The Precariat: Insecurity as a Practice of Government

Abstract: The assemblage of neoliberal policies with economic globalization has created the conditions for the emergence of a new class structure, which includes what Guy Standing calls "the precariat". This "class" is characterized by new types of relations of production, if distribution and with the state, which are increasingly unstable.

Our research focuses on one of the distinctive aspects of this "class in the making", the relations of production, with unique characteristics in history: it is the first class in which the rule is having a higher level of qualifications than the type of work one can aspire.

We aim to discuss how the precariousness among female graduates is concealed by the increasing feminization of work. That is, how new forms of work organization impact in the construction of subjectivities and of personal and professional narratives of women workers.

Our framework is based on the works of Hester Eisenstein, Fraser, Acker, Morini and Lorey on the centrality of women's work as a resource for global capital, the appropriation of feminist ideology by the capitalism and precariousness as governance tool, with women taking the place of "ideal worker".

Within a qualitative methodology, we conducted semi-structured interviews with women whom perform functions below their academic qualifications. The collected data were analyzed according to content analysis techniques, encoded with the help of Atlas / IT software, version 7.0.

The results show how precariousness, as a governmentality instrument, does not mean only the uncertainty of waged work, but also and above all uncertainty as a mode of living, the uncertainty of subjectivation modes and of bodies. The ideological normalization of precariousness becomes a technique of subjectivation.

Keywords: precariat; precariousness; women; qualifications; governmentality; uncertainty, subjectivities

1. Introduction

In this paper, we intend to explore the ways in which the growing precariousness in employment and work relations have an impact on the construction of subjectivities and of personal and professional narratives of women workers.

This course will be based on Guy Standing’s concept of “the precariat”, through which we are going to addresses one of the distinctive aspects of this "class in the making", the relations of production, specifically in the case of women graduates in Portugal, who believed that higher education would allow them to have a career and a safe trajectory of work.

The precariat presents at the level of these relations of production something that seems to be unique in history: it is the first class in which the rule is to have a level of qualifications (skills and abilities) superior to the type of work that it performs or can aspire to perform, (Standing, 2013a, 2014b), with a strong penalization of women who, through the adaptation of inequality dynamics, now assume the role of the "ideal worker" (Acker, 1990) throughout the world.
After generations of efforts to integrate women's equality into labor wage, we are witnessing a restructuring of the work landscape that has brought it closer to the characteristics attributed in the past to women's work: vulnerability, paid and unpaid work time, lower wages without respect for working hour limits. Precisely because precarity is not only a condition of women, although it is a dominant trait in its historical course, it is necessary to understand it, as Judith Revel explains, in the context of a set of devices of subjection, exploitation and control that characterizes neoliberal rationality, to better understand the specific ways in which precariousness is experienced (or rather applied) to women. (Morini, 2014) The option for the study of this specific group intends to bring to the discussion the commonly accepted premise that the modernization of the social, labor and educational status of women is in itself a criterion for the development of countries. While, on the one hand, we are in higher numbers in higher education since the mid-80s, (Pordata, 2016) on the other, the data show that women in Portugal receive about 81.5% of the average monthly wage of men. This difference increases as the level of qualification increases, being particularly high among the upper management, where the ratio is 72.6 (Cite, 2015). Furthermore, we consider that the characterization of Guy Standing of the “precariat” - like the other groups framed in the class structure - as bringing together a combination of distinct relations of production, distinct relations of distribution and distinct relations with the State (Standing, 2013a) allows us to overcome the use of the term, as coined by Castel and Bourdieu, in the 1980s to describe the precariousness and precariousness of working conditions, extending its meaning to the dimension of existential precariousness that results from instability in work and life, that reveal the "many faces" of the precariat. (Rauning, 2008, Standing 2011, Morini 2014) Nowadays it is not possible to identify the limits of precariousness as circumscribed "to the lower classes," as passive subjects pushed into precariousness, as described by Marx, nor even as self-excluded subjects, a thesis that interweaves precariousness with the neoliberal idea that the losers of society actually choose for themselves the existence in which they live, since this self-exclusion evidences their inability to conduct themselves according to the norms that guide neoliberal governmentality. (Rauning, 2008). The insufficiency of these justifications to respond to the growing phenomenon of the precariat, as a common designation of a vast group of people from different strata, and who does not necessarily see themselves as a victims, implies to perceive, as Butler explains when he prefices Lorey's work, that "we can only identify the instances by seeking recourse to its
more general form, and this leads us to a consideration of how precarity has itself become a regime, the hegemonic mode of being governed, and governing ourselves.” (Lorey, 2015, p.viii).

Based on the analysis of the presence of categories associated to status frustration, deprivation in relation to the future and greater vulnerability to precariousness traps, which according to Standing characterize the fraction of the precariat that is made up of people with academic training, this paper intends to show how the insecurity and instability in employment and work relations associated with the rhetoric of "freedom through work" (Beck, 2000) has profound consequences in the production of subjectivities, that is, in the "relation with the self" as described by Foucault. This set of categories, in fact, forms an ideological precondition of precariousness as a technique of governmentality. We focus on women's experience because, with the historical condition of women becoming the exploitative measure of all people, women are now exposed to a "double penalty" - as a subfigure pushed to the margins of their own condition. (Morini, 2014).

Based on a qualitative approach, individual and in-depth interviews were conducted with six Portuguese female workers in a precarious professional situation. The collected data were analyzed according to the techniques of content analysis, codified with the aid of Atlas / TI software, version 7.0.

2. Neoliberalism: Between the promises of emancipation and the feminization of work

The era of globalization usually refers to a complex series of events beginning in the 1970s that brings together a multitude of changes that have altered the contours of economics, politics, and social life. (e.g. Giddens 1999, Rose 1996, Bauman 1998, Beck 2000, Hardt and Negri 2000)

We believe that it is not possible to speak of globalization, its effects, without mentioning the centrality of women's work as a resource for global capital (Acker, 2004), as well as the appropriation by capitalism, not only of their productive and reproductive work, as has long been pointed out by feminists, but also the appropriation of their ideology and political work, placing feminist ideals at their service (Eisenstein, 2009, Federici, 2012).

As Fraser (2009) and Eisenstein (2009) point out, as the claims of the second wave of feminism meet and coincide with neoliberal ideologies, the contradiction settles in the working world. This parallel movement has led to the current situation of women at work and
in society - in the West and also to a greater degree in highly capitalist countries such as India and other emerging economies. The critique of “economicism”, of the "androcentric" state, has led to a relative integration of women, including in state apparatus, but according to Eisenstein (2009) and Fraser (2009), led also to the normalization of feminist ideology and to the lack of vision in the face of the seduction that the "market" and neoliberalism directed towards the ambitions of affirming the individualities and the rights of women. As Cristina Morini (2014) explains, the body of women is the biopolitical body *par excellence* - the object of consumer and advertising investment, the main support of commercial desire. This is a paradoxical phenomenon. On the one hand, the use of images, ideologies of femininity, to construct models of desirable workers and services (Acker, 2004) and, on the other hand, the persistence of the image of "corps dociles" (Foucault, 1975), perfect for routine work and no prospects.

The feminization of labor thus emerges as a double movement, the massive entry of women into the labor market, but also, and above all, the frightening extension of the conditions of exploitation and subjection, which historically belong to women, applied to the whole sphere of production, made possible by means of the introduction of a series of management prerogatives on the organization and working conditions, proper to neoliberal policies (Standing 1999, Oksala 2013, Morini 2014).

### 4. METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

This work has an exploratory character, making use of a conceptual variation (not to confuse "term" and "concept") that adds new traces to the concept of "precariat" that allow to overcome the uses of "precariousness" and “precarization” to describe certain working conditions, or to discuss forms of self-exclusion, a simplistic use typical in neoliberal discourses to explain the experiences of those who are unable to" win" in society. From a methodological point of view, our approach is justified by the need to "develop, clarify and modify concepts and ideas, in order to formulate more precise problems or searchable hypotheses for later studies" (Gil, 1989, p.44-45).

In this work, the qualitative approach was chosen considering its relation to "the universe of meanings, motives, aspirations, beliefs, values and attitudes, which corresponds to a deeper space of relationships, processes and phenomena that cannot be reduced to the operationalization of variables "(Minayo, 1994, p.22).
Data collection was carried out through semi-structured individual interviews with women graduates who are living in a precarious professional situation, inviting them to describe their perceptions about topics and dimensions selected according to Standing’s work on the precariat, that are included in the script/protocol.

The identification of potential respondents started from the accessibility criterion and continued with the "snowball" strategy, in which one participant pointed out others that had characteristics of interest for the research. This method is useful in accessing populations that are difficult to identify. (Bogdan & Biklen, 1994). It should be noted that there was some difficulty in getting volunteers for this study. Some women in this situation showed a fear of being identified, especially by the employer, perceiving some social shame about the situation.

All our respondents had the expectation that higher education would provide them with a career in their field of specialty. All but the youngest, had work experience in their studies field, but none so far with security, both financial and professional.

Table 1 outlines the information considered important to contextualize the trajectories of each interviewee. To preserve the anonymity of the interviewees, their communications are marked with the letter "E" followed by the number that corresponds to the order in which the interview was performed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Academic degree</th>
<th>Occupation / job</th>
<th>Marital status/ Children</th>
<th>Dwelling-place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E1</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Postdoctoral</td>
<td>Postdoctoral scholarship</td>
<td>Married with children</td>
<td>Lisbon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E2</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>Customer service representative</td>
<td>Single no children</td>
<td>Lisbon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E3</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>Trainee</td>
<td>Single no children</td>
<td>Coimbra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E4</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td>Married no children</td>
<td>Faro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E5</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>Lawyer and Call center agent</td>
<td>Single no children</td>
<td>Lisbon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>Sale assistant</td>
<td>Single no children</td>
<td>Coimbra</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The interview protocol consisted of a request for the interviewee to give a brief summary of her academic career, as well as an appreciation for the reflection of this career path (links, periods of unemployment). From this first question, the interview was developed in order to understand the following questions:
How would you identify yourself professionally when requested to do so (for example, on official forms or in response to job postings?) In what areas did you seek employment and would you agree to work in a completely different area and well below your formal qualifications? If so) What would weigh/weigh on this decision. How do you describe your relationship with work and what factors motivate you to go to work every day. How do you manage your activities/what are they; What perspectives do you have in relation to the future, the composition of income (whether or not they depend on other aid); What do you responds to people who tell you to risk, for example with a business of their own or to emigrate, or how do you respond to people who say that perhaps you don’t try hard enough; Do you feel that your fundamental rights are assured (civil, political, cultural, social and economic); how do you describe your relationship (representativeness) with the State. Interviews lasted about 30 to 40 minutes, conducted via Skype and recorded with the agreement of the interviewees.

To describe and interpret the content of the interviews, we used Content Analysis technique (Bardin, 1977) was. The established categories correspond to those already mentioned by Standing in his work on the precariat, grouped into families according to their contribution to the most present consequences in the fraction of the precariat which is made up of people with an academic background (Standing 2013a, 2014c; 2014a), according to table 2.

### Table 2

**Categories and families**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distinctive relations of production</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>10 Status frustration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of occupational identity</td>
<td>102</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detachment from labour</td>
<td>103</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinctive relations of distribution</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>11 No sense of future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertainty</td>
<td>112</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low social mobility</td>
<td>113</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of control over time</td>
<td>121</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinctive relations to the state</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>12 Precarity traps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over-qualification</td>
<td>123</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the analysis of data and later coding, the Atlas/TI software, version 7.0, was associated with the Content Analysis technique. The results generated by the Atlas / TI software allow us to visualize the network of relationships between the different codes (categories and families),
the strength of these relationships, the number of citations available for each category, and the number of relationships each category has with the remaining (Figure 1).

5. Findings

5.1. Status frustration

The precariousness of production relations, as a consequence of insecurity in employment, is not in itself the distinguishing feature of the precariat (Standing, 2013a, 2014c). It is not a threat to the order and techniques of neoliberal government (Lorey 2015), but rather the installation of precariousness as a permanent regime (Castel, 2009). From the normalization of the precarious conditions of life and work the precariousness ceases to be the passing or episodic condition, constituting a new form of regulation that distinguishes this historical time (Butler in Lorey, 2015)

The 'new economy' discourse, which idealizes 'creative workers', is often a pretext for imposing precariousness (Kapur, 2007; Brophy and Peuter, 2007) or for concealing labor exploitation (Neilson and Rossiter, 2005). In one of the statements of one of the interviewees reports:

Contract agreement? A real contract? ... Never! Because it is these temporary agency work contracts that can rescind and put another job and send the person off. So I never had a real work contract (E5).

Most of the available work in global capitalism has now the characteristics historically present in female work-precariousness, flexibility, mobility, fragmentary nature, low status, and low pay (Oksala, 2013).

According to Casaca (2013), Portuguese women workers are among those that, within the framework of the European Union, show more continuous labor involvement. However, the quality of the employment relationship and working conditions in general is poor: women are more affected by precariousness and unemployment, tend to occupy socially less valued and recognized jobs, earn lower wages than men when sharing the same level of qualification (Casaca, 2013).

Under these circumstances, building a career and identifying with a professional community becomes impossible:

When the scholarship was over, and I also finished my master's degree, I started working on projects. On the other hand, I never got to be a college professor because I was never invited! And who is not invited afterwards has a problem. The problem is
that when the competitions arrive they ask for the teaching career, that it counts 30-40% in the contests. I get zero [...] I've been unemployed for almost two years. Meanwhile I got a postdoctoral fellowship. But for me this is back to back, because I'm 47 years old and I'm back to being a scholarship (E1).

The fragmentation and growing precariousness of productive processes have made social identity extremely fragile, and increasingly imagined, with processes of identification focused on what we could be (Berardi, 2009), opening the way to a sense of frustration:

It's hard to identify with what I do. Honestly, at the height when I have to write my profession ... when I look at these papers, I have a feeling of revolt and at the same time of sadness. An uprising because, obviously, when we study, we aspire to work in the area where we fought so hard, and sadness because it was also so much money invested, so much time, and now it comes down to ... nothing! That is to say, it is to have a job, but it is to go in a totally different way from the one that ambitioned (E4).

As Morini (2014) explains, a very different situation would be the situation in which work, whether good or bad, was capable of guaranteeing certain levels of freedom, of individual and collective growth, if it granted some possibilities of emancipation, formation and economic level. The experience of this interviewee is the portrait of this difference:

For example, when I was at the mall, the only thing I did was sell shoes. It had to "pull through the brain" to continue thinking about evolving. If it's a job where we start doing things mechanically, it's a bad sign (E6).

The subsumption of the mind in the process of capitalist valuation leads to a constant attentive stress (Berardi, 2009) and contributes to the configuration of anxious selves who have internalized the imperative to perform (Moore and Robinson, 2015), visible in the testimony that follows:

"What makes me go to work is simply having to pay my bills. That's it. Because ... it's a climate in which you always feel worn, always lacking "(E2).

The condition of precariousness is thus a source of negative identity (Soeiro et al, 2012) and a condition of non-freedom (Bauman 1989).

Ashford et al. (1989) showed that employees who felt insecure about their future employment were more dissatisfied with their jobs compared to those who perceived their future job situation as more secure. This reality induces provisions marked by the need for constant adaptation and the emergence of a "new psychological contract" based on short-term
commitments (Smithson and Lewis 2000; Stone, 2001) and a detachment from work and from the employers. (Soeiro et al., 2012, Standing, 2014d), as it is clear in this statement:

I go to work and I think "I have to go there", but I am not at all angry, I am happy, I am grateful, I hope this lasts at least until the summer. Now, "that" motivation, I do not have (E5).

It begins to become clearer how precariousness is a growing part of government standardization techniques (Lorey, 2006). This normalization is also ensured by the construction of what is deviant or abnormal (Lorey, 2006, Rauning, 2008). The threat of insecurity, a consequence of unemployment for example, has a subjectivating function here, ensuring that behaviors and discourses are normalized, by a disciplinary power (Foucault, 1975) that makes bodies docile and useful (Morini, 2014). Faced with the threat of unemployment (understood as an abnormal and deviant category), a temporary job, demotivating and without perspectives, becomes motive even of thanks. As Renault (2012) has pointed out, people tend to believe that work has become a privilege, or even a wrong not so severe as unemployment and marginalization.

5.2. No sense of future

The feeling of having no future is, according to Standing (2014c), one of the differentiating characteristics of the fraction of the precariat who believed that the investment in their schooling would put them in a position to have a safe work path, with prospects of socially advancing.

Berardi’s statement (2009, p.25), "Do not worry about your future, you do not have one" seems to convey perfectly the irony of this experience:

[...] I try not to make such plans in the long run ... It's all very unstable and then what happens is that a person makes plans, like I did 10 years ago or 5 years ago and the plans come out all stuck. So I opted for ... ready, that cliché phrase: live one day at a time, I think ... it applies, it applies more and more. Because otherwise a person ends up getting frustrated, anxious ... (E3).

The austerity context in some countries of the European Union, especially in Portugal, places particularly women and young people in a situation of great vulnerability (Pond and Hermes, 2012), that only increases the pressure, the anxiety, the stress and the pain (Morini, 2014).
The instability and uncertainty of these trajectories of life allow us only to aim at moments of precarious employment, followed by unemployment, new precarious work and, with all the instability and uncertainty, the postponement of the constitution of family, normal life plans at this stage of the life cycle (Monteiro, 2015), as one of the participants explains:

I live in a rented house. If I lived alone, I would have to go to my parents’ house again. Because at my salary level, obviously I cannot afford all the expenses [...] It's me and my husband. The budget is not enough to think about children. Unfortunately things have been like this (E4).

The strategies of survival that precarious work forces to put into operation clearly complicate the existence of women and end up conditioning other planes of existence (Morini, 2014), such as maternity, for example.

Again, this instability and uncertainty have very clear traits in the case of women. According to Rosa (2016), based on the Eurostat database, in 2009 the average remuneration of men in Portugal was higher than that of women by 10%, increasing in 2014 to 14.9%, contrary to the European trend, where this difference decreases in 2.09% over the same period.

The permanence of these differences illustrates well how the processes of change, despite great achievements associated with the feminization of education and work, are in general inducers of new dynamic inequalities that seem to be due to a permanent readjustment (Estanque and Hermes, 2012).

The concentration, again, of income on money wages, but now through variable remuneration systems, such as performance or productivity premiums, (Standing, 2011), performance evaluation systems, based on the ideology of competencies, seem only to guarantee "some of the right to direct, control, manipulate and punish others, reduced to mere executors of orders whose ends, meaning and origin remain secret." (Chau, 2014, p. 117), as explained by this worker:

Such awards (of performance) that are distributed annually in April, are based on that assessment ... and that is done ... it's horrible, it’s horrible. They close you up in a room with 3 people: a director, the supervision and the coordinator ... They say: ready, let's give you one more chance, we hope that next year will run better... So you always get the feeling that ... hey! "They're giving me one more chance to see if I'm not fired!" They're giving me one more chance! (E2).

It seems that any relationship to the labor force, precarious as it is, is fast becoming a social privilege (Khsola, 2007). In addition, downsizing survivors have to do with fewer resources,
their work-load increases, and uncertainty about task performance is likely to be prevalent (Burke & Nelson, 1998; Hartley et al., 1991).

It is clear from this experience how members of the precarious can become “supplicants” – in medieval terms - (Standing, 2013a, 2011, 2014c, 2014d), in an experience in which they are subjugated and simultaneously endowed with agency (Lorey, 2006). Looking at the experience mentioned above, we see how the process of normalization of precariousness is also (re) produced by each one of us. Note how this worker is given the responsibility to discipline herself, to control herself and to regulate herself, in order to improve her performance, thus deciding freely, to seize the opportunity that they give her.

This freedom to decide is essential, precisely because the techniques of self-government arise from the simultaneity of subjection and empowerment, from compulsion and freedom (Lorey, 2006).

For most workers, the high degree of uncertainty to which they are subjected, including income insecurity, results in a chronic uncertainty (Standing, 2011), often implying the underutilization of cognitive - relational capacities (Morini, 2014).

The same interviewee, realizes this experience when the question arises: don’t you think you could try to change jobs or go abroad?

Because I'm afraid! Notice! I have nothing behind me to support me, in case anything goes wrong. I do not have! If I suddenly fail to receive my salary, I have no one to turn to. Therefore, I am bound with arms and legs! I have to be there, doing something that makes me unhappy, because I have to make sure that at the end of the month I can pay the bills (E2).

This intervention summarizes the difference between the notion of risk and that of uncertainty. The possibility of investing in a change cannot be considered a risk, since the probabilities do not allow any type of evaluation: strengths/weaknesses; Threats/opportunities. The values at issue here are indeterminate and not quantifiable (Knight, 1964). In this sense, the calls made everywhere for greater 'flexibility', also means redistribution of risks away from the State and the economy towards the individual (Beck, 2000).

In such insecure living conditions, it is evident that social ascension becomes an almost impossible undertaking. Has pointed out by Wilkinson and Pickettas "greater income differences seem to solidify the social structure and decrease the chances of upward mobility, where there are bigger inequalities of outcome, equal opportunity is a significantly more distant prospect." (Wilkinson and Pickettas 2009, p.169). The conditions for a "global
apartheid" seem to be created (Shiva, 1995) with a growing world divide between rich and poor.

The project of taking a course, having a job, raising her career, getting a house of her own with stable incomes, begins to be more and more a chimera, illustrated by this 35-year-old woman who lives in her parents' house:

> I am currently on unemployment benefit. Fortunately I have the support of my parents when it is necessary and ... They have their own house, it is not rented or any of that, and by itself it already helps in terms of expenses ... here we are guiding ... not easy ... (E3).

The impact of flexible and precarious forms of employment and the increase of unemployment, especially among young people and women, even among graduates (Golsch 2008; Soeiro et al., 2012, Kovács and Lopes, 2012; Armano and Murgia 2013; Giugni and Lahusen 2016), shows that the promises contained in this neoliberal model, that presented a promising future, based on a meritocracy model, which would allow, through investment in qualifications, better living conditions and the possibility of social ascension (Handy 1984; Saunders 2010), turned out to be simply an illusion. (Keep, 2012). In this scenario, it makes perfect sense to characterize this new structural unemployment as not only as "structurally inseparable from the dynamic of accumulation and expansion which constitutes the very nature of capitalism as such (Jameson 2011, p. 149), but also as a form of exploitation. That is, from a dialectical twist, exploitation includes its own negation - the exploited are not only those who produce or 'create', but also (and even more) those who are condemned not to create. (Jameson 2009)

5.3. Precariousness traps

One of the distinctive aspects of the precariat, the relations of production, which seems to be unique in history, is related to the gap between the level of qualifications possessed and the type of work that one performs or can aspire to perform (Standing, 2013a ; 2014b). The way flexible labor markets work worsens the vulnerability of graduates, especially younger ones, to the pitfalls, or traps, of precariousness. Investment in education presupposes the acquisition of skills and knowledge that will be realized, developed and recognized in the following years through the construction of a professional career. However, if the next years are to change from precarious employment to precarious employment, the possibility of developing these talents is potentially permanently impaired (Standing, 2013a, 2013b, 2011, 2014c, 2014d), as it seems to be the case of this interviewed who, although finishing the
master's degree in the Human Resources area, has always worked as an OCT employee in shopping centers:

I think companies ask for a lot of experience in relation to what I can present ... If I do not get it in the meantime, imagine in the next 10 years I work in human resources management, which is the area that I like, that I identify with and that I want to work even if I leave Portugal. When leaving, only if it is to work in my area (E6).

The “fallacy of entrepreneurship” (Campos and Soeiro, 2016) depends on what Smail (2005) has criticized as ‘magical voluntarism’, an ideology which insists on the miraculous power of each individual to be whatever they want to be. This “magical voluntarism” overlooks the reality of class exclusion, blocked opportunities and structural decline. This belief that poverty, lack of opportunities, or unemployment, is our fault and our own fault alone (Fisher, 2014), creates conditions for another precarity trap. Unemployed people with skills and qualifications are being pressured to take "any" job (Standing, 2014d) risking to negative long term costs (Fumagalli and Moini 2012; Fumagalli 2013). These costs are associated with the "truth regime" (Foucault 1969) legitimized by neoliberal discourses in which subjects self-define in terms of their status for the external gaze (Moore and Robinson, 2015), meaning that if someone presents herself with such high level of skills and yet works in a low work level something must be wrong with this person (Rose, 1996). The notion of this reality is translated by this interviewee:

My parents obviously know, and a more closed circle of friends who also know. [...] Now ... there it is, I do not tell the truth to anyone, nor think ... no doubt they would think then if she is a lawyer and doesn't practice it must be for some reason... So I say that I am a lawyer, I have my own office, I work very much at home because I have this opportunity! (E5).

The citizenship conceived as a working citizen, typical of industrial capitalism (Beck, 2000), now gives way to the rhetoric that citizenship must be active and individualistic. “The political subject is henceforth to be an individual whose citizenship is manifested through the free exercise of personal choice among a variety of choices” (Rose 1996, p.65), Or in other words, freedom and self-determination become necessary elements to stimulate productive creativity and innovation (Morini, 2014).

The problem may arise when, in a labor market characterized by precariousness, as in the case of Portugal (Carmo, 2012), having a too many options, often leads into situations of "unbounded rationality" (Standing, 2013b), not knowing which of our actions may have the desired return - an employment contract. This reality is well illustrated by this interviewee:
My posture is one day at a time. But I do not stop; I'm always working and enriching my resume, because when it comes one opportunity that may worth something I think! I am always going to congresses and making communications, publishing (...) Therefore, I still do not know what to apply for next ... besides being a research professional, I am a contestant. (...) I spend the time competing for anything. (...) Every day I read the Diário da República, the job sites, etc., and I have everything prepared, in the folders of the PC, to be able to compete (E1).

In the neoliberal logic, the individuals have now the responsibility to become employable, always remaining in a "state of competence", of "market competitiveness" (Dubar, 2000, p.112).

Definitely, in this regime of biocapitalist accumulation, precarization, while it does not guarantee the continuity of income and rights, necessarily requires enthusiasm, a powerful suggestion that can lead the subject to be sold in a regime marked by gratuity. (Morini, 2014). Professional internships are a good example of this reality. Initially seen as a way of gaining experience, aiming, in principle, to integrate the trainee into the company, they have been used by many companies as cheap and expendable labor, functioning as a disqualifying integration in the labor market (Paugam, 2000).

Being a curricular internship (in different areas) - not paid, you can do as many internships as you want! And you'll see why I'm saying this ... All of a sudden, I went to the [consulting company] for the third internship of my curriculum, it was of about three months. Then I did the next professional internship of 9 months (...) In June of last year, I started to do a 3 month training in Java programming and also, because from "x" hours we are entitled to a curricular internship - The 4th curricular stage!! (Laughs) That's where I am now. (...) Being optional, but my intention was once again to enter the area in some way. Okay, but I also was informed that I will not be able to stay with the organization. That is, it was another 6 months working for free (E3).

The transformation of the wage-earner into a "self-entrepreneur" (Rose, 1996), as it forms contemporary techniques of domination, is the simultaneous realization of processes of subjectivation and exploitation processes. On the one hand, the individual takes subjectivation to the paroxysm, since it implies in all his activities the "immaterial" and "cognitive" resources of "himself", and, on the other hand, it leads to identify subjectivation and exploitation, since he is at the same the time master and the slave of himself, capitalist and proletarian, subject of enunciation and subject of statement. (Rauning, 2008; Rolnik, 2011)
That is to say, I arrive home at about 8:30, 9:00 pm exhausted ... the fatigue is not physical, it is psychological ... what I do is: I take my dog to the street, eat anything, I stretch out on the couch to watch a lot of television and fall asleep instantly... I do not have ... I do not feel like going out, I do not have time to be with people ... I only have the weekends, when, fortunately, they do not ask us to go to work on Saturdays! I have no social life, I have no family life. During the week I have nothing! (E2).

All of these experiences refer to another of the distinctive aspects of the precariat, they are forced to play an increasing amount of 'work-for-labor' (Standing, 2011). Time is invaded and the delimitation of activities is no longer possible (Standing, 2013b), with the total overlap between working time and life time (Morini, 2014). The new production logic thus becomes biopolitical, because it is no longer limited to economic phenomena but involves all aspects of social life (Hardt and Negri, 2000). It is "life put to work" (Morini and Fumagalli, 2010)

The exposition of the experiences of these women denounces the rhetoric of neoliberalism as the only political system capable of emancipating women. In fact the willingness of women to enter the workforce in massive numbers has traditionally served the interest of capital in holding wages down (Eisenstein, 2009). The publicity of equality of opportunities, as Morini (2014) argues, found in the promises of "law" the way to “save the soul” according to the assumption that the law makes equality possible and achieves the overcoming of social distinctions.

The fact that women have a higher level of formal education, coupled with the fact that they cannot maintain professional trajectories, according to what they consider to be their ability to work, translates into a strong sense of status frustration. This feeling is reinforced by the absence of prospects for the future and the aggravation of fragility in relation to the precariousness traps. The articulation of these categories is quite visible in this comment:

When I have to identify myself professionally, I always present myself as a student. Because I do not see this work as ... a profession, a career. [...] It's not a job where I see the future, I want to build a career. But no, not even thinking… (E6).

The way in which these categories are articulated, from the combination of three dimensions based on the concept of class, according to Standing (2011) - distinct relations of production, distinct relations of distribution and distinct relations with the State -, must be understood as a dynamics in network in which, the insecurity acts as a sort of glue.

To facilitate the visualization of these interrelations, the map generated by Atlas / TI 7.0 software, shown in Figure 1, is presented as follows:
Figure 1: Research categories and families

Subtitle: The = Relationships between initial categories (thickness according to the strength of the relation). Within curly brackets {0-0}. The first number represents the number of citations marked in that category, the second number is the amount of relationships it has with the remaining; the = Relations between the initial categories with their respective families

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>Distinctive relations of production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>Lack of occupational identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103</td>
<td>Detachment from labour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111</td>
<td>Distinctive relations of distribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112</td>
<td>Uncertainty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>113</td>
<td>Low social mobility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121</td>
<td>Lack of control over time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>122</td>
<td>Distinctive relations to the state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>123</td>
<td>Over-qualification</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Discussion

It should be noted that the new relations of production call to themselves all the other categories, and it should be pointed out that their relation to the category of absence of professional narrative or identity, through the category of "excess of qualifications" and, of these, "decline of social mobility, "are very significant and, as can be seen from the map, they all point towards the three families that mark the experience of the group under analysis.

It is important to note that the category of "uncertainty", like "distinct relations of production" and "decline in social mobility", are those that call themselves the greatest number of interrelationships. Increased flexibility in labor markets has led to increased work-related stress, increased feelings of uncertainty and insecurity. (EU-OSHA, 2007) This uncertainty, as seen by their interrelations with other categories, extends to the whole sphere of life, producing subjectivities marked by anxiety, stress, pain, vulnerability, frustration and hopelessness in relation to the future (Berardi, 2009; Moore and Robinson, 2015).

Moreover, the relations found between the pair of categories "absence of identity or professional narrative"/ "distinct relations of production" and "distinct relations with the State", highlight the impact of the new forms of work organization in the construction of subjectivity (Beck, 2000, Standing, 2011).

The results of a study of women's rights in the United States showed that, since citizenship is associated with productive work, are seriously compromised by the flexibility of these paths. By establishing "labor rights" based on the stability of the employment relationship and the "years of service", access to social protection, regulation and redistribution the lack of this may endanger women's rights (Guattari and Negri, 1990, Berardi, 2009, Standing, 2014d, Lorey, 2015). This explains the strong interrelation between the category "distinct relations of production" and the category "distinct relations with the State".

The impossibility of maintaining a stable link in relations of production also results in a precarious relationship with the State, since it follows from the absence of a contract of employment, or from its intermittence, the impossibility of access to the rights granted by the accumulation and stability, as described in the experiments presented. The precariousness of the relationship with the State also means a difficulty in exercising the value of equality and access to politics. A danger to which Judith Butler also warns, evoking Hannah Arendt: "Equality is a condition and is a central feature of political action, while at the same time it is a purpose of politics" (Butler, 2009, p.vii).
7. Conclusions

Although generalizations on the effects of changes in the structure of employment and work are difficult and problematic, several studies point to a tendency to women’s disadvantage (Acker, 2004; Casaca, 2010; Eisenstein, 2009). The extension of studies and the conclusion of higher education are no longer in the short and medium term an antidote to unemployment and against the conditions of instability, precariousness and disqualification in which employment is exercised (Kovács and Lopes, 2012).

These experiences contemplate the distinctive aspects and effects of contemporary work processes and show how their combination and interaction impact on all dimensions of life. As Isabell Lorey wrote recently "If we do not understand precarization, we do not understand neither the politics nor the economy of the present" (Lorey 2012).

Based on the concept of “precariat”, we discussed how the precariousness among female graduate is concealed by the increasing feminization of work and how this phenomenon impacts on the construction of subjectivities and of personal and professional narratives of women workers.

At first, from the transcription of some testimonies, we presented how and why the relationship between academic formation and the respective professional paths no longer allow to create safe and rewarding trajectories of work, resulting in a source of feelings of hopelessness and frustration. Then, from the visualization of the results generated by Atlas / TI 7.0 software, we showed how the various categories work in an intricate network of relationships in which it is often difficult to distinguish the effects of each one.

These two moments of this paper allow us to perceive that insecurity is the common feature of these experiences and how precariousness works as an instrument of government. In other words, governing through precariousness means that our relations with the state are characterized by insecurity, as it is clear in the importance that the category "relations with the State" assumes in our results. Precariousness as a mode of government thus means, as Lorey (2015) explains, that the degree of precariousness cannot exceed a certain threshold, that is, it does not seriously compromise the existing order and therefore does not lead to insubordination. Nowadays the art of governing consists of keeping this threshold balanced, defining who is "inside" but kept "outside," (Butler and Spivak, 2012). This balance is achieved through the normalization of precariousness, where the feminization processes of labor play a crucial role, with a strong penalization of women who, through the adaptation of
inequality dynamics, now assume the place of "ideal worker, pushed to the margins of their historical condition. The ideological normalization of precariousness becomes a technique of subjectivation.

This research, although only exploratory, can be a starting point for future research on the real employment situation of many of the graduates in our country. Without questioning the importance of all the studies based on a statistical basis for determining and describing large aggregates, it seems, however, that they alone do not account for the finer, less visible and less quantifiable realities of the uncertainty effects that become a mode of living, the uncertainty of subjectivation modes and of bodies.

Future research should deepen the implications of these new experiences in the world of work for social and labor policies, namely to assess whether legislation promoting equality include women in the labor market, work placements, reduction of TSU pays by employers, which will benefit all employers paying the minimum wage, or measures to support women with one-parent families, if all these policies are actually improving the living conditions of these women, or just the financing of precariousness, the lowest variant of feminized labor.

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