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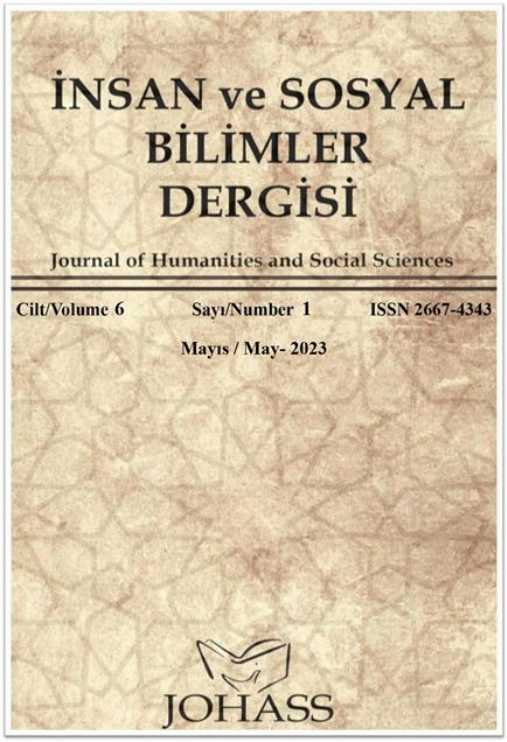

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Digital Capitalism and Individualization of Labour: The Case of Remote Work

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Digital Capitalism and Individualization of Labour: The Case of Remote Work

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Abstract

The study examines the phenomenon of individualization of labour, which has increased with the concept of digital capitalism. The principal argument of the study is that the individualization of labour has increased with digital capitalism; this phenomenon can be examined with the increase of remote working. First, the importance of digital capitalism to capitalism is questioned. Is digital capitalism the occurrence of capitalism in digital spaces? Is digital capitalism a new era of capitalism? Although the individualization of labour is a concept emphasized by Manuel Castells, it needs to be examined in depth. Is isolation meant by the individualization of labour, or is the emphasis on the processes of non-unionization? With the answers to these questions, the phenomenon of individualization of labour is examined through the example of remote work. Remote work is concentrated in the service area, which can be expressed as the sector where digital capitalism is experiencing. In this sense, remote work is a useful example to understand both digital capitalism and the phenomenon of individualization of labour.

Keywords: Digital capitalism, individualization of labour, digital Taylorism, remote work.

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Introduction

The study examines the concept of digital capitalism and the individualization of labour. First, the importance of digital capitalism in terms of capitalism has been questioned. The main argument of the study is that the individualization of labour has increased with digital capitalism. It is thought that the individualization of labour can be examined with the increase of remote working. It is thought that the study will be pioneering in examining the phenomena such as the individualization of labour and the control of remote work and will provide a theoretical basis for the field studies to be conducted.

Is digital capitalism a form of capitalism that occurs in digital spaces? Is digital capitalism a new phase of capitalism? The individualization of labour is suggested by Manuel Castells (2008, s.357). However, the concept has not been emphasized much in the literature, so it needs to be examined in depth. Is the isolation of the individual meant by the "individualization of labour" in the work? Or does it emphasize the transition from the collective worker to the individual worker? The answers to these questions will make it easier to take a position regarding the concept of individualization of labour. In the study, the phenomenon of individualization of labour is examined through the example of remote work. Remote work acquires intensity in the service area, which can be expressed as the sector where digital capitalism is experienced. In this context, remote work is seen as a key example in terms of understanding both digital capitalism and the individualization of labour. The quantitative increase in remote working in pandemic conditions can also be considered as one of the proofs of this claim (Tuna & Türkmendağ, 2020, s. 3247).

The phenomenon of individualization of labour with remote work brings two questions: 1) How do the control mechanisms of labour occur in digital capitalism? 2) Do labour forces respond to this individuation—if so, how does it occur? Related to the second question, the title of class struggles and digital capitalism comes to mind. Another point discussed in the study is whether class struggles are reflected in the digital field or whether digital class struggles are possible. In this context, the validity of the concept of cybertaria has been questioned. In addition, a new concept of labour exploitation in digital capitalism has been proposed: Cybercariat. The concept of cybercariat is obtained by considering the concepts of cybertaria and precariat together.

A literature review will be conducted on the concepts of digital capitalism, individualization of labour, remote work, labour control, digital class struggles, and cybertaria, which will form the conceptual framework of the study. It is thought that the study will be pioneering in examining the phenomena such as the individualization of labour and the control of remote work, which is not emphasized and will provide a theoretical basis for the field studies to be made. The position that will be focused on in the study is “Marxist studies of digital media and information society” expressed by Christian Fuchs (2013, s. 51). Accordingly, the processes of capital accumulation in digital capitalism, class relations, general domination, ideology, the struggle against the dominant order and the search for a democratic society have been examined from a critical political economy perspective (Fuchs, 2013, s. 51). In the first part of the study, the emergence of the concept of digital capitalism and approaches to the concept are discussed. Among these approaches, the concepts to be used were determined. In the second part of the study, the concept of individualization of

labour and the phenomenon of Digital Taylorism is examined in the third part. In this direction, the control of labour and the possibilities of class struggles are discussed. In the conclusion part, a discussion was held in line with the questions asked at the beginning of the study.

Digital Capitalism

The concept of digital capitalism began to be used in the late 1990s to explain the effects of digital technologies on the process of economic globalization (de Rivera, 2020, s. 725). There is no single theory that explains the birth and development of digital capitalism (Mahatma, 2021: 244). There are numerous concepts, put forward by Marxist theories, which explain the new change and development process in capitalism that digital capitalism means: Cognitive capitalism, information capitalism, innovation capitalism, techno-capitalism, and information technology capitalism (Miçooğulları, 2018, s. 6; Akçoraoğlu, 2019, s. 527). All these concepts emphasize the importance of information and communication technologies that emerged with the globalization wave of capitalism. In this study, the concept of digital capitalism used by Dan Schiller (reference) is preferred. Because, unlike the others, the concept of digital capitalism is thought to emphasize capitalist relations rather than tools.

Schiller explains the development of the concept of digital capitalism in his book "Digital Capitalism Networking the Global Market System" written in 1999. According to Schiller, the Internet, and major telecommunications systems have served to transnationalize economic activities. Networks have expanded the social and cultural effects of the capitalist economy more than ever before. Schiller explains the concept of digital capitalism from the perspective of "digitalization". According to this perspective, digitalized production tools have not only increased productivity but also formed a great political economy that goes beyond the purpose of facilitating communication within and between companies (Schiller, 1999, s. xiv-xvi).

Schiller (2003: 142) states that digitalization has increased with the emergence of neoliberalism and draws attention to the simultaneity at this point. While Schiller draws attention to this synchronicity, he also underlines the concentration of the internet network. According to him, the concept of digital capitalism emphasizes the increasing importance of communication and information in the global economy: The information-determined new economy, especially intensified with the 1990s, triggers the process of change (Schiller, 2011, s. 925). To put it in simple terms, digital capitalism means capitalism that takes place through an internet connection (Mahatma, 2021, s. 244).

Neoliberalism, which has been seen as a "new" period of capitalism since the mid-1970s, has spread globally in the 1980s and became a global phenomenon in the 1990s (Schiller, 1999: 1). In this new capitalism, “the gain from knowledge and information forms the basis of accumulation and profit” (Kıyan, 2015, s. 28). In this period, capitalism tried to come out of the crisis that Fordism had entered, with a structural tendency that transformed the valuation forms of capital and the organization of production/labour. At the centre of this change and transformation is the increasing role of knowledge (Lebert & Vercellone, 2015, s. 17). The key features of this wave of change and transformation that capitalism has entered can be listed as follows:

- Knowledge and the immaterial dimension becoming the main source of value, replacing the quantitative measures of productivity and direct labour time typical of industrial capitalism;
- The overriding role of labour-incorporated information in comparison with fixed-capital information and, as a result, the reorganization of design and implementation tasks, as well as production and innovation activities;
- • The replacement of the sequential regime of industrial capitalism by a permanent regime of innovation and the introduction of a new international division of labour built on cognitive principles;
- The resulting intertwining of the software industry and biotechnology leads to an innovation model (Lebert & Vercellone, 2015, s. 38).

This new capitalism, defined as digital capitalism, which started in the 1970s and started to increase since the end of the 1980s, has experienced four important developments because of the above-mentioned change and transformation. The first of these is the information-based transformation and automation of production and management processes; second, the flexibility of the product and process in production; the third is the decentralization of production and decision areas and the creation of a new hierarchical model with the use of the network, and finally, the development of unlimited intra- and inter-sectoral cooperation between enterprises and new business divisions (Schmeder, 2015, s. 65). In this process, telecommunications have become a prerequisite in all developed/underdeveloped economies (Chakravarty & Schiller, 2011, s. 672).

The sector where digital capitalism is most prevalent is the services sector. In the early 1970s, only a quarter of foreign direct investments were in the services sector, while this rate reached 50 percent in the 1980-85 period (Geray, 2016, s. 54). The new accumulation areas of the capitalist restructuring process that started in the second half of the 1970s are the service sector and new accumulation geographies (Geray, 2016, s. 57). The emergence of these new geographies has led to low-paid labour and production, increased geographic mobility, and opportunities for the profitable employment of surplus capital (Harvey, 2004, s. 55).

The most important stage in the realization of digitalization in capitalism is undoubtedly the development of information and communication technologies. The cause of the economic transformation process is the development of information and communication technologies (Çaşkurlu & Arslan, 2017, s. 284). Digital capitalism theorists, especially Schiller, consider "the internet and its connected telecommunications systems, the internationalization of financial and economic flows brought about by globalization, as an important turning point in the transnationalization of economic actions" (Başlar, 2013, s. 779). The development of information and communication technologies has affected various sectors of the economy. For example, parts transfer between sequential production processes based on automatic devices, and continuous flow processes based on automatic control of flow and quality, for example, in the chemical industry, oil refineries, gas and electricity services, computer-controlled processes in the manufacturing industry have been affected by increased automation because of the spread and advancement of information and communication technologies (Mandel, 2008, s. 189).

In the computers and digital communication-based model, the addition of automation and flexible production system leads to the emergence of hybrid production forms and thus the erosion of the mass-based production style (Geray, 2016, s. 57). It can be said that large companies have been able to globalize both production and sales thanks to information and communication technologies. In addition, capitalist structures in underdeveloped countries were able to be integrated into the global market. The process of capitalist restructuring/globalization is based on the development of information and communication technologies (Başaran, 2016, s. 137; Huws, 2018, s. 23). The new accumulation order that emerged at the end of this process also led to the transnationalization of the services sector, which had been dominated by nation states until that time (Geray, 2016b, s. 195). However, in this process, digitalization continued based on the monopoly of private property and the continuity of commercial purposes. Capitalism determines the management style of digital networks (Pace, 2018, s. 3).

At this stage, it is necessary to recall the questions asked at the beginning: Is digital capitalism the occurrence of capitalism in digital areas? Is digital capitalism a new era of capitalism? Christian Fuchs (2021, s. 144) indicates that the "new" capitalism has the same basic structures as the "old" version. But these basic structures are implemented in "new" ways and forms. The "new" capitalism, according to Fuchs, is neither completely different nor the same as the "old" one. Thus, digital capitalism is a trend and dimension of contemporary capitalism. Because there is no single dominant form in today's capitalism: different capitalisms, such as financial capitalism, mobility capitalism, and hyper-industrial capitalism, correspond to different tendencies. In other words, today's capitalism contains different tendencies, and this is a structural feature of capitalism (Pace, 2018, s. 6).

However, although contemporary capitalism is like the old capitalism, it differs in terms of creating new productive resources and organizational forms and the presence of information and communication technologies at the centre of the global economic structure (Akçoraoğlu, 2019, s. 527). Digital capitalism, which developed against the structural problems and permanent crisis tendencies of capitalism, was developed as a supply-side strategy and made significant contributions to the accumulation process in the 1990s. These features have evolved into a new stage in the political economy by taking it beyond being a sectoral phenomenon (Akçoraoğlu, 2019, s. 531). Unlike other trends, digitalization has spread to the entire global economy: from finance to services, from formal to informal (Robinson, 2018, s. 82). Digitalization has come to the fore as a macro-strategy in the capitalist restructuring process and has become a new phase of capitalism (Staab, 2017, s. 282). Therefore, in this study, digital capitalism is not seen as a trend, but as a new stage of capitalism, just like agricultural and industrial capitalism. The hegemonic state of digital capitalism can be seen in the change from 2008 to today: In the first quarter of 2008, the top four companies in terms of the market value of a company's shares are Exxon/Mobil ($452 billion), Petrol China ($423 billion), General Electric ($369 billion) and Gazprom ($299 billion). This picture has left its place to Apple (851 billion dollars), Alphabet (717 billion dollars), Microsoft (702 billion dollars), and Amazon (700 billion dollars) 10 years later (Couldry & Mejias, 2022, s. 95).

Individualization of Labour

The phenomenon of the individuation of labour is discussed by Manuel Castells in the first volume of his book, The Information Age. Castells expresses the radical changes in work and the organization of production, together with the individualization of labour and the technological development in the field of information. According to Castells (2008, s. 357), it "reverses the historical trend towards the remuneration of work and the socialization of production, which was the dominant feature of the industrialization era". According to Castells, "the new social and economic organization based on information technologies brings about the decentralization of management, the individualization of work, the ordering of markets, thus the fragmentation of work, the fragmentation of societies." In the process of individualization of labour, tasks acquire independence from the centre. The individualization of labour is based on the coordination of a communication network based on interactivity, both intercontinental and within the same regions. Especially with the emergence of lean production methods, work is transferred to other branches/companies on a contractual basis, and new practices such as working on order emerge by reducing the size of companies (Castells, 2008, s. 357). What Castells means by the concept of the individuation of labour is undoubtedly the liquidation of the massiveness of the "old" forms of production. So, is the individuation of labour limited only to the liquidation of the mass? To answer this question, the transformation of the labour process should be looked at.

The restructuring process of capitalism in the 1970s is a result of the crisis of the Fordist capital accumulation model that has been dominant in Western societies since the 1930s. As a result, postfordism, which is a more flexible capital accumulation model, has been adopted. With postfordism, new production forms based on mass production, instant production, and customization were tried and started to be applied. In this process, the transition from hierarchical and centralized line production to decentralized, small, and medium-sized companies. The production process is globalized, and labour is divided globally through multinational corporations. This process was accompanied by a wave of precarization. With the Postfordist mode of production, the dominant technology has passed from a mechanical and centralized understanding to an informational and networked model. networked organization, management, and control have come to dominate the global production chain. At the same time, this process has been accompanied by the expansion of instant production, production, distribution, and consumption processes, flexibility in labour processes, and networked technology becoming the centre of all changes. Network technology not only aims to perfect market mechanisms but also transforms working life. The spread of network technologies brings with it new production styles (Fisher, 2010, s. 233-239).

Thus, the work spreads from a single place to the whole society (Kaymas, 2017, s. 325). The labour of the producer, who is separated and isolated from others, is social labour: it forms a part of the labour of the society (Mandel & Freeman, 2008, s. 16). However, as work spreads to the whole society, the way work is done is fragmented. In this process, what is meant by fragmentation is "externalization and flexibility of the workforce" through "outsourcing the works or outsourcing them to another company on a contractual basis" (Gürcan & Kumcuoğlu, 2017, s. 67). The point to be noted here is that the individualization of

labour is a different construct from the division of labour. The individuation of labour and the division of labour are two different constructs operating simultaneously. The division of labour, unlike the individualization of labour, means that workers doing different jobs work in different departments. The division of labour is a crucial factor in the process of individualization of labour (Beshers & Fewell, 2001, s. 415).

It is seen that there is a connection between the phenomenon of individualization of labour and the emergence of neoliberalism (McGuian, 2010: 333). Along with neoliberalism, "a new threat to work and income, anxiety, insecurity, chronic mass unemployment, periodic consumption and income losses, and intellectual and moral impoverishment" has also been experienced (Mandel, 2008, s. 212). The phenomenon of individualization of labour, which can be read together with neoliberalism, recalls the increase in non-unionization (Mitchell & Fetter, 2003, s. 294). "With the information age, labour has lost its integrity. Rather than being organized, it has been fragmented and diversified. The diversity of the workforce on a global scale and not relying on virtual networks cause the labour to lose its integrity and accordingly the individualization of labour" (Yalnızoğlu, 2021, s. 22).

In the process of individualization of labour, "the dynamism of the labour market secured by the welfare state has weakened social classes within capitalism" (Beck, 2011: 133). Therefore, it can be said that the individualization of labour has progressed with the phenomenon of precarization. Precarization has accelerated with the removal of individuals from unions: With the individualization of labour, there has been a decrease in union membership (Beckmann et al., 2019, s. 20). Precarization denotes a process and not only non-union. The process of precarization permeates the entire lives of individuals and communities. Neoliberalisation processes, especially after the collapse of socialist states, have eroded the non-work side incomes of employees such as social insurance. Unemployment security, eroding the rights of retirees, and suppressing wages to the bottom have progressed with precarization. Moreover, income insecurity is another aspect of precarization (Della Porta, Hänninen, Siisiäinen & Silvasti, 2015, s. 2-3). The privatizations experienced with neoliberalism have affected the individualization of labour. Especially what happened in the health system and pension reforms in Western Europe can be given as an example of this situation (Lewis & Bennett, 2004, s. 44).

Since the second half of the 1970s, the transformation in labour forms, which manifested itself with post-Fordism, progressed with an ideology of individualization. This ideology of individualization draws attention to the fact that income, education, and mobility overshadow old inequalities and lead to increased individualization in the labour market. The ideology of individuation brings together ideas such as openness to an individualized society, high differentiation, and autonomy (Ostner, 2004, s. 47-49). However, this approach focuses on the problem of identity, unlike the phenomenon of individuation of labour. This approach is closer to fiction understood as individualism (Madsen, 1997, s. 199). What is meant by the individualization of labour is different from the individualization processes based on individualism (McGuigan, 2010, s. 132). However, the individualization of labour is not completely isolated from the phenomenon of individualization in society: the individualization of labour forces has been accelerated through individualism and competitiveness (Beckmann et al., 2019, s. 26). The development of information technologies

has not only affected labour processes but also pushes individuals to social isolation and exclusion (Göktürk, 2007, s. 218).

From this point on, it is useful to remember the questions asked about the phenomenon of individualization of labour in the introduction. These questions are as follows: "Is the individualization of labour meant isolation or does it emphasize the processes of non-unionization?." In the literature examined under this heading, it is noteworthy that the individualization of labour is analysed differently from the phenomenon of individualization and is read as referring to the processes of non-unionization/precarization. In this study, the two trends will be discussed together. In other words, the concept of individualization of labour will mean both the liquidation of large factories in the production processes and working with fewer people in smaller spaces, the accompanying tendencies of non-unionization/insecurity, and the increase in isolation/individualism in the social field.

Before mentioning the phenomenon of digital Taylorism, it is necessary to mention classical Taylorism. Taylorism is based on the ideas of Frederick Winslow Taylor. Taylor explains the principles as follows:

- Determining how best to do every job with the development of a real management science,
- Selecting the workers with the scientific method and revealing which worker will do which job better as a result,
- Scientific training and development of employees,
- Establishing friendly cooperation between management and employees (Köroğlu & Koç, 2017, s. 5).

Considering these principles, the three basic principles of Taylorism can be listed as follows:

(1) Gaining the knowledge of the workers about the production process to the capital. (2) To separate the design and implementation of the work and to detach the first from the worker and transfer it to the representatives of the capital. (3) To ensure that each step of the labour process is planned in detail by the management and that the application is constantly checked (Savran, 2007, s. 142).

According to Taylor's theory, complex tasks should be reduced to simple ones. This means that each movement of the worker is calculated. As a result, the best workers are rewarded with bonuses because of these calculations (Tobelem, 2017). Taylor proposed the separation of the planning and management phases and the execution phase. Taylor provided the application of positivist scientific methods to the relationship between workers and modern industrial production techniques. In this way, productivity in labour power, the performance of machines, and the applicability of tools will be increased. To do this, increasing the skills of workers with technical knowledge, more capital accumulation with control over time management, increased technical individualism and mechanization, and scientific studies on productive time have been tried. Digital Taylorism is simply the digitized version of Taylorism: "The global organizational system of knowledge labour based on knowledge or the third industrial revolution" (Vázquez & Purificación, 2011, s. 498-509).

Taylorism is prevalent today, especially in the service industry. This form of Taylorism has been made possible by digital development in the third sector of the economy.

For this reason, it is referred to as Digital Taylorism. Digitalization forces social relations at work to Digital Taylorism through computers, databases, and high-speed networks. Every move is tracked, studied, and controlled by management (Tobelem, 2017).

Digital Taylorism follows some of Taylor's original rules:

1. Reducing complex tasks to simple and standardized ones,
2. To view everything workers do and
3. Remuneration based on performance.

However, there are points where Digital Taylorism differs from traditional Taylorism. In Taylorism, workers are aware that management is watching them, but in Digital Taylorism this is less noticeable. Digital Taylorism completely standardizes labour by allowing algorithmic management, and various workers participate in various forms of the production process with situational and organizational synchronization (Günsel & Yamen, 2020, s. 113-114). Unlike traditional Taylorism, Digital Taylorism offers new forms of rewarding. But ultimately both types of Taylorism lead to the same social consequences: greater control over production processes and more intense exploitation of workers' time (Benayas, 2021).

Today, many platforms have scoring systems for the measurement, standardization and digitization, analysis and surveillance, management, and control of workers' labour. Either the platform automatically assigns points or customers rate workers. Numerous workers think that they are exposed to unfair scoring at this point (Altenried, 2020, s. 5-6). For example, there is a patented wristband that monitors the real-time hand movements of workers working in Amazon warehouses and records them for performance measurement and scoring (Salama, 2018). Another example is from Turkey:

> "MESS brought up the proposal they named 'MESS Safe' in praise of the 'technology of tomorrow'. In this system, which MESS announced to be developed, a device will be attached to the neck of the workers. This device will monitor the worker's movements. If the worker gets closer to another worker or machine than the required distance, the device will warn the worker and the employer. Thus, the employer will have the opportunity to monitor all the movements of the workers." (Özveri, 2020, s.500).

In summary, Digital Taylorism has worked with the standardization of business processes and the management of organizational information. The aim is to do the job ideally, and a new standard has been set in this direction. It is intended to save time by dividing large movements into smaller parts to reduce time. A new form of scientific management has been introduced to ensure that workers follow the well-established path: control over material terms. As a result of this process, management power shifted from managers to algorithms. The algorithm automatically determines the range of action (Nyckel, 2020, s.16-22).

Thus, it can be said that with the changing forms of labour, the control mechanisms of labour also change. With the phenomenon of Digital Taylorism, Taylor's efforts to use labour more efficiently are being modernized through algorithms and tracking devices. As a result, jobs are divided and fragmented, making them more unqualified, all the work done by the workers is followed and workers are rewarded/punished for their performance.

With the development of digital technologies, digital space has begun to be defined as the space where people become a new object of commercial exploitation (Pfeiffer, 2014,

s.601). With the effect of digitalization, labour productivity has doubled all time. The production of surplus value also takes a new form with digitalization. For example, software engineers sign overtime contracts. In digital capitalism, the game labour form is becoming dominant. The spirit of digital capitalism is a business culture of games and entertainment. With digital capitalism, the number of platform workers has also increased. These workers work as freelancers through platforms (Fuchs, 2021b, s. 26-31). Thus, traditional business forms and the lifestyles created by them have disappeared (Hardt & Negri, 2004: 209). Classes have also been affected by this situation. But digitalization also creates possibilities for communication and collaboration: the masses are no longer a collection seeking leadership from above; they are "collaborative singularities" (Camfield, 2009, s. 179-181). It is thought that the individualization of labour is closely related to the concept of cybercariat, which was originally proposed. Therefore, before discussing the possibility of digital class struggles, two concepts that make up the concept of cybercariat are examined.

Nick Dyer-Witheford (2019, s. 16), the pioneer of the concept of cyber proletariat, states that because of the class transformation that comes with digitalization, the working class no longer has strong bonds of solidarity as in industrial cities and that relations based on ethnicity and gender have taken the place of the class by determining the coordinates of social life. Another striking element in this determination is the underlining of the increase in consumerism (Dyer-Witheford, 2019, s. 16). Digitalization and cybernetics lead to the decline of the mass collective worker (Dyer-Witheford, 2019, s. 80). The mass collective worker is replaced by an individual worker with the division of labour. Starting from Dyer-Witheford, this process can be called the individualization of labour: As a result of this process, the collective worker was liquidated, and the individual worker emerged. In this transformation process, manufacturing jobs were moved from developed countries to Asia; “a service sector spread over wage labour in the spheres of circulation and social reproduction” has grown; women were “mobilized for both paid work and unpaid domestic labour”; “unemployment and underemployment, unpaid and precarious” labour increased; as a result of these developments, the professional and technical intermediate layer has expanded; universities have become training factories (Dyer-Witheford, 2019, s. 162).

The emphasis on precarity by Dyer-Witheford can also be seen in the concept of the precariat constructed by Guy Standing. The globalization and neoliberalism that took place in the 1970s led to radical transformations in the fields of economy, society, and politics. As can be seen in the transition from the Fordist mode of production to Postfordism, new forms of labour emerged during this period. Postfordism is also known for the increase in precarity called flexible production. The precariat is located further down as a different categorization from the working class. Although the precariat cannot be defined as a class in itself, it also has class characteristics. Therefore, the precariat is a sociality that is on its way to becoming a class (Standing, 2020, s. 38).

After discussing the concepts of cyber proletariat and precariat, it is seen that the concept of cyber proletariat emphasizes the labour production processes that occur in cyberspace. The concept of the precariat, on the other hand, implies insecurity, an insecure existence experienced not only in the digital space but also in all spaces. The concept of cybercariat, which was put forward at this stage, proposes a holism that will cover the

segments that are excluded from Huws's cybertaria and Dyer-Witheford's cyber-proletariat concepts - non-contracted workers, unpaid, unpaid, and unemployed. While the concepts of cyber and cyber-proletariat only examine the experiences of the working people, the concept of Cybercariat underlines the relationship between the exploitation of unpaid labour in the field, as well as the exploitation of unpaid labour, such as the exploitation of digital labour in Fuchs, with practices of precarization. However, the concept of cybercariat takes advantage of the concepts while approaching them critically, that is, it includes and transcends them. The claim that the cybercariat has a precarious existence is one example of this containment. In terms of working cybercariat, the pressure of wages towards the bottom, disorganization, the spread of simple and repetitive jobs, and the increase in surveillance practices can be seen as reflections of the processes underlined by the concepts of cybertaria and cyber-proletariat. Again, it is considered important that the concepts of cybertaria and cyber-proletariat draw attention to class relations in the digitalization processes. Therefore, the prefix cyber in the concept emphasizes the capacity of digital capitalism to carry labour exploitation to different spaces, while the suffix -cariat emphasizes that the labour exploitation here has a direct connection with the precarization processes of capitalism. The concept of cybercariat, "Is Digital Class Struggles Possible?" It is thought that its discussion under the title of the class is related to the concept of class. Because, according to the Marxist perspective, where the study stopped, the indicator that defines the concept of class is not wages, but "the potential and current attitude of the classes in the class struggle" (Savran, 2008, s. 10). Another pillar of which the definition is based is the material conditions that are decisive when introducing the concept of cybercariat (Savran, 2008, s. 10).

The Marxist theory of class is based on the concept of labour, which leads to human participation in social production activities through labour and thereby interacting with nature and other people. People participate in the production process within the framework of historical and social conditions that they cannot determine (Koşar, 2018). Considered within these principles, the concept of cybercariat indicates a burgeoning sociability in one of the areas where labour exploitation is most intense when its material conditions are considered. At the same time, this exploitation of labour makes it potentially "dangerous" (Merrifield, 2021)—that is, potentially favourable to class struggle. Cybercariat has been involved in production within the framework of historical and social conditions that they could not determine during the spread of digital capitalism and neoliberalism. However, it would still be overly ambitious to define a new "class" for cybercariat. Because the problem of consciousness comes to the fore in the mass participation in the digital capitalist labour process without precariousness, which is indicated by cybercariat.

In The Poverty of Philosophy (1979, s. 184) Marx addresses the issue of consciousness with the concepts of class-in-itself and class-for-self. Accordingly, economic conditions first make the people workers; the solidarity of the ruling classes creates common interests for the workers. Thus, these workers become a class (in itself) against capital, but they are not yet a class for themselves. They become a class for themselves, in Marx's words, only by uniting in the class struggle. So, the interests defended by the workers become those of the class and a political struggle ensues.

In The German Ideology of Marx and Engels (2013, s. 76), he emphasizes that class struggle takes precedence over class consciousness, with the statement "Unless a class emerges that has no special class interests to realize against the dominant class, it cannot be stopped from gathering individuals under certain classes in this way". Class struggle can also occur when there is no class consciousness and political struggle (as cited in Callinicos, Yılmaz, 2013, s. 353). Therefore, it can be said at this point that the proposed cybercariat is not yet a class for itself but is on the agenda as a potential class. Whether the cybercariat can be a class for itself is a question to be answered with the individualization of labour in mind.

With the development of artificial intelligence and robotic technologies, cybernetics has become one of the most important weapons of capital in the top-down class war (Dyer-Witheford, 2016, s. 182). Because "robots do not oppose, demand wage increases and better working conditions, do not strike and try to lead, which makes them attractive to capital as a means of limiting the potentials of working-class struggles" (Fuchs, 2021, s. 113). Another effect of digitization is that managers are not as visible as in the Fordist production process. Algorithms and robots have replaced the forepeople who tell employees what to do (Yeghikyan, 2020). This leads to the present appearance of the opposition to capital in the era of industrial capitalism: the opposition to capital represented by algorithms and robots (Lohmann, 2021, s. 50). Thus, the cyber proletariat encodes algorithms and robots, digitization as enemies. These reactions are not new: Engels, in Chapter 8 of The Condition of the Working Class in England, considers different forms of working-class struggles: a) crime, b) machine destruction, c) unions, and d) political movements. Engels sees crime and machine destruction as individual reactions. He preaches the unity of economic and political class struggles. In digital capitalism, there are many cybercrimes, and crimes using digital technologies. In digital capitalism, calls are being heard to stop using digital technologies. These strategies are technophobic and techno deterministic. These views see digital technologies as the source of stress, health problems, depression, and loneliness (Fuchs, 2021b, s. 39). Therefore, the task is to build a communist digital space together with a communist society (Greaves, 2015, s. 202). In digital capitalism, are there other strategies for cybercariat?

Jodi Dean (2014, s. 9) is one of those who responded positively to this question. Dean, for example, sees hackers' methods as a modern way of sabotage. According to him, there is a need for strategies that give communication more fundamental roles, face challenges, and establish stories and symbols. There should be arguments, claims, and positions. Individualities, differences, and inequalities should be considered, and new lines of struggle should be determined in this direction. Christian Fuchs proposes "digital socialism" in this direction. According to Fuchs, today's digital capitalism exploits the cyber proletariat in diverse ways. The alternative to digital capitalism is the transfer of class struggles to this area. Digital socialism aims at the unification of the cyber proletariat. To make this struggle real, he advises the union of national and international unions (Fuchs, 2020, s. 26). In this way, a society in which the means of production belong to everyone, and the disappearance of compulsory work may come to the fore (Özalp, 2020, s. 113).

With digitalization, the concept of exploitation in Marxism was decentralized and the concept of domination passed (Wright, 2016: 26), the narrative of freedom came to the fore.

With the intensification of digital Taylorism, the problem of freedom against the concept of control has come to the fore. Individuals construct control over themselves as an understanding of freedom. Freedom stands out as one of the important acquisition strategies in the historical struggle of the working class. Many rights such as reduced working time, public health services, free education, and the right to organize have been achieved because of long-term struggles and waves of protest. Cybercariat, on the other hand, is free to work from home. But it is surrounded by digital communication technologies and is monitored from mealtime to leisure time. However, they are asked to work longer hours in violation of their privacy. Therefore, the "new" freedom struggle develops against the control mechanisms of Digital Taylorism (Chattopadhyay & Pandit, 2021, s. 146-147).

New and concrete forms of struggle around the concept of digital socialism are discussed. One of these trends is the "platform expropriation" strategy, which supports platform workers to make decisions together (Englert et al., 2020, s. 141). Christopher M. Cox lists the demands put forward by digital socialism as a utopia project as follows:

- New ethics, values, and adjustments for labour
- Eliminating capitalist work ethic
- Shortening the weekly working hours
- Restoring social order by mastering institutional adjustments and collective values
- Central planning
- Democratic participation in the supply of goods and services
- Movement of networks, banks, and financial services determined based on worker ownership with the principle of majority protection
- Protection of decentralized business and finance with a central federal banking system
- Basic services
- Universal access to education, transport, housing, health, and media connectivity and production
- Universal basic income (Cox, 2020, s. 73).

Another concrete demand is "basic income." Kathi Weeks (2020, s. 580-583) states that this demand is a reform proposal that will not be enough to revolutionize capitalism unless it has a post-capitalist vision. However, according to him, basic income as reform will not only improve people's lives but will also provide the time and energy needed for further reforms and allow them to think about working and not working/thinking about changing its structure. A claim is not just an end but a process: it must be explained, defended, grounded, and discussed. A basic income is therefore an ideal tool for questioning the capitalist notion of work.

The question at the beginning was, "How does labour respond to individualization?" Returning to the question, the following answer can be given: Class struggles have also been transferred to the digital field with digitalization. Cybercariat tries various strategies against this situation. However, it cannot be said that these strategies have become permanent yet. The definition of the cyber proletariat by Nick Dyer-Witheford, on the other hand, does not fully cover the service workers employed/or employed in unpaid labour in the field of today's

information and communication technologies. Starting from Standing's concept of the precariat, the concept of cybercariat (cyber-precariat) would be appropriate in terms of emphasizing today's insecurity.

Example of Remote Work

Digitization has the potential to affect all areas of production. It, therefore, functions as the foundation of contemporary capitalism. Digitization has also changed the understanding of work in many ways. It has affected business strategies, job descriptions, managerial policies, production chains, and employment patterns as well as labour relations (Staab & Nachtwey, 2016, s. 458). With digitalization, the expectation of how "normal" working behaviour should be, as well as "a series of features of work that were considered exceptional or unusual in previous periods" has also transformed (Huws, 2018, s. 20).

In addition to standard work, which is defined as a full-time, continuous, direct employment model with digitalization, atypical work styles have become widespread with the increase in flexibility. Some of these forms of work are subcontracting, temporary employment, remote (home/tele) work, casual work, and informal employment (Kıcır, 2019, s. 176). Remote work, which will be examined in this study, is defined as "work done away from the central offices or production facilities, where the employee has no personal contact with the employees in the head office or production facilities but can communicate with them using new technology" (Karaca & Esen, 2019, s. 15).

Teleworking was first developed in the 1970s, after the oil crisis, as a form of work aimed at reducing travel and energy consumption. Remote work is realized through communication technologies such as internet technologies, e-mail, instant messaging, and videoconferencing, not directly through personal relationships since the employee works in a place far from the head office/production place. Thus, the work becomes independent of the place (Berkün, 2013, s. 17). With the development of communication technologies, remote working has become widespread (Karakoyun, 2016, s. 143). Remote work falls into distinct categories:

- Types of Remote Working According to the Nature of the Job
    - Remote work based on product supply
    - Service supply-based remote work
- Ways of Working Remotely in terms of Contacting the Main Office
    - On-line remote work
    - Off-line remote work
- Ways of Remote Working by Place of Work
    - Home-based remote work
    - Telecenter-based remote working
    - Mobile remote work (Berkün, 2013, s. 18).

Although home-based work and remote work are used interchangeably, home-based work is a subcategory of remote work. Thanks to the convenience provided by communication services, employees can work from any place, including home, without coming to the office/production place (Alkan Meşhur, 2007, s. 265). There are some obligations that both the employer and the employee must comply with in the remote working

process. For the employer, these are the obligations related to the provision of materials, worker health, and safety, prevention of social exclusion of the worker, and protection of personal information, while the obligation of equal treatment is the obligation of working and the duty of care for the employee (Görücü, 2018, s. 285).

According to 2005 data, 2.5 million people in the UK work from home. This number corresponds to 8% of all employees (Kıcır, 2019, s. 178). In another study conducted in 2017, it was claimed that half of all employees in the UK will switch to the remote working system (Gough, 2017). In the USA before the Covid-19 pandemic, this number corresponds to 5.7 million people, or 4.1% of all employment, according to 2019 data (Global Workplace Analytics, 2021). However, since 2005, remote working has increased by 140% worldwide (Simovic, 2021). It can also be said that there is an inequality in this area: For example, while 50% of the work has the potential to be done remotely in Luxembourg, this rate is 21% in Turkey (Tuna & Türkmendağ, 2020, s. 3247).

The advantage of teleworking is the flexibility it provides to the employer in the organizational structure, productivity, and increase in employee motivation (Özçelik, 2021, s. 225). The fact that employees do not lose time on the road and spend more time on the road by sleeping more, and the comfort of the remote working environment are crucial factors in increasing productivity. In addition, another factor seen as an advantage for employers is the decrease in office expenses (Zümbül, 2020). Employees participating in a study see the most important plus of remote working as balancing their personal and work life. Thus, they are free to set their workday (Koehne et al, 2012, s. 1260).

The disadvantages of remote working can be compiled as follows:

- Remote working is not suitable for every profession,
- Fewer wages compared to those working at the workplace,
- Social assistance, unfavourable regulations in terms of social security,
- Poor time management that occurs when working from home because of the loss of work discipline provided by the workplace,
- The narrowing of the distance between work and life,
- Being deprived of social opportunities provided by the workplace,
- The absence or weakening of business friendship ties,
- Loss of interaction between people, distancing, and loneliness tendencies,
- Uncertainty in the career plans of employees who are not at work,
- More workload because of employers' thinking that working from home is more comfortable,
- Diseases and disorders resulting from repetitive work, insufficient rest, and non-ergonomic working conditions,
- The employee can be controlled and accessible at any time (Aksoy, 2012, s. 405-409; Serinikli, 2021, s. 283; Zümbül, 2020; Özçelik, 2021, s. 226; Akca & Tepe Küçükoğlu, 2020, s. 75; Özmakas, 2015, s. 24; Törenli, 2011, s. 90).

When the positive and negative aspects of remote working are considered together, it is seen that the features attributed to the employer as positive are reflected as negative features against the employee (Tuna & Türkmendağ, 2020, s. 3248). With the Covid-19 pandemic, the tendency to work remotely has increased (Tuna & Türkmendağ, 2020, s. 3248). In particular,

the users of applications such as Zoom, Microsoft Team, and Slack have “reached 100 million from 10 million” (Akca & Tepe Küçükoğlu, 2020, s. 75). Facebook's CEO, Mark Zuckerberg, announced in July 2020 that new remote work positions will be opened and that they aim to work half of the employees remotely in the next 5 to 10 years, Microsoft has started a 4-day working week in Japan and a hybrid work is being conducted as workplaces open. In this sense, many employees are free to choose to work from home until October 2020. Companies such as Amazon, Google, and Twitter have also planned to offer their employees the option to work from home. During the pandemic, Barclays Bank tried to employ approximately 70,000 of its 80,000 employees from home. Technology company Fujitsi has announced that it will halve its offices in Japan and provide permanent flexibility to its 80,000 employees through its work-life change program (Görmüş, 2020, s. 489).

According to a report published by Eurostat, the European Union Statistical Office, in April 2021, the rate of remote workers “sometimes” in Turkey is 1.7, while the rate of permanent remote workers is 3%. These numbers increased by 0.7 percent and 0.9 percent, respectively, compared to the previous year. This increase can be read as the effect of the pandemic on remote working. The ratio of remote workers, which is 4.7% in total, can be measured as 1 million 457 thousand when compared to all employed (31 million 595 thousand) (Eurostat, 2021; TÜİK, 2021).

Why is the problematic of "individualization of labour increased with digital capitalism, and this phenomenon can be examined with the increase of remote work", which was put forward at the beginning of the study, why is it important? And what are the theoretical underpinnings of this problematic? Based on Fuchs's (2013, s. 51) approach, this question will be answered by examining the concepts of capital accumulation processes, class relations, general domination, ideology, and struggle against the dominant order.

With digital capitalism, the increasing role of information in networks, automation, and capital accumulation processes has come to the fore. This process of change and transformation has been experienced intensively in the service sector. With digital capitalism, class relations have also changed and transformed. First, the production and sales stages have been globalized. The way the work is done, which spreads from a single place to the whole society, is also divided into parts. This transformation in work and the organization of production has progressed with the decentralization of the management apparatus, the spread of the bespoke market, and the fragmentation and individualization of work. In the study, this process was read within the framework of the concept of "individualization of labour". The division of labour processes through multinational companies has led to the globalization of precarity. The global division of labour has also given a global context to the individualization of labour.

Digital capitalism also emerged and spread simultaneously with neoliberalism. Thus, features such as insecurity, a threat to job and income, flexibility, mass unemployment, non-unionization, and individualization ideology, which are seen because of neoliberalism, have also affected digital capitalism. In this process, where digital capitalism and neoliberalism have become widespread simultaneously, Taylorism has also become “Digital Taylorism” by being digitalized. Digital Taylorism corresponds to a stage where measurement, standardization, digitization, analysis, surveillance, management, and control processes on

labour are also transferred to algorithms. Thus, domination takes place at every moment of the labour process through digital networks. The title of struggle against the dominant order proposed by Fuchs will be discussed at the end of this section. Therefore, to understand today's labour forces and class struggles, the concepts of individualization of labour, digitalized capitalism, and cybercariat seem useful.

It is mentioned that the concept of cybercariat is derived from the concepts of the cyber proletariat and precariat. Dyer-Witheford (2019) refers to "the proletariat existing in digital space" by the concept of the cyber proletariat. This class is globally divided and individualized. In addition to this concept, the distrust process of the precariat concept introduced by Standing (2020) has also been considered. The concept of cybercariat is pioneering because it emphasizes the labour processes that take place in cyberspace proposed by the cyber proletariat and draws attention to the possibility of the emergence of a class at this point, as well as the existential precarization experienced with the concept of the precariat. Another reason the concept of the cyber proletariat is considered inadequate is that the workers working in cyberspace are not "a class for themselves". For the cyber proletariat, there is a "common situation and common interests" in Karl Marx's words. "This mass is thus already a class against capital, but not yet for itself" (Marx, 1979, s. 184). The precariat, on the other hand, is not yet a "class for itself," as Standing (2020, s. 21) puts it. In this respect, it is claimed that the concept of cybercariat corresponds to class information.

With the replacement of the presence of managers by algorithms in Digital Taylorism, the perception of the enemy of cybercariat has become technophobic. Suggestions such as hacktivism, digital socialism, nationalization of platforms, and basic income were left in the air because of general strategic deprivation. It can be said that cybercariat is based on freedom against domination. Nevertheless, the mentioned deprivation continues.

Remote working is a form of labour that is the product of digital capitalism, where the individualization of labour is experienced. When the examples of remote work are examined, it has been seen that the forms of labour in Turkey and the world are insecure, contract-based, globally divided, and spread to the whole society and the ways of doing it are divided. Remote workers are part of the disorganized cybercariat doing standardized and unskilled work, which is planned and controlled by algorithms, rewarded, or penalized based on performance. The exploitation of labour in teleworking has increased so much that much of the work done by workers lately is not even paid (Jones, 2021). Considering these examinations, the claim that the individualization of labour has increased with digital capitalism and that this phenomenon can be examined through the example of remote work has been discussed based on the theoretical framework.

Discussion and Result

In the study, the phenomenon of individualization of labour, which has increased with digital capitalism, has been examined through the example of remote work. It emphasizes a change in thinking in contemporary production relations because of digital capitalism, neoliberalism, and digitalization processes. Remote work is one of the forms of labour that has increased with the development of digitalization. Remote workers are often employed in the service industry. In the process of working remotely, employees are faced with the

phenomenon of social exclusion: The distance between their work and their lives narrows, they are deprived of the social opportunities provided by the workplace, the ties of business friendship are not formed or weakened, and the interaction between people weakens. As a result, employees cannot express their demands collectively. Therefore, the example of remote working is one of the clearest examples of the social and union individualization of labour. The individualization of labour is a continuation of the postfordist production regime. The decentralization and flexibility of working processes have progressed with the process of individualization of labour.

In the introduction part of the study, answers to the following questions were sought: Is digital capitalism the occurrence of capitalism in digital areas? Is digital capitalism a new era of capitalism? Is isolation meant by the individualization of labour, or is the emphasis on the processes of non-unionization? The individualization of labour with remote work brings two questions: a) How do the control mechanisms of labour take place? b) How does labour respond to this individuation?

As a result, in the study, it has been examined that digital capitalism should not be seen as a trend of capitalism and a new economic system to emerge from this trend, but as a new stage of capitalism -like agricultural and industrial capitalisms. With the concept of individualization of labour, it is understood that large factories should be eliminated in the production processes, working with more people in smaller spaces, and the accompanying tendencies of non-unionization/insecurity and the increase of loneliness/individualism in the social field should be expressed. It is seen that the phenomenon of digital Taylorism has become a new form of labour control mechanisms. With Digital Taylorism, it can be said that the productivity of labour is increased with algorithms and tracking devices -with reward and punishment systems- and the work is divided and made more unqualified, and this process is related to the individualization of labour. Digital Taylorism aims to intensify labour by making it insecure, thus increasing productivity. It can be said that the most obvious example of the individualization of labour progressing with insecurity is teleworking and that teleworking has increased with the pandemic.

The individualization of labour depicts the replacement of the collective worker by the individual worker. While it is seen that the remote working conditions, which have increased with digitalization, have developed in favour of the capital and against the workers, it is seen that the concept of the cyber proletariat is insufficient to understand today's precarious working conditions. To understand the class relations experienced in remote work, it is claimed that the concept of cybercariat is more convenient based on the concept of the precariat. Cybercariat is an emphasis on the precariousness of labour processes taking place in digital space rather than a classroom. Those who do remote work are part of the cybercariat. It can be argued that in today's class struggle, the notion of freedom has taken on a new meaning against control mechanisms. It has been revealed that the workers are trying many strategies in the class struggles carried into the digital field and no permanent success has yet been achieved. One of the main reasons for this is that the phenomenon of individualization of labour also individualizes class struggles. Demands in the form of hacks and proposals to improve the conditions of individuals (such as digital socialism and basic income) lead to the weakening of class struggles.

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