



Logistics and crisis: The supply chain system in the Po valley region

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Abstract

The theme of this article is an inquiry into the logistics of contemporary global capitalism, seen through the lens of the struggles developed in this sector during the last couple of years in the Po valley region, in northern Italy. To make a full analysis of the topic, we propose a trans-disciplinary approach: from the theoretical field to the anthropological one, passing through geographical and sociological aspects. Thus, our article is divided into five parts in which we try to focus not just on different crucial elements, but even on different geographical levels: from global to local.

Key words: logistics; struggles; supply chain; trade unions; cooperatives business

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A theoretical overview

Before delving into the issue at the regional level of Po Valley, in the first part we would discuss some theoretical fundamentals, which we have established on the works of Karl Marx and Anna Tsing. Firstly, we believe it is really important to clarify not only what logistics is, but also how logistics is generally viewed or defined. According to the general and open source information website Wikipedia, logistics is defined as:

«the management of the flow of resources between the point of origin and the point of consumption in order to meet some requirements, for example, of customers or corporations. The resources managed in logistics can include physical items, such as food, materials, equipment, liquids, and staff, as well as abstract items, such as time, information, particles, and energy».

We of course view logistics from a much more interdependent tradition. Since the birth of trade itself, and even more from the beginning of the “capitalism era” (from the “industrial revolution” in the 18th century), logistics has been a fundamental field of the productive system, and the more the world has become globalized, the more logistics has acquired a lead role.

From a theoretical point of view, we are prompted to extend our research from the second book of *Capital* by Karl Marx. According to Marx, capitalist production needs to reduce the circulatory time of commodities (the so-called «turnover time») as much as possible, because during that period the capitalist cannot convert so-called surplus-value into profit. For these reasons, from the capitalist point of view, it is so important to have a «turnover time» that is close to zero. Therefore, it is decisive to have an efficient logistic plan. Marx breaks it down further into a basic equation where he says:

«If we designate the year as the unit of measure of the turnover time by T, the time of turnover of a given capital by t, and the number of its turnovers by n, then $n = T/t$. If, for instance, the time of turnover t is 3 months, then n is equal to 12/3, or 4; capital is turned over four times per year [...]. If its time of turnover is several years, it is computed in multiples of one year»¹.

Basically, that means: the more efficient the logistics, the more the capitalist entrepreneur can produce a profit. So we see how even Marx considered logistics («turnover time») a crucial dimension of capitalism. Again, the amount of surplus value that a capitalist can reach in one year is dependent on the speed of «turnover time».

As we said above, the more the whole world has become globalized, the more logistics has acquired importance. Now it has a lead role into what Anna Tsing calls «supply chain capitalism». According to Tsing, an analysis of supply chain capitalism has not just an interest to itself, but, as she puts it, it is «necessary to understand the dilemmas of the human condition today». But, what is

1 K. Marx, *Capital*, New York, Dutton&Co, 1957.

«supply chain capitalism»? Using Anna Tsing's definition,

«supply chain capitalism here refers to commodity chains based on subcontracting, outsourcing, and allied arrangements in which the autonomy of component enterprises is legally established even as the enterprises are disciplined within the chain as a whole»².

When Anna Tsing wants to offer a typical example of «supply chain capitalism», she talks about the retail giant Wal-Mart, «the highest-profile supply chain driver today». Despite Wal-Mart's self-projecting image, portraying itself as a “community”, as a multi-national corporation its highest priority is of course to produce profits. When considering the fact that Wal-Mart does not want to control labor arrangements, environmental practices, subcontractors' investment strategies, because they are outsourced, we see this community image drastically shrink. Ironically, in the third part of the article, we might be able to see some similarities between the cooperatives business works in the Po valley region and Wal-Mart in their respective logistics systems.

Ultimately, as a consequence of market globalization, reducing «turnover time» becomes a cornerstone for every business. Logistics sectors have become a strategic point for market competitiveness and there are few areas particularly dedicated to this sector. Po valley region is one of these “strategic areas” and is important to know how is its “geographical structure” to mapping out sites of struggles and, eventually, even to deeper understand the struggles itself.

A geographical perspective

Now we try to climb down a geographical scale aiming to show – by way of a snap-shot – the concrete implementation points of some global flows of commodities and people. In other words, by rehearsing a cartographic rhapsody of the logistical supply chain in northern Italy, we will talk about logistics as a political apparatus of production with its own spatial dimensions. And furthermore, we assume logistics as a privileged observatory point to understand new geographies into a perspective that aims to work from linear to processual geographies.

So, we see the Po valley as a specific place of political spatialization that contains forms of territorialization and de-territorialization³. Our aim is to use the category of “region” appraising its constitutive ambivalence: a spatial unity infra and over the national borders. This fact helps us to give to the category of territory/region a measure of conceptual autonomy from the nation-state. This is very important: the spaces and scales of contemporary economic activity cannot be immediately correlated with official political boundaries.

Moreover we propose to do a sort of game to revise Henry Lefebvre's concept of “space”: «[social]

2 Anna Tsing, *Supply Chains and the Human Condition*, in *Rethinking marxism*, 21/2, 2009, 148-176.

3 Guattari F., Deleuze G., *Mille Plateaux*, 1980.

space as a [social] product that contains power relations» (Lefebvre, 1974). Into this perspective, the exercise is to see at Po valley through the lens of Po, the main Italian river. So we try to look Po valley not as a soil or a ground floor but rather as a sea, a liquid or at least a moving territory. By using this metaphor we can imagine an unstable and fluctuating map, and territory emerges as a contested spaces or, as David Harvey said, a «space as embodied of social power».

Why we decided to talk about this geographical and social region? For three main reasons:

- the first one refers to his economic importance and its strategic position for Italian (about 80% of the Italian commodities flows circulate into this region) and European economy;
- the second, and this is our hypothesis, is because of the new spaces that logistics is generating in the Po valley. This region gives an emblematic example in which logistics is generating new types of bordered spaces that cut-across traditional inter-state borders;
- the last reason is the crisis that is investing and running into this region, as we can see through the lens of the struggles: in fact during last years there have been an increasing number of them in logistics sector.

Starting from these hypothesis, it is not an haphazardness to sustain that logistics plays a role as a vector that charts the redefinition of “traditional” political forms (State, cities, administrative regions and so forth).

Logistics works as a biopolitical technology: it has a central role in managing the movement of labor and commodities in “post-Fordist” labor regimes of flexibility and transnational relation. What does this concretely means? It means that the geographies of urbanization, which have long been understood in the Po valley with reference to densely concentrated populations and an older framing of city-scapes, now is shaping new territories into a widespread metropolis, conforming to the structure of capitalistic organization. Neil Brenner affirms that «urbanization has expanded on even larger regional scale, creating giant urban galaxies». Here logistics plays as a biopolitical technology⁴ that is shaping new territories: from the old framing of city-scapes to a new and increasingly large scale morphologies that «perforate, cross-cut, and ultimately explode the erstwhile urban/rural divide» (Brenner, 2013). This is a territory that de-borders territoriality. A territory developed through networks and assemblages, not only with the tools and rationality of capital accumulation, but also through the processes of strikes, struggles, conflicts.

Starting and shifting to this perspective, we can see a double, overlapped and juxtapose maps. These maps are not clearly disconnected, they are a sort of poles that determine and establish a field

4 The reference is to Michel Foucault and is concept of ““circulating city” as a biopolitical urban milieu which regulate the flows”.

of tensions. This shows a deep ambivalence: logistics today as a key not only for processes of capital accumulation as well as for the possibility of struggle. On one side, logistics seen as the art and science of building networked relations in ways that promote transport, communication and economic efficiencies. Stemming from military practices, it organizes capital in technical ways that aim to make efficient every step of its “turnover time”. The supply chain capitalism “dream” is to build up and create a smooth and straight up space, like a sea without wind and waves. It constantly tries to realize his dream by using its centrality in managing the movements of labor and commodities that connect the transnational level with the local; thus it transforms the territory by breaking the traditional political borders.

On the other side, this widespread metropolitan spaces are hybrid and hybridated, they are devices that organizes the stratification of different temporalities and are organized through it⁵. Po valley widespread metropolitan space is built by the contradictory aggregation of places managed by, using foucaultian terms, difference and not reducible temporalities and forms of subjection and subjectivation. It is even setting up a space defined by various strength's vectors of different weight, adjusted in diverse directions. Where logistics works as a political technology with its flexible adaptability, at the same time logistics struggles are playing a role as a wind force that is striating the Po valley space and in counterlight it is creating new maps. They are exceeding Po Valley. The experimentation of overturning the dense network of lines of production connecting hubs and warehouses in the Po valley is principally done by warehouses docks that seems like kinds of contemporary harbors. So we can see a non-linear geography arranged principally of road transport hubs and warehouses conceived as contemporary harbors. These are some of the main strategic places that constitute the focus of this research. This contemporary harbor are the places where the organizational and conflictual experiences in the logistics supply chain has found their form of territorialization.

Now, let's turn back to the “liquid metaphor”. Considering what Walter Benjamin asserted: «harbours used to be special places where the rarest and the least probable class combination could happen» (Benjamin, 1983). The logistics places are transforming from non-places of the flows circulation into islands of conflictual organization in which migrant workers, young students, precarious workers and union organizations are developing significant levels of conflict⁶.

5 This temporality is composed by different layers of the capital's enhancement that capitalize on the cleavage between the half-run time of the financial digitization of the trades and the more slower and gunky time of the everyday strain.

6 Conflicts that manage to combine radicalism and negotiation, production blockades and concrete dispute; able to go back up along the chains of subcontracts and identify the counterpart representing the first ring of that chain. We can see this phenomenon if we look at the geography of the logistic struggles: from the Milan Interporto to Padova,

Moreover, organizational and conflictual experiences are able to read and reinterpret from below the territories drawn by the circuits of commodities mobility. As an example, pickets at Ikea triggered new pickets in other cities, tracing and overturning the panoptical geography of valorisation. This confirms what Saskia Sassen said: «metropolis are the main places for the expression and organization of informal political subjects» (Sassen, 2006). Lastly we can see logistics' routes ability to trace the new productive organization of space and time. A new geography drawn by struggles⁷ is creating new materiality, another usage. They are able to read and reinterpret from below the territories drawn by the circuits of commodity mobility opening the Po valley towards Northern Europe and the Mediterranean, at least creating new geographies.

The organization of labour inside Po valley region: the cooperative business

Until now we focused our attention on the importance of the supply chain in the ongoing capitalism and we located it in the Po Valley Region. It's the moment to highlight in a better way how these chains are locally organized. Put it differently, what is the organization of labour inside Po Valley Logistics? Generally, we can state that, in the region we took as case-study, the main and prevalent business model adopted in this productive branch is the cooperative. We could approach it on three different levels, each one pointing out a different perspective on the role and the working of cooperatives.

From the theoretical side there are two main features: the mutualistic purpose and the democratic control. On one hand, the mutualistic purpose means that a cooperative is built up in order to guarantee advantages to its members: they have to take benefits from their membership. On the other hand, the democratic control states that every member has the same right of the others in taking decisions about the business: "one head, one vote". It is not important how many shares someone has of firm's social capital, everyone is equal to the others in his deciding power. These two basic theoretical features are strictly connected with the second level of analysis, the historical one; in fact, they summarize the original spirit upon whom cooperatives were born. This kind of business isn't a model of organization of labour arisen from the experiences and needs of upper classes; on the contrary, cooperatives are rather a product of workers' history: during the Industrial

from Piacenza to Bologna and in Turin.

⁷ That have finally demonstrated to being able to do networking, processes of self-organization that exceed the representative formulas and immediately practice their aim, the accumulation of won disputes that increase in speed and power the claim to income and dignity, a new political and social subjectivity that crosses and reciprocally infects the different conditions of the migrant and of the precarious, a radicalism hardly capturable and able to translate itself into conflictual practices immediately efficacious. At the very least, logistics' routes are tracing new forms in the organization of space.

Revolution's changes many of them found in solidarity and self-organization the best and efficient devices to improve their life's conditions. We can state that the fundamental idea of cooperatives was staying on the market without exploitation, that is accepting the competition but not the submission of labour-force; putting it differently, the basic idea was holding the capital without being held by it, managing it with good and social purposes. Generally, the first cooperative is indicated in the Rochdale Equitable Pioneers (1844). They opened a market that sold wares at a better price than others to members. This kind of consumer cooperatives were largely diffused in England, while in France we had production's cooperatives and in Germany credits' cooperatives. In Italy they had their highest period of expansion in the '60 of last century, especially in the so-called Red-Regions like Emilia-Romagna where the Italian Communist Party (Pci) and Italian General Confederation of labour (Cgil) were politically dominant: during a period of economic expansion they tried to introduce a better business model than capitalistic ones that could emphasize, at the same time, workers' abilities and their role in managing profits.

The question now is what remains of this original spirit in the ongoing supply chains capitalism; putting it better, are the Emilia-Romagna logistics cooperatives still based on solidarity and self-organization? These questions leads us to take in consideration the third level, that is the material situation inside ongoing cooperatives operating in this branch and in this region. We have to notice that in the last years many enterprises decided to outsource their logistics services to small cooperatives. Why? We can try to put forward three explanations for this phenomenon: the flexibility of cooperative business model, savings on labour-force, unaccountability toward workers' rights. Cooperatives are a kind of firm that has legal and financial advantages, like the possibility to open and to close it more easily; they permit to save money on labour-force's costs because of the condition of member-worker; they create a chain that breaks the direct relationship between owners and workers through the outsourcing so that it is not possible to account directly someone for his responsibility towards economic decisions. Weaving these three levels among them (theoretical, historical and material), we can state that logistics cooperatives in Emilia-Romagna loosed their original spirit of solidarity and self-organization among workers and became a device of capital exploitation. In fact we can highlight the existence of a proper *system of cooperatives*, using this definition as indicator of a specific model of organization of labour-force. More specifically, we mean a pyramidal and vertical business structure that presents on the top an head-enterprise, in the middle some cooperatives and workers at the base. It is a system of Chinese boxes made by a succession of cooperatives where workers lose both economic power and rights.

Among the organizational pyramids of Emilia-Romagna logistics cooperatives, one has become notable and clear during the struggle of last years in this economic branch in Po Valley Region. We are talking about Granarolo system of cooperatives. Granarolo is a famous and important Italian

enterprise of dairy products located in Cadriano, just outside Bologna. This enterprise has outsourced a part of the delivery sector to Cooperativa Trasporto Latte (translated as Milk Transport Cooperative). But Ctl, located close to Granarolo warehouses, is only the first step of this pyramid, below it there is Sgb, a union of other three cooperatives: Work Project, Global Logic and Planet Log. Labour force is distributed among these last three even if it works basically for Granarolo.

We can conclude that whether this is the typical organization of labour in Emilia-Romagna (and not only there) supply chains, the point of fracture with this system has been the decision to challenge this pyramid stating “stop the system of cooperatives!”. Workers and rank and file unions called head-enterprises back to their responsibilities towards workers stating that they couldn't hide themselves under the coverage of outsourced services to cooperatives. In the case of Granarolo, as an example, workers of Sgb union accounted Granarolo for its duties towards their salary and rights, not only the cooperatives where they were formally enrolled.

Struggles and the role of rank and file unions

In this part we'll speak about the role of unions in logistics' struggles. SI COBAS and ADL COBAS are the main “rank and file unions” that organized the struggles of migrant workers in the warehouse sector. In a sector ruled by the system of cooperatives (with continuous contract changes, widespread illegal behaviors and exploitation of the migrant workforce), the list of demands included the implementation of the national collective contract, the right to maintain the same working condition even after contract changes, the right to be recognized as employees (and not as associates, which, implies a cost rise and a lack of protection). Moreover they were asking for an increase in wages and a stronger protection from injuries and illnesses. The strike that took place on the 22nd of March 2013 was the first attempt to coordinate on a national level and in a single day of action the struggles of the logistic workers, which were originally born in different warehouses. Subsequently SI COBAS organized two other national strikes and, on the 1st of June, a general demonstration of logistic workers in Bologna in order to support Granarolo struggle. This demonstration was organized with the support of a local occupied social center. This collaboration between rank and file unions and some political activists from the social movement is a peculiarity of these logistics struggles. During this march at least 500 workers protested against the layoff of 50 logistics workers who were previously involved in harsh struggles for fair salaries and rights. Specifically, they were asking for the reinstatement of these workers and for the right to strike. In addition to these several strikes, one of the main strategy of the struggles was the disruption of contractors' deliveries. The interruption of the commodities' stream, reached through the organization of road blocks and the promotion of boycott campaigns, were the main disruption tools used by protesters. One of the most important struggle happened, as we said before, at Granarolo.

Forty workers were fired from the Granarolo warehouse after the 15th of May's general strike in the logistics industry. The reaction to this was the launch of a boycott campaign. As we can see the strategy of the protesters was to strike the contractors at the beginning of the supply chain, so that, in turn, they would pressure the cooperatives to comply with the national contract.

Rank and file unions are a sort of complex galaxy and they are different from confederate unions. First of all, rank and file unions are usually formed solely of rank and file members, with no full-time officials; they maintain stronger positions in order to protect workers' rights; moreover they are usually well-established in specific industries or in specific geographical areas⁸.

SI COBAS was born in the mid to late 90s and it is, nowadays, mostly active in the logistic industry. It is the only "rank and file" union where the presence of migrant workers is larger than that of Italians. This fact is useful to introduce the reason behind the strong connection that ties the migrant labor force with the unions and, subsequently, with class organization. The residence of migrants on the Italian territory depends on a specific law about migrations, the Bossi-Fini law, which binds the residence permit with a regular labor contract. The loss of the job doesn't only produce poverty but it also represents a real threat of expulsion, that is why migrant workers are obliged to accept the worst labor conditions. Even if the unions support the claims of migrant workers, they do not fully acknowledge the double blackmail which threatens them and they don't recognize the political role that the struggles of migrant labor can play to redefine the balance of power of the living labor as a whole against the instances of the capital. The immigration legislation is in fact a device used to discipline all labor force, both because it creates differences in the workplace - which produce racism among workers - and because it gives employers the power to manage the legal permanence of migrants on the territory. The leading role of migrants collides with a conception of union representation which is still closely linked to citizenship and anchored to a categorized conception of the division of labor⁹. The migrant labor force shows us some limits of the "union device". Although the SI COBAS union has properly organized workers during logistics' struggle, unions are only able to organize specific labor force sectors, starting from the material needs of their situations. In fact the warehouse industry is mainly composed by migrant workers, which imply practical and common claims. Unions could be seen as a kind of mass organization unable to represent the interests of the complexity of the living labor, but migrants have shown that there may be a class use of the union. In fact, unions refer to a collective dimension of the struggle, so they remain a tactic conflict tool which is still central. Nevertheless this tactic role of the union does not exhaust the challenge of organization: it is possible to use it exclusively within homogeneous segments, because the work is sector-based and because it is governed by an

8 <http://strugglesinitaly.wordpress.com/?s=cobas>

9 Cobbe Luca, Grappi Giorgio, *Primo marzo, percorsi di uno sciopero inatteso*, in Mometti, Ricciardi, "La normale eccezione. Lotte migranti in Italia", Edizioni Alegre, Roma, 2011, pp. 55 – 90.

extremely specific system of civil and market laws¹⁰. For these reasons we can say that migrant workers have demonstrated and are still demonstrating that, through organization and through a wise use of the union device, they can fight for better labor conditions, that it's why they have something to teach us.

Voices and sights¹¹

The long wave of the “Arab Spring”.

The main aim of this final part, is to propose some voices and sights from the logistics gate. What clearly arise immediately from the struggles in Po valley region, is the leading role of migrant workers. We encountered different biographies, but also different perspectives regarding the future and different ways of using migration. Compared to the older generation of migrants, this new generation is moving in several different directions, with higher expectations that push them not to accept certain conditions of exploitation.

The experience of the so called “Arab Spring” has certainly influenced this new approach to migration, a strong will to improve life conditions through involvement in social action, the ability to organize groups and protests, in short, to take public space as a political arena to express demands. The politicization of the square is a central aspect of this political movement. There are, of course, many other factors that have effected these new paths of migration.

Speaking with some of the younger migrant workers about their future, many new and interesting ideas emerged. For example, one of them said "Seeing as we've gotten rid of Ben Ali, we'll get rid of the bosses". This, as well as portraying the conflict at the heart of the cause, is also indicative of the never ending struggle migrants face in attaining their rights.

A Spectre called Crisis

The perception of the crisis within the logistics sector can be ascribed to a kind of "narrative of the crisis". There are at least two important aspects related to this: first of all, the negotiations between the various parties involved in the action at Ikea's warehouse in Piacenza revealed that it was the local political representatives, the cooperative representatives and the unions who have effected the specter of delocalization, catalyzed by the economic crisis. An interesting fact was that the representatives of Ikea had no intention of leaving Piacenza. This fact begs the question whether the intentions of the local representatives were insincere, and use the crisis to cut back some of the

10 This part is mostly referred to some editorials of the website www.connessioniprecarie.org. Here the specific links: <http://www.connessioniprecarie.org/2013/05/15/la-precarieta-delle-nostre-conessioni/> and <http://www.connessioniprecarie.org/2012/10/22/la-concertazione-e-finita-per-una-discussione-su-sindacato-lotte-e-organizzazione/>. A special thanks to Sean Patrick Casey.

11 This section is based on some interviews taken with logistics workers.

worker's right, or rather a result of their inability to grasp the real situation and their susceptibility to be influenced by a simplified reading of economic processes. This question provides an interesting starting point for further research.

On the other hand, it is interesting to see how the workers' point of view on crisis emerges from the interviews. The crisis appears to them as an exploitative strategy used by the bosses, who live the crisis like as an opportunity to increase their own benefit. Some migrants workers come to declare that the crisis doesn't actually exist at all besides the form of exploitation, underlining instead the political and entirely deceptive function of this condition.

The Unbearable Absence of Women

The presence of women among the logistics workers is quite modest. This indicates a clear choice that has been made regarding the profile of workers employed in the industry. However, when they are present they usually play a leading role in protest and organization, notwithstanding the pressure on them in the workplace and outside it. Women have to struggle with what has been called a triple precariousness:

- The continual risk of unemployment and the constant threat of losing the residence permit that this implies. For women this can be a very strong threat since most of them have families to care about in their country of origin or where they live;
- The segregation in low paid and unskilled work sectors or tasks and the pressure from bosses to work faster and longer even when they actually have a second job at home;
- Amongst many other prejudices against women, they are required to preventively sign the resignation form, which thus enables the bosses to fire them whenever necessary. It is often used as a quick way to settle the issue of maternity leave.

The quickly expanding movement of the logistics workers, that has imported “Tahrir square into the Po valley”, open new interesting points to investigate. Today migration is the most "natural" condition of living and more than 232 million of people are migrant so that we could almost say that migrants are the «fifth world State», a State that has no fixed borders and for this is politically and globally central.

The relations inside this «fifth world State», or rather this "migrant State" that has permitted the spread of this protest inside and outside workplace, the new perspectives and expectations of this new path of migration and re-politicization of global spaces, the way in which migrants are both inserted in the production's processes also through the regulative EU migration's policies are all central issues to read correctly the present day in its global meaning.

Conclusions

Eventually, we would like to propose few new research lines, arisen from our research work.

First of all, it would be really interesting to deepen the historical field as well as the historical relations between the different forms of logistics and the composition of workers. Starting from Anna Tsing portrait of the situation (written above), we propose to study and understand the important work of Stefano Harney (“The Undercommons” - Harney&Moten, 2013 – and other works), who ties tightly slavery and logistics as a fundamental sign to understand the history of the modern capitalistic system. In other words, we believe it would be extremely interesting to go deeper into the hypothesis which sees logistics as the litmus paper of the modern capitalism system because «logistics is everywhere», and even «business innovation has become logistical and no longer strategic» (Harney&Moten, 2013, p. 88).

The high concentration of migrant labor force in the logistics can be an another interesting point for further research. Is this a peculiarity of the Po Valley or is it a more common fact? Is, in some way, the use of delocalized labour force related to the delocalization of the production's processes. What does it mean for the organization of labor in general and especially for the struggles at the global level the fact that having a workforce that organizes itself despite being exploited ? Another interesting point concerns to the connections between migrants and how the movement has been expanded so quickly. What kind of networks had permitted this expansion? Those struggles are creating a self-consciousness of those workers subjectivity not related at relatives or community? Moreover could be interesting to investigate the role that hubs and warehouses, conceived as ongoing harbors, are having in performing the labor-force.

Another point of questioning, that we would like to investigate further, is the possible duration of this kind of phenomenon. Put it differently, are the struggles in the Po Valley logistics branch a temporary episode or are we going to face a long-period vindication? The answer is probably bound to some aspects of the supply chain capitalism. We have highlighted the fundamental role that delivery plays in our present: this makes us think that we are not talking about something of incidental. Moreover we have illustrated how the Po Valley logistics sector is largely based on a hard exploitation of the labour-force. Considering these elements, could we hypothesize that a transition to a greater use of constant capital should reduce the antagonism and the level of exploitation in this branch? Or is the use of a highly-exploited labour-force a necessary component for its functioning? Why the Italian logistics has focused on savings on labour-force and not on the technological development? Which effects could have the introduction of a greater constant capital? To conclude: we are confronting to what geographers call “a problem of scale”. In this paper we have developed an analysis that has a lot of global characteristics: the territorialization of global flows commodities; the presence of multinational corporation; a complex heterogeneity of migrant

labour composition; some intersections between financial processes and the transformation of the urban scenario and so forth. But at the same time has emerged that there are also many peculiarities of the local level: a specific labor organization methodology (what we call “the system of cooperatives”); a particular rank and files unionism; the historical city landscape and the local territorial morphology etc. So we are wondering if logistics process of struggles can be thought as a generalizable example or not. In other words: we intend to keep on researching to verify the hypothesis that crisis is producing deep changes in supply chain capitalism starting from a new workers subjectivation.

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