

Value transfer and human degradation in an automotive enterprise cluster in Mexico

Carlos Jiménez Bandala and Jesús Contreras Álvarez

The purpose of this paper is to explain the labour precarisation processes as a sine qua non condition of capitalism in its neoliberal phase, which allows enterprises with low organic capital composition to generate enough value to transfer it to enterprises with high organic composition. This work is carried out parting from the assessment of the working conditions of the operational workers of a company that supplies services to an automotive cluster in Mexico. Through a qualitative methodology it is demonstrated that the working conditions are not only precarious, but also inhuman. They degrade the essence of the work proper and all the attributes of the subject [worker], and they take it to the extreme point of deprecation, in such a way that they deny his/her physiological and biological characteristics .

Prologue

In the aftermath of the crisis of the 1970s, two important theories on the restructuring of Iberian American economies were put on the table. The first places the problem between State-Economy-social classes. This signals that the crisis is due to a deficit producing fiscal policy, based on the "State-Enterprise-Workers Pact" that was supported with public spending (Aglieta, 1979, Boyer, 1988, Coriat, 1990, Abramo, 1991). The proposed solution was economic liberalisation and deregulation by thinning the public sector and by refraining from intervening in the economy, leaving market forces to generate the economic equilibrium.



Foto de [Simon Kadula](#) en [Unsplash](#)

The second theory is rather a set of several theories, which converge in production and productive processes, either by pointing out that the technological base was exhausted or elaborating about the limit of Taylorist relations (Kochan, McKersie and Capelli, 1984; Sabel, 1985; Womack, 1992). The proposed solutions were the drive of the Third Technological Revolution and labour flexibility.

the objective of this paper is to explain the processes of job insecurity as a sine qua non condition of capitalism in its neoliberal phase

Both currents are going to coalesce the new techno-productive model of industrial relations that was adopted by large companies in our country and that can be identified as neoliberal labour relations or simply as labour flexibilisation (De la Garza, 2000). That is to say, on the one hand, at the macroeconomic level, we have a labour market that was deregulated like all the others and handed over to the market forces the determination of wages as the price of the labour force. On the other, on the company floor, we have individualised work relationships, for a specified term and adjusted according to the productive needs of each organisation. The result has been detrimental to the working class and has configured a type of job we call precarious, because it is unstable and subjects the worker to inferior conditions (De la Garza, 2001).

In this sense, the objective of this paper is to explain the processes of job insecurity as a sine qua non condition of capitalism in its neoliberal phase, by analysing the working conditions of workers operating in a supplier company in an automotive cluster in Mexico.

To this end, a qualitative methodology was proposed from the research-action-participation approach in which one of the researchers entered the company under study and coexisted with the workers directly from an administrative role in the Human Resources area. The company is a provider of transportation services, which we will simply call "Transport Company" for, in order to protect the anonymity of workers, as key informants, we also have to keep the anonymity of the company; nor we point out the geographic location of the automotive cluster in Mexico. We don't deem it relevant, for the structural analysis that we perform in the first part brings us to the assumption that similar situations can be experienced in different clusters of the automotive sector, even across the world.

In the first part we expose a brief theoretical framework that justifies the processes of employment precarisation through the value process. In the second part, we expose the processes of human degradation in the workplace in business organisations from a humanistic perspective. In the third part we outline the contextual framework of the organisation that we study. Finally, in the last section we show the findings of the field research in the "Transport Company" of the automotive cluster.

Value process and precarisation process

We part from the Labour Theory of Value (Marx, 1867), in which the capitalist mode of production required to go from capital to incremental capital (C-C') through the production process and then the circulation process that allows the creation of goods; hence, it is necessary for the entrepreneur to transform his capital into commodities (M) necessary for production, labor force (LF) and means of production (LF), these being the assets and the inputs; both commodities are consumed in the production process (PP). This process unfolds into a work process where the concrete work of the worker emerges and serves to give use values to the production; on the other side, a process of valorisation that is the manifestation of abstract work and that allows the generation of exchange values . Consequently, the value of all

commodities used in the process (M) has been transferred, plus a new value generated by work (m) so that the entrepreneur can release into the sphere of circulation the goods for sale and obtain for them the capital originally employed (C) plus the monetary-equivalent of the new value (d) or C', in the way we lay it out (1) according to Marx in the second section of Volume II (1970, T .II, p 308):

$$\begin{array}{c} |Lf| \quad |M|C| \\ C - M| \quad |..PP..| \quad | \quad | -C' \\ |Mp| \quad |m|d| \end{array} \quad (1)$$

The foregoing not only explains the process of valorisation, but also the process of appropriation of surplus value (d) by the employer. It is a condition without which the capitalist mode of production cannot reproduce itself and is the basis that allows us to understand the successive processes within the business.

Since it is of interest to the entrepreneur to obtain a higher rate of profit (g'), it is not enough to appropriate the surplus value (p), but rather, it is necessary to increase its yield with respect to what it invested ($c + v$) (2). To this effect, it can choose two ways: to increase the absolute surplus value, if it extends the working day or to increase the relative surplus value, if it makes the workday more intensive so that it reduces the social time of work necessary to produce a commodity (Marx, 1970, T. III, p. 58):

$$g' = \frac{p}{c + v} \quad (2)$$

The labour relations model based on the labour-employer-State pact of the import-substitution industrialisation era (1950-1980), allowed working class organising —through trade unionism— to have an important counterweight vis-à-vis the business class and inhibit, the increase in prohibiting workdays without overtime (Valenzuela, 1984). increase of relative achieved through the Taylorist methods in the work rate is worker through example, when the regulated in the case but also, at the stage planning/execution of management principle. In this way, the manager retains the know how of the process whilst the worker is left only with the routine and simple repetitive gestures for his work (Coriat, 1991).

The labour relations model based on the labour-employer-State pact of the import-substitution industrialisation era (1950-1980), allowed working class organising —through trade unionism— to have an important counterweight vis-à-vis the business class and prevent, or at least inhibit, the increase in absolute surplus by prohibiting workdays greater than 8... Although wages were never fixed by a true productivity relationship, the fact is that, since they were fixed on the basis of political agreements and social pressure, they were allowed to retain their purchasing power

prevent, or at least absolute surplus by greater than 8 hours, compensation Nevertheless, the surplus value was adoption of Fordist- which the cadence of imposed on the technology. For conveyor belt speed is of serial production; of the separation, work, as a

Although wages were never fixed by a true productivity relationship, the fact is that, since they were fixed on the basis of political agreements and social pressure, they were allowed to retain their purchasing power (Ros, 2015). It is also true that it was not only the structure of this pact that made it possible to improve the conditions of workers, but also that

employers accepted these concessions due to high rates of economic growth (Valle, 1991). Table 1 shows the variation in the wages' share of income for Mexico in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the pre-and post-structural adjustment policies. We see a drastic decrease from 1980 to 1985 that can also be explained by the debt crisis, but the trend of the following years was always downward, particularly from 2010 to 2015, a period without economic crisis, but with a labour reform looming.

Table 1. Wages' share of income in GDP (%) Selected years, Mexico

Year	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015
Total	35,8	38,1	36,0	31,1	29,3	30,3	30	28,5	27,6	25,3

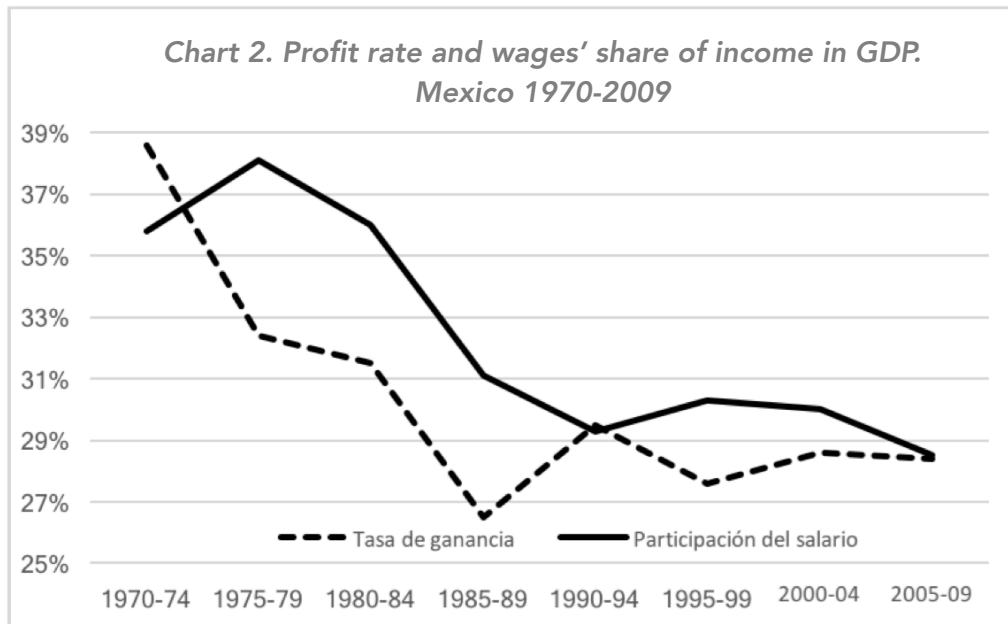
Prepared by authors parting from the chaining of INEGI's bases 1970-2015

The generalised intensification of the declining trend in the rate of profits that was experienced in the 1970s and 1980s (Chart 1) forced companies to a paradigm shift in the techno-productive model. The gaze of large corporations was put over Japan, parting from the Toyotists models, based on practices that were not oriented to supply, but demand. In other words, the production process did not start at the factory, but at the sales agency or at what some call "to think backwards" (Coriat, 1992). Although Japan's labour relations system was much more complex, what moved to Western companies were hybrid versions suitable to capital that did not find a good fit in a different cultural context.



Prepared using Maito data (2014)

In Mexico, the profit rates followed the world's trend and showed a differentiated correlation with a wavering wages' share of income in GDP (Chart 2); whereas in the seventies the correlation was negative; in the 1980-1984 period we found a turning point (debt crisis and adjustment policies that were applied by mandate of the International Monetary Fund); during that period the profit rates and wages' share correlated positively, both fell profusely. Prior to the 1994 crisis, the correlation was negative again; the wages' share fell while the profit rate recovered. It is the period of greatest diffusion of techno-productive changes in the manufacturing sector; subsequently there was a slight recovery of wages until the next crisis in 2009.



Prepared using data from Maito (2014) and INEGI (1970-2015)

The greatest predominance of the Japanese model was, in general terms, to make production processes more flexible so that companies order the exact amount of raw material at the right time, consequently saving storage costs and safeguarding liquidity by not having inventories as assets. (Coriat, 1992). Nonetheless, we have pointed out that the labour force is part of those commodities that the entrepreneur requires for production. In this sense the labour force must also be flexibilised, so that, on the one hand, it can be used in different processes (pluri-specialization-polyvalence) and, in line with demand fluctuations, do without it in periods of low demand and call for it in periods of high demand.

This flexibility can be explained from three different dimensions: Flexibility in Industrial Relations (FIR), directly related to labour force changes at the floor of the company within the productive process; Flexibility in New Forms of Work Organization (FNWO), related to changes in administrative and management processes; and, Precarious Flexibility (PF) that has to do with salary and numerical practices that make the worker more vulnerable to the conditions imposed by the employer (Jiménez-Bandala and Sánchez Daza, 2014). The corresponding variables are listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Variables making up the different types of Labour Flexibility

<i>Industrial Relations Flexibility (FIR)</i>	<i>New Forms of Work Organization Flexibility (FNWO)</i>	<i>Precarious Flexibility (PF)</i>
<p>Job Rotation</p> <p>Sub-Contracting</p> <p>Worker decision Making</p> <p>Quality circles and work teams</p>	<p>Just in Time (JIT)</p> <p>Total Quality Management (TQM)</p> <p>Statistical process Control</p> <p>Production Bonuses</p>	<p>Temp Work</p> <p>Hourly work, part-time and free lance rates</p> <p>Unionisation</p> <p>Collective Agreement</p> <p>Dismissal Clause</p> <p>Seniority Clause</p> <p>Social Security</p> <p>Benefits</p>

Taken from Jiménez-Bandala and Sánchez Daza (2014)

As can be observed, both the FIR and the FNWO respond to management practices closer to the Japanese model, technological insertion, democratic and decision-making processes, as well as means that encourage innovation; in contrast, the PF is based specifically on the conditions of work and the elimination of benefits, workers' organisation and the long-term commitments between the worker and the company.

According to Jiménez-Bandala and Sánchez Daza (2014), in the 1991-2001 period, Mexican companies from the most dynamic branches of manufacturing had mostly applied changes oriented to the FIR and the FNWO. This is the case of

petrochemicals, metalworking and microelectronics, whereas, among the changes to PF had food, textiles, paper precarisation has been companies whose rates of profit. It

Mexican companies from the most dynamic branches of manufacturing had mostly applied changes oriented to the FIR and the FNWO; whereas, among the less dynamic branches, changes to PF had predominated. That is, precarisation has been more recurrent in companies whose activities report lower rates of profit.

pharmaceutical, (including automotive) among others; less dynamic branches, predominated, namely and wood. That is, more recurrent in activities report lower becomes a necessary

condition to obtain a greater surplus value given the adverse conditions for the development of hard technologies (machinery, robotics, digital processes) and soft (managerial innovation).

Precarious flexibility required legal deregulation of the labour market. However, these practices were already present in the 1991-2001 period, long before they were legalised in the Mexican Labour Reform of 2012. So it would be naive to assume that precariousness is a practice derived from a formal subsumption. As it always happens, the real subsumption appears first.

Deregulation of the labour market has increased the vulnerability of the worker by reducing his negotiation capacity and confronts him individually to a market that will determine his salary according to supply and demand. It is clear that in a market where the Economically Active Population (EAP) grows faster than employment rates and where, structurally, the formal market has been unable to absorb the EAP, generating informality, underemployment and unemployment, wages will always be pushed down. In contrast to the wage drop in value added (Table 1), the profit rate stopped falling and showed recovery (Chart 1).

Although Table 2 shows variables that let us "measure" the degree of precariousness of a company, we must also point out that precarisation is much more than job instability and loss of economic benefits for workers. It is also made up of

dimensions that can understand them we mention the one's own time, the own abilities, the loss greater resources in (Standing, 2014) that continuous quality of life, which, imperceptible, it does been slowed down.

precarisation is much more than job instability and loss of economic benefits for workers. It is also made up of dimensions that can be difficult to understand numerically, among them we mention the loss of control over one's own time, the development of one's own abilities, the loss of identity, the use of greater resources in unpaid work that consequently brings a continuous deterioration of the quality of life

be difficult to numerically, among loss of control over development of one's of identity, the use of unpaid work consequently brings a deterioration of the albeit sometimes it is not mean that it has

Therefore, we define precarisation to be a process of deterioration (always continuous) of the workers' working and living conditions rather than a condition of industrial relations. In response to the decreasing trend in the rate of profit, capitalists tend to deepen precarisation. Hence, precariousness has been exacerbating. This increasing degree of precariousness forms a new process, that of human degradation at work, which would mean "adapting vital expectations to unstable employment, to an unstable life" (Standing, 2014, p.8).

Human degradation in the workplace

The process of human degradation is then the result of exacerbating precariousness in employment, because it is increasingly difficult for businesses to increase their surplus value with only discipline in the work process (Aktouf, 1992); The capitalist enterprise in the phase of neoliberalism of the 21st century is presented as "a sphere that engenders suffering, physical and psychological violence, boredom and even despair" (Chanlat, 1994, p.322). We identify that this process of degradation can have different levels that degrade human conditions and that are not necessarily presented as successive in the organisation. We expose them briefly in table 3 parting from a company's disavowal exerted on human beings.

Table 3. Levels of human degradation in the workplace

<i>Negation kind</i>	<i>Worker's depiction</i>	<i>Manifestation</i>
Social negation	Homo economicus/Homo administrativus	Limited to numerical statements, individualised and alienated from his product
Physiological negation	Animal	Does not think, just reproduces gestures in imitation; does not speak; does not organise nor participates and is alienated from the work process
Biological negation	Thing	Does not eat, defecate, or breathe; alienates himself from his own.

Authors's own construal

The first level implies that the company denies the worker his social status. He goes from being human to "homo economicus", "homo administrativus" (Chanlat, 1998), the heart and soul are removed, that is, their emotional states, and only what is capable of being formalised in numerical statements is allowed (Chanlat, 1994). The social meaning of the commons comes off and it is replaced by the exclusive individual concern; the worker subsequently alienates himself from the product of his work, and looks detached at his own creation.

A second level means that the company denies the worker the physiological conditions of the human being: speech for example, learning, reasoning, organisational skills, participation, leadership, even walking upright (in jobs where the worker is extendedly in unnatural positions such as seated or stooped); all forbidden based on severe standards that always make reference in favour of productivity. The worker is alienated from the process and the nature of his work, not only the result is alien, but the task itself, and that means alienating himself from the human elements (Aktouf, 1992).

Both types of degradation are very common in models of Taylorist-Fordist production and in excessively rigid bureaucratic forms of organisation, thus they become the hallmark of modern organisations.

A third level, when the company denies workers their biological condition, translates into reducing the human being into a thing. Things walk, do not sleep, do not have alienates himself essence (Je est un ceases to exist for he the Other for his and Bédard, 2000), exist as well. Stress, overwhelming way of not recognising his self in the sphere of work, reproduces the periods of violence and the suffering of the individual.

when the company denies workers their biological condition, it translates into reducing the human being into a thing. Things do not eat, do not walk, do not defecate, do not sleep, do not have sex. The worker alienates himself from his own essence (Je est un autre), the Self ceases to exist for he necessarily requires the Other for his recognition, the other does not exist as well.

do not eat, do not defecate, do not sex. The worker from his own autre), the Self necessarily requires recognition (Chanlat the other does not overwork and the

overwhelming way of not recognising his self in the sphere of work, reproduces the periods of violence and the suffering of the individual.

If the worker does not recognise himself as a human being, the worth that he has of his self is belittled. Thus, the economic (lower salaries, revocation of benefits, extension of the days without additional payments) and social practices (mistreatment, words ignored, discrimination) that are imposed on himself will become acceptable, irrefutable, even come to be seen as a normal situation in the company.

The Cluster as business model and value transfer

The cluster is a geographical concentration of interconnected companies and institutions of a particular sector. The institutions can be universities, financial agencies, or qualification, training or government agencies around a central company (Porter, 1998). The cluster, as a business model, allows a large company to deconcentrate its production process so that it concentrates on the most important activities for the value generation (lean production) while the companies that subcontract for the other processes reach a high level of specialisation favouring value generation.

Seen from the perspective of the Porter value chain (1998), a cluster favours innovation, competitiveness and productivity. Nonetheless, the model is thought from and for developed countries and their particular conditions. The transfer to developing countries is far from the original conception. But the value of which Porter speaks starts from a subjective theory of value; thus, it has a different meaning to the value to which we refer in the first part of this work. From the work-value theory approach, the cluster will facilitate the process of value transfer.

The transfer of value assumes that having two economic sectors (be it SI and SII), one requiring its product to have an organic composition of high capital (CCO) and another requiring its product to have a low CCO, namely, that in the ratio of constant capital (machinery, equipment and supplies) by variable capital (wages of the labour force) the quotient of sector I is greater than that of sector II (3), the SI will absorb [appropriates] the value of SII (Marx , T.III, 1970, p.161).

$$CCO_I > CCO_{II}$$

$$\frac{C_I}{V_I} > \frac{C_{II}}{V_{II}} \quad (3)$$

Given that SII has transferred its value to SI, SI has transmuted its costs into surplus values and, conversely, SII transmuted its surplus value into costs. In this way, if we break down (3) in (1) we have:

$$\begin{aligned} S_I: c_1 + v_1 + p_1 &= c_1 + c_{2\#} \\ S_{II}: c_2 + v_2 + p_2 &= v_1 + v_2 + p_1 + p_2 \end{aligned} \quad (4)$$

In other words, in a relationship between capital-intensive companies with labour-intensive companies, the former will benefit from acquiring the goods produced by the latter, since the values generated in the latter translate into profits for the former through a lower level of costs (Valle, 1984). In a cluster, the central company is always more capital intensive, and has a quantitative and qualitative superiority of its techno-productive system over the rest of the companies. Therefore, the precarisation level of the central company will always be lower than that of the other of the companies, which must intensify their precariousness so that their costs are translated into competitive prices.

Work at the "Transport Company" of an automotive cluster in Mexico

The case presented below refers to an organisation that belongs to a cluster of suppliers of the automotive industry in Mexico and that is subcontracted to provide the service of personnel transportation. We consider this assessment to be important. It does not only transport the personnel of the central company but of subcontracted companies, and, in value generation terms, transporting commodities also appreciates the commodities. With the labour force being one more commodity in the production process, its transport not only represents the just in time, but, a process of appreciation due to the condition of moving from a remote point to the work centre.

Parting from the hypothesis that the transport company has a smaller organic composition of capital than the central company, we have:

$$\frac{C_{transport}}{V_{transport}} < \frac{C_{assembler}}{V_{assembler}} \quad (5)$$

Subsequently, that the transport company has a degree of work precariousness must be verified. The evidence found showed us that this precariousness has reached a point of human degradation.

The study was carried out using a qualitative methodology from the research-action-participation approach that involved one of the researchers entering the company under study and coexisting with the workers directly from an administrative position in the Human Resources area during a period of five months (January-May 2017). Relative to the treatment of data privacy, we manifest the following: a) we have omitted the name of the company to guard the privacy of the workers, who were our key informants; b) by the same token, we have omitted the data granted by the company, but that requested to not disclose it; c) we omitted any indication about the location of the automotive cluster so that, despite the growing number of personnel transportation companies, the name of the company is not inferred.

We believe that this work should serve, within the methodological framework used, to give back to our informants part of what they granted us, as a reflection of their experiences, a systematisation of their experiences and misery, to in turn enable them to understand their reality by becoming aware about it and to open the possibility of transforming it.

There is no intention to evaluate the behaviour of the company's management, nor do we attribute to it the final responsibility for what takes place in there, because the analysis that precedes the presentation of this case responds to a structural level. Similarly, we do not absolve its managerial actions. We must acknowledge that companies are trapped

between following the capitalism in its respond to the rate of profit and be to the company that market. We leave the management to future in this occasion on presenting the evidence of human degradation.

We must acknowledge that companies are trapped between following the necessary condition in capitalism in its neoliberal phase to respond to the maximisation of its rate of profit and be able to transfer value to the company that hires it or leave the market.

necessary condition in neoliberal phase to maximisation of its able to transfer value hires it or leave the assessment of studies and we focus

The company under study began operating in the 1990s, in the context of the 1989 presidential decree that deregulated the automotive sector and extended the possibility for companies with foreign capital to participate more actively in the auto parts industry, which favoured the strengthening of a more integrated production chain through industrial clusters and corridors in the central, Bajío and the northern regions of the country.

Based on its number of employees, it is considered a large company (+250). We circumscribe our work to the operational area that comprises the staff driving the buses. The profile of the bus operators in this company is as follows: primary schooling, age range 25 - 55, male gender and experience greater than 1 year in the handling of units of over 3.5 tons; operators have a monthly salary of 7 thousand 702 pesos before taxes (equivalent to 405 US dollars¹), which is slightly higher than the average salary for these drivers in Mexico (WageIndicator, 2017). Workers have social security and associated benefits: a housing fund and retirement savings, 8 vacation days and a Christmas bonus equivalent to 19 salary days, which is greater than the 6 and 15 days respectively, established in the Federal Labor Law.

The previous description does not give us indications of job precariousness. Rejecting the null hypothesis was put under consideration, because the first weeks passed without any setbacks. Yet, as the researcher extended his coexistence with the operators, he was able to observe a variety of situations that the workers shared with him in greater detail.

Operators work 8 hours a day, but with a discontinuous workday schedule. Their task is focused on making trips from a starting point to the destination point with continuous stops to pick up the staff. They start their first route at 4:30 in the morning and conclude at 7 a.m. The second route starts at 12:30 p.m. and concludes at 3:30 p.m. The third and final route is from 9:30 p.m. to midnight. A discontinuous workday is one in which workers work less than 8 hours in a row and are allowed to leave the facilities of the company in the middle of the day. Bearing in mind that workers end their workday at midnight they have just 4 and a half hours left to rest, minus transfer times. Workers have essentially spent the whole day at the company, the entire week, except for the rest day, once a week.

For the most part, workers prefer to stay in the bus during their short breaks (between the first and second routes and between the third and first routes), during which the buses remain parked inside the company's facilities or industrial park in which they provide the service. They cannot take out the units, mileage and gas consumption are recorded, so they rest inside or clean the vehicles, which is also part of their tasks.

Between the second and the third route, which is the longest rest they have, some workers choose to go home. Thus, if we consider transfer time, workers do not sleep more than 6 continuous hours a day, despite the fact that their work

¹ An exchange rate of \$ 19.00 per dollar was applied.

demands a high level of concentration and reflex response. Having short sleep days reduces their capacities and drains their health. Sleeping short naps in the buses does not guarantee a restful sleep capable of reconstituting their strength.

If workers do not arrive on time due to personal reasons and, thus, causing a delay in the production line, the transport company is fined by the contractor. The fine must be paid by the responsible driver, which can mean a discount of up to half his monthly salary per event; so stress and pressure levels are the prevailing state of mind among workers.

On the other hand, despite the fact that there is a union, this serves to endorse dismissal decisions by the employers, which are recorded as voluntary resignations so that the worker "has no conflicts" and is able to "find another job". In this way, workers who are labeled by the company or the union, as "conflictive" are discharged. A "conflictive" worker is one who makes a fuss, makes a complaint, is inconvenient or does not cooperate; that is, does not accept extra work (which, although paid, makes a strenuous workday for the driver). The precarious situation is already clear at this point.

As we go deeper into the true conditions of the worker, we find evidence of human degradation, which we summarise in table 4. In this part of the investigation, the microanalysis of data in the field logbooks that were developed during the company's stay was used. Sentences that expressed the workers' feelings or situations that were observed directly were logged in. Subsequently, they were selected and ordered according to the categories that we present in table 3.

The first impression that was made and that set in motion the rest of the analysis was during a tour with the operators. Drivers are banned from talking to the workers they transport. This lack of communication has been done in such a way that users do not greet the drivers, neither when boarding nor when descending. The change of attitude of the operators when the researcher arrived and greeted them was extremely noticeable. Later the drivers commented, with a deep sadness and a load of nostalgia, that the employees of the central company "*no longer even greet them when they get on or off the bus*" as if evoking a past in which they were greeted. We have no evidence that in the past they did, rather the drivers had not realised that the lack of a daily greeting was the norm. They became conscious about it when someone (the researcher) greeted them again.

This practice of invisibility of the worker is not the case with the passengers only. Management reproduces the same practice, such as when workers indicate that "they are ignored", that if they ask something they do not get a response and if they do it is with phrases such as *I will not explain it to you, for you would not understand it anyway*. Here we see a clear physiological negation. The greeting is a human characteristic that is denied. You cannot talk to anyone, you cannot ask. When one asks, *one is ignored*. The biological condition is again negated, the worker is not listened to. If he insists, the physiological negation is reproduced once more: *you do not understand*; animals do not reason.

Upon enquiring with the workers-users about the drivers, the invisibility was lower. Despite seeing familiar faces, the workers acted in response to the first perception: *If they do not greet us when we go up, why should we greet them; If they do not talk to us, we do not talk to them*. Others within that group expressed themselves in a more discourteous way. The complaint was typically: *they smell bad, they always stink* [the drivers].

The drivers' bad smell is a common occurrence. When they choose not to go to their home, due to time constraints and they stay on the bus, they have no access to a cafeteria on the premises of the company, a physiological negation: animals can eat anywhere; but if drivers have to stay inside the industrial park, they cannot use the food stores of the central company, a biological negation: things do not eat. Given that these workers have not gone home, they must clean themselves in the bus, a physiological negation: the toilet is characteristic of homo sapiens. There are no changing

rooms and shower facilities in the company's premises to wash themselves, nor can they use the industrial park facilities. This includes not being able to use the restrooms, so these workers must use diapers, a biological negation: things do not defecate. These situation explains the bad odours.

A worker who wears a diaper and spends a large part of his workday sitting down, will easily develop health problems such as haemorrhoids that get rapidly infected. In addition to the physical pain, workers must endure self-humiliation, the moment of changing the diaper and having to keep it, sometimes, until it is discarded at home, in front of his family.

Due to the discontinuous schedule of the workday and the distance between work and home, some workers do not see their family until the rest day, or when they go home their children are already sleeping or in school. Drivers complain that *not even my family recognises me.* This is when invisibility is transferred to other levels, the working day turns them into mere suppliers, a physiological negation: the animals do not generate ties, except for relations of food, but also a biological negation: things do not feel.

Workers develop an anxiety in need of recognition. Hence, they reacted differently when greeted by the researcher who carried out conversations with them; it was their word that became meaningful because the researcher was listening. When they talked about the company, the suffering for lack of recognition was constant. *Even a soda drink* offered by management would make them feel like they were there; this is about existential negations.

In the whole microanalysis performed, there was no demand for a higher wage or dissatisfaction with their income level. This can lead to erroneous interpretations. On the one hand, we could point out that the root cause is the level of salaries and benefits, slightly higher than the national average for the same job. On the other hand, we could think as well that precariousness is not salary related. Yet, as we said in the first part of this work, precariousness goes beyond what numerical formulas can convey, and when precariousness has reached degrading thresholds for the human condition, it is necessary to amplify the analysis.

We believe that in the explanatory framework we are proposing, the absence of a salary requirement is also a consequence of the process that workers worker who is under degradation feels with lower values. If deserves the least is for this reason that *soda*. In other words, can trade-off work receiving a negligible object.

in the explanatory framework we are proposing, the absence of a salary requirement is also a consequence of the human degradation process that workers go through. The worker who is under conditions of degradation feels himself degraded, with lower values. If he belittles himself, he deserves the least possible or nothing.

human degradation go through. The conditions of himself degraded, he belittles himself, he possible or nothing. It he is satisfied with a in his value scale he recognition for

Consequently, human degradation in the workplace also allows the social reproduction of workers with low expectations of retribution and thus greater profit rates, which leads to symbolic violence, which could bring about the development of further research. Table 4 shows how such violence takes shape in different dimensions; one of them to be economic, by showing conformity and not losing the job, acceptance and continuing to concede, until the complete disappearance in the human, physiological and biological dimensions, remaining only as a thing that produces.

Table 4. Evidence of degradation. Testimonial categories and commentary matrix

Category	Testimonial commentaries
Social Negation	<p><i>They treat us worse than animals, they are despotic and arrogant, but there's nothing you can do, or my family would be left without food</i></p> <p><i>They exercise pressure to force us to resign. Supervisors, bosses and human resources coordinate themselves to make the decision to remove us from the union, and this does not interfere or do anything to give us a solution</i></p> <p><i>They prefer to remove us than to solve the problems</i></p>
Physiological Negation	<p><i>Human resources said that the operators do not understand what they want to tell us because we hardly have primary schooling and they cannot explain to us in detail, it is a waste of their time with us</i></p> <p><i>I do not see my family for a long time and my children no longer know me, much less in my own work</i></p> <p><i>Talking with them is giving them time to think how to get rid of us</i></p> <p><i>I've been working here for 12 years, but if I leave, nobody important would be leaving, they do not value us</i></p>
Biological Negation	<p><i>We use diapers to meet our needs, because we cannot use the bathrooms and store of the central company</i></p> <p><i>We do not have time to take a shower and they do not put showers either</i></p> <p><i>We have never received any recognition for our efforts, I've been here for 16 years and I've never been given a gift</i></p> <p><i>Even if it's a soda or whatever, but with that I would feel recognized</i></p>

Authors's own construal

Final reflexions

In this paper we have argued that job precariousness is not a determined state of working conditions, but always a continuous process that can be exacerbated in order to obtain a higher rate of profit; which, under neoliberalism, is presented as a sort of flexibility and is a sine qua non condition allowing to extend absolute and relative surplus value in the midst of fierce competition in globalised markets. The precarisation could reach extraordinary levels to the point of subjecting the human being to a degradation that implies denying his social, physiological and biological conditions.

Under the business cluster model, large industrial companies have decentralised their production processes through the insertion of supply chain companies with a relatively lower organic composition of capital (CCO), which allows companies in the centre of the cluster to absorb the values generated in the companies with lower CCO. This enables companies in the centre to not have to exacerbate their labour precarization processes, but it forces the rest to do so. That is why the working conditions in the supplying companies will always be lower with respect to the conditions of the company in the centre of the cluster.

The development of Iberian American production, which allowed the region to insert itself into the global chains, contributed to this change that allowed rates to be reversed, on greater worker sense, the structural capitalism that between sectors degradation. The and he alienates product, of the work and of everything that surrounds him. This not only drives him to a state of animality (as in Taylorism) but his existence is completely denied when his physiological and biological conditions are negated.

the structural condition of capitalism that transfers value between sectors triggers human degradation. The worker is deprecated and he alienates himself of his work product, of the work process, of himself and of everything that surrounds him. This not only drives him to a state of animality (as in Taylorism) but his existence is completely denied when his physiological and biological conditions are negated.

techno-productive the fall in world profit fundamentally based exploitation. In this condition of transfers value triggers human worker is deprecated himself of his work process, of himself

Why does the worker agree to undergo a process of human degradation? Because it is a structural condition that is linked once again with precarization, the situation of unstable employment with low rewards that characterises the labour market, especially of the peripheral countries, as in the case of Mexico, where nationally only 4 of every 10 jobs are formal, but whose figure decreases alarmingly in the southern states, where only 2 out of 10 jobs are formal (INEGI, 2014). The dilemma seems clear: a job like this is better than no job at all.

On the other hand, it is also important to point out that the structural conditions are normalising the situation in the working class and degradation to them. It is aware of their management aware symbolic violence towards the pursuit

it is also important to point out that the structural conditions are normalising the situation in the working class and the act of human degradation becomes imperceptible to them. It is necessary to make them aware of their situation, to make management aware about this type of symbolic violence exercised as a first step towards the pursuit of transformation

the act of human becomes imperceptible necessary to make them situation, to make about this type of exercised as a first step of transformation.

We ponder that these phenomena should be studied in the academic sphere with the utmost attention, in such a way that the scientific discipline enable us, beyond understanding, to build the means for transformation. A humane management can alleviate the suffering of the worker, but the structural conditions of the capitalist mode of production impose their own logics. Hence, we propose to continue developing trans and multidisciplinary studies like the present one, which aim to articulate the different macro-micro levels to explain the practices within the company from a systemic perspective.

Bibliography

- Abramo, Laís (1991) El sindicalismo latinoamericano en los 90, Santiago: ICOS-CLACSO
- Aglieta, Michel (1979) A Theory of Capitalist Regulation, Londres: New Left Review. Trabajo y Sociedad, Núm. 31, 2018 180
- Aktouf, Omar (1992) "Management and theories of organizations in the 1990's: toward a critical radical humanism?", Academy of Management Review, 17(3), pp 407-431
- Boyer, Robert (1988) Alla ricerca de alternative al fordismo: Gli anni ottanta. Stato e mercato, 24(3), pp. 387-423.
- Chanlat, Alain y Renée Bédard (2000) "La gestion, une affaire de parole", en Chanlat, Jean François, L'individu dans l'organisation. Les dimensions oubliées, les presses de l'Université Laval y Editions Eska, Montréal, (1990)
- Chanlat, Jean François (1994) "Hacia una antropología de la organización", Gestión y Política Pública, 3(2), pp 317-364.
- _____ (1998) Sciences sociales et management. Plaidoyer pour une anthropologie générale, les presses de l'Université Laval y Editions Eska, Montréal.
- Coriat, Benjamin (1990) Deindustrialization and tertiaritation: Towards a new economy regimen, en Amin, A. (comp.) Towards a New Europe?, Londres: Aldershot.
- _____ (1991) El taller y el cronómetro. Ensayo sobre el taylorismo, el fordismo y la producción en masa, México: Siglo XXI
- _____ (1992) Pensar al revés, trabajo y organización en la empresa japonesa, México: Siglo XXI
- De la Garza, Enrique (2000) Tratado Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales, México: FLACSO-UAM-FCE
- _____ (2001) "Problemas clásicos y actuales de la crisis del trabajo". En E. de la Garza y J. C. Neffa (compilers). El futuro del trabajo – el trabajo del futuro. Buenos Aires: edición del Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales (CLACSO).
- Jiménez-Bandala, Carlos y Sánchez Daza, Germán (2014) La flexibilidad laboral en México. Los efectos de las relaciones neoliberales de trabajo, en Ventura, Teresa (coord.) Las expresiones del mundo laboral, México: BUAP, pp. 15-34.
- Katz, Harry, y Sabel, Charles (1985) Industrial relations and industrial adjustment in the car industry, Industrial Relations 24(2), pp. 295-315.
- Kochan, Thomas; McKersie, Robert y Cappelli, Peter (1984) Strategic choice and industrial relations theory, Industrial Relations 23(1) pp. 16-39.
- Maito, Esteban (2014) The historical transience of capital: de downward trend in the rate of profit since XIX century, Alemania: University Library of Munich.
- Marx, Carlos (1970) "El Capital" Crítica a la Economía Política, Tomo I, II y III, México: Siglo XXI.
- Porter, Michael (1998) Clusters and the New Economics of Competition, Harvard Business Review, pp. 77-90.
- Ros, Jaime (2015) ¿Por qué cae la participación de los salarios en el ingreso total en México? EconomíaUNAM, 12 (36), pp. 3-15
- Standing, Guy (2014) Por qué el precariado no es un "concepto espurio", Sociología del Trabajo, 82, pp. 7-15.
- Valenzuela, José Carlos (1984) Productividad en Bienes salarios: tendencias y problemas, Investigación Económica, XLII (163), pp. 125-148.
- Valle, Alejandro (1984) La Composición Técnica del Capital y la Tasa de Ganancia", Ensayos. Economía Política e Historia, I, (1), pp. 19-28
- _____ (1991) Productividad: las visiones neoclásicas y marxista, Investigación Económica, L (198), pp. 45-69.
- Womack, Jhon (1992) La máquina que cambió al mundo, México: McGraw Hill.

Documents

- INEGI, (Various years) Sistema de Cuentas Nacionales-Banco de Información Económica, Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía, México, en línea: <http://www.inegi.org.mx/sistemas/bie/>. F.c. 20/05/2017
- WageIndicator (2017) Comparativo Salarial en línea <<http://www.wageindicator.org/main>>. F.c. 20/05/2017

Useful links:

- jussemper.org
- [Mexico's Wages 2018 - 2024: To Change So That Everything Remains The Same](#)
- [Invisible Exploitation](#)
- [Mexico: Hell is the Tijuana assembly line](#)
- [Mexico and living wages: the utmost epitomization of social darwinism as a systemic public policy](#)
- [Living Wages in the Paradigm Transition](#)
- [Unequal Exchange](#)
- [Modern Slave Work](#)

❖ **About Jus Semper:** The Jus Semper Global Alliance aims to contribute to achieving a sustainable ethos of social justice in the world, where all communities live in truly democratic environments that provide full enjoyment of human rights and sustainable living standards in accordance with human dignity. To accomplish this, it contributes to the liberalisation of the democratic institutions of society that have been captured by the owners of the market. With that purpose, it is devoted to research and analysis to provoke the awareness and critical thinking to generate ideas for a transformative vision to materialise the truly democratic and sustainable paradigm of People and Planet and NOT of the market.

❖ **About the author:** Carlos Alberto Jiménez Bandala is Professor-Researcher at the Faculty of Business - Universidad La Salle-Mexico City. Andrés de Jesús Contreras Álvarez is an undergraduate student in Administration and Management of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises at the Metropolitan Polytechnic University of Puebla.

❖ **Cite this paper as:** Carlos Alberto Jiménez Bandala and Andrés de Jesús Contreras Álvarez: Value transfer and human degradation in an automotive enterprise cluster in Mexico – The Jus Semper Global Alliance, April 2019.

❖ **Acknowledgments:** The authors thank Universidad La Salle - Mexico City and Universidad Politécnica Metropolitana de Puebla for their support in conducting the research; as well as the workers who kindly collaborated by providing information about their working conditions to the authors, who respectfully protect their privacy.

❖ The responsibility for opinions expressed in this work rests only with the author(s), and its publication does not necessarily constitute an endorsement by The Jus Semper Global Alliance.



Under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/deed.en>

© 2019. The Jus Semper Global Alliance
Portal on the net: <https://www.jussemper.org/>
e-mail: informa@jussemper.org