# THE IMPACTS OF URBAN POLITICS ON FEMALE STREET VENDORS IN PRAIA, CAPE VERDE

**Jacqueline Britto Pólvora**

Instituto de Humanidades e Letras
Universidade da Integração Internacional da Lusofonia Afro-Brasileira
Avenida da Abolição, 3 – Centro – Redenção, CEP: 62.790-000
Brasil

jacqueline.polvora@unilab.edu.br

*Departing from transformations that are taking place on the space of the Plateau in Praia, Cape Verde, this paper discusses how these transformations are affecting the daily and working lives of the female street vendors in the city. It is an ethnographic study conducted with the ladies, also taking into account official data available from the institutional offices in Praia. It focuses on the tensions and disputes around the space, given significant changes that have been promoted by the City Hall.*

This paper[1] explores two main concerns. The first is an investigation on the relationship of people with the urban space, on a macro perspective and the second, on a micro perspective, reflects on the different policies, practices and discourses that force or perpetuate social exclusion in cities. Therefore, this research has focused on the cities' excluded groups, be it from the point of view of their geographical location (the outskirts), be it in relation to the exclusion from benefits that life in the city should provide. Thus, the discussion here highlights some ingredients related to living in informality. Instead of the classical focus that emphasizes the economic aspects of informal activities, from an anthropological standpoint this research is interested in daily working lives of women who act informally in central spaces of the city of Praia, particularly in neighbourhoods such as Plateau, where trade and administrative activities take place.

In my research, I have wondered about the relationship of people with the space where they live, specifically in the urban environment. In the case of these female street vendors in Praia, I follow the changes taking place in spaces in the city centre (Plateau) as well as in other neighbourhoods. In this process, in the first place I wish to analyse how these women see the space where they work and, then, what they think about these changes and how they affect their work and lives[2]. This research is an ethnographic study of female street vendors, which includes participant observation and informal conversations, as well as interviews conducted during the working days of the ladies. Besides, I also resort to institutional data (from the City Hall, National Statistics Institute, United Nations and its institutional branches).

My analysis of space pervades the theoretical body of human and cultural geography (Harvey, 1985, 2008; Lefébvre, 1974; Massey, 1994; Soja, 1993; Sassen, 1993, 1994, 2007), as well as that of the anthropology of space (Low, 2000; Smith, 1996). Despite the diversity of perspectives, for all these authors, the urban space is considered one of the fundamental parts in the gear that makes the current global capitalism work. Thus, and following my interpretation of these authors, the urban space would be the smoke and at the same time, the engine of the economic system where it belongs. In this sense, modern capitalist societies impart upon space (and also time) the idea and sensation of progress, and what comes along with it, which is the conversion of a physical area into capital. Therefore, urban spaces are spaces *par excellence* where the global capital circulates, whi-

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[2] José Carlos Semedo Vieira and Rutte Cardoso Andrade, both master students from the Graduate Program in Social Sciences of the University of Cape Verde, are studying "the other side of the same coin – informal housing in the city of Praia and have complemented this research."

ch causes some cities to concentrate and often surpass the importance of nation states *per se* (Sassen, 1993, 1994, 2007). At the same time, the concentration and circulation of capital in "global cities" generates and reproduces a polarization both at local and global level. In this sense, the concentration of capital – and the dispute for it – creates internal and external (global) polarizations, through which social groups are being differentiated either by their place in the structure of the social classes or, also, by origin, gender or racial and ethnical belonging (Massey, 1994, pp. 146-156). Finally, space here is seen not as a separated and autonomous entity, but as being produced from social relations. In the case of Cape Verde, this production is deeply influenced by the economic relations and strongly determined by the women who occupy it and make it the place to produce their livelihood and that of their families.

Following the reviewed literature, I read and understand space through the observation of the processes of social exclusion that take place in big cities over time. A relevant discussion concerning these processes focuses on the numerous strategies and justifications that lead to exclusion and, almost always, segregation of minority groups, in search of revaluation of urban areas that up until then had been degraded and with little investment. Gentrification: this is the common formula by which capital moves in the cities, through real estate investments, with a view to commercial exploitation and very little – if any – social benefit (Davis, 2006; Smith, 1996). Here I will approach such process, which has been taking place in the city of Praia. Finally, I follow the assumption that, although economic relations dictate the pace of social relations in the cities, and modify the spaces with the claim of generating capital, people who go to and use these spaces have different experiences and perceptions. Thus, they also, attribute multiple meanings to space, which do not always match public policies. Conflicts between these different perceptions and city policies are not uncommon. When I approached the female street vendors in the city of Praia, I was precisely looking at these different perceptions, through ethnographic account. Therefore, I also dwell on these conflicts, in order to better understand urban issues within the Cape Verdean context and, by extension, West Africa.

## Cape Verde and the City of Praia

The city of Praia, on the island of Santiago, is the country's capital , although the first settlement was what nowadays is known as Old City (Ribeira Grande de Santiago, 1497). Ribeira Grande de Santiago was the first European nucleus in African lands. Praia, founded in 1615, was subsequently chosen (1858) to be the

capital of the country because, as the literature suggests, Ribeira Grande offered less conditions of security if attacked. Besides, Praia had better areas to serve as port for the colonial goods (Estevão, 1989; Pires, 2007, pp. 23-68).

Cape Verde is an archipelago of ten volcanic islands, nine of which are inhabited. Their land is known for its aridity, except for a set of hilly areas of some islands, which retain a little more humidity and have more water sources. The climate is dry tropical, meaning that more or less nine to ten months of the year present a dry and hot climate, with short spells of two or three months of rain. This means that only 10% of the country's lands are arable and it produces only 15% of its consumption. Small agriculture generates part of this consumption and provides support for many families in the interior of the islands.

According to the World Bank (2011), in 2007 around 9% of the GDP came from immigrant remittances. Currently, in the context of the global financial crisis, these remittances have diminished, as well as foreign investment, which impacted the country's economy. In 2007, the World Bank also raised the *status* of Cape Verde and classified it as a Middle Income Country, not due to the economic income itself, but for a series of items that the World Bank considers important for such status[3]. This distinction may be understood as an affection of the World Bank for the adoption by Cape Verde of neoliberal policies ruling global economy, and whose effects have been, among others, an increase in unemployment and cuts in public budgets for social spending. As it is known since the Washington Consensus, international institutions established rules to lend money to less developed countries, and these rules forced countries to follow recipes to economic adjustments (Williamson, 1990, 2004). Under the title of Middle Income (Country) many countries can no longer send aid as they used to. Besides, and still according to the World Bank, in rural areas 30% of the population lies within the range of absolute poverty, being the most affected children, young people and women.

In terms of population distribution, according to Cape Verde's National Institute of Statistics (INE) and the United Nations / Habitat (UN/HABITAT – United Nations Human Settlements Programme), in 2010 the country amounted to almost 492.000 people, of which roughly 303.000 (slightly over 60%) live in rural areas (United Nations Human Settlements Programme, 2010, p. 243). Praia has the largest urban concentration of the country, almost 128.000 people.

Since 2008, the city of Praia has been undergoing renovations understandable through the strategies traced in the 07/2008 decision, from the Praia's City

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[3] Good governance, a macro economy that shows strong fiscal discipline, stable exchange rates, opening to foreign market, strong integration in the world economy and the adoption of effective measures for social development (World Bank, 2011).

Hall. This document specifies that they aim at: "making the city safe, (...) clean (...); (...) cosmopolitan, modern and dynamic from the economic and cultural point of view; an inclusive city showing solidarity" (Conselho de Concertação Estratégica, 2008). These transformations concentrate on some key areas, especially the historical centre of the city (Plateau). They included the creation of an area for pedestrian use (25 de Julho Street), which got a new paving, some tree seedlings, and where bars and restaurants are allowed to use part of the public space to serve their clients. The new pedestrian area has also held seasonal fairs of local products and handicrafts, besides other information and social programs as, for example, campaigns for disease prevention, volunteering or combatting the violence against women. The surrounding streets are receiving new pavement on the sidewalks. The municipal public market is also listed for being refurbished and, with this initiative, the women vendors shall also be removed to another area – outside the Plateau – where the municipal administration intends to build a commercial centre and some of these female vendors shall receive a new space for sales.

When interviewed, the ladies claim not knowing for sure if they will have to leave the market where they currently are and, should that be the case, when it would happen. In the case of the vendors dealing in the street itinerant trade – surrounding the current market and in the area of the historical centre – at present they do not have a space to sell and they do itinerantly. The vast majority of the ladies I interviewed revealed that they do not know if they will have an space in the market in the future, as they do not feel included in the changes taking place or being planned. At the same time, the City Hall promoted training courses to the sellers as guidance to improve their work[4]. The content of the training was reported by the ladies as "good manners": "how to treat the clients", "how to organize the merchandise", "how to keep clean the surroundings", etc. If, on one hand the City Hall fails in communicating the decisions, on the other, it offers this training, seen as a way of controlling and establishing a discipline of selling.

## The Women Street Vendors in Praia

My interest in the women street vendors of Praia is especially due to two reasons. Firstly, in Praia, as in many other urban centres of developing countries, it is impossible not to come across street vending, given that these ladies dominate

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[4] The goal of this initiative was to promote "healthier" conditions for the goods. The training was promoted by the City Hall, the Cape Verdean Office for Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and MORABI (Associação Cabo-Verdiana de Auto-Promoção da Mulher), among other organizations (http://www.rtc.cv/index.php?paginas=13&id_cod=2963 http://asemana.publ.cv/spip.php?article85884&var_recherche=vendedeiras&ak=1).

the street commerce in the city. Secondly, due to the fact officially acknowledged, that women are the majority of informal workers in the country. This also reinforces my findings in a previous research done in Brazil.

The ladies who work as informal street vendors come from neighbourhoods distant from the centre – new and old, as well as Plateau, the historical colonial centre. These ladies, the *rabidantes,* are part of the soul and life of that area. *Rabidante* is a word in local Creole that was brought to me as: get by, get along with it, find your own way…. The study on *rabidantes* by the economist Marzia Grassi defined the word as "get through", "get along" (Grassi, 2003, p. 24). In short, being *rabidante* is how some ladies call themselves and their selling activities – on the street or at fixed places. It is an accepted and understood term for this activity among the inhabitants of Praia. Moreover, it carries in itself the denomination of people who "get by". In this way, and like in other African urban realities (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1997, pp. 94-108), being *rabidante* in Cape Verde is part of the reality of many poor women, who carry out a significant part of the informal activities in the city.

Along the same lines, according to Cape Verde's National Institute of Statistics (INE) within the total number of self-employed informal workers in Cape Verde, 62,5% are women (⅔ of self-employed informal workers) (Instituto Nacional de Estatisticas de Cabo Verde, 2010, p. 14). These numbers also aroused my interest for these ladies, continuing my doctorate's study when I researched about the social exclusion of black families in an informal area in Porto Alegre, nowadays called Entrance to the City (Pólvora, 2006). This work dealt directly with families who live from and in the "informal", carters and recyclable material collectors on the streets of the great urban centres. In general, informal workers – whether in Brazilian cities, Praia or almost all medium-sized and big cities of less developed countries – have no papers or documents that identify their property titles; they rarely possess rental deeds or even papers that register them as workers in the respective labour ministries. Therefore, they seldom appear with a fixed address and do not participate "formally" in the working and economic life of the city, although they indirectly contribute with taxes included in the prices of products and services, such as public utilities like electricity and water. These families cannot afford to regularize their life in the city. Therefore, their permanence in the so-called informal sector runs through several generations encompassing various spheres of life: how they work; where they live, work and get supplies to feed their families.

## Cape Verde: Transformations and Informalization of Daily Life

In Praia, the *rabidantes* originate, in their majority, from the countryside of Santiago and/or other islands – where they worked in rural subsistence activities together with their families. They move to the cities still young or when they marry and build their own families. This change takes place for the usual reasons that justify the rural-urban migration: in general, they face the lack of conditions to work in the fields, which in Cape Verde is also associated to climate issues such as prolonged spells of drought. One can also find ladies, in general a little bit older (around sixty), that are the second or third generation living in Praia. The migration of these ladies to the urban centres, like Praia and Mindelo (São Vicente island) confirms the tendency indicated by the national census that points at around 60% of the population living in the urban environment, (Instituto Nacional de Estatisticas de Cabo Verde, 2010a). This rate surpasses the tendency foreseen by United Nations Human Settlements Programme (2010, p. 99) for West Africa of around 45% in 2010.

As preliminary results, I outline an ethnographic profile of the women working on the streets of the city of Praia. In general, the ones aged around 30 years had either attended school up to the 4th grade or given up studying due to the need to work. Many of them, especially those over 30, consider themselves illiterate. In my interviews, I identify them as those who are migrants from the rural areas (first generation), and the others who have already lived in the city for two or three generations. In general terms, these ladies came to the city to work as maids and ended up giving up this job, establishing themselves as street vendors. This last group of women did not improve their lives very much, since they came from poor conditions in the countryside and when they entered the urban environment they increased the range of the socially excluded, pushed by multiple factors (economic, political, social and human) towards impoverishment and stigmatization (Furtado, 2008, p. 6-17). This movement to informal neighbourhoods enhances the evidence of the historical persistence of inequalities and social exclusion[5]. In addition to the rural-urban migration, they face other economic factors, which the developing countries have gone through, that affected urban centres. They can be summarized in the formula of implementation of liberal policies: reduced spending and State investment in social benefits (education, health, transport, housing, electricity, water, sanitation), gradual privatization

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[5] Also in Porto Alegre my research ascertained the prolonged permanence, sometimes for several generations, of black and afro-descendent families in these areas.

of the public services and, together with these, the creation of economic strate-gies defined to attract foreign capital in order to generate investments, taxes and fundraising (Maricato, 2006, pp. 213-214). In Praia, as well as in Cape Verde, one of the development strategies has been a strong investment in tourism. Thus, the spaces of the city of Praia have been renovated – mainly in the Plateau – with the intention of transforming them into areas adapted to the *blasé* taste of internation-al tourists. The gradual prohibition of street vending came along with it, in the way it used to happen before: walking, standing on the corners or beneath some shade. Little by little, some areas in the city of Praia turn into places where only people with purchasing power are allowed to walk, buy, sit and consume.

There is yet another factor that gradually starts to be included in the statistics, which is the presence of Chinese migration in the country. Its main activity vis-ible in the cities is the new haberdashery shops of plastic, fabrics, make-up and domestic utensils. These small shops were bought from their old Cape-Verdean owners, and are managed by small families of young Chinese that settle in the back, or in an apartment on top of the establishment. Often, they sell the same goods that these ladies do, except for local fruits and vegetables. The presence of Chinese people in Cape Verde is to be found in the urban centres and almost the whole national territory, including very small villages where there might by, for example, only two or three businesses. As it is also known in other coun-tries, the sold articles are cheap when compared to the same of European origin. Therefore, these products have "stolen" the scene and the commercial areas of the Cape-Verdeans.

All these factors (the movement field-city; the state disinvestment, translated into a poor contribution to improve the economic situation of the population; the reformulation of the urban space and the unequal trade competition) push these ladies to an informal trading on the streets. But, in contradiction, they also hamper this activity. Furthermore, these factors are accompanied by an increase in poverty and criminalization of the poor. This point will be developed further. Parallel to this scenario, it is important to underline that the structural poverty in Cape Verde causes, somehow, a certain resignation in conversations about the situation, as it has also been pointed out in the study organized by Furtado (2008, p. 7).

Moving further on the informal situation of these ladies in Praia, it is known that the urban growth in many countries, as in Africa in the post-colonial period, does not come along with public urban social inclusion policies for the grow-ing urban population. As an example, in the housing sector, informal cities form the "real" African city: 62% of the inhabitants in this continent live in informal

places (Pieterse, 2009, p. 2). It is also pointed in the frightening document from United Nations Human Settlements Programme entitled "The Challenge of the Slums" (2003, p. 246) that in 2001 approximately 61,3% of the African population (around 187 million of people) lived in informal cities. It is this reality that makes it difficult to reflect on African cities using the same model used for European (Paris, London, e.g.), Asian (Tokyo, Seoul, e.g.) or North American (New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, e.g.) mega-cities and not the absence of circulation of global capital. Praia, for example, is home to Angolan, Senegalese, Russian, North American, Brazilian, Portuguese and Chinese businesses, among others. In other words in spite of the existence of shopping centres like in any rich mega-city and neighbourhoods like Cidadela, eminently residential and comprising complexes of high-rise buildings different from the rest of the local constructions, in Praia's urban landscape prevails what Mike Davis describes: "the cities (…) instead of being made of glass and steel, (…) will be built mostly of apparent brick, straw, recycled plastic, blocks of cement and waste wood" (Davis, 2006, p. 28-29).

In Cape Verde, the effort over history to invent a Creole nation that did not establish itself exactly as African, but also not as European or, more specifically, Portuguese, was present both in the colonial and local thought. This was particularly desired by the members of the literary movement "Claridade", which saw Cape Verde as a nation belonging to the African continent but culturally distant from Africa (Barros, 2010; dos Anjos, 2002, p. 21). This historical heritage endures in local and national projects[6]. In Praia, Plateau, the most central and administrative part of the city, maintains part of the colonial architectural memory. This architecture, concerned with marking the territory, could not avoid showing "modern social and political conflicts of the colonial era" (Andrade, 1989, p. 38), due to the poor social investment by the metropolis. Thus, the reformulation of the urban spaces of Praia taking place until nowadays relentlessly tries to achieve a possibly difficult goal, which is to make the city look alike the urban aesthetics of the northern countries.

Coquery-Vidrovitch (1988, 1991, 1997) has already demonstrated that urban informality already existed in the colonial period and increased after that. Thus, cities in Africa have in informality their means of growing, and this is the case

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[6] In response to a violent episode associated to the GM, the City Hall announced that responsibilities should be investigated. And added: "Africa has many examples of cities that sank because of the undisciplined commerce and transportation, which caused various negative impacts in organization, sanitation, security and image of both cities and countries." ("A África está cheia de exemplos de cidades que se afundaram por causa do exercício descontrolado do comércio e do transporte informal, com impactos extremamente negativos ao nível da organização, do saneamento, da segurança e da imagem das cidades e dos países.") http://www.cmp.cv/Not%C3%ADcias/Not%C3%ADcia/tabid/159/Article/398/comunicado-confronto-entre-guarda-municipal-e-algumas-vendedeiras-ambulantes.aspx (accessed on 5 March 2013)

of Praia, in Cape Verde. Praia had its heart urbanized in Plateau and, after that, grew in neighbour areas, but also relatively separated by geographical accidents. The case of Achada de Santo António (also known as ASA), considered one of the oldest neighbourhoods of the city, is separated from the Plateau centre because it is located in a second plateau. Thus, this location – relatively close but separated – enabled, for example, the Achada de Santo António neighbourhood to grow oscillating between formality and informality. Part of the ASA became the neighbourhood of the ministries, diplomatic representations and public departments of the federal government and, thereby, has part of its territory planned. There are, however, parts of the neighbourhood, which grew informally with the population having to solve their own impasses of space arrangement.

Praia follows the tendency of African cities of a rapid urbanization carrying along with it little planning and an abundant and increasing informality. In the specific case of women, it must be said that they represent in Cape Verde more than half the population employed in the informal labour market. As informal workers, the majority of them live without benefits, retirement and minimum legal conditions to perform their job. When we look at itinerant trade, it is dominated by the female figure: 76% of commercial workers are women and this explains the abundance of *rabidantes* on the streets of Praia (Instituto Nacional de Estatisticas de Cabo Verde, 2009, p. 18).

## Spaces, Women and Tensions

This research up to now reveals some aspects that can be put forward drawing from these transformations in the urban space of the city *vis-à-vis* the daily routine of the *rabidantes*. The majority of these ladies live in the outskirts of the city of Praia. In the morning, seeking to commute to Plateau, they use public transport – small minibuses, usually overcrowded, that circulate through the city. However, when returning, many of them can no longer find available public transportation. Therefore, they resort to taxi, the main source of revenue of many men from Praia. Because of the distance travelled, these rides can cost up to 400.00 CVE (3.60 Euros). In these moments, the ladies get together in groups of five women – or whatever the number that fits the car – to return to their neighbourhoods together and, thus, split the fare of the taxi. Here we have a help and solidarity network that supports the daily lives of these women.

Along the same lines, the urban space is very busy with female street vendors and is shared based upon another solidarity and business network fostered by these women. In interviews, they explained how they keep their merchandise

when they return home. Most of them pay a rent for small spaces where the goods are kept at the end of the day. Besides the goods they also store their working instruments in these spaces. When they work in fixed locations they use small benches – or anything that allows them to rest their legs – together with some boards where they expose the articles; there are also wooden boxes that serve as cribs for the babies to spend the day next to their mothers, grandmothers, aunts or acquaintances, besides other objects like purses and basins, where they carry their merchandises.

These ladies use the small alleys, entrances, or corridors in Plateau to keep their products. Different women share these spaces – allocating one or two square meters to the belongings of each woman – and the corresponding rents. Although the price of the rents is relatively low in other currencies (the average can be around 60 CVE/week = 0.54 Euros), the quantity of such rented spaces is significant and definitely a plus in the income of the tenants or subtenants. These small rental and loan businesses that take place here involve multiple levels: the first is the income that circulates from this informal work to other sectors and inhabitants of the city. The capital that circulates through the leasing of rooms, corridors and courtyards where the merchandises are kept is not formally counted and is, therefore, unknown. Besides, it has a significant effect on the monthly income of the ladies who rent them. Sixty escudos each week impact on the income of such women, heads of the family who live with two thousand escudos per week. At the same time, the rent charged might be an aid to pay the water and electricity of the corridor or the courtyard where they leave their merchandises. Economists know the importance of the circulation of this informal capital in the national economies[7]. However, what this research intends to highlight is not exactly the unaccounted for financial amounts that circulate through these ladies. Rather, we wish to highlight that other citizens and families will also be affected in case they are actually prevented from carrying on with their work, given the extension of the capital chain. In addition to the circulation of capital through the informal economy, part of the solidarity network that composes these informal activities is strengthened.

Thus, a network of help and solidarity is established among women during the work period. It happens when those who have a fixed location help the others: they look after each other's children when the mothers have to leave for a moment, take care of the board or the merchandise, or simply yield a place in the shade so that the other can rest some minutes during the workday. I would say, a code of ethics and solidarity circulates, differently from the predictions of the

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[7] See Skinner (2008) for different theoretical discussions about the role of street vendors in local economies.

early days of urban sociology from Chicago School, especially Simmel (1973). For this author, cities create a distance in social relations, including what was called a "blasé attitude" – indifference, distance and disengagement of people with others and public affairs.

The other facet of this cooperative and solidarity relationships are the innumerable conflicts that are being caused by the changes in the urban space of the city. As already mentioned, the City Hall created a special police, the City Guard (CG), whose official function, among others, is to "ensure compliance of attitudes, regulations, (...) of the urban norms" (Câmara Municipal da Praia, n.d.). However, it ends up criminalizing these women. In the vendors' opinion, the CG has stood out as agents "who hunt people"[8]. When the City Guard is seen, the ladies run away with their goods on their head towards other streets, or hide them in the first corridor or courtyard they find or one of those spaces they rent to store their merchandises – not without mocking as they arrive. The prohibition and consequent "hunt" of the ladies eventually brings about conflict among them, since the dispute for space has increased. Thus, there has also been a finding that the cooperation that exists to defend and protect the legislation of the city, ends up distancing the public administration (and its codes) from the poorest populations, thus excluding them, from the benefits that the city would be generating. There are constant conflicts between the ladies and the guards, and also among some of them, resulting from a set of legislation and a "code of conduct", officially in process, whose regulations have not favoured the inclusion of these ladies, exactly the opposite.

## Final Considerations

The questions brought up here deal with the discussion about the evolution of cities, especially in developing countries. Attempts to standardize, diminish and, if possible, finish the heterogeneity of urban spaces is not new in the history of cities. In Cape Verde, the path has not been different, as this research points out. The concrete data showing that African cities grow in informality and, despite the innumerable attempts to end it, informality persists cannot be neglected when it is aimed to rearrange the cities. If, on the one hand, the city's municipal government has been in fact trying to improve the living conditions of the poorer population, investing in sport courts and paving streets, on the other hand they have been promoting an open policy of exclusion and segregation of the poorest from the spaces held as not appropriate for them. The constant intervention of

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[8] For instance, this local television report: http://www.rtc.cv/index.php?paginas=13&id_cod=8014

the municipal police (GM) running, intimating, confiscating goods and "hunting" ladies is only a cruel presentation of these policies, which actually criminalizes women who are, after all, heads of family and workers.

The dynamics established in the urban space of Praia among the female street vendors and institutions – represented by the City Hall and municipal guards – prompt diverse relationships between these actors. This work highlights, on one side, the existence of strengthening mechanisms of supportive and solidarity ties that supposedly would be scarcer in urban life. On the other, it also underlines that these relationships develop tensions and enhance conflicts among the workers who use the city. For those women, in the urban space where their daily working routine takes place, also occur dynamics of an increasing exclusion, vulnerability and repeated tensions.

The *rabidantes* from Praia, with their long experience of "getting by", have been finding tactics to stand up to such a context. In the presence of the municipal guard they use techniques to communicate to one another and immediately warn when the agents arrive. Concerning the uncertain future transformation of the space in the city, they do not seem to believe there might be a positive solution for them to continue being able to sell. Moreover, these ladies express a clear consciousness about this process of exclusion when they ironically talk about the "good manners" training course, and, at the same time, acknowledge they are not being included in the decisions regarding the transformations of the city's space. The instances of power should be responsible for devising responses, which encompass the possibility of the effective social, political, economic and human inclusion of these Cape-Verdean women and their families, and translate them into effective policies.

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