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The migrant and refugee entrepreneur (of the self): vernacular modes of immaterial labor as (re)invention of the self in the destination country

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ABSTRACT

This article adopts the Autonomy of Migration approach to analyze the singularization of migrants and refugees from creating work activities based on the perspective of immaterial labor. The cartographic method was used to collect data from interviews and participant observation in Porto Alegre (Brazil), exploring events-activities, key informants, and economic migrants and refugees from the global south who work with music, dance, food, fashion, language, and political-cultural representation. The findings show that the mobilization of migrants and refugees in a cooperation network stresses the vernacular references and the migration/refuge situation, making them entrepreneurs of themselves. A mode of singularization is perceived regarding a labor market *for* migrants and refugees linked to affection and politics, which allows, through immaterial labor, the (re)invention of the self in the destination country.

KEYWORDS

Immaterial labor, Autonomy of Migration, Refugee

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1. INTRODUCTION

Migratory flows are mixed, complex, multifaceted phenomena and have reached unprecedented levels that continue to rise (UNHCR, 2019). In recent years, Brazil has been a destination for economic migrants and refugees from the global South – Africans, Arabs, Caribbeans, and Latinos (Brasil, 2018).

Economic migrants leave a context of low quality of life or economic, financial, and political collapse that prevents satisfactory living conditions (IOM, 2019). Refugees flee their country due to a well-founded fear of persecution due to race, religion, nationality, social group, political opinion, or severe violation of their human rights (UNHCR, 2019). Both need shelter and work opportunities to restart their lives in foreign lands (Sayad, 1979; UNHCR, 2019).

Migrants and refugees' modes of individuation (Guattari & Rolnik, 1996) are evidenced by society commonly assigning them the labels 'poor' and 'unqualified,' although this is untrue (Altenried et al., 2018), limiting them to more precarious jobs (Sayad, 1979) despised by natives (Hilario et al., 2018). However, when looking beyond the stereotypes, it is possible to identify modes of singularization in this process (De Genova, Garelli, & Tazzioli, 2018).

Against this backdrop, this research adopts the autonomy of migration approach and the perspective of immaterial labor. The first admits that society may be an agent that perpetuates prejudice, exclusion, and domination, and advances when targeting subjective tensions of these migrants and refugees in search of their (re)invention and singularization, especially related to work (Mezzadra, 2012). Immaterial labor refers to bodily, manual, intellectual, creative, affective, and communicative activities – specific to each worker – valued as an indispensable condition for producing and monetizing work (Grisci, 2011; Lazzarato & Negri, 2001). Thus, the individual monetizing knowledge and culture becomes an entrepreneur (of the self), generating value for their work (Gaulejac, 2007; Gorz, 2005). Immaterial labor can be seen as a way of controlling subjectivities and constituting independent and autonomous social individuals (Gorz, 2005; Negri, 2018).

The argument put forward in this study is that migrants and refugees can avoid the precarious labor market, and the (re)invention of their ways of living in the host country emerges through immaterial labor, exposing the autonomy of migration movement. Therefore, the research objective was to analyze modes of singularizing migrants and refugees based on the creation of labor activities from the perspective of immaterial labor.

The study was developed in Porto Alegre, the capital city of the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul. In recent years, the city has received many immigrants, an influx observed in the landscape, media highlights, government actions, migrant organizations, and other civil society organizations. Porto Alegre is the eighth Brazilian municipality with the highest number of migrants and holds the 17th position with the highest number of asylum seekers (IBGE, 2019). The cartographic method was used, counting on the participation-intervention of 36 events-activities, five key informants, and 16 economic migrants and refugees, who work with music, dance, food, fashion, language, and political-cultural representation, based on influences from their home countries' traditions (Venezuela, Haiti, Syria, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, and Nigeria).

The article contributes to the literature by showing the process migrants and refugees go through in the host country, encompassing the efforts to leave the precarious and socially devalued labor market and the (re)invention of the self through immaterial labor, which values making references to their homeland and situation as a migrant/refugee.

2. AUTONOMY OF MIGRATION

The immigrant's survival relies on the work they find in the host country. In the 1970s, Sayad (1979, p.55, our translation) warned that the labor activity available to immigrants (including refugees, nowadays) "is the work that the 'labor market *for* immigrants' assigns to them and in the place attributed to them: work for immigrants that therefore requires immigrants." This conception persists. In line with Marinucci (2017), today's migrants and refugees are destined for the most precarious and underpaid labor niches. These positions are not easily found or considered valuable instruments of incorporation into the host society and become a vector of discrimination and social exclusion.

Although the autonomy of migration does not disregard this perspective, Mezzadra (2012) argues that the processes of exclusion, stigmatization, and discrimination, frequent in the literature, appear as collateral effects of capitalism, neglecting movements of struggle and resistance to these prejudices. Therefore, the autonomy of migration is essentially focused on the processes of subjectivation, where the migrant leaves their homeland for another country and other modes of singularization related to work in the capitalist system, characterizing a movement of the multitude.

Multitude is the concept used by authors such as Hardt and Negri (2005), Corsini (2007), Mezzadra (2012), and Negri (2018), referring to a set of singularities of political, productive, and class dimensions. The multitude moves for needs and desires, forming affective and cooperative ties along its path. For Mezzadra (2012), the multitude formed by migration is capable of building "bridges" and destroying "walls."

According to Mezzadra (2012, p.71, our translation), the autonomy of migration approach appeared in the late 1980s in a context in which the post-Fordist production system was strengthened, characterized by changes in the labor market marked by precariousness and flexibility. The autonomist perspective considers migration through the lens of the "composition of living work and the production of subjectivity linked to the commodification of the labor force." It is concerned with the tensions and conflicts produced in everyday life between the "action of heterogeneous subjection devices" and the "multiplicity of subjectivation practices." Such heterogeneities are characterized by attempts of controlling migrations to transform the migrant into a subjected being; and by the practices of expression of autonomy.

In other words, based on Guattari and Rolnik's (1996) view about subjectivity, the particularities experienced by an individual allow subjectivities to oscillate between two extremes. On the one hand, the individual submits to subjectivities received in a movement of alienation and oppression, called mode of individuation. On the other hand, the individual manages to reappropriate the components of subjectivity received in a movement of expression and creation, configuring a mode of singularization. Subjectivities are collective and, when associated, result in a singularization process – an affirmation of other forms of being, other sensibilities, other perceptions. The transformations in the world come from this process, which is nothing more than the expression of resistance to social control (Guattari & Rolnik, 1996).

For autonomists, mobility is a right, and migration is a creative force within social, cultural, and economic structures. This is not a romanticized vision of a migrant who moves exclusively for autonomy but one that sheds light on this element (Mezzadra, 2012). This approach intends to contribute to a vision of someone seeking to (re)invent the self, who moves because singularities arise amid the production of subjectivities. In this sense, the autonomy of migration approach allows associating the creation of labor activities of migrants and refugees with the notion

of immaterial labor. This work is often surrounded by tensions related to the production of subjectivity, sometimes via the commodification of the worker, sometimes via autonomy related to ways of being and living.

3. IMMATERIAL LABOR

Immaterial labor refers to the “set of bodily, intellectual, creative, affective, and communicative activities inherent to the worker, currently valued and demanded as an imposing norm that makes the worker an active subject of work and an indispensable condition for production” (Grisci, 2011, p. 456, our translation). Therefore, subjectivity becomes the basis of productivity, the investment in the socialized human brain, which requires maximum freedom at work and maximum disruption of the disciplinary relationship observed in factories (Negri, 2001).

Immaterial labor is also a social and autonomous workforce (Lazzarato & Negri, 2001), constituted in the forms of networks, flows, and productive cooperation through life (Negri, 2001). Affection is considered a singular and universal expansion as the potential to act towards immaterial labor: “Singular because it puts action beyond any measure that the potential does not contain in itself, in its own structure and in the continuous restructurings [that] it builds. Universal, because the affections build a community among subjects” (Negri, 2001, p. 54, our translation). In the same line, politics is considered related to activities that, through the exercise of dialogue, seek collective connections and help to form groups (Mansano & Carvalho, 2015).

Gorz (2005) explains that post-Fordist workers of immaterial labor enter the production process with all their culture and diversity of heterogeneous capacities developed outside of work, stimulating liveliness and cooperation. They also own the vernacular knowledge – diversified knowledge, such as mathematics, rhetoric, art, aesthetic norms. Thus, the subject’s work is to produce themselves continuously through knowledge that is a source of value creation (Gorz, 2005).

Self-profitability is possible when one appropriately manages themselves and their own development potential. It has been pointed out and criticized as essential for the success of the individual worker and their company (Gaulejac, 2007; Bauman, 2011). Thus, the worker must continually dedicate themselves to management and produce themselves as a subject to be able to work. Then comes the self-entrepreneur, who uses their abilities which, in turn, are their fixed capital. Regardless of their status, there is no longer any difference between the individual and the company (Gorz, 2005).

Entrepreneurs of the self, managers of the self (Gorz, 2005, Gaulejac, 2007), or self-employed workers (Lazzarato & Negri, 2001) are careers supporting both those who own a business and those who are employed. This illustrates the argument that immaterial labor tends to be hegemonic (Lazzarato & Negri, 2001) in globalized and flexible capitalism (Harvey, 2017).

In the context of migrants and refugees, entrepreneurship in the logic of immaterial labor distances from the entrepreneurship commonly associated with the managerial perspective, which, according to Gaulejac (2007), highlights the entrepreneur as a model of success, linked to the most sophisticated planning tools, and calculating the risks and costs of an innovative business. Entrepreneurship comes close to committing one’s life as a work alternative in search of becoming, even if unconsciously. In this sense, we argue that entrepreneurship for migrants and refugees includes mobilizing oneself to create ways of working in the host country that meet the specificities of migration/refuge and their countries of origin.

4. CARTOGRAPHIC METHOD

Cartography is a qualitative method to monitor subjectivities production processes (Passos, Kastrup, & Escóssia, 2015). In Administration, Weber, Grisci, and Paulon (2012, p.841, our translation) warn that few studies point to its potential and encourage its use as an “alternative to traditional research methods, thus contributing to the production of knowledge about work in the contemporary scenario.” This is a coherent and fruitful method for this research since we discuss the subjectivity processes of singularizing migrants and refugees from creating work activities based on the perspective of immaterial labor. According to Rolnik (2006), following the process of a phenomenon in motion, such as migration, associating it with immaterial labor, requires accompanying, at the same time, the loss and formation of meanings, the dismantling, and creation of worlds that express contemporary affections – characteristics of cartography.

The cartographic method is not prescriptive, but it offers some paths, such as the immersion of the cartographer in a territory and the intervention research (Passos, Kastrup, & Escóssia, 2015). Cartography is based on Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophical concept of territory – it values expressiveness, rhythmic characters, and melodic landscapes (Alvarez & Passos, 2015). On the other hand, intervention research is consistent with how researcher, research object, and research subject interact and produce effects in the study (Passos & Barros, 2015).

The research scope refers to the scenario of migration/refuge in Porto Alegre (capital of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil) as portrayed by the study participants, considering their various relationship possibilities. The history of the Brazilian state is strongly marked by migratory movements, especially its colonization by German and Italian immigrants throughout the nineteenth century. Just like the history of Brazil, the state’s population is made up of a mix of Portuguese, Spaniards, and Africans who had been enslaved during the colonial and imperial period. After the country’s independence in 1822 and until the mid-1960s, populations from other nations arrived through stimulated migration policies designed to attract qualified labor. The period of military dictatorship until the mid-1990s was marked by the creation of laws to restrict immigration, i.e., immigrants were considered undesired employees (Zamberlam, 2004).

These movements originated urban quilombola communities and immigrant organizations (associated per nationality). Civil society institutions have also emerged, working since then and to this day to welcome migrants and refugees, such as the *Centro Ítalo Brasileiro de Assistência e Instrução às Migrações* (CIBAI) (Italo-Brazilian Center for Assistance and Guidance to Migration), an institution linked to the Catholic Church, operating since 1939 (Zamberlam et al., 2014).

Since the beginning of the 2000s, Porto Alegre has had municipal legislation and a specific sector in the city hall responsible for the issue of migration. However, it only gained priority on the government agenda with the mass arrival of Haitians and Senegalese between 2013 and 2015. The city has a series of civil organizations and projects linked to universities around the theme. It is common for newly arrived migrants and refugees to seek out these institutions instead of government offices (Otero & Lotta, 2020).

This scenario led to a migratory agenda in the municipality, enabling intervention research that supported data production and took place in three parts between January 2017 and December 2019. These parts were not subsequent and overlapped following the processes in the territory.

The first part refers to participant observation and completing logbooks in 36 academic, political, social and/or cultural events-activities regarding migration/refugees, such as seminars and extension projects at the university, meetings of local and state government committees, volunteering in nonprofits, immigrant entrepreneurship fair in a social project, and art exhibitions in a cultural center. It was the result of an experience as a *flâneur*-cartographer experienced in

the city, triggered by the network of contacts of one of the researchers, opening paths for the other parts. According to Romero and Zamora (2016, p.457, our translation), “in his[her] walks through the city, the *flâneur*-cartographer sees, smells, feels, touches, and tastes the city with his[her] body open to the perception of intensive variations.” In these events-activities, it was verified the occurrence of reception, demands, claims, decisions, jointly discussed by migrants and refugees, public and private, and civil society institutions. This context shows the plurality of ideas circulating in these spaces and reveals the local network. The ideas and network formed a living organism of migration and refuge in the city, an organism that is the basis for developing the territory of this cartography.

The second part refers to five open interviews with key informants, members of religious organizations, civil society institutions, universities, and public authorities, who worked directly with migrants and were active participants in the activities. The interviews were held in a conversation format focused on their work experiences. The interviewers asked participants to appoint migrants/refugees working under the influence of references from their homeland.

The third part refers to open interviews with migrants and refugees and participant observation of their work activities in person (in their workplace/residence, and/or events-activities) and online (Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp). This part covered the interviewees’ experiences both in their country of origin and in Brazil. It is noteworthy that in addition to formal interviews, the presence at the events-activities allowed for several meetings and informal conversations with the interviewees, recorded in a logbook. Thus, it was possible to gradually establish an ethos of trust – which is needed in cartography – and count on the active participation of migrants and refugees in the research process.

During these first parts of research, twenty potential participants were identified and invited to contribute. Four of them did not agree to participate in the interviews or offer the opportunity to know their work. Therefore, 16 economic migrants and refugees participated in the research, active participants in the events-activities or indicated by key informants, regardless of gender, with the following characteristics: (i) natives of countries in the global south; (ii) migrated to Brazil in a situation of uncertainty; (iii) live and work in Porto Alegre or the metropolitan region; and (iv) work in an activity influenced by traditions of their homeland. Table 1 shows the participants identified by the names of the main rivers in their country, thus alluding to flows, movements, displacements.

The interviews were conducted in the participants’ place of work, study, or residence, or in cafes/restaurants. The average duration was one hour, and the languages the respondents chose to communicate were: Spanish with three Venezuelans; English with a Syrian; Arabic with two Syrians (simultaneous Portuguese-Arabic translation); and Portuguese with the others. The interviews were translated into Portuguese when needed, and the grammar in some excerpts was corrected for better intelligibility.

Data analysis followed the guidelines of Barros and Barros (2013). For the authors, there are no pre-determined and sequential analysis procedures in cartography, but the method must follow a process and be consistent in all research procedures. The cartographic analysis consisted of examining subjectivities production processes, where understanding concepts requires monitoring processes of singularization that make up the immaterial labor of migrants and refugees, pursuing the objective of the research. This study implied a rearrangement of the initially established borders between subject and object. The cartography reached a set of multiple relations and a proliferation of meanings unique to this study.

Table 1
Presentation of participant migrants and refugees

Participant	Country of origin	sex	age	Marital status	Time in Brazil	Qualification in country of origin	First work experiences in Brazil	Influence of home country's tradition in current work
Orinoco	Venezuela	M	48	Married with children	1 year and 7 months	Metallurgical technician	Bricklayer, services of painting, welding, wood, floors	Food
Unare		F	18	Single	10 months	High school; Training in traditional dances	Teacher of traditional dance	Dance
Arauca		F	41	Married with children	10 years	Bachelor degree in administration	Office assistant	Food
Tuy		F	50	Divorced	8 months	Bachelor degree in public accountings; Masters in finance	Private Spanish teacher	Language
Artibonite	Haiti	M	32	Married with child	6 years and 6 months	Qualification courses: computing, project management, photography, interior design	Worker in areas of triage, checker, clerk, factory invoicer (bicycles; iron parts; air conditioning)	Political-cultural representation
Estère		F	42	Single	6 years and 6 months	Accounting technician; Bachelor degree in pedagogy and economic management	Cleaning; tobacco plantation; kitchen assistant; elderly caregiver	Language
Aurrou		M	22	Single	2 years and 7 months	Incomplete high school	Apprentice in hospital	Language
Euphrates	Syria	M	30	Single with child	4 years and 5 months	Incomplete bachelor degree in cinema	Confectioner/Chef in restaurants, hotels, bakeries	Language
Orontes		M	32	Single	2 years	Incomplete bachelor degree in engineering	Confectioner in candy store	Food
Balikh		M	30	Single	2 years and 9 months	Incomplete bachelor degree in administration	Helper in restaurants and bakeries	Food
Khabur		M	21	Single	4 months	Elementary school	Snack bar assistant	Food

Table 1
Cont.

Participant	Country of origin	sex	age	Marital status	Time in Brazil	Qualification in country of origin	First work experiences in Brazil	Influence of home country's tradition in current work
Saloum	Senegal	M	32	Single	10 years	High school	Supervisor in slaughterhouse; Administrative assistant	Political-cultural representation
Casamance		M	42	Single with child	4 years and 6 months	Incomplete high school	Painter; Kitchen assistant	Fashion
Falémé		M	27	Single with child	5 years and 7 months	Incomplete bachelor degree in electrical engineering	Mat carrier; Attendant/Cashier in gas station; Pizza assembler; Ride share driver	Political-cultural representation
Comoé	Côte d'Ivoire	M	32	Single	3 years and 4 months	Bachelor degree in music	Shows in bars; French teacher in a refugee project and music teacher (African rhythms)	Music and Fashion
Niger	Nigeria	M	–	Divorced	8 years and 7 months	Apprentice-musician with the drum family/Yoruba culture	Director of an African choir; Events coordinator at the Chamber of Commerce Nigeria-Brazil	Music and Political-cultural representation

Source: Elaborated by the authors (2020).

The recordings of the interviews accounted for approximately 20 hours of audio. This material was transcribed and, together with the logbooks, totaled 434 pages. Audio and text were revised, and citations that characterize the modes of labor activity of migrants and refugees were extracted, considering both the perspective of the interviewees and the cartographer's point of view (observations registered in logbooks). The results, analyzed in the light of the theoretical framework presented before, point to three sets of vernacular modes of immaterial labor related to the entrepreneur of the self: artistic, technical-manual, and communication activities.

5. VERNACULAR MODES OF CREATING IMMATERIAL LABOR

As shown in Table 1, the participants, in general, came from their countries of origin with secondary or higher education, qualified and experienced in their fields of work. However, their first opportunities in Brazil were inconsistent with their skills, training, and experience. They had formal and/or informal work trajectories, as employees and/or self-employed, in operational and temporary positions in the sectors of industry, commerce, repair, and services. Job offers, often precarious, were related to the image of flexible labor and urgency to meet basic needs (Altenried et al., 2018). This scenario highlights a “labor market *for* migrants and refugees,” with characteristics of precariousness and social devaluation similar to that evidenced by Sayad (1979). It is a scenario understood, in line with Guattari and Rolnik (1996), as a way of individuating in the capitalist order that intends to keep these individuals in this position.

Feelings of nonconformity and rejection led migrants and refugees to find a line of flight (Deleuze & Guattari, 1996), characterized by the moment when they sought to single out their work trajectory, (re)creating alternatives (De Genova, Garelli, & Tazzioli, 2018). The recovery of professional activity or the creation of new work (con)forms these alternatives mobilized by an affective (Negri, 2001) and political (Mansano & Carvalho, 2015) potential to act, highlighting the vernacular references of the interviewees' home countries and the migration/refuge situation itself. This mobilization makes them entrepreneurs by creating alternatives suitable to the entrepreneur of the self, a characteristic embodied in immaterial labor.

This context shows that migrants and refugees seek to distance themselves from this precarious labor market and move toward activities developed in different areas in which immaterial labor is evident, supporting the argument of this study. The types of *savoir-faire* consistent with immaterial labor, as announced by Lazzarato and Negri (2001), served as the basis for elaborating three sets that mark the plurality and the vernacular of migrants and refugees' activity-profession-work: (i) **artistic activities as historical-cultural-informative expression** – musician, dancer, actor, music producer, musical instrument teacher, dance teacher; (ii) **technical-manual activities as skill-creativity-imagination** – cook, pastry chef, chef, stylist, dressmaker; and (iii) **communication activities as socio-political-cultural relationships** – representative (president/secretary/cultural manager) of migrant organizations, cultural speaker, language teacher, translator, interpreter, poet. The following sections present each of these sets.

5.1. ARTISTIC ACTIVITIES AS HISTORICAL-CULTURAL-INFORMATIVE EXPRESSION

“Intellectual activities, with regard to cultural-informative content” are named, by Lazzarato and Negri (2001, p.49-50, our translation) immaterial labor activities. From cartography, artistic activities were added in the areas of **music** and **dance**, which contained the history of the migrants and refugees' homeland as told through art in addition to intellectual and cultural-informative

content. This workforce is characterized by performances, musical instrument lessons, costumes, choreographies, and typical music from Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, and Venezuela.

Regarding music, Comoé and Niger were professional musicians in their countries. In Brazil, they made new partnerships, performing solo or with bands, playing African music (afrobeat and afrojazz). Their performances involve singing, dancing, acting, and playing instruments, especially wind and percussion, cultural elements of their countries. The strategy was to enter the field of work slowly:

I started offering drum workshops. There were only two, three people in the first one. Then I produced a three-month course, then more people came. During this period, I was studying and getting to know the south [of the country], Brazil, how it works here, how I could show my culture to the people here, without invading anyone's space, without being misunderstood. That's how I did, and I thrived. Then I created this group, with former students[...]. It only had percussion and voice; we sang and played drums. At that time, we used Brazilian, Afro-Brazilian, and conga instruments (Niger).

Maintaining originality is a registered trademark, including the name of Comoé's band, which means is "searching within the roots" in the Akan (his ethnic group) dialect. The alterity of artistic activities is proven in the performances. In Comoé and Niger's shows,

the stage spotlights highlighted the African ethnicity of the costumes with colorful and geometric fabrics; the free movement of the musician holding the djembê, an instrument that, by having the shape of a chalice, allows simultaneous dance steps to the drums; facial and body expressions accompanying the vibrant sound emitted by the agility of the hands; the singer's prayer to the orixás, while they scatters incense smoke; harmony with other Brazilian musicians; and the energy of the audience trying to hum the lyrics in African dialect. They also explain the origin and meaning of the lyrics, gestures, dance steps, instruments, reverberating in a political movement, the history of their ancestors, and the (de) colonization of Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria (Logbook August 03, 2019).

The hybridism with Brazilian music occasionally occurs, as the other members of the bands are Brazilian. "Culture, music has no borders," says Comoé. This network between natives and migrants arises from matching the interests of professionals and clients. In this case, Brazilian musicians see this occasion as a laboratory for learning rhythms and musical instruments that explain the historical relationship between Africa and Brazil. This novelty is characterized as a movement of the multitude, attributing value and monetizing the work of natives and migrants, offering opportunities for future performances, individually or collectively (Hardt & Negri, 2005; Corsini, 2007; Mezzadra, 2012; Negri, 2018). However, Niger rebukes the acritical assimilationist stance of many migrants, a stance adopted to facilitate acceptance – as individuals and workers – in the host society. Migration studies indicate that society partially tolerates the migrant only as a worker, but not their modes of expression and full existence (Sayad, 1979; Hilario et al., 2018). Niger demonstrates an affective and political resistance to this mode of individuation:

Many Africans end up changing to please Brazilians. Instead of owning their African culture, they end up singing samba, frevo...no! This is not you! This is not your story! Where is Yorùbá? Where is your tradition? I see Africans dancing pop, noooo... we have influence, there are stories about pop too. But where is the traditional within pop? Where does traditional history come from, you know? Did you look? That's what's going to make the difference; it's not about you joining them so you can say: "Now, they accepted me because I'm making this and that, because I said they're nice, they'll accept me more'. No, not cool, no. They discriminated against me, kicked me out, didn't let me do my activities (Niger).

Unare, from Venezuela, seeks to gradually integrate as a dance teacher for children, an activity she performed in her home country. The cooperative network movement (Lazzarato & Negri, 2001) assisting refugees is helping in this process of integration. Her mother's boss offered a garage where a beauty saloon used to be, equipped with mirrors for her to teach. The news spread, and soon the garage became a jam-packed dance school.

The first steps of Unare's dance classes were marked by 'uno, dos, tres,' sung in portunhol (a mix of Portuguese and Spanish) by the teacher and students. The beat of the Latin music did not leave any child still. Except when Unare wore her full skirt below her knee to perform a solo demonstration of the "joropo," one of the best-known types of tricolor [Venezuelan] dance (Logbook, Unare, July 6, 2019).

"I have twelve girls; I'm teaching them the culture of my country," says Unare, linking the dance to the Venezuelan culture. Her training and experience with variants of Venezuelan dances allowed her to learn other rhythms. To get closer to the Brazilian public, she mixes hits from Brazil and Venezuelan dance steps, making a fusion of cultures of origin and destination possible through the migratory movement.

In artistic activities, the gradual return of Comoé, Niger, and Unare to their profession stands out, a goal pursued since their arrival in Brazil. The (re)insertion on the stage occurred through connection with Brazilians and other migrants who recognized the performances and the knowledge, experience, singularity, and consolidation of these professional-artists in their homelands.

The connections with a support network formed by the awareness around the refugee situation and the symbiosis between rhythms, form a polyphonic chorus (Gorz, 2005) in the network of cooperation of artistic activities, sometimes sung (and danced) in harmony sometimes in cacophony (Bauman, 2011). The tensions occur due to the resistance to making art more flexible – between consenting to the mixture of national sounds/rhythms and preserving the authenticity of their work, in the very affirmation of their ways of being, after all, "artistic work should seek, build, defend, and protect their own foundations" (Bauman, 2011, p. 53, our translation).

5.2. TECHNICAL-MANUAL ACTIVITIES AS SKILL-CREATIVITY-IMAGINATION

Capable of "uniting creativity, imagination, technical and manual work," "manual activities" make up one of the sets of immaterial labor activities (Lazzarato & Negri, 2001, p.50, our translation). Therefore, the work of migrants and refugees engendered in the areas of **food** and **fashion** are technical-manual activities as skill-creativity-imagination. The first area consists of the preparation and sale of food products from Syria and Venezuela, the second, the sewing and sale of clothing and accessories made with African fabrics.

The four Syrians interviewed formed a support network (Negri, 2001) that included family and nationality. To continue their parents' business in Syria, the brothers Euphrates and Orontes opened a bakery selling sfihas and sweets with spices. Euphrates also became a business partner with Balikh, after being invited because of his abilities speaking Portuguese. They opened a snack bar whose flagship is the *shawarma*, a typical sandwich from the Middle East. Khabur, who arrived in the country after, is an employee at the snack bar. Euphrates and Orontes faced money issues and had difficulties finding guarantors to rent a commercial establishment to open the bakery. "Since we are new here, it is almost impossible to find someone who trusts us" (Orontes). These typical situations reflect the fragility of bonds of trust, especially in the relationships between "strangers" (Bauman, 2011).

Cooking has also generated work for Venezuelan families. With the arrival of her brother and sister-in-law, Arauca, who was already running a translation company, wanted to provide work opportunities for herself and her relatives. She invested in a Venezuelan cuisine snack bar with a menu including the famous tequeños and arepas. *“I had this idea for a long time [...] of doing something for the family to have work [...] trustworthy people who know what they are doing and do it well”* (Arauca).

Orinoco and his wife turned their home kitchen into a workspace to produce snacks to order (colonial cheese, *arepas*, and *empanadas*), and lunch dishes (*hallaca*). He had never prepared any of these dishes before. At that time, the mobilization of skills acquired throughout life is fundamental to production (Grisci, 2011): *“I was always very creative, I visited many Venezuelan cities. I like fishing, agriculture”* (Orinoco). Such experiences helped him to find good suppliers directly on farms in the region.

On the interview day at his home, I was greeted by his wife, daughter, and grandchildren. I got to try the famous empanada. My daughter prepared this one. Here, everyone helps a little while they cannot work formally,” said Orinoco, as his wife organized deliveries. It was another day of deliveries across the city by bus (Logbook, Orinoco, July 06, 2019).

Furthermore, their house became a point of sale for the main clients, other migrants from Venezuela, reinforcing the coexistence of the dynamics of personal life, family life, and work functions in a single space-time (Gaulejac, 2007; Lazzarato & Negri, 2001). For Orinoco, the house became a workplace that “employs” family members. Thus, the Brazilian home, a refuge for the family, has also become a refuge from unemployment.

As for fashion, the typically African costumes of Comoé’s shows aroused a public desire to consume, which, based on Grisci (2011) and Gorz (2005), denotes the active and indispensable subject for the production-consumption relationship: *Each time I was going to play, people wanted to buy the clothes I was wearing! I used to sell mine, but I would soon run out of clothes (laughs) [...] I called my mother to send me the fabrics. I started selling one fabric, two, three at home, and it started to grow* (Comoé).

The support of relatives from Côte d’Ivoire to import products added to the growth in sales and made it possible to open a store of African fabrics, clothing, and accessories in a small rented room in the city center. Comoé opens the store daily, and Sundays are the busiest days, which denotes the need for total mobilization for work (Gorz, 2005). The store window catches attention with the diversity of fabric prints, and the designs, shapes, and colors indicate the identity origin. In a video posted on Facebook, Comoé explains that each design has a name and *“tells a story, a fact of the civilization of an African people,”* explaining elements such as social strata, proximity to the king, parties, and weddings.

Casamance, from Senegal, is a stylist, has his own brand, and is one of the partners who sews for Comoé, showing the cooperative network (Negri, 2001) among migrants of different nationalities. While Comoé outsources the manufacture of clothes and sells them in a physical store, Casamance has a home studio and sells his products on the street, as a street vendor, in fairs and parks. He also exposes his creations on Facebook and Instagram. He is always alert to customer comments, uses *“only African fabric, but the models are Brazilian-style. In Senegal, few women would wear short clothes,”* he says.

From the technical-manual activities, food habits in the country of origin have become a source of work for entire families. For Euphrates and Orontes, it was as a return to the profession

inherited from ancestors, whereas for Balikh, Khabur, and Orinoco, it allowed survival. For Arauca, the activity generated employment for newly arrived family members. The solidarity network sensitized by the refugee situation and the native clientele strengthened by refugee groups from virtual social networks opened the way for the realization and singularization of these businesses.

Clothing traditions provided Comoé with a supplement income and Casamance, returning to a stylist-dressmaker career. Above all, African fashion instigated the moving capacities of black migrants and the Brazilian black community interested in valuing their ancestry.

Thus, cooperation networks in technical-manual activities expand through affection (Negri, 2001) and politics (Mansano & Carvalho, 2015) by seeking a place to value food and fashion in the global south. Even if there is an appeal to associate international gastronomy and fashion with sophistication and profitability, the experience of sitting at a table in a French or Italian restaurant, for example, or of buying branded clothing from these countries, is very different from the value society attributes to Venezuelan or Syrian cuisine and African clothing. In a context where renowned chefs and stylists present themselves with names associated with countries in the global north, acknowledging professionals from the global south is also an act of resistance of the migrant political class (Corsini, 2007).

5.3. COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES AS SOCIO-POLITICAL-CULTURAL RELATIONSHIPS

“Social relationships” are a set of immaterial labor activities aimed at “structuring social cooperation” (Lazzarato & Negri, 2001, p.50, our translation). In this cartography, communication activities as socio-political-cultural relationships are increased, referring to work related to **language** and **political-cultural representation**. Language refers to French classes taught by Haitians and classes, written translations, and oral interpretations by Venezuelans. Political-cultural representation refers to activities of migrant organizations from Haiti and Senegal and lectures/courses on the culture and history of ethnic groups and African countries.

The mother tongue proved to be a possibility of work due to the interest of Brazilians in learning new languages for tourism, passing exams, or improving professional performance. Autrou’s and Tuy’s students have this profile. They teach French and Spanish at the students’ homes, language schools, or spaces provided by the government. This type of work requires much preparation from them since it is a novelty as a profession. “*It’s one thing to know how to speak the language; another is to teach. I never planned to be a Spanish teacher, but here I am, trying to do my best, above all, learning a lot,*” reveals Tuy.

Furthermore, the language class involves learning about the country’s culture and history, and in the case of the migrant/refugee teacher, it also involves a certain fascination for their life trajectory, which, according to Guattari and Rolnik (1996), demands other sensibilities and perceptions. “*They are very curious about me. We talked a lot.[...]when I give an example from my life, they are delighted to hear it,*” says Estère.

Another work activity that provided opportunities for two Venezuelans was acting as Spanish consultants-interpreters-translators for business. Tuy, who started a company in partnership with a Venezuelan friend, believes that there is a market to serve public and private institutions: “Brazil, due to Mercosur, is very integrated with Latin America. So it helps a lot to speak Spanish.” Arauca has been working in this market for five years. She started at home, translating documents and websites into Spanish, with her Brazilian husband proofreading. Over time, the network of contacts with professionals, Brazilians, and migrants has expanded (Negri, 2001), and currently, they serve clients’ demands in English, Italian, German, French, and Turkish.

As for political activity, Saloum and Falémé work in the Senegalese association and Artibonite and Autrou in the Haitian association. Also considered as political action are the lectures given by Niger on Yorùbá culture, and Falémé's lectures on Senegalese culture and African history.

Associations are born from the nationals' need for organization and cooperation. Engagement, pro-activity toward the cause, time in the host country, and fluency in Portuguese were elements that defined the leaders of these organizations:

In 2014/2015 a large number of Senegalese were arriving. The government of [the state of] Acre had an agreement with [the state of] Rio Grande do Sul, so whenever Senegalese arrived at the bus station, they called me to help, to be an interpreter. Then they decided to create an organization and told me that there was no one better than me to help. That day, they "forced me" to be president [laughing] (Saloum).

The migrant organizations have a wide range of activities showing the creative and political force of migration within social structures (Mezzadra, 2012): support in the arrival of migrants/refugees; organization of cultural/sporting events; forwarding of resumes; dissemination of job offers; and representation at political, social, cultural and academic events. They operate as a welcoming and protective network, seeking connections and promoting new forms of organization (Mansano & Carvalho, 2015). They do not isolate themselves in ghettos. On the contrary, they seek integration with society through active, creative, and interventive actions. Presidents Saloum and Artibonite are present at all events-activities, always advocating migrants' rights.

These organizations do not pay salaries to their members, but they offer networking opportunities, constant improvement in the understanding of Brazilian society, and dissemination of other members' work. Saloum, for example, started a construction services micro-company with fellow members. The company's name clarifies that they are a group of African workers (the acronym alludes to a word in the Senegalese dialect – *wolof* – meaning quality and agility in services). The strategy is identified with the origins of the enterprise's founders, giving visibility to new forms of migrant organization, and adding value to the business (Gorz, 2005), so much so that the company is usually mentioned in events-activities as an example of immigrant entrepreneurship.

The communicational activities suggest that the knowledge related to being from a specific nation was transformed into forms of labor, regardless of whether it was based on opportunity or necessity (Lazzaratto & Negri, 2001). The subjectivity constructed and exercised throughout the lives of migrants and refugees, whether through language, habits, or customs, has become a genuine, distinct, and singularizing resource offered by the network of friends, family, colleagues, fellow citizens, and Brazilians.

For Tuy and Autrou, communication activities were the closest alternative to their experiences/skills; for Estère, professional (re)insertion in her training area; for Saloum, Falémé, and Niger, the way to present their origins, change the stereotyped view of Brazilians and advocate for other migrants' rights, movements that characterize the autonomy of migration.

The notion [people have] about us is based on [what] the media [portrays]. Let's reset! Reset everything! So, through music, through storytelling, I seek to show that we are not what people see on TV.[...] What we have to do is to hold our heads high. Keep going and trying to deconstruct this [image], doing things that you know how to do, that come from your origins. [...] But it's difficult, so they [members of the cultural nonprofit organization] guided me, opening their network to help me (Niger).

Niger's words shape the thought of Deleuze and Guattari (1996, p.53, our translation): "art is never an end, it is only an instrument to trace the lines of life." This idea extends to migrants' and refugees' immaterial labor activities – artistic, technical-manual, and communicational. Such activities are alternatives traced by lines of flight (Deleuze & Guattari, 1996). They are built while searching for, above all, personal and professional appreciation, since the image immigrants have of themselves does not correspond to the individuating and normative standards of the market (Altenried et al., 2018; Guattari & Rolnik, 1996). Entrepreneurial activities related to (self) management capacity linked to cooperative networks operationalize these types of work and offer a sense of freedom and autonomy. In addition, they bring the responsibility for the entire production cycle, making the multiple and contradictory facets of immaterial labor.

The scenario that led migrants and refugees to entrepreneurship is not detached from the reality of Brazilians. The flexibility of labor laws, precarious employment, temporary employment, and unemployment (Harvey, 2017) advance to the point where dignified alternatives are lacking for underprivileged and vulnerable individuals (Bauman, 2011). Despite the equity of labor rights between foreigners and natives in Brazil, research shows that the greatest vulnerability lies with migrants/refugees from the global south (Marinucci, 2017; Simões, Cavalcanti, & Pereda, 2019). Self-employment becomes an alternative that goes beyond entrepreneurship in the managerial sense and takes on the contours of entrepreneurship of the self, characteristic of immaterial labor. Media and government devices encourage these self-managing ways of working, conferring prestige and status on the (micro) entrepreneur.

Migrants and refugees do not want to be considered people in need or rely on charity, vulnerable to the most precarious work positions. Instead, they are individuals who produce and contribute to the country's economy. This image change gives rise to a warm feeling of escape from the dominant powers, even if, according to Negri and Hardt (2001), it is not possible to escape from capitalist forces. However, the foundation of these struggles (which is always social) precedes capitalist development (Negri & Cocco, 2005).

Whether by opportunity or being the only viable alternative for survival, the connection with their roots is the main engine of migrants and refugees' work as a path to self-appreciation, generating a process of subjectivity that produces market differentiation and social singularization. Whether returning to professional activities they had in their home country or creating new forms of work, the essence of the migrants' work had been with them throughout their lives. It is knowledge not necessarily formalized or codified but linked to their own ways of being. Because this knowledge is part of the individuals, they relate to work in different forms, establishing affective and political relationships, circumscribed in the attitude of the multitude (Hardt & Negri, 2005; Corsini, 2007; Mezzadra, 2012; Negri, 2018), without ignoring the balance of the economic and legal relationship, inherent to the foreigner's survival and security. It should be noted that this way of working is not observed for all migrants/refugees, and it does not mean

that those who engage in this form of labor today will never return to the regular labor market or take on an underpaid and flexible job.

Expanding the notion that knowledge generates value (Gorz, 2005), the mixture of being a national of a certain country, being a migrant or refugee, and having/producing symbolic products or services (con)forms a kind of “immaterial capital” (Gorz, 2005, p.29) which only comes into being when the individual crosses borders. Work is recognized as immaterial when subjectivity is at the fundamental basis of the production cycle (Lazzarato & Negri, 2001). This recognition is facilitated since migrants and refugees from the global south generally do not go unnoticed in the eyes of the natives. Cultural characteristics, customs, and national habits cause the sensation of otherness, but they also produce strangeness, enchantment, culture shock, or even aversion and rejection. Corroborating Pelbart (2013), it is possible to say that a subject is affected in this encounter with otherness. The subject has extracted their power and capacity to produce differentiation and form new existential territories.

Entrepreneurship of the self is inscribed in the logic of micropolitics, raising small singularizing resistances in response to the individuation games (Guattari & Rolnik, 1996) that seek to leave migrants and refugees in the space of subordination. In this process, one can see the engendering of another labor market *for* migrants and refugees, linked to affection and politics, different from that postulated by Sayad (1979). According to Altenried et al. (2018), this is one of the objectives of the autonomy of migration: to give light to the processes of claim and continuous (re)constitution of the migrant labor market. Following the changes of flexible and globalized capitalism, this cartography witnessed a labor market of migrants and refugees from the global south in Brazil that makes up, simultaneously, life and work. This characteristic is inherent to immaterial labor, capable of exploring wealth but also (re)inventing life.

7. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This article highlights that immaterial labor offers opportunity for migrants and refugees to (re)invent their way of life in the host country. The mobilization of migrants and refugees in a cooperation network highlights the vernacular references and the migration/refuge situation itself, making these individuals entrepreneurs of themselves, which is consistent with the notion of immaterial labor specifically in the case of foreigners, advancing the understanding of this concept and expanding the theoretical perspective of autonomy of migration. In this process, a movement of singularization is observed, creating a labor market *for* migrants and refugees that is connected to affection and politics, consistent with the hegemonic trend of immaterial labor and the autonomist approach. However, this market is still subjected to the criticisms found in Bauman (2011), Gaulejac (2007), Gorz (2005), and Lazzarato and Negri (2001) on the image of the entrepreneur of the self. Migrants and refugees perceive, in the artistic, technical-manual, and communication activities of immaterial labor, other ways of living, feeling, getting involved in the existing life and, at the same time, continuing in displacement, causing other becomings and, thus, (re)invention of the self in the host country.

This research has implications for organizations and policymakers who envisage investing in the historical, cultural, informative, creative, social, affective, and political potential of the labor activities of the migrant/refugee entrepreneur (of the self). From the organizational point of view, when hiring migrants and refugees, the skills, training, references they bring from their homeland and their situation as migrants/refugees are little appreciated or understood. Inclusive policies of labor relations and people management and diversity and interculturality practices

in organizations may help retain the migrant/refugee workforce, culminating in modes of singularization for them and the organizations.

Public policies could concentrate on the autonomous activities of immaterial labor of migrants/refugees related to music, dance, food, fashion, language, and political-cultural representation. These entrepreneurs are active participants in the local economy and can be connected to the global economy. Such policies are crucial and urgent, especially nowadays, when their labor production strategies are limited due to the pandemic.

As a limitation and common challenge of research with migrants/refugees, communication in a foreign language is highlighted. There is a risk of losing nuances, expressions, feelings that are better externalized in the mother tongue – both by the interviewees who spoke in Portuguese and by the cartographer who conducted interviews in English and Spanish.

Future studies seeking to explore the issue of migration/refugee and immaterial labor activities could research further (i) the cooperation networks based on nationality/ethnicity/ancestrality (e.g., the relationship between Africans and Brazilians in the black movement); (ii) the intersection between social markers (gender, race, class, ethnicity/nationality); (iii) the literature on ethnic/immigrant/cultural entrepreneurship; (iv) the immaterial labor formats of migrants/refugees in organizational practices of diversity and interculturality; and (v) the continuous process of (re) inventing the self in the face of the economic crisis aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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