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DECIPHERING THE CAPITAL-EXTRACTIVE SHARING ECONOMY: ANALYZING ITS POLITICAL-ECONOMIC ROLE AS PRIMITIVE ACCUMULATION

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ABSTRACT

The emergence of the capital-extractive sharing economy presents a novel terrain for economic analysis and critique. This study delves into the political-economic role of the capital-extractive sharing economy through the lens of primitive accumulation theory. By scrutinizing the mechanisms through which value extraction occurs within sharing platforms, this research sheds light on the socio-economic implications of contemporary sharing practices. Through a nuanced analysis of power dynamics, labor relations, and ownership structures, the study explores how the capital-extractive sharing economy contributes to processes of wealth concentration and socio-economic stratification. Ultimately, the study aims to provide a deeper understanding of the political-economic dimensions of the sharing economy and its broader implications for economic justice and social equity.

KEYWORDS

Sharing economy, capital-extractive, primitive accumulation, political economy, value extraction, labor relations, ownership structures, economic justice.

INTRODUCTION

The advent of the sharing economy has heralded a new era of economic organization, characterized by the proliferation of digital platforms that facilitate peer-to-

peer transactions and resource utilization. However, beneath the veneer of communal exchange and collaborative consumption lies a complex landscape of

power dynamics, value extraction, and socio-economic inequality. This study endeavors to unpack the political-economic role of the capital-extractive sharing economy, offering insights into its position within the broader framework of primitive accumulation theory.

The sharing economy, once heralded as a democratizing force that would disrupt traditional economic paradigms and foster greater inclusivity, has increasingly come under scrutiny for its role in perpetuating structures of exploitation and wealth concentration. At the heart of this critique lies the phenomenon of capital extraction within sharing platforms, whereby value generated by users is siphoned off by platform owners and investors, often at the expense of workers' rights and socio-economic well-being.

Drawing upon the conceptual framework of primitive accumulation, as articulated by Karl Marx and subsequent political economists, this study seeks to elucidate the mechanisms through which the capital-extractive sharing economy operates. Primitive accumulation, originally conceived as the process by which capital is accumulated through the dispossession of land and labor, provides a lens through which to analyze contemporary forms of value extraction and wealth accumulation.

The capital-extractive sharing economy encompasses a diverse array of platforms and services, ranging from ride-hailing apps and short-term accommodation rentals to task-based labor platforms and digital marketplaces. While these platforms offer unprecedented convenience and flexibility for users, they also engender a host of socio-economic challenges, including precarious employment, income volatility, and regulatory arbitrage.

By examining the political-economic dynamics inherent in the capital-extractive sharing economy, this study aims to shed light on the ways in which value is produced, appropriated, and distributed within digital platforms. It explores how platform owners leverage network effects, data analytics, and algorithmic governance to extract surplus value from user interactions, often exacerbating inequalities along lines of race, gender, and class.

Moreover, the study interrogates the implications of the capital-extractive sharing economy for broader processes of economic restructuring and social reproduction. It considers how the commodification of social relations and the enclosure of shared resources shape patterns of accumulation and dispossession, reshaping urban landscapes and community dynamics in the process.

In the following sections, this study will delve into the intricacies of the capital-extractive sharing economy, analyze its political-economic underpinnings, and explore its implications for economic justice and social equity. By deciphering the complex interplay of power, profit, and precarity within sharing platforms, this research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of contemporary capitalism and its transformative impacts on social relations and economic organization.

METHOD

The process of deciphering the political-economic role of the capital-extractive sharing economy involved a multifaceted approach aimed at uncovering the underlying mechanisms of value extraction and wealth accumulation within digital sharing platforms. It commenced with an exhaustive review of literature spanning political economy, sharing economy studies, and primitive accumulation theory, providing a robust conceptual framework for analysis. This literature

review laid the groundwork for understanding the historical context and theoretical foundations underpinning the sharing economy's political-economic dynamics.

Building upon this foundation, empirical data collection ensued, drawing from a diverse array of sources including academic research, industry reports, regulatory documents, and media coverage. Primary data sources, including interviews with stakeholders such as platform users, workers, and industry experts, provided invaluable insights into the lived experiences and perspectives within the sharing economy ecosystem.

In tandem with data collection, case studies were conducted to examine specific instances of value extraction and labor exploitation within sharing platforms. These case studies, spanning various sectors of the sharing economy including ride-hailing, short-term accommodation, and gig work, offered detailed examinations of sector-specific dynamics and challenges, enriching the analysis with real-world examples and context.

A qualitative analysis approach was employed to analyze the collected data, utilizing thematic analysis techniques to identify recurring themes, patterns, and tensions inherent within the capital-extractive sharing economy. By triangulating findings across multiple data sources and analytical methods, the study aimed to enhance the validity and reliability of its conclusions, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the political-economic dimensions at play.

Throughout the research process, ethical considerations remained paramount, guiding decisions related to participant confidentiality, informed consent, and the responsible dissemination of findings. Careful attention was paid to the potential impact of

the research on vulnerable populations and marginalized communities affected by sharing economy practices, prioritizing ethical conduct and integrity in all research endeavors.

By systematically unraveling the complex interplay of power, profit, and precarity within sharing platforms, this research aimed to contribute to a deeper understanding of contemporary capitalism and its transformative impacts on social relations and economic organization, shedding light on the political-economic role of the capital-extractive sharing economy within the broader framework of primitive accumulation theory.

In order to analyze the political-economic role of the capital-extractive sharing economy, a comprehensive methodological approach was employed, integrating theoretical frameworks, empirical data, and critical analysis.

The research commenced with an extensive review of scholarly literature, policy reports, and industry analyses related to the sharing economy and primitive accumulation theory. This literature review provided essential insights into the conceptual underpinnings of the sharing economy, the dynamics of value extraction within digital platforms, and the historical evolution of primitive accumulation as a theoretical construct within political economy.

Drawing upon insights from primitive accumulation theory and critical political economy, a conceptual framework was developed to guide the analysis of the capital-extractive sharing economy. This framework aimed to elucidate the mechanisms through which value is extracted from users and workers within sharing platforms, as well as the broader implications for economic justice and social equity.

Data collection involved gathering empirical evidence from a variety of sources, including academic studies, industry reports, regulatory documents, and media coverage of sharing economy practices. Primary data sources included interviews with stakeholders in the sharing economy ecosystem, including platform users, workers, and industry experts, providing firsthand perspectives on the political-economic dynamics at play.

A series of case studies were conducted to examine specific instances of value extraction and labor exploitation within the capital-extractive sharing economy. Case studies focused on a range of sharing platforms, including ride-hailing services, short-term accommodation rentals, and gig economy platforms, allowing for a nuanced understanding of sector-specific dynamics and challenges.

A qualitative analysis approach was employed to analyze the collected data and identify recurring themes, patterns, and tensions within the capital-extractive sharing economy. Thematic analysis techniques were utilized to uncover underlying power dynamics, labor relations, and ownership structures embedded within sharing platforms.

Triangulation techniques were employed to enhance the validity and reliability of findings by corroborating results across multiple data sources and analytical approaches. Comparative analysis of case studies and triangulation with existing literature facilitated a comprehensive understanding of the political-economic dimensions of the sharing economy.

Ethical considerations guided the entire research process, including the protection of participant confidentiality, informed consent procedures, and the responsible dissemination of findings. Careful attention was paid to the potential impact of the

research on vulnerable populations and marginalized communities affected by sharing economy practices.

Through the systematic application of these methodological principles, this study aimed to provide a rigorous analysis of the political-economic role of the capital-extractive sharing economy, contributing to scholarly discourse and policy debates surrounding contemporary forms of capitalist accumulation and exploitation.

RESULTS

The analysis of the capital-extractive sharing economy reveals several key findings. Firstly, within sharing platforms, value extraction occurs through a variety of mechanisms, including commission fees, data monetization, and algorithmic manipulation. Platform owners and investors accrue wealth by appropriating a portion of the value generated by users and workers, often at the expense of labor rights and social protections.

Secondly, the capital-extractive sharing economy exacerbates socio-economic inequalities by perpetuating precarious employment, income volatility, and regulatory arbitrage. Workers in the sharing economy often lack access to basic labor protections and face unpredictable income streams, contributing to financial instability and socio-economic precarity.

Moreover, the concentration of ownership and control within sharing platforms reinforces existing power imbalances and exacerbates disparities in wealth and influence. Platform owners wield significant authority over the terms of engagement and exercise considerable discretion in shaping the rules of the game, further entrenching their dominance within the sharing economy ecosystem.

DISCUSSION

The findings underscore the transformative impact of the capital-extractive sharing economy on contemporary capitalism and social relations. By elucidating the mechanisms of value extraction and wealth accumulation within sharing platforms, this analysis reveals the underlying power dynamics and socio-economic tensions inherent in the sharing economy.

Furthermore, the discussion highlights the broader implications of the capital-extractive sharing economy for processes of primitive accumulation and socio-economic reproduction. The commodification of social relations and the enclosure of shared resources contribute to the concentration of wealth and the erosion of communal bonds, reshaping urban landscapes and community dynamics in the process.

Moreover, the discussion interrogates the role of regulatory frameworks and public policies in addressing the socio-economic challenges posed by the capital-extractive sharing economy. By promoting worker rights, ensuring fair compensation, and fostering transparency and accountability within sharing platforms, policymakers can mitigate the negative externalities associated with value extraction and promote greater economic justice and social equity.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the analysis of the capital-extractive sharing economy reveals the complex interplay of power, profit, and precarity within contemporary capitalism. By deciphering the political-economic role of the sharing economy within the framework of primitive accumulation theory, this research offers insights into the mechanisms through which value is

extracted, appropriated, and distributed within digital platforms.

Moving forward, it is imperative to critically examine the socio-economic implications of the capital-extractive sharing economy and to explore alternative models of economic organization that prioritize worker rights, social protections, and democratic governance. By fostering dialogue, promoting regulatory innovation, and empowering marginalized communities, stakeholders can work towards building a more equitable and sustainable sharing economy that benefits all participants and contributes to the broader goals of economic justice and social transformation.

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