

**Final Technical Report**

**Project Title:**

**“Economic growth, inclusion and empowerment of women in  
Brazil”**

**IDRC Project Number:** 107542-001

**Research Organizations involved in the study:**

Proponent institution:

SOS CORPO Instituto Feminista para a Democracia

Participant institutions:

REDEH Rede de Desenvolvimento Humano

IPEA Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada

**Location of Study:** Brazil.

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## 1. Executive Summary

The general objective of this research project was investigate whether the combination of high growth and progressive social policy have contributed to women's economic empowerment in Brazil. The specific objectives were: 1- Based on quantitative indicators at the macro and micro level, determine the impact of growth on women's economic empowerment; 2- Based on women's perspectives, investigate the factors influencing women's insertion in the labor market and the conditions under which the jobs are performed; 3- Analyze the relation between economic growth and women's participation in the job market, taking into account the pace and nature of this participation; 4- Identify and analyze the social policies geared to women's participation in the labor market; 5 - Inform public policies addressing gender inequality.

The outcomes are related to the three main components of this project:

a) Qualitative field research: holding informal jobs in three dynamic economic areas of the country's economy (involving three different regions): Pernambuco Agreste Clothing Industrial Area (Northeast); Barcarena Aluminum Industrial Area (Pará state, North); and Metropolitan São Paulo Civil Construction Sector (Southeast).

The main scientific findings of the qualitative research according to the analytical report are:

The working experience of women workers who were part of the universe of this research confirmed that the relationship between formality and informality does not enable us to understand the concrete and complex labor conditions and relations. The concept of precariousness has become from our point of view central to analyses the labor relations in which women are involved. From accounts about their job trajectories, we also understood that oscillation between formal and informal contracts is an intrinsic part of their labor trajectory. In the case of women workers, who also remain chiefly responsible for reproductive work even when inserted in productive labor, precarization can only be understood by taking into account the dynamics and conditions of insertion in those two labors. In the three contexts, it is immediately perceptible in the everyday working experiences reported the intensity of the working hours that often includes evening work, in an intermittent movement between labor that generates income, and labor that ensures home maintenance, care of children, other family members, and the women themselves. No matter the economic sector, the organization of women's everyday life is determined, above all, by the working hours required by their paid jobs. The working hours of these women can be generally summed up as long, intense, intermittent, and simultaneous. The wealth produced in the three contexts of this study contrasts with the precarious social and infrastructural conditions, which are mainly expressed in the absence of public policies to support social reproduction, such as leisure facilities and daycare centers. Productive and reproductive labor activities may present differentiated dynamics in the three contexts of this research.

In the precarious conditions in which the participants of this research are inserted in the labor market, paid work ensures a degree of economic autonomy (albeit fairly objective and very

restrictive) directly related to providing basic needs for their survival and their family's subsistence. Women's autonomy is to make their own financial decisions, within the limits of everyday needs that can be met by available resources.

For women in precarious labor, economic autonomy specifically means to have a wage, and based on this, to have the capacity of making decisions about her basic needs and her family group. This is reflected in a feeling of Independence and achievement. Hence, the degree of women's economic autonomy is directly determined by their insertion in the labor market. In the case of women in situation of precarious labor, their economic autonomy is directly affected by the following factors: 1) income level, its variations, and instability; 2) working hours in productive and reproductive labor (usually this results in lack of autonomy to control everyday time, as well as imposes limitations to professional qualification and improvements in their labor insertion); 3) harmful impacts of productive and reproductive work on their bodies, and specially on their health situation; and 4) concrete possibilities of having access to their labor rights and exercising them.

**b) Construction of a Panorama on Women, Work, and Development** focused in precarious insertion of women in the labor market, taking as data source the official quantitative data on this field and processed by IPEA with new variables crossing.

Quantitative secondary data were also surveyed to execute new data cross-checking and build a panorama of women's insertion in the labor market. For this research, IPEA introduced a new variable to analyze precarious labor, a rate of precarization for female workers. Women in precarious labor include employees with no formal contract, non-remunerated self-employed women workers, workers who produce only for their own consumption and women employers with up to five employees. We note that the rate of precarization among Brazilian women is very high, reaching 41.2% of the female EAP. In this rate is included several levels of precarization. For example: a worker with no formal contract of work (informal work), but with a income of 5 minimum wage. But when we consider only the workers situated in the lowest scale of income (until 2 minimum wage) 32.3% of women and 26.2% of men workers are involved in precarious and informal work.

The highest rates of precarization are found in the states of the North and Northeast. In the female EAP as a whole, only 36.7% had a formal work contract; Black women workers had the lowest rate of formalization in the workforce as a whole, with just 31.6% with a formal contract, while for white women this percentage was significantly higher, reaching 41.6% (IPEA/DISOC, 2015).

**c) Analysis of public policies geared to women's economic autonomy, insertion into and qualification for the job market and social security.** The following public policies were analyzed: Individual Microentrepreneur, Qualifying Women for the Civil Construction Industry and the Growth Acceleration Program (PAC) – as far as the installation of daycare centers.

The study conducted on public policy of daycare in Brazil indicates as the main result that there is a failure in incorporating the goals of economic empowerment and gender equality. This failure shows a fragmentation of State action and also indicates that while the gender issues at public

policy is marginalized, its transformative effects of inequality will also be limited. The fragmentation and segmentation of the State's actions in relation to policy on women, does not provide adequate conditions to operate gender mainstreaming. Practical and strategic gender needs are, in this context, inarticulate, with low politicization of the sexual division of labor and social practices of care, even when the State seeks to incorporate the concern for the real needs of women.

The centrality of caring in human life reproduction poses the need for the Brazilian state to have a radical commitment to shaping new social practices in caring, creating conditions to overcome the sexual division of labor. Until this does not become the aim of the state action, it will remain compromised with the reproduction of inequalities, rather than confronting these inequalities.

#### MEI (Individual Microentrepreneur)

The MEI legislation does not have the purpose of weakening existing labor relations; and it should not be used to transform a worker into an individual microentrepreneur, through an outsourcing process or by replacing a worker with a formal job contract by a service provider. However, the public policy to expand social security coverage and include self-employed workers seems to be misused to replace formal labor contracts by service providing relations.

Based on RAIS data (2006-2010) and taking into account the beginning of MEI implementation in 2009, it was observed that a percentage of individuals, who ceased to be formal employees between 2006 and 2008 (24.3% of those in RAIS), were unemployed when they joined the MEI after 2009. "Thus, for those individuals the MEI policy was responsible for reinserting them in the formal labor world, now as MEIs. It is even possible that some of them were working as informal entrepreneurs." (OLIVEIRA, 2013).

On the other hand, Oliveira (2013) indicates that a substantial group of individuals registered as MEI and found in RAIS data (2006-2010), listed according to the reason for cessation of employment, had in fact been dismissed and had made the transition to individual microentrepreneur.

One of the main MEI attractions is the low cost of the formalization process and of the social security protection. While the Social Security Simplified Plan (PSPS), created in 2006-2007, requires a monthly contribution of 11% of the minimum wage, the social security contribution in the MEI scheme is 5% of the minimum wage (beginning in May 2011).

Public policy initiatives geared to self-employed individuals have been quite residual. Although the MEI legislation can be considered a recent advancement for this segment of workers, this initiative is greatly limited because it does not offer an approach to the worker that would integrate access to information, specialized technical knowledge, and material resources to improve his/her labor activity. The high rate of default on social security payments among individual microentrepreneurs is clear evidence of this reality.

According to the Ministry of Social Security, the number of MEIs contributing to social security and with at least one contribution in 2013 was around two million (Table 16). However,

the total of MEIs registered with the Internal Revenue Service (Receita Federal) for the same year was 3.6 million (Chart 7).

Unlike employed workers, whose social security coverage depends on employer-employee formal relations, coverage for self-employed people depend on their social security contributions. Thus, it is necessary to put forward policies that will stimulate that contribution, with lower contribution rates, but it is also important to emphasize that social security goes beyond the old age pension.

Most self-employed workers are involved in low-earning activities, especially when one takes into account the average duration of their long working hours. Thus, it is clear the need to increase the aggregated value of the services provided by this segment of workers. This would not only increase their earnings, but also would ensure greater likelihood of formalization of their economic activity, increasing their contributive capacity.

### **Women Building Autonomy in Civil Construction**

The courses offered by the program Women Building Autonomy in Civil Construction serve a small portion of that labor market (7.9%). Two points stand out: 1) nearly half of women workers in construction sites were inserted in two occupational sectors, as civil works helpers and workers in concrete structure and masonry. These occupations require only elementary education and are low-wage jobs (around R \$ 1,200); and 2) formal employment official data show that women are entering the construction labor market especially in administrative services, general services and at technical levels, and not in occupations directly related to construction sites.

In sum, it is important to ensure women's access to education and professional training, including courses geared to sectors historically occupied by male workers and where gender discrimination is quite common. However, education does not guarantee job market insertion. It is necessary to strengthen employment policies that, based on economic growth and dynamization of national economic activity, would ensure new job openings, reinforcing public policies geared to women's economic autonomy and equality in the world of labor, with a broader perspective to insert women in the labor market.

Recommendations resulting from the study show the fundamental need to ensure the following: 1) physical working conditions (infrastructure, equipment, etc.) for women involved in activities that are traditionally masculine; 2) policies to prevent and oppose discriminatory practices and violence at the workplace (moral harassment, sexual harassment, among others); 3) adherence by private and state-run companies to the program to promote gender and race equity in enterprises, implemented by the Secretariat for Women's Policies (SPM) of the federal government; and 4) reinforce the demand for equitable working conditions for men and women on trade union agendas.

All tasks included in the project timetable for the whole period of this project were concluded. The outputs related to this project are: 1) a publication with the results of the qualitative research, quantitative data panorama and the three studies on public policies; 2) a booklet about women's economic autonomy and labor rights; 3) A website for the dissemination of the three mentioned outputs (this website was also used to disseminate the program of the final seminar): <http://soscopo.org/areas-de-trabalho/pesquisa/autonomiamulheres/> ; 4) Three publications (for electronic divulgation) of the synthetic version of the results translated into English, Spanish, and French.

## **2. The research problem**

This research project questions the relation between economic development and the construction of women's economic autonomy in informal working relations in the current Brazilian context. To this extent, it calls into question the prevailing concept of economic autonomy generally restricted to access to income.

We propose to reflect on economic autonomy as a process, not as a state that could be definitively attained in a given moment. The sexual division of labor is our reference to approach the relation between productive and reproductive work that marks women's experiences. Another aspect that should be taken into account to develop the concept of economic autonomy is the subjective dimension. In addition to objective factors, any autonomy also entails an interior process of strengthening and overcoming domination and exploitation, not only of an economic nature, but also patriarchal and, in the case of Black women, patriarchal and racist domination/exploitation. We also look into one aspect that has been little explored in labor market research: how insertion in the labor market affects women's subjectivity, their self-constitution as subjects of rights and the construction of their autonomy. Finally, the vulnerability of jobs and lack of social protection, i.e., the sustainability of women's economic insertion is also discussed.

We think that the methodological approach used in this research enables a critical reflection on women's economic autonomy in its gradations and contradictions. Remunerated work in the precarious conditions in which were inserted the participants in this research ensures an objective and very limited degree of economic autonomy. This autonomy is directly related to providing for women workers' basic needs and their family group. It is also based on a subjective dimension expressed as self-esteem, independence, and a feeling of being a subject because they are working, producing, and earning an income.

For these women workers who spend their daily lives going from the productive to the reproductive sphere and vice-versa, the precarious insertion in the world of labor ensures only a

precarious autonomy in life. Under the burden of alienated productive work that provides minimal subsistence means wearing their bodies out, they see the enjoyment of their own time reduced.

Women workers who made up the research universe perceive their remunerated work as a fundamental dimension of their lives, both because it makes them feel as subjects with feelings of independence and self-esteem, and because it ensures the provision of daily basic needs. Most of these women perceive the possibility of changes in their lives, generally small changes, as difficult or impossible.

Based on this research, we found that the fundamental level of economic autonomy is insertion in remunerated work, and the capacity to decide on how to use this income. However, going further, we cannot consider autonomy as a closed concept. We must understand that it has gradations and contradictions, and these should be investigated and analyzed in the concrete contexts of women's insertion in productive labor, as well as her concrete experiences in reproductive labor. Another finding was that the development contexts examined favored, above all, women's precarious insertion in the labor market, thus also resulting in a precarious economic autonomy.

In other words, because women are mostly responsible for reproductive labor at home, this affects not only their daily professional performance, but also limits their possibility to expand their income through qualification given the lack of free time for this. Women's double workload (productive and reproductive) constrains two indispensable objective factors to increase their economic autonomy: free time and physical energy.

In addition, we start from a critical approach to the concept of informality, trying to overcome a perspective of duality between the informal and formal sectors. In realities, such as the Brazilian one and in the current stage of capitalist development, there is a continuum between formal and informal labor relations. The research process and results led us to abandon the initial concept of informality and adopt the notion of labor precarization. This notion allows us to approach the concrete web of labor relations in the current period of capitalist accumulation, which cannot be apprehended if we consider the duality formal/informal or even the continuum formal/informal. The work experiences of women inserted in precarious contexts show that precarious conditions can exist even in formal labor relations. Thus, we adopted a broader concept of precarious labor relations, including different forms of hiring and remuneration, all of them with common characteristics of overexploitation, fragile labor relations, lack of social protections, and low and unstable income.

According to the previous item (1.a), the new variable developed by IPEA (precarization rate), used this same comprehensive definition, including different occupational insertions and distinct forms of labor relations, when it established an income range.

When we prepared this research project, Brazil experienced a historical moment in terms of its economic development and insertion in global economic and political dynamics. Now during the analysis of research results, we observe shifts in this process – focused on the emergence of a

sharp economic crisis expressed in economic stagnation. These shifts call into question the limits of an economic model that has guided economic growth, based on the production of commodities for export and the expansion of the domestic consumer market.

At the present time, the debate on the pathways for national development becomes central in the political arena for Brazilian social movements and intellectuals in the democratic camp. In this scenario, these research results acquire greater relevance because its empirical data can help to analyze the limitations of our development model in addressing gender and race inequalities. These dimensions are still treated in a subordinated and marginal fashion in the political and theoretical debate, even among progressive-minded people.

The concept of development was used critically in this research to drive forward the discussion on development and women's economic autonomy. In our view, this issue has been broadly addressed in a mechanical and simplistic way, as if the so-called economic development processes were by themselves automatic inducers of autonomy.

### **3. Methodology**

The purpose of this knowledge production project was to deepen critical knowledge about labor relations, considering women the subjects of those relations. Our study was based on women workers' trajectories and everyday lives. These women made up the universe of our qualitative research.

The research methodology used in this study was based on a critical approach that takes into account subjects in social relations, the articulation between objective and subjective dimensions, the relation between everyday life and the historical process, in the perspective of materialist, situated, and emancipatory knowledge.

Qualitative studies are an important tool to address reality in a dialectical way, and in terms of methodology they make it possible to use fieldwork techniques that allow for different ways of approaching and relating to research subjects, as well as the social reality in which they are inserted. This ensures knowledge production based on the subjects' perceptions of their experience and social reality, as well as guarantees the possibility of situating those subjects' perspectives within their concrete action contexts and social relations in which they are inserted.

Research subjects' experiences are understood not only from narratives of their social practices concretized in the space-time of everyday life, but also from time viewed as a process, which in our case is the women's professional trajectory. Narratives express time experienced as internal duration (Bergson, 2006), i.e., as memory, as subjective time. Some of the techniques of qualitative research, such as life stories (but not only them), make it possible to have accounts of what was lived as interpretative remembrances of one's trajectory, expressing in synthetic manner an experience with facts and processes that shaped that trajectory. Listening and reading the

subjects' narratives, it is possible to understand the imbrications of social relations in which the women are inserted, as well as how tensions unfold in concrete social practices in their trajectories and configurations.

In this research, the notions of trajectory and everyday life were methodological ways of organizing the questions in data collection instruments. Obviously, they are also a reference for analyzing the data.

We considered the trajectories of researched subjects as individual pathways, representing women's capacity to act in contexts and social relations in a given historical time. To this extent, the experience that emerges as an individual account is always related to a collective experience, a common experience in spaces of the community where she lives, in the workplace, in other social spaces, as well as in political organization collective spaces – in the case of women engaged in political and resistance struggles.

This methodological approach makes it possible to critically reflect on economic autonomy in its gradations and contradictions, based on the feminist viewpoint and on the experience of women workers involved in precarious labor. This experience affects mostly women and, above all, Black women.

When we defined the scope of this research as subjects inserted in contexts and precarious labor relations, we established a research universe forged in the imbrication of social relations of class, race, and sex. According to quantitative data on women's insertion in the labor market, Black women are the majority in precarious jobs. In the process of qualitative investigation, we sought to configure the experience of discrimination through the perception of these research participants, as well as their own perception of racial identity. However, the empirical reality of these issues proved to be hard to apprehend. In our view, two factors, which are explanatory hypotheses requiring further investigation, might have interfered with the study. The first factor was methodological and related to methodological limitations that need to be overcome in empirical studies theoretically based on the concept of social relations and their imbrications. The second factor was imposed by the "racial democracy myth," which prevails in Brazil as an ideological instrument, producing and reproducing racism and race inequalities, hiding the domination and exploitation of Black people by whites, and making the contradictions of race relations invisible.

Qualitative research should be a process in which knowledge production is closely linked to the establishment of horizontal relations, the ability to understand, respect, and accept the narratives about social reality and the experience of women – which are their points of view – adjusting the methodology whenever needed.

The first fieldwork activity carried out in the three researched areas was an initial visit to the territories and local subjects. These women were the initial sources of information on the contexts, and through them we established contacts with women workers to have preliminary discussions on the possibility of their participation in the research process, as well as approaching other women with the same purpose.

After this first stage, we had a period of initial meetings, both individual and collective, to define an agenda for dialogue. These dialogues, a fundamental moment of fieldwork, were carried out through semi-structured interviews, life stories, and short unscripted conversations, which unfolded as part of the joint experiences in the research contexts.

Twenty semistructured interviews were made with women precariously inserted in the labor market in the three research areas and in the defined productive sectors, totaling 60 interviewees. A list of questions was prepared to facilitate the dialogue; and based on these questions interviewees were free to recount their narratives.

Four women workers' life stories were also collected in each research area, totaling twelve life stories. Through the narrative of their trajectories, these life stories enable us to understand the factors that led to those work contexts. Those trajectories also reveal the experiences in the family, community, and job collectives, as individual stories are also part of the collective life. Thus, they allow not only the knowledge of individual stories, but also the social reality of these subjects' insertion, with their determinations and tensions, revealing changes and continuities in the processes that mark the movement between everyday life and life trajectory.

Observation at the workplace and in other collective spaces, as well as at home, was done throughout the whole period of fieldwork. The observation was done by one researcher in each context. In the cases of Barcarena and São Paulo, the process began in the morning at the residence of the woman worker, and followed her traveling to the workplace, her working hours in productive labor, her return home, and the first few hours upon returning to her residence. In the case of Toritama, as productive and reproductive labor took place at home, the observation did not include any traveling time. Observation lasted from 9 to 12 hours, according to the length of the working hours. When the interview was done, researchers also observed the interviewee's workplace and working conditions, recording their impressions in the field diary.

This enabled the researchers to get close to the research subjects' life contexts. Following all working hours (productive and reproductive labor) was a mechanism that proved to be very useful to deepen that observation. The technique to observe the work day was developed during the fieldwork data collection process, when it became clear that it was impossible to use the other technique initially planned: discussion groups with research participants. Since the beginning of fieldwork, we had concluded that the working hours and the dynamics of research subjects were highly intense. Research participants emphasized the need to abandon the idea of discussion groups.

Two aspects are central in our methodology: take into account women workers' everyday life and trajectories as references both for fieldwork and analytical research, and relate economic autonomy to productive and reproductive labor. This means that in our empirical data collection we sought to understand everyday experiences in subjects' narratives, taking into account productive and reproductive labor, as well as experiences in their professional trajectory (from its inception up to this research).

When the research results were presented, analyses were based, from a theoretical perspective, on existing studies within the framework of the critical theory, and in the more general framework of the feminist theory on the issue of women's work.

In this research process, the concept of economic autonomy is not only an investigation theme, but also an analytical notion that has to be taken into account for data analysis. The research title itself uses this concept in association with the notion of development. Our purpose was to provide another contribution based on empirical research with women workers inserted in precarious labor relations, to help in problematizing and formulating critical ideas around this conception.

Feminist authors and feminist movement documents that use this concept clearly express the need for considering this autonomy always in relation to local and global economic contexts, employment and income policies, and social protection. In addition, in these approaches, there is a clear need for reflection on this issue beyond income or remuneration, even if they are important elements for a certain degree of autonomy.

In this approach, context is an important theoretical and methodological notion that guided the research process. Context is not to be confused with adjacent area or territory. It is defined as a space-time in which social relations take place and express their particularities through concrete social practices. The context also manifests a historical process that shapes social relations of sex, class, and race forged in imbricated and consubstantial way, and expressing a dynamic between present and past, local and global.

**- Survey and quantitative data analysis:**

In this project, the definition of variables to be analyzed with the aim to create a quantitative panorama of women's participation in the labor market was made through a dialogue between IPEA and SOS CORPO's teams. In this dialogue, we decided that those variables would be defined on the basis of issues investigated during the qualitative research. This qualitative research was the guiding thread for all processes and components of the project. At each stage of the fieldwork, those two teams held methodological meetings before going forward. Based on this interlocution, IPEA's team presented broader data conglomerates that enabled us to jointly define data to be selected, analyzed, and cross-checked. In this way, the research's qualitative and quantitative components were developed in an entirely articulated way.

To prepare the panorama of women's situation in the labor market, we used existing data on women in the labor market combined with information on the context of women in the country. We have taken into account the surveys carried out by official research institutions, especially the IBGE, and based ourselves on microdata produced by the National Household Sample Surveys (PNAD, 2013) and the last National Census (2010). However, we emphasized the cross-checking of data of these sources – so far made available and analyzed separately. This cross-checking was done by IPEA in the framework of this research to help the production of new

analyses of women's labor market and economic autonomy. Finally, we also used information extracted from the Women's Annual Socioeconomic Report (RASEAM, 2014), prepared by the Secretariat for Women's Policies (SPM).

The production of the data that made up the women's situation panorama in this work was based on the methodology developed by IPEA for the Portrait of Gender and Race Inequalities. The objective was to make available information on the situation of women, men, Blacks, and whites in our country. In this methodology, indicators based on IBGE's National Household Sample Survey (PNAD) are produced for different areas of social life, making available the current panorama of the gender and race inequalities in Brazil to researchers, students, social movement activists, and public managers. The indicators cover women and men, Blacks and whites, white and Black women, and white and Black men. The purpose is to present descriptive statistics that could provide a current portrait of the situation of Brazilians from the perspective of gender and race inequalities, as well as to provide historical data that would make it possible to analyze the main advances and continuities of these asymmetries in the last two decades.

To build the panorama of women's labor included in this research project, seven out of twelve IPEA's thematic indicators were selected to compose the portrait of gender and race inequalities in Brazil, based on IBGE's PNAD data. Starting from the issues that emerged in the qualitative research, teams from SOS CORPO and IPEA revised and updated indicators from the PNAD data bank and the 2010 Census and selected the following indicators: 1) population, 2) head of household, 3) education, 4) social security and social assistance, 5) labor market, 6) poverty, income distribution and inequality, 7) use of time. The data were produced taking into account the intercrossing of gender, race, and socioeconomic condition.

For this research, IPEA produced a new variable to analyze precarious labor: the precarization rate of female labor. Women workers in precarious labor include employees with no formal contract, non-remunerated self-employed women workers, workers who produce only for their own consumption, and women employers with up to five employees. The introduction of this new variable is a most relevant result from this project, and a new contribution to understand women's insertion in the labor market, taking into account gender and race inequalities.

Regarding the **public policy studies**, each team of specialists established a specific methodology, engaging in a dialogue with the project coordinating team. Following, we will describe the methodological process developed for each study. Three policies or programs directly related to the promotion of women's economic autonomy were chosen. The policy of expanding public day care centers was chosen because of its positive impact on freeing women's time for productive work. The program to qualify women workers for civil construction was also selected because it was a governmental initiative to facilitate women's insertion in a traditionally masculine productive sector, thus enhancing women's possibilities and capacities to join the labor market. Finally, the MEI program was chosen because it was the federal government main strategy to expand informal workers' social security coverage, and women are the majority in the informal

labor market.

### 1 – Daycare center public policy study

This study dealt with the establishment of an agenda and the formulation of a daycare center policy in the 2011-2014 period, through the daycare policy of the Growth Acceleration Program 2 (PAC-2) and “Brasil Carinhoso” (Brazil Cares). This study included a critical analysis and a gender perspective. Through qualitative techniques of document analysis, we sought to determine to what extent the establishment of an agenda and the formulation of a daycare center policy in that period were articulated with the objectives of promoting women’s economic autonomy and gender equality in the world of labor. These objectives had been incorporated into the National Plans of Policies for Women (PNPMs). In addition, we investigated which ideological conception of social practices in the area of caring was central for the development of daycare center identity in that period. Our initial hypothesis was that the commitments to expand women’s economic autonomy and equality in the world of labor had not been incorporated as strategic objectives into the ideological assumptions of daycare center policy. Thus, the transformational capacity of the state action regarding the prevailing social practices in the area of caring was compromised.

In this study, we used qualitative techniques of document analysis, selecting documents that would enable us to understand the normative and institutional framework of the policy. This is what Muller and Surel (2002, p. 14) classified as “a set of concrete measures which constitute the ‘visible’ substance of the policy” – such as norms, policy reference documents, and consultations to the Electronic Citizen Information Service (e- SIC).

To contextualize this analysis, we used a representative sample of documents produced in that period of transition of daycare centers and pre-school facilities to the educational system, in addition to formal statements and resolutions issued by the National Education Council (CNE) and minutes of meetings held by the National Social Assistance Council (CNAS). In addition, we took into account the reference documents that helped to formulate the National Policy for Women. Finally, we also used data produced by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) and the Anísio Teixeira National Institute for Educational Studies and Research (INEP), in

addition to the Portrait of Gender and Race Inequalities (IPEA et al, 2012)<sup>1</sup>.

## 2 – The Individual Microentrepreneur (MEI) Program study

This study sought to verify to what extent this public policy had effectively contributed to expand the social security coverage of this segment that has a fragile occupational insertion in regional labor markets.

To analyze the self-employment profile, the information source used was the Employment and Unemployment Survey (PED), carried out by the DIEESE in partnership with the SEADE Foundation, MTE/FAT, and regional agreements in some of the main metropolitan areas in the country (Belo Horizonte, Fortaleza, Porto Alegre, Recife, Salvador, and São Paulo) in the 2009-2013 period. PED data show that, despite some singularities, self-employed workers are mostly male, aged 50 years or older, and with very diverse levels of education.

In the second part, we described the legislation that created the MEI program, a public policy designed to include self-employed workers and informal microentrepreneurs in formal labor relations. This program involved different governmental agendas and was an action to expand social security protection to this important segment of workers, characterized in the first part of the study as self-employed workers. Next, there was a description of the recent evolution of registrations in the program, and a profile of these individual microentrepreneurs.

## 3- Study of women's qualification in civil construction

The objective of this study was to analyze the professional qualification of women workers in the Metropolitan São Paulo civil construction industry in the 2009-2013 period.

In the first section, we presented the civil construction sectorial dynamics in the 2000s, especially between 2009 and 2013, based on quantitative data survey and analysis produced by the Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA). In the second section, we included the study of the civil construction labor market in that last period in Brazil, in the Southeast region, and in Metropolitan São Paulo, based on data from PNAD/IBGE and the Ministry of Labor and

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<sup>1</sup> Data used by IBGE and IPEA et al (2012) are based on the National Household Sample Survey (PNAD); for the latter, we used the data available on their digital platform (<http://www.ipea.gov.br/retrato>).

Employment (MTE/RAIS). In the third section, we presented a summary of the main recent changes in the Brazilian civil construction industry, in addition to a reflection on theoretical aspects of our labor market and labor qualifications, with a brief survey of public policies on professional qualification, focusing on the program Women Building Autonomy in Civil Construction, and based on literature review and document research. Finally, in the fourth section, we analyzed the qualification of female workers in the Metropolitan São Paulo civil construction industry between 2009 and 2013, based on the available data.

#### **4. Project Objectives and Activities**

##### **General:**

**Investigate whether the combination of high growth and progressive social policy have contributed to women's economic empowerment in Brazil.**

In the last decade, Brazil redefined its position in the world economy, expanding its economic growth and development perspectives.

Despite the rapid economic growth, the gap between this process and social, gender, and race inequalities remained. Although there was a clear reduction in income inequality, Brazil is still one of the most unequal countries in Latin America and in the world (Gini Index of 0.495, according to UNDP, 2013).

Hence, the dynamics between economic growth and overcoming those inequalities was placed on the public agenda as a very current and urgent issue – a strategic issue to influence the direction of our development.

President Dilma Rousseff's first mandate deepened the economic development policy in which the state assumed a leading role in creating infrastructure for economic growth, through the Growth Acceleration Program (PAC), combined with the fight against extreme poverty, through the Brazil Without Poverty Program, as well as other social policies.

In this context, the central issue established in studies influenced by investigations made by the feminist and women's movements about the relation between women and development (Boserup, 1970) was once again posed. In a more critical perspective, this central issue involved the extent to which an economic development process inserted in a hegemonic development model confronts or reproduces women's inequalities in society. The analysis of economic growth and job creation from the perspective of women's and the Black population insertion, or, beyond that, of how gender and race inequalities determine and are addressed in this process, has been crucial in revealing limitations and paradoxes between growth and economic development,

participation in the labor market, and the process of overcoming inequalities in social relations.

When this research project was first proposed, Brazil experienced a historical moment in its economic development, and leadership insertion in the global economic and political dynamics. Now, when this report is being written, we see multiple shifts in this process, focused on the emergence of a strong crisis that has led to economic stagnation. This has called into question the limits of this development model that guided economic growth, based on production of commodities for export and the expansion of the domestic consumer market. Again, Brazil is at a crossroads, and the debate on the direction of our national development becomes central on the political agenda of social movements and progressive intellectuals. In this new scenario, our research results based on qualitative empirical research became even more relevant because they contributed to the analysis of the development model limitations in tackling gender, class, and race inequalities. These dimensions are addressed in a subordinate and marginal fashion in the theoretical and political debate, even among progressive-minded people.

We think that the investigation carried out in this project, through its different components, ensured the full achievement of this general objective in a strategic moment of the Brazilian conjuncture, showing the limitations and contradictions that permeate the relations between economic development, progressive public policies, women's participation in the labor market, and women's economic autonomy.

During the whole period of project execution, the set of activities and their different components planned were carried out. Following, we describe each activity:

- 2 Based on women's perspectives, investigate the factors influencing women's insertion in the labor market and the conditions under which the jobs are performed.**
  - 3 Analyze the relation between economic growth and women's participation in the job market, taking into account the pace and nature of this participation.**
- **Meetings with local partners** – In each research area, possible local partners were identified, based on contacts with strategic subjects working in each context. In each research area, we held meetings with those strategic subjects, followed by meetings with local partners. These meetings took place between October and November of 2013, and in Toritama and Barcarena they were held prior to receiving project funds. Thus, they were paid for with SOS CORPO own resources. In São Paulo, on October 24-25, 2013, we held meetings with the following organizations and persons: Unified Workers' Federation (CUT), through its National Secretariat for Women, in addition to other organized women workers; São Paulo Municipal Government, represented by its Planning Department; a researcher from the Perseu Abramo Foundation and the São Paulo University; Guarulhos Municipal Government Women's Coordinating Organ; and the São Paulo Civil Construction Workers' Union. In Belém and Barcarena (Pará state), on November 21-22, 2013, we held meetings with the Pará Amazon Women's Forum, a women's movement active across the Pará state; the nongovernment organization Federation of Organs for Social and Educational Assistance (FASE), with the participation of a specialist in Amazon development processes; Barcarena Women's Association, Barcarena Dressmaking and Fashion Cooperative, and Vila São Francisco Women's Cooperative. In Toritama, we

participated in a gathering with researchers from the Interunion Department for Socioeconomic Studies (DIEESE); municipal organs involved in policies for women from the municipalities of Toritama, Caruaru, and Santa Cruz do Capibaripe; Toritama Women Dressmakers' Union, and young students from the National Industrial Learning Service (SENAI).

- **Workshop to prepare data collection instruments** – The research coordinating team prepared a draft proposal for data collection instruments: guidelines for interviews, observations, discussion groups, and consent forms. These proposals were discussed and consolidated with the three field teams, and with the partners IPEA and USP during the training of the fieldwork teams.
- **Selecting researchers and fieldwork supervisors** – Based on suggestions made by local partners in each research area, we received and analyzed résumés from graduates in social sciences and related areas with experience in social research. Teams were made up according to criteria of qualification, gender, and race; all researchers were women and there was at least one Black woman in each team. The race/color quota was maintained throughout all project teams. In Toritama, the two researchers and the supervisor are Black women; in São Paulo, one supervisor is Black; and in Barcarena, all the team is made up of Black women.
- **Training field researchers and supervisors** – On March 23-24, 2014, the research coordinating team met the selected supervisors and researchers from the three areas to provide field research training. Guidelines for the following topics were shared: methodological issues (general assumptions for approaching interviewees, research methods and techniques, sensitive issues); guidelines for research subject profile and instruments (eligibility criteria; step-by-step presentation of instruments); guidelines for administrative issues; team work dynamics, information flows and equipment operation. SOS CORPO research coordinating team also produced a booklet with guidelines for field procedures and the responsibilities of each team member.
- **Field research in three areas** - For this activity, we planned the use of several data collection techniques. We used exploratory visits to research areas (getting to know the areas, surveying information about the local context, and identifying strategic subjects); semi-structured interviews with women workers inserted in the main research area production process (20 in each area), life stories (4 in each area, chosen among the 20 interviewees), and systematic local observations. In addition, there were 10 interviews with young students residing in the cities where the field research was carried out. The field research took place from April to September, 2014.
- **Monitoring the field research** – SOS CORPO research coordinating team systematically monitored the three field research teams. This procedure was performed on a daily basis by telephone calls and e-mail. Every week, the supervisors would send spreadsheets with the number of interviews carried out and scheduled. SOS CORPO research coordinating team held two face-to-face meetings with the research teams of each area during the field

research stage. On these occasions, difficulties to perform the work were discussed, as well as strategies to overcome them.

- **Organizing of data recollected in the three fields of the qualitative research:** we made 60 interviews with women works, 12 life histories and observations of specific journeys of three workers and also field observations in general. These data were systematized and the analysis process is concluded and presented in the research report (attached).

**1 - Based on quantitative indicators at the macro and micro level, determine the impact of growth on women's economic empowerment.**

- **National team meeting to define method and variables** – Meeting of the research coordinating team and IPEA, through its Gender and Race Social Policies coordinating unit, held on March 11, 2014. Participants discussed the definition of variables for the secondary quantitative data analysis, which will constitute the analytical part of the research. It was decided that variables would be defined based on findings and issues brought forward by the qualitative research. To this extent, a second meeting took place on September 23 in Recife with the IPEA researcher responsible for this project to discuss the first issues raised by the qualitative research and begin the process of surveying secondary data.
- **Databank creation, secondary data survey and organization:** During the first six months of the project, a researcher was hired to survey data on each research area context, and also to survey the bibliography related to each context. The creation of a secondary data databank is planned for the first half of the project second year. However, given the wealth of information provided by the interviews and life stories, we decided it was indispensable to transcribe all recorded material. Thus, part of the funds allocated to this activity was used for this transcript.
- In the meeting held in Recife, in March 2014, IPEA's researcher presents a data selection based on the issues related to the qualitative research. These data formed a database. Some of these data were chosen to set a new crosschecking, which is presented in the first chapter of the research report.

**4 - Identify and analyze the social policies geared to women's participation in the labor market.**

**5 - Inform public policies addressing gender inequality.**

- Study of public policies and production of document. Three studies were produced by specialists in each specific subject about public policies. These studies and documents are already finalized. Originally, it was planned to produce 04 studies but during the last year two fields of the public policies chosen to compose this selection were integrated in a same public policy. For this reason, the studies about women's qualification and women's integration in the labor market of civil construction industry were elaborated together in

a same study.

### **Activities to fulfil project objectives:**

Planning, monitoring, and evaluating the research:

- **National Team meeting to plan the research and install the Advisory Committee with researchers and invited advisors** – The first meeting was held in Recife, on January 16-17, 2014. It was attended by research coordinating team members (Maria Betânia Ávila, Verônica Ferreira and Rivane Arantes, SOS Corpo), representatives from partner organizations (Schuma Schumacher, from REDEH; Bruna Jaqueto Pereira, from IPEA), and people invited to the Advisory Committee (Graciela Rodriguez, Articulação de Mulheres Brasileiras – AMB; Rosane Silva, Secretaria Nacional da Mulher Trabalhadora – CUT; Vera Baroni, Articulação Nacional de Mulheres Negras; Laura Duque Arrasolla, Universidade Federal Rural de Pernambuco; Josefa Salete Cavalcanti, Universidade Federal de Pernambuco; Gustavo Venturi, Universidade de São Paulo; Maria Antônia Cardoso, Universidade Federal do Pará; Milena Prado, Departamento Intersindical de Estudos Socioeconômicos – DIEESE). On that occasion, an Advisory Committee made up of representatives from research institutions and the feminist and women’s movements was installed. At the meeting, the research project was presented and we had a theoretical and methodological discussion on the concepts of informality, economic autonomy, as well as the methodological challenges in understanding gender, class, and especially race inequalities. We also debated research techniques and the criteria to compose teams to fulfil our methodological decisions.
- **Second Meeting of Advisory Committee with researchers and invited advisors** – Held in Recife, on March 25, 2015, it was attended by research coordinating team members, representatives from partner organizations, and people invited to the Advisory Committee. At this meeting, the process of qualitative investigation was presented and we had a discussion on the configuration of the informality and precarious work in each context. We also had a debate on some quantitative data produced by IPEA from the national databases of IBGE to construct a background about women’s participation in the labor market in Brazil.
- **Four (4) meetings of the National Team to monitor the research – two (2) in the first year and two (2) in the second year:** In the first year, two meetings of the research national team were held in Recife. The first one in January, prior to the Advisory Committee meeting; the second one in March, during the training sessions for qualitative researchers. In the second year, two meetings of the research national team were held in Recife. The first one in March, for discussion on the quantitative variables produced by IPEA; the second one in April, during a research seminar with the participation of Helena Hirata. Ongoing contacts and discussions among team members through conference calls and electronic communication were maintained.
- **Mid-term and final external evaluation** - At the end of the first year of project execution, we hired the specialist Albertina de Oliveira Costa, a Carlos Chagas Foundation (São Paulo) senior researcher, to carry out the mid-term project evaluation. At the end of the second

year of project execution, we hired the specialist Albertina de Oliveira Costa, a Carlos Chagas Foundation (São Paulo) senior researcher, to carry out the final project evaluation. According to the evaluation report (attached), “the objectives of the project were fully achieved. A close examination of the results obtained shows that the different dimensions in the proposal have been successfully addressed. Among the positive gains are worth mentioning: a substantive contribution from a feminist perspective both to the field of labor studies as to the field of gender studies; a substantive contribution to strengthen the claims of the agenda of the women's movement and for the formulation of public policies; and the proper use of a synergy of efforts among different organizations and experts and the choice of innovative and collaborative strategies of dissemination modalities of the results.”

## Training

- **Purchase of publications for bibliographical updating and literature review:** Works of reference dealing with our research issues were purchased. These publications dealt with the following topics: research methodology, changes in the world of labor, race inequalities in Brazil, and feminist theory.
- **Implementing the internship program:** The internship program included in the research started to be implemented in March 2014, through an agreement among SOS CORPO, Pernambuco Federal University (UFPE), and Pernambuco Federal Rural University (UFRPE). The program’s general objective was to help in the intellectual and professional development of women students to become researchers with a feminist perspective. In a clear option for affirmative action, two young women were hired, one of them Black. Together with women students, a work plan was organized with the following activities: guided studies on the themes of social research, research methods, ethical issues in research, feminist social theory, and other topics related to the research work; learning activities for practicing qualitative social research, involving bibliographical research, preparation of fieldwork, development of data collection instruments, systematization, data treatment and analysis.
- **Participation in national and international seminars, congresses, and courses. Research team members participated in the following national and international seminars:** Ad Hoc Seminar of the Group for Research on Gender, Work and Mobility (GTM – Genre, Travail et Mobilités) of the Paris Center for Sociological and Political Research (CRESPPA), on May 22, in Paris. Maria Betânia Ávila presented an article entitled “Domestic work – dynamics and tensions in the everyday lives of Brazilian women,” in addition, she met researchers working on the theme of women’s work, and participated in working meetings and feminist activities; “International Seminar on Work, Care, and Social Policies – Brazil-France in debate” organized by USP, UFRJ, Carlos Chagas Foundation, Brazilian Center for Analysis and Planning for Brazil, and MAGE Network (“Marché du travail et genre”) for France, on August 26-27, 2014 in São Paulo and August 28-29 in Rio de Janeiro; Seminar about “Economic crisis, work transformations and ways of precariousness: international comparison”, with the presence as lecturer of Helena Hirata (CNRS-Paris). This activity took place in the seminar space of the Pernambuco Federal University (UFPE) and was organized in partnership with researchers and professors of this institution. The

seminar had a great audience of students and researchers of this and other universities; Small meeting with the research team with Helena Hirata to discuss some issues related to the research process. These activities were held in Recife, on April 29, 2015; participation in two sessions of research work, one with Danièle Kergoat and Helena Hirata and one with Danièle Kergoat about issues related to the results of this research and also about theoretical and methodologic concepts for analysis process. Participation in the June session of the seminar “materialist feminism and critical analysis,” held in Paris, in June 2015; participation in the International Seminar Participative Methodologies in the Construction of Knowledge, held in São Paulo, in July 2015.

### **Debates and dissemination**

- Participation in the workshop about economic autonomy of women in the activities that composed the program of action of the two days of Margarida’s March (rural women’s workers mobilization with two days of activities: first day, workshops and seminars; second day, great march of seventy thousands of women) , held in Brasilia, on August 11-12, 2015;
- Organization and participation in a roundtable about the results of this research in the Work Studies Brazilian Association (ABET) Annual Congress, held in Campinas, on September 15-17, 2015.
- Final seminar for presentation, dissemination and debate of the results of the qualitative research and the studies about public policies, which was held in Recife, on October 29-30, 2015, with the participation of researchers of universities and other research institutions (national and local), activists of women’s national and local movements, representatives of public institutions from national government, state of Pernambuco government and municipalities government and students from the public universities from Pernambuco and others states of the Northeast of Brazil. Two members representatives of work groups of CLACSO – Latin American Council of Social Sciences (from universities of Argentina and Venezuela) and two representatives of a Latin American feminist movement (from Uruguay and Paraguay) were present. The total number of participants was around one hundred persons.
- 03 meetings for presentation of the results of the qualitative research were held in each context where the research field took place: São Paulo (SP), September 29, 2015; Barcarena (PA), November 6, 2015; and Toritama (PE), November 20, 2015. These results were also presented in Brasília during the activities held as part of the process of Black Women March (November 17-18, 2015).
- The results of the qualitative research were presented in a panel during the VII Latin American and Caribbean Conference of Social Sciences, organized by CLACSO and held in Medellin, Colombia (November 9-14, 2015).
- Development of a website for dissemination of the project outputs (<http://soscorpo.org/areas-de-trabalho/pesquisa/autonomiamulheres/>);
- Dissemination in this website of the synthetic version of the results translated into English, French, and Spanish.
- Distribution of a booklet to women workers through their organizations and during local presentations in the areas where the qualitative fieldwork had taken place. We produced 1,000 copies distributed to women’s organizations in the areas where the qualitative research had been carried out; national networks and movements of women workers and

feminists; women's organizations carrying out educational work for those local movements and groups.

- Distribution of publication with the project results to university researchers, feminist and women workers' movements, and public authorities. Seven hundred (700) copies were printed and distributed to that audience. An electronic version was also sent to e-mail lists of research groups, movements, and public managers. Finally, it was made available at the hotspot with the research results: (<http://soscorpo.org/areas-de-trabalho/pesquisa/autonomiamulheres/Desenvolvimento-Trabalho-e-Autonomia%20Economic.pdf>)

## 5. Project Outputs

### List of outputs

- 1) **publication** with the results of the qualitative research, quantitative data panorama and the three studies on public policies: printed version and electronic version (<http://soscorpo.org/areas-de-trabalho/pesquisa/autonomiamulheres/Desenvolvimento-Trabalho-e-Autonomia%20Economic.pdf>) ;
- 2) **Booklet** on women's economic autonomy and labor rights: printed and electronic versions. The booklet presents a brief summary of the qualitative research results, focusing on the issue of economic autonomy. In its second part, it summarizes labor rights to support the educational work with women workers. We emphasized labor rights because the qualitative research demonstrated lack of knowledge of those rights among women workers.
- 3) Three electronic publications of the **synthetic version** of the results translated into English, Spanish, and French.
- 4) A **website** for the dissemination of the mentioned outputs (this website was also used to disseminate the program of the final seminar): <http://soscorpo.org/areas-de-trabalho/pesquisa/autonomiamulheres/>.

The project team led processes and relevant areas of training and capacity building in research methodology and practical experience in conducting qualitative research. During the project, eleven young researchers were trained in theory and practical experience of research, methods and techniques of qualitative research. Two of them were trained through an internship program, and other nine were incorporated into the qualitative fieldwork teams. They were also trained in a more comprehensive approach to the concept of work, considering women's productive and reproductive labor. The meetings of the advisory committee were spaces for mutual learning between researchers from university, feminist institutions and national women's movements, in the field of research methodology and also in some special areas which were theoretical research challenges: development, sexual division of labor, social relations of gender, race and class, labor relations (with emphasis on the debate on informality/formality and precariousness) and

economic autonomy. The approach of the racial issue was especially debated in this space. Local meetings to disseminate the results of the research were occasions for presenting the results, but also spaces for dialogue and learning about the question of work, labor rights of women in the country, and economic autonomy. These meetings also enabled dialogue between workers, organized movements and local public authorities around the problems experienced by women in the labor market in each context. One very effective aspect of this project was that it yielded several products with different formats, making it possible to use them in various forms and, thus, having distinct impacts for the research results. Other relevant aspect is the strategy to distribute such products, reaching different audiences by several means. Products have been broadly distributed to networks and research groups in this field of knowledge production, women's movement networks, other social movements, and public managers. An innovation that should be highlighted was the production of a booklet to provide input to the educational work with women workers' movements. These two aspects demonstrate an innovative strategy to disseminate research results.

It was deeply innovative and effective to have included in our strategy the idea of disseminating the research results in various formats, and especially our participation in spaces for direct dialogue with different audiences (movements, researchers, and public managers). This should help to have an impact on the debate in those different areas.

An innovation in outputs is the production of materials of various formats and its dissemination via different media (print and electronic materials, teaching materials and website). Another particular way of dissemination is, although, the main part of the materials is written in Portuguese, a translation of a synthetic version of it was done to English, French and Spanish allowing a much larger scope of dissemination of results. These different products may be disclosed by different networks which the SOS CORPO, REDEH and IPEA are integrated: women's movements at the national and Latin American levels; researchers at the University; working groups with which we relate in CLACSO; French feminists researchers groups with whom we have shared this process and national government institutions of different levels.

## **6. Project Outcomes**

### **6a- Scientific contributions**

We presented here a synthesis of findings of the qualitative research:

The working experience of women workers who were part of the universe of this research confirmed that the relationship between formality and informality does not enable us to understand the concrete and complex labor conditions and relations. The concept of precariousness has become from our point of view central to analyses the labor relations in which women are involved. This was clear in their narratives about their work and everyday life, as well

as in the narratives about their job trajectories. In the trajectories of those women workers, we can see different strategies used by labor contractors and companies in the three contexts studied to reshape labor relations, which have become even more peripheral and precarious, directly affecting women. Precarious labor is not something static determined by the kind of job contract, it is rather an ongoing movement structured by material and ideological processes that we can apprehend in women's labor trajectories and in the articulation between production and social reproduction. Women workers, who confirmed to have a formal employment contract, implying access to rights, declared they had no concrete experience with those rights because of constraints imposed by labor relations. For example, lack of daycare centers, no vacations and long working hours, among others. Lack of knowledge about their labor rights was the most obvious expression of this absence of concrete experience and of the gap between this situation and full citizens' rights at the job. From accounts about their job trajectories, we also understood that oscillation between formal and informal contracts is an intrinsic part of their labor trajectory. This makes it impossible to define those women workers as part of a "sector" based solely on their job contract. The relationship between rights formally established and not experienced in everyday life is one aspect that express the contradictions and the precariousness of labor relations in the country. There are complaints made about it permanently by social movements as well as other critical studies that demonstrate this. The innovation of this qualitative study is to show this relationship embodied in the labor trajectory and daily life of working women and take it as an element of precarious work today.

In the case of women workers, who also remain chiefly responsible for reproductive work even when inserted in productive labor, precarization can only be understood by taking into account the dynamics and conditions of insertion in those two labors. For women, sexual division of labor, concretized in everyday life as an ongoing movement between reproductive and productive labor, carried out intermittently and in many cases simultaneously, is in itself a factor of precarization. A central element that characterizes this division as a precariousness factor is the extent of productive and reproductive work schedules that goes far beyond the time of a workday considered legal (in the case of Brazil, 44 hours per week). Another element that can be cited is the situation of intense stress generated by flashing between the two works, and in some cases, the simultaneity that profoundly affects women's health.

In the three contexts, it is immediately perceptible in the everyday working experiences reported the intensity of the working hours that often includes evening work, in an intermittent movement between labor that generates income, and labor that ensures home maintenance, care of children, other family members, and the women themselves.

No matter the economic sector, the organization of women's everyday life is determined, above all, by the working hours required by their paid jobs. The working hours of these women can be generally summed up as long, intense, intermittent, and simultaneous. Thus, everyday life of those women is a sequence of days fully taken up by productive and reproductive labor demands. The wealth produced in the three contexts of this study contrasts with the precarious social and infrastructural conditions, which are mainly expressed in the absence of public policies

to support social reproduction, such as leisure facilities and daycare centers. These facilities are fundamental to ensure women's autonomy in a context in which sexual division of labor imposes the burden of reproductive labor on them and limits their time. Productive and reproductive labor activities may present differentiated dynamics in the three contexts of this research. However, in the context of the world of labor reconfiguration, this study has generally confirmed that the sexual division of labor remains a dimension that structures social reproduction and everyday life. In the precarious conditions in which the participants of this research are inserted in the labor market, paid work ensures a degree of economic autonomy (albeit fairly objective and very restrictive) directly related to providing basic needs for their survival and their family's subsistence. Women's autonomy is to make their own financial decisions, within the limits of everyday needs that can be met by available resources. This economic autonomy is also based on a subjective dimension, expressed by self-esteem, feelings of independence, of being a subject because she works, produces, and earns an income.

For women in precarious labor, economic autonomy specifically means to have a wage, and based on this, to have the capacity of making decisions about her basic needs and her family group. This is reflected in a feeling of Independence and achievement. Hence, the degree of women's economic autonomy is directly determined by their insertion in the labor market. In the case of women in situation of precarious labor, their economic autonomy is directly affected by the following factors: 1) income level, its variations, and instability; 2) working hours in productive and reproductive labor (usually this results in lack of autonomy to control everyday time, as well as imposes limitations to professional qualification and improvements in their labor insertion); 3) harmful impacts of productive and reproductive work on their bodies, and specially on their health situation; and 4) concrete possibilities of having access to their labor rights and exercising them.

According to the point of view of the external evaluation: "among relevant contributions to social sciences, we highlight the following topics. Based on materialist feminist theory and empirical research with women workers in precarious labor relations, conceptions such as women's economic autonomy and double workload are problematized. The research provides a nuanced notion of autonomy, including gradations, tensions, and internal contradictions. Using a methodology that approached economic autonomy as a process directly related to social life transformations – produced by collective action rather than a status achieved by individuals – enabled us to understand how women workers' insertion in precarious labor relations, as well as their responsibilities for daily reproduction chores, results in a relative, limited, and precarious autonomy. This happens despite the importance of remunerated work in the lives of research's participants, its impact on their self-esteem, and the pride these women workers feel for supporting their own families" (Evaluation Final Report, 2015).

As other component of the project, quantitative secondary data were also surveyed to execute new data cross-checking and build a panorama of women's insertion in the labor market. For this research, IPEA introduced a new variable to analyze precarious labor, a rate of precarization for female workers. Women in precarious labor include employees with no formal contract, non-remunerated self-employed women workers, workers who produce only for their

own consumption and women employers with up to five employees. We note that the rate of precarization among Brazilian women is very high, reaching 41.2% of the female EAP. The highest rates of precarization are found in the states of the North and Northeast. In the female EAP as a whole, only 36.7% had a formal work contract; Black women workers had the lowest rate of formalization in the workforce as a whole, with just 31.6% with a formal contract, while for white women this percentage was significantly higher, reaching 41.6% (IPEA/DISOC, 2015).

The three studies on public policies mentioned above were also a major and unprecedented contribution of this project. Two evidences of this importance: 1) during the project's collective preparation, both public managers and women's movement leaders affirmed the relevance of carrying out the studies because of the lack of information on these policies from the perspective of promoting women's economic autonomy; 2) after their conclusion and first presentation at a seminar to disseminate the research results, SOS CORPO has received several requests from public organs for presentations and discussion of these studies, as well as from women workers' and feminist movements for their processes of leadership training and education, and from public university students and teachers seeking information directly at our headquarters.

These studies were evaluated by the participants of the final workshop as fundamentally important to support management of women's public policies, demands from social movements, and finally to carry out research in the field of public policies. In addition to the forms of dissemination already described in this report, which took place during the project execution and were directed to those audiences, there are other strategies of dissemination and political influence based on its results that will continue after the project.

The study on the Brazilian daycare center policy shows deficiencies in the incorporation of objectives related to the promotion of gender equality and economic autonomy. The absence of these objectives not only demonstrates the fragmentation of the government action, but also signals that when the gender perspective is marginal in a public policy, its capacity to have transformational effects on inequalities is also limited. The subsidiary nature of the state action reinforces the reproduction of familist and maternalist values in the social practices of caring, making these ideological conceptions central to Brazil's social policies.

The study conducted on public policy of daycare in Brazil indicates as the main result that there is a failure in incorporating the goals of economic empowerment and gender equality. This failure shows a fragmentation of State action and also indicates that while the gender issues at public policy is marginalized, its transformative effects of inequality will also be limited. The fragmentation and segmentation of the State's actions in relation to policy on women, does not provide adequate conditions to operate gender mainstreaming. Practical and strategic gender needs are, in this context, inarticulate, with low politicization of the sexual division of labor and social practices of care, even when the State seeks to incorporate the concern for the real needs of women.

The centrality of caring in human life reproduction poses the need for the Brazilian state

to have a radical commitment to shaping new social practices in caring, creating conditions to overcome the sexual division of labor. Until this does not become the aim of the state action, it will remain compromised with the reproduction of inequalities, rather than confronting these inequalities.

The MEI legislation does not have the purpose of weakening existing labor relations; and it should not be used to transform a worker into an individual microentrepreneur, through an outsourcing process or by replacing a worker with a formal job contract by a service provider. However, the public policy to expand social security coverage and include self-employed workers seems to be misused to replace formal labor contracts by service providing relations.

The decision to contribute to social security involves an accounting process to assess costs and earnings currently and in the future. The difficulty to adjust social security rules to the reality of those workers in informal activities is based on their limitation to make contributions during periods of financial hardship, or incapacity to work caused by illness or accident. Public policy initiatives geared to self-employed individuals have been quite residual. Although the MEI legislation can be considered a recent advancement for this segment of workers, this initiative is greatly limited because it does not offer an approach to the worker that would integrate access to information, specialized technical knowledge, and material resources to improve his/her labor activity. The high rate of default on social security payments among individual microentrepreneurs is clear evidence of this reality.

Analyzing this occupation in the 2000s, we note the decrease in civil construction employment beginning in 2014. This process may have negative impacts on consumption, family incomes, and especially on job creation, which would lead to increased unemployment. It is fundamental to recover national economic growth and to increase public and private investment in economic and social infrastructure to reactivate the important sector of civil construction that generates so many jobs in Brazil.

However, it is important to emphasize that male workers still predominate in this sector, although there has been a recent expansion of female employment. Women workers in civil construction have better schooling, and better forms of insertion by occupational grouping and occupational position. Women workers also have proportionally higher levels of formal job contracts (despite the increase in self-employment), lower labor turnover, and receive higher average incomes. Nevertheless, they accounted for only 4.5% of the civil construction workforce in Metropolitan São Paulo in 2013. Civil construction labor market is still marked by low educational levels, high labor turnover, and large numbers of self-employed workers, especially among male workers. Hence, the state should put forward proposals for action and execute monitoring activities to tackle the main issues in the sector – informality, labor turnover, outsourcing, health, and safety – in order to improve working relations and conditions in civil construction.

The courses offered by the program Women Building Autonomy in Civil Construction serve

a small portion of that labor market (7.9%). Two points stand out: 1) nearly half of women workers in construction sites were inserted in two occupational sectors, as civil works helpers and workers in concrete structure and masonry. These occupations require only elementary education and are low-wage jobs (around R \$ 1,200); and 2) formal employment official data show that women are entering the construction labor market especially in administrative services, general services and at technical levels, and not in occupations directly related to construction sites.

In sum, it is important to ensure women's access to education and professional training, including courses geared to sectors historically occupied by male workers and where gender discrimination is quite common. However, education does not guarantee job market insertion. It is necessary to strengthen employment policies that, based on economic growth and dynamization of national economic activity, would ensure new job openings, reinforcing public policies geared to women's economic autonomy and equality in the world of labor, with a broader perspective to insert women in the labor market.

***b. Changes in behavior, capacities, actions, or relationships of researchers, networks, or research institutions***

This research project enabled an innovative partnership between feminist organizations that produce knowledge and one of the main public research institutes in the country, with reciprocal contributions for all those involved. It also reinforced the participation of national and Latin American networks in knowledge production. In Brazil, we highlight the following activities: 1) participation in congresses of the Brazilian Sociology Society and the Brazilian Association for Labor Studies, in activities carried out in partnership with feminist organizations and universities; 2) organization of activities pulling together trade unionists, feminist movement activists, and members of university study units, through participation in the Unit for Feminist Reflection on Productive and Reproductive Labor. In Latin America, we emphasize our participation in activities of the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO), as for instance, research seminars and the Latin American Conference on Social Sciences (2015). Partnership ties between feminist organizations, universities, IPEA, and women's movements were strengthened by the Advisory Committee created for this project. The Advisory Committee became a space for fruitful dialogue on theoretical and methodological challenges posed by this project and other research work carried out by the other institutions.

This project resulted in strengthening feminist organizations' capacity to network with spaces for dialogue and exchange between universities from different regions of the country (we highlight the participation of women researchers from universities in the North), public research institutions, and social movements. Evidence of this process was the public statement made by

Maria Antônia Cardoso, a researcher from the Pará Federal University (UFPA), at the final seminar to publicize the project. She explained that participation in the project had demonstrated the existence of knowledge production centers in the North. It also favored participation in the research process in conditions of equality, creating new ties between that university and other research centers producing knowledge in the area of development and women's labor. Through this project and other spaces for debate promoted during the project execution new partnership links were created and old ones were consolidated.

Training and capacity building were strong components of the project. This was emphasized in its external evaluation. To this extent, we highlight the ongoing training of the young women researchers, through the internship program, and the capacity building with the whole team that participated in the project. This was done through workshops and methodological discussions held throughout the project, as well as seminars for theoretical debates.

Hence, in our evaluation this project expanded feminist organizations' investigative capacities, increased public recognition of those organizations as knowledge production centers, and strengthened their institutional relations at national and international levels.

We believe that the development of this research project had as one of its main results the consolidation of new institutional relationships, strong learning processes between institutions and researchers participants of the project. Its results deeply contribute to launch new theoretical issues and they also contribute for a greater understanding of social reality and for the possibilities of making changes.

We also want to stress the view of other researchers involved:

According to what was stated by the IPEA researcher, a member of this project, "the experience served to consolidate a new line of more qualitative research in this institution."

The researcher of REDEH also stressed that the results of the research provide strong new arguments which constitute an important reinforcement to the claims of the Brazilian feminist and women's workers movement for public policies for women's autonomy.

The partnership established between feminist organizations and a public institute of research was considered a great opportunity for mutual learning and with very positive results for both sides.

In research seminars in Brazil and in international meetings the presentation of the research's process and of the research's results produced much interest. The participants of these meetings reaffirmed the importance of this study for the production of knowledge. It has also contributed to reinforce feminist's organizations as producers of knowledge.

The research process had a pedagogical dimension of theoretical qualification for members of proponent organizations and also for all the participants of the research staff. This

qualification was provided through seminars and meetings with national and international specialists and in specific workshops about research methodology. We also want to emphasize the internship program that incorporated two public university students. According to the final evaluation report, “they both emphasized they consider the internship a remarkable and unforgettable stage of their education. Concerning plans for the future, both reported that the internship had encouraged a reflection on their own autonomy. They intend to continue their studies to achieve master’s degrees, and to become financially independent from their families.

**C - Policy influence (e.g., expanded policy capacities of researchers; broadening policy horizons of policymakers; and affecting policy regimes).**

Concerning public management, we have planned to participate in the 2016 National Conference on Women’s Policies this coming April, where we expect to influence with our research results the debate and vote on proposals and guidelines for government action. The conference will be attended by about 3,000 women representing women’s movements and public managers from all states and many municipalities in the country. We have also planned a presentation of the research results to the National Women’s Rights Council (CNDM). This organ is made up of representatives from government and civil society. SOS CORPO has one representative on the Council.

Dissemination of research results among women’s movements will serve as input to formulate proposals of governmental policies geared to promote women’s economic autonomy. Research results have been incorporated into SOS CORPO’s educational programs for women’s organizations at local and national levels to help those movements to make policy proposals. Among these activities, we highlight the following: 1) National Leadership Training Course for rural workers’ unions, affiliated to the National Federation of Agricultural Workers (CONTAG); 2) Leadership Training Course for the Peasant Women’s Movement; 3) Leadership Training Course for the Unified Workers’ Federation (CUT) Women’s Collectives; 4) Leadership Training Course for the Pernambuco Women’s Forum; and 5) National Educational Course for AMB’s Activists.

## **7. Overall Assessment and Recommendations**

The support of IDRC to this project assured time and conditions to conduct a qualitative research, a panorama of the women in labor market based on quantitative data, and studies on public policies considered the great quality from the technical point of view. Their results were considered as a relevant contribution on the issue of development, women’s economic autonomy and working conditions. The dissemination of the results took place at a very strategic moment in the national debate on development projects, its limitations and challenges. The support also assured the strengthening of partnerships, consistent learning processes and participation in

strategic public spaces for dissemination of knowledge, for women's movement and public managers. We believe that this project achieved an efficient relationship between time and available resources in carrying out different activities and considering the actual and potential impact of their results. From our point of view, we considered it an extremely successful project in achieving its objectives and its contribution to the theoretical and political debate in Brazil and for the formulation of public policies for equality and empowerment of women.

**Other annexes:** Recipients are encouraged to include additional annexes such as photos on key activities and results (Informed consent is required for photos. Contact your IDRC Program Officer for consent forms); tables; graphs; list of participants; etc.

***Project research outputs, including Final Technical Reports, are to be submitted in digital format whenever possible. While submission of lengthy outputs in paper format such as published books is also acceptable, project leaders are encouraged to submit all project outputs electronically to facilitate dissemination.***