

Call for chapter proposals for edited volume

The Platformisation in Digital Capitalism: Subsumption and Resistance

Over the past two decades, and dramatically since the Covid-19 crisis, platform capitalism has become a defining feature not only of paid work but of everyday life (Fuchs, 2021). What began as practices confined to the gig economy has turned into a transversal infrastructure that reorganizes time, space, sociality and subjectivity well beyond the formal boundaries of the workplace (Witthof and Mularoni, 2025). Platformization is no longer a niche phenomenon but a pervasive, colonizing logic (Cingolani, 2021; Couldry and Mejias, 2019; Srnicek, 2017) that subsumes labour and life alike, requiring an equally transversal theoretical and methodological response (Alquati, 2022; Armano, 2025; Cavazzini, 2020).

Despite growing scholarship on platforms, this expansion has not been matched by a comparable development of practical theory (Alquati, 2022) — a way of grasping social processes able to inform both critical knowledge and radical political praxis. The result has been an oversimplified understanding of platform work, trapped within the binary of techno-optimism and techno-pessimism, and a persistent difficulty in accounting for how labour mobilizes, resists and antagonizes capital beyond isolated case studies.

This volume aims to critically examine platform work and platform-mediated activity more broadly — paid labour as well as unpaid, informal and everyday practices mediated by platforms — by reformulating the relationship between labour, activity and technology: rather than an autonomous force to which work and life must adapt, technology is treated as a mediating organizational device within labour and social processes (Beverungen, Beyes and Conrad, 2019) — shaped by, and reshaping, existing relations of power (Crawford, 2021). To do this, we mobilize and expand Briziarelli's (2024) concept of open subsumption. Open subsumption is understood here as the ongoing, contradictory process through which social practices, capacities and forms of life are incorporated into capitalist relations while retaining spaces of autonomy, resistance and potential reconfiguration (Graziano, Mars and Medak, 2024). Subsumption is thus treated as unresolved rather than accomplished: not a completed process of domination with its own telos, but a re-mediated terrain of ongoing relations of force, exploitation, alienation and — crucially — contestation, shaped as much by platforms as by social and class struggle.

Building on this framework, we invite reflection on platformization as open subsumption and as a form of the *hyperindustrialization of human activity* (Alquati, 2021). This lens brings into focus contradictions and tensions produced by the platform-driven reorganization of social relations, operating at three interdependent levels: the organization, the individual and the community.

A first tension unfolds between *destructuring and structuring*, made visible in the spaces of ambiguity opened up by the platform economy and in the reconfiguration of the relationship between informalization and formalization (Murgia, 2025). At the organizational level, this tension entails a destructuring of time, schedules and activities, driven by a twofold, multidimensional fragmentation: a fragmentation of work content and activity, as tasks are identified, selected, classified, codified and proceduralized on an industrial, mass scale in order to determine what can and cannot be platformized (Casilli, 2019); and a fragmentation of temporality, as time is increasingly segmented into discrete tasks (Huws, 2016). What recomposes this fragmented process is digital technology itself, together with the shared

platform infrastructure connecting all participants within an organization — raising the risk of a digital neo-Taylorism (Altenried, 2022) in which control over workers and human subjects becomes invisible, yet is sustained by an apparent autonomy and responsibility that in fact remains paced and mediated by the platform.

This tension between structuring and destructuring in turn generates a further contradiction between formalization and informalization: the informalization of work and activity produced by platforms gives rise to a new formalization, understood as an emerging institutional structure that normalizes conduct and activity. It becomes crucial to examine the mechanisms through which subjects learn the institutional limits of operating on a platform, and the disciplinary effects that follow. Discipline is thus exercised indirectly, through regulatory forms that appear “soft” yet function as effectively “hard”; correspondingly, while hierarchical control appears diluted, the reticular and matrix-based control that platforms generate is in fact stronger and less visible.

If subsumption is open rather than accomplished, the subjectivities it produces cannot be understood only as passive effects of algorithmic control (Armano, Briziarelli and Risi, 2022). The book asks how workers and other platform subjects — navigating power relations that extend, spatially and temporally, well beyond the “hidden abode of production” — develop forms of agency, coalition, negotiation and resistance capable of deflecting, reverting or reversing the subsumptive relation (Cini, 2022; Bonini and Treré, 2024; Cuberos-Gallardo and Comesaña-Márquez, 2026; Kearsey, 2026; Woodcock, 2021).

The publisher Edward Elgar has expressed an interest in this publishing project; in line with the publisher’s editorial requirements, all accepted chapters will undergo peer review. We invite proposals for chapters that engage theoretically, empirically, methodologically or through research perspectives with the themes of the volume, drawing on research conducted in the Global South as well as in Western contexts. We particularly encourage empirical analyses attentive to the migrant condition, gender and class — including from an intersectional perspective. We especially welcome contributions which:

- Theorize platform capitalism, digital capitalism, and models and forms of colonization of everyday life, encompassing both paid platform work and unpaid or informal platform-mediated activity;
- Analyse the subsumption of subjectivities — of workers and of platform users and subjects more broadly — in platformization processes and the production of neoliberal subjects;
- Address the ambivalent logics of connection/disconnection, algorithmic management, and the reshaping of labour, everyday life and social identities;
- Document forms of agency, organizing, resistance, coalition and class struggle within platform-mediated spaces of both paid work and unpaid activity;
- Develop critical epistemological and methodological discussion on inquiry, workers’ inquiry, co-research, ethnography — adequate to the post-pandemic platform economy;
- Explore platformization and open subsumption across both Global South and Western contexts, with particular attention to the migrant condition, gender and class, including from an intersectional perspective.

We especially encourage contributions that bridge theoretical elaboration with grounded empirical inquiry, and that speak to the intersection of labour, everyday activity, technology and political praxis.

Interested contributors should send the following to emi_armano@proton.me and marco.briziarelli@unimib.it by **30 October 2026**:

- A **proposed chapter title** and a **short abstract of maximum 250 words**, clearly indicating whether the contribution is theoretical, empirical or focused on research perspectives. We appreciate your proposals may be speculative at this stage, however we ask for as much detail as you're able to provide so we can make an informed decision on your proposed topic.
- A **100-word biography** statement for all author(s).

We anticipate that notification of acceptance will be communicated indicatively by **30 November 2026**, with full chapters of 5 – 6,000 words indicatively due by end of Spring 2027; submitted chapters will then be subject to the publisher's peer review process. The volume will be published in English. Details of the publisher to be provided in due course.

If you have any questions, please do get in touch using the e-mail addresses above.

Emiliana Armano, [Independent researcher, University of Milan] : emi_armano@proton.me

Marco Briziarelli, [Associate Professor in Sociology, University of Milano Bicocca] : marco.briziarelli@unimib.it

References

- Altenried, M. (2022) *The digital factory: The human labor of automation*. University of Chicago Press.
- Alquati, R. (2021) *Sulla riproduzione della capacità umana vivente. L'industrializzazione della soggettività*. DeriveApprodi.
- Alquati, R. (2022) *Per fare conricerca: Teoria e metodo di una pratica sovversiva* (Original work published 1993). DeriveApprodi.
- Armano, E., Briziarelli, M. and E. Risi (2022) *Digital platforms and algorithmic subjectivities*. Westminster University Press.
- Armano, E. (2025) *Inquiry and Co-Research Today. Contemporary Practices and Perspectives*, Teseo Press.
- Beverungen, A., Beyes, T. and Conrad, L. (2019) 'The organizational powers of (digital) media', *Organization*, 26(5), pp. 621–635.
- Bonini, T. and E. Tréré (2024) *Algorithms of resistance: The everyday fight against platform power*. MIT Press.
- Briziarelli, M. (2024) *Supersuming Subsumption*. Theory and Politics. Brill.
- Casilli, A. (2019) *En attendant les robots: Enquête sur le travail du clic*. Seuil.
- Cavazzini, A. (2020) 'Pratiques et expériences de l'enquête – I/II', *Cahier du GRM*, 16/2020; 17/2020. Available at: <https://journals.openedition.org/grm/2093>
- Cingolani, P. (2021) *La colonisation du quotidien: Les laboratoires du capitalisme de plateforme*. Éditions Amsterdam.
- Cini, L. (2022) 'Resisting algorithmic control: Understanding the rise and variety of platform worker mobilisations', *New Technology, Work and Employment*, 38(1), pp. 125–144.
- Couldry, N. and U. A. Mejias (2019) *The costs of connection: How data is colonizing human life and appropriating it for capitalism*. Stanford University Press.

- Crawford, K. (2021) *Atlas of AI: Power, politics, and the planetary costs of artificial intelligence*. Yale University Press.
- Cuberos-Gallardo, F. J. and Comesaña-Márquez, J. (2026) 'Beyond the algorithm: Riders as geographical actors in the city', *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 55(3), pp. 317–345.
- Fuchs, C. (2021) *Digital Capitalism: Media, Communication and Society*, Volume Three. Routledge.
- Graziano, V., Mars, M. and Medak, T. (2024) *Figure It Out: The Art of Living Through System Failures*. Drugo More.
- Huws, U. (2016) 'Logged labour: A new paradigm of work organisation?', *Work Organisation, Labour and Globalisation*, 10(1), pp. 7–26.
- Kearsey, J. (2026) 'Communities of co-research: Private hire drivers' self-organisation in the platform gig economy', *Work, Employment and Society*. 0(0).
- Murgia, A. (2025) *Hybrid Labour: Measuring, Classifying, and Representing Workers at the Boundaries of Employment and Self-employment*. Routledge.
- Srnicek, N. (2017) *Platform Capitalism*. Polity Press.
- Witheford, N.D and Mularoni, A. (2025) *Cybernetic Circulation Complex. Big tech and Planetary Crisis*. Verso.
- Woodcock, Jamie (2021) *The fight against platform capitalism: An inquiry into the global struggles of the gig economy*. Westminster University Press. <https://doi.org/10.16997/book51>