

## Development projects and the disciplining of women in time and space\*

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### Abstract

By contrasting the implementation of three development projects, this article examines the meanings of “female empowerment” employed in each context, emphasizing how the strategies for the use of time and space of those who conceived the projects delimit opportunities and create obstacles for different women. The article demonstrates the precarious comprehension of the various repercussions on gender relations of these development projects, which involve: 1) a hydroelectric dam; 2) a mega sporting event; and 3) a port complex. It found that actions related to women had secondary priority in each of these projects. Supported by international regulations presented in productivist discourses and promoted as offering opportunities to women, in fact these initiatives discipline women as those who: complement household income, are linked to domestic space, are capable of stereotypical female skills, have sexuality related to reproduction, are targets of protection and deserve control similar to the younger generations. Each sector develops its own strategies and meanings of projects for women. The main objectives sought by the executors of the projects involve differences in the scope of the projects and their objectives and the length of their planning, and execution phases. Independently of the phase and size, more obstacles prevail to empowerment than true empowerment for groups of women who come to be involved in or by the project.

**Keywords:** Development project, Feminism, empowerment of women, planned neglect, Disciplining.

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\* Received 19 October 2017, accepted 23 July 2018.

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Development, regardless of how flowery a description one presents of it, and although its scope may seem universal and broad, invariably involves concrete actors in limited spaces and times. This intensifies processes of investing attention in publicized projects by steering the use of resources on a variety of fronts. Independent of the ideological line that informs and justifies a development project, it is precisely the delimiters of time and space that come into play when evaluating a project's "benefits". Development is embodied in projects associated to interconnected policies that are announced as being related to fundamental goals that respond to one or another of these policies. The projects are actions that open spaces for negotiations that reflect the confluences and divergences of actors in the entangled relations between state and economy, within the plurality of interests of government institutions and companies and the establishment of relations with populations affected by them. As varied as the group of institutions and companies involved may be – internally and among each other – the main explicit objectives of the projects, beyond the essential circulation of capital that is the prime interest of the institutions and their planners and administrators that idealize and execute the project, establish a priorities that determine how the success of the enterprise will be evaluated.

The selection of priority objectives leaves others secondary, which are listed in the plans and promotional materials to reinforce the capacity to attain the priorities. The plans include calls for actions to form alliances in a search to expand the base of support for the intended action. Enumerating objectives that are "lesser" priorities can allow some issues – simply because they are cited and associated to actions that are presented to attain them – to gain greater attention in the planning and execution. This also creates a veiled hierarchy, a decision that establishes some goals, if not for the "sacrifice" at least for a more precarious attainment. The precariousness of reaching these goals is associated to the justifications that reproduce and reinforce hierarchies of values of the planning process itself, beginning with its conception, as part of a specific policy.

I argue in this article that no priority is given to establishing more equitable gender relations in the definition of policies to defend development projects. By implicitly or explicitly occupying “second order” objectives, whether by the initiative of the planners themselves, or to comply with laws that feminist movements were able to attain through negotiations, these second order objectives become: 1) vehicles capable of distortion that aggrandize the priority objectives; and 2) targets of compensatory actions that do more to “minimize damage” than promote equitable gender relations. They are part of a discourse of social responsibility that is aligned with communication that can establish what Bronz and Lagüénz understand, respectively, as “expansionism linked to the condition of the new ethic that shapes the discourse of business organizations: ...[the] corporate geopolitics” (Bronz, 2014:50). These secondary objectives also serve as instruments to

Create accesses and support the maintenance of good relations with politicians and people with power or highlighted in their universes of action ...[that] behind the partnerships they are seen as an important resource for companies ...to constitute a type of relationship insurance accessible to companies (Lagüénz, 2015:212).

There are clearly some “development projects” that may have been conceived as having priorities associated to policies that produce gender equity, but these projects usually distance themselves from the more formal denomination of “development”, locating themselves in another field of discursive competition. The secondary designations of the so-called development projects such as: “local,” “sustainable,” “social,” or “community”, suggest that the actions associated to them in the formation of partnerships and administrative responses to various demands - both internal and external to institutions and companies that conceive of and execute the projects - refer to issues “beyond” development. These “adjectivized” actions can have political relevance for the attainment of the apparently multiple objectives of the

development project's activities, but they serve mainly to justify the existence of the institutions and companies themselves.

The negotiation of space for discussions of gender in the context of development projects – which itself is the fruit above all of the women's movement – identifies two main routes for inclusion: 1) efficiency in attaining the goals of policies independent to gender equality; and 2) mandatory legislation and voluntary partnerships that legitimate the institutional and corporate actions. The presence of objectives that seek gender equity opens room for a relationship that disturbs planners and administrators because it reveals questions of evident and undeniable inequalities that their projects are not able to diminish, but require that they maintain a discourse of being attentive to their resolution. Because a project's actions are accompanied with great attention and research, information is produced about the results, which reveal precisely the opposite of what they intend to document. In the effort to attain the priority objectives justified in the priority policy chosen for the project, the actions contribute to intensifying gender inequalities, limiting their results to revealing contradictions and taking measures, or to deviating attention from the issue (shifted recognition). They are often actions of limited scope that only appear interested in the "mitigation" of effects harmful to gender equity in the project. These paths are concrete manifestations of the *planned neglect* (Scott, 2009, 2012) as a practice repeatedly observed in development projects, reflecting the same phenomenon that informs the critical international change in emphasis of the feminist perspective from "women in development" to "gender and development" (Nanes *et alli*, 2017).

To demonstrate the precariousness of the understanding of the diversity of the repercussions of development projects on gender relations, I present examples in specific times and spaces of planning, execution and announcement of the scope of the objectives of three different projects. All of them involve public-private partnerships and many authors, and all have been researched directly by the author of this article. They include: 1) a hydroelectric dam; 2) a mega-sporting event; and 3) a port

complex. By comparing the implementation of these development projects, I sought to understand the meanings of “female empowerment” and “gender equity” employed in actions and practices in each context, emphasizing how the strategies of use of time and space of the conceivers and executors of the projects delimit opportunities and obstacles for different women.

The perspective of this work adheres to the positions of Cornwall (2018, in this dossier) and Sardenberg (2018), that empowerment, understood as a feminist perspective, involves broad transformations of power relations that question gender relations organized according to patriarchal principles. These “liberationist” goals are being deviated by adulterations that focus on individual insertions and conquests that involve more neoliberal than feminist gains, without considering their power to question and transform structures that collectively conserve and promote inequality.

In all three examples studied, the information is obtained by field research with a team coordinated by the author. The study involved: extensive ethnographic agenda of daily living, registered in annotations, documental research and interviews with and questionnaires for administrators and those affected by the projects. In all of the cases, gender issues receive emphasis, although in different degrees, according to the emphases of the projects.

### **The dam: energy, removal and devaluation of women in resettlement**

As a policy to provide electricity to industrialize and urbanize metropolitan and other regions in the Brazilian Northeast, the construction of the Luiz Gonzaga Hydroelectric dam and the creation of the Itaparica Lake in the Lower-Middle São Francisco River, in the 1980s, provoked the removal of more than 80,000 residents from along the margins of the river. In the decade prior to the formation of Itaparica, the image of the electrical sector had been tarnished after it offered no or meager compensations to residents in the region of the dam and lake of Sobradinho. Social

movements of those affected by the dam and social scientists questioned and documented the struggle for justice and the increased precariousness of the living conditions of these residents. In Itaparica, the energy sector, pressured in broad negotiations with unions – supported by new conditions established by the environmental department of the World Bank, which determined the need for environmental impact studies and mitigation policies for these impacts - decided to prepare a complex and multifaceted plan of “choices” for the population affected. As shown by Bronz (2013), Bronz and Bezerra (2014) and Lagüéns (2014), these actions are associated to environmental licensing and social responsibility requirements and were undertaken as practices of governability by the executors of the projects, whose effectiveness required attention to the network of state-economy relations and the formation of partnerships.

The Achilles heel of the project was to have imagined it could be a showcase of concern for the social issues involved in the broad resettlement required. Among international evaluators it was considered one of the projects with the highest general execution costs per capita. Hydroelectric dams were beginning to be understood in the energy sector as relatively inefficient in the cost-benefit ratio per kilowatt hour. While the project executor, the Companhia Hidrelétrica do São Francisco (CHESF), was proud of its energy generation technology, it discovered that the technologies for dealing with human beings, agricultural irrigation systems and social movements were very demanding. The results were not easily expressed in the “social showcase” sought by the company sectors responsible for the environment and “social responsibility”.

CHESF announced that the resettlement process would be a “change for the better” and affirmed that the process would remove workers from illegality, dependence and exploitation as sharecroppers and squatters and provide them irrigated land to work as independent farmers. CHESF, established new priorities in its following energy generation projects (the Xingó Dam, built after overcoming engineering challenges and with little population to

remove) and in the projects of the Riacho Seco and the Pedra Branca dam (between Sobradinho and Itaparica, whose population has resisted intervention until today). Itaparica presented the difficulties of *planned neglect*. There were a wide variety of problems: many lands were not suitable for agriculture; a good part of the livestock was lost; much of the irrigation equipment was not installed for decades; lands destined for lots of indemnification were invaded by third parties and poor quality and badly installed sprinklers and the absence of drainage channels harmed the production and raised the salinity of the earth. The Companhia de Desenvolvimento do Vale do São Francisco [The Development Company of the San Francisco Valley] (CODEVASF), specialized in technical support for irrigated farming, broke the support contract for the resettled parties after the fifth year of implantation and reported the errors committed by CHESF. Meanwhile, the temporary maintenance funds negotiated to compensate each resettled farm family for the period they would have no farming income was extending. Ill-intentioned third parties began characterizing this as a sign of “laziness”, transforming the image of those affected into that of opportunists who wanted to live at the costs of the state. The constant appeals to resolve problems were frequently sent on to new organizations designated by the CHESF, in a constant change, with little sensibility and a low rate of resolving the demands of those resettled. The list could continue, most dramatically including high rates of morbidity and mortality, and the fact that enormous dissatisfaction pushed many people to abandon their homes and migrate in search of work (Scott, 2009; Araújo *et alii*, 2000; Silva Filho, 1992). A project that had seeds for possible structural changes, even if localized, produced the contrary. It led the state to be perceived as a generator of *administrative insecurity*, which used tactics to dismantle the resistance and search for compensations that included a) *demoralization of the population affected*; b) *planned abandonment* and nonexecution, or execution of only precarious services and the purchase of products of inferior quality; and c) an *institutional metamorphosis* that impeded

communication with those responsible for the project, through constant changes in the processes and organization of requests, making the bureaucracy for the resolution of problems inoperative for those affected by the dams (Scott, 2012).

So, where are the women in this project? This is not a project for women. When they appear, they have multiple facets. Among the women affected by the dam; they participate in the resistance to the authoritarian imposition of plans; serve as a devalued negotiating currency; participate in technical projects that offer little viability for complementing income; and gained some prominence in union organizations and cooperatives. On the side of the administrators; they are targets of actions to comply with mandatory requirements of the financial agents; and compose the “humanized” arm of the operation of persuasion and accompaniment of the removal. That is, they play a role in the project administrator’s search for what Lagüéns (2014) understood as the use of the discourse of social responsibility as a tool to discipline the population. In general, they both impose discipline and are disciplined, to not create any confusion.

The rural workers union resolved to occupy the worksite for the dam during the construction phase to negotiate better conditions for resettlement. This is because they were not satisfactorily included in the planning from the beginning to define these conditions, and because of repeated delays and impasses at the negotiating table. At that time, the union positioned the women as a bumper in the front line against an expected violent response to the occupation, which would interrupt the executors’ race to conclude the dam. The occupation was a success and men and women workers remained at the worksite, while the leaders sat at the table to explicitly negotiate the conditions of the future resettlement. The courage of the women at the occupation was commented on in conversations with the male labor leaders who emphasized their own intelligence and that of the women in preparing and executing a strategy to decrease the probability of violence.



The agreement signed, repeated a common practice in the way that it calculated the labor force at the house of each family that would be resettled. The labor force of women was always worth less than that of men, regardless of the age as can be seen in these figures: (7 -14 years old - ♀ = 0.15 points, ♂ = 0,20 points; 15 - 64 - ♀ = 0,60 points, ♂ = 1,00 points; 65+ years of age - ♀ = 0.30 points, ♂ = 0.50 points). This resulted in a distribution of lots that favored houses with higher proportions of men than women (Scott, 2009:77-83). Single men or women would not have the right to independent lots, which would only be granted if they were part of a family block, even if they were heads of family. In the words of many administrators, those who married recently were accused of having done so to benefit with a lot.

Once removed, technicians and resettled families stimulated activities that sought to incorporate women, many of whom worked regularly on the lots, to complement the family income in activities such as weaving and selling hammocks, raising poultry and selling the eggs and birds for slaughter; planting products in the backyard for various uses; promoting religious activities as catechists who collected offerings to the church; and works for collective benefit or for that of families in need. Some women with more instruction worked as teachers, others helped to establish cooperatives to share eventual costs of technical support and find local markets for the products from their lots/homes (such as snacks for schools and products for the open-air markets). To summarize, the various activities conducted by the resettled women were not significantly different from those that women farmers and in families of farmers do in other rural spaces. They were not inactive, nor was their participation in the resettlement an activity of collective empowerment for them. Their participation did not question patriarchal principles of power structures.

One exception was due to the progressive opening of space in rural unions for women farmworkers, where some empowerment could be found. But, in this case, it was precisely a function of actions of groups identified to have explicitly feminist goals. In the case of the *Polo Sindical do Submédio São Francisco*

[The Union Center of the Lower-Middle São Francisco River] (a group of farmworkers unions of more than a dozen municipalities affected by the resettlement projects), the women participated in the departments of youth and women, and were expanding their space in the unions. A little more than a decade after the resettlement took place, Rita de Cássia dos Santos became the first woman to become the top coordinator of the union center. The advance of organized rural women (Butto Zarzar, 2017; Cordeiro 2006a, 2006b) in Pernambuco state encompassed two very active movements – the Women of the Sertão Central and the *Movimento de Mulheres Trabalhadoras* [Rurais Women Farmworkers Movement], which identified themselves as feminist movements, while the *Polo Sindical*, even with a woman in the presidency, never assumed that it was feminist. It appears that directly confronting the effects of a development project as significant as the dam construction was not a route able to promote an explicitly female collective with its own leadership and priority objectives associated to a feminist agenda.

These social spaces demonstrate limited gains of power by women in various spheres of activity, decision making and agency, in social relations that can characterize empowerment for women, in a broad intersectionality (Piscitelli 2008; Kerner, 2012). This also did not take place in the intersectionality of race and class, emphasized by Crenshaw (2002), or of ethnicity. The project for removal, indemnification and resettlement did not include a specific project for *quilombola* communities in the region, and much less for black women. The project did “contemplate” the indigenous Tuxá people with a *special project* (which divided the group in two factions separated by more than a thousand kilometers!), but did not offer special attention to indigenous women. Although incipient in Brazil, in the late 1980s, policies to recognize particular demands for either blacks or women had still not matured.

The project as a whole is a manifestation of class inequality, and the actions of the company executing the objectives of the state had a strong female component through the hiring (mostly

temporarily) of teams of social workers and other specialized technicians to explain, convince and closely accompany the removal of the families, before and during the resettlement. A good portion of these teams were composed of women, which is a common characteristic of these professions. The company's environmental department, which was responsible for supervising the execution of these actions, had more women than other departments of the androcentric institution of executor engineering. As much as the department would need to align itself with the general policies of the institution, it expressed that it was uncomfortable because of the budget limitations and of the decision making power in the institution. The growth of this department in the institution was driven more by conditionalities established by international finance agencies, which required compensatory measures (related more to ecology and biology than to gender and ethnicity), than by a conviction of the institution itself about the need to mitigate impacts or benefit women. In the late 1980s, contractual clauses concerning accompanying the resettlement, influenced by pressure from the feminist movement, had established some gender components. Nevertheless, these components were executed by outsourced partners in narrow and isolated actions. Within the institution, the teams that included social workers suffered pressure to defend the interests of the company, to make viable the large project and the removals, and not give priority to positive change in the conditions of women.

### **The World Cup: circulation of capital and images to “clear the area” and negotiate new territorialities**

The spectacular announcement of the choice of Brazil to host the 2014 World Cup, well described by Damo and Oliven (2013), opened the path for articulations by investors in the fields of construction, entertainment, advertising and public relations who created a discursive reality to sell Brazil's image abroad. The frequent visits of commissions to accompany the country's preparations for the great event, whose beginning and ending

dates could not be delayed, created at the unprecedented 12 locations for the games, an urgent need to prepare arenas that would comply with international football regulations. A range of businesses facilitated public-private partnerships composed of actors with considerable social and financial capital. Security, tourism, healthcare, urban mobility, airports, ports and urban renewal in general were great themes stimulated in the field of investments and in the research field. The terms of reference for studies issued by Brazil's National Council for Scientific and Technological Development, and by the Ministry of Sport to federal universities in the host cities identified an agenda of priority goals that configured "The Legacies of the Cup", which as a group, could consecrate the country for its capacity to receive people and investments, wrapped in a positive image of the nation. Our research team accompanied the social impacts caused by construction of the Arena Pernambuco on the population (Moura, Scott, Oliveira, 2015; Silva, Alves, 2015; Scott, Mello, 2014).

In Pernambuco, the Special Secretariat of the Cup was established by the state government. In conjunction with the Secretariat of the Cities, it planned to integrate the Arena Pernambuco in a "new urban centralization" project in the western portion of the Recife Metropolitan Region. The goal was to support an expanding real estate market in areas that had been little explored. The official promotional images for the project repeatedly associated the image of the Arena Pernambuco to a rich and extensive array of still unbuilt architecture in a territory baptized the "City of the Cup". The project, signed by an international firm, was already worth millions. It would bring a multiplicity of healthy, ecological and technologically advanced benefits, legitimated by its inclusion in the list of projects of the "Porto Digital", which was a springboard organization for urbanization projects in the metropolitan region. The hygienic white architectural models of the buildings displayed urban residences and services touted as the stimulants of a new territorialization that would remove the western portion of the Recife Metropolitan region from obscurity. It would create a point

of reference of a new urban area totally integrated to electronic, efficient, and ecological modernity, and have a “residential complex” and services that would encompass up to 9,000 economically favored residents.

The first games were held at the Arena Pernambuco for the Confederations Cup in 2013 and the World Cup in the following year. The government was proud to have completed the project with a budget that although high, was far below that of other new stadiums in the country. The government signed a 30-year contract for administration of the stadium and a total of 242 hectares reserved for the Cidade da Copa [City of the Cup], with the developer Empresa Odebrecht (which is now under criminal investigation), at the site that borders an environmental preserve, whose boundary is always presented as incomplete. The land for Cidade da Copa, had been inhabited and used by a first group of families who, during the planning, were indemnified with some R\$18 million.<sup>1</sup> This practice was designated as “clearing the area” (Limpendo..., 2014). The officials responsible for security and planning of the use of the area belittled the importance of the loss of housing of these residents (“that area was just scrub” and “it was not a problem, it would be easy to relocate the population”). The existence of this first group of impacted people is nearly secret, because no information about them has been presented publicly. The treatment given to them was an indication of what would later take place with 240 other families at the subdivision known as the Loteamento São Francisco, an urban neighborhood in Camaragibe, which was in the path of the projected “branch road” of the Cup that would provide access to the Arena.

The difference between this development project and the hydroelectric dam is that it was realized under the short and hurried time frame for execution of the World Cup. It mobilized the attention of researchers and of the *Comissão Popular da Copa* [Popular Commission for the Cup], which denounced growing and

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<sup>1</sup> Data gathered by the doctoral study, in progress, of Núbia Clementino, at the Graduate Program in Anthropology (PPGA) at UFPE.

more visible human rights violations (Moura, 2016; Ramalho, 2015). Families were expelled from their homes and the homes were demolished, but the branch road was not built, and the space became a bus garage. For the families, a slow and painful process began in court to receive very low payments for the appropriation of their homes. At the same time, the state of Pernambuco inaugurated the Executive Secretariat of Expropriations to assist the state Attorney General undertake the indemnification processes on the lands that would be subject to “clearing”.

Where are the women in this project of new territorialization, which would be used to create an environment appropriate for selling the image of Pernambuco to the world during the World Cup? In all the plans seen by our research team, there is no reference to the expectation of specific positive results for women. To the contrary, many mothers and their families faced forced removal without any new living space being provided to them. The suffering of these mothers is portrayed in the interviews conducted by Alice Mello Moura (2016). As one displaced mother expressed, who more than one year after moving still did not have the courage to unpack some of the furniture in the rented house where she went: the game in which Germany humiliated Brazil by 7 - 1 brought her enormous joy, as a type of revenge. They are mothers (and fathers) of families who went to court in the city of Camaragibe to try to advance their slow indemnification processes and who had their daily life completely reorganized because of the loss of housing.

It is not only the mothers of the displaced families who had their lives changed in the project. Concern was aroused over the reputation of the city of Recife as a destination for sexual tourism and sexual exploitation of children and adolescents (Scott; Ribeiro, 2016). Given the flood of football fans and tourists expected to be looking for passing fun, feminist groups that fight sexual tourism and representatives of the state Secretariat of Women promoted in public locations and events the need to avoid the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents. Provoked by the imminence of the World Cup, the feminist group GAATW (Global

Alliance Against Traffic in Women) (2011) and Paula and Bartelt (2014) sought to demystify the alarm over this exploitation. They showed that five Olympics and World Cups preceding the Cup in Brazil - those held in Germany, Canada, South Africa, Greece and the United States – did not register any increase in sexual exploitation. Nevertheless, the campaign in Pernambuco mirrored similar campaigns in other Brazilian states, and was supported by charismatic soccer players who lent their image to the movement against exploitation. The vigilant atmosphere, combined with what the fight against child exploitation fed, also facilitated tolerance for actions of police repression to “clean” various points of street prostitution in the city, as well the demolishing of popular bars in neighborhoods close to the Arena, in Recife. The image of the city and particularly of places where tourists would be, had to be healthy, and commercial sex and child exploitation are certainly not healthy!

Similar to what took place with the removal of the population for the dam construction in Itaparica, in Recife, women with higher levels of education were included in the administrative processes for the removal of families to prepare for the new territorialization promoted by the project for the *Arena* and the *Cidade da Copa*. Women with bachelor’s degrees in social service and psychology and other women – who were employees of the state or of companies contracted to conduct the removals and indemnifications – were responsible for providing information and counseling to the families about the impositions of the state on their residences and daily practices. From the perspective of the planners and executors of the plans, the involvement of women would allow more pacific resolutions.

Once again, a development plan, a new territorialization and a large investment project would present an explicit blindness to the issue of gender. The actions do much more to discipline the actions of women and tame their resistance. Even if many women had approached the *Comitê Popular da Copa* and received support from nongovernmental organizations that supported the right to housing in the city (Comitê Popular da Copa, 2014), when

the intensity of the event passed, the spaces for confronting the loss of rights decreased. With the women already dispersed by the enactment of individualized housing solutions, and clearly and heavily involved in reconstructing their own residences and those of their families, no groups of resistance or of representation, such as an association of residents or of people removed by the Cup, were organized. The search for indemnification continued for some in an individualized manner, but considering the abandonment of what was planned (nothing more is heard about the City of the Cup; no significant movement is seen of families returning to their land, given that it is occupied by a bus company) more women victims are seen who suffer disciplining by the state than women who benefited or were empowered by this great investment project for a megaevent that was presented as a development project for a new urbanized and modern centralization.

### **The Port of Suape: reinforcing commercial vocations, importing men, victimizing and protecting women**

The Industrial Port Complex of Suape is a project that had been planned for more than four decades in Pernambuco state. Its most intensive phase of implantation began in 2007, and ten years later, in 2017, many elements (especially those related to petrochemical industry) had still not been concluded, affected by periods of recession and investigations about irregularities in their contracting and implantation. This has not caused despair among those enthusiastic about the importance of the port for the Pernambuco state economy and its impact on the urban region. In 2016, the Newspaper *Diário de Pernambuco* published the following description:

In the past 38 years, the port grew and the 670-hectare site began to attract investments. “Everything went gradually. There were quite difficult times, but no one gave up”, emphasized Mario Mestre. Today, the location houses 1,000 companies, divided into 13 development poles. In this way,



**the industrial port complex** does justice to its name (Complexo..., 2016, emphasis mine).

The same article highlights the words of this administrator/planner who has accompanied the region since the beginning:

There was a time they called me crazy for saying that on that rocky land there would be a petroleum refinery and in front a shipbuilder. They said it was impossible. But it was all in the master plan and I believed it. Today I am moved to see the stones become buildings, the dust became a road and the dream has been realized (Complexo..., 2016).

On the website for the port complex (<http://www.suape.pe.gov.pe>), in May 2012, at the height of the construction boom for the 670 hectares located in the municipalities of Cabo de Santo Agostinho and Ipojuca, in the southern portion of the Recife Metropolitan Region, information was circulated publicly about the vocation and dynamic nature of the project. The website informed that Suape encompassed, in addition to the port, the “largest shipbuilder in the southern hemisphere”, a petroleum refinery, three petrochemical plants, and another 100 installed companies, and there are plans for at least 50 other companies. The promoters of the complex emphasize that Suape is inserted in the historic vocation for commerce established since the discovery of Brazil. This dates back to the creation of a national origin myth tied to the international trade of brazilwood and sugarcane. The income traditionally earned by sugar exports are evoked to emphasize the state’s vocation for global commerce, to then highlight the port complex’s capacity to contribute to overcoming an archaic agroindustrial structure that does not offer good opportunities for development. It reports the number of containers that enter and leave the port and the positive consequences of this trade for companies. The logistics that allow the products reach their destinies, at times combined with a contribution of value added by companies at the complex, are the

selling points of the vocation being constructed in the port development. The progress is indicated by the passage from a period of “containerization” of the development based on the trade of many smaller items, to the movement of record levels of tons of cargo, making the port the leader in Brazil in these measurable categories, with enormous quantities of transport vehicles. The shipbuilding industry, petrochemical industry, vehicle sales and logistics are seen as paving the road to development. Even if the rhythm of the economy as a whole continues to heat up given this movement, the employment vocations being created at the port complex have little to do with the local history of fishermen, farmers, farmworkers, local merchants, surfers, tourists and house-caretakers. They are new vocations.

From 2010 to 2013, research about the *three development poles* that I coordinated (Scott *et alii*, 2015; Santos *et alii*, 2015) accompanied the intense period of construction of the complex that preceded the desacceleration and drop in growth in production in the municipality of Ipojuca to 0.1%, in 2014. In 2012, the forecast was for the creation of 15,000 direct jobs in 2013, in addition to the 25,000 recently created until then in this period of growth. In this implantation phase, more than 40,000 workers were attracted to the civil construction industry. Nearly all of these jobs were occupied by men, many who had been recently attracted to the region and only some came from locations near the complex. The traditional local population interacted in many ways with these migrants and outsiders (to use the terms of Elias and Scotson, 2000), about whom they often elaborated images that reflect both distrust and positive expectations. This populational mobility, which in the discourse of the planners was emblematic proof of the dynamism established by the development of the port and positively modified the metropolitan economy and that of the entire state, received other readings from researchers, residents and movements that deal with issues related to human rights and sustainability (Scalambrini Costa, 2014; Rios, 2015; Santos *et alii*, 2015).

In this third project for development and territorial redefinition, the same question arises: where are the women? The industrial and port complex evoke many more male than female images. According to the reports and estimates seen, the jobs attracted **male** workers, because no announcement was made about the installation of industries and services predominated by women. The administrative functions that usually have a reasonable proportion of women were still numerically reduced during the construction phase, as is common in the implantation phase of large projects (Ribeiro, 1992; Vieira da Silva, 2013). It appears nearly fortuitous to discover women working as drivers of vans that carry workers employed at the site and even more fortuitous to find a woman operating machinery, or in construction. When found, these women are included in propaganda about the port complex's contribution to job creation for men and women, presenting the illusion of an opening to female work, in flagrant contradiction with the real proportions of job offers, which are quite unfavorable to women. This is what Cornwall (in this dossier, citing Fraser, 2009) identifies as inclusionary discourse of empowerment promoted by international institutions that emphasizes that investing in women is "economically intelligent". This vision promotes a neoliberal economic perspective and contrives goals for social justice, gender equality and structural change, making female inclusion little more than a public relations tool to create a simulacrum of "social consciousness" at institutions that measure their success in terms of profits and growth.<sup>2</sup>

The creation of favorable images of the project was used by the first large company inaugurated at the complex: the shipbuilder Atlântico Sul. Information circulated that women would find many opportunities at the factory as welders. At first, this appeared to be a liberating opportunity that would open up a traditionally male profession to women. This was tempered by the justification that accompanied the information: due to their skills in activities like

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<sup>2</sup> See parallel with arguments of Lagüéns (2014) about social responsibility.

sewing, women would pay greater attention to detail when welding and would be less likely to do a rushed and less safe job for the ships that depend on well-executed welds. But proportionally few local women were employed (and were substituted by *dekassegui* women who had experience in the trade during the operations). It is an illusion that the shipyard is an employer that promotes gender equality, and the reading of the situation that one resident reported to be her own and that of many of the women she knows, was confirmed:

In fact, the metalworking opened up a bit more as work for women because the good metalworkers with experience in the shops here were employed by the shipyard, and thus jobs opened in the shops for some of us women to work (Ponte dos Carvalhos, 2013).

More than justice and equity, this propaganda has two characteristics: 1) it affirms the economic intelligence of the shipbuilder that invested in women and thus deserves praise for its intelligence as a company looking to balance the factors of production; and 2) it reinforces the categorization of women as possessors of qualities inherent to femininity, maintaining them subject to stereotyped visions.

There was an increase in the search by women for training in welding techniques at a new school of the Federal Technical Institute, in the city of Ipojuca, located at the entrance to the port complex. Even more men and women sought courses in logistics. In the euphoric environment of future job opportunities, the search for “training” was one of the most important gains for the population and for the image of the state as a “promoter of development”. This forced families to decide who would be trained. A type of acceleration of inequality of generations was created, because many families judged that the young people would have the best conditions to be employed with the new opportunities that were created. These families were accustomed to giving preference to study to youth, stimulating the middleclass

strategy described in Hansen *et alii* (2008) of parents keeping their children at home for more time so that they could study and acquire skills and knowledge that they would reproduce, or even better, that would expand the domestic cultural and economic capital. The intense demand for classes at the technical school in this period showed that men and women had expectations of participating in the vocations promoted by the port complex.

But it was not an image of young women training to enter the labor market with an advantage that was captured by society. The massive arrival of men to work during the construction period had repercussions in at least four important aspects of the lives of women living close to the complex in Ipojuca and Cabo. The arrival of thousands of men led to changes in housing arrangements for mothers and fathers who were heads of households; created demand for local women who could provide services for the incoming males; influenced conviviality and sociability in the local communities; and most visibly affected the sexuality and reproduction of adolescents. The latter became a more explicit object of our broader research (Scott *et alii*, 2015) about the three development poles and sexuality in adolescence. We will now describe each aspect in greater detail.

- 1) The heated real estate market did not fully meet the demands for worker housing, and many families (and *pousadas* near the beach that had previously served a seasonal demand for tourism) invested in the opportunity to rent out their residences or *pousadas* to serve as lodging for the men at rates that were previously unthinkable. These families moved in with relatives, or rented houses in cities a bit farther away. This interfered considerably in family strategies for daily activities. Mothers complained the most about difficulties caused by their relocation, even if seen as temporary and economically advantageous, because it was they who had (and lost) the command of the spaces close to their houses in daily life.

- 2) The notoriously low job offers for women in construction within the complex reinforced their engagement in typically female jobs to meet the needs of men who had little interest in conducting tasks seen as “domestic”. Thus, the women were temporarily employed in cleaning and caring for lodgings, and cooking and washing clothes for the temporary male residents. This reproduced gender inequality and made women dependent on payments from workers or their employers who “included the services of women in [payments for] the supply of lodging for the men”.
- 3) Public spaces became uninviting for women who remained in their locations of origin or traveled back from their new dislocated residences to conduct their tasks. They confronted tensions in the new sociability created by the flood of male workers who populated the small and large cities (Gaibu, Nossa Senhora de Ó, Porto de Galinhas, Ponte dos Carvalhos, Cabo e Ipojuca), particularly in the morning and at night, when they came and went from work. The beaches, local bars, shops and streets, public transportation and public services became threatening because of the significant intensification of harassment and discomfort for women who no longer felt “at home” in their own native cities.
- 4) Women experienced all of this without any process of “empowerment”. The most visible condition was that of youth and adolescents who felt they had agency to look for boyfriends, partners and spouses in this environment. But their situation became a concern for the entire state of Pernambuco, mainly due to the consequences of their sexual and reproductive activities, always under vigilance and disciplining.

About the latter issue, a news report in 2011, denounced the abandonment of the “Filhos de Suape” [Children of Suape] (Teixeira, 2011), and showed how the arrival of the population of male workers led to the birth of children of relations “without

strong commitment” between the migrant workers and local youth. The report strongly stimulated a generalized indignation. This led to a public hearing called by the state in the city of Cabo, and the elaboration of “mitigatory” activities aimed at female adolescents and young women, respecting what is called for by the law and that allows the signing of contracts of installation with the companies. Each one in its own way, the disciplinary institutions for youth and adolescents in the environment of the complex exercised their function to promote order: schools were concerned with education and sexual relations of youth with migrants; the youth and children guardianship councils [Conselhos Tutelares] sought to judicially promote healthier and less violent community environments for youths based on the federal Statute for Children and Adolescents; and the Family Health clinics focused on knowledge about contraception and on accompaniment and active pre-natal care for mothers, especially for adolescents; the churches organizing groups to inculcate their collective moralities in youth groups; the police stations observing practices and environments unsafe for youths and repressing crimes against adolescents and women; and families themselves seeking means to organize their strategies, above all by negotiating the participation of grandmothers, mothers, daughters and sons-in-law in activities for training, sociability and work, according to the disposition of each member (Souza, 2012; Santos *et alii*, 2015). These works for disciplining are clearly (although not exclusively) for predominantly female realization and combine interclass and intergenerational power relations.

About the strategies of the families themselves, newborn children of adolescent and young mothers, abandoned or not by the men, migrants or local residents, who generated the babies, require negotiations in family that, repeatedly reveal strategies of grandmothers (also young, from 35 to 50 years old), whose involvement in the local labor markets was no longer favorable. These grandmothers make an effort to work outside the home and are dedicated to caring for their daughters and grandchildren. Even believing in the eventual possibility for work at the complex,

these young grandmothers had the hope that their children, more than themselves, could be trained, find a job and or find a dedicated partner. These were the strategies dually explored by the young grandmothers who lived (and live) at the Complexo de Suape, which is now much more quiet and has alarming rates of unemployment. Few men who migrated are still living at the location (Coutinho, 2015).

The strength of the reaction of local society (politicians, the courts and social movements in particular) was an element that highly favored compliance with the law that required an investment by Petrobrás in the “*Programa Diálogos Suape*”, which was related with the mitigation of impacts of the complex on local society, by focusing on the field of sexuality and reproduction (Rios *et alii*, 2015; Queiroz *et alii*, 2015). Research and action were associated in work to raise the awareness of women (and some men) about their reproductive and sexual rights – parallel work that was conducted to comply with the requirements and secondary in relation to all of the economic benefits expected. These activities led to information and actions that, in addition to being valuable for research, reinforce even more the set of disciplinings (even with more innovative and intentionally “liberating” contents) to which the impacted population is subject.

### **Final considerations**

This study concludes with nine considerations that compose parts of processes of implementation of disciplining of women in development projects, which allows a final reflection on empowerment.

1. To gain the name of “development project” a government action is usually presented as being focused on energy, industry, commerce and generation of income and is submitted to economic performance indicators for evaluation. In the words of Vainer and Araújo, they are Large Investment Projects (1992). The addition of the adjective “sustainable” or of other adjectives



that qualify the development sought by the project usually suggest an implicit criticism of what is expected of these projects when they do not need adjectives. For this reason, a “feminist” development project is perceived as requiring action with more limited and restricted frontiers, seeking a precarious harmony among the project objectives to be able to respond to the needs of women. The existence of “public policies for gender” is a more direct route for responding to the needs of women and trigger the intersectional possibilities for inclusion with gender projects. This is realized by the reference to international regulations that results from international agreements, as well as specific sectors of the state that care for these issues, which, invariably, do not identify themselves particularly as agents of “development”. It is necessary to create spaces of dialog with the promoters of development, appropriating their terms to contribute to having the goals contained in their public policies for gender be able to gain a minimum of respect within the development projects that seek more to discipline women than empower them. The succession WID-WAD-GAD in the ways women dialog with the World Bank to address the understanding of the relationship between women and development is a strong indicator of this process that historically recognizes a broadening separation of priorities in themes over time (Nanes *et alii*, 2017). It passes from “Women in Development” (WID) to the relationship between “Women and Development” (WAD) to the relationship between “Gender and Development” (GAD), to include the issue of power relations between men and women.

2. In the general framework of the objectives of development projects, the scope of goals of public policies for gender is located among the secondary objectives, and are subject to a process of “planned neglect”. This condition creates an ambiguity in which there is a discursive manipulation of the participation of women in the project and an effective action of disciplining of them to not produce deviations from the attainment of the priority goals. A corporate vision of “social

responsibility” is effectively promoted by mentioning women and or gender among the goals.

3. Whenever possible, in the promotion of intelligibility of the agreement between the priority objectives of the development project and the objectives related with the possible gender policies, the terms of attaining the goals will be retranslated in terms of the first – proportions of productivity, capacities to produce better quality work; actions to complement income, security on return on investment, etc. (as argued by Cornwall in the work about *Development Lite*, in this dossier).
4. The priority benefits of the development projects are described in broad, generic and apparently more generalizable terms and refer to an hierarchical and geographically superior level that commonly extrapolates the physical and social limits of implantation of the project, causing the reference to secondary benefits to contrast with the priorities, since they are presented as more localized, specific and punctual, therefore, secondary and requiring ordering and disciplining to be able to fit into the larger project.
5. When the protagonists of a development project announce a territorializing pretension, this spatial goal assumes a subjacent symbolic strength that suggests that the territorial expansion that reconfigures economic and social relations will reinforce the control planned for a leading segment of the region at stake; it does not directly call for the reconfiguration of power relations among genders. The resettlements establish a group of municipalities to administer projects far beyond those directly bathed by the lake created at the dam; the new centrality of the western portion of the metropolitan region goes far beyond the *Arena* and the *Cidade da Copa*; the extent of commercial and industrial relations affected by the network established by the greater *Complexo Portuário Industrial do Nordeste*. All of these projects focus on territorial domains, not on domains of power

relations among genders in the immediate territories of implantation of the project.

6. The isolated recognition of one or another woman who exercises a key leadership role in the development projects, an action that in itself is symbolically strong, is not evidence of a more generalized empowerment of women. The professional insertion of an expressive number of women in the work to mitigate the impacts of the projects shows more clearly that the intersectionality in a project with centralized and organized administration does more to administratively incorporate a layer of women of more highly hierarchized segments to be able to reinforce the goals that intensify inequalities than the contrary, which would be the incorporation of women to contribute to a generalized decrease of gender inequalities. It is easier for a woman leader to appear than to contribute to reduce inequalities among genders in the actions of resistance to development projects.
  
7. The importance of laws that are sensitive to the demands of the feminist movement cannot be underestimated, above all international regulations that are conditionalities for the approval of financing, which regulate the operation of development projects so that there is, at least, some attention to their impacts on the condition of women. They were included in the laws, based on the conscious national and international feminist struggles that recognize the fact that without any laws, these issues would be totally ignored. At least in this way one objective condition that is a secondary priority can result in some attention to the search for gender equality. The existence of these clauses, is itself evidence of the female empowerment that points to paths to be included in the agreements related to the implementation of the project and its evaluation. It is an historic opening to concerns that, if notably absent in older projects, became required in more recent regulations.

8. In an alliance of agendas, gender issues are indirectly reinforced by means of an appeal to the question of generation. Politically, this alliance allows readings that understand that the need for reinforcements veils a limited acceptance of isolated feminist issues, as well as readings that understand that the scope of the demands is expanded because it conjugates two subordinated segments that require greater attention and care. In Itaparica, the actions in support of women protagonized by the union center are organized in the union center's directory of youth and adolescents; at the World Cup, it was the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents that sparked the campaigns of feminist organizations and the Secretariat of Women; in Suape, the attention to adolescent mothers with children from passing relationships with migrant workers led to news reports and a public hearing, giving more strength to the implementation of projects aimed at questions related to women and sexuality. In any case, these three projects show that the generalized awareness expands when there is greater visibility of the generation protected by the Statute for Children and Adolescents. For this route, the notion of dependence and fragility continues to be symbolically powerful, independently of its capacity to mobilize opinions and actions that favor gender equality.
  
9. The utilization of images that reproduce a stereotyping of the female, much more than any empowerment, is constituted by the manipulation of images and discourses that contribute little to fighting inequalities. Women who complement household income, who are worth less in the calculation of the value of family labor, which determines access to lots in resettlements, who pay attention to details that qualify her to symbolize suitability for very scarce jobs for women in the welding profession; which must be a target of campaigns against sexual exploitation by tourists because of her young age; and who are victimized by migrant men who get them pregnant without offering support – all of this does little to directly empower

women. It contributes more to suggest that who administers and supports development projects must have the ability to protect and discipline women well, respecting some issues that are important to the feminist agenda that have been successfully included in laws that allow access to resources and processes of evaluation of impacts, but effectively offer few opportunities for empowerment, recurring to discourses that are simulacros of search for justice, equality and opportunity.

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