

# Woman and city in urban politics: a possible relationship?

## Abstract

The article aims to highlight, in the broad spectrum of national and international feminist struggles, the women's guidelines in Campinas for the universalization of certain services and equipment to combat territorial, social segregation and violence, historically constructed in terms of class, race and gender, to be discussed within the framework of urban policy. This work is based on authors, official documents and documents of social collectives that emphasize the discussion of certain public policies defended by feminist entities, groups and movements, especially from Campinas (São Paulo). The socioeconomic contextualization places the demands presented by the collective and public documents of the women in search of conquests regarding the right to the city. The observed territorialization takes into account the regions with greater social vulnerability, published by official documents, areas with greater socio-spatial segregation, where most of the inhabitants live in Campinas (southern and eastern regions) but also spaces known for political disputes and popular organizations. Even though they are almost 52% of the population of the municipality and are present in the public space participating and conquering different socio-political roles, women continue to face serious challenges to become recognized as a collective political subject in fundamental public policy decisions and urban planning for their lives in the city.

**Keywords:** woman, city, urban politics, feminism, inequality

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## Introduction

The objective of this paper is to problematize the urban policy of Campinas from the perspective of the relation between woman and the right to the city, emphasizing authors, proposals of collective documents and public policies thought by feminist entities and movements that are guided by questions of class, race and Gender, nationally and internationally. The sense of the demands aim at the universalization of services and equipment that combat territorial and social segregation and violence for the entire municipality, but especially for the women of Campinas. LOPES<sup>1</sup> Even though they are almost 52% of the population of the municipality and are present in the public space, participating and conquering different socio-political roles, women continue to face serious challenges to make themselves recognized as a collective political subject in fundamental decisions for their lives in the city. In order to have an idea of the abyss of political representation between men and women in the Country, a survey conducted in the 2014 electoral year revealed that Brazil occupies 115th place in the world ranking of female presence in parliament compared to 138 countries surveyed. Among 27 senators, only five are women, with 8.14% of the total valid votes. Federal deputies reach 10%, with 51 elected in 513 deputies. State elected representatives won 114 seats of the total, reaching 25, 24%. For the vacancies for councilmen in the whole Country, in 2016, were 14% of the total, with 7,824 elected councilors.<sup>2</sup> Campinas, home to a metropolitan region with more than one million inhabitants, elected a councilor (PSOL) in 33 councilors in the City Hall. Without sufficient political representation in the various levels of the country's parliament and even less in executive positions, it can be seen that the women of the country and of Campinas face the macho culture with difficulties, but with determination. For years, different groups of women have organized themselves systematically by participating in acts, forums, walks, public hearings, conferences, protests in the city Council, elections of entities, municipal councils, etc. In December 2016, for

example, the Municipal Council for Women's Rights (CMDM) was elected with a participation above expectations, with more than 500 voters concerned with the defense of a plural and extensive program. It is possible that the current context of feminist political participation retakes a leading role in the past from broader discussions from the CMDM.

The program for the construction of the Women's Institute stands out in an area of 9,914m<sup>2</sup> in Parque Italia, whose federal budget is available to the municipal government. An old aspiration of the different feminist fronts of Campinas, this hospital would expand public access to health in many specialties for large female contingents of the city, including care for victims of violence. Certain patterns of feminist movements occupy a large part of political energies such as the defense of one's own body and against the various other forms of violence, such as morality, and its extreme, femicide, considered a heinous crime since 2015. According to the Institute of Applied Economic Research (IPEA), between 2009 and 2011, the femicide rate was 5.82% for every 100,000 women in Brazil. It means that each year there were 5,664 women killed, 472 cases every month, 15,52 every day, or one every hour and a half. Of the national average, of the 5,664 deaths, 61% of the victims were of black women, throughout the national territory, except for the southern region.<sup>3</sup> According to Costa (2017a), the Map of Violence 2015 points out that in Campinas femicide jumped from 12 in 2009 to 22 in 2013, without forgetting the year 2017 that began with a collective femicide of wide national repercussion, with the death of 12 people from the same family, 9 women. Feminists from different fronts of city struggles reacted quickly organizing a major demonstration.<sup>4</sup> The act of January 5, which released the manifesto "None the less, Alive we want ourselves", was signed by several women's organizations in Campinas, whose title was part of an international feminist convocation, led by Argentina, to combat violence, especially rape and femicide. And encouraged the resumption of a claim, the implementation of a rod to combat

domestic and family violence. As well as reaffirming the need for the two women's police stations in the city to operate 24 hours, seven days a week and with qualified professionals, as violence against women is more recurring on weekends.

As for judicial district, it is a specialized service that already exists in several cities of the State of São Paulo. It is provided for by the Maria da Penha law, whose purpose is to prevent, punish and restrain violence against women.<sup>5</sup> It completed ten years of existence without many significant achievements for the country's women. Education also occupies a central place in the debate among feminists, especially the gender discussions, prevented by the government of Michel Temer from being part of the National Curricular Common Core of basic and infantile education, despite denunciations against its constitutional legality. This point can be approached from different perspectives, but it is interesting to note that this conservative wave against the gender debate in Brazil is a reaction to the questions that feminism and LGBT movements make to the patriarchal, misogynist, racist and neoliberal culture in all its extension. It is a question of combating women's control of bodies, work and sexuality, of rejecting an ideal of 'being a woman', which guarantees, for example, the exploitation of the work done by the social reproduction of families in the private world and demonstrates their relationships direct and hidden from the market economy.<sup>6</sup>

According to a study by the Inter-union Department of Statistics and Socioeconomic Studies<sup>7</sup> on Pension Reform, 91% of the women in the country declared to perform domestic and care tasks, against 53% of the men employed in 2015, unchanged Compared to the year 2006. Women's working hours corresponded on average to 54.7 hours, while men's work rate was 46.7 hours, an average of 8 hours more per week and about 66 hours (two months) on average in the year, in a working day of 44 hours per week. Although the rate of female participation in the labor market has grown dramatically over the past 55 years, from 16.5 per cent in 1960 to 54.4 percent in 2015, men account for 76.2 per cent of productive activities. Certain segments of the female labor market are more penalized than others in terms of turnover, informality and illegality in hiring, not counting periods of unemployment, such as education segments, domestic workers, rural workers, outsourced workers, etc.

Gender inequality occurs even in formal activities with higher wages when a woman's income can be up to three times lower, even if she has, on average, more years of study and a similar workday. In this context, the dominant view of heteronormativity reproduced in the institutions is realized daily, as in the family, religion, etc.. In the case of formal conservative education, we have the retrocession of rights in polls of municipal and state education plans across the country removing the gender content of the school content. Called 'gender ideology', which, in turn, is associated with another antidemocratic project, the thought of 'school without party' that wants to prohibit freedom of expression and thinking in children's primary education.<sup>6</sup> In Campinas, it was not different, either in the voting of the Municipal Plan of Education, or in the attempt to make the prohibition of discussion of gender definitive in the Organic Law of the Municipality in a first vote in the City Hall. It was barred from being concluded by feminist demonstrations at the site, who are vigilant about the possible return of the project to the plenary.<sup>8</sup> This same Chamber approved a motion to reject a question from the National High School Examination (2015) that mentioned the philosopher Simone Beauvoir to inquire about the situation of violence against women in Brazil. Aldermen have argued that the 'ideology of gender' and

the 'political indoctrination' in the classroom hurt the 'morality' of the Brazilian family. In April 2017, members of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights opposed and denounced the effects of the 'non-party school' and the withdrawal of content from the national curriculum, especially the terms 'sexual orientation' and 'identity Of gender', based on anthropology and sociology. They charge a position of the Brazilian government for violating treaties and international human rights, including the Federal Constitution of 1988.<sup>9</sup>

All the imperious guidelines of politically organized women have developed in mainly urban actions, where 82% of the Brazilian population is concentrated, but also in the countryside, as the feminists of the Landless Workers Movement (MST). Through their organizations, movements and collectives are on the streets against the legislative, media and legal coup of 2016 that has deposed 54 million votes given to the political program that elected President Dilma Rousseff of the Workers Party (PT). The feminist acts of "OutTemer" denounce the misogynist, patriarchal and surrenderist nature of the neoliberal economic model adopted by the federal government, defeated at the polls in 2014, but which has imposed a continuous setback of social rights, such as Social Security reforms and That of Labor, that deepen the poverty in general and the inequalities between men and women. Reflecting on their feminist collectives about the daily life in which they live in Campinas, they punctuate urban demands accumulated in years of discussions about double or triple working hours that have not changed over the last decades throughout the country. Hence the insistence on certain urban equipment in collective documents that would increase their autonomy, empowerment, quality of life, their right to the city, security, health, education, especially on dates such as March 8, International Women's Day. Rights usurped by the chronic lack of day-care centers, but also of public laundries and restaurants, which should be distributed mainly in outlying areas of the city.

In addition to the increase in inequalities, much more serious as a result of the 2008 international economic crisis, and politico-economic in the country from the democratic breakup of 2016, with the continuous withdrawal of social rights, the majority of women, poor black and peripheral is increasingly hampered in its right to the city. Since it is managed and organized politically and economically from the experience and hegemonic way of life of the macho culture, patriarchal, in the definition of urban policies, including affecting mobility, which disregards the universe of demands arising from the relation of woman to City. One example is the cut of 61 percent of the federal resources of the Temer government to care for women victims of violence.<sup>5</sup>

Another major difficulty for women, although they are more than half of the population of the city and most of them are heads of families, is that there is not yet an accumulation of feminist discussions in the urban planning of the country and in particular in Campinas. There are many public policies that can be included by the women of Campinas in the City's Master Plan (2016-2017) to reduce the distances between their needs and interests and the reality they face, such as mobility and public lighting. Urban transport is precarious and unreachable outside working or business hours. This is also associated with the issue of women's safety, since there is a large contingent of those who return late at night, whether for reasons of work, study or because they also wish to access cultural and leisure rights. It is necessary to rethink the public policies of the city from the perspective of women who circulate in public space, invariably fearful.<sup>10</sup> The same problem of insecurity applies to children, young blacks, through

'institutional racism' denounced by black women's movements. In 2010 the census of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) showed a universe of 160.3 million people living in cities, of which 77.3 million were men and 83.0 million, women. Living in inadequate sanitation housing, 49,1 million people, that is, 30.6% of the total urban dwellers. Women accounted for 25.0 million (50.9%), of which 9.3million were white women and 15.3million black women were socially vulnerable.<sup>11</sup> The feminization of the heads of families in the country is also the feminization of poverty that affects the majority of peripheral women, mainly black women, aggravating the territorial exclusion. The public space is the experience of traveling long distances daily between home, public equipment, commerce and work. In fact they are crossing and not having right to the city as a collective right.<sup>12</sup>

According to the IPEA (2015), in 1995 households with women as a family reference were 23%, twenty years later they reach 40%. It is a markedly urban phenomenon, since in 2015 female-headed households rose to 43%, while in the countryside this proportion is 25%. Between 1995 and 2015 the increase in the city was approximately 18 points; while in the field was 10 points. The figures show visible changes in the family structure but also point to greater risks of social vulnerability given that the average income of women is lower than that of men, especially black women. Another issue to note is that families headed by women with a spouse reach 34% of the country's family arrangements. One of the urban public policies that most poor women resent is the right to housing.<sup>10,13</sup> More recent movements of urban occupations in Campinas by the right to housing (Joana D'arc, Mandela, Itayu, Cappadocia and others) try to resist together at a time of many retrogresses of rights. There is a large number of women living in urban occupations today or being evicted without any alternative housing policies presented by the municipal government. They are part of this growing contingent of families in situations of greater social vulnerability because they are aggravated by gender and race inequalities. To get an idea of the problem<sup>13</sup> estimates that Campinas has around 12,732 favelas/occupations; 57,857 illegal settlements, a total of 70,589 households in precarious settlements.

As there is no recognition of the continuous or isolated efforts of leaderships, especially of women, in social movements to access the right to the city, often synonymous with the right to housing, due to the responsibility of social reproduction of the family in the private world, policies predominate exclusionary laws criminalizing their social status. The feminist movements are making history in the country and in Campinas, including due to the movements of the black women and the other movements of gender identity with their presence in diverse fora in the public spaces.<sup>14</sup> But it is necessary to recognize and construct an own agenda of urban politics from the perspective of the universe of the feminist struggles from concrete proposals built from their territories. If we look at the history of the specific claims of women in the city we will see that many are old and unmet, some are still current, such as the chronic lack of day care centers. Several public policies of interest to the women of Campinas are also in the results of the 5th. Conference of the City of 2013, with high popular participation.<sup>15</sup>

The translation of proposals of feminist interest in bills that aim at the universalization of urban equipment and services combat the inequality of women's access to the city. And it is a social and political challenge to be recognized on the various fronts of mobilization of civil society,<sup>16,17</sup> including the task and responsibility of public power

in the urban planning decision-making spaces. All public policies aimed at women would need to be cross-sectoral and, in each of the government's policies, a sector that interacts with the political, economic and cultural specificities of their insertion in urban life. This goes well beyond the existence of some isolated public services for women, which means that for most of the city's citizens the relationship between women and the city remains marginal and subordinate.

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## Conflicts of interests

Author declares that there are no conflicts of interest.

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