

## CAPITALISM AND PATRIARCHY IN THE COUNTRYSIDE: TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN<sup>1</sup>



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### ABSTRACT

This article aims to present reflections on the origin of patriarchy from Engels' book "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State", seeks to demonstrate how patriarchal culture manifests itself in the countryside and in peasant culture, directly affecting peasant women, by devaluing, disregarding and keeping in invisibility the work of women in the production of food for the self-sustenance of peasant families, as well as for women's economic autonomy. It also addresses the concepts of productive, unproductive and service labor, as well as the sexual division of labor in the countryside and power relations in peasant territories.

**Keywords:** Patriarchy, Work, Power relations, Peasant women.

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## INTRODUCTION

*We don't understand anything about women, we the peoples of the West. We lead them, very wrongly, almost to our equals. The peoples of the East have more spirit and righteousness. They declared them the true slaves of man; and nature, indeed, made them our slaves. [quote from] Napoleon Bonaparte, who wanted to install with his armies the French flag of "liberty, equality and fraternity". (Apud Moema Viezzer, 1994. p. 17).*

This article will present an analysis of the intrinsic relationship between patriarchy and capitalism, understand how the domination of patriarchy and the exploitation of capitalism manifests itself in women's lives (Saffioti, 2015), understand how power relations based on patriarchal culture are embodied on a daily basis, which "ossify" the differences between men and women in society. It seeks to understand how the changes from maternal to paternal law, even happening in a subtle way, generated profound transformations in the organization of society and remains very vigorous today.

To understand how the domination of patriarchy and the invisibility of women's productive work is manifested, whose work is considered "unproductive" because it is the result of their calloused hands. To perceive how power relations based on patriarchal culture are embodied on a daily basis, which "ossify" the differences between men and women in society. For the writing of this text, a focus will be made on peasant women, who live the double, and sometimes triple working day, because they are overloaded with "care" (children, the elderly, the sick, houses and surroundings). It is peasant women who bear the deepest marks of the exploitation of capital and the submission imposed by patriarchal culture. (SILIPRANDI, 2015). This culture is expressed in peasant territories and will be addressed throughout the text.

## HOW AND WHERE PATRIARCHY ARISES

*To the woman God said, "I will increase your suffering in pregnancy, and with much pain you will give birth to children." Despite this, you will desire to be like your husband, and he will dominate you. (GENESIS, chapter 3, verse 16).*

Dialoguing with the epigraph and conceiving the bible as a set of rules and laws for those who believe in it, written to define the "values" of humanity, it can be said that it responded to the interests of the dominant groups of its time, already expressing in a crystalline way the elements that make up what is known as patriarchy.

However, it was not always like this, in the various tribes that populated the planet in the prehistory of humanity, there were similar processes of development of their groups,

and the form of production of these groups was called primitive communism, in other words, there were families (their small group) and their tribes that formed a large communist family, where the predominance was of women. Engels, when dealing with the way families were organized, states that:

But the communist family means the predominance of women in the house; such as the exclusive recognition of one's own mother, in the impossibility of recognizing with certainty the true father; it means high appreciation for women, that is, for mothers. One of the most absurd ideas that the philosophy of the eighteenth century has transmitted to us is that at the origin of society woman was the slave of man, among all savages and in all tribes that are in the lower, middle and even (in part) higher phases of barbarism, woman is not only free but, also, highly regarded. (ENGELS, 2012, p. 68).

According to Engels, in this period, provisions for families were common, savages lived and practiced communist domestic economy, and women were of great importance to this way of life. This period can be called matriarchy.

The communist domestic economy, in which the majority, if not all, women belong to the same gens, while men belong to other different gens, is the effective basis of that preponderance of women that, in primitive times, was widespread everywhere (ENGELS, 2012, p.68).

Although the women worked a lot with their groups, they were highly respected and considered in every way. According to Engels, there are no reports or records that in America, the land of the pairing family<sup>5</sup>, there was any higher form of family, unlike in the old world, "Here, [old world] the domestication of animals and the raising of cattle had opened up hitherto unknown sources of wealth, creating entirely new social relations." (ENGELS, 2012, p. 73).

In the period that goes up to the lower phase of barbarism, the wealth produced was to ensure the maintenance of life, housing, clothing, adornments and some objects that allowed the obtaining and preparation of everyday food. However, with the expansion of the herds (oxen, sheep, camels, horses, goats and pigs), the shepherds needed to expand the areas of domain to guarantee food for the animals, that is, the need to guarantee the

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<sup>5</sup> System of inbreeding, in force among the Iroquois. A kind of marriage easily dissolved by both parties. The offspring of such a couple was patent and recognized by all. [...]. At this stage, a man lives with a woman, but in such a way that polygamy and occasional infidelity remain a right of men, although polygamy is rarely observed, for economic reasons; at the same time, the strictest fidelity is required of women, as long as their life together lasts, and their adultery is cruelly punished. The conjugal bond, however, is easily dissolved by one party or the other, and then, as before, the children belong exclusively to the mother. (ENGELS, 2012, p. 45, 66).

domination of larger areas of land flourished, because production was no longer reduced only to consumption, it was already beginning to generate surpluses.

The question that arose was: To whom did all this wealth that was accumulating belong? "All these riches being converted into the private property of families, and then rapidly increased, dealt a severe blow to society based on pairing marriage and on the gens based on matriarchy." (ENGELS, 2012, p.75). In that period there was a division of labor, the man was responsible for searching, providing food and producing work tools, and, in case of separation, the right of possession of these instruments was his, in the same way the woman, who worked in the transformation and preparation of food, had the right to possession of domestic instruments.

It turns out that, with the rapid accumulation of wealth from animal husbandry, and the new source of food, man, according to the custom in force at the time, was the owner of these riches, and as society was under the dominion of maternal right, this meant that descent was only counted by female line, so children could not inherit these assets from their parents. Based on this custom, men's assets passed to their closest maternal blood relatives. (ENGELS, 2012, p.75-76). Therefore, as the wealth of men increased, they gradually increased their degree of importance in relation to women. As a result, men gave rise to the need to change the form of inheritance for the benefit of their children. To achieve this goal, maternal rights would have to be abolished and paternal rights would be implanted in its place, this was a "revolution" that subtly, without conflicts, stirred the deepest foundations of humanity. From then to the present day, according to Engels:

Such a revolution—one of the most profound that mankind has ever known—had no need to touch any of the living members of the gens. All the members of the gens were able to continue to be what they had been until then. It was enough simply to decide that in future the descendants of a female member would leave it and pass into her father's gens. Thus, female filiation and maternal hereditary right were abolished, being replaced by male filiation and paternal hereditary right. (ENGELS, 2012, p.76).

It is not known with certainty when this revolution, or passage from the hereditary maternal right to the paternal hereditary right, took place. According to Engels: "we do not know how and when this revolution took place among cultured peoples, because it dates back to prehistoric times." (ENGELS, 2012, p.76). This change took place with all subtlety, however, it caused profound transformations in the course of the life of the whole society. "Innate casuistry in men to change things by changing their names! And to find ways to break with tradition without leaving it, whenever a direct interest gives enough impetus to do

so." (ENGELS, 2012, p.77).

In this way, the annihilation, or collapse of maternal rights, occurs, and the conditioning of women to the domination of men in all senses. As Engels describes:

The collapse of maternal rights was the great historical defeat of the female sex around the world. The man also took over the direction of the house; Woman has seen herself degraded, converted into a servant, a slave to man's lust, a simple instrument of procreation. This degraded condition of woman, manifested above all among the Greeks of heroic times, and still more so among those of classical times, has gradually been retouched, concealed, and in some places even clothed in forms of greater softness, but by no means suppressed. (ENGELS, 2012, p.77).

This is the birth of patriarchy, that is, patriarchy is born together with private property, to ensure the maintenance of inheritance in the family. With a modification in culture, in customs, which took centuries to "take root" and cause these profound transformations in the way society was organized, where there was no exploitation of one sex over the other, where there was no private property. "The first effect of the exclusive power of men, from the moment it was established, we observe it in the intermediate form of the patriarchal family, which arose at that time." (ENGELS, 2012, p.78).

It is in this period that the "birth record" of patriarchy is made, however, it is not born with the characteristics it has today. The concept of patriarchal family in this period did not only concern the ties between spouses and children, feelings, but also the slaves who were under the paternal or patriarch's domination:

The essential features are the incorporation of slaves and paternal domination; therefore, the Roman family is the perfect type of this form of family. Originally the word *family* did not mean the ideal of the Philistine of our time, a mixture of sentimentality and domestic dissensions; at first among the Romans it did not apply even to the pair of spouses and their children, but only to slaves. *Famulus* means domestic slave, and *family* is the set of slaves belonging to the same man. In Gaius' time, the *family* "*id est patrimonium*" (i.e., inheritance) was transmitted by will. The expression was invented by the Romans to designate a new social organism whose head kept under his power his wife, children and a certain number of slaves, with the Roman paternal power and the right of life and death over all of them. (ENGELS, 2012, p. 78).

Understanding how the process of historical construction of the concept of family takes place is of fundamental importance to unveil reality, both with regard to the current formation of families, as well as the form of organization of society and the State, considering that:

The modern family contains, in germ, not only slavery (*servitus*) but also servitude, since from the beginning it is related to the services of agriculture. It contains *in*

*miniature* all the antagonisms which develop later on in society and in its state. (ENGELS, 2012, p. 78-79).

Based on the quote above, it is possible to see how latent this servitude imposed on women is latent in society. According to the interests of the dominant ideology, in crisis situations, or with the advance of authoritarian governments, women are the first to have their rights and their wills questioned.

According to interests and historical times, the appearance of patriarchal culture changes, gains new contours, forms change in order to ensure airs of modernity, acquire new clothes, but the essence (control, the domination of men over women) does not change, it remains the same, untouched. According to Engels "The first division of labor is that which is made between man and woman for the procreation of children." (ENGELS, 2012, p. 87). The author adds:

The first class antagonism that appeared in history coincides with the development of the antagonism between man and woman in monogamy; and the first class oppression, with the oppression of the female sex by the male. Monogamy was a great historical progress, but at the same time it began, together with slavery and private wealth, that period, which lasts to our day, in which every progress is simultaneously a relative retrogression, and the well-being and development of some are verified at the expense of the pain and repression of others. It is the cellular form of civilized society, in which we can already study the nature of the contradictions and antagonisms which reach their full development in that society. (ENGELS, 2012, p. 87).

It is necessary to understand the nature of the contradictions in order to act in order to demystify, denaturalize the social and cultural constructions of "being a man" and "being a woman", as well as the spaces of action of men and women that have been naturalized, crystallizing in society, as something given and finished. Thus, the patriarchal order of genders was constituted, in this order:

Women are "amputated", especially in the development and use of reason and in the exercise of power. They are socialized to develop docile, courteous, appealing behaviors. Men, on the contrary, are encouraged to develop aggressive, dangerous behaviors, which reveal strength and courage. (SAFFIOTI, 2015, p.37).

Patriarchy, which as its name indicates, is the regime of domination-exploitation of women by men". (SAFFIOTI, 2015, p. 47). He managed to achieve a fruitful and lasting marriage between religion and politics, thus conquering all possible terrains of society. Some of these spaces are under the domination, influence or control of religion and politics or the State is in charge of controlling, influencing and dominating the other spaces and/or



sectors of society.

In this way, this "alliance" between religion and politics holds control of all the institutions that make up the human being. Based on the elements pointed out here, it is necessary to understand how gender relations and power relations in peasant territories materialize. Spaces in which various forms of power relations are found, as we will discuss below.

## POWER RELATIONS IN PEASANT TERRITORIES

*The peasant woman works so hard, Her going is a mixture of joy and sadness, Docê and bitter, routine and tears, Resistance and singing! To be a woman! Peasant woman, Fight for freedom and autonomy! Work with determination and firmness, Plant hope and utopia!*

(Sandra Marli da Rocha Rodrigues, ANMC, 2012).

With the understanding that the countryside is a space where identities, social, economic and cultural relations are built, it is also a space for the construction and maintenance of power relations, which are expressed and reaffirmed both in the family, in the school, in the church and in the community, that is, in all spaces according to each context. Thus, regardless of their geographical location in the country, peasant women carry in their bodies and minds the marks of the historical constructions of gender and patriarchy, as well as the overload of work imposed on them.

Thus, the countryside is a producer and reproducer of culture, so even in the working class, inequalities between men and women become the general rule, as it is immersed in the patriarchal gender order that attributes positive qualities to men and negative qualities to women. (SAFFIOTI, 2015). Undeniably, the countryside is one of the places where contradictions and inequalities emerge, and become perceptible to the "naked eye". There is a popular saying that can be used to illustrate this reality, "only those who don't want to see it don't see it". Furthermore, "Legal inequality, which we have inherited from previous social conditions, is not a cause but an effect of the economic oppression of women." (ENGELS, 2012, p. 97).

These gender inequalities are ingrained in all spaces of society and are expressed very strongly in peasant families. "The modern individual family is based on the domestic slavery, frank or covert, of woman, and modern society is a mass whose molecules are individual families." (ENGELS, 2012, p.97). With the above, it can be seen that the way families are organized reflects on the form of social organization as a whole, that is, society

reflects the organization of families and, dialectically, families are influenced by society.

Unraveling this tangle of things that make up families is an important step in understanding the way society is organized. Realizing that "in the family, the man represents the bourgeois and the woman represents the proletarian". (ENGELS, 2012, p.97). Therefore, it is only possible to advance in overcoming this proletarian condition of women when equal rights between men and women become a concrete reality and when the presence of women in the "portion" of the economy becomes the rule and not the exception.

Considering the countryside, especially the peasant territories, where I situate my analysis, as spaces that produce and reproduce culture, in this sense, they reproduce the patriarchal culture, in which there is the hierarchy and superiority of men over women. And in this place (field) gender relations are constructed, which are permeated by power relations, according to Pinto:

But, above all, gender is implicated in power, in the realm of control, domination and violence. Thus, we cannot escape the fact that the difference between 'public man' and 'public woman' is not a morphological difference – or is not, as we learned in school, one properly the "feminine" of the other. It is the repeated acts within a rigid framework that constitute gender – ritualized acts through a body that speaks. And yet the rigidity and repetitiveness of this picture is what makes it at the same time, and more easily perceptible, with an appearance of naturalness, and therefore a unique and intelligible possibility of the subject. (PINTO, 2007, p.24).

From this perspective, it is necessary to understand how gender relations are constructed and crystallized daily in the countryside, and how they are naturalized and reproduced by the women themselves. Women are not sexist, in the limit, they reproduce machismo. When they say that they "do the housework and help in the fields" they are reproducing the patriarchal culture that devalues women's work, because when a woman says that she does the housework, this work called "service" is not considered, it is not valued as work, therefore, it continues in the invisibility and responsibility of women, since it is not work, it has no significance, it has no value.

In the same way, when women say that they "help in the fields", this "help" is not considered work, because the idea that the one who performs the work is the man is evident, and the "help", even if decisive within the context of production, has little significance, because, after all, it is considered a complement, a "plus" to the work of the man. On this, Pacheco analyzes that:

When women and children do the same work as men, it is understood that they are



helping. The representation of work as help is often also associated with the opposition between heavy work, when it is work performed by men, and light work, when performed by women. (PACHECO, 2002, p. 142.)

Thus, the same work acquires different connotations depending on the sex of the person who performs it. When work is considered "help" and not "work", it is priceless, it has little importance. It is important to understand that these relationships are the determinants of the spaces of men and women in society, according to Siliprandi:

Power relations also determine the conditions for the participation of men and women in decision-making spaces about the direction of society, and, therefore, in the construction of sustainable rural development. There seems to be a "void of analysis" between the micro level focused on by agroecological theories (the agroecosystem) and the macro level (rural communities, "peasants", "indigenous", "family farming"), a space that deserves to be analyzed, in which the concrete people, men and women who work in agriculture, are found. (SILIPRANDI, 2015. p.19).

Contributing to reducing this "analysis gap" between the micro and macro levels, mentioned by the author, is a challenge that is posed, both in academia and in scientific research, as well as to deconstruct this perception in common sense. "From the patriarchal perspective, we women do not make history. History is the history of men. The philosophy and history taught in universities refer to the history of men." (GEBARA, 2002, p.24).

In times when the wheel of history seems to turn backwards, where the few advances with regard to women's rights are harshly questioned and attacked, it is of fundamental importance to carry out studies on the relationship between the micro and macro levels, in order to understand this set of factors that determine power relations in the countryside and how they interfere or directly influence women's lives.

To overcome these inequalities, it is necessary to understand how their roots, as exposed above, are established in the identities built from patriarchal culture. According to Butler:

It is necessary to understand that men were not born with the faculty of the universal and that, at birth, women were not reduced to the particular. The universal has been, and is continuously, at all times, appropriated by man. This does not just happen, it has to be done. It is an act, a criminal act, perpetrated by one class against another. It is an act carried out in the realm of concepts, philosophy and politics. (BUTLER, 2003, p.169).

The quote points out elements that allow us to understand the reality experienced by peasant women by denaturalizing the idea that there are spaces considered to belong to men, "universal", that is, public spaces, and spaces considered to belong to women,

"private", in other words, private spaces, the spaces of the house and its surroundings.

Corroborating the author and daring to add the elements of culture and economy, because, through the experience with peasant communities, it was possible to perceive, accompany and guide many women victims of all forms of violence typified in Law 11.340/2006<sup>6</sup>. Among women who live in the culture of economic dependence on men, most remain silent and subject themselves to difficult and painful situations, "for years on end", if not for life, "until death do them part", or, in some cases, until they reach the age where they can enjoy a retirement,<sup>7</sup> this moment in life, in which they decide with great difficulty and at the same time great courage, to put an end to this situation, and separate from their husbands. In some situations the expression could be "separate themselves from their tormentors", facing all kinds of prejudices imposed by patriarchal culture.

Here we can reflect on the symbolic and cultural charge that exists in a marriage ceremony (making the cut for Christianity), "Christianity is an eminently masculine patriarchal religion". (GEBARA, 2002, p.31). What is a marriage if not the design of patriarchy?

Let's then "script" the celebration of marriage: Part 1 – The groom enters the Church, alone, haughty, confident, sure of himself and waits at the altar, just below the priest; Part 2 – The bride dressed in white (a sign of purity), and often with her face covered with a veil, enters the Church led by the arm by her father (provider), who gives her to her fiancé and future husband (future provider), who removes the veil from the bride's face; Part 3 – The celebration of marriage is done by the priest/pastor (man), in the name of "God (man) the father almighty" and the blessing of fertility (when there is one, it is given to the woman), because it is up to her to have motherhood (reproduction).

This ritual portrays what we have been arguing in this subtitle, the intrinsic relationship between power relations and patriarchal culture in gender relations. "In fact, like other social phenomena, **patriarchy**<sup>8</sup> is also in permanent transformation." (SAFFIOTI, 2015, p.48). Patriarchy is a culture and as a culture it is adaptable, it adapts and molds itself according to reality, to historical time.

In his book entitled: "Gender patriarchy violence", Saffioti lists in a didactic way why

<sup>6</sup> Maria da Penha Law, of August 7, 2006. It is the first specific instrument to combat domestic and family violence against women.

<sup>7</sup> Law 8.213/91, promulgated on July 24, 1991. Which guarantees the condition of special insured to rural workers by age (60 years for men and 55 years for women) (jus.com.br).

<sup>8</sup> Emphasis added.

the concept of patriarchy should be named and understood:

- 1- It is not a private relationship, but a civil one;
- 2- It gives sexual rights to men over women, practically without restriction (...).
- 3- It configures a hierarchical type of relationship, which invades all spaces in society;
- 4- It has a material basis;
- 5- Corporifica-se;
- 6- It represents a power structure based on both ideology and violence. (SAFFIOTI, 2015, p.60).

There is, therefore, a need to understand how these plots are constructed and intersect in power relations. Unveiling the between the lines and the interests that feed the perverse logic of the capitalist system and patriarchal culture is a necessity of this historical moment, as well as it is important to analyze the category of Work, which is "light" or "heavy" according to the gender that performs it, understanding how the sexual division of labor materializes in the complexity of the Brazilian countryside.

## **SEXUAL DIVISION OF LABOR IN THE COUNTRYSIDE**

*In the patriarchal culture, in which submission seems natural, we need to deconstruct this sexist vision, in which the woman has to ask permission to be able to come and go, This is the imposition of capitalist society. (Sandra Marli da Rocha Rodrigues, 2016, p.63).*

Starting from the assumption that "it is not consciousness that determines life, but life that determines consciousness". (MARX and ENGELS, 2010, p.9). It is concluded that the destinies of men and women in society are not the result of a biological determination, as already evidenced in this text. These roles are the result of a historical and cultural construction, through patriarchal culture, they are social constructions that have a well-defined material basis, which is work. It is the material conditions that determine life, work is only carried out by human beings, it is an eminently human activity. Marx, when referring to the work necessary to maintain human life, writes that:

Labor, as the creator of use-values, as useful labor, is indispensable to the existence of man, whatever the forms of society, is a natural and eternal necessity to effect the material exchange between man and nature, and therefore to maintain human life. (MARX, 1996, p.50).

Only man, in the ontological sense of the word, is capable of carrying out the work, in a thoughtful, intentional way. In "The German Ideology" Marx and Engels make the following statement in relation to the production of material life: "By producing their means

of existence, men indirectly produce their own material life". (MARX and ENGELS, 2010, p.4).

It can be said then that the human being, when producing his material life, produces culture and knowledge. Man is forged, molded, according to the existing material conditions, Marx and Engels conclude: "What individuals are, depends, therefore, on the material conditions of their production". (MARX and ENGELS, 2010, p. 5). In the materialist perception of reality, other categories of work are also considered, such as productive work and unproductive work. About productive labor Marx defines it as:

*Productive labor* is nothing but a succinct expression that designates the integral relationship and the way in which labor power and labor are presented in the capitalist process of production. Consequently, if we speak of *productive labour*, we are therefore speaking of *socially determined labour*, of labour which implies a clearly definite relation between the buyer and seller of labour-power. (MARX, 1978, p.75).

Marx makes the distinction between productive and unproductive labor, from the point of view of the Theory of Value,<sup>9</sup> presenting the difference between the two:

The difference between *productive* and *unproductive* labour consists only in the fact that labour is exchanged for *money as money* or for *money as capital*. For example, in the case of the self-employed *labourer*, the *artisan*, from whom I buy the *commodity*, the category is entirely out of the question, because there is no direct exchange between money and labour of any kind, but between *money* and *commodity*. (MARX, 1978, p.79).

Interweaving the threads of this reflection on work and the countryside, it is clear that there is no well-defined and objective relationship between the families that work in the peasant units. Labor in the production of food can be understood as unproductive labor, because when the products are destined for consumption, they are not commodities because there is no exchange for money, or it can also be considered productive labor, that is, when the production is destined for sale, thus imprinting a commodity character to the production which is exchanged for money. "A work of *identical content* can therefore be productive and unproductive". (MARX, 1978, p.75). In relation to work in the peasantry, it is necessary to reflect on some aspects, according to Carvalho:

So, the problem arises that the peasantry, in addition to being small producers, ranchers, squatters, settlers or whatever, in addition to fighting for the land, in

<sup>9</sup> Labor theory of value. It is an economic theory with Adam Smith, David Ricardo, and Karl Marx as its main precursors. For the labor theory of value, economic activity does not occur in isolation, that is, it develops collectively. It is Marx who develops this theory in more depth. (MARX, 1969).

addition to wanting the possession and use of the land and a certain appropriation of the product of labor, the peasantry represents a way of life, a way of organizing life. a culture, a vision of reality, he represents a community. And it is the fact that the peasantry constitutes a way of being, a community, a culture, a whole vision of labor, of the product of labor, and of the division of the product of labor, that makes it a relevant force. (CARVALHO, 2005, p.162).

When dealing with work in the peasantry, the author writes in a general way, it refers to the appropriation of the product of labor by the peasants, there is a view of labor and the division of the product of labor in a generalized way. When it comes to the production and reproduction of life in peasant production units, the author writes that "The social reproduction of the peasant production unit is not driven by profit, but by the growing possibility of improving the living and working conditions of the family." (CARVALHO, 2005, p.170). This observation is important to understand who are the subjects involved in the production process in peasant units, because, as already discussed in this text, patriarchal culture is present in peasant territories and, therefore, in peasant production this culture seems to be equally present.

Probably in the countryside the same social division of labor between the sexes, the so-called sexual division of labor, of society in general, materializes. On this Kergoat states:

The sexual division of labor is the form of division of social labor resulting from the social relations of sex; This form is historically adapted to each society. Its characteristics are the priority distinction between men in the productive sphere and women in the reproductive sphere and, simultaneously, the occupation by men of functions of strong added social value (political, religious, military, etc.). This form of social division of labor has two organizing principles: that of separation (there are jobs that belong to men and jobs that belong to women) and that of hierarchization (a man's job is "worth" more than a woman's). (KERGOAT, 2009, p.67).

These two organizing principles dictate the importance assigned to the work, according to who performs it. From this perspective, the work performed by women is not considered economically as work, however, it is fundamental for creating the conditions for the development of other family activities. It is common to hear from peasant women the expression "I do the housework", in Marx the definition of service is presented as: "*Service* is, in general, nothing but an expression for the *particular use-value* of labor, insofar as it is not useful as a thing, but as an activity". (MARX, 1978, p.78). In this way, it is understandable why women say that they "do the housework", why they refer to routine activities that concern the maintenance of family life.

To understand the complex relations between gender and the other power relations that permeate the lives of peasant women in the production and reproduction of life, in the

various territories of peasant agriculture, it is necessary to understand how the development model imposed on the countryside further excludes women from the productive processes, conditioning them to the reproductive processes, which are made invisible, and, therefore, less valued.

When we discuss the work of peasant women, we know the importance of valuing domestic and care work, not only for their reality, but also for the country's economy. However, we believe that we also give visibility to the fact that peasant women are in all workspaces in their community or production unit. This unmasks the ideological character of the sexual division of labor when analyzing the peasant reality. (CALAÇA *et al*, 2018, p.63).

With this, it is necessary to understand that no power relationship is decontextualized and outside of history, it is, therefore, a historical construction, with direct influence on the economy and politics, aiming to respond to the interests of the dominant classes and maintain power relations in all spaces, including peasant spaces, according to Conte, Martins and Daron:

The exploitation of women and, consequently, gender inequality are, to a large extent, naturalized in society, not least because this is part of the machinery of capital. These are complex elements, insofar as it is difficult to identify and reflect on the possibility of change and overcoming a patriarchal macho culture, which is so strong that it becomes invisible, to the point of legitimizing, elaborating and romanticizing the role of women in the culture of exploitation and super exploitation. That is why women end up being reproducers of patriarchal culture. (CONTE, MARTINS and DARON, 2009, p.123).

It can be understood in the light of this statement that, as men and women are "social construction" and not natural facts, it is possible to build new relationships between people and with nature, under the aegis of new values, that is, they need to be thought of and built daily in the most diverse spaces of action, among them, peasant territories that are geographical spaces, measured, controlled, thought, hierarchized, where the solidified relations are power relations, in the same way, the spaces of production and reproduction of life, of peasant families are permeated by these relations.

Herédia 1979, while conducting a survey with peasants in the Brazilian northeast, made an analysis rich in details that illustrates how spaces are naturalized in the production and reproduction of life. The author found with the peasant communities she researched that there is a clear and objective division between *swidden* (area intended for production) and house (area intended for food preparation and reproduction). Thus, the "swidden" is the place of work and the "home" is the place of non-work "The opposition *casa-roçado* delimits



the area of work and non-work, marking the feminine-masculine places related to this division". (HERÉDIA, 1979, p.81).

In a study carried out with peasant families in Portugal, Karin Wall realized that "the sexual division of labor is not only a principle of social organization of the family and the peasant community, but also, currently, a fundamental strategy of connection to the land/family unit of agricultural production". (Wall, 1986, p. 662).

It can be said that in Brazil it is no different, because this form of family organization has no borders, although each reality is configured in a different way, but the essence of the sexual division of labor does not change. Thus, in Brazilian lands, even when women develop activities in the field, or in dialogue with Herédia's text, "in the swidden", more diverse activities, such as sowing, which is considered a feminine activity, the periodic cleaning of the crops in the swidden, this work also carried out in general by women, are not considered work, because the swidden is the male space, space of men's work.

It is thus considered that the woman does not work, and this principle is maintained even when she does on certain occasions, even when she performs tasks in the swidden. The tasks belonging to the swidden, when performed by female elements, lose the character of work. It is precisely for this reason that when describing the work in the swidden, women are never included (HERÉDIA, 1979, p. 81).

There is a control over women's lives and bodies, sometimes covertly, and sometimes in a blatant way, as perceived by Herédia, that when women participate in the production space with their work, they cannot participate in the commercialization of products from the swidden, because this is considered disrespectful to the "head of the family".

If the *work* in the *swidden* is recognized as the domain of the male sphere, represented by the father of the family, the sale of products also corresponds to his sphere of control. In this way, he hegemonizes this process, deciding how, under what circumstances and under what conditions the sale of the different products will take place (HERÉDIA, 1979, p.83).

The elements pointed out by the research carried out by Herédia illustrate how power relations, the sexual division of labor, and various forms of violence to which women are subjected occur in the daily life of peasant families, even without realizing that it is violence, from psychological, moral, patrimonial, in this research it is possible to affirm that these women are victims of patrimonial violence. Which is typified in law 11.340/2006: [...] "such as any conduct that constitutes retention, subtraction, partial or total destruction of

their objects, work instruments, personal documents, goods, values and rights or economic resources, including those intended to satisfy their needs". (BRASIL, 2006. n.p.).

However, these practices are not always understood as violence, because they often happen in a veiled or disguised way, in popular ideas violence is only configured when it reaches its last stage, which is physical violence. In relation to gender violence, or in other words, violence against women in the countryside, there are no official data on the various forms of violence practiced. Even though the news is daily reporting assaults, rapes and femicides<sup>10</sup>.

We can understand that the lack of data is also configured as a form of violence perpetrated against peasant women. Women who experience this situation in their daily lives are pertinent to seek to understand how this social fabric permeated by power relations and the sexual division of labor is built, according to Pinto. "These types of representations are related to the concept of sexual roles, in the effort of some studies to understand the different experiences available to male bodies and female bodies in societies as a system of division of labor." (PINTO, 2007, p.3).

When observing the statistics in rural areas, the work done by women is practically not noticed, because there is a separation between public and private space, because the patriarchal culture considers the public space more important than the private space, as Nalu Faria points out.

"In capitalism the separation between the public and private spheres is consolidated, the first being of production and the second of reproduction. [...]. Reinforcing the lack of knowledge of domestic production and the economic role of women's work". (Faria, 2009, p. 16).

When the author refers to the space of production, she is referring to these elements and their meanings that keep women's work being seen as a space of reproduction, and therefore, with less value in relation to the work performed by men. This perverse logic means that the work performed by women is not considered economically as work, as a fundamental part for the development of other family activities:

Within the family unit, there are different forms of access to and control over land and other productive resources (including those resulting from public policies) and women, although they work in practically all the tasks of the property, often do not participate in the decision about the use of resources on the family's properties and do not have access to the income generated by their work. [...] Women's movements have been building alternatives, both in terms of academic analysis, through feminist economics, and in actions and struggles for public policies, seeking

<sup>10</sup> Law No. 13,104, of March 9, 2015, defines femicide as a crime committed against women for reasons of the condition of the female sex.

that these contribute to overcoming not only social inequalities, but also gender inequalities. (SILIPRANDI and CINTRÃO, 2011, p. 13).

To advance in overcoming social, economic and gender inequalities, it is necessary to give visibility to women's work, work that is fundamental for the permanence of families in their territories. However, it is not enough to give visibility only in terms of ideas, it is necessary to materialize in public policies aimed at peasant women, with respect for the differences and diversity that make up the Brazilian peasantry.

## **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The countryside, as a place/territory where most of the peasant family agriculture is worked and developed, is a space permeated by conflicts, as it reproduces the conflicts existing in society, some in a more veiled way and others in a more explicit way.

It is also the place where the sexual division of labor is naturalized, when considering productive work what is performed by men, and reproductive work what is performed by women, the second always of less importance compared to the first, however, it is the work performed by women that creates the material conditions for the realization of work considered "productive". And many times women are doing this work together with men, but women's participation is considered only "help", that is, it does not have the same value as the work attributed to men.

Accordingly, when women perform work at home and around the home, they are called "services" and are not recognized as work.

Undoubtedly, these constructions are the result of a historical process, with well-defined objectives of maintaining control and domination of private property, the direction of the economy and society, and also the bodies and labor force of women. Although patriarchy predates capitalism, it has been configured as the cultural basis that sustains the capitalist system.

To maintain this vigorous domination, the capitalist system uses patriarchal culture as an instrument of control. In other words: "patriarchal culture is the oxygen that gives life to the capitalist system." (ROCHA RODRIGUES, 2013, p.13).

Unveiling, analyzing and deepening the studies on the issues exposed here are challenges posed in this historical period, which can point to concrete elements to understand the reality experienced by peasant women in the production of food, both for self-consumption, for income generation, for commercialization, and to access programs

and public policies.

This more in-depth analysis of the reality of peasant women allows us to understand and perceive the productive potential of the work of peasant women who contribute significantly to ensuring Food Sovereignty and Security.

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