it is the worker who uses them in his work.

[...] it is not the worker who employs the means of production; it is the means of production that employ the workers. It is not living labor that is realized in material labor as its objective organ; it is material labor that is preserved and added to by the suction of living labor, thanks to which it is converted into a value that is valorized, into capital, and functions as such."

With that Alves (2007) elucidates us by saying that: "hard work is not abolished. On the contrary, new forms of work intensification arise with perverse impacts on the psychic (and mental) structuring of working men and women," that is, with the expansion of productive structuring and the capitalist dominating the mode of production and with the arrival of globalization, workers in Brazil are at the mercy of a system that creates mechanisms to appropriate labor, cheapening the cost of labor and extracting a greater part of the profit for capital. This is how the precariousness of work in contemporary capitalist society exposes workers to forms of work such as: outsourcing, part time, modern sub-proletariat, informal work, contract work, among others.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The present research is a focus on the qualitative approach that seeks to identify the production of scientific material on the impacts of the transformations in the world of work: a reality for workers in Brazil.

In order to elaborate this present study, a systematic review of the literature on the theme under analysis was carried out, selecting some articles published in the period between 1997 and 2020. The strategy of identification and selection of articles was to search for publications in databases such as Scielo, Elseve, Scopus, and Congresses, among other sources of discussion about the theme to be studied in order to understand the chosen problematic.

The research method will also be based on dialectical historical materialism, which is one of the philosophical currents that Social Service uses for its own performance.

The search for scientific articles was systematized according to the steps described below: The articles were adopted some steps indicated for the construction of this review, as the search for themes of the following described: Work, Alienation, Unemployment and working class.

The process after carrying out the searches with the combination of the described, a reading was carried out in the abstracts of the articles, according to inclusion criteria, having been published in the last 15 years, being the last criterion of the search to have worked with the combination of at least 3 described above.

The critical dialectic method was of fundamental importance in elucidating the problems that the theme brings to contemporary society within the category of work, thus being able to demonstrate the consequences of the precarization that occurs in the world of work through its transformations.

The exclusion criteria were as follows: Articles that did not present the complete version for reading and text that did not include the category work and its transformations, because it was found some articles that dealt with the category work, however, did not discuss the impacts occurred by the transformations in the world of work.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Of the six articles selected for this study, all were published in national journals or congresses and written in Portuguese, which discuss the category of work that is central to the life of the social being. Thus, elucidating the debates about the transformations in the relations of the world of work in the Brazilian context.

The subject that the articles deal with is related to the labor category theme in Marx, which brings with it the critical dialectical method. Thus, we will delve into how the capitalist modes of production and productive restructuring came about. Another point of discussion to understand this debate is to understand the process of productive restructuring and, finally, to analyze the impacts of work on the working class in contemporary Brazil. Chart 1 - Articles located in the Scielo, Scopus, Elseve and specialized congresses databases on the category of work.

**BOX 1:** Articles located in the Scielo, Scopus, and Elseve databases, and specialized congresses, about the work category.

Article Title/Reference	Objective	Results
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Transformations in the World of Work: Crisis and Challenges.	The objective is to analyze the changes in the world of work, emphasizing the most general issues of this process and also aspects of the Brazilian reality.	Reaffirm the role of Labor Justice and the regulation of labor laws, given the rapid transformations that have been occurring in labor relations. The State must assume its role as regulator and implementer of public and social policies, since its function is to establish guidelines in this context of globalization, based on ethics and the affirmation of labor and social rights.
The transformations in the world of work and their repercussions in Brazil today.	To make a simple analysis about the situation of work precariousness in Brazil, contextualized in the current stage of economic development.	It brings as a result, a sample that the country grows, but the policy continues to be the precarization of labor relations and the deregulation of labor rights.
Accumulation, labor and social inequalities.	Makes an analysis of the historical facts, based on the categories taken by Marx, to understand the social inequalities.	It shows that social inequalities are inseparable from poverty and lack of employment, therefore, the capitalist system imposes precarious conditions on the working class, turning labor into mere merchandise.
Productive restructuring and impacts on the formation of Social Service.	It aims to discuss the transformations in the world of work in contemporary Brazil, pointing out the different expressions of the Social Issue.	The knowledge about the problems imposed by the capital. Bringing a double dimension: the socialization of knowledge and services and the socially produced wealth.
Transformations of the essence of work in the era of capital: some considerations about work in the capitalist mode of production.	To reflect on the transformations that have occurred in the essence of work in the era of capital, presenting aspects that show how work loses its original meaning.	It shows that the precariousness of labor relations and further reinforces the alienation and subordination of workers, through the various models in work processes. Which nowadays shows itself to be much more volatile and competitive, enabling capital to be more flexible.
Restructuring of capital, fragmentation of work and Social Service.	Situate restructuring in the context of the capitalist crisis and identify the mediations that connect the experiences of Social Service.	It shows that by submitting social and labor rights to the logic of market functionality, they intend to implement a strategy of devaluation and "remercantilization" of the labor force, only possible because the "rights" are reduced to the realization of a state norm.

**SOURCE:** From the authors (2021).

Thus, we can observe that the research revealed that researchers discuss the category of work and its various transformations resulting from capitalist modes of production and that, over the years, this process of transformations has had an impact on the working class of Brazil, being able to elucidate through studies that the precariousness of work occurs as a result of an exploitative and dominating system of capital.

In the study by Neves (1997) about the transformations in the world of work, they happened through the emergence of the capitalist modes of production and the productive restructuring. This puts workers in an alienating position in the labor process. For the worker will have to be more agile, more versatile, to compete with technology and accept whatever is offered to get a formal job.

In Arruda's research (2011), the researcher shows us that the transformations in the world of work accentuate the precariousness of the working class as a result of economic development. Arruda (2011)

adds: "the concept of precarization is used here as work with little or no stability, fragile, deficient, with differentiated or diminished rights. Thus it is clear that over the years growing unemployment is the main way to maintain the capitalist system and a reserve army compatible with the needs of a totally exploitative system.

In Tavares' article (2017), it can be seen that capitalist society is formed by antagonistic classes, that is, who dominates and who will be dominated. Capitalism adds to this domination because on one side there are the owners of the means of production, who possess the money, and on the other side the workers who have become merchandise for the capitalists. This relationship that articulates capital, labor, and capital accentuates social inequalities, increasing class conflicts, increasing poverty, and the exploitation of capital over labor.

The work of Alforado (2015) presented, concerns the economic transformations and social impacts, under the aegis of flexibilization increases the subordinate relationship of the working class, given that the precariousness of work decreases decent work conditions and struggles for labor rights.

The research of Silva (2013) brings us the transformations of the essence of work in the era of capital, Silva (2013) reports: "There is a complete subordination of human needs and maintenance of life to the reproduction of the exchange value of buying and selling," that is, the changes that have occurred in the world of work requires new behaviors of the worker, to meet the needs of both capital and the worker to survive in a capitalist society submit to the dictates of the capitalist system.

The study by Mota and Amaral, (2021), presents us that the labor process in the sphere of production, increases profit rates by virtue of the growth of labor and labor cheapens through the growth of labor productivity that increases as a result of technology. Thus the labor market becomes increasingly fragmented, via unemployment, outsourcing, and job insecurity through formal and informal links in the Brazilian labor market.

According to Neves (1997), with the emergence of capitalist modes of production and productive restructuring, the intensification of precariousness in the world of work has intensified, resulting in extreme precariousness, fragmentation, and other factors that disadvantage those who depend on work and who need to sell their labor to the capitalist system. Thus, the capitalist system appropriates surplus value in order to obtain more profit.

However, Arruda (2011) adds that the transformations in the world of work in fact accentuate the precariousness of the class that lives on work, but this precariousness is linked to economic development, that is, the class that lives on work depends on economic development to be employed or unemployed, in this way the class that lives on work will maintain itself or try to be in the world of work through economic development. This will generate employment when it is high or unemployment when it is low.

Tavares (2017) adds that society is divided into dominator and dominated, that is, bourgeoisie and proletariat. The owners of the means of production and the workers who only have their labor force to be sold, turning it into merchandise. This labor relationship reflects on social relations and social inequalities, making possible the expansion of the expressions of the social issue, which is a reflection of class conflicts that occur through capital versus labor.

However, Alcoforado (2015) tells us that the economic transformations and social impacts occur due to flexibilization and, in this way, the class that lives from work tends to become more fragmented, weakened, and subordinated ... since the precariousness of work does not add conditions of dignity to the work, thus enabling capital to exploit perverse forms, since there is a regression of the rights acquired through social movements and struggles for labor and social security rights.

Silva (2013) complements this by saying that there is a complete subordination of human need, that is, the human being needs to sell his labor force so that he can maintain his life. Still along this line of thought, the worker needs to sell his labor to maintain himself in society and thus have his livelihood, but it is clear that this worker is facing a complex process, the capital versus labor relationship, and that the worker, in order to maintain himself in a formal job, must attack the dictates of a cruel, perverse, and controlling system called the capitalist system.

However, Mota and Amaral (2021) show us that work in the sphere of production reveals an increase in profit rates, that is, for the capitalist, surplus value, more profit, and for the class that lives off work, more productivity, more precariousness, so the worker who works on a factory floor, for example, must increase his productivity. In this sense, the worker who produced ten pairs of shoes will have to produce fifty pairs in the same space of time to increase profitability for the capitalist, but will not receive any additional salary for this production, and at the end of the month his salary will be the same as when he produced ten pairs of shoes.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

With this study it was possible to observe that the precariousness of work is intertwined with a logic of extreme exploitation of labor. It is through the capitalist modes of production and the productive restructuring that the workers become vulnerable, becoming submissive to the capitalist system. Therefore, being subject to accept working conditions such as: outsourcing, part-time, modern sub-proletariat, informal work, contract work, etc. Bringing to workers insecurity and fear, of being part of a capitalist reserve army. That is, of being unemployed and not having a fixed salary, therefore inequality is inseparable from poverty and lack of employment. However, the capitalist system has historically created means for living work to be substituted by dead work, that is, the work that thousands of men and women used to do

has been substituted by machines, thus increasing the number of unemployed in Brazil, as if it were natural that the unbridled increase of unemployment in Brazil should be natural.

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