Perceptions on work: analysis of conceptions of homeless people[1]

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Abstract: Introduction: We are facing alarming levels of structural unemployment that become exponentially larger when we analyze the layers excluded from the right to work, as the people living in the street. Objective: To identify the conceptions about the work of people living in the street. Method: The participants were ten men sheltered in a religious institution that welcomes homeless people, located in the interior of the state of São Paulo. This is a qualitative study that used the semi-structured interview for data collection and the thematic analysis technique to analyze them. Results: The participants link the work to financial issues, since the money was recognized by them as a means to satisfy material desires and support family. They also link it to the use of psychoactive substances, indicated as the main reason for the loss of jobs. However, we observed that the work was also indicated as a possibility of (re)construction of future life projects, being an important component of daily life. Participants associated the work with the viability of their social networks, which in many cases were fragile or non-existent and conceived as an emancipatory strategy, whether personal, family or financial. Conclusion: Research into social assistance equipment for the homeless people is important, since it broadens the knowledge about the equipment itself, the users and their demands, favoring the creation and implementation of social policies, as well as supporting Occupational Therapy practices along with this population, which are still scarce.

Keywords: *Homeless Persons, Work, Solidarity Economy.*

Percepções sobre trabalho: análise de concepções de pessoas em situação de rua

Resumo: Introdução: No contexto nacional, nos deparamos com alarmantes índices de desemprego estrutural que se tornam exponencialmente maiores quando analisamos as camadas excluídas do direito ao trabalho, como a população em situação de rua. Objetivo: Identificar as concepções sobre o trabalho de pessoas em situação de rua. Método: Participaram dez homens abrigados em uma instituição religiosa que acolhe pessoas em situação de rua, localizada no interior do Estado de São Paulo. Trata-se estudo qualitativo que utilizou a entrevista semiestruturada para coleta de dados e a técnica de análise temática. Resultados: Indicam que os participantes vinculam o trabalho às questões financeiras, pois o dinheiro foi reconhecido por eles como meio de satisfazer desejos materiais e o sustento familiar. Também o vinculam ao uso de substâncias psicoativas, indicado como a principal razão da perda de empregos. Entretanto, verificou-se que o trabalho também foi indicado como possibilidade de (re)construção de projetos de vida futura, sendo componente importante do cotidiano. Os participantes associaram o trabalho à viabilização de suas redes sociais que, em muitos casos, apresentava-se fragilizada ou era inexistente e o conceberam como estratégia emancipatória, seja pessoal, familiar ou financeira. Conclusão: A pesquisa em equipamentos de assistência social voltados à população em situação de rua é importante, pois amplia o conhecimento sobre os próprios equipamentos, os usuários e suas demandas, favorecendo a criação e implantação de políticas sociais, além de dar suporte às práticas de Terapia Ocupacional junto a essa população, que ainda são escassas.

Palavras-chave: *População em Situação de Rua, Trabalho, Economia Solidária.*

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1 Introduction

The lives of those who live or survive on the streets are traced to innumerable causes, from economic, social and supportive social networks, migrations to urban violence, unemployment and/or dependence on psychoactive substances; the impact of each element is specified in each context and for each subject, hindering to give more importance to some aspects than others, being a population whose situation is diverse and multi-determined (ARAÚJO, 2003).

For this reason, the National Politics of the Population in Street Situation instituted by Decree Number 07.053/2009 is characterized as:

> [...] a heterogeneous population group with common extreme poverty, broken or fragile family ties, and the non-existence of conventional housing, using public places and degraded areas as a space for housing and livelihoods, temporarily or permanently, as well as temporary shelter units or temporary housing (BRASIL, 2009).

Although there is no single determination for this phenomenon, it is believed that relationships with labor play a central role in this outcome (COSTA, 2005). There seems to be a preponderance of issues related to exclusion from the world of work (and the consequences of the political, economic and social conjuncture that feed it) on the motivations that lead some people to live in the street, as well as their permanence and the difficulty of overcoming this situation (BORIN, 2004; COSTA, 2005; MATTOS; HELOANI; FERREIRA, 2008; PRATES; PRATES; MACHADO, 2011; SILVA, 2009; VALÊNCIA et al., 2008; VIEIRA; BEZERRA; ROSA, 1992).

In a broader context, the precariousness of relationships and working conditions, flexibilization and structural unemployment taken shape since the 1970s, when the capitalist crisis began a process of world productive restructuring, had an impact on the economy as well as intense social, political and ideological changes, characterized in Neoliberalism, in the privatization of the State and in the deregulation of labor laws (ANTUNES, 2000, 2009, 2013).

All these changes contributed to the production of a big contingent of workers pushed progressively towards the exclusion, becoming unnecessary to the current economic circuit as "leftovers" including the street population (BURSZTYN, 2003; SILVA, 2009).

The National Survey on Street Population conducted in 2008 found that 70.9% of the interviewees had some paid activity (work), highlighting recyclable materials (27.5%), car watchers (14.1%), construction (6.3%), cleaning (4.2%) and charger/stevedore (3.1%). Also, 58.6% reported having a profession (civil construction (27.2%), commerce (4.4%), domestic work (4.4%) and mechanics (4.1%), and 15.7% as for money (charity). Despite the high occupancy rate, only 1.9% of respondents worked with a formal contract, and 47.7% of the subjects never worked formally (BRASIL, 2008).

It would be undeniable the existence of a high occupation rate among this population, especially in the picking garbage and in activities related to the commodification of fear, crime and begging (ESCOREL, 2006). However, the work carried out by this population makes feasible to obtain financial autonomy, being transient, temporary, varied and irregular, and often developed under unhealthy and risky conditions (BORIN, 2004; ESCOREL, 2006; MATTOS; HELOANI; FERREIRA, 2008; OLIVEIRA, 2007). Despite the provision of services, it is excluded from the right to work and to consume minimum survival items (VALENCIA et al., 2008).

Facing the fragility of the labor relationships and social support networks of the street population, it is necessary to propose economic and social alternatives that respond to their demands, ensuring the recovery of their autonomy and independence (GHIRARDI et al., 2005). In this context, the Solidarity Economy becomes a possibility, especially as regards the potential of income generation and social inclusion, as well as an alternative to the capitalist mode of production.

For Singer (2002, p. 10),

> [...] solidarity economy is another mode of production, whose basic principles are the collective or associated property of capital and the right to individual freedom [...].

It is based on equality and the principles of self-management, democratic participation of members, collective ownership of the means of production, and horizontalization of relationships (OLIVEIRA, 2008).

According to Mattos, Heloani and Ferreira (2008), participating in labor cooperatives would be an alternative to the street situation, because cooperatives promote income generation for people who have difficulties to survive by selling their workforce in capitalist enterprises.

Identifying and understanding how the street population elaborates their conceptions and relationships with work becomes relevant for the construction of inclusion actions at work similar to the real demands, desires, and needs of this population.

2 Method

2.1 Type of research

This is a cross-sectional, qualitative approach carried out by interviews with users of a social-care entity, of a religious nature, providing institutional support services to street men in a municipality in the interior of the State of São Paulo. This research was related to a project of scientific initiation linked to the Department of Occupational Therapy (UFSCar) and to the Multidisciplinary and Integrated Core of Studies, Training and Intervention in Solidarity Economy of the Federal University of São Carlos (NuMI-EcoSol/UFSCar), developed projects since 2012 aimed at the insertion of the population in a street situation in the world of work, through the Solidarity Economy. Since 2013, specific actions have been carried out with the social-care entity mentioned above.

2.2 Ethical procedures

After the approval of the project by the Human Research Ethics Committee/UFSCar, the research objectives were presented to all those followed by the entity. Those who agreed to participate in the study were asked to sign the Informed Consent Term.

2.3 Participants and selection criteria

There were 10 street people participating in the study who were living in the House of Divine Mercy Mission during the period of data collection. All the people who were sheltered in the House during the period were invited to participate, however, only 10 of them accepted the invitation.

Therefore, the selection criterion was based on people's willingness to participate voluntarily.

2.4 Procedures for collecting and analyzing data

The data were obtained through semi-structured interviews, with a script created from theoretical references about the subject and the experience of university extension activities with the population studied, associating closed and open questions, totaling 12 questions. The objective of the interviews was to capture the participants' previous professional life, their conceptions about work and the influence exerted by them in their lives. It was also sought to know the current social support networks mentioned by the participants and how they imagined the networks pointed out by them if they were inserted in the world of work. Therefore, the interview questions dealt with these topics. To implement them, the institution provided a room so that there would be no interruptions. Each participant granted personal information, such as date of birth, education level, marital status, and profession, to fill out the preliminary protocol of personal information of the participants used to characterize them. The interviews were recorded and transcribed in full, and arranged in a standardized way, by the identification data of each participant. The interviews were, on average 20 minutes long.

Data analysis was carried out using the thematic analysis technique, using of Bardin (2008) as a reference, whose application implies to discover the core of meaning contained in the communication, and the presence or frequency of appearance may have some meaning for the analytical objective elected. After the transcription and ordering of the interviews, an exhaustive reading was carried out that allowed the identification of sense core and their respective themes that were aggregated into five thematic categories, 1) Multifaceted money: the work tied to financial issues; 2) The diversity of relationships between work and the use of psychoactive substances; 3) The work as a strategy for the (re) construction of life projects; 4) The viability of social networks through the work, and 5) The work as an emancipatory strategy.

3 Results and Discussion

Regarding the personal identification information of the participants, it was observed a mean age of 34 years old. Although they came from different cities, all were from the State of São Paulo. As for marital status, seven said they were single, two were widowers and one was married. At the time of the interviews, the average length of stay of each person in the institution, which did not limit the reception period, was 15 weeks.

Regarding formal school education, four participants had incomplete elementary education, three had completed primary school, two had completed all secondary education and one had an incomplete higher education.

Regarding the professional identities, related or not to the last professions, a great diversity was identified: general mechanic, religious missionary, agricultural technician, sushiman assistant, civil constructor, tractor driver, harvester operator,

rural worker and general assistant, declared by two participants.

Regarding the time they were out of the world of work (regardless of the formal or informal professional bond), three participants reported the last job about a year ago, four reported about two years ago and three reported being away from the world of work for more than ten years.

The results will be presented and discussed in the thematic categories identified.

3.1 Multifaceted money: work tied to financial issues

Regarding the thematic categories identified, the first one is based on most of the participants, for whom the work appeared strongly linked to the financial problem, being considered a means to generate income. For the participants, money is considered the main fruit of the work and it can be used in different ways, granting autonomy to those who have it:

> I was the owner of my salary, I manipulated my money [...]. You have to generate income, you have to declare your taxes, you have to make and manipulate cesarean money right, let's say [...] (P1).

> [...] I always had my money [...]. Money is good, everything is good too. We need it because if we do not have money, we do not wear clothes, we do not feed ourselves (P7).

> [...] then the end of the month comes a there is a little bit of money. It is good [...] to earn your daily bread, sweaty, but honestly (P8).

Regarding this aspect, Costa (2005) also identified the relationship of work with income generation for this population. For the author, the presence of work is seen by the population in a street situation as resistance to the precariousness of relationships and the prejudice they are subjected, and income generation is a socially expected consequence from work.

Besides to income generation, the presence of work in the lives of most of the participants was associated with the satisfaction of material desires, as well as consumption and consumerism linked to the satisfaction of these desires as shown in the following report:

> I miss paid work. I miss it a lot because of the lack of money and to satisfy my material desires, right? It implies that I want to be part of the world of consumerism. It is part of consuming something, clothes, electrical devices, owning a beautiful house, owning a car. Have a bank account and have free access to go to the bank and at the cash register take out the money and go out counting, to buy anything you want, from a sneaker, a pair of shoes, a hat, a perfume, to get a person out aligned, right? (P1).

Currently, through the production of material, the place socially and economically occupied by a person is determined, enabled by work (SILVA; FONSECA, 2002; SCHWERINER, 2008), as evidenced by the report of P1. Consumption is considered consumerism only when the consumer no longer recognizes the purpose of the product he or she is buying, that is, the purchase of a particular product is by the simple act of consuming, to satisfy an internal need, and not by the meaning of subsistence (FREIRE, 2012).

Bauman (2008) states that consumption is an inseparable element of biological survival that all human beings share with each other, being a condition free of temporal or historical limits, while consumerism establishes ideas of devaluation and depreciation of goods after purchase. Society, being ruled by consumption, excludes or accepts people based on the ability to consume something (BAUMAN, 2008).

Due to the current ways of production, extraction, consumption and disposal, many negative impacts on the environment, such as irregular waste disposal and on society can be observed that may involve degrading working conditions, unfair financial distribution, alienated labor processes and exclusion of people based on their personal characteristics, such as ethnicity, gender and social origin (CUNHA et al., 2011; MEZZACAPPA, 2013).

From the Solidarity Economy that a new logic of consumption grows: while meeting the needs and desire for material consumption the ethical, solidary and responsible consumption promotes the quality of life of all the workers involved in the elaboration processes, distribution, and marketing of products, while contributing to the construction and consolidation of more just and egalitarian societies (MANCE, 2002).

As we observed in the study, the act of consuming for the participants is only feasible through work, as shown in the P1 report. When attending to the needs for the social existence of the subjects, the act of consuming becomes a central element in human sociability (SILVA, 2009; ANTUNES, 2013). However, the capitalist system transforms this element into wage labor, alienated and fetishized, reducing the

central purpose of the social being to an obligatory means of subsistence, becoming a commodity for the valorization of capital (ANTUNES, 2013). Thus, labor and the financial issue are regarded as obligatory, not possible without them to survive or subsist nor to its dependents, like the family, according to the following reports:

> [...] *because the person thinks that we are going to work for good, but it is not for good because if you do not work you do not eat, you do not treat the family, right?* (P6).

> [...] *the life I was while working was difficult because I did not earn much, I worked under the rain, all my life to keep the house right. I had four women and one man, all children, right? So we have to work to keep the house, right* [...]. *And then that money I was receiving was to keep the house, right* [...] (P6).

> [...] *everyone has to work, if not, we do not eat* (P7).

> *Well, in my opinion, nowadays, every human being has to work* [...] (P4).

> [If I was working] *I could be helping my mother* (P4).

These reports showed that the work was understood as obligatory to the human being since it provides the means of subsistence and/or family. In the National Survey on Population in Street Situation, 29.8% of the respondents indicated unemployment as the main reason for living on the streets, while 29.1% attributed the street situation to family disagreements (BRASIL, 2008).

The study by Tumolo and Tumolo (2004), which examined, through referral from Sine - National Employment System of Florianópolis (SC), the characteristics of the experiences of people who are out of work, evidenced that the condition of unemployment interferes with the life of the subject as a whole, affecting the way the subjects without work relate to other people of their social life and beyond. The participants of the research revealed that the lack of work generates an extreme situation of impossibility in acquiring essential products that guarantee the survival of their families. These findings corroborate with those found in the present study, illustrated by the reports of P4 and P6.

Thus, the relationship between work and money is multifaceted and finds different understandings, either as a way of generating income and the autonomy that gives to the participants or as a possibility of satisfaction of material desires, support/provision to the family or even subsistence.

3.2 The diversity of relationships between work and the use of psychoactive substances

The consumption of psychoactive substances has been present for several purposes since the beginning of history. In Brazil, during the 20th century, devices of a disciplinary nature appeared to control habits and behaviors coming from the use of psychoactive substances tolerated among the privileged classes, but reprehensible among the poor and populations considered dangerous. These devices shared an affinity with the hygienic and eugenic notions, bases of public health in that period that articulated the use of these substances by classes vulnerable to theories of degeneration (PETUCO, 2011).

The concept of vulnerability was important for the AIDS movement between the 1970s and 1980s but, despite the incorporation of this concept in health, it did not help to reduce contamination rates and widened prejudices against certain population groups, such as drug users. These population groups had prejudices and stigmas, resulting from the control devices of the time, expose them to numerous social vulnerabilities (PETUCO, 2010; PEREIRA; NICHIATA, 2011).

Although institutions that looked to problems of drug use in Brazil appear in the tenth century, it was only in 2003 that the Ministry of Health Policy for Integral Care of Users of Alcohol and Other Drugs was implemented. This policy recognizes the specialized guarantee to users of alcohol and other drugs within the scope of the Unified Health System (SUS) (ALVES, 2009).

Such a policy is in agreement with the principles of psychiatric reform and in the attempt to resolve stigmas and prejudices regarding its use, admitting a multifactorial context, breaking with the reductionist idea of the use restricted to the most vulnerable classes, that currently these substances are also consumed by the middle and upper classes (BRASIL, 2010).

It is worth mentioning that we present this reflection as a background to deepen the conceptions of the participants of the research on the relationship between work and the use of psychoactive substances, demystifying the association of drug use as a consequence of a situation of social or emotional vulnerability.

The participants presented the perception that abusive use of alcohol and/or other drugs interferes

directly in the work, either in the inability to remain linked to the world of work, due to the consequences of the problematic use or in the difficulty to re-enter in that context of life.

The following reports illustrate the difficulty of staying in work as a result of drug abuse:

> [...] *when I did not go to church, I stopped in the middle of the road and went to bars, right, for happy hour. And this was causing me to get away from work too, by using too much alcohol... it was a first step in getting me to sink deeper into the field of alcoholism* (P1).

> [...] *and I got into the drugs. I started with drinks, on the drugs and then it was going. At the age of 22, I was already out of touch. Yeah, I went deep into cocaine. Then I no longer had service that I held* [...]. *According to the effect of the drug, you went out one night, the other night you could not work. If we do not work, I know that if I had focused on the time I started working in this repositories market from 18 to 19, I was fine, I guess I had not fallen.* [...] *and work, when you get into the drug, everything is at the bottom, woman, work, family. Nothing puts you in the foreground. The foreground is the drug and the drink. Not that you want to, but it is something that dominates you, dominates you. And it makes you, you lose focus on everything* (P2).

Despite the multi-factories, the trajectories of life on the street are closely linked to "[...] economic issues, migration, family breakdown, unemployment, urban violence, drug addiction, alcoholism, among others" (ARAÚJO, 2003, p. 89). However, for some authors, one of the main reasons for going to the streets is the use of alcohol and other drugs, followed by unemployment and family disagreements (BOTTI et al., 2010). This affirmation is corroborated by the National Survey on Population in Street Situation, held in 2008, with about 32,000 street people from large Brazilian capitals. Of this total, 35.5% stated that they began to make public roads as their homes due to the use of alcohol and other drugs (BRASIL, 2008).

On the other hand, the use of psychoactive substances is increasingly incorporated into the productive life, resulting in a decrease in productivity and in the alteration of labor relationships (CARILLO; MAURO, 2004; BECK; DAVID, 2007). In a study by Castro (2009) who analyzed the role and influence of the workplace in the treatment of alcohol abusers treated in a worker health division within a public university, it was identified that places close to work, such as bars, made access to alcohol possible,

and the hours of consumption, usually after hours. In this direction, one of the participants pointed out the connection of the work environment with the beginning of the use of psychoactive substances:

> *I knew the drugs in the service. In my case, that influenced badly, I did not have a head and me just ...* [...] *did not know how to deal with it* (P10).

Carillo and Mauro (2004) argue that the possible circumstances of vulnerability in the workplace and the stress generated by the organization, such as precariousness of space and rivalry among workers are related to the consumption of alcohol and other drugs. However, the authors point out that the causality of substance use and abuse is multifactorial and can be influenced by personal, family and cultural situations.

If in the previous category, it was identified that the work is linked to the fulfillment of the desires of consumption and for subsistence, in this category, it was verified that the work was also a way found to make feasible the consumption of psychoactive substances. Although it is evident that the consumption of psychoactive substances is also a desire for consumption, we chose to analyze these results separately, aiming at a deeper relationship between work and consumption of psychoactive substances.

The fear of returning to work is something present, as the following reports show:

> [...] [I'm afraid to go back to work] *because I'm afraid of money in hand and do not know how to use* (P1).

> [...] *every kind of service that I arranged was just for drug use.* [...] *then I stopped, only there I worked sometimes* [...]. *Every city that I came to, I drank and used drugs because I got a job* [...]. *So, I know that when the fear comes, I know that I have the ability to work, to follow and to take the course now with my head in place, but I think the drug would not let me. In case I do not have a cure, I just leaned against it, it's a bug that put to sleep* (P2).

In this sense, Beck and David (2007) argue that the consumption of substances, main alcohol, composes a social behavior characteristic of the worker because it is accepted socially, whose consumption potential can be increased due to the monthly salary receipt. According to the aforementioned study by Castro (2009), although the return to work of the interviewees was considered therapeutic since they occupied a large part of their time, the work

environment was more likely to resume alcohol consumption, to social pressures. Besides to fear of relapse, respondents were excluded from the labor market because of the stigma attached to alcohol and other drug use, which emerges in this category.

An alternative to the social inclusion of the population in a street situation through work can be through the Solidarity Economy. Being constituted of initiatives that add the populations marked by exclusion, it can be sources of motivation for the participation of this person (BARRETO; LOPES; DE PAULA, 2013; BONADIO; SILVEIRA, 2013). Besides this characteristic, Solidary Economy welcomes the differences and faces the personal difficulties of those involved. In this sense, the relapses of people who abuse psychoactive substances are confronted and discussed in the collective work and are not grounds for exclusion of the person from the work group as in the capitalist company.

Barreto, Lopes and De Paula (2013, p. 55) see potential for the social and labor reinsertion of users of alcohol and other drugs through the Solidarity Economy, since such potentialities:

> [...] *it basically comes from the congruence between the objectives of the Solidarity Economy movement and the problems related to the people, because the values, logic, and rationality of the movement enable to rescue these individuals for public life* [...].

In this category, the participants associated the relationship of work with the use of psychoactive substances, albeit in different ways, but converging to move away from the working environment in the capitalist market. We argue that the Solidarity Economy is present as an opportunity for inclusion in the world of work for this population.

3.3 Work as strategy for (re) construction of life projects

It is clear that for the participants getting work and focusing on it is an essential component of everyday life, a means to achieve future goals, changes in life, leisure, and personal recognition illustrate the following accounts.

For some participants, getting work and focusing on it is an essential component of everyday life, a means to achieve future goals, changes in life, leisure, and personal recognition:

> [Work] *It's everything, everything, right?* [...] *work is everything to us, right?* (P5).

> [The work] *That's all. It is life* (P8).

When they mention that work is "everything", it is observed that participants conceive work as an indispensable condition for human existence, as Marx (1996) puts it. For this author, the condition of creator of products and services useful to the life of the people, denominated by values of use, causes that the work not only acquires central value in the human history and in the influence of the sociability, but that becomes indispensable condition to the existence of human beings in any social form. Another participant also pointed to work as a component of everyday life:

> [The work was part of the] *daily life* (P2).

In this sense, Castro et al. (2001) understand life as a wide range of routine actions, and the construction of daily life is related to the concrete transformation of reality. Everyday life is a heterogeneous compound in content and meaning, constituted by innumerable activities that make up the day to day, making daily life the mark of the singularity of the subject, which shapes it from values, beliefs, and affections (GALHEIGO, 2003). In this way, work was considered one of the activities that make up everyday life.

Castel (2013) affirms that work constitutes a central foundation in people's lives, not only in their economic dimension but when conceived in an expanded way, considering the psychological, cultural and symbolic aspects. The author states that this expanded concept of work is perceived only by people living on unemployment and consequent social exclusion. The following accounts corroborate these assumptions by pointing to work as paramount in life:

> [The work] *It is one of the primordial things in the life of the human being* (P4).

> [...] *and the service is the main thing, is the foundation right? Without the service you're not going anywhere, you get nothing* [...]. *The service is paramount* (P10).

Another element linked to this category is the conception that work would be able to change the current life situation. According to Escorel (2006), the analysis of the vulnerability trajectory and the untying of the work of this population is guided in two directions: symbolic stratification and economic stratification. The author understands the symbolic stratification referring to the behaviors and values of the worker, creating the identity of the subject, and the socioeconomic stratification as the possibility of future perspectives and changes in life. The following account illustrates the conception of work related to life change:

[...] [Work] *is quite a change of life* (P7).

At the same time that work is seen as an occupation that changes the focus of thoughts and actions and promotes changes in life, conceptions have been identified that work is also a promoter of fun and emotional relief, characteristics usually attributed to moments of leisure, according to the reports:

> [...] *but the work itself, it is very good, it is little or very much gain, it is a distraction for those who live in that state of the level that we are* [...]. *And it tires, which is good. It disintegrates* (P2).

> [...] *for us the service was good because we had fun a little bit more* (P6).

Gomes (2004, p. 125) considers leisure as a

> [...] dimension of culture constituted by the playful experience of cultural manifestations in a time/space conquered by the subject or social group 1, establishing dialectical relationships with the needs, duties, and obligations, especially with productive work. Leisure is understood by Camargo and Bueno (2003) as one of the achievements of workers to the need for freedoms of obligations that do not cause them pleasure, and reducing the workday.

For Carmo (2001), different social classes, times and cultures have exalted and despised the work. For the author, this society exalts the work causing that, for many people, the leisure causes a feeling of guilt. However, for the interviewees, the work was also conceived as synonymous with distraction, stress relief and even fun, a concept that may be accentuated by the situation of unemployment and the experience of ruptures experienced.

It was identified that work is also seen as a means of achieving personal dreams and goals, as well as for the production of future life, as the following reports show:

> [...] *then* [the work] *is everything, from there you go to your goals, your objectives, everything you want, but without focus, you go forward. But work opens doors to everything in life, with work there is no difficulty* [...]. *With work, everything has a way* (P2).

> [...] [Working] *we have dreams, speaking the truth. We have a dream* (P5).

> [...] *if you work, you dream. Now, if you do not work, you have no way to dream* [...], *you know when the end of the month comes, if you really have focus, you will be able to get where you want to go. Now, without work, you are not going anywhere*

> [...]. *I need to work, do you understand? For me to be able to live again, to dream, to get something back in life* (P10).

The work becomes a source of pleasure when it favors the valuation of the subject, admiration, and recognition (DEJOURS, 1999).

> When feeling like this, the worker considers his work important for himself, for the company and for society, indicating a positive reinforcement in his self-image, which is related to pride in the work he does, in professional achievement, while feeling useful and productive (MENDES; TAMAYO, 2001, p. 43).

The following testimony corroborates the findings of Mendes and Tamayo (2001) on the feeling of usefulness that the work provides to the subject:

> *Ah,* [working] *a person feels useful, right* [...]. *It's work, work, it makes you feel useful, it's rewarding, you get it?* (P10).

Being considered a structuring component of the life of the subjects, the chronic unemployment situation due to the advancement of the age group can also be a de-structuring element, as pointed out by one of the participants:

> [...] *nobody registers anymore, nobody gives more service, with 62 years old, there is no way* (P6).

When affirming that this is one of the tendencies in the current world of work, Antunes (2012) argues that, in parallel with the exclusion of the market of young people in search of the first job, the exclusion of workers considered elderly by the capital, that is, at 40 years old or more, who, once excluded from work, will hardly be able to reintegrate into the market.

In this sense, Wajnman, Oliveira and Oliveira (2004) affirm that the precarious prospects of expanding coverage of the social security system establish the importance of planning work policies directed at the elderly population, which in many cases there is a lower level of qualification than the current adult population, intensifying the processes of exclusion.

Therefore, in this category, work has been defined as something extremely important, a component of daily life, a means for dream performance and production and life change, and a form of distraction or leisure through emotional relief and well-being.

3.4 The viability of social networks through work

In the fourth category, it was possible to identify that work is conceived as something that confers identity to people, that is, "not work" confers to the person the identity of a vagabond, expressing the capitalist social conception about work, as shown in the next testimonies:

> [...] *people, nobody can get out of work. Even today. Only if you are a vagabond, right?* (P2).

> [...] *now, the person in a job is already* [...] *is called as a vagabond, who does not work. With me, it's like this, so I prefer to be working then stopped* (P8).

For Coutinho, Krawulski and Soares (2007), the identity has been presented as a dynamic concept to understand the insertion of the subject in the world and the relationship with the other, being such insertion the recognition of a dialectical conception between individual and society, in which one identifies and transforms from the other. Being a dynamic concept, Bauman (2005) affirms that identity is not something that is guaranteed for a lifetime because it is constituted from the decisions that the individual takes, as well as the paths that he goes through and the way he acts.

Assuming that, in our society, work confers identity on people and it is a privileged support for inclusion in the social structure, the absence of work causes the identity of the subject to change before society and this is reflected in other contexts of his life (CASTEL, 2013).

It is possible to identify several circles in which there is identity formation: at work, which can extend to the community in which the subject lives, as well as places such as bars, restaurants, churches etc., work being an inductor that integrates all these contexts present in the life of an individual (CASTEL, 2013).

The study by Galvani et al. (2016) made with people in street situation that make the street space of expression of their art shows that even among them, there is a distinction represented by those artists who are considered professionals and those considered adventurous. It is observed, in this case, that the way in which the artwork is developed contributes to the identity of the person.

The same study revealed that one of the participants considered as a professional by their peers was an important reference and support to those who were starting an art career in the streets (GALVANI et al., 2016).

In this sense, it was perceived, in this category, that work was also considered an important factor for the viability and expansion of social support networks and, as a means of acceptance in society, as shown in the following reports:

> *Because without paid work in the capitalist world you are not well-liked, it is not well-liked under certain circumstances. I prove it, that there is some division in the social class of people well financially, financially average and those who are poor* (P1).

> [...] [The work influences] *mainly within the society that you live, right? This influences a lot* (P3).

> [...] *when you work, you enter and leave anywhere, you are seen differently* [...] (P10).

For Castel (2004), part of the situations configured as exclusion results from vulnerabilities of transformations in the world of work. What generates vulnerability is not a state of fragility - whether in housing, health, education, etc. - but by the effect of two vectors: the axis of integration through work and the axis of social-family integration (CASTEL, 2004).

In the axis of integration through work, there can be integration, precarization and exclusion, in the socio-family axis, there may be different insertions, which revolve between two extremes: solid inscription in a sociability network and total social isolation (CASTEL, 2004, 2013). The interlocking of the two axes produces cuts and different zones of social space, according to the degree of cohesion assured, according to a relationship that goes from autonomy to dependency. Thus, four zones are formed: integration, vulnerability, assistance, and disaffiliation. In the integration zone, work is present, as well as social relationships, differing from the zone of vulnerability, characterized by precariousness in work relationships and fragility in social relationships. The assistance zone is characterized by incapacity to work, but with a solid social insertion, and the area of disaffiliation is described by the absence of work and social isolation (CASTEL, 2004).

Despite the discussion on French society, these concepts raised by Castel bring important contributions to the debate on the productions of vulnerabilities together with the loss of worker identity in Brazil. Castel (2004) affirms that the area of social existence that grows the most is disaffiliation, which is a consequence of the contemporary crisis around labor relationships and its high unemployment rates, and it defines the movement that takes the subject

included in society to a situation of losses of social rights and progressive ruptures of social networks.

Corroborating this perspective, Almeida et al. (2011, p. 352) state that the street population "[...] is a social segment that travels through zones of vulnerability and social desfiliation [...]". Thus, in our study, integration in the socio-family axis was related by the participants to the family, friends and the boss.

Regarding this aspect, Escorel (2006) states that the family can react to the vulnerability of one of its members in two different ways: aggregate these components or promote their expulsion from family life. For the author, the family presents itself as an affective and material rearguard of the worker in his relationships with the labor market. As the following testimonies show, the work was put by some participants as something valued by their relatives:

> [...] *I would be better seen by the family if having blessed paper money* (P1).

> [...] *my mother looks at here* [missionary work] *as a job. My father comes to visit me and it looks like a job, right?* (P2).

Therefore, it was identified that the work occupies a place of prominence for the interviewees from which they can insert themselves again in the society, under the identity of the worker. This identity allows people to enjoy their privileges, as it is accepted as a structuring element in today's society. On the contrary, being without work, regardless of the reason, is still fraught with stigmas that identify the subject in a pejorative way, as we observed in the previous reports of P3 and P10.

Escorel (2006) points out that the situations of vulnerability can lead to the exhaustion of the family as a unit of protection and support.

We identified that the rupture of the family bond can be linked to the loss of work and the consequent going to the streets. The following report illustrates this finding.

> [...] *I had family that time* [when I was working] *yet. Now I have no family, I have nowhere to go, where to live* [...]. *Oh, I'm going to raise some money and I'm going to buy a piece of land, I'm going to build my house, I'm going to get married, to have a son, a daughter, a grandchild, I think that way* (P5).

Besides affirming the existence condition from identity, work also has its meaning linked to the formation and expansion of sociability (P1):

> [...] *emphasizing happy hour and being able to sit at a table and share someone else's day. Talk about what your work journey was like, what you did during the day, what you did during the day. Pro-collective approach to becoming a social well-being, right, a sociability right?* (P1).

Faced with the question of a possible expansion of social support networks, in a hypothetical work situation, the figure of the boss was mentioned as one of the people who could constitute support (P4), besides family and friends:

> [...] [You can count] *on the boss, depending on the boss, if it was in the service. And with my mother, who is the only one who has helped me to this day. That helps me, right* (P4).

Given the assumption that there are two fundamental social classes, the owners of the means of production and the sellers of the labor force (MAX; ENGELS, 2001), the figure of the boss is seen as mediating between the owners of the means of production, represented by the management of a company, and the sellers of the labor force, that is, the workers (AGUIAR, 2013). The role of the boss in a company is mainly the mediation of conflicts that can occur among workers, seeking the full functioning of the team (SÁ; AZEVEDO, 2010) and the fulfillment of the production goals (P6):

> *Oh, it depends, if we had worked we had the boss, right, we had the manager, right* [to get help]. *Maybe he would argue and get to the boss and say, "It's happening like that and so, so, or me or him"* (P6).

Thus, in this category, the participants related the work to the existence and strengthening of family and social ties. The absence of work, regardless of its reason, is stigmatized and favors the break with the social support network.

3.5 Work as an emancipatory strategy

Finally, the fifth category evidences the attribution of an emancipatory character to the work, although there have been conceptions in different senses: the conquest of the autonomy and independence and the attribution of responsibilities to the workers.

The concept of social emancipation, which Cattani (2003) claims to be linked to autonomy, refers to the process of getting rid of the power exercised by others in gaining the full civilian capacity and citizenship of the democratic rule of law.

Marx (2004) believes that the individual is really independent only when he owes his existence to

himself, otherwise, the individual does not own himself. Ghirardi et al. (2005) understand that autonomy is the individual's ability to decide on the course of his life, while independence, in the same sense presented by Marx, it is defined as the concretization of these decisions by means of the individual.

The work was related, by the participants, with autonomy and independence, be it personal, family or financial. The following accounts show the work linked to autonomy and financial independence:

> [...] [With work, I would be] *maintaining myself and not having to depend on anyone* (P4).

> [...] *for you to buy clothes, you will not only need your mother and father, right? You'll have to study, to do a college entrance exam and* [...] *later think about a profession* (P9).

The results show the feeling of responsibility as a consequence of work:

> [...] *work leaves you dependent on it, on many things. You do not need to depend on other people's things, then you start to create a responsibility* (P2).

However, this responsibility appeared as the fulfillment of orders established in the capitalist world by the relation employer/employee, as shown in the following report:

> [...] *you have to have a responsibility, and people have to assume all that role, you have to do it* (P8).

It should be noted that the research was developed in an institution of a religious nature and this can influence the participants' discourse, albeit implicitly. Perhaps this discourse marked by obedience, it may be influenced by religious doctrine.

We point out that, despite being considered as a factor of independence and autonomy, the work is conceived within the reference of the capitalist production logic. As a counterpoint to this perspective, Santos and Rodríguez (2005) affirm that alternative economic initiatives to the capitalist mode of production offer great emancipatory potential. Santos (2005) points out that this emancipatory potential is due to the organization of these initiatives and their work relationships, implemented around reciprocity, social life, and everyday contexts.

The perspective of enterprise organization through the Solidarity Economy follows the presupposition of decentralization of power and information, of the autonomy and independence of the individuals and the responsibilities shared by the group (GHIRARDI et al., 2005).

The study of Lussi and Morato (2012) focused on the labor insertion of people with mental disorders, identified that the achievement of autonomy added to the process of development and expansion of professional skills occur through the provision of responsibilities. By experiences based on the Solidarity Economy, subjects become increasingly autonomous and protagonists of their actions at work.

Nicácio, Mangia and Ghirardi (2005) understand that cooperatives can be understood as a means of registration in the world of work, is one of the paths for the projection of proposals that aim at the emancipation of the subject.

In this way, cooperatives based on the principles of Solidarity Economy can be a strategy that promotes the social emancipation of people at a disadvantage by providing value production and guaranteeing rights, especially to street people.

Thus, we identify the emancipatory character of the work in the conception of the participants, related to the development of autonomy and independence. However, the sense of responsibility linked to labor appeared in an articulated way to the capitalist mode of production which, in practice, is contradictory to the processes of social emancipation of people.

4 Conclusion

The objective of this study was to identify the conceptions about the work elaborated by the men in street situations, provisionally hosted by a socio-religious entity located in the interior of the State of São Paulo.

The results showed that the work acquires several faces for the participants. The work was understood as a means of generating income, favoring their subsistence or their relatives, besides to providing the satisfaction of material desires. On the other hand, it seemed to be a medium that facilitates the use of psychoactive substances, either by the monthly income or by the environment. Participants defined work as an essential daily component for the (re) construction of life projects, for the viability of social networks and as an important resource for autonomy and independence.

Bringing the principles of the solidarity economy closer to the experience of people living on the streets or even from the social movements and collective movements made up by this people tends to broaden the experience of these individuals in the process of appropriating their reality, in the construction of their autonomy (through work, income generation and the construction of their own choices, through

and driven by self-management) and in their struggle for a less unequal society, rights and duties precisely shared and experienced. The Solidarity Economy tends to provide experiences and relationships never or little experienced by these subjects, mobilizing different resources, affections, and desires, effectively empowering them as subjects, capable of perceiving themselves as citizens and empowered in the struggle for a better daily life.

Despite the achievement of the initial objectives, the study has limitations that it encompasses men in a street situation in a particular situation of accompaniment, since it was not possible to access other people, men or women, also in street situations, experiencing others contexts (life on the street, accompanied by other services, etc.).

However, given the scarcity of studies such as this one, the research on social assistance equipment and services for the street population is important, since it increases the knowledge about the equipment, the users and their demands, favoring the creation and implantation of social policies and to supporting Occupational Therapy practices and others, with this population, which are still scarce.

Constant updates and discussions about work are necessary considering situations of fragility experienced by the street population, so, in fact, it promotes emancipation and social inclusion.

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Isabela Aparecida de Oliveira Lussi: contributed to the conception and guidance throughout the research process, in the elaboration of the text and its critical review. Thamy Eduarda Ricci: contributed to the bibliographic review, data collection, and analysis, description of the results, preparation of the text. Roberta Justel do Pinho: contributed to the critical review of the text and theoretical reflections. All authors approved the final version of the text.

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