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### Abstract

This article aims to analyze the main implications of metamorphoses in the world of work in the transition from a Fordist paradigm to a post-Fordist, for the professionalization of teaching work. Therefore, three important studies on Brazilian teaching are taken as empirical material and it is pointed out the importance of considering the diagnoses about the changes in the world of work in order to understand and make more complex the current context experienced by teachers. We begin by examining the main transformations which have occurred in recent capitalism since the triumph of neoliberal thought in Brazil, signaling to the emergence of new professional profiles that are now required in the current context. Afterwards, we present a diagnosis about teaching professionalization and teaching sickness in Brazil, evidencing that the concept of degendering is an important tool for future studies which pursue to investigate such topics.

Keywords: Teaching work, Capitalism, Degendering of work.

### Introduction

In a magazine with a wide circulation in Brazil a headline draws our attention to it: "The teacher of the future". The magazine issue published at the end of 2017 announced the challenges of teachers for the 21st century. Among these challenges stood out the domain of technologies and of socio-emotional competences. At the end of the magazine issue, five indispensable competences were available for the "masters who will prepare the new generations". The first competence consists of the so-called "innovative spirit", which according to the magazine issue, would be related to the introduction of new teaching tools, such as electronic devices. The second competence would be "continuing education" and the third would be "teamwork". The fourth competence would involve the "social skills", which means that the teacher has to know how to teach students to deal with problems and make healthy choices to solve conflicts. And the fifth and final competence, which the magazine issue names as "content curation," would be related to the ability to filter the best content in the face of the excess of information we have available all the time (MASSON, 2017).

With this article we do not wish to place ourselves to the detriment of the importance of such competences for the performance of Brazilian teachers, but we want to understand what the main changes are related to Brazilian teaching in recent years and how these changes can be understood in the light of the metamorphoses of the world of work and the new configurations of capitalism. Therefore, this article is divided into two sections. In the first one we present a diagnosis about the main

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changes related to the transition from a Fordist to a post-Fordist context. In this section we also present the concept of "degendering of work" developed by the Italian sociologist Cristina Morini (2008). In the second section we present an analysis of three important studies produced during the decade of 2010 on the conditions of the contemporary teaching work and we point to the productivity of the concept of degendering for a better understanding about Brazilian teaching work.

# The metamorphoses of the world of work and the new configurations of capitalism: a diagnosis

In this section we aim to launch an attentive look the major changes in the world of work, from the establishment of new configurations of capitalism. Ricardo Antunes (2010), in an important study of the Brazilian sociology of work, raises a pertinent question for the present: Would we be facing the end of work? In the words used in the title of the work, the question could be put like this: "Goodbye to work?" Throughout the work, the Brazilian sociologist makes clear that he does not support a thesis that advocates the end of work however, he seeks to describe a new morphology of work. This new morphology would have as its visible element its multifaceted design, the result of strong mutations that shook the productive world in the last decades. The contours acquired by this "worker's new way of being" would contemplate characteristics such as being polyvalent and multifunctional.

In a more recent study, Antunes (2014) deepens this analysis and describes a new morphology of work in Brazil. For the researcher, the transformations that occurred in recent capitalism, starting in the mid-1980s and 1990s, triggered off a set of modifications that altered the working class' being. Thus, according to the author, with the triumph of neoliberal thought in Brazil, we see an expansion of the process of productive restructuring "through the adoption of new organizational and technological standards, new forms of work organization and the introduction of participatory methods" (ANTUNES, 2014, p.40). This "new working class' being", according to the researcher, would have as main characteristics flexible, productive and deregulated work.

For Dardot and Laval (2016, p. 326), in a recent diagnosis, neoliberal thinking has as one of the fundamental characteristics "a man discourse's homogenization around the company figure". In this way, several techniques have been used to make a new unit subject that the authors will name as "neo subject". With this conceptualization they emphasize a difference in the organization of work and in the constitution of worker's subjectivity, no longer organized by the coercion that sought to "train the bodies and bend the spirits to make them more docile" (DARDOT; LAVAL, 2016, p. 326); but a government that must involve and govern each subjectivity so that it wishes to "fully participate, to fully engage, to give up completely to its professional activity" (DARDOT; LAVAL, 2016, p. 326). From this point of view, the new management techniques would be based on a "Lacanian government" (DARDOT, LAVAL, 2016, p. 326) reaching the height of the alienation exactly when aiming to suppress any form of alienation. Explaining the metaphor, it would be a kind of government by desire. Thus, the effect sought by the new manufacturing and management practices would be "to make the individual to work for the company as if he worked for himself" (DARDOT, LAVAL, 2016, p. 327).

Looking at this change in the work administration forms, Carlos Bordoni, in dialogue with Zygmunt Bauman (2016), points out that while the management's knowledge in an industrial capitalism, ruled by a Fordist labor organization, organized its practices on the basis of stability and continuity by searching routines, learning and memorization, the new management's knowledge, in a post-Fordist context, working in a volatile and unpredictable context reject the routine, operating in the logic of irregularity and forgetfulness. In such a context, questions such as imagination, novelty and boldness become more and more exalted and required characteristics, as in Bordoni's words:

> In such an environment, personal peculiarities, including bizarre and unclassifiable idiosyncrasies once banished from the office and left in the cloakroom at the building entrance, are now seen as the most precious of advantages and the most promising and lucrative capital. The quest for success requires that they be nurtured, uncontested, or smothered. (BAUMAN, BORDONI, 2016, p. 67)

It will be in looking at this valuation of differences in the context of a cognitive capitalism that the Italian sociologist Cristina Morini (2008) will point to a tendency towards the "degendering of work" in Contemporaneity. According to the researcher, cognitive capitalism in its contemporary form seems to impose a single and homogenous device of command over work, namely: "it is the differences themselves, and the exploitation of these differences, which translate into a *surplus* of value" (MORINI, 2008, p.250, emphasis added). Thus, the production/reproduction dichotomies, male/female labor would lose meaning and, objectively, we could only think of a work that has increasingly become degendered.

Morini (2008), in her analysis of work feminization process in cognitive capitalism, shows that capitalism has appropriated polyvalence, multiactivity and the quality of women's work, seeking to exploit women's experience<sup>2</sup> in the historical performance of their tasks in the spheres of reproductive and domestic work for public sphere work. Therefore, characteristics such as being malleable and hyperflexible become the constituent elements of work, regardless of gender. It is important to emphasize that when we refer to the feminization of work in cognitive capitalism, it is possible to understand the process beyond the exclusive scope of production, because "whenever we say 'work' in cognitive capitalism, we understand less and less a precise and delimited portion of our life, and increasingly a global action "(MORINI, 2008, p.250).

Fumagalli (2016), about this issue, describes what he names as "biocognitive capitalism". According to the researcher, during the primacy of industrial capitalism the wage-labor process represented the primordial way in which a formal subsumption of life occurred through a command of capital over labor. Thus, the "technical composition and division of labor, based on a strict separation between the human being and the machine and on the hierarchical discipline of work performance, characterized the actual subsumption phase" (FUMAGALLI, 2016, page 15). In

<sup>2</sup> Morini (2008) points out that by using this expression "women's experience", she ends up using a generalization that may sound imprecise. The researcher reiterated that it would be impossible to make statements that would be valid for all women. Thus, when the author refers to the expression "women and their experiences" does not seek to start from a fixed heterosexual and Eurocentric binomial to describe these experiences. In contemporary capitalism the presence of subjects from diverse backgrounds and diversely sexed end up occupying a prominent place, under the spotlights.

biocognitive capitalism, the technical division of labor and the separation between human and machine are no longer the main factors that move the real subsumption.

It is no longer the time of factory production, where labor productivity was measured by the chronometer applied to machine times and rhythms. The activities of learning and networking (the birth and diffusion of knowledge) are intrinsically linked to the worker subjectivity, expertise and individuality. The timing of learning and networking - the time of the general intellect - becomes objectively unverifiable and therefore not directly monitorable (FUMAGALLI, 2016, p. 15-16).

Because of this difficulty of verification and measurement of immaterial production, biocognitive capitalism will need to refine its forms of control, and this refinement of control techniques to carry out a government and subsumption of life would be what would differentiate biocognitive capitalism from cognitive capitalism. The subsumption of life would be a process that, according to Fumagalli (2016), would explore worker's subjective individuality, transforming the differences/diversity of gender, race, education, character and experience into value.

This worker's differences and individualities appreciation are also a dimensions examined when describing the so-called "emotional capitalism". Sociologist Eva Illouz (2007), in the book Intimidades Congeladas, will describe and analyze the emotional dimension in capitalism, which would be managed by the axiom of control and emotional management. Such an axiom would have been produced and would be strengthened by the discourses of self-help. Thus, emotional capitalism constitutes a culture in which emotional and economic discourses/practices would have a relation of immanence and would produce a displacement, where "affection becomes an essential aspect of economic behavior and emotional life" (ILLOUZ, 2007, p. 19-20). For Han (2016, p. 38), in a critical perspective, the "neoliberal regime presupposes emotions as a resource to increase productivity and income." Thus, today workers would be required not only cognitive competence, but also emotional competence. Emotions become the raw material within a context of capitalism of emotions.

Another nuance that deserves attention when looking at the transformations in contemporary capitalism refers to the analyzes developed by Richard Sennett (1999) regarding flexible capitalism. For the sociologist, subjects and culture will be redefined in times where flexibility acquires centrality. We can highlight three aspects that have sustained the centrality of flexibility. The first aspect would be related to the continued reinvention of institutions in relation to new forms of organization focused on increasing efficiency and productivity. The second aspect would be linked to flexible specialization which would have specific implications for the need for permanent innovation and for increasing competitiveness. The third and last aspect refers to concentration without centralization, that is, a new form of work organization regulated by new forms of control, linked to the creation of goals (usually difficult to fulfill) and a pursuit for the qualification of performances.

Under the conditions of flexible capitalism described by Sennett, the willingness to risk and reinvent ourselves emerge as fundamental virtues. However, this new configuration ends up exposing "individuals to permanent vulnerabilities, through which they embark on continuous training processes" (SILVA, 2015, p.29). The need to become employable has produced an increase in precariousness in the world of work, and has required us to become more employable, since we are stimulated/ summoned to consume services that will be essential so we can keep the characteristics demanded by the market.

We can infer that this need to build ourselves employable and in permanent training is produced in the change of emphasis analyzed by Bell (1977), in a classic study in the sociology of labor, from an industrial society to a post-industrial society. For the researcher, one of the ways to define a post-industrial society would be through the change in occupational distributions, that is, "it has been altered not only the *place* where people work, but also the *type* of work they perform. Among the determinants of class and stratification in society, occupation constitutes the most important determinant of them"(BELL, 1977, p.29, emphasis added).

The social prediction proposed by Bell in the 1970s acquires specific contours in the current contexts with the intensification and strengthening of neoliberal thinking. Again, using the analysis of Dardot and Laval (2016), the great news of the contemporary context in relation to the fabrication of new subjectivities for work would reside in a modeling that makes individuals more capable of withstanding the new working conditions that are imposed, also producers of these conditions contributing to the strengthening of this logic. In a competition-centered context and with a focus on self-realization, as the studies reviewed here show, it prints out and shapes a new way of being a worker in the present days.

The new dimensions assumed by the changes in recent capitalism as we have sought to show have operated a significant change in labor relations, either through an emphasis on flexibility, emotion or the immaterialisation of labor. Such configurations change the subjectivity of the worker himself who must take on new characteristics and relate himself in a new way with the work. What we want to show in this article is that such changes have produced a new relationship between the teacher and the teaching work.

Maria Eliza Rosa Gama and Mariana Vizzotto Motta (2017) carried out a relevant literature review in five journals of important academic impact for the field of Education in Brazil. The authors identified 231 articles, in the period between 2010 and 2014, that discuss the topic of Teaching Work (TD) in the periodicals analyzed. Of these articles, 30 were selected for analysis because they focused on the theme of teaching work in public primary schools in Brazil. The authors established nine agglutination axes by the articles' analysis. From the 30 articles analyzed, 11 articles are in the "Educational Policies and Teaching Work" axis. This research set, according to the authors, would mostly focus on the changes and impacts in the organization and implementation of TD due to public policies and educational reforms in relation to working practices and conditions. The results would point mainly to the intensification of teaching work. According to the authors, the articles when delineating a link between the effects of public policies such as teacher professional suffering, show that educational programs when trying to manage or solving educational problems with the intensification of schooling may be producing a kind of "madness of teachers "(CORREIA et al., 2012) as one of the researches analyzed by the authors named.

The three agglutination axes that presented 5, 4 and 3 papers respectively by the authors' categorization are: "Professional identity, professionalism and

professionalization", "New technologies and teaching work" and "Health and teaching work". In the axis "Professional identity, professionalism and professionalization" the works which stood out focused on the beginning teachers and on the absence of strategies, either of the maintainers or of the schools, for the insertion of these professionals. Regarding the new technologies the authors pointed out that "it was possible to perceive that research on this subject is becoming recurrent over the years" (GAMA, MOTA, 2017, p.10170). The researches analyzed by the authors pointed to the importance of the use of Educational Technology in the teaching work considering the new profile of students who are at schools, for whom the use of chalk and black board would be ineffective. Such studies besides pointing out successful experiences in other countries would highlight the lack of structure and qualified teachers to perform this work in Brazilian public schools.

In the axis on Health and teaching work, the articles' focus would be on the phenomenon named in literature as teacher malaise which is understood as a social phenomenon of the Western world. This phenomenon would be unleashed by different factors such as: depreciation, enlargement of professional demands, violence and indiscipline. These factors result in a teacher's questioning about his/her professional choice and the meaning of his/her profession. The studies of this axis also point to the teaching profession as one of the most stressful professions and discuss about the different pathologies presented by teachers in the contemporary world, with emphasis on burnout syndrome.

When resuming this literature review, we want to give visibility to a significant set of contemporary researches which has been proposed to investigate teaching work conditions in Brazil, but also in other countries, showing that different aspects have contributed to the enlargement of its precariousness. Whether due to the category's depreciation or the functions' expansion today's teachers face dilemmas and tensions that seem to limit their field of action, producing stress, illness and distance from the profession. In an international perspective, we highlight the analyzes of Jan Masschelein and Maarten Simons (2014) on the professionalization of teaching work which, for philosophers, would consist of a tactic to tame teachers who would assume "the position of a private business manager" (p. 137). This new teacher's position only seems possible to us in a context of centrality of learning (BIESTA, 2013) where the teacher who is positioned as a facilitator (manager) of student's learning (private matters) has his/her main function, which is teaching, dimmed (BIESTA, 2016). As shown by Gert Biesta (2013) the new language learning main problem is the description of the educational process in economic terms transforming pupils into consumers, teachers and schools into providers and the education in a commodity that must be supplied or delivered by the teacher. Such language learning strengthening in the current context could produce an erosion in the way we understand the teaching processes and the disappearance of the teacher as responsible for these processes (Biesta, 2016).

Pongratz (2013), when analyzing the educational reforms effects in Germany with the objective of improving its performance in PISA, points out that in the educational processes the emergence of a new vocabulary is visible which understands the teaching processes as a kind of learning management. Thus, he describes a transition from Fordist forms of educational production from which educational guidelines and defined elements of the curriculum would establish a corresponding

set of methods. For post-Fordist steering models where teaching strategies would be geared towards the care of the subject / student as a client. After such a review we understand the importance of analyzing the new configurations of TD in the light of the changes in capitalism, which we have already described above, and taking as central the concept of "degendering of work". We believe that such analyzes can launch a new work front for studies which seek to identify, understand and describe the new conditions of Brazilian teaching work.

# Teaching professionalism and teachers' sickness: a look from the degendering of work

In the beginning of the 2010, the researchers Dalila de Oliveira and Lívia Vieira (2012) publish the results of an investigation about work in basic education in seven Brazilian states. The main focus of the study was the teachers' condition. This research was developed from four guiding hypotheses that point to a new configuration of teaching work, namely: (1) enlargement of the teachers' workday without formal recognition; (2) increase in teaching functions and responsibilities; (3) intensification and self-intensification of work; and (4) the emergence of a new technical division of labor in educational units. This new organization would have as one of the main characteristics to link more and more the teachers' remuneration to the students' performance offering prizes and bonuses articulated to teachers' productivity. It is possible to perceive along this new policy the career plans dismantlement through the dissolution of promotions and professional guarantees resulting in greater flexibility in employment relations and a significant increase in temporary contracts. Another highlighted element in the research is the excessive number of students per class and the practices imposed through a more collective work management (discussion with the peers, individual student's accompaniment, etc.), which would also be causing physical and mental suffering to the teachers.

We can make some reflections about the analyzes' potentiality concerning to the degendering of work to understand the constitution of teaching work in the Contemporaneity when looking at the results presented by the researchers considering some of the diagnoses described in the previous section. If, as we have pointed out in Morini's (2008) studies, one of the elements related to this process would be shaped by a visible elimination in the division established between working time and free time, producing a subsumption that "reaches the spheres today (Morini, 2008, p.254), or what Fumagalli (2016) named as subsumption of life, the teaching work does not seem to escape such a diagnosis. Remembering that one of the aspects observed by the researchers refers to the increase of the working day without formal recognition and to an intensification and self-intensification of work.

Another highlight which deserves attention refers to the increasing of teachers' functions and responsibilities. It can be understood in the context of what Morini (2008) described as a process of infinite adaptability and flexibility, characteristics that would be well known by women. In this context, the historical experience of women's work is taken as a rule, intensifying the processes of work precariousness. The classic studies of Louro (1997) show that the process of feminization and professionalization of the teaching profession has been articulated producing a re-signification of teaching work. If we consider this idea "the teaching will be represented in a new way as it becomes feminized (LOURO, 1997, p.95). Such questions

seem to assume a new contour with the new forms of capitalism described above, increasing the precariousness and intensification of work no longer associated with female characteristics but also to the new demands of the labor market in the neo-liberal context.

In another study developed in the same decade, Verónica Pfingsthorn and Judit Pagès (2016) also dedicated themselves to understanding the new configurations of teaching work, achieving similar results. The researchers reflected on the teacher subjectivity construction in a post-Fordist context. They mapped a new teachers' profile which would tend on the one hand to the "accumulation of knowledge, abilities, extensive life and work trajectories, often little recognized (PFINGSTHORN, PAGÈS, 2016, p. 142), and on the other, to a strong sense of "vulnerability, insecurity, guilt and exploitation" (PFINGSTHORN, PAGÈS, 2016, p. 142). In a flexibility and mobility context, the researchers point to some specific features of the employment new forms which have produced this new teacher's profile. The first trait refers to the issue of mobility. The authors show that among the teachers who participated in their research there were recurrent teachers reports, especially from beginner teachers, who pointed out a need for permanent arrangement for geographical displacement and mobility related to constant changes of contractual profile.

The second trait is corporeity. Regarding this the researchers point to a recurrent narrative of the participating teachers in describing a sense of non-belonging to the workplace which would produce stress, guilt and insecurity. The third element identified would be the relationship with the knowledge. In the analyzed context it would be producing a continuous demand for lifelong learning. It would also be creating "an ambivalent feeling of being highly qualified, but feeling less valued than it should, thinking that we are never sufficient to find decent and continuous work in which we can develop"(PFINGSTHORN, PAGÈS, 2016, 143). Profitability and precariousness would be included in the fourth aspect highlighted by the researchers. They show that the research participating teachers presented ideas about vocation, self-justification for enjoying their own work, and the desire and pleasure of choosing the path of teaching, despite their precariousness. The fifth and last aspect presented in this study refers to the care that, as the researchers point out, "has become part of the economy as a form of immaterial affective work" (PFINGS-THORN, PAGÈS, 2016, 143).

Following our argumentative line, we pointed out that the traits mapped by the researchers regarding the emergence of a new teacher profile in front of the new configurations of the work, can be understood as a process of degenring of the teaching profession. Attributes such as mobility, corporeality, lifelong learning, profitability, precariousness and affective work begin to guide teaching to the detriment of characteristics associated with a feminine nature and a supposed maternal instinct. Today the demands on teaching seem to be guided no longer by the teaching associated with motherhood and vocation but also to questions related to metamorphoses in the world of work described in the diagnosis presented previously. Even though the study points out that the teachers who participated in the research describe as one of the elements which justify their choice by teaching as a vocational aspect, this does not seem to be the central issue that guides teaching work in Contemporaneity. Towards the analysis end of the present a last study on teaching work in the Contemporaneity developed by Vera Balinhas and collaborators (2013). The researchers analyzed elements of the teachers' work process in a municipal network in the southern region of Brazil, between 2007 and 2009. They showed that the teaching image as a sacrifice, when naturalized as an intrinsic element of teaching work has produced conditions of teachers' sickness and/or work emotional distancing. The research diagnosed that:

Teachers have been losing their will and pleasure in teaching and over time wear and tear has led most of the professionals to wonder about their place of work, their colleagues, their students and their profession. And sometimes this process is followed by nervousness, irritability, and stress (BALINHAS et al., 2013, p.266).

Faced with the realization that working conditions have effectively generated the so-called "teacher malaise" the research points to solidarity among peers as a mitigating factor for such a scenario of illness and precariousness. Here we would like to explore the hypothesis that one of the central questions to understand the teacher malaise is the new morphology of work as explored in the previous research. This new morphology of work by producing a degendering of work (MORINI, 2008) and a consequent subsumption of life (FUMAGALLI, 2016) has expanded this scenario of teacher illness. The "flexibilization sufferings" (SAFATLE, 2016), as well as the "clinical neo subject diagnoses " (DARDOT; LAVAL, 2016) seem an interesting scenario for new researches that seek to investigate this theme. It should also be pointed out that as described by Byung-Chul Han (2016) in "A sociedade do cansaço" a society based on income and activity would be producing excessive tiredness and fatigue. Therefore, as we can see in the three studies described above, a teaching work enlargement and intensification which can be one of the important factors to be considered when analyzing the teaching sickness.

Returning to the argument presented above, it is important to be aware of how teachers' sickness also lacks a new level of intelligibility for future researchers. Safatle (2016, p.187), noting that from the year of 2010 the cases of depression have grown by an average of 20% a year. Currently represented the mode of psychic suffering with greater economic impact launches a very provocative question about these modifications:

We have the right to ask ourselves if such temporal parallelism would not hold deep articulations between them. In what sense would it be possible to affirm that changes in the universe of work are important factors for the growth of certain pictures of psychic pathologies? It is not a question here of whether suffering in the world of work manifests itself in the form of depressive disorders. It is rather a question of how the forms of conflict produced by the psychic impact of the world of work are currently managed, among other strategies, by the constitution of clinical frameworks capable of individualizing suffering dynamics whose causal structure masks the possibility of understanding relationships between social and psychic suffering.

According to the author contemporary illnesses share characteristics such as sadness, emptying and loneliness. It seems that the more we demand the formation

of flexible, dynamic and proactive workers, the more we expand these workers' psychological suffering. And as we can see in the results of the three surveys presented previously focusing on teaching this scenario does not seem very different. Neoliberal thinking when constructing the belief "that it is only the individual who is responsible for the failure of the attempt to self-affirm his individuality within the work" (SAFATLE, 2016, 189) seems to contribute to strengthening and amplifying these feelings of incapacity which end up creating the workers' sickness.

#### **Final considerations**

In our analyzes we persue to support the argument that a tendency towards the degendering of work has produced a new relation of the worker both with time and space (MORINI, 2008). This tendency is intensifying the logics of competition and performance (DARDOT, LAVAL, 2016) centralizing and valuing skills traditionally associated with female work for all workers regardless of gender (HARDT; NEGRI, 2016). Thus, by articulating the results of three studies carried out in the context of the 2010 decade which explored the new configurations of teaching work in Brazil we showed that the strengthening of neoliberal rationality has produced a re-signification of what it means to be a teacher nowadays. Besides expanding teachers' work hours and instilling new management and orientation methods guided by the principles of collaboration and individualized follow-up of each student (OLIVEI-RA; VIEIRA, 2012), a new teaching subjectivity is produced, centered on the knowledge accumulation, skills and competencies that are often poorly recognized, bringing forth a feeling of vulnerability, insecurity and guilt (PFINGSTHORN; PAGÈS, 2016). It seems to strengthen the naturalization of teaching image as a sacrifice, producing sickness and/or detachment from work (BALINHAS et al., 2013).

This teaching work reconfiguration when taken under the light of the degendering of work concept is evidenced as a process of subsumption of life (FUMAGALLI, 2016) producing a greater intensification and precariousness of teachers' work. Thus, the "clinical diagnoses of neo subject", as described by Dardot and Laval (2016), as well as the "flexibilization sufferings" explored by Safatle (2016) and the work of degendering concept (MORINI, 2008) are fruitful for future analyzes of the teaching work in a scenario of intensification of neoliberalism political grammar.

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