

**SOLIDARITY: THE OVERCOMING OF THE CAPITALISM  
RULES CREATING SPACES FOR SURVIVAL IN THE VIEW OF  
ORGANIZED WORKERS OF THE HOMELESS MOVEMENT OF  
IJUÍ.**

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**ABSTRACT**

Living in the outskirts of the cities identifies its members like unqualified workers, of low school level, not prepared for work. Such situation reinforces the solidarity in the production of the survival. One of the problems that maximizes the lack of life quality is the habitation lack and of work. On these last years the family and the community were important for the need of the State to divide the responsibilities and the costs of the public politics of the individuals' social protection growing an attendance attitude more and more with their support programs and the middle classes and discharges of the population again, a services rendered in philanthropy, protects and defense of rights. The family, for is time, enlarges their bows of friendships more and more as form of to resist and to survive in a social space with the almost total absence of money.

**" Solidarity: The overcoming of the capitalism rules creating spaces for survival in the view of organized workers of the Homeless Movement of Ijuí ".**

**Introduction**

The ideas exposed in this paper are the result of years of contact with people who live in poor conditions homes in some Brazilian cities, and the research is the outcome of the work done in the last five years with the Homeless Movement of Ijuí. This movement was formed together with the taking over of urban lots in parcels of land belonging to the District City Hall by people needy of dwelling, of work and of minimum living conditions. It's known that the united behavior of the dwellers of the more needy settlements of Brazilian cities continues to be object of several researches, which originate the most varied theories and speculations. In this paper I just intend to share the view I got by the direct contact with the participants and the experience acquired during the formation of the Homeless Movement of Ijuí in 2000 and some social and anthropological readings, emphasizing their relevance in the more universal matters. It's almost inevitable, in this paper, to make use of some comparisons of these dwellers studied to others, due to the special characteristics of the reasons of their formation. The focus of my study is the existing solidarity among the group of dwellers of periphery settlements specially of the people settled at the First of March settlement in Getúlio Vargas Neighborhood of Ijuí in 2001. Three members of the group were interviewed and they participated of the whole process, but they have life circumstances that complement the approach of the solidarity matter contributing spontaneously to this research. The techniques of life story, interviews and the documental research were used in this study.

Living in the outskirts of the cities identifies its members, in common sense, as two actors: the first, like formed by "a bunch of lazy bums and troublemakers

associated to the world of crime". The second, like unqualified workers, of low school level, not prepared for work, and abandoned by the state, used as guarantee to the continuity of the charity policies. In this action that seems natural, this procedure shows, in fact, intentions beyond the place, and that are internalized in the population's imaginary., as common sense. Which results do those attitudes provoke in the production of survival, in the urban space and in the practice of citizenship?

Both of them integrate literally the speech of those who benefit from the precarious situation of these populations. This procedure results of a direct relationship between the spacial urban frame and the production and reproduction of the capital. These people are not consumers, therefore they are excluded of the projects for the city's personality, the City of the Diversified Cultures, to turn it into a competitive product, increasing, at any cost, its attractive power. When the city abandons the passive form of the object and assumes the active form of the subject, acquiring a new identity, of a company, and begins to compete in the market of cities, what should be done with the outskirts dwellers, those dwellers who put down the quality of life index., those who are not part of the postcard.

One of the problems that maximizes the lack of quality of life is the need for dwelling, and for solving completely the matter of dwelling of a city in isolation, in a country of such a need for homes and work, would cause migrations, from many sources, resulting in an invasion of groups of homeless families from night to day. How to create agility when the proposals for solutions are slow, victims of bureaucracy of processes? The discrimination of the dwellers of the outskirts turns difficult the search for work. Adding to it the low school level, the skin color, the ethnic group, and the uncertain address that reinforce the negations to whom lives in a prejudiced society. Therefore, the dwelling is the beginning point for the individuals to get organized, to plan life and the creation of bonds to the stay in a city. Even in the lack of work, to have an address means the possibility of waiting for an opportunity or developing some way of gaining a worthy income.

To have a fixed dwelling means to have school for children, to be close to friends and relatives. The formation of the social group like its shown in the statements overcomes the limits of family bonds. It means to belong to a city. Men and women who with their work build the city.

### **1. The fragmentation of the individual in needs .**

While in rich countries the state discarded the attention to the collective, favouring the individual, we down here, don't leave it this way and copy the model, and we start fractioning the collective even more in the form of public attention. Creating the rights to the old, to the child; the needs, health, education, in which, after some time of incubation, the social movements and unions developed.

In the same way that, at first the family submerged in these social categories gaining identity like needs: Needs of properties and rights, and after that, the family and the community start to emerge again like the state's need to share with them the responsibilities and the costs of the public policies of protection and social reproduction of the individuals.

That's the way we develop in Brazil an assisting attitude on one side, inside the popular layers, like resistance and living conditions in needs and in poverty and, on the other side, in the middle and high classes a service rendering to the popular layers in the form of philanthropy, custody, rights defence. Both basically assuming conservative proposals, like arms of international, company like, religious or political organisms.

The topic I am going to develop in this article is just the assisting or united behavior of communitarian bonds, organized or flown of the popular layers as protection and social reproduction of the group.

## 2. The solidarity

To MAUSS (1980), the donation is a simultaneously spontaneous and obligatory act. The study of donation would permit sociology the relative overcoming of the deep dualities of the western thought, between spontaneity and obligation, between interest and altruism, selfishness and solidarity, among others. The donation produces the alliance, the matrimonial alliances as well as the political ones (exchanges among bosses or different social layers), religious (as in sacrifices, understood as a way of relating to gods), economical, legal and diplomatic ones (including here the personal relationships of hospitality). We don't intend to criticize the generalization of the notion of individual interest implicit in the bourgeois society and in the liberal thought, that will oppose radically to what the donation unites. We held back to the aspects of what it is like to be in the line of division between living with relative dignity in the lack of work and overcome the material needs through solidarity, so that they don't lose the social identity, having the donation as an instrument that strengthens and amplifies the affective bonds of the human groups in society. Every exchange implies, to a certain degree, some alienability. When I give, I always give something from myself. When receiving, the receiver accepts something from the giver. He stops, even if momentarily, being the other; the donation unites us, turns us into fellow men.

In his book "The Rules of the Sociological Method", Durkheim registers his basic principles concerning the specifically sociologic concept of the society, proposing the Social Facts as object of study of Sociology and the evolution of society from solidarity on. According to his concept:

the society it's not a simple addition of individuals, but a system formed by the association, that represents a specific reality with its own characteristics. Without any doubt, we can't produce anything of collective if private consciences don't exist;

but this necessary condition is not enough. It's also necessary the consciences to be associated, linked, and linked in a certain way; it's from this combination that the social life results and, consequently, this is the combination that explains it. Getting together, penetrating, blending, the individual souls give birth to a being, a psychic one if we wish, but that constitutes a psychic individuality of a new gender. (DURKHEIM, 2002.)

Taking support from the theoretical findings of Emile Durkheim, to whom the true solidarity it's only possible when the individuals share categories of thoughts, we evaluate that when individuals share their thoughts they harmonize their preferences determining their decisions in the construction of the social space. This attitude implies in the existence of a reference of solidarity among the members of the group, considering the social space, essentially, as a space of solidarity. On the other side, we should also think the space of solidarity as a space of diversity. The space of solidarity should guarantee the unity incorporating the diversity. Unity and diversity should coexist in the logic of solidarity, when we watch the climb of intolerance, of selfishness, and of social exclusion, the solidarity is the instrument capable of discerning a unity, taking into consideration the plurality of the experienced solidarity and permitting the meeting of a self-ethics with a communitarian ethics.

### 3. **How to live without an income**

Our object study is to understand how the families live, reproduce their work force without having a monthly minimum income. How is this united net established permitting the survival in this social space in the almost total lack of money.

Earning low salaries or even without continuous work it is normal to share private problems with relatives, neighbors and friends. To expose the private side is the way to integrate in this universe of needs. The solidarity can be seen in simple attitudes, it can be the lending of a telephone card, the money of a bus ticket (specially on rainy days, on normal days to walk two or three kilometers is the rule), the taxi money to go the doctor, some olive oil left, wheat for a corn cake, Paraguay-tea (*Ilex paraguariensis*), some sugar, and so on. In this solidarity the ones without

possessions live in a permanent relationship of exchange of favours among relatives, neighbors, intimate friends and fellow-country-men to minimize difficult situations. In this picture, there are other attitudes that can be paid: the "cats"- distribution of electric power among the homes from a buyer-, the rubber hose taking water to the family that had its supply cut, the children care for the mother who works out, the payments can be done through the division of a tree knocked down by the wind into chips of wood making use of borrowed tools. Some other shared items are: a lettuce stem, cabbage from the vegetable garden, oranges from the tree in front of the house. In this constant exchange of favours these groups can face unemployment and diseases. This is a united net that brings together the dwellers of these settlements.

Nowadays in Brazil we live a picture of significant social exclusion. The state and the society have, in relation to the popular layers in poverty, an attitude of philanthropy and not of rights. We can include in this task, conservative and progressist groups linked to the state, churches, companies or the community itself, creating a vast net of solidarity.

#### **4. The three kinds of solidarity**

We found three types of solidarity public demonstrations among the interviewed dwellers:

##### **✓ A solidarity of fellow-country-men and relatives.**

In this solidarity the ones without possessions live a relation of exchange of favours. In this constant exchange of favours these groups can face the unemployment and the disease. It's the solidarity of favours, money loans, payments of light and water bills, the taxi money in an emergency.

"I was unemployed for two years living there in the other house, without light, without water. We got to the point of having to ask for money among friends and Luci's relatives to pay and to have just water".

According to Márcio: "Cesário, Adir, Margarete and others helped me a lot. with wooden boards of the storage shed belonging to the old owner of the land we built the house".

In this social context the woman as work force enters the rank between the boss and the one who provides the surviving of the family group. The woman doesn't work to help in the maintenance, but contributes and divides, without however, making the male chauvinism disappear.

Margarete's words show clearly this idea of solidarity: "nowadays it is common to exchange and ask the neighbours, the more intimate ones for help. Each one seeing (knowing of) the needs of each other, no one wants to see one of these people (God keep them away from it) starving. If I have it, I share it".

A variation is the exchange of work for dedication, the person will get studies, clothes, food, dwelling. Taking care of the neighbor's children so they can go to work or in an emergency situation. The retribution of the favour can be done in some other way or in a similar situation. It has to do with a solidarity that requires reciprocity. Almost always the belonging received in the exchange has a more important social value than the one lent like in the case of studies.

"I moved to live with a teacher. Then they gave me studies, and I studied up to the fifth grade. I passed the fifth and left school, because it was located in the countryside and they had it only up to the fifth grade. After that I had to go to the city to continue. Then I didn't even have conditions to buy books, neither clothes to study (adequate clothes). Then I quit studying. Now I have two children and I am studying. (Margarete Marafiga, 29 years old).

✓ **There is another kind of solidarity called sponsored solidarity.**

It happens when one of the members establishes links of work with the middle and high class and turns them into means of clothes donation, medicine, house electronic devices, construction material that can be used as complement and as an element of exchange and retribution of favours, creating a current of recycling of consumer goods.

" With the neighbors when I need I get, but I give more. I got things from the boss that were shared with the neighbors, whoever needed. I worked more than 20 years with signed work contract and only got something when I invaded".

"When I got to know of that thing there I entered together. I stayed one month camped. Suffering I left my boy (son) there with my sister and I went on fighting, because with a child we can't face it. I left him there until I was sure I could get what I wanted. If I suffered, I suffered alone. I stayed in the storage shed for a year, I faced it together with Margarete, everything she went through, I went through with her. Fellow man. In the shanty, I stayed there too. We only got apart when I came here and she went back to her house".

Being the owner of a cart with two horses leashed, tired or an old pick up permits the circulation around the city for daily search of work. There are ground cleaning jobs, furniture and old home electric devices transport, wood leftovers, boards, pieces of wood and trunks of trees. The taking out of furniture and home electric devices from the residences is done and that's also abandoned in the garbage. The wood is turned into firewood and the furniture is and used as currency.

The recycling of consumer goods is a sample of solidarity for the sponsoring by middle and high classes that seem to prefer this kind of action to participating of philanthropic entities.

✓ **A third tendency is the religious one**

Linked to the Catholic churches, Protestants and Spiritual or Afro-Brazilian contributing to the social reproduction of the worker. The church is an institution with the most credit among the families with a spiritual support, and through them mechanisms of social justice are created that we can also understand as instruments used to soften the revolt against the injustice becoming accomplices in the reproduction of poverty.

The church always stimulates hope and its religious programmes give an emotional, affective and material support. However, at the same time, it is the religious institution that forms the basis of the solidarity of struggle.

It is formed a net of relations in the everyday life of community and government agents acting in it, that are external agents more trustable in the reflection of their everyday needs who build the atmosphere of struggle. The everyday learning of needs in opposition to the institutions accumulates the forces and so the social claiming movements are born and the projects and actions to attend the common needs.

This solidarity is experienced, however, not without contradictions and conflicts proper to the confinement to which they are submitted. The proximity of the homes, from one another, and the daily needs don't guarantee any privacy.

Today in Brazil the social exclusion of millions is notorious and they live in shanties, shanty-towns, precarious dwelling. In these groups, the family is formed by neighbours, relatives and fellow-men, and this solidarity is important once living in tiny dwellings piled up like "Habitar-Brasil"(official programmes for popular dwelling), Living Brazil, without basic sanitation, and close to the others makes public their intimacy. The familiar problems are shared with all dwellers. They are much closer to the ghettos than to the community. There is no heterogeneity in these places. Everyone has low salaries, discrimination.

## **5. Conclusion**

At the moments that could weaken the united bonds, caused by exclusion, accentuating the individualism that presses down the solidarity in favor of the logic of the market, we find three distinct kinds of solidarity that break with the capitalist logic. The ethics of solidarity opposes itself to the perverse logic, pointing to social actions with a meaning, at the same time, libertarian and communitarian, while the communitarian project is built in opposition to the thesis of liberalism. Beyond these three aspects of solidarity observed, exchange, support and recycling, it is found that the concept of family overcomes of the one of family through bonds of relatives extending itself to the group that gets united in the social living together.

However, this idea can be debated in another research.

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