

# “Doing their best for the company”:\* neoliberalism and the subjectivity of shopper workers

“Vestindo a camisa da empresa”: neoliberalismo  
e a subjetividade dos trabalhadores *shoppers*

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## Abstract

This article aims to understand the subjectivity of the shopper worker, analyzing uberization in the Brazilian scenario and the impacts of neoliberalism on the social and urban reality. We investigated how shoppers describe their activities, what relationships they establish with platforms and colleagues, and how they manifest their identity. To achieve this, we analyzed two workers who talk about this type of work on YouTube channels. The conclusions point out that the uncertainties experienced in this context are converted into uncertainties regarding their professional identities, which are added to an urban context dominated by lack of protection of millions of workers, who are sometimes seen as entrepreneurs of their own lives seeking to build alternatives of income and work.

**Keywords:** neoliberalism; shopper; uberization; informality.

## Resumo

*O presente artigo visa compreender a subjetividade do trabalhador shopper, avançando na análise da uberização no cenário brasileiro e dos impactos do neoliberalismo no tecido social e urbano. Observamos como os shoppers descrevem suas atividades, quais relações estabelecem com as plataformas e colegas e de que forma manifestam sua identidade. Para tanto, analisamos dois trabalhadores que nararam questões sobre esse tipo de trabalho em canais do YouTube. As conclusões sinalizam que as incertezas vivenciadas nesse contexto se convertem em indefinições quanto às suas identidades profissionais, que se somam a um contexto urbano dominado pela falta de proteção de milhões de trabalhadores, por vezes vistos a si mesmos como empreendedores de suas próprias vidas que buscam construir alternativas de renda e trabalho.*

**Palavras-chave:** neoliberalismo; shopper; uberização; informalidade.



## Introduction

Neoliberalism, seen as a political rationality that builds and modulates subjectivities – a way of the world, from the perspective of Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval (2016), in turn influenced by Michel Foucault's (2008) reading of the phenomenon –, has pernicious impacts in social life and in a very latent way for the popular classes, sometimes neglected in studies that privilege the influence of this system of ideas on the State. By advocating the government of societies based on a generalization of the market and competition, neoliberalism does not only raise new forms of productive organization, but also inscribes managerial norms in governmental practices and in human actions, resulting in subjects and institutions that see themselves as companies (ibid.) and lacking mechanisms of collective intermediation and social regulation.

With the technological transformations of production systems, mainly through the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), which enable the emergence of new, more individualized activities, mediated by software that take charge of many human activities (Manovich, 2013), it is possible to think of new organizations in the ways of producing and offering products and services. As well as new practices of consumption to these goods, which in this process reveal an absence of guarantees and security for the most fragile side of this balance: that one of workers subjected to such arrangements (Abílio, 2019).

In this new context, cities, especially metropolises, are faced with urban reconfigurations, permeated by the absence of public regulation and coordination and susceptible to the imperative of private logic. There is, then, an attempt to adapt to the fleeting design of contemporary work, which is often precarious, in which inequalities are reflected in space and, through it, are better understood, as well as putting challenges for public governance.

The work based on apps can serve as an example for this scenario. We are faced with novelties in everyday life that are gradually introduced and transform the way of seeing and thinking about certain consumption habits and ways of working. In this logic, some companies end up influencing the market and gradually modifying the production chain, consumption habits and the ways in which the State deals with and regulates these issues. This is the case of the Uber platform, whose organizational model is based on the use of big data to manage workers as a type of application user, which, in turn, serves consumers, who form the other group of users. The latter group, as they demand the service, they also start to evaluate the performance of those responsible for providing it, the workers. Well known in the passenger transport service, this organization has extended to areas such as delivery of meals and goods, beauty services, cargo transport and supermarket shopping. Depending on the branch in which it operates, this model finds more or less room for growth, according to the consumption habits of the population and the legal flexibilities of each market.

With the advent of the new coronavirus pandemic, we have seen the food delivery and supermarket shopping branches grow exponentially. In Brazil, this latter segment, which until then did not have many adherents, began to offer itself as a way for people who avoided leaving their homes, for fear of infecting themselves and their families but, even so, they needed to buy groceries of everyday use. Thus, alternatives for carrying out this activity were offered by companies such as Cornershop, Rappi and James Delivery. Platforms that connect consumers with people willing to make these purchases in the market and deliver them at home, risking their health, with remuneration according to parameters defined by the companies.

The growing literature around work based on apps points to a critical perspective on the conditions faced by this workforce, as well as the logic operated by the platforms that modulate such conditions (Scholz, 2016; Srnicek, 2017). In particular, the debate around the phenomenon of uberization, pointed out by Slee (2017) and, in a perspective closer to the Brazilian reality, also developed by Abílio (2019 and 2020), reveals the formation of new professional identities, under a deep transformation in how the subject sees himself in relation to the activity he performs. Sennett (2006) had already identified the subject resulting from what he called a culture of the new capitalism as someone who is guided by short-term relationships, incessantly searches for new capabilities and preaches a certain detachment from the past, invoking a consumer personality and not of an

owner zealous for his personal attributes. Boltanski and Chiapello (2009) highlighted the importance of a project organization in a connectionist world, in which the formation and maintenance of dynamic networks and easily reactivatable points were essential for the new capitalist spirit on the rise. In a plot closer to the national context, Telles (2006 and 2010) pointed out that the social experience of work in neoliberalism indicated other times of life and their relationship with the city, in a scenario that gives rise to precariousness, discontinuity and uncertainty. If we refer to the description of subjectivity stemming arising from neoliberal rationality, guided by competition as a social norm and the organization of individuals in the form of a company, we have in the shopper category<sup>1</sup> – the worker who purchases in supermarkets mediated by large platforms – an important figure in this context. It does not imply granting all these attributes to this type of worker, but rather thinking about how this subjectivity is being formed and how it dialogues with the influences it receives. It is important to emphasize: if there is the emergence of new elements in the relationship between subject and work, there are also relevant continuities in the practices and identifications related to work in the non-formalized market, in view of its importance and historical and structural weight for the Brazilian economy. The absence of guarantees and rights for this part of the labor market on the part of public governance marks the trajectory of this sector, which, although flirting with the horizon of wage-earning, finds itself increasingly distant from achieving

it, especially with the new productive arrangements of neoliberalism and with the dissolutions of the wage-earning world.

The objective of this article, therefore, is to advance in the understanding of the subjectivity of the shopper worker, considering that this is a category that allows us to analyze the context of uberization in the Brazilian scenario and, thus, to move forward in the understanding of the impacts of the neoliberal advance in the social and urban tissue. We will pay attention to the following questions: How do shoppers describe their occupation and work activities?; What relationships do they establish with the platforms and with their peers?; How do they represent their activities towards the society and how do they claim recognition and manifest their identity?; How do they see themselves towards the State and how do they position themselves politically? In order to do so, we will analyze two shopper workers who narrate their daily lives and questions about this type of work through channels of the YouTube video platform.

In the digitalized society, YouTube has become an important space for the expression of contemporary subjectivities. The fifteen-year-old platform has approximately two billion unique monthly users,<sup>2</sup> making it the second most visited website in the world, only behind Google. Having varied uses by its users, YouTube has undergone important transformations (Burgess and Green, 2009), no longer being just a repository of home videos to become an important social media for the production of new businesses, the emergence of digital influencers (Karhawi,

2017) and the emergence of self-performance devices, based on elements put in scene by users (Jesus, Salgado and Silva, 2014). The performances published on the YouTube platform are projected as a resource (device) of mediatization of a “self” represented in front of an audience based on search terms (internal or external) and the recommendation algorithms of the platform (sociotechnical network). In this way, the self-representation of the professional activity by shopper workers, through YouTube, is configured as a structuring element of their identity and subjectivity, the focus of this study.

The article is divided into four more sections, in addition to this introduction. We will begin by approaching in greater depth the debate about neoliberalism and its impacts in the Brazilian context. We will seek to trace how uberization is associated with this model of government of society and how we can think about the resulting forms of work, considering our historical and social scenario. In the next section, we will explain how the Cornershop platform operates in Brazil and which activities are required from shopper workers. Then we will explain the methodological approach adopted and present the two YouTube channels analyzed, first doing a general reading about them and, after that, describing and analyzing each shopper worker through the speeches, actions and behaviors from their videos. The final section will be dedicated to drawing conclusions about the analysis carried out and its relationship with the proposed theme, indicating possible research agendas and outlining a small overview of the shopper worker's subjectivity.

## Neoliberalism, uberization and subjectivities related to work

The emergence of neoliberal reason – as advanced in the Introduction to this article – as a strategy of government, or governmentality, of the very ways of governing and exercising biopolitics (Foucault, 2008), has provoked profound reorders in the way individuals and institutions see themselves in relation to society. If the ideas present in the Chicago School, defended by economists such as Milton Friedman, or even in the Austrian School of Von Mises and Hayek, had not obtained great support in the mainstream political debate as soon as they emerged, from the 1970s onwards this scenario became reversed. The mobilization for the individual became quite diffuse, in academic circles and in the corporate environment, according to a certain vision exhausted from the predictability and accommodation of Fordism, that claimed greater autonomy in the face of the bureaucratic structures that the worker faced, through a consideration of themselves as subject-company. Someone who takes risks, constantly seeks to value their capital and organizes themselves around competitive mechanisms (Dardot and Laval, 2016).

If we analyze this process of changes in production and in thoughts and subjectivities by another theoretical key, it is also possible to notice important transitions in the way individuals organize their work and their way of facing economic and professional life. Sennett (1999 and 2006) explains the transition that took place in subjective aspects of workers between an era marked by Fordism and its

ability to provide stability, long-term planning and the definition of routines, in contrast to a new culture of capitalism permeated by the short term and the impossibility of making long life plans. In the work environment, this would, among other things, lead to a low level of institutional loyalty, that is, loyalty between workers and the companies they operate, as well as a decrease in the informal trust of these workers and their colleagues (Sennett, 2006).

Exploring this new position in the world of work, Boltanski and Chiapello (2009) unravel what would be a new spirit of capitalism, whose ethos points out to a new social life, formed by the multiplicity of encounters and by networks whose connections are temporary, although always reactivatable. The project thus becomes the pretext for the formation or reactivation of these connections: "It temporarily brings together very different people and presents itself as a network segment that is strongly activated during a relatively short period, but which allows for the creation of more lasting ties, that will remain dormant, but always available" (*ibid.*, p. 135; our translation). Following this vision, connection networks start to guarantee the success of individuals in the professional world. The greater a person's network of contacts, the more projects he or she has and, therefore, the more ways to adapt to the environment in which he or she is inserted. This fleetingness of connections and activities is also reflected in issues such as the traditional notion of property in capitalism. While this view privileges the possession of something, in the new spirit of capitalism, the availability of that good becomes more important. It is not by chance that leasing relationships become frequent instead of those of purchase and

sale. With this, the idea of property that is still so dear to the capitalist system resides in the possession of oneself. It is here that we can think of entrepreneurship, as stated by López-Ruiz (2007), as a social value to be cultivated in everyday practices. We are referring to businessmen or self-employed who have gained so much ground in the contemporary world of work, marked by the deregulation of professions and the job market itself, posing challenges to the dynamics of urban life.

Other changes are also present with the advent of neoliberalism. In addition to the change in the ways of thinking and leading the lives and professional paths of individuals, institutions are deeply modified by neoliberalism. The State becomes, at the same time, the target and the agent of these transformations. As mentioned by Cruz and Fonseca (2018), government programs and projects, under what they called ultraliberal ideals, are built from a precedence of the private sphere over the public sphere, exemplified in proposals such as privatization in the economy, lack of protection of the national capital, the dismantling of the welfare state – an aspect also noted in Fonseca (2019) – and *“a nonintervention and deregulation of the production, as of the circulation of goods and services, the financial market, labor relations and all forms of market, including real estate”* (Cruz and Fonseca, 2018, p. 556; our translation, emphasis added). Thus, this deregulation is felt, in turn, in the urban social tissue and in the management of large metropolises, since the organization of space and multiple economic interests would be dependent on a link between the State and the presuppositions of the market, which is in constant and accelerated modification.

The ways in which goods and services are circulated also suffer structural changes, influenced and being part, of course, of the changes already noted here between individuals and institutions. An example of this relationship is the encouragement of a sharing economy encouraged by the notion that “everything belongs to everyone” or “what is mine is yours” (Zanatta, 2016, p. 22, free translation). Scholz (2016) demonstrates that the economy based on the sharing of goods and services, rather than the private ownership of them, despite offering more alternatives for income earning, extends unregulated free markets to areas hitherto essentially private of our lives. Thus, the large companies of the so-called platform capitalism depend on our cars, apartments, emotions and, mainly, our time, to grow, being only logistic intermediaries in which the related goods are, in this case, individuals.

The concept of platform capitalism, originally created by Nick Srnicek, sought to reference a new stage of the global economy based on technology companies that focus on the economic exploitation of data: platforms such as Cornershop, which will be discussed here. These platforms start to organize the markets, mediating the infrastructure between different groups and, when defining “the rules of the game”, also dictate how other companies are structured from then on, with little room for maneuver (Srnicek, 2017). Scholz (2016, p. 18, free translation) called the platform-fueled sharing economy “a precarious trap of low wages.” By matching workers and consumers as both being users of the applications offered by these platforms, there is a duality of this relationship. If, on the one hand, it is about having new economic

opportunities, on the other hand, the working users who provide the goods and services to consumer users are managed by them, with the prerogative to punish or even dismiss the person who is providing a certain service. This is where we can talk about uberization as a concept that synthesizes the effects of this economic model for social organization. Slee (2017) analyzes this movement as something that emerged as an innovator, part of a sustainable and community appeal, and, in the end, has become a deregulated space controlled by large companies. These eventually promoted a new wave of precarious work.

Abílio (2019 and 2020) develops this scenario by exploring what she called the era of "just-in-time worker" to describe what she understands as uberization. The author's argument, after studying cosmetic retailers and motorcyclist delivery men, is that the forms of exploitation of work in the periphery, which previously had a secondary or marginal role in explaining the mode of production of capitalism, now play a central role in explaining the global economic dynamics. It is important to note that elements very present in the historical reality of the Brazilian labor market, such as the uncertainty about what is considered working time or not, the confusions about what should be remunerated, which are the domestic spaces and workspaces, are all deepened in a flexible model that reaches world levels, overcoming the global southern barrier and leading to a new form of management and control. The concept of uberization is understood, in this way, as a broad and generalized process of informalization of work, which causes changes

in the way informality itself is conceived, because uberization, according to Abílio (2020), encompasses processes of state deregulation and the extinction of mechanisms to control labor relations, legitimizing and making the transfer of costs and risks to the worker himself banal. This process takes place, among other aspects, from the conversion of workers into self-managed professionals, who manage themselves and are always available to a multitude of consumers. In this sense, the subjectivity of the worker in uberization is deeply altered, since aspects related to his identification in relation to the activities he performs are suppressed. Thus, the concept of amateur work emerges as something that is temporary, even if it is permanently put, because there are no definitions of activities, schedules and workspaces, as well as long-term planning for occupation are impossible to be plotted (*ibid.*).

An important element of the uberization defined by Abílio (2019 and 2020) is the fact that, although it has unprecedented proportions and creates new forms of regulation and control, the uncertainties and flexibility provided by this model are not unprecedented issues in the horizon of the Brazilian working class. Machado da Silva's work (2018) and the positive construction (in the sense of seeking a statement rather than denying its opposite) of what it considers as strategies of life and survival elucidate that, contrary to facing informality as only the inverted mirror of wage, it is necessary to see the practices existing in this universe as legitimate and revealing the way of life of a huge contingent of the Brazilian population. Analyzing the subjectivity of workers in the

midst of uberization is, therefore, considering their trajectory as a class and the economic and social practices developed previously by them.

In addition, concrete changes emerged in this universe of popular economic practices, especially from the 1990s. The ways of obtaining income and strategies of life have changed with great proportions in large urban centers. Uncertainties and the need to outline calculations and strategies before them remain, but the horizon of wage giving way to a scenario whose social protection loses its degree as a reference to be sought by workers. Telles (2010) situates this dynamic quite accurately, looking at the city of São Paulo, but in a process that, we can say, can be observed in other Brazilian urban centers:

[...] the informal economy, always present in the city (and in the country) expands through new articulations between the traditional survival economy, local markets, which spread throughout the regions, even the most distant from the city, and the globalized circuits of the economy. It is here new connections and a scale of redefinitions entirely in phase with the globalized world, which redesign spaces and urban territories in the trails of subcontracting networks that reach the extreme points of the peripheries through the pathways of an inextricable strain of intermediaries and intermediations that reactivate work at home and redefine the so-called autonomous work, at the same time that local markets are also redefined in the combination of the circumstances of the so-called popular economy with local mafias and clandestine trade in lawful or illicit goods of varied origins. (p. 9; our translation)

## The Cornershop platform and shoppers' activity

Cornershop is a Chilean startup created in 2015 and which, in the beginning, operated only in Chile, Peru, Mexico and Canada, focusing on the Latin American market, according to Oskar Hjertsonsson, its founder.<sup>3</sup> In October 2019, Uber acquired a majority share of the company. It thus reached the Brazilian market in early 2020 and gradually expanded the cities and regions in which it operated.<sup>4</sup> In June 2021, Uber took over 100% of the startup after disbursing \$1.4 billion.<sup>5</sup>

The now called Cornershop by Uber is an application that intermediates intersperses the purchase and sale between stores and supermarkets and previously registered consumers. At the other end, to ensure this relationship, are those who will make the purchases demanded, going to the registered stores, selecting the chosen products, buying them and delivering them to the households. They are the shoppers, a term coined by the company itself and adhered by the competitors of the segment. As with other apps, there are different versions for customers and shoppers, both available for download on Android and iOS systems.

Becoming a shopper is similar to becoming an Uber driver: you must be over 18 years old, with a national driver's license and a vehicle in good condition with a manufacturing year equal to or greater than 1999 with permission to go.<sup>6</sup> Some steps, however, need to be fulfilled after the initial registration:<sup>7</sup> (1) online presentation

of the company; (2) submission of documents and an online course of instructions and rules of operation of the application, with expectation of 90% score in the test; (3) if approved, contract signing and training with experienced shopper; (4) removal of material from the company: debit and credit card to make purchases, masks and hand sanitizers, returnable bags and the t-shirt with name on the front. Thus, shoppers are easily identifiable people in supermarkets, literally "wearing the company's shirt" (reinforcing the relevance of the expression in Portuguese as we mention in the title of this article), even if they act as self-employed workers.

The time at which activities can be performed is when most stores are open: from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m.; this time, according to the company, provides greater security to the worker. On the other hand, the remuneration of the shopper takes place in two moments: one in the purchase of the products, with a fixed value plus a variable according to weight and quantity of the products; and another in the trips to the supermarket and to the house of the person who made the order, being the value conditioned to the mileage and, again, to the weight of the products. To receive these

Figure 1 – Shopper worker with the shirt provided by the company



Source: TV Cultura – UOL.<sup>8</sup>

accumulated amounts, the shopper registers as an Individual Microentrepreneur (MEI, in portuguese), an alternative encouraged by the platform, or issues a Standalone Payment Receipt (RPA, in portuguese). Payment always takes place on Fridays and refers to the earnings of the previous week.

As with other platforms, there are incentives and promotions that Cornershop aims to regulate supply and demand and to cover certain regions. These produce psychological and decision-making impacts to shoppers, either by boosting the emergence of interested people, or by encouraging higher workloads and prolonged expedients.

The "Benefits" section of the FAQs in the "Be a shopper" tab of the Cornershop website<sup>9</sup> is very insightfully elucidating about the professional relationship established between worker and company. There is the mention of insurance for shoppers, which only applies during the period of order fulfillment. It covers accidental death, total or partial permanent disability by accident, medical, hospital and dental expenses and daily hospitalization by accident. This insurance, it is important to note, only emerged in early 2021. We were unable to trace whether there were agents responsible for exerting this pressure on the company or whether it was an action taken directly, possibly to match the types of insurance already provided in the transport of passengers. More recently, the possibility of tips by consumers, passed on to the shopper, has also emerged. It also has the benefit of one free delivery per week to enjoy the platform as a consumer. And there is also a pre-established incentive system, the "5 stars Shopper", which

"seeks to recognize shoppers who have a great service and an excellent partnership with Cornershop".<sup>10</sup>

In sum, there is a professional relationship that emulates certain elements of an employment relationship: employee benefits, incentives and bonus programs, and medical coverage. However, these elements are ephemeral and insufficient to represent real security and stability to the worker. The benefit of having a weekly purchase only highlights the linking of the individual to the platform on which he operates, placing him, even once a week, in the position of a consumer, which, in turn, will evaluate and judge the service of another worker. The medical coverage provided only occurs during the order fulfillment period, being invalid for times when the shopper is, for example, connected to the application, but is not serving anyone. Similarly, the journey from his home to the supermarket, and vice versa, has no security on the part of the company, as well as the purchases and vehicles involved in eventual accidents are not included in the insurance provided.

Finally, the "5 stars Shopper" award system associates the worker's rating with the consumer, who has no commitment to this task and can vary in the requirement levels and quality parameters. They are, therefore, characteristic elements of work by applications and platform capitalism currently in force, even if they seek aspects that convey a greater sense of worker acceptance, such as benefits and awards, possibly to adapt to a society still marked by the horizon of wage and security provided by them. In this sense, the measures

are not taken through a remarkable initiative to regulate this professional activity that requires minimum parameters and guarantees to the shopper worker in the exercise of their activity. Although it is sometimes urged to act alongside the passenger transport, given the scope and repercussions of the uber profession in urban centers, the State has not yet inserted itself in some kind of social protection to the shopper.

## Knowing the analyzed channels

We will now enter the description and analysis of the two channels of shoppers selected for this article. Beforehand, however, it is appropriate to explain the methodology used for the choice and reading of this content. In this sense, it is important to explain that this is an object of interest arising around April 2020, when the city of São Paulo experienced more rigorous periods of isolation, including the anticipation of municipal and state holidays and even daily rotation in the circulation of cars. This is important to be placed, because it is at this time that the Cornershop company began to expand its scope of operation, both in the cities in which it was already present, with a growth of shoppers who signed up for the application, as well as in national terms, in which the company inaugurated its operations in other major cities and capitals. It was, therefore, a context in which vaccination was still a very uncertain and distant reality, and the protection of the population that had comorbidities was even more urgent. Thus, it was frequent to see, in the company's partner

markets, a number of shopper workers, men and women, but mostly men, in red Cornershop T-shirts shopping and constantly consulting their smartphones.

It was in this wake that we sought to know more about this type of activity, and we found, on YouTube, a few channels, still, of shoppers who began to expose their daily lives, transmit practical knowledge and give tips to those who were interested to follow the same directions.

A video by Valmir Cavalcante, whose channel we will explore below, entitled "Cornershop – My first day as a shopper – buyer/link"<sup>11</sup> and dating from March 22nd, 2020, reveals with great clarity this context of the beginning of both the pandemic and this type of activity. Valmir, in this video, summarizes, while driving, the activity he will perform: "I do not take passenger, I just take the purchase. [...] People ordering the app, I make the purchase and I will make the delivery. That's what you must do. Crowded market, lots of people buying by app, buying a lot, and I'm going to do this shopper job. Shopper, shopper." [00'35"]. The end of this sentence also expresses the beginning of Valmir's identification with his activity, changing the pronunciation of the new word of his vocabulary, until he defined one, with the "o" more open. It reads "ch-oh-per".

Thus, the choice of the two channels on which we will focus was under the primacy of content that reflected the daily work of the newly emerged shoppers, also valuing a certain continuity of publications on YouTube, which would increase the diversity of topics covered and the moments experienced, reflecting important variations for our analysis. It is also relevant to consider the stimulus

of the YouTube search engine algorithm, which indicated more prominent channels on the theme searched. Thus, in addition to visualizations, the algorithms indicated the channels as a consequence of the engagement and articulation between producers and viewers, leading to a common denominator of cohesive narrative for the analyzed segment (theme, keywords, common profiles that accessed this type of content). Since, in this article, we care more about the discourse, the narrative construction of the shoppers, than the number of views and likes, is that we analyze channels and videos not necessarily at the top of the audience on YouTube.

The decision to have only two channels as the object of study corroborates the search for focus on the narrative construction of the analyzed individuals which requires a greater level of detail of the contents exposed for the study of the expressions and discourses of these professionals. From the perspective of analysis of the shopper's subjectivity, we consider that these details would ensure the capture of more nuances, ambiguities and reflections than a quantitative study, for example, on various channels of shoppers on YouTube. This, however, is also an interesting research for the sequence of studies on this category of worker in this type of media framework, as well as other qualitative approaches deserve development. In such a way that our article and the clipping proposed by it allow only a first look at the social phenomenon described here, with much room to explore it through a larger universe in any future research.

The following descriptions and analyses will seek to understand who the chosen shoppers are, collecting information about

their biographical and professional trajectories and also drawing a panorama of the channel they have: description, graphic representation, types of videos and playlists created, interaction with other social networks. This will allow us to infer certain aspects of their subjectivities, which will be explored with videos of them as shoppers, when we will select some speeches and activities that better help in the construction of these subjects. As advanced in the Introduction, the selected elements are based on the interest of observing how these shoppers describe their activities and relate to the platforms and their co-workers and on the way they construct the narrative of themselves, expressing their positions towards society and their subjectivity.

*Marcelo's Uber, the Uber off the charts (in Portuguese: 'Uber do Marcelo, o Uber fora da curva')*

This channel is managed by Marcelo Ribeiro, who describes himself as follows:

4 Years of Uber, more than 15,000 trips, the first driver of the RS to achieve the incredible 5.0 score, currently the most awarded driver in Brazil proving that "YES, the stars pay the bills and more". Helping other drivers from all over the country to achieve the 5.0 score and also be recognized for excellence in service. Without ever working with transportation or living in traffic, I discovered at Uber an excellent opportunity to make money and meet new people every day.<sup>12</sup>

Marcelo's channel has 105,000 subscribers and more than 12 million views and was created on April 14th, 2016. There is a wallpaper on the homepage with a photo of

Marcelo in front of a vehicle and the following text in the image: "Off the Charts Driver Method: run using the best strategies in your favor, earn the best scores and earn much more than you think!". The logos of the Uber, 99 and Cabify platforms are also displayed, as well as hyperlinks to access Marcelo's Instagram and Facebook pages.<sup>13</sup>

We noticed, therefore, that Marcelo created a kind of work methodology, the "Off the Charts" Method, which would help drivers to have higher incomes and good evaluations, in a kind of "optimization" of the effort employed. Because the focus of this article is on working as a shopper, we will not examine how this methodology is designed and applied. However, it is worth noting a mention that Marcelo does about a course with "dynamic and direct classes with practical examples to help YOU earn more money as an application driver". This mention is found on his Facebook page, in which there is a link that, in theory, would refer to the course, but that, when we click, the page seems to be already down.<sup>14</sup>

It is also valid to mention the title claimed by Marcelo on his Instagram page, elected as "Best Uber in Brazil". This title comes from his 5.00 rating, at least in May 2019, recognized by uber as the only one in the country. In the interview given by Marcelo to the newspaper of Rio Grande do Sul, Zero Hora, when he was awarded, we were able to identify that he is a resident of Porto Alegre and works with a rented car.<sup>15</sup> In another interview, granted to a company that develops transport applications, we were able to know that, before working by applications, Marcelo was a salesman of a sports store, in the format

of a formal job, and that he also worked in the field of car sales, in which he says he had not succeeded.<sup>16</sup>

So far, all the mobilized elements lead us to think that Marcelo only works in passenger transport, manifesting his professional identity as a worker who is only "uber". However, an examination of the playlists in his channel reveals one specifically dedicated to the theme "Cornershop". This playlist contains 124 videos. The other playlists, that, in a way, organize the activities represented by Marcelo, are in the Table 1, which are selected from the oldest to the most recent.

In a way, Marcelo's association as an uber and not a shopper comes from the way Cornershop's activities have entered Brazilian society. In the context of the beginning of the new coronavirus pandemic, in which there was a significant drop in the number of races in passenger transport, since many people have adopted measures of social isolation, becoming a shopper sounded like an alternative for those who were already uber. Whether this activity would replace its predecessor or be shared with it in the future would be difficult to say, and that determination is still in constant definition today. However, the question that many ubers asked themselves was: "Is it worth making supermarket delivery?". This was exactly the phrase in the cover image of the third video of the playlist that Marcelo dedicated to the subject "Cornershop". This video, from April 23rd, 2020,<sup>17</sup> reports the first delivery made by the new shopper, continuing a phase in which he gave his first impressions about the application. Four days earlier, on April 19th, Marcelo had posted the first video of the series, entitled "First Impressions of Cornershop".

Table 1 – Playlists of the channel “Marcelo’s Uber, the Uber off the charts”

Plasftec and Pure Lime Additive	Don't be a passenger's fool
How much you earn with Nissan VERSA	5 tips for making big money in December
I was rejected by 99 POP	uber blocked my account
I was fooled (“Me deram no meio”)	My loyalty to Uber and 99 is over
I was fooled (“Me deram no meio*”)	Cornershop
R\$ 4,200.00 clean in the crisis and in Uber	Marcelo's tip
Note	Polemics
Uber pro	NOVELTIES
uber pro is not worth	#OfftheChartsTip (“#DicaForaDaCurva”)
the biggest punishment for the passenger	

Source: prepared from <https://www.youtube.com/c/UberdoMarcelooUberforadacurva/playlists>. Access: July 27th 2021.

\*This is a second playlist with the same name.

In the video about his first delivery as a shopper, Marcelo mobilizes elements of appreciation of personal abilities, including patience. Those who did not have this attribute, according to him, should "go to work" (02'00). Another moment that the shopper mobilizes the interpersonal skills of the activity is when he says that "you get to learn the ropes" of shopping and improve your efficiency, because the application will pay better and assign you more often for other purchases. Then, an initial relationship of admiration for the application is perceived, which manages to organize and quantify the work relationships involved in the experience. At the end of this video, the construction of a positive image linked to work as a shopper and as uber is evident, again manifesting individual

qualities that exalt the one who persists while others criticize his position, in a similar position to those who are entrepreneurs of themselves. These "others" are seen as losers: "[...] there will be a lot of losers telling you that this, that this is not worth, it is a slave life, that I do not know what ... it's Uber, it's Cornershop blah blah blah. You know where the shoe pinches, you know where you have to take the strength to leave home every day [...]" (05'50").

If, in the initial videos, there was a certain dazzle with the way the Cornershop application operated, after some time of experience as a shopper, Marcelo starts to question certain strategies of the platform. On May 5th, 2020, he records the video titled "Cornershop reduces fares and incentives"<sup>18</sup> and starts asking "Is Cornershop still paying

off?". After questioning, he describes situations of reduction of the amounts earned and the incentives that, at the beginning of the operation, were so present for the shoppers. While weaving criticism, Marcelo seeks to explain the logic behind the behavior of the companies for which he provides services. There is, then, a dual character, between criticism and understanding that results in a certain resignation, associated with attempts not to be exploited: *"When the applications are good, I say it. When the apps are crap, I say it too. Why do I speak? Because we have to try not to be exploited, to be only exploited, by the applications. You have to try to exploit something from them too"* (04'38). Marcelo explains the economic logic of the platform in the places it arrives, saying that they seek to inject money in the beginning, providing incentives to shoppers, a moment that makes up the most for shopping and delivery for this application. After the company consolidates on the site, he said, this investment ceases to happen. The economic logic and accountability of the platforms are succeeded by a conjunctural reading that there are many people available to the applications, because many people are unemployed, which results in few calls for each shopper. To some extent, it places part of the responsibility for the low gains on the worker himself. The way out is, again, to invest in yourself and in individual capacities, mobilizing small economic and time calculations, while "trying" and persisting end up being more and more advisable attitudes. The attempt, for Marcelo, given the inevitability of Cornershop's way of acting, is "to explore in a way so as not to be so exploited".

Can you make money? Yeah. But more and more, as I've always said, you have to know how to work. More and more you will have to know where you are spending, for how long you are on the street, if it is worth being available to the application, how long you will be online ... try to play with other apps, try to play with Uber, with 99, with InDriver. Try, you know, because... today the tariffs are very bad, the fares are very low. Whether it's Uber, InDriver, 99, it's too complicated. The fare here at Cornershop is falling too. So we're going to have to know how to explore to the fullest so we don't get so exploited by the apps. (06'00" to 06'37")

It is important to note that, despite the individualistic character present in Marcelo's speech, and mobilized mainly by the idea that approaches an entrepreneurial ethos, overcoming adversities and constantly reading the economic scenario, we also see that there is a search for the formation of a network of workers in conditions similar to his. This network is also ambiguous, because the association of more people to his channel and his social networks ensures, in turn, more views to his content and greater monetization of it. In addition, at the beginning of Cornershop's operation in the country, there were also many financial incentives for a shopper to invite a colleague to join the business. Thus, the one who indicated more people would get more advantages. Moreover, even considering these individualistic aspects, there is a constant exchange of experiences and situations that, while helping the day-to-day work, also helps to form a professional identity, even if a fragile one. There are many times when Marcelo gives tips on how to act in certain situations, including illustrating examples of colleagues

he met, much because of the channel's performance. An example of how a collectivity of this professional activity is formed, although with fragile ties, is the support for strikes of app drivers that Marcelo demonstrates in the video: "Strike at Uber, 99 pop and InDriver. Will you stop too???" On November 3rd.<sup>19</sup> Although not explicitly referring to the work as a shopper, this video is in the playlist dedicated to the subject, showing once again how the shopper and uber categories are imbricated in his speech. In the video, Marcelo says he supports all kinds of stoppage, but he calls for more unity in setting the dates for the strikes of the category. For him, there must be a strategy, because it is possible to "stop intelligently. Even in that, we can make money. We can make money, we can show and we can make an effect... stronger, right, throw a punch in the kidney, there, of the applications". (01'07"). This is an important description of the strategy "exploiting not to be so exploited", present in Marcelo's discourse, and gives an account of representing the complexity of his subjectivity. This complexity and Marcelo's political positioning are clearer at the end of the video "How I work in the pandemic",<sup>20</sup> of August 18th, 2020, also present in the playlist dedicated to the theme Cornershop. By mentioning the health care he routinely takes in his vehicle and expressing concern about the severity of the new coronavirus pandemic, possibly by observing that this was a politically controversial topic, Marcelo says:

There are some there who are far left, others are far right... I don't want to hear it, I don't want to discuss politics, I get nothing from these fucking politicians. I don't care about the left or right, I don't care about your party, my party is the

work's party, I make my own money. No politician helps me, just gets in my way and sucks mine, sucks my money through taxes. So, folks, let me know your opinion here in the comments. Leave your like, subscribe to the channel and see you in the next video off the charts!

Marcelo apparently hasn't done as many activities as a shopper in 2021 as he had at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. In the video "I almost lost my Cornershop account",<sup>21</sup> of January 19th, 2021, he reports that he hasn't been doing so many races for the app, probably having resumed his activities as an uber worker, in such a way that it was disabled on the platform for staying too long without using it. The explanation, according to Marcelo, is that many people want to enter the business, and those who stay a long time without using it end up with the vacancy of those who wish to join.

#### *Valmir Cavalcante*

Valmir is more succinct in the description of his channel, which takes only his first and last name. He describes it: "Videos about my jobs!"<sup>22</sup> The channel has a much smaller reach compared to Marcelo, with only 2.07 thousand subscribers, although it is older, with its registration on November 10th, 2013. Until the writing of this article, there were 403,583 views on the channel. The wallpaper reads as follows: "Masks [emoji of someone with mask] wholesale", which, if we analyze the profile picture of Valmir, who wears a homemade mask written, on one side, his name, and on the other, the YouTube logo, would allow us to conclude that Valmir's activity as a shopper,

if not discontinued, at least competes with other of his "jobs", a term he employed in the description. The most recent video of him talking about Cornershop, however, clarifies the situation for good. In a comment, a user asks: "Did you leave Cornershop? You are posting sales videos now." And Valmir, in one of the answers, summarizes his current professional activity: "Cornershop helped me a lot, but nowadays I'm only selling masks, I ship to all Brazil".<sup>23</sup>

Although there are no playlists created on Valmir Cavalcante's channel, we have done below a small grouping of the subjects of the videos he posted on the channel. The grouping seeks to follow a timeline from the oldest to the most recent videos. Thus, we realized that Valmir, between 2016 and 2017, was a truck driver, or a *truck*, as he named his channel until 2020: Truck Valmir Cavalcante. About two years ago, he began working as an uber, alternating, for a time, the activities as a trucker. In March 2020, he became a shopper, this time alternating with uber activities. As of

May of the same year, there are already videos of Valmir reporting his wholesale mask sales. This function, as well as the other times, has been combined with activities such as shopper and uber, until the moment he reports dedicating himself to masks exclusively.<sup>24</sup>

It is possible that, because he plays a series of "gigs" and jobs that vary as opportunities come and go, Valmir does not manifest, as Marcelo does, an identity as an uber or shopper. A careful look at the videos he publishes and the narrative he builds about himself indicates that Valmir is all of them at the same time, evoking new identities as one application is connected and another is disconnected; or as the required products or services to be delivered change. Valmir's first video as a shopper, titled "Cornershop, Shopper Buyer in Markets",<sup>25</sup> of March 18th, 2020, illustrates this polyphony of professional identities, which, in his words, we could say is approaching a vision of someone who is an entrepreneur of himself, initiating new enterprises:

Table 2 – Topics of the videos of the channel 'Valmir Cavalcante'

<p>Activities as a truck or truck driver</p> <p>Activities as a passenger driver or uber</p> <p>Videos reporting personal events</p> <p><b>Activities as a shopper</b></p> <p>Activities on the production and sale of masks wholesale</p>
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Source: prepared from [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvXhwd\\_7xuWh\\_9-F-VEWWrg/videos](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvXhwd_7xuWh_9-F-VEWWrg/videos). Access: July, 29th, 2021.

I'm going to do some training for a new enterprise there. It is... what is this venture I'm going to do now? [...] I'm going to be a shopper. What is a shopper? The shopper is a buyer. So, I'm going to be a buyer. A market buyer. So now there are several companies, I'm going to do the training for one, but there are already two more there that I can register too. I'm going to stay on the market, so I can work with two apps. The same, like, Uber and 99. But I'm only going shopping instead, I'm not going to have a passenger. [...] So I'm already going to be a shopper for this company that is... shopper is buyer. I go there, make the purchase, I separate the items and take them to the... to the customer. (00'03" to 01'23")

Like Marcelo, Valmir records a lot of his videos inside the car, but in general he makes them during trips to the supermarket or to the residence of some Cornershop consumer. For this reason, his speeches are often interrupted by the GPS voice command or else he needs to take a few breaks in the reports to pay attention to the traffic around him. Other videos are also recorded in the supermarket or their parking lots, shopping and narrating some tips and events. This feature is not much mobilized by Marcelo, who usually makes his reports in the same place and with the car parked.

Valmir's video, "Cornershop – working for 12 hours",<sup>26</sup> from April 6th, 2020, is an example of this shopper's way of recording. However, more than that, it is an illustrative video of the working conditions faced by Valmir. On a Sunday, though a widespread reference to a rest day, he reports having spent 12 hours working as a shopper. He starts the video after his third purchase on the day, inside his car in a supermarket parking lot. In

his fourth purchase, he is eager to comment that the value of the purchase ordered did not cover the free parking, which forced him to contact the platform company's support to get a refund. Another reported difficulty is the need to walk a lot to make some deliveries.

In other moments of the video, we noticed Valmir's permanent disposition for that activity, clearly exemplifying the notion of the just-in-time worker (Abilio, 2020): he first comments that he needed to expedite a delivery because the application had already indicated another purchase to be made; then, he reveals, "I worked, man, I didn't stop for a minute. The only time I stopped was half an hour, made a meal and continued [...]" (05'37"); at the end of the video, when he is already returning home, he points out that he will only eat, sleep and then wake up early for another 12-hour workday.

In this video, the idea of the self-entrepreneur is present again, that mobilizes the imperative of being agile to increase his gain, while worrying about his reputation, seeking to choose well the products so as not to have problems with customers and worrying about the rating system of the application (49 reviews with 5 stars and 1 with 4 stars). This same video still elucidates how Valmir dealt with work in two different applications and activities, seeking to combine them in order to mitigate the expenses of his travel through the city. After all, often, when the working hours are over, he is far from his home: "I've finished away. Since we're not silly, I just turned on Uber. I directed, if I pick up a passenger, it will help with the expense" (5'00"; our emphasis).

Valmir develops a relationship similar to Marcelo's, in some respects, with the Cornershop platform. Both combine criticism

with certain operating logics with explanations and justifications about the way the company operates. However, it is possible to say that Valmir expresses greater resignation towards Cornershop than Marcelo. While he speaks of the strike of the app drivers and was more incisive in the criticism, Valmir seems more concerned with explaining the ways in which the platform works, even expressing tiredness and anxiety about the working conditions he faced. Although the video "Cornershop prohibits you from working with another App",<sup>27</sup> of June 6th, 2020, seems to deal with a manifestation of retaliation to the company, in fact it is an explanation of Valmir that there is no impediment to working with more than one application, belying certain rumor that said otherwise. He explains that there were incentives for shoppers to stay online in the app for a certain period, because they earned an additional value for it, and there was no reason to connect to other platforms. With the reduction of these incentives, Valmir says that it became more worth working with other platforms simultaneously, since taking care to turn off one of them when a race or purchase arrived at the other. But he stresses that this exclusivity with Cornershop never occurred: "Simply, if you aren't... if you are not connected, you will not receive... hmm... any request at all. Whoever is connected will receive a request, and that's how it works. Ok? I am making a video and I am connected. Suddenly it can ring here..." (03'33" to 03'48").

Another important aspect for the description of Valmir's channel is its interaction with other shopper workers. There are many videos reporting the experience of working with other colleagues, whether people who were starting their activities as

shoppers at that time, or colleagues that he reports having contact through WhatsApp groups, and who decided to record a shopping experience next to them. This is the case of the video "Cornershop 31/12, Last Purchase of the Year",<sup>28</sup> of December 31st, 2020, when Valmir records his colleague fulfilling a request, and the two provide tips on how to provide that service with more quality and agility. Valmir's excitement and effusiveness when recording videos with his colleagues denote some collective solidarity around the activity as a shopper, while at the same time indicating a quest to mobilize his own channel, attracting views for his activity. In this aspect, in comparison with Marcelo, we see that he acts differently: his interactions appear in the videos through his reports about conversations he had with colleagues, without, however, mobilizing names and videos entirely dedicated to it. Possibly due to the difference between the channels' magnitude, number of subscribers and views, Valmir seems to be busier giving visibility to other shoppers, even if there is no continuity of these interactions in his channel.

Finally, politically, we can see that Valmir does not stand emphatically, avoiding positioning himself, even at times when he would apparently express his opinion more clearly. More specifically, in the video "Uber – taxi! Councilman Amadeu",<sup>29</sup> of August 1st, 2020, Valmir begins by talking about how Councilman Adilson Amadeu, recognized representative of the category of taxi drivers in São Paulo, had been angry and dissatisfied with a certain strategy of the company Uber in seeking to include the taxi drivers. Valmir gives signs that he will begin to criticize the councilman and, in some moments, appears

to defend Uber, but he ends the video saying that, although there are good changes for the passenger, in the sense that they will have more options to choose, " it will cause big fights, this will give a lot to talk about. Right? But let's see the result from now on" (07'00). A little earlier, he pondered the councilman: "From his point of view, he's right. He's fighting there for the cabbies...". This episode also elucidates the way the debate about the initiatives of regulation of work by applications takes place, in which private and corporate logics – of taxi drivers – seek for intervention within the State, which is already permeated by the economic interests of the platforms and the management logic of governance. The rights and protection of the poorly represented and unassisted categories of a real regulation of their conditions end up neglected by a neoliberal conception of justice, which understands social inequalities as justifiable and, therefore, accepted (Fonseca, 2014).

## Conclusions

We can start by analyzing the descriptions exposed above by observing that the way the shopper activity is described by Marcelo and Valmir mobilizes different elements. Here it is not about a comparison between the two, but a complementarity that helps us trace aspects of the shopper worker's subjectivity. In describing his activities, Valmir brings the strenuous working conditions to which this category is subjected, such as long working hours, low pay, lack of structure for commuting home-work and the absence of important conditions

for the workers' health, such as adequate lunch time and concerns about the physical effort employed in the tasks. Not to mention the almost null work rights considered by the Cornershop platform as "benefits". These conditions become manifestations of physical and psychological fatigue, as well as in several moments of anxiety and concern, arising from the effort of performing the shopper function well, but also from the insecurity provided by the logic of operation of the platforms. Valmir mentions personal attributes that a shopper should appreciate and develop in this scenario, but it is Marcelo who explores this in more detail. He brings the entrepreneurial ethos in his speeches and actions, always demanding an attitude of perseverance in the face of such faced conditions, not failing to denounce them, it is worth noting. But the way Marcelo describes his work allows him to frame himself as a self-entrepreneur (Dardot and Laval, 2016), who goes through a difficult journey, but for which it is necessary to "extract strength", overcoming barriers such as the State that "sucks" him through taxes, the platforms that exploit him and the "losers" that transmit negativity to that occupation.

Being a shopper, therefore, is more like "becoming" a shopper, it is to face another "enterprise" in the life of these individuals, it is a condition that can be disabled or reactivated as calculations, strategies and opportunities progress. In the case of the new coronavirus pandemic, this was the opportunity for many who saw themselves as uber or, as they usually call themselves, "app drivers" to start acting as shoppers. In any case, you never leave an activity completely. The uncertainty and insecurity regarding working conditions

and the gains that will be obtained lead to an impossibility of planning the future in the medium and long term, as Sennett (1999 and 2006) had already advanced. Planning takes place according to the information available, and the speed of calculations and reasoning to join a particular activity or turn on and off a particular application needs to be very fleeting. This explains the fragility and difficulty of building an identity around the shopper, but also around other occupations modulated by uberization (Abílio, 2019 and 2020). Thus, the presence of amateur work is latent, as Abílio (2020) described, given the indetermination of time and space in the tasks performed. This influences the formation of a collective solidarity and on the possibilities of this social subject to intervene in the State.

It does not mean to say, however, that there is no identity and subjectivity to be noticed in the shopper worker. It exists and can be seen in the statements of the subjects analyzed here and in the way they dialogue with their peers. But this identity has fragile and fleeting, though always reattachable, bonds, as Boltanski and Chiapello (2009) describe in the connectionist world of projects and networks formed in contemporary capitalism. Perhaps it is clearer to note this collective identity, even if it remains unstable, if we look at shoppers as well as *ubers*, delivery men, *trucks*, that is, workers modulated by applications managed by large companies, the platforms. Like all generalizations, we may lose important nuances if we look at it this way, but it is a way that considers the narrative itself and representation of themselves made by Marcelo and Valmir, for example.

The permanence of work by applications, however, helps to explain the activities performed by the two, but does not end the strategies they outline to earn a living. Marcelo, for example, sought to capitalize on his performance as a youtuber to try to offer a course to other app drivers. Valmir, identifying that working as a shopper did not provide the gains he was expecting, began to use the networks and his channel to sell masks wholesale, another gap identified by him with the advent of the new coronavirus pandemic. In a classic entrepreneurial narrative, we would say that Valmir identified a market opportunity and sought to exploit it to achieve his gains. This is not an incorrect description, but we prefer to situate it as a constant and structuring practice of the strategies of life and survival of the popular classes (Machado da Silva, 2018), or as an imperative of survival in the world of informality, considering the Brazilian historical and socioeconomic context, although under distinct dimensions and intensities today (Telles, 2010).

A frustration with politics (and with politicians) is perceived in the statements of the shoppers analyzed. The idea that they are on their own and avoid positioning themselves politically, fearing that their vision may bring some damage to their activity, especially with their customers, is clear. Marcelo, for example, says he seeks "not to meddle in politics". Still, it is possible to see some dissatisfaction and discontent with the platforms and certain logics of operation. However, without a collective representation, as in the case of taxi drivers cited by Valmir, and in the absence of social protection mechanisms, the perception

that they are "alone" is highlighted. That's why they need to use all strategies to increase their income: "to exploit in a way not to be so exploited", as Marcelo said. Valmir's phrase, apparently commonplace and unpretentious, "Since we are not silly, I just turned on Uber", is actually symbolic of the representation of the strategies adopted to face the scenario of uncertainties and protections.

Finally, it is perceived that the shoppers, or, in general, the application workers, who permeate the tissue of contemporary metropolises, are subjects who seek practices that go through the idea of "novelties",

something that breaks with the structure of gains and conditions experienced, as the activity of shopper was, especially in the period of the new coronavirus pandemic. The uncertainties experienced in this context become indefinities regarding their identities and feelings of attachment and recognition, which add to an urban context dominated by a neoliberal reason that results in the lack of protection and regulation of millions of workers, sometimes seen by themselves as entrepreneurs of their own lives and seeking to build alternatives of income and work.

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## Notes

- (\*) The original expression, in Portuguese, is "Vestindo a camisa da empresa", which means, literally, "Wearing the company's shirt". It is a common expression in Brazil used as a reference for an employee who puts devotion and allegiance to his/her work and, mostly, the company he or she is working for.
- (1) This is a term used by the workers themselves for this type of service, which is why we decided to keep it in our analysis. In English, shopper would designate a buyer, and the word is mobilized by the Cornershop platform, owned by Uber, which names its hardworking users in this way. Thus, when the company joined the Brazilian market, many became shoppers, because, in their vast majority, they started working on this application, even though they currently also provide services to other platforms. More recently, a startup named Shopper, with similar operations to the other platforms mentioned, has gained market share in the city of São Paulo. However, the term shopper remains in its broad sense, being able to designate workers in this field on different platforms.
- (2) Information available at: <https://www.youtube.com/intl/en-GB/about/press/>. Access: July 23rd, 2021.
- (3) Link *Estadão*. Uber buys Chilean startup from Cornershop market deliveries. Available in: <https://link.estadao.com.br/noticias/empresas,uber-compra-startup-chilena-de-entregas-de-mercado,70003046303>. Access: November 8th, 2020.
- (4) Techtudo G1. Cornershop: How the market service works in partnership with Uber. Available in: <https://www.techtudo.com.br/listas/2020/08/cornershop-como-funciona-o-servico-de-mercado-em-parceria-com-uber.ghtml>. Access: November 8th, 2020.
- (5) NEOFEED. Uber takes over 100% of Cornershop for more than \$1.4 billion. Available in: <https://neofeed.com.br/blog/home/uber-assume-100-da-cornershop-por-mais-de-us-14-bilhao/>. Access: December 17th, 2021.
- (6) At Uber, however, a car is requested to be manufactured back up to 10 years. That's a comparative advantage for anyone who wants to become a shopper, since they don't need to have such a new car.
- (7) These steps are based on the reports of the shoppers analyzed by us and the context of the production of the videos we used. Some of these steps, however, were altered over the platform's performance time, such as a shortening of online training and the dispensation of a knowledge approval test. However, we chose to describe those that prevailed when the videos began being produced and the reports of the two shoppers we studied were made, around April 2020.
- (8) Available in: [https://cultura.uol.com.br/noticias/18919\\_profissao-shopper-saiba-como-e-o-trabalho-e-quanto-ganha-quem-faz-as-compras-de-supermercado-por-voce.html](https://cultura.uol.com.br/noticias/18919_profissao-shopper-saiba-como-e-o-trabalho-e-quanto-ganha-quem-faz-as-compras-de-supermercado-por-voce.html). Access: July 27th, 2021.
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- (12) Available in: <https://www.youtube.com/c/UberdoMarcelooUberforadacurva/about>. Access: July 25th, 2021
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