EMPOWERMENT AND WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY ECONOMY: IN SEARCH OF EQUITY

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FEMALE INVISIBILITY IN SCIENCE

- Modern science - patriarchal

- Mechanicist perspective - rationality and objectivity, established female inferiority.

- New paradigm: all scientific-natural knowledge is scientific-social - more comprehensive, interdisciplinary, non-dichotomous approach

- the person, as author and subject of the process, goes to the center of knowledge
SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY ECONOMY (SSE): A FIELD OF POSSIBILITIES

- A field of study that allows **greater equity for women** because of their **fundamental principles**, allowing this invisibility to eventually be extinguished.

- The difference is to understand the economic logic **incorporating the social** and do not separate the **cultural, political, ethical** dimensions maintaining the **substantive character** of these manifestations.
These figures can show the dimension that the ESS has reached in Brazil, as well as its motivations, which corroborates its **plurality**

ESS participation in the Brazilian economy is **only 2%** - subsistence or artisanal production, individual or family initiatives; people with low education and advanced age, with little or no initial recourse.
SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY ECONOMY AND GENDER
• It is a perspective of **opposing universalizing values** that is concerned with the **singularity** of thinking about associating **women's work**, usually **disregarded or devalued**, to the **SSE** in a perspective of **confronting the hegemonic context** and as a possibility for the **consolidation of gender equality**.

• The SSE, because of its **intrinsic characteristics** and concern with the **valorization of the human being**, appears as an **opportunity for the feminine work**.

• Offers a space that **values the human, respects the limits and needs** of each one and is concerned with the **non-discrimination or exploitation of the participants**, in an approach of **inclusion**
### Female Participation in SSE in Brazil

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Associates</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Coordinated by Women</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,423,631</td>
<td>620,258</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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#### Women's Participation
- 1% coordinated by women
- Participation is greater in:
  - Smaller enterprises
  - Informal groups
  - Urban spaces

#### Income of Members
- The only source available (15.4%)
- Main income (16.06%)
- Informal kinship and neighborhood networks (19.3%)

#### Nurseries and Schools
- Husbands/companions' performance - 7.0%
- 4% of enterprises have a structure to take care of the children
These disparities become **contradictory**, since the SSE is based on principles such as democracy, equity, solidarity, from other economic, ideological, political and social paradigms.

It is **incongruous**: to have more men than women; men occupy the predominant positions of management; women have to dedicate themselves to the domestic functions and, therefore, they destine only part of the time to the enterprise.

The **configuration** of a self-managed, cooperative space that is preoccupied with **social issues**, which allows women to **own the means of production** by their collective character, to have **similar income** thanks to redistribution among cooperative members, SSE becomes a **promising space** so that women can act and **grow** in quantity as well as individually, **generate opportunities** for an improvement of the **participation** in the enterprises and, consequently, in positions of **decision-making**, proposing a more **equanimous** picture.
WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

- Assert themselves in a group with **autonomy**, participating in **decisions** about their life, improving their **quality of life**, allowing a more **critical view** of reality and precariousness, subordination, domination and discrimination.

- The empowerment of women, as a way of **altering this framework of inequality** - creation, within the Sustainable Development Objectives (ODS), of **item 5** that deals with gender equality and empowerment of women and girls.
3 Kinds of empowerment: \textit{political, psychological, social} power
WOMEN ON THE SSE

- ***Maria Beatriz*** (50 years old) has elementary education, lives on the coast, works with recycling and is extremely active in social movements, becoming a representative of the state in the national recycling movement.
“There was one time we went to do Environmental Education at the airport. Then, a lady said [...] She was already angry because she wanted to go home and did not want to know about a meeting. So she said, "What am I going to gain in separating for you?" I say, "Then you are not very informed, because by separating, besides helping to generate income for people, pickers who have children, who have a grandchild, you are still helping our environment. If there were not people like us doing this job, how much mountain of garbage would be on our planet?"

"[...] I think the SSE gives you the opportunity to have a knowledge you did not have. As I told you, until then we did not know the power that we have. And knowing how to use that power too is very cool.”
WOMEN ON THE SSE

- **Maria Clara** is from the south of the state, (47 years old), married, 02 adult children, fisherwoman at the origin, works with bakery, did high school and became very active after knowing the SSE.
“It is something that has no explanation. I have almost no teeth, I did not understand anything about life, my life was my house, my husband was my 2 children and only that. My life was this, I had no other way. I was banguelinha (without teeth), had no study, did not leave the house, was just that. Then Mrs. XX said, "First of all you're going to have to value yourself, have you ever looked at yourselves?" Here one was all disheveled, the other was toothless. Then Mrs. XX said, "Let's start liking ourselves first." Then, I went to the dentist, I organized everything and the Bakery was ready and we had the party open."

"If you have to say like that, "you have to die today, I die happy." Because this here, the Bakery for me, is my life, my life, my life. From here I sustained my house, I finished my high school, hence I took my driver's license, now I ask you, who am I to take a driver's license? I drive sometimes, I'm proud of myself, but so, I wasn't like that, the solidarity economy that taught me to be like this.”
**WOMEN ON THE SSE**

- **Maria Elizabete** (62 years old) is from the western region, is a founding member of a sewing cooperative, has even specialized in education and was a representative of the state at the National Solidarity Economy Forum.
"I think the woman has more difficulty putting herself in the market, the reliability I think in a venture of women takes longer to reach. These days Professor Paul Singer said, "No, in the solidarity economy there is no such thing," I say, "yes, there are men who come there and look at us, ‘a women's group, you do not fight, you have no gossip?’ . Because it's the conception that woman is empty, only fight, only makes gossip. So how do you put yourself in the market when you have a society that has this conception of women? How a woman will negotiate, will be ahead of a business?"

"So imagine women who have never had anything, who have never worked outside, who were housewives, soon they own a business. This is also something that the growth of these women, their language changed, their posture changed, their relationship with their husbands, so this was something that gave me great joy because we saw those women who were submissive, not long ago, they were 'holding their noses’ too, and they knew what they wanted, they were negotiating, they were going to go shopping.”
WEAVING SOME CONSIDERATIONS...
Because of its multidimensional nature, empowerment **cannot be** understood in an **absolute way** - or whether it is empowered or not.
Empowerment encompasses notions of democracy, human rights, participation, but also, proposes a reflection on action and the relation with economic, political and cultural issues, - it is necessary to reflect on the subject itself, in a individual and collective dimension.

An important characteristic associated with psychological power is nonconformity in the face of the adversities they perceive.

The formal study is deeply associated with the process of empowerment, social power, that is, increasing access to information, knowledge and skills

• The SSE functions as an external agent that helps these disempowered or conquered women, allows individuals or family units to perceive this condition and want to modify it. It is a catalyst in this process and it is by participating in SSE that they continue their processes, that is, in the collective they improve their individual characteristics (political / social power).
The understanding of the SSE is different among them, however the **importance of the collective** is always present, whether in participation in fairs, in working together to achieve a goal, in the importance of sharing.

Their **personal growth** (psychological power) is perceptible through the many personal, material, and family achievements they have reported.

This growth makes it possible to **improve the critical sense** that is applied in relation to the SSE itself, in a process of **enhancing empowerment** - psychological power.

When women link what their **daily lives** to what they **experiences at the SSE**, in discussing the forums it is that they **consolidate** their empowerment process.
There is a **constant articulation** between the types of power in the process of empowerment.
“Thank you”

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