On-Demand Migrants: Entrepreneurialism, Platformization, and Migration in Brazil

SOFIA CAVALCANTI ZANFORLIN
Federal University of Pernambuco, Brazil

RAFAEL GROHMANN
University of Toronto, Canada

This article is based on training programs for migrant entrepreneurs and aims to analyze how the platformization of labor and the entrepreneurial discourse—as aspects of communication—shape the relationship of migrants living in São Paulo with Migraflix NGO and its partners, such as Facebook and Uber, exponents of the gig economy. We conducted interviews with 10 migrants and refugees in São Paulo over two years. The interviewees' discourses reveal that the entrepreneurial rhetoric hides situations of job insecurity, lack of transparency in hiring and paying for services, and dependence on NGOs for participation in events and markets. Migrants depend on the NGO to be able to work and cannot earn a minimum income to survive; they must also work as drivers for companies like Uber—in line with studies on migrant labor in the gig economy. Thus, in the context of platform migration, these people are turned into on-demand migrants.

Keywords: migration, platformization, entrepreneurialism, on-demand migrants

The integration of refugees into the so-called sharing economy—a conceptual mistake in relation to the real possibilities of building the common good (Scholz, 2016)—presents contradictions and tensions between the insertion of migrants as workers and the co-opting of their lives by a neoliberal and entrepreneurial rationale. Stimulus for entrepreneurship and offers of an "authentic" experience are presented as possibilities for migrants to change their social and economic lives in Brazil. In this context, entrepreneurship has been highlighted by both supranational humanitarian agencies (e.g., The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) or International Organization for Migration (IOM) and NGOs that have embraced this discourse as a possibility for the economic integration of immigrants and refugees into the receiving states. It is important to clarify that in this article, we use both *refugee* and *immigrant* as designations, because they are used in the conception and development of the entrepreneurship training program; however, we know that not all participants have refugee status, and some are seeking refugee status. Migraflix did not communicate to us the differentiation between those who were refugees recognized by the Brazilian government and those who were in the process of seeking refugee status. However, we highlight that the invitation to migrants to join the campaign came from UNHCR in partnership with Migraflix.

Sofia Cavalcanti Zanforlin: sofia.zanforlin@ufpe.br
Rafael Grohmann: rafael-ng@uol.com.br

In this sense, we accept the general terms *refugee* and *immigrant* because we believe that this differentiation will not affect the general objectives of the study.

According to data published by the National Committee for Refugees (CONARE), Brazil recognized a total of 1,086 refugees of various nationalities in 2018 alone; up a total of 11,231 people were granted the status of refugees by the Brazilian government. Still, the report highlights that 2018 was the year with the greatest number of asylum applications. This was due to an exponential increase in the flow of movement from Venezuela as a result of the economic, political, and social crisis in that country. This crisis is responsible for the massive emigration of Venezuelans through the continent, especially to Colombia, Ecuador, and Brazil. In total, of more than 80,000 asylum applications in 2018, 61,681 of them were from Venezuelans.

With a focus on training programs for migrant entrepreneurs, this article investigates how the platformization of labor (Casilli & Posada, 2019) and the business discourse—as communication aspects—shape the relationship that migrants living in São Paulo establish with local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), such as Migraflix and some of its partners; among these partners are Facebook, Uber, and Airbnb, which are regarded as exponents of the platformization of labor. We conducted interviews with migrants and refugees in São Paulo over two years. The interviewees' discourses revealed that the entrepreneurial rhetoric hides situations of job insecurity, lack of transparency in temporally hiring and paying for services, and a dependence on NGOs to participate in events and markets.

We also highlight the recurrence of working for digital platforms such as Uber, iFood (food delivery), and Airbnb (selling experiences with migrants) as a means to meet the needs and insecurities derived from the lack of predictability regarding when the NGO will demand work from them. Migrants and refugees who participate in the Migraflix training programs become part of the "cast" that the NGO offers on its website to be temporarily hired for specific events by companies or people in general. Catering is the most common service. Thus, the consistency with which they are invited to participate in events may be unclear, directly causing variation in their monthly income. This is why many migrants and refugees turn to temporary jobs on digital platforms to make up their monthly income. The type of work related to Migraflix does not guarantee formal employment. Additionally, the NGO transforms the workers into competitors among themselves: If one migrant is substituted for another to perform the same type of service, this creates a competitive environment and undermines the possibilities of collectivization (e.g., hiring Venezuelan B instead of Venezuelan A would mean passing over B to the detriment of A). Thus, Migraflix work and platform labor complement each other because instability, informality, and lack of clear rules are features of both. This shows how the "gig economy" does not happen only with platform labor.

This means that migrants need to obtain work individually, without collective action on the behalf of the workers. This is shaped by a humanitarian discourse that ratifies the neoliberal ideology, which seeks to turn migrants into entrepreneurs. On the one hand, migrants depend on the NGO to be able to work. On the other hand, they cannot earn enough (Fredman et al., 2020) to survive, and they must also work as drivers for companies like Uber. This is in line with studies on migrant labor in the gig economy (Van Doorn, Ferrari, & Graham, 2020). Thus, Migraflix is an example of migrants and refugees entering the platform labor through the role of NGOs. This is an underrepresented topic in both platform labor studies and migrant

studies. One of the exceptions is Phil Jones's (2021) book *Work Without the Worker*. Jones (2021) reveals the complex relationships between NGOs and migrants in the Global South in relation to platform labor.

Migraflix stands out as an NGO that presents itself as a nonprofit social movement supporting economic integration and development of migrants in Brazil. It started in 2015, hosting cultural workshops, "global cuisine food services" (Migraflix, n. d.-c), and motivational speeches and events led by immigrants and refugees. Its work is limited to recently arrived migrants in Brazil and refugees and asylum seekers, and it uses social media to publicize information about its events. These events have increased and concentrated on catering services for companies and motivational speeches by migrants at the headquarters of companies including Google, LinkedIn, PayPal, and Facebook. Migraflix has also been involved in training events, including Dream-makers Creatathon: Enabling the Dreams of New Brazilians, with the participation of UNHCR and Google.

In 2017, Migraflix began its training for migrants on how to become entrepreneurs. The first training was called Roots in the Kitchen, and its main partners were Facebook and Uber. In the first half of 2019, Migraflix conducted another training for entrepreneurial migrants, this time focusing on experiences provided by migrants in the Roots in the City program, in partnership with Airbnb platform. The focus of this article is the unfolding of the Roots in the Kitchen project, which was described as a gastronomic entrepreneurship program. The first edition of the program, in São Paulo city, had 21 refugees from 12 countries.

According to data provided by the NGO, 75 people registered for the program, free for all participants, and the selection process took place between July 22 and 29, 2017.

Communication and Migrant Work in the Context of Platformization

The stimulus for entrepreneurship as a solution to economically integrate migrants became an agenda item at the United Nations in a document from 2016. The idea, based on entrepreneurial spirit and government (Dardot & Laval, 2013), is to invite civil society and private companies to actively participate in the management of humanitarian causes. Such discourse is reflected in the everyday lives of migrants and refugees who are in search of a place in their new society and who need to generate income for themselves and their families. Organizations that work with migrants are the bearers of the humanitarian work, for the common good discourse, while migrants are those who need to sacrifice on behalf of a greater good in view of austerity measures (Brown, 2016).

The migrants' search for survival management is accentuated in a context of increasing employment precariousness that authors such as Woodcock and Graham (2019) call the "gig economy." However, the economies of countries in the Global South are historically based on the gig economy, with informal work being a historical norm for the working class (Grohmann & Qiu, 2020). The novelty for migrants is the connection between entrepreneurial spirit and sacrificial citizenship within the platformization of labor (Casilli & Posada, 2019), and the growing dependence on digital labor platforms to perform work activities. Thus, the subordination to big tech companies and their mechanisms is the radicalization of the relations between NGOs and migrants bounding toward escalation in the precariousness of work. The

platformization of labor is not a homogenous process—in neither the diversity of platforms nor the profiles of workers (Woodcock & Graham, 2019). In the case of Migraflix, the relation with these companies is subtle. By participating in trainings to open their own businesses and become entrepreneurs, migrants and refugees are also trained to use the platforms. For example, the training module on sales and advertising was held at Facebook's headquarters in São Paulo. The participants were trained to advertise their products on the network. At first, they received discounts on placing ads, but in later months, they had to pay full price. In the case of Uber, participants were trained to use the delivery app UberEats at Uber's head office in São Paulo. In this way, the migrants become both users and clients of the platforms. In summary, the group of migrants is led to migrate to work via platforms for survival management—and there are differences depending on whether the platform is Airbnb or Uber, for example, because each platform has distinct mechanisms of labor management and relations.

The literature on European-focused platform labor (Könönen, 2019; Però, 2020; Van Doorn et al., 2020; Woodcock & Graham, 2019) highlights the central role of migration in the development of these activities. The investigations demonstrate dialectic relations between degradation and opportunities for work, and autonomy and dependence. Among the characteristics of migrant platform labor, the authors call attention to discrimination and racism, selective formalization of work, and language barriers. For this study, we recognize the usefulness of the labor approach to understand migration and migrants, because they are individuals managing their own survival, navigating uncertainties of life in a new place. However, there are two blind spots in this literature that we aim to explore in this article. The first is that migrant labor, and its relation with platforms, occurs very differently in a country like Brazil as compared with Europe regarding not only the characteristics and mobility of the workforce, but also the role that NGOs play in this process.

The second blind spot in this literature is the lack of understanding of the role of communication in complex relations between migrants, NGOs, and platforms. Communication shapes the relations between NGOs and migrants through the circulation of narratives of entrepreneurship and the common good (Casaqui & Sinato, 2015) with humanitarian implications, transforming the growing individualization and degradation of working conditions into a sense of opportunity and autonomy. In a broader dimension, the communication, both as process and as discourse, consolidates the ideological and financial ties between the platformization of labor and neoliberal rationale (Grohmann & Qiu, 2020). In this way, the centrality of communication allows organizations like Migraflix to be portrayed as "migrant saviors," weaving complex relations with companies like Uber and Facebook; meanwhile, migrants are discursively transformed into entrepreneurs and on-demand migrants, carrying all the risks and responsibilities of failure in the scope of their work.

During the 2000s, the focus on the relation between communication and entrepreneurial spirit was the transformation of organizational processes into the ethos of a reality show (Couldry, 2008; Redden, 2018). This also happened with the project *Raízes na Cozinha* [*Roots in the Kitchen*] by Migraflix, whose format resembled reality cooking shows that combine elements of entrepreneurship and games with increasing individual responsibilities, recast as if they were opportunities. In this case, the option to be an entrepreneur translates into rebranding personal and cultural attributes from migrants' country of origin; their personal narratives become a way of making their "product" unique, presenting themselves as media brands and offering an "authentic" gastronomic experience (Zanforlin & Amaral, 2019). So, at the same

time that Brazilians are invited to be involved in a distinctive cosmopolitan experience in their own country, they are also encouraged to join a humanitarian cause.

In the context of this study—that is, while observing the program *Roots in the Kitchen*—we could notice that the integration of migrants involves relations between NGOs, the United Nations agency for refugees (UNHCR), and transnational capitalist corporations. In the last decade, these relations were enhanced by the use of digital platforms to outsource the organizations' obligations to migrants. Thus, different aspects of the work around migration governance have become increasingly dependent on digital platforms, whether for communication and organization with other migrants, or for being able to effectively survive through their work.

The process described in this article is the transformation of migrants into on-demand workers, which includes instability, informality, and lack of clarity in the rules, uniting aspects of the historical informality of migrant labor in Brazil with the mechanisms of platform labor. This "reconfigures how the spatialities and temporalities of migration are understood" (Collins, 2021, p. 873). Thus, the analytical lenses of this research start from the critique of entrepreneurship as a central aspect of neoliberalism (Brown, 2016; Dardot & Laval, 2013). We understand that communication—as discourse, production, and circulation of meanings (Silverstone, 1999)—plays a central role in the dissemination and consolidation of neoliberalism as a way of life.

Casaqui (2019), for instance, states that entrepreneurship is both a culture and an ideology, highlighting inspiration culture. That is, "There are discursive formations that correspond to this culture" (Casaqui, 2019, p. 205). This spreads to all fields of social life (Illouz, 2007; Purser, 2019). The dominant discourses around inspiration, innovation, and self-help are elements of communication in neoliberal ideology, radicalized by a Silicon Valley ideology (Liu, 2020). According to Casaqui (2019), communication, as process and as discourse, is a central place to understand entrepreneurialism as neoliberal ideology.

Therefore, communication is a place of articulation between platform capitalism and neoliberalism (Sodré, 2019). These lenses extend the original notion of platform migration (Collins, 2021), with the aim of understanding how entrepreneurship, as a central part of neoliberalism, penetrates both the infrastructure of humanitarian organizations and the discourses of migrants.

Methodology

The wider methodology of the study combined methods related to ethnographic practice, including participant observation; recorded, in-depth semistructured interviews; and questionnaires during the second half of 2017. The observation allowed for monitoring the interaction of the group members, the development of the participants in relation to the topics of the classes, and the application of what they learned to their daily routines, given that the majority of them had already worked with food. Besides participant observation, Migraflix members, such as its director, assistants, and volunteer workers, were interviewed. At the end of the project, we sent online forms by e-mail to the immigrants and refugees that allowed us to expand on details about previous experiences with entrepreneurship and the further development of their socioeconomic profile, to be completed by the migrants.

Roots in the Kitchen opened on August 19, 2017. Classes were held every Saturday and followed this schedule: technical training (August), business management (September), marketing and business plan (October and November), and mentoring (November). The technical training classes included topics such as safety, hygiene, food handling, and guidance on how to get certificates and permits from city halls to participate in events in public places. The business management module took place at Uber's office and presented classes on pricing, competition analysis, calculation of general and specific costs of ingredients and dishes, and use of the UberEats platform. Between October and November, the candidates took classes at the headquarters of the social network Facebook and learned how to create pages and expand the use of resources to sell their products. The last module included mentoring in consolidated restaurants.

The observations took place at the openings of the four training modules, which enabled the monitoring of the group members' interaction with each other, the engagement of participants with the themes of the classes, and the applicability of what they learned to their work routines. Next, we established contact with the migrants who participated in the program six months after its finalization. We conducted a total of 10 in-person long interviews structured in three parts. First, we asked about their impressions on the training; then, we inquired about whether the training was enough for them to open or increase their business; and finally, we asked about the working relations with the NGO. Most of the interviews were conducted either in the migrants' homes or in locations where they chose to meet. Of this group of 10 interviewees, one decided not to continue in the food industry and began repairing cell phones. For this article, we focused on the first phase of interviews with the 10 immigrants and refugees and then looked more deeply at the story of the three migrants who still kept working relations with the NGO at the time this article was written. We kept frequent contact with these three sources, and, after July 2018, this contact extended to audio and text conversations via WhatsApp. New in-person meetings were also conducted between September and December 2019. The participants' names and nationalities were kept confidential, as agreed to by the study and the interviewees. The analysis of the results combines the resulting notes from participant observation and from interviews with the migrants.

Migraflix NGO

NGOs like Migraflix present themselves as bearers of a discourse with sights on the common good and with the goal of helping the migrants. However, like a bank, they prioritize a policy of indebtedness in a context of sacrificial citizenship. These discourses are related to the inspiration culture, an important element that articulates neoliberal rationality and communication.

The rhetoric of "inspiration culture" is present in Migraflix's discourse, as mentioned earlier; it is related to the stimulus of an experience of a cosmopolitan trip, presented over a background of engagement with a humanitarian cause with global repercussions. This is a process of assigning a new meaning to something in service of the collective, based on the practices, materialities, and narratives that prioritize the individual stemming from the growing monetization of all areas of social life.

The NGO's website, edited various times throughout the length of the study, flaunts on its banner the invitation, "Experience the world in your city: Try out new cultures learning from immigrants" (Migraflix, n. d.-b). The most recent statement is, "We foster the meeting of people and cultures through cultural

entrepreneurship" (Migraflix, n. d.-b.). In the section about professional development and income generation, we highlight the "development of socio-emotional, technical, and entrepreneurial skills" with links to the projects *Raízes na Cozinha* [*Roots in the Kitchen*], in partnership with UberEats; *Raízes na Cidade* [*Roots in the City*], in partnership with Airbnb; and Migralab, which, according to the website, is a project carried out in Boa Vista (in Northern Brazil), in partnership with the global consultancy Accenture and the government of Canada to train Venezuelan refugees in entrepreneurism.

The cultural exchange is presented as the goal of the NGO, which states on its website that the Migraflix family is composed of new Brazilians who decided to restart their story in Brazil. They brought together new cultures and worldviews, offering a rich exchange of experiences (Migraflix, n.d.-a.). The workshops, in the words found also on the Migraflix website, are an invitation to take classes taught by immigrants and refugees to value their cultures and stories. The catering service to "foster a delicious trip to different cultures," while the motivational speeches can be adapted "according to the needs and objectives of the client," emphasizing how it can be an "international inspiration for your organization— hire a Migraflix motivational speaker" (Migraflix, n.d.-a.). Thus, the meanings and the contextual frame that lead a person to become a migrant or a refugee become empty, merely a support for the practices and narratives of inspiration—with connections to entrepreneurial spirit and sacrificial citizenship.

Therefore, we agree with Casaqui (2019), according to whom the different media institutions are responsible for spreading the ideas of entrepreneurship supported by the inspiration culture. It gives individuals with the notion that being an entrepreneur does not reveal the withdrawal or weakness of the state's social well-being actions; instead, it stresses individual activity as a solution worthy of life itself, in a process of sacrificial citizenship (Brown, 2016). It is not by chance that the migrants linked to the NGO's entrepreneurship projects in this study become media brands of themselves.

This happens because the migrants are responsible not only for harnessing their personal stories to the product that they sell in the wake of the humanitarian cause they are immersed in, either as catering service providers or at workshops, but also for being motivational speakers. Thus, the migrants must be understood as a media brand of themselves and not as citizens, so in a neoliberal context, "job opportunities" will appear, like on-demand migrants. This is one of the dimensions of platform migration.

Thus, we understand that the migrants and the NGO in question are examples of an ideological context that links entrepreneurship to the inspiration culture, as Casaqui (2019) suggests. Besides, the rhetoric involving the NGO's actions is well-tuned to neoliberal values. Meritocracy, resilience, and overcoming hardship have become the recipe for the successful migrant or refugee.

Contextualizing Migrants

The profile of the migrants who attended the training was diverse: resident migrants, like Bolivian women who worked in sewing workshops in São Paulo; refugees from Syria, such as a photographer who had a photo store in Damascus and now has a Syrian food kiosk in the city of Guarulhos, and a pharmacist who now sells prepared food; and refugee seekers, like the Venezuelans, with stories of interruption of their jobs and routines because of the crisis in their country. Twenty-one

people were selected, 11 women and 10 men. A study participant from Haiti participated in only two of the classes and stopped to pursue music instead of gastronomy. Table 1 shows the profiles and business plans developed in the program.

Table 1. Participant Profiles.

Country of Origin	Current Situation	Business Plan
Mexico	Restaurant owner	Delivery
Côte d'Ivoire	Artisan	Catering and delivery
Venezuela	Journalist with catering experience	Delivery and café
Chile	Catering business owner	Catering
India	Degree in gastronomy	Catering
Côte d'Ivoire	Sister-in-law and associate owner of Assouan	Catering and delivery
Democratic Republic of Congo	Sells prepared food	Catering and delivery
Bolivia	Seamstress and box lunch seller	(did not participate in the program graduation)
Colombia	Owner of two food trucks	Delivery and restaurant
Colombia	Sells prepared food	New kitchen
Peru	Works at mother's restaurant	Restaurant franchise
Peru	Sells box lunches	Restaurant
Colombia	Owner of food bike	Food truck
Palestine	Sells prepared food	Food truck
Palestine	Singer and sells prepared food	Food, music, and dance project
Syria	Photographer and owner of a kiosk	Itinerate food truck
Syria	Sells prepared food	Stall at the metro, van, and kitchen
Bolivia	Seamstress	(did not participate in the program graduation)
Venezuela	Sells prepared food	Food truck
Bolivia	Hotel chef	Catering

The NGO promised that the 20 approved participants would be gifted a logomark created by advertising agencies and a business plan; the 10 finalists would be able to use UberEats for free for the first month, plus free advertising; and the top three finishers would receive domestic appliances (a fridge for first place, a stove for second place, and a microwave for third place). It was also announced that R$50,000 loan would be given to the first-place finisher, with terms of repayment to be negotiated, through a private investor. The reactions of the migrants in relation to the *Raízes na Cozinha* program is in line with the contradictions between opportunity and abandonment by the NGO. On one hand, all the interviewees demonstrated gratitude to the program for teaching them how to open a business, in the sense of survival management. The interviewees also stressed how the program fostered connections with other people

through professional networking. However, in spite of the program's possible collective spirit and humanitarian discourse, some of the migrants criticized the final result when the prizes promised by the training were handled—top-down gamification (Woodcock & Johnson, 2018)—in which individualistic meritocracy prevailed. As said by one of the interviewees, "Those who already have experience with the business win" (September 19, 2019). This breaks down the humanitarian and collective rhetoric and the project's idea of the citizen in service of a rationale related to sacrificial citizenship—the basis of entrepreneurship and meritocracy.

At the same time, the migrants' comments reveal how their economic lives are held hostage by the dictates of the financial market. One bank announced a credit line that in reality never came to be. The external investor, who would supposedly be the financier of new business, made his own list of migrants, but none of them received money for a loan. The migrants said that in the meeting they had with the investor, his wife, and a lawyer, they were questioned about collateral to receive approval for the loan, such as cars, properties, or a guarantor. This is in contrast to what was announced.

On April 27, 2019, the first-place winner, who should have received a loan in early 2018, contacted one of the researchers to say that they had finally received the money, R$45,000 (around $8,000), to buy their food truck via Migraflix and the external investor.

The agreement stipulates a payment of R$2,000 (around $360) per month to pay off the debt. The other sources recorded by the study related that they participated in sporadic events and had an ambiguous relationship with the NGO: At the same time that they recognized the benefits of the development programs and the financial help from the monthly revenues from participating in events, they also demonstrated dissatisfaction with some methods. They complained, above all, about the amount that they received for catering services, stating that it was not always lucrative. For this reason, others told of their decision to not accept any more work mediated by the NGO and instead to work for themselves. These stories reveal how there is a servitude by debt (Berardi, 2012; Lazzarato, 2017), with policies related to financialized capitalism (Sadowski, 2020), causing mechanisms of dependence between migrants and NGOs.

This dependence was accentuated by indirect relationships with platforms, which affected their routines and income. An interviewee from Venezuela who worked with made-to-order food and whose partner was an Uber driver said,

> I make a profit of R$4,000 (around US$730) per month. I do events to make a profit to pay the rent. He (the source's partner) Ubers to pay for power, buy food. And the car is rented, it's not his, so then he even has to pay for this car. I was diagnosed with Leer's complex. I was in bed for three days with a headache, and I was diagnosed with fibromyalgia. But the treatment was really strong, I was drugged up. He (the doctor) then gave me a (medicine) that should only be taken at night. I was in pain. And as I was doing events, I stopped doing the experiences for a while. Because I couldn't humanly get it done. There are times that I have to wait three or four hours for the pain to go away. Sometimes I wake up in pain and it doesn't go away, and I have to go on, take a shower

> and go to work in pain. Last week three people told me to take a day off on Saturday and
> Sunday, I said, I can't. (September 20, 2019)

This is an example of how survival management is linked to the idea of multitasking. The NGO outsources all the responsibilities to the workers, without concern for matters of health as a central aspect of fair work (Fredman et al., 2020).

Migrants were pushed to be flexible multitaskers (Boltanski & Chiapello, 1999) in their work, not by choice, but by survival management. Because of the ambiguities in understanding their relationship to the NGO, the migrants made themselves available to the market to do gig jobs, as on-demand workers. However, this did not necessarily mean autonomy, as evidenced by the studies about the ambiguity between dependency and autonomy in platform work (Schor, Attwood-Charles, Cansoy, Ladegaard, & Wengronowitz, 2020; Wood, Lehdonvirta, & Graham, 2018). As Schor and colleagues (2020) state, the precarity—a concept that is often trivialized—was directly related to how dependent the workers were on these gigs. And this relation of dependence, though ambiguous, appeared in the relationship between the migrants and Migraflix.

In this sense, NGO Migraflix repeats the same framework as larger work platforms like Uber and Deliveroo. It claims to bring opportunities, entrepreneurship, and innovation to migrants, when in fact it aids the growth of debt servitude and a dependency relationship through the mechanisms of platformization on the part of the migrant workers. Thus, on-demand migrant workers are a part of platform migration. This leads the companies to outsource costs and leave the workers on their own, contradicting the NGO's own humanitarian discourse.

This is in line with studies about platform labor (Cant, 2019; Wood et al., 2018). However, in this context, platformization acts indirectly, in two dimensions. Migrants are not directly invited—or required—to work for Uber, but Migraflix, at all times, claims that these platforms are available to migrants. Furthermore, Migraflix encourages migrants to boost their social media accounts—such as Instagram—so that they have more visibility. Thus, the platform labor takes place through the intermediation of the NGO—with its meanings—and through a visibility labor (Abidin, 2016). This becomes even clearer when Migraflix's action is focused on work activities through one specific platform: Airbnb.

Connections Between Entrepreneurship, Migration, and Platforms

In the first half of 2019, Migraflix had a new entrepreneurship program in partnership with Airbnb. The program followed the same steps as those of *Raízes na Cozinha* [*Roots in the Kitchen*], with focus on the promotion of cultural experiences with migrants, but this time it was called *Raízes na Cidade* [*Roots in the City*]. The idea is that resident migrants in São Paulo will host people interested in taking culinary or artisanal classes in their houses or public spaces (when the activity is dancing, for example), and the classes mix in the migrants' personal experience, their path, their difficulties, and, mainly, their cultural identity. We can consider this program a connection between the infrastructures of incentive for entrepreneurial spirit and the platforms, assigning new meaning to migration in what Collins (2021) calls platform migration.

The study was part of one experience as it was being carried out by one of the interviewees in their home. In addition to the researcher, four other people from Rio de Janeiro and the residents of the house—that is, the couple, their children, and mother-in-law—were involved in the experience. The event consisted of a brunch, during which typical dishes from the country of origin were served, photos of tourist spots were shown, and a personal story outlined their trajectory from being citizens to becoming refugees in São Paulo. The story ended with a message of resilience and overcoming hardship. After the event, the study subjects related a series of problems that bothered them in relation to the NGO. Among them were questions related to the contradictions of hiring catering services, differences between the amounts agreed on and the amounts actually paid for the work, and delays in payment. These questions are contrary to the agenda of decent work, deepened by the criteria of the Fairwork project[1] (Fredman et al., 2020) in relation to platform labor. These criteria include matters of pay, working conditions, contracts, management, and representation.

According to their accounts, the migrants were contacted by the NGO via WhatsApp, the most-used social media platform in Brazil (Evangelista & Bruno, 2019). For every event, the collaborators/producers created a new group on the platform with the people who would be at the event. There they discussed the details of the job, such as amounts to be paid, quantities, and the presentation schedule, but there was no formal contract. At the end of the event, the group was deleted. This reinforced feelings of transience and informality of this type of work, a true gig. Thus, the migrants complained that there was nothing that truly proved the working relationship. This issue reinforced the figure of an "on-demand migrant."

However, all this was done via social media platforms, revealing connections between the role of digital platforms and the money necessary for the migrants' survival. It was not a process of digitalized finance (Paraná, 2018), but of new connections between money and social media (Swartz, 2020) in a context of the lower levels of the economy in the global periphery (Santos, 1979). This revealed the centrality of communication in the connection to economic processes (Sodré, 2019), in conjunction with aspects of the entrepreneurial spirit.

Moreover, there was a gap between what was agreed on in the WhatsApp group and what was actually done, in addition to a dissatisfaction related to the amount paid to the migrants for the events and catering. This became clearer as clients started contacting the migrants directly, without Migraflix mediation. An interviewee revealed, "The clients now hire me directly and they tell me. They (Migraflix) charge R$187 per person at an event for 50 people. I get paid R$45 per person. The client told me this at an event about entrepreneurship" (personal communication, September 19, 2019). So, behind Migraflix's humanitarian rhetoric was an exploitation of added value on top of the migrant workers, to account for them individually for their "weaknesses and successes."

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[1] Fairwork is an action-research project with the aim of evaluating digital labor platforms against five decent work principles: pay, conditions, contracts, management, and representation (Fredman et al., 2020).

Delay in receiving payment was another area of dissatisfaction. The migrants did not have working capital. When migrants participated in events and caterings, sometimes they received money in advance to buy ingredients and packaging, but sometimes they did not. In addition, payment was posted 15 days later, at the earliest, as another source mentioned:

> Today I should have received the payment from the event on November 22nd. I already sent a message to know when I'll get it. It never arrives on time. I always have to go after them to know when the payment will come. There are times that they are aware that we need the payment. So then, this time he gave us part of the payment before the event that will be on the 28th. But it's like this with the others, too. They always pay late. (personal communication, December 5, 2019)

Instability and unpredictability defined the working life of the migrants, and the events and caterings were essential to guarantee a flow of work and income that was essential for the majority of them. This was also how a relationship of dependence on the NGO and, consequently, on the mechanisms of the migration platform was established. This dependence, according to Schor and colleagues (2020), accentuates the precarity of the work.

The connection between Migraflix and Airbnb in the sense of a union between platformization of labor, entrepreneurship, and the migration issue in a neoliberal context does not develop without resistance. As Cant (2019) and Woodcock (2019) state, unorganizable workers do not exist, and resistance comes from the multiple life experiences in a context of circulation of struggles (Englert, Woodcock, & Cant, 2020). Thus, the possibilities of emergent collectivities (Soriano et al., 2020) occur, and social media plays a central role in organizing migrant workers, in line with Lazar, Ribak, and Davidson (2020) and Soriano and Cabanes (2020).

The theoretical framework of Soriano and Cabanes (2020) helps us understand both the penetration of neoliberal ideology in migrants and the possibilities of emerging solidarities. The authors point out that there are contradictions between individualism and collectivities. They name this process "entrepreneurial solidarities." This means understanding the point of view of migrants as citizens and workers at the same time.

The study asked about the measures taken or whether there is some type of protest against these actions among the migrants. As previously mentioned, the migrants keep a WhatsApp group where they talk and exchange information. However, there are ambiguities, contradictions, and conflicts in the communication among workers through WhatsApp groups, in accordance with other literature on the topic (Lazar et al., 2020; Soriano & Cabanes, 2020):

> People normally write me personally to ask me if I have already been paid, what the payment status is. I tell them that they have to speak up. They stay neutral. I say, send an e-mail, talk to them. I think that because of fear, people don't confront them, and when they confront them, for example, in my case, they decrease (the work—they stop hiring for new gigs). When it is an event where the client doesn't choose the menu, they're

the ones who choose. This happened to T. They had an argument with T last year and T hasn't worked with them since. You're out of the loop. It's personal, you know? (personal communication, December 6, 2019)

This participant concluded,

I can't say only bad things about Migraflix. I can't discount the work that everyone is doing. But I think that now they have become a company with a lot of people working there and the migrants who have the most responsibility to do a ton of things are at the bottom. (personal communication, December 6, 2019)

In spite of collective attempts among the workers to confront this scenario of platformization of the labor and sacrificial citizenship, in the sense of a search for greater autonomy on the part of the migrants, the possibilities of resistance and organization are small. The migrants speak of a contradiction between being grateful for the "work opportunities" offered by the NGO and the precarity of life at work, as shown by the narratives of those interviewed in this article. The migrants themselves produced and spread media of themselves in distinct social spaces and showed dependency on the Migraflix's infrastructure. The synthesis about the migrants is at the bottom and reveals the central role of migration in the complex experiences involving entrepreneurship and platformization of labor in the Brazilian context, with the production of on-demand migrants.

Conclusions

In addition to all the factors cited earlier in this article, this study's authors have kept in touch with the interviewed migrants during the COVID-19 pandemic. The beginning of every year, especially in January and February, represents a fall in monthly income because of the decrease in events, caterings, festivals, and orders in general because of the school break following carnival. In March 2020, the pandemic led to the need for social distancing and the cancelation of prescheduled events, increasing the vulnerability of the conditions needed to maintain a monthly income. One migrant who worked as an Uber driver to pay the rent had to sell their car, which they had bought with the help of a Syrian aunt who sent money from Canada. Others started offering sack lunches via delivery and appealed to social networks to encourage clients to keep making private orders: "Every day I send people our services, I ask if they know of a company that needs delivery lunches. It's marketing every day. For example, last week I wasn't able to sell a single delivery. This makes me worried" (personal communication, September 20, 2019). The context of the pandemic, which Fuchs (2020) called coronavirus capitalism, radicalized and accelerated all the processes previously in effect; this was affirmed by other studies on the impact of the pandemic on the economy of refugees (Dempster et al., 2020) and about platform labor in the context of COVID-19 in Brazil (Howson et al., 2020).

Migrants and refugees residing in Brazil have the right to request monthly emergency assistance of R$600 (less than US$100) as stipulated by the Brazilian government in a vote at the federal congress. For the consulted migrants, the response was unanimous about the importance of the assistance to complement their monthly income, confirming the central role of the state—even if reluctantly—in mediating

the course to formal citizenship during this pandemic. The emergency assistance exposed all the fragility of the neoliberal rhetoric supported by entrepreneurship. It also reaffirmed the need for public policies that guarantee fundamental rights to people in vulnerable working conditions and in relation to what has become known as human capital. Neither the NGO nor the humanitarian agencies were able to act during this emergency. After the emergency assistance program ended at the beginning of 2021, the Brazilian government had already rehearsed the discourse of sacrificial citizenship in which the working class needed to take care of itself, shouldering all the costs of the grave economic crisis.

Thus, one of the contributions of this article is the exploration of more complex aspects of the relations between labor and platform migration than what has been shown so far in the literature, as mentioned. This means expanding the notion of platform migration to understand the relationships between communication, neoliberalism, and platformization. This is due, to some extent, to the context of the so-called Global South and the distinct relations from the experiences of the migrants dependent on an NGO crossed with relations with digital platforms.

Another contribution is that this article highlights how communication shapes the migrants' experiences. In this context, migrants need to be in circulation as a media brand and be under pressure to produce practices and narratives of entrepreneurship and the inspiration culture. Communication is present in this relation also in the contradictory forms by which migrants seek to organize themselves on social media and in the relationships between finances and digital technologies. Though they are vulnerable, sick, and indebted, migrants are constantly "marketing every day," promoting not only their products but also themselves as media brands, as solitary agents of their own subsistence.

NGOs are places of dissemination of neoliberal ideology. Inspiration culture and entrepreneurship are communication strategies intended both to present themselves as "citizen organizations" and to control migrants, including in ideological terms. As part of the platform migration, NGOs are also discursive spaces that facilitate the penetration of neoliberal ideology.

The circulation of these ideologies—as meanings and, therefore, communication— occurs in different parts of the world in similar ways. Brazil is not something exotic or alien to neoliberal ideology. Local specificities are related to the deepening and radicalization of platformization mechanisms. But there are many similarities in the way of life of migrant workers around the world, as shown by Van Doorn and colleagues (2020).

For migrants, emerging solidarities are still too fragile for collective organization. In this way, they are packaged into the entrepreneurial rhetoric and are dependent on the mechanisms of platform migration, without predictability for the future. They are on-demand migrants; this is related to the literature on on-demand work (i.e., Stefano, 2015) and is the synthesis of how platform migration works together with communication, neoliberalism, and entrepreneurship.

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