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THE VULNERABILITY OF WOMEN IN THE CAMELÔ MARKET IN THE CITY OF SANTO ANTÔNIO DE JESUS-BA

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Abstract: The purpose of this article is to highlight the vulnerability of women street vendors in the city of Santo Antônio de Jesus-BA who, although they are part of an informal circuit responsible for generating income and moving the local and regional economy, suffer from gender inequalities., access to public space, mainly. The structural precariousness of work historically verified in Brazil can also be verified in the city of Santo Antônio de Jesus and informal work in the camel market is a reality that reveals the profound social inequality also in access to decent work conditions. This inequality will be even more profound when we consider the vulnerability explained by gender differences, so we sought to make it visible in the daily lives of women street vendors as it is made explicit. A methodological approach was adopted based on bibliographic and documental research, and on the techniques of participant observation, of a qualitative nature. Taking as a time frame the period marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, between the years 2020 to 2021. The results achieved indicate the need to create municipal public policies that accommodate the specificities contained in socio-spatial dynamics considering gender and gender differences. guarantee the improvement of working conditions for women street vendors.

Keywords: Street vendor woman¹; Decent work²; gender inequalities³.

INTRODUCTION

The city of Santo Antônio de Jesus, in the state of Bahia, is considered a regional center and this condition has given it the position of commercial hub in the Recôncavo region of Bahia. However, the structural precariousness of work historically verified in Brazil is also expressed in this city and informal work in the street vendor market is a reality capable of revealing the profound social inequality

in access to the fundamental right to decent work.

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO) the fundamental right to decent work consists in welcoming the interests and aspirations of workers, formal or informal, and encompasses a series of elements, such as: safety in the workplace and social protection for families; the opportunity to perform productive work with fair remuneration; possibilities for personal development and social integration; freedom to express their concerns and participation in decisions that may affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment (ILO, 2022).

Unemployment and the difficulties of entering the formal job market have increased considerably in the last decade across the country and, according to the researchers Mariana Werneck and Bruna Ribeiro, this is a phenomenon closely linked to the reversal of public policies of a developmental nature and the adoption of fiscal adjustments in 2015, which worsened after the parliamentary coup of 2016, culminating in the withdrawal of the president of the republic and pushing Brazil into an acute scenario of economic recession and unemployment. In 2017, according to the authors, the unemployment rate in Brazil reached the mark of 14.2 million unemployed and, despite a reduction in the following year, “underutilization – an index that gathers, in addition to the unemployed, people who have not been able to get a job. full-time position and those who gave up looking for a job – continued to grow” (WERNECK and RIBEIRO, 2019, p.01).

When we update the data presented by the authors, considering the current situation marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, we find that the unemployment rate remains high, even with a slight reduction in the number of unemployed, which in the last quarter of 2021

was 13, 5 million, with a drop of only 2.1% in the unemployment rate, between the first and last semesters of 2021, which were respectively 14.7% and 12.6% (SEI, 2022).

According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE, 2021) the rate of underutilization of the workforce continued to grow and, in 2021, reached 29.7%, representing an increase of 5.8% compared to the previous year. year 2017. Furthermore, when observing the consolidated result of this rate, it is noteworthy that the Northeast region was the one that presented the highest underutilization measures compared to other regions of the country.

The economic crisis, verified in recent years and deeply exacerbated by the health crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic, has further increased the number of people who are self-employed or in vacancies without a formal contract. Many of this contingent found working on the streets the conditions for their survival and sustenance. In the analysis carried out by Werneck and Ribeiro, they clarify that:

Around 200,000 new street vendors began disputing on the sidewalks of urban centers between 2014 and 2017 alone, when the number of Brazilians earning a living as street vendors reached almost 1.7 million. In São Paulo, the state with the largest population of street vendors, street vendors grew 26% in the last three years and reached 287,000 in 2017. Bahia and Rio de Janeiro also saw growth of, respectively, 25% and 20%, reaching 198 thousand in the state of Bahia and 145 thousand in the state of Rio de Janeiro in the same year. According to the IBGE, only 5% of them are licensed to work (WERNECK and RIBEIRO, 2019, p.01).

Among the workers who sought survival alternatives in informality, women stand out. According to the inter-union Department of Statistics and Socioeconomic Studies (DIEESE, 2021), between 2019 and 2020, a significant portion of women (8.6 million)

lost their occupation during the pandemic period and, among these, many did not even work. sought a new entry into the job market. With this:

By deepening the analysis, DIEESE will clarify that the situation of black women, compared to non-black women, was much more vulnerable. With the increase in the unemployment rate, which reached 19.8%, representing a difference of 3.2 and 2.9 percentage points respectively. In Bahia, the unemployment rate in the first quarter of 2021 was 21.3% and in the last quarter of the same year it showed a slight reduction, reaching 18.7% (SEI, 2021).

According to DIEESE (2012) informality can be understood as relations in the labor market that imply the absence of social protection, both with regard to the coverage of labor legislation and the lack of support resulting from collective negotiations conducted by union representations of workers. In this sense, the phenomenon of informality "... cannot be understood without considering the historical process of formation of the national labor market and the recent trends in the organization of production, the productive structure and labor relations in Brazil" (DIEESE, 2012, p. 165).

When we reflect on the participation of women in the work of street vendors in the city of Santo Antônio de Jesus, we have that they were always present and active, as verified in the annual surveys of the Municipal Department of Infrastructure, of the municipality. Their presence is quite expressive, just walking along the main streets, where the street vendors' points of sale are located, to see the expressive number of women in the informal street market, a fact confirmed by the inspection coordination of the street vendor. County. Despite this representativeness, the vulnerability in which they find themselves reveals inequalities in

access to space, goods, public services and disadvantages to achieve social mobility.

The concept of vulnerability adopted in this study is the materialist dialectic which, as Carmo and Guizardi (2018, p. 02) will clarify, is not strictly conditioned “to the absence or precariousness of access to income, but also linked to the weaknesses of affective bonds -relational and unequal access to public goods and services”, will explain a reality perceived as a synthesis of multiple determinations. The authors clarify that the notion of vulnerability, not being natural, will explain certain situations and socially produced individual and collective contexts, thus allowing contestations (CARMO and GUIZARDI, 2018, p.06). According to this concept of vulnerability, the authors explain that, in the areas of health and social assistance, the vulnerable human being will be the one

[...] more susceptible since it has disadvantages for social mobility, not reaching higher levels of quality of life in society due to its weakened citizenship. Thus, at the same time, the vulnerable human being can have or be supported to create the necessary capacities to change their condition (CARMO and GUIZARDI, 2018, p.06).

Given the above, the purpose of this article is to highlight the vulnerability of women street vendors in the city of Santo Antônio de Jesus-BA who, although they are part of an informal circuit responsible for generating income and moving the local and regional economy, are subject to a social context that make them vulnerable.

This is an article of critical reflection, with a qualitative approach that used the technique of participant observation (OP) (QUEIROZ et.al, 2007) as an instrument for collecting empirical data that revealed evidence of the vulnerability present in the daily lives of women street vendors, which allowed them to observe, in addition to their work activities,

some social dynamics that intimately involve them. A methodological approach was adopted based on a bibliographic and documentary survey, we chose to carry out a virtual consultation in the databases of *sites* such as: Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE); Superintendence of Economic and Social Studies of Bahia (SEI), Inter-Union Department of Statistics and Socioeconomic Studies (DIEESE) and; face-to-face consultation with the Secretariat of Infrastructure (SEINFRA), in the municipality of Santo Antônio de Jesus, responsible for inspecting informal work and street vendors . On these *sites*, we used studies that presented information on unemployment, underutilization of the workforce, informality and work conditions due to gender differences, in the years 2020 to 2021, a period marked by the beginning of the COVID -19 pandemic.

THE CITY OF SANTO ANTÔNIO DE JESUS

In order to arrive at a contemporary understanding of the importance of the street vendor market in Santo Antônio de Jesus, it is necessary to present a brief socio-historical investigation in which the elements of the socio-spatial formation of the street vendor market, in the center of this city, will be present. It is worth mentioning that the socio-spatial, as an interpretive notion, refers to the recognition of social dynamics that, when materialized in space, made explicit specific social relations that produced the space of the street vendor market and imprinted on it also specific processes and interactions (SOUZA, 2013).

After the completion of the construction of the Capela do Padre Matheus, in 1779, the then district of the municipality of Nazaré experienced a dynamism that attracted peddlers, traders, service providers, installation of dry and wet warehouses, etc.,

(QUEIROZ, 1995). Such dynamism provided significant changes in the formation and structuring of the regional space and in the socio-spatial relationships that were structured there. Currently, the city is configured by the strong presence of informal work, notably the street vendor, which was established in the surroundings of the Igreja Matriz, former Chapel of Father Matheus, preserving in the current landscape elements that date back to the historical origin of its formation.

In the 19th century, according to Santos (2002), the population growth attracted service providers, traders and peddlers, who in addition to installing their businesses in the central streets, also occupied its main streets with street markets. In 1891, according to Santos (2002), the train passing through Santo Antônio de Jesus heading to the city of Amargosa contributed to the increase in population and its commercial development, events responsible for the movement that resulted in its emancipation. of the municipality of Nazaré.

The commercial activity, which historically marks the formation of the city of Santo Antônio de Jesus, will stand out over the years due to the diversity of activities, products and services that are developed and diversified in it. In the 20th century, the city's growth was driven by the highways that made it one of the main commercial centers in the region. The street market, near the Church, attracted a large number of traders and, in the 1970s, with the rise of highways and the deactivation of the railway line, another impulse was experienced in the growth of the city, which began to have a new social configuration. -spatial, assuming a new social dynamic resulting from the municipality having become an important Road Axis, regionally interconnecting it to all the municipalities of the Recôncavo Bahia.

In the 1980s, occupation that was restricted

1 For further details on the reformulations, see Silva, Eliane L. da & Costa, Lucia Cortes da. "Unemployment in Brazil in the 1990s".

to the traditional center expanded to more distant areas, which made commerce even more dynamic, as larger commercial centers, such as *shopping malls*, were installed in these new areas.

STREET VENDORS: A REALITY IN INFORMAL WORK IN BRAZIL AND IN SANTO ANTÔNIO DE JESUS

Street vendor work was recognized as a profession in Brazil by Decree-Law No. 2041, of February 27, 1940. This decree regulates the exercise of itinerant commerce, by sellers or buyers, on their own account or that of third parties, in public places or places with open access to the public. In addition, it refers to the regulation of new forms of work that intensified and reflected the structural changes promoted at the time that marked the first phase of developmentalism in Brazil.

Thus, the labor market in Brazil went through a series of reformulations, mainly from the 1990s onwards ¹, which decisively interfered in the generation of a substantial contingent of workers living "on their own", and among these we highlight the street vendors (GOULART, 2008). The 1990s was a period in which Brazil lived with high unemployment rates, mainly due to a liberal economic policy that favored the flexibilization of labor relations and the containment of the public deficit through the reduction of expenses with social policies.

Several authors discuss this period, such as Lourenço (2000) and Pochmann (2001), and call attention to a reflection on the real role of the State in the economy. Among the reformulations that most contributed to the increase in the number of informal workers, especially street vendors, the privatization of public companies, the fiscal adjustment policy, the economic opening, the sale of national companies, the agreements signed with the

IMF, the renegotiation of the payment of the external debt and the generation of a primary surplus. For Tavares (2004) the precariousness and lack of employment, combined with the lack of effective public policies, made unemployed workers seek new strategies for their survival developed within the scope of informal work.

The relations between man and work in the course of his historiography reach new configurations resulting from the needs of each time and culture. Silva (2017) says that the view that Man has of himself has been constantly changing over time. These changes have consequently reflected in the organization of work, in the way of being and socializing, reverberating in the process of human subjectivation. Silva (2017) also adds that man's way of relating to work and productive means also undergo changes, both in modes of action and in interpretation.

It is worth noting that Rubens Filho (1994) already pointed out that the first foundation of the value of work is man himself and that his relationship will always be irreplaceable. Antunes (2004) reinforces this line of thought by saying that work is fundamental in human life because it is a condition for its social existence. For Barcelar and Vasconcelos (2011) work is a challenging element necessary for survival where man fights a constant struggle, with effort and determination.

According to etymology, the word *camelô* has its origin in the Arabic *Khmalat*, which refers to a type of rustic and terry cloth, made with camel hair and sold at street markets. However, it was in France, in the twelfth century, with the verb *cameloter*, that the expression became popular among those who took to the streets to see products of dubious origin, things of little value, etc.

For Quezada (2008) there are street vendors who depend on street vendors, while others work as street vendors. In the same

line of thought, Rodrigues (2008) clarifies that a street vendor worker can be both street vendor and bag vendor, or even street vendor and street vendor. According to Rodrigues (2008), the street vendor is a derivation of the street vending activity, but with a somewhat significant difference, since the street vendor market has the peculiarity of fixing its activity in a certain place, while street vending is not. Corroborating this understanding, Oliveira (2009) points out that although the words street vendors and street vendors are synonymous, street vendors have their origins in a popular denomination, while street vendors are a legal denomination that can sell at a fixed point or in movement.

In Brazil, at the end of the 1980s, "more than a third of the economically active population of the country was composed of women" (BALTAR, 2008, p. 240) and, from the 1990s, the productive force of female labor became significant for the economy. The results of the study on Social and Employment Perspectives in the World, carried out in 2017, by the International Labor Organization (ILO), indicated that the increase in the participation of women in the labor market would inject more R\$ 382 billion into the Brazilian economy, which would represent an increase in GDP of 3.3%.

However, the report Global Employment and Social Perspectives: Trends for Women, 2018, indicated that the global rate of participation of women in the labor force was 48.5% in 2018, 26.5 percentage points below the rate of women. men, being the global unemployment rate for women in that same year was 6%, approximately 0.8 percentage points higher than the rate for men. That is, for every ten men employed, only six women are employed, which contributes to the increase in women's participation in informal work. These results confirm previous ILO research that has warned of significant gender inequalities in

terms of wages and social protection.

We can understand informal work as one of the consequences of the contemporary social issue, a result of the absence of employment opportunities and the precariousness of the labor market. Scherer (2009) considers—that in addition to precariousness, one of the most serious factors is that informal work does not guarantee access to basic social and labor rights, which affects these workers at a time of illness and retirement, for example.

According to research produced by the Observatório das Metrópoles – IPPUR (2019), the number of Brazilians who earn their living as street vendors reaches 1.7 million. Of the people who started working on the streets between 2015 and 2017, to ensure the support of their families, 55.5% were women. Currently, there are almost 840 million women street vendors across the country and the vast majority are black. According to data from the IBGE (2017), employment without a formal contract surpassed formal employment for the first time in the history of Brazil. The year 2018 ended with 34.31 million people working on their own or without a formal contract, against 33.321 million employed in formal jobs.

The number of street vendors has increased considerably in recent years. Due to the economic crisis, the number of street vendors reached almost 1.7 million between 2014 and 2017. According to the IBGE, on 12/31/2020, the number of street vendors and informal workers grew during the COVID-19 pandemic, reaching 27.9 million people. And, of this contingent, revealed the IBGE, only 5% have some authorization to work. For Bouças (2015), it is a situation that cannot be ignored by the public power and it will only be possible to solve it from the moment in which the understanding of its complexity and specificities is deepened. From this, it would be possible to propose participatory

alternatives that reconcile the different social and gender interests involved, without the intention of eliminating the daily practices of the spaces of representation of the street vendors.

The city of Santo Antônio de Jesus, also known by the locals as Cidade das Palmeiras, is located almost 200km from the capital of Bahia, Salvador. It is also known as “the commercial city”, the result of a local campaign to enhance trade, created by the Commercial Association in 1980, aiming to further boost its status as a centralizing hub responsible for attracting many consumers driven by the variety of products on offer. .

In 2020 it had a population of 102,380 inhabitants, according to IBGE (2020), surrounding municipalities such as Nazaré, Muniz Ferreira, Aratuípe, Valença, Cairú, Jaguaripe, Varzedo, São Miguel das Matas, Elísio Medrado, Laje, Mutuípe, Jiquiriçá, Ubaíra, Amargosa, Salinas da Margarida, Dom Macedo Costa, Conceição do Almeida, São Felipe, Sapeaçu, Castro Alves, Santa Terezinha, Cruz das Almas and Governador Mangabeira are directly influenced by the Santo Antônio de Jesus trade where they constantly seek the support they need (IBGE, 2010).

The Feira Municipal de Santo Antônio de Jesus also stands out for being an important regional supply center. It includes the commercialization of vegetables, meats, dairy products, cereals, footwear, clothing, electronics and the like, in addition to having bars and restaurants. The clothing and footwear trade, in particular, is very expressive, especially on Wednesdays, attracting people from different municipalities who head to Santo Antônio de Jesus, attracted by the low prices and variety. Here, the importance of the Axis Rodoviário is highlighted, which guarantees the mobility of people and goods coming from the entire Recôncavo region.

The informality of work in Santo Antônio de Jesus, Bahia, is considered part of the historical process of formation and development that has always been present in its economy. Queiróz (1995) reports that this relationship and its contribution to the existence of the city, now known as “O Comércio Mais Barato Da Bahia”. The city gained this *slogan* as a result of the initiative of local businessmen and merchants, in the 1980s, who drew attention to its regional importance. This *slogan* can be read as the historical recognition of the city linked to the retail food trade, initially, followed by clothing, footwear, clothing and services.

Besides, according to the memoirist, the presence of the work carried out by street vendors or peddlers was important since the beginning of the foundation of the village that was born around the Igreja Matriz Padre Mateus, which would later become the city of Santo Antônio de Jesus. This way, these vendors marketed various manufactured and food products where, as their borders expanded, the transitory informal economy contributed to the form of productive organization in the region, with informality being a social reality that is present until the present day.

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON INFORMAL WORK

According to data from the ILO Labor Outlook report (2021), the regional unemployment rate for women in 2020 increased from 10.3% to 12.1%, above the general unemployment average. That's 13.1 million women who saw their jobs disappear due to the abrupt drop in work participation and the increase in unemployment last year, in addition to about 12 million women who were already affected by unemployment before the COVID 19 pandemic. However, gender inequality precedes the pandemic, and its arrival only contributed to deepening an

already existing social issue, accentuating the vulnerability of women in the labor market, which worsened considerably over the years 2020 and 2021.

In the research carried out by UN Women, Bergallo et al. (2021), the programs implemented for income transfer due to the COVID-19 pandemic by several countries were evaluated. The aspects considered in the evaluation took into account, for example, the sensitivity of the programs to gender issues, an aspect under which it was identified that in Brazil six million female heads of household received emergency aid until December 2020. The same survey observed there is also an important deficit in terms of formal and informal labor market policies and economic and fiscal assistance focused on women. This process is consolidated every day and is no longer just a temporary oscillation, making the process of incorporating the female contingent into the informal market a continuous and persistent social phenomenon (GARCIA & CONFORTO, 2012).

According to the UNDP 2021 Report, due to the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, women are more vulnerable to persistent structural challenges to jobs and economic independence. According to this Report, this vulnerability is due in part to a system of gender inequality that imposes unpaid care and housework on women through socially constructed gender norms, which deprives women of access to effective universal protection systems. For the ILO, if we are to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls by 2030, it will be necessary to prioritize ending gender inequalities in the world of work by tackling persistent challenges and obstacles.

STREET VENDOR WOMEN IN SANTO ANTÔNIO DE JESUS: VULNERABILITIES AND SURVIVAL STRATEGIES

The fieldwork was carried out between the months of July, August and September 2021 in the center of the city of Santo Antônio de Jesus, according to the techniques of the participant research. Thus, active observation was applied in the main area of the street vendor trade, around the Igreja Matriz, located at Rua Monsenhor Francisco Manoel Silva, downtown, Santo Antônio de Jesus. At the same time, a written record of all the observed social dynamics was carried out, seeking to identify the presence of women in fixed and ambulant points, identify the type of products they sold, locate bathrooms and/or public toilets, public security aimed at them, for example. . Added to this activity was the documentary and bibliographic survey, both in local and state public agencies, as well as in the database of national and international organizations.

According to information from SEINFRA, in 2021, the number of women who sought to register for street vendor work grew, reaching approximately 30%, compared to previous years. They are, in general, women aged between 25 and 58 years and mothers of 01 to 02 children. And, despite having little schooling, they revealed an interest in their children attending school and having a profession. It was informed that not all street vendors that have active stalls are legalized, which further reinforces the informal nature of this activity. The most common reasons for this are the lack of documents required for legal formalization and the refusal to leave that location for another. According to SEINFRA, although this informal activity has existed for decades on the streets of the city center, it was only in the previous municipal administration (2016-2019) that the registration of street

vendors began with the purpose of organizing and distributing the spaces for these workers to work. street, as well as greater knowledge of the existing quantity in this region. In 2020, there were 315 street vendors registered, of which 45% are women. In the vicinity of Praça Padre Mateus there are 26 registered street vendors and of these, 50% are women.

This data is consistent with what was observed during the fieldwork, in which the presence of women street vendors in the city of Santo Antônio de Jesus was observed, and they can be seen present either at fixed points of sale or stalls or as street vendors circulating through the streets. streets of the city center, women street vendors appear as important social agents in the socio-spatial production of the city center. With their own organization and production dynamics, they are more intensely, but not exclusively, linked to the sale of women's, men's, children's, bed and bath clothes, as well as shoes, perfumery, makeup, toys, household items, among others.

Therefore, the participation of women street vendors is a reality in the streets of the city center of Santo Antônio de Jesus, occupying a prominent place in this informal job market. Just walking through the main streets of the city, both on the most dynamic days of the week, Wednesday and Saturday, and on less intense days, it is possible to see their presence in tents around all the sidewalks, on the right side of the entire street. main street and opposite the formal shops and car parking. At various times it is possible to see agglomeration of pedestrians on the sidewalks of the main street shopping and, as in all urban centers where there is this type of commerce, causing discomfort in some pedestrians who transit these mediations.

Although there is no excessive presence of waste on the streets where the tents are located, which may suggest the presence of regular collection, it was noted the absence

of public restrooms and toilets, infrastructure to protect the stalls from rain and sun and of public safety. The tents, in almost their entirety, are assembled with fragile structures, covered by aged and worn-out tarpaulins and plastics, even causing the impression of abandonment.

In this scenario, it was found the presence of several women, some owners of their own stalls, others linked by ties of kinship and affection. Some offering their products to passersby; others were sitting in plastic chairs with their small children and some were breastfeeding, putting them to sleep or just caressing them. The presence of children under six was also noted, a fact that reinforces the narrative of some of these women, in the sense that they do not want the same professional destiny for their children. Although they show pride in their daily work, they recognize the social prejudice against the profession of street vendor.

In this regard, we highlight the contribution of Durães (2013) by drawing attention to the fact that the street and its peculiar activities are part of society itself, where the experience in street work enables the acquisition of a set of knowledge specific to this universe marked by elements that have a dynamic with all their brightness, but also with all their load of illegality, persecution and daily struggle. Thus, being a street vendor is not part of the future dynamics of the children of these street vendors, but rather the desire for salaried work that guarantees a fixed monthly income and social acceptance.

In addition, it was noticed that some women spend their entire day in this workspace, not making any displacement that distances them from their tents, vying for clients without any comfort or protection against the weather. However, Bouças (2015) draws our attention to the fact that street workers tend to develop a relationship of belonging with the place where they fix their points or their tents, where

many of them stay for years and even decades, which gives rise to an affective, committed and sometimes even conflicting relationship.

Besides, about the lack of access to public restrooms and toilets, we highlight possible health problems arising from not being able to urinate, at least during the workday. We highlight the presence of menstrual poverty, which is not only linked to the lack of access to sanitary pads, but is also related to the absence of toilets or bathrooms to guarantee intimate hygiene. In addition, it was noted that a good part of the women street vendors were lively, cordial, some with makeup and always inviting when advertising their products.

As for social organization, we highlight the presence of the Associação dos Ambulantes, Barraqueiros e Camelos de Santo Antônio de Jesus (AMBARC), founded in 2005, with the objective of organizing actions that promote labor achievements, which reflect on quality of life and equity in the independent worker of gender differences. However, they were not successful and the improvements in the tents and the implementation of toilets have encountered obstacles on the part of municipal managers.

There are countless difficulties faced by street vendors when working on the streets, especially when it comes to women. According to data from the Municipal Department of Infrastructure (SEINFRA), women street vendors registered in a survey carried out by the municipal government in 2016 are aged between 20 and 60 years and most of them have little schooling and reveal difficulties in accessing school, given the long working hours and unsanitary conditions. Added to this are the difficulties in accessing facilities such as restrooms and/or public toilets, poor hygienic conditions on the streets, the absence of full-time daycare centers for children, which makes the task of serving customers even more difficult and taking care of the children

at the same time, in addition to insecurity both at work and on the way home.

The solution found by the municipal government to “improve” the conditions of street vendor work consists of removing this trade from the city center. Alleging insufficient physical spaces available in the center, the municipal government decided, in an imposing and unilateral way, to relocate some street vendors to another location, which, although closer to the street market, generated discontent. According to Mariana Werneck (2019) the lack of interest in street work is one of the factors for the failure of registration policies carried out by city halls that, when understanding the sector as a temporary occupation or activity for mere income supplementation, makes work permits available to public- different targets without observing the working time of those who traditionally occupy the streets.

According to the coordination of inspection of street work, there are several complaints from the street vendors relocated to the new area, some argue that they will have losses in sales due to the distance of the new area from the city center, the low intensity of daily movement of people in the new location, the poor visibility of the available location, among others. Faced with these problems, many of these street vendors returned to the streets of the city center, near the Padre Mateus Church.

Besides, according to the inspection coordination, SEINFRA recognizes the need for new projects and interventions aimed at better service to street vendors in the city, who are still waiting for projects that meet their needs and that take into account gender differences and, therefore, the demands presented by women street vendors. Here, we highlight the perception presented by the aforementioned coordination regarding the vulnerability of women street vendors, considered “quieter” in relation to men, when

involuntary removal to the new area.

In this case, their vulnerability is recognized as a positive element for the consolidation of the city hall project, as they believe that the “fear” of not being able to find a space to set up their tents is the determining factor for the apparent tranquility. Here, it is noted that the public power is an agent of this vulnerability that actually puts them in a situation of insecurity regarding the possibility that, when they resist, they lose their only source of income and support for their family. For the inspection coordination, although the women demonstrate clarity when exposing the problems with the change of space and explain the locational advantages present in the city center, they are moderate when expressing themselves before the public agent. Unlike men, who speak “in a higher tone of voice” and are “more resistant” to the proposals presented by the municipal authorities.

However, after a decision by the State Public Prosecutor’s Office, the municipality of Santo Antônio de Jesus announced the relocation of street vendors from that street to the open market area, on November 27, 2021. Disgusted with the decision, the street vendors held protests in the streets and they spoke in the City Council demanding the promises of the electoral campaign of the current mayor, Genival Deolindo (PSDB), in relation to guarantees of permanence in the center of the city. They claimed that sales would be impacted by the abrupt move to the new location together with a period of great movement, the end of the year holidays and all this in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, they argued that the new location is far from the city center and does not offer security, given the already established absence of public security and the constant presence of drug users and robbers. In addition, he denounced that the new place does not bring any improvement in working

conditions, as there is still a lack of bathrooms and public toilets, the absence of public cleaning and adequate sewage, which makes the “new” place an environment with a fetid odor. and inadequate for the permanence of street vendor workers.

Faced with these arguments, the city hall postponed the relocation of the street vendors to December 1, 2021. On this new date, they relied on the strength of the Military and Civil Police to comply with the judicial decision and closed the main street of street vendors with cones, the from 04:00 in the morning. On the same day, new street vendor demonstrations took place through the city’s central streets to the City Hall headquarters. These manifestations generated great repercussion throughout the region, mobilizing various social subjects that are directly and indirectly linked to the street vendor trade.

The street vendors’ demonstrations had an effect and influenced public opinion, as the population was divided in terms of support for the demonstrators who, despite being apprehensive, resisted and kept their tents set up in the city center, carrying out their street vendor work. With this, the socio-spatial issues that already exist, not faced by the municipal government, are added to the involuntary removal for relocation of street vendors.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to the study presented, it was found that the right to fundamental and decent work is still very far from the reality of women street vendors in the city of Santo Antônio de Jesus. It is possible to say that none of the elements that constitute the concept of decent work, explained in the introduction to this text, by the International Labor Organization (ILO), appear as objectives to be achieved by the municipal government in compliance with the aspirations already explained by workers,

during the hearing held by the Municipal Council of Councilors, at the end of 2021. In this context, the results achieved indicated the need to create municipal public policies that address the existing vulnerabilities that prevent women street vendors from reaching better levels of quality of life. life and dignity at work. Creating participatory strategies that support and encourage the development of the necessary conditions for the change in the current condition.

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