Collective Action and Social Innovation:
how cooperation efforts in Brazil have guaranteed rights to the local homeless population

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Summary

The aim of this paper is to describe how ICOM (Community Institute in Great Florianópolis), a Southern Brazilian community foundation located in Florianópolis, promotes social innovation through its collective actions. The theoretical approach was based on Sociology of Public Problems to study social innovation processes promoted by civil society actors in the public sphere. The main strategy of research is ethnographic, based on participatory observation at a ICOM project, the Participatory Survey Project on Homelessness in Great Florianópolis, Brazil. The project was developed with direct involvement by the homeless, as they became research fellows of their own field of cause, describing their expectations and motivations, building new identities, achieving social empowerment, bringing a new visibility on the cause within the public sphere, and, finally, creating impact that showcases its innovative and collective character.

Key Words: Collective Action; Social Innovation; Homeless people; Ethnography

Introduction

The Brazilian Constitution from 1988, known as "Citizen Letter", regulated public participation mechanisms (such as plebiscites, referendums, public hearings and public policy committees) and determined that the guidelines and governmental actions were to be

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performed based on decentralization of public administration, including public participation in the creation, implementation and control of public policies. Since a re-democratization period in Brazil, there was a significant increase and diversification of interaction channels between the State and civil society. In this democratic environment, civil society's actions were effectively established in the public policy cycle.

According to Lopes, Santos and Xavier (2015), the presence of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the public policy cycle may be observed in the creation of policies through participation in councils, conferences and sharing of experiences related to innovative social technologies; in public policy execution, through celebration of agreements with the public sector and the effective implementation of projects and actions of public interest; and in monitoring and evaluation, through participation in exercising control and reflection on means and outcomes of the public policy cycle.

Several laws and instruments were created along Brazilian history to regulate partnerships between civil society and the State. Currently, there are more than 400 thousand civil society organizations, of which 41% act in areas including social assistance, health, education and culture. Such organizations, which employ more than two million workers, participated at the execution and effectuation of social public policies (Ipea, 2018).

In December of 2009, the Brazilian national government established the National Policy for Homeless People, with the intention to promote the integration of efforts of both the public sector and civil society for its implementation, in order to guarantee socioeconomic and political rights to the target population. Even though these rights are included in the Brazilian Constitution, institutional innovations do not seem to ensure an effective transformation in the social reality, as it is seen in numerous cases of human rights violations, affecting the homeless population.

In September of last year, a group of six organizations and social movements, including the National Movement for Homeless People (MNPR) sent a complaint report on violence faced by homeless people in Brazil to four United Nations agencies, including the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The document highlighted the need for public policies that focus specifically on the socioeconomic vulnerability of this group. According data provided by the National Center for Homeless People's Rights (Centro Nacional de Defesa de Direitos Humanos da População em Situação de Rua), 419 violent complaints and 69 murders were registered between March and August 2017. The organizations claim that

the State was the main aggressor, as its public agents were responsible for 65% of human rights violations[1]. It also was stated that, even though lack of housing is common need among the homeless, it should not be isolated from other needs, and that all services provided to the homeless should be carried out in an intersectoral manner.

Regarding this issue, civil society organizations have stood out in Brazil as important actors for promoting social innovation and strengthening democracy due to their collective action efforts. Such efforts are aligned with the public interest, which seeks to guarantee the rights of people and groups often forgotten and marginalized by public state policies.

The aim of this paper is to describe how ICOM (Community Institute in Great Florianópolis), a Southern Brazilian community foundation located in Florianópolis, promotes social innovation through its collective actions of knowledge-sharing and dialogue with the local communities, demonstrating its effects by guaranteeing human rights for the homeless population. The theoretical approach was based on Andion, et. al (2017) whose framework is grounded on Sociology of Public Problems (Cefaï, 2009; Cefaï and Terzi, 2012; Chateauraynaud, 2009; 2011) to study social innovation processes promoted by civil society actors in the public sphere.

Our research analyzes a ICOM Project, the Participatory Survey Project on Homelessness in Great Florianópolis, which will also be called Homelessness Survey, for shortening purposes. It was supported by Global Fund Community Foundation and promoted in 2016 in partnership with State's Movement of Homeless People (MPR/SC), a social movement of around 50 homeless people. Its main goal was to secure a needed and proper participation of homeless people in the discussions about policies focused on their rights and wellbeing in the Santa Catarina State. The main strategy of this research is ethnographic (Cefaï, 2013), based on participatory observation in order to comprehend the process of social innovation and on the "field of cause" (Chateauraynaud, 2011) of people in homeless situation in Brazil.

This article is organized into five main sessions. Its theoretical analysis revolves around collective action in public arenas and the ethnographic research methodology. After introducing main concepts and definitions we will focus on introducing the "field of cause" and presenting Brazil's national legislation on homeless people's rights. The following

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[1] Source: National Center for Homeless People's Rights (Centro Nacional de Defesa de Direitos Humanos da População em Situação de Rua - 2017)

session focuses on the experience observed by researchers and authors of this article. We will introduce organizations that participated at the creation and execution of the Homelessness Survey, ICOM and MNPR/SC (National Movement for Homeless People in the Santa Catarina State), as well as their partnership with each other and other organizations involved in the process. Following such contextualization, we will present events experienced throughout the project from the perspective of actors involved, incorporating their expectations, context of life on the streets, and moments that provided new meanings for social interactions and generated a new visibility within the public sector. Lastly, in our final considerations, we will present the Project's main impact outcomes as well as personal reflections on our experience working along with the homeless.

Collective Actions and Social Innovation in Public Arenas

Collective actions of public interest in the civil society arena include the role of social movements, organization networks, human rights committees, associations, foundations, corporations, and all collaboration efforts to achieve public interests, which could be formalized or not. As Cefaï, Veiga and Mota (2011, p. 20) argue, collective engagement for public interest are privileged ways to exercise citizenship roles. They "instil knowledge, virtues and civic competencies and shape the civic engagement regime". Moreover, they are "laboratories of civic life and schools of deliberative democracy, places of civic formation and civil society mediation".

Andion et. al (2017) define collective action as the product of collaboration between several forms of engagement among different actors: (i) the institutionalization of these actors could take place in practices, coordination, conventions and rules; (ii) the main actors range from subjects (human and non-human) to people in the practical field and networks; (iii) their motivations are diverse and its concertation patterns are on focused on ways of expression, functionality, agreements, confrontations and competition; (iv) they include dialogues and discussions between the government, civil society and companies with the goal to establish agreements or consensus about public issues. Furthermore, (v) its rationalities are diverse, as well as (vi) its engagement regimes and modes of existence and the strategies used to pursue collective actions include problematization, pluralization, argumentation, critical capacity, and public research (Andion et. al, 2017).

In short, collective actions are defined as more or less formalized and institutionalized efforts undertaken by individuals who seek to achieve a shared objective in cooperation or competition with other groups. Such actions are different than aggregated or emergent effects studied by the individualist methodology, as they imply intentions among its actors that could be more or less conscious, rational or voluntary (Cefaï and Terzi 2012).

Constituted by different contexts and participants of public arenas, collective actions with public interest can be formed by different ways of taking action and promoting engagement: with commercial enterprises, industrial organization, public service, democratic representation, popular sovereignty, social cohesion, domestic life, personal accomplishments, and religious communities. (Cefaï; Veiga and Mota, 2011).

For the authors mentioned above, a collective action can be lasting or brief, such as a revolt, a riot, or a specific moment (in response to catastrophes, for instance). It could also be limited to space and time, and ordained in the most diverse organizational forms, and characterized as spontaneous and fluid (social networks), or formal, hierarchical and rationalized (bureaucracies and companies).

Collective actions with public interest coordinated through people and issues create categories of experience and action denominated by Cefaï, Veiga and Mota (2011) as "neighbor regimes" in public arenas, spaces of confrontation and cooperation where public problems are defined and shared and where several actors and instances, which go beyond the State, work together for the same purpose.

The definition of public interest occurs through a process negotiated by several actors. It is not defined *a priori* with abstract references, but constructed and defined jointly during the realization of collective actions. For that reason, the authors (Cefaï, Veiga and Mota, 2011) argue that, in order to understand the internal functioning of collective actions with public interest and its role in the most diverse public arenas, an ethnographic method must be applied, *in situ*, to comprehend engagement, coordination, collaboration, confrontation and justification regimes where activities and organizational practices occur. Above all effects on collective and public causes where they intend to act must also be considered.

Proposing the dialogue between authors of the Actor-Network Theory and the Sociology of Public Problems, Andion et. al (2017) utilize a pragmatic perspective based on Pragmatic Sociology (Barthé et. al, 2013) to study civil society and social innovations in the public sphere. Their study brings a new understanding of the capacity of social groups to

innovate and create their own rules and practices, becoming more creative and politically autonomous as a result (Andion et. al, 2017).

Connecting it to the dynamics of social change promoted by the mobilization and participation in the solution of public problems collective action promote social innovation (Andion et. al, 2017). For these authors:

> Social innovation starts to be understood as an opportunity of expanding the capacity of groups and of the society itself to reinvent, i.e., to create their own rules and conventions and also new social practices, becoming more creative and politically autonomous (Andion et. al, 2017, p. 379).

Their perspective seeks to observe the daily political activities and mobilization efforts among different actors around public problems, and presents three new assumptions to analyse the phenomena. Firstly, it states that social innovation is related to space and time, which means that the trajectory of public problems matters social innovation. Secondly, it assumes that social innovation is a product of "fields of experience" (Cefaï, 2014) in specific problematic situations. Lastly, it affirms that it is important to connect social innovation efforts with social change in order to better understand their impact (Andion et. al, 2017).

Research Methodology

This research is characterized by its qualitative nature, which, according to Denzin and Lincoln (2006), constitute an activity organized through a collection of material and interpretative practices with the goal to comprehend and showcase the phenomena investigated.

It is based on the conception that nature and society are not distinct poles but a production of elements that require an adjunct explanation (Latour, 2012). For the French Pragmatic Sociology, the analysis of such phenomena occurs both in processes and flow of its events; therefore, an ethnographic position with participatory observation will be the main strategy of investigation and observation in this research (Cefaï, 2013; Andion et. al, 2017). For that reason, we utilize the expression *ethnographic posture* to refer to ethnographic contributions not only as a method, but as an epistemological posture for realizing research in the Public Administration field (Andion and Serva, 2006).

Cefaï (2013) affirms that ethnography is an investigative process based on extended observations in public spaces and organizations, which implies wisely managing one's access to the study phenomena (through building acceptance, trust, finding its role, knowing how to exit in a friendly manner). The main feature of ethnography is the direct insertion of the researcher in the phenomena.

This study conforms to the general objectives of this research, which is to describe how ICOM, a Southern Brazilian community foundation located in Florianópolis, promotes social innovation from its collective actions of knowledge and dialogue with the local communities and demonstrates its effects by guaranteeing human rights for the homeless population.

Since 2007, ICOM performed eight actions of community engagement, through participatory workshops that culminated in a published document, which is easy to access and visually appealing. The goal of such documents is to simply present indicators and reflections on the challenges of the city in several themes reflected upon and discussed collectively, in order to contribute with the formation of public policies in the city.

This study is focused on one of ICOM's projects, the Participatory Survey Project on Homelessness in Great Florianópolis, which will also be called Homelessness Survey, for shortening purposes. It was supported by Global Fund Community Foundation and promoted in 2016 in partnership with State's Movement of Homeless People (MPR/SC), a social movement of around 50 homeless people.

The goal of this study, therefore, was proposed based on the experience and life stories of researchers related to civil society engagement on the topic proposed. All researchers have work experience at ICOM, which focuses on realizing actions to engage with the community and get to know local challenges through participatory social surveys and strengthen natural and legal persons who invest in issues of public interest.

The field observation period happened between November 2016 and December 2017, adding up to thirteen months. Researchers were involved in several activities related to the project. One of them was directly and fully involved with it, as one of ICOM's coordinators and a key supporter of homeless researchers.

The main observation spaces were ICOM's Social Innovation Support Center (CAIS - In Portuguese, Centro de Apoio a Inovação Social), one of the first co-working spaces dedicated to social innovation in Florianópolis; MNPR/SC meetings under a bandstand at

November 15th Plaza; Monitoring Committee for Municipal Public Policy on Homelessness meetings; public debates; get-togethers; events at public spaces; and meetings with civil society organizations and the public sector in the four municipalities that participated at the Homeless Survey projet.

According to the theoretical framework proposed by Andion et. al (2017), social innovation is related to space and time, which means that the trajectory of public problems matters social innovation. In order to contextualize the "field of cause" on homeless people, the next session presents historical records based on Melo (2016), an ethnographic work that sought MNPR's historical archives. Following remises established by Andion et. al (2017), which assume that social innovation is a product of "fields of experience" (Cefaï, 2014) in specific problematic situations, the subsequent sessions describe the main moments in our participatory observation, which sought to understand and report events based on perspectives of all actors involved.

Lastly, in response to the last premise proposed Andion et. al (2017), which affirms that it is important to connect social innovation efforts with social change in order to better understand their impact, we unfold the observed process, its impacts and our personal conclusions on the experience.

The Field of Cause of Homeless People

To understand the public issues, Chateauraynaud (2009; 2011; 2012) argues that the "fields of cause" like institutions, as well as regulations created around public interests over time, contribute to the comprehension and identification of different actors, controversies and arguments, which make up public arenas. For such, some historical considerations on the rights of homeless people in Brazil will be introduced.

The origins of homeless organization in Brazil date back to actions taken place in the 1950s by religious members at the Catholic Church, who presented concerns with homelessness as "poverty that remained invisible during that time" (Melo, 2016). In 1978, written records used the expression "homeless population" to refer to a group of people with specific sociological and psychological characteristics who express themselves in a difficult process of adaptation to life in societies: beggars, prostitutes, alcoholics, migrants, prisoners, and abandoned minors (Melo, 2016).

Melo (2016) affirms that some working innovations among religious groups transformed, at the end of the 1970s and early 1080s, the way homelessness is perceived. They replaced charity work with a higher proximity and a participatory framework that included homeless people in the process. Such experiences marked the early involvement of members of what later became the National Movement for Homeless People (MNPR), which constituted a change in protagonism and self-organization of the group.

From the 1990s onward, the lack of public policies on homelessness is highlighted and several initiatives and movements became stronger. Such movements, which focus on defending the rights of homeless people, had a greater presence in Brazilian cities such as São Paulo and Belo Horizonte, which are characterized by the presence of several religious organizations, proximity with institutional politics and leftist municipal administration (as exemplified by the Labor Party, PT). The creation of forums and interlocution spaces between the government and civil society to discuss interventions and public policies responsible for this public, and the application of research studies to produce data on the quantity and profile of the homeless people (Melo, 2016).

During the 2000s, new movements were created and organized by the homeless people, making them the protagonists and the ones responsible for facing challenges related to discussing public policies with the government. This context modifies the street scenario in Brazil, because, at the same time, there was an increase of the homeless population due to declining socioeconomic indicators and an increasing number of public debates among several individuals and institutions on the issue (Melo, 2016). According to Melo (2016), this increase in agents to deal with homelessness creates a "homelessness cause", which is translated into debates about homeless representation in intervention strategies.

Between August 19th and 22nd, 15 homeless people were slammed on their head while sleeping in different areas of Sé Plaza (Praça da Sé), located on São Paulo downtown, resulting in seven deaths. Such killings were known in Brazil as "Sé Plaza Massacre". Suspects were brought into an extermination group, organized by the police and/or private security agents who worked nearby Sé Plaza, motivated by the discomfort caused by the presence of homeless people in the region (Melo, 2016). August 19th became the National Fighting Day for the Homeless, which is annually celebrated in Brazil by advocates at MNPR.

As Melo (2016) relates, the Massacre became a catalyst for exposing and reporting daily human rights violations which were previously ignored. "Life on the streets is usually understood as a situation of vulnerability, danger, humiliation, exposure, violence and harassment by several groups" (Melo, 2016, p. 55). When such realities are exposed, a language of urgency comes about, favoring a significant numeric and intense mobilization growth, which reaffirms the need to political action.

The National Movement for Homeless People officially started its activities in 2005, in São Paulo and Belo Horizonte. According to Melo (2016), a new political context was established under President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's mandate (Labor Party - PT), when MNPR obtained a direct dialogue channel. In 2005, the federal government organized the I National Meeting on Homelessness, where several government and civil society representatives were present, as well as homeless people and organizations dedicated to securing homeless people's rights. In 2006, an Interministerial Working Group was established to propose public policies for the homeless people.

The II National Meeting, which happened in 2009, consolidated such proposals into Decree nº 7.053, signed by the President on December 23rd of the same year. Being applied in a decentralized and intersectorial manner, such policy is an example of efforts to establish guidelines that favor the reintegration of homeless people to family and community networks that would facilitate their access to rights secured to all Brazilian citizens (Melo, 2016). According the federal decree, some objectives of the National Policy are: a) institute an official headcount of homeless people; b) produce, sistematize and disseminate data and social, economic and cultural indicators on the existing network of public services to the homeless and c) give incentives to research, production and knowledge-sharing about the homeless, including its human diversity in all its forms - ethnic-racial, sexual, gender-based and generational - in all fields of knowledge. These objectives can take place through the integration of public policy and civil society efforts for their execution, including by supporting the participation of homeless people in the most diverse ways of evaluating public policies.

The Policy instituted an important instrument for social control, the Monitoring Committees. They are constituted by both governmental and civil society represantants, with the objective to create strategies to implement the National Policy in every location where homeless concerns must be addressed. However, when observing in retrospect the

transformations and advancements of MNPR in the last few years, it is noticeable that mobilizing advocates remains a constant challenge, as well as financial sustainability to carry on the Movement's activities. Political institutionalization is also sometimes seen as a challenge, as city councils are responsible for implementing public policies related to social assistance to the homeless, yet are often unresponsive.

As Melo (2016) argues, it should also be considered in this context the challenge of fighting for awareness and recognition of homeless people's rights and the specific services needed to serve the group, which should consider the ideas expressed by representatives of this populational segment. Based on such historical and institutional-legal context on the Brazilian "field of cause", the next session presents a project developed by ICOM, in partnership with the National Movement for Homeless People in the Santa Catarina State (MNPR/SC), whose experiences and processes are this article's study focus.

Participatory Survey Project on Homelessness in Great Florianópolis

The region of Greater Florianópolis, located in Santa Catarina, Southern Brazil, has one million inhabitants and is composed by cities such as Palhoça, Biguaçu and São José and state's capital, Florianópolis, which are growing in size and density. Even though the region presents a high Municipal Human Development Index, when compared to other Brazilian cities, it faces challenges related to social justice, such as a large population living in areas that lack infrastructure and access to basic services in education and health care.

On the municipal scope, the majority of activities described by the National Policy on Homeless People are under the city council's responsibility, especially under the social assistance field, which is commissioned to promote a network of tools and services for the homeless. Such responsibilities include the creation and maintenance of special units of specialized assistance to the adult homeless population, providing food, hygiene, shelter and social outreach services.

In 2013, the city of Florianópolis, through Municipal Decree nº 11.62, instituted the Monitoring Committee for Municipal Public Policy on Homelessness, composed by ten representants from different groups, movements and civil society organizations, with the objective to contribute towards securing human rights and political effectiveness for the

homeless. As a Community Foundation, ICOM became part of such public policy, and became directly involved with community challenges that homeless people faced.

ICOM has been a pioneer in southern Brazil, for creating an innovative model of how to mobilize and reassess local resources to promote community development. At its Social Innovation Support Center (CAIS - In Portuguese, Centro de Apoio a Inovação Social), one of the first co-working spaces dedicated to social innovation in Florianópolis, ICOM promoted proximity and strengthening of actors related to securing the rights of homeless people. The homeless themselves, as well as religious leaders, health organizations, social assistance organizations, volunteer groups, students and advocates shared a space where they were able to ponder on and take action in municipal public policies.

Through local funders, ICOM also supported MNPR/SC since 2013, by promoting leadership strengthening, providing a working space, consulting meetings on planning and passing on financial resources so that the Movement could participate in environments that discuss public policies on the homeless.

From this historical collaborative work, ICOM and MNPR/SC, with the support from Global Fund for Community Foundations, developed a proposal for a participatory social survey in order to better understand the needs of the homeless in Great Florianopolis, including their particularities, necessities, characteristics, dimensions and vulnerability in this context.

This unique proposal at the public arena counted with the collaboration of homeless researchers to apply about one thousand questionnaires during the period of December 2016 to February 2017 in four municipalities that compose Great Florianópolis: Florianópolis, Biguaçu, São José e Palhoça. The project's development included mapping organizations and initiatives that provide support to the homeless population in Great Florianópolis (August and September, 2016); the formation of an interdisciplinary working group to co-create the field research, select parner civil society organizations for support in all four municipalities (November 2016); selection and training of homeless volunteer researchers (December 2016); and application of questionnaires with homeless people, conducted by the homeless researchers (December 2016 to February 2017). The project culminated in an event at the city's Legislative Building to share the Survey's results and launch a small documentary produced while the project took place.

From Homeless People to Researchers

In this session, we present the main observations made throughout the course of the project in several observation spaces. We sought to accompany the main actors involved in the research, taking note and sharing our experiences and perspectives. We organized our writing into three main parts, which present the main motivations, expectations and new possibilities experienced by homeless researchers, including the construction of new identities, social empowerment and achievement on a new visibility on the homeless cause.

The Early Process: Expectations, Perspectives and Possibilities

Every Monday, at 2pm, advocates from MNPR/SC meet up under a bandstand at November 15th Plaza (Praça XV de Novembro), at the heart of the Florianópolis city, to discuss their actions. In a horizontal way, with no hierarchy, they delegate, divide actions, articulate strategies to change their lives and promote awareness about homelessness and their rights. Reflecting on their actions, the Movement's state coordinator sincerely affirms that "the greatest challenge is to build something along with the public sector in the city. In reality, the greatest demand is to put into practice the National Policy for Homeless People and to coordinate actions of local secretariats, because we do not need only social assistance". His argument goes beyond welfare claims: "We need the health sector, culture, education, work opportunities and housing." Also, he calls attention into forms of public intervention, which often promotes a violent and repressive social outreach approach: "We need ask for food, and the State responds with the police. We ask for housing, and the state responds with the police. We ask for our rights, and the State responds with the police".

ICOM's striking idea to organize a social census on homelessness had the goal to place such claims at the center of public debates. It articulated with several local political actors and acknowledged the importance of collaborating with MNPR/SC, reason why one of its ideas was to make the homeless themselves the researchers, making it possible to generate real data, provide funding for its beneficiaries and proving that the homeless do not only need social assistance to leave the streets in Florianópolis. About 50 advocates from the Movement co-executed the Homelessness Survey, which also relied on the support of a working group

formed by organizations and specialists, which would be responsible for an interdisciplinary and collaborative construction of the Homelessness Survey's objectives.

In a condition of daily fights for physical survival, ICOM knew it would be immoral and unjust to count solely on the homeless' voluntary participation, so the organization incorporated a scholarship program in the process. A weekly payment of 50 reais (about 15 USD) was made for each of the twelve participants. Evidently, scholarships attracted competition among people who were interested in contributing with the project. There was a selection process based on geographic distribution, involvement with MNPR/SC, availability to work, and gender representativity, so that the group would properly represent demographic features of people living on the streets in Florianópolis. Since the majority of homeless people in the region are men, we formed a group of 8 men, 3 women and one transsexual person.

All participants received a formal training, where they also had the chance to get to know each other better. Research tools and partner organizations were their main sources of support throughout the process. Trainings included practice interviews to illustrate how to approach people on the streets, and a sense of great expectations and excitement was present in the room. One of the women scholars, who participated in the project for three months, affirmed during a training sessions: "I am excited to start the Homelessness Survey, and I know a lot of people in the city and all of them want to take part in it. This survey will significantly help the homeless people by improving services such as housing".

Another testimony from a homeless couple shows the importance of the project, as both worked on it and, as a result, were able to afford renting a house for themselves and their 2-year-old son. We will call them G and L. Before engaging with the project, the couple had lived on the streets for a few weeks, and feared losing guard of their son, who, according to Brazilian legislation, cannot live on the streets. This family represented the municipality of São José, which is part of the Great Florianópolis region. They had very specific demands for their region, as G states: "My expectation is the guarantee of some public policies, including the functioning of shelters and service centers. This survey will also highlight the realities of the homeless situation in São José, demystify some assumptions and prove the necessity and urgency to improve services to the homeless, who currently do not have access to health and housing".

While working on the project, the homeless were also able to grow closer to each other, and began seeing their group as a family. G affirms that seeking his own rights encouraged him to care for other people in a homeless situation, and to promote their wellbeing. Reflecting on the topic, G affirms: "Participating in the Homeless Survey enables us to approach people on the streets. The Movement we are a part of tends to be criminalized and marginalized, as we have been pursued by the police several times. Now, with this supporting network, we are capable of approaching institutions and fostering dialogue".

In order to give support to researchers in different geographic locations, ICOM selected civil society organizations that would be responsible for supporting the project. With great difficulty, since few organizations were open to the idea of engaging the homeless in research, four of them were selected to join the project development. A wide range of questions and protocols were defined through three workshops, designed to listen and understand the life on the streets. ICOM and MNPR/SC sought references of similar projects conducted in Brazil and around the world and adapted them our local social and political reality. The workshops were conducted in public spaces, open to any participant. There were educative moments, where people who did not live on the streets had the change to better comprehend its environment as a territory with its own currency, inflated prices and unmet demands.

As mentioned earlier, the Survey's geographic focus included four municipalities, which compose Great Florianópolis. This questionnaire application stage lasted for 90 days and added up to 937 filled questionnaires. After applying the Survey, ICOM and MNPR collectively focused on strengthening the region's social environment and reassessing available resources in the region.

When proposing a collaborative work with supporting organizations, ICOM, as a community foundations that sought to strengthen social initiatives, perceived that defending human rights and promoting equality have increasingly become important topics in community organizations. When proposing innovative ways to approach the homeless population, based on a logic of "harm reduction"[2], which constitutes a humanized

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[2] According to the International Harm Reduction Association (IHRA), Harm Reduction refers to policies, programs and practices that focus on reducing adverse health, social and economic consequences that involve the use of licit and illicit drugs, without necessarily reducing its use. [...] Harm Reduction principles encourage open dialogue, constant consulting and debate. A wide range of actors must be involved in the process of developing, implementing and evaluating public policies and programs.

methodology, interviews reached higher levels of political socialization with homeless researchers. They became the protagonists of the project, while seeking self-care, health and human rights in an individual as well as collective manner.

The project coordinator and psychologist affirms that the monitoring work done by research professionals became one of the main tools of social transformation, as it developed a relationship between supporting organization and homeless researchers based on care and dignity. According to him, the project's format materialized the homeless' daily struggles, and transformed them as people worthy of their rights. In his works, "when we become the protagonists, we challenge the conventional ways of conducting research, and of doing politics, which is usually a top-down approach. We build a transformational method, which changes the way institutions look to beneficiaries, making them a fundamental piece of research and politics. The Homelessness Survey is linked to the deep connections it promotes between the homeless and institutions, and between homeless researchers and people who will be interviewed by them."

New Social Identities: Reflections on Empowerment and Social Protagonism

During the course of the project, participants created an internal slogan that clearly represents their empowerment: "From the streets with the streets". The main premise along the early states of the project development, its training and "harm reduction" practices was to place the beneficiaries (homeless researchers) as protagonists of their own development.

Most homeless researches were also previously involved with MNPR/SC. When engaging with public environments, they introduced themselves as researchers, as opposed to homeless people, causing the research to be presented to the city in a positive and legitimate way.

One of the homeless researchers reflects on his experience and affirms: "It is great for me to feel useful at something. It changed everything for me. It changed the way people interact with me, even when I look for work. Then, I realized they did not change, I did. I have a new posture. Things are more clear to me nowadays. When you begin to understand

Source: (2010, April). O que é redução de danos? Uma posição oficial da Associação Internacional de Redução de Danos (IHRA). Retrieved from
https://www.hri.global/files/2010/06/01/Briefing_what_is_HR_Portuguese.pdf

your rights, things become clear. You understand how to approach others, and how to express yourself. A lot of disagreements on the streets happen for lack of effective communication. [...] The Homelessness Survey has brought real data. And it is only true because the people conducting it understand, in a direct and personal way, this necessity".

During the research process, MNPR/SC was able to open new doors for dialogue with the public sector. One of them, for instance, was a collaboration with the Social Assistance Secretariat in the city, which became responsible for delivering food for the homeless population during a strike organized by public servants while the project was happening. MNPR/SC was commended by both the population assisted by such collaboration and by public managers, for their initiative to collaborate with society. When reflecting on this partnership, the project coordinator affirms that "when we work FOR the people, they say what we want to hear, not necessarily what is true in practice. In this project, we are dealing with a much more complex interaction, as we seek to be sincere with each other. We are bringing discomfort to several public sectors, as the homeless introduce themselves as researchers". After this event, the city council requested help from MNPR to execute some tasks along with a new administration at the municipal Social Assistance Secretariat. This event clearly shows the importance of the Homelessness Survey, especially as it works WITH the people (as opposed to working FOR the people, as the project coordinator suggested).

Public interest and debate: bringing visibility to the homelessness cause

(i) Main Research Findings

Homeless researchers have reflected on the process of filling questionnaires as an opportunity to deepen relationships with other homeless people. One of them has mentioned that, although filling a questionnaire takes no more than two minutes, conversations may last for over an hour. He has also pointed out that many people who were not interested in participating in the project, decided to do so after witnessing friendships being formed through interviews.

To better understand the profile of people living on the streets at the four municipalities in Great Florianópolis, ICOM and MNPR/SC systematized the main research findings in a straightforward and accessible report. The report presents the information

through simple graphs and charts, simple vocabulary and a pleasing layout, so that it can easily be shared and used as a source to promote public policies and human rights advocacy. The report constituted the first document to present data about the homeless population in the region.

Questionnaires filled by homeless people in the four municipalities that constitute the Great Florianopolis region helped the organizations to identify that there are approximately one thousand homeless people in the region. 937 of the applied questionnaires were utilized on the Survey's final report. The main survey results are summarized on Chart 1.

Chart 1 - The reality of living on the streets[3]

Age	5% below 29 years old	65% between 30 and 49 years old	30% above 50 years old
Gender	77,8% male	20.6% female	1,6% undeclared
Ethnicity/Race	47% white	45% black/brown	
Education	92.4% are able to read and write	4.1% are able to write their names	3.5% are unable to both read and write
Work Experiences	70% perform some kind of paid work	8% never had access to a professionalizing institution	
Health	67.8% are in good health conditions	26.4% are in regular health conditions	5.8% present some form of illness
Drug use	88% have used or currently use licit or illicit drugs	12% have not used drugs	21.3% use medicinal drugs
Access to institutions and public services	65% have used shelter services	55% have access to 3 meals a day	75% have access to the city's Specialized Reference Center for the Homeless Population
Access to sports and culture	54.5% do not have access to cultural activities	59.1% do not have access to sports and physical education activities	

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[3] ICOM, & MNPR (2017, May). Diagnóstico Social Participativo da População em Situação de Rua na Grande Florianópolis. Retrieved from
http://www.icomfloripa.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Diagnóstico-Social-Participativo-da-População-em-Situação-de-Rua-na-Grande-Florianópolis.pdf

| Violence | 91.3% have suffered from violence by institutions, other homeless people or other individuals | Out of all participants who have claimed to have suffered from violence, 32.8% of them claimed that violence was performed by public institutions | |

Source: Elaborated by authors based on ICOM; MNPR/SC (2017).

On July 10th of 2017, ICOM and MNPR/SC organized an formal event at Florianópolis State Legislative House for launching Research Report and Short Documentary about the project[4]. About one hundred and fifty people joined this event. Participants included homeless people themselves, city mayors of the four municipalities part of the research, authorities, including the Public Prosecutor's office, volunteers, CBOs and academia. The final research report was officially distributed to city mayors and public official during the event[5]. On weeks following the event, 164 people downloaded the research report; 700 reports printed and distributed; 12 public events ICOM and MNPR/SC participated to present results.

ICOM coordinated the distribution of the Participatory Research Report to the political representatives of the 4 municipalities. In order to advocate and raise awareness, ICOM presented research results at the the City Council of Florianópolis on August 20th and at the City Council of São José on October 10th. In addition, ICOM and MNPR/SC participated in a Public Hearing on the Homeless People: Rights and Violations, organized by the Public Defender of the Union. Hearing took place on October 16th.

(ii) Repercussions on Local Media Channels

Both the event and the material produced by ICOM and MNPR/SC produced great repercussions in the local media, generating interest on different sectors in society. ICOM's records report that the event they has reached over 1 million people. Such repercussion counted with 5 TV channels, 11 publications on printed newspapers (including 3 of them as

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[4] Short Documentary about Participatory Social Study of the Homeless Population of Florianópolis, produced by ICOM: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H5YAF9H-PKc
[5] Final Report of Participatory Social Study of the Homeless Population of Florianópolis: https://bit.ly/2rXeasO

covers) and 3 radio programs[6]. In an interview with Record TV's program on Education and Citizenship (July 13th, 2017), one of ICOM's project coordinators stated that ICOM's research revealed "unprecedented data", and that it was "the first time a research of such kind was conducted in Brazil". A local newspaper (Notícias do Dia - Daily News, in English) also highlighted the relevance of the project, when it affirmed that "there are no easy solutions, but ICOM's work is a light that can point out solutions to benefit those who live on the street and those who would not like them to be there and interfere in the urban landscape". The Homelessness Survey provided a source of debate, reflection and political discussion over weeks following the project's final stage. The project was also present on social media channels. Its small documentary reached more than 15 thousand views on Facebook, and hundreds of positive comments and provocative reflections.

(iii) Community, Network and Advocacy Development

With the goal of advocating for public services for the homeless people and raising awareness of such social issues mapped in the research, ICOM supported the creation of a network of social supporters formed by leaders of the MNPR/SC and Community-Based Organizations Greater Florianópolis, which became a source of empowerment and awareness on the homeless cause. The group named themselves "Caring and Self-help Network" and was initially formed by approximately 10 homeless people and 7 social supporters. Together, they made 50 visits to public institutions and influencers in order to advocate for the rights of homeless people (from August to December 2017) and distributed over 400 research reports. All meetings were registered in journals given to each member.

Moreover, ICOM promoted two capacity building workshops focused CBOs' work with homeless people. The first workshop, held on October 6th, 2017 addressed Networking and Harm Reduction, and the second workshop, held on November 10th, was dedicated to teaching CBOs how to elaborate a social project focusing on harm reduction. Both workshops added up to 40 participants from 9 different community-based organizations. For instance, the Rainbow Institute (Instituto Arco íris), a local organization dedicated to promoting human rights of marginalized groups, participated at the capacity building workshops and were able

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[6] A complete report with Media results can be found here: https://bit.ly/2BFE9F1

to receive a financial grant to carry out a project on mental health and harm reduction on drug use.

Final Considerations: What Does This Experience Entail?

In this public arena, for the first time, a participatory survey was proposed, with the objective to co-create a profile of homeless people in this region through collaborative efforts between civil society and the public sector. The social innovation from its collective actions was demonstrated through closely following the project, which was anchored on knowledge and dialogue with the local communities and demonstrated its effects by guaranteeing human rights for the homeless population.

Based on reflections by ICOM workers involved with the project, making a research survey with social participation and local partners enabled them to (i) strengthen community groups, (ii) strengthen several members from MNPR/SC, by creating new social and political meanings and identities; and (iii) connect with policy-makers and funders. Upon reflecting on such achievements, ICOM affirms that the "selection of community-based organisations, to help with logistical support in the project, resulted in strengthening these organisations by giving them access to a new approach and methodology when working with homeless people".

(i) The importance and effectiveness of collaborations between Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and the public sphere when addressing rights of marginalized groups

A huge step forward in the actions of the MNPR/SC took place, due primarily to the social and political inclusion of a group of 10 homeless research fellows who were part of the group, the project aims to help. These fellows, in addition to their contact with the research methodology, were given a street-level policy training, so that when applying the research, they would also be spokespeople and point of access for the rights of the marginalised homeless population. According to ICOM, "the profound change in visibility and the development of autonomy of the volunteers themselves, who, through the field work, saw an opportunity to empower their population and reduce the problems that affect the streets".

All of the four municipal governments were contacted and received information

regarding the research methodology implemented throughout the project. They were all invited to participate in the process of the construction of research, to support us with the research fellows in their respective locations. As reported by ICOM, "In Florianopolis, ICOM is already a member of the local committee of policy makers and NGOs, which supports and motivates social inclusion of the homeless population. The current challenge now lies in implementing this committee in other municipalities where the research took place. Nowadays, the committee is the principal instrument in maintaining and monitoring the development of national public policy pertaining to the homeless population".

(ii) The challenges related to forming partnerships across different sectors

Considering the incorporation of homeless individuals as protagonists in the research field (as homeless research fellows), ICOM and MNPR/SC had some difficulties, such as the mistrust on the work of the homeless people and the difficulty to find local partners to carry out activities.

Mistrust on the homeless were expressed by concerned many people had on whether questionnaires would be handed in by research fellows. However, by January 2017, over 500 filled out questionnaires have been handed by research fellows. This number is more than what had been planned.

We also noticed some internal resistance from ICOM's board with regards to the direct transfer of money as stipends to the homeless individuals who were a part of the project. In order to not render the project unfeasible, the board approved that the value of stipend to the local subsistence and travel was passed on to the beneficiaries through partner institutions, community-based organisation with experience on working directly with the homeless people population.

Along with mistrust experiences, the stigma associated with drug use were also present, since most homeless researchers were drug users. Such stigmas are a result of a culture of combating drugs, as opposed to reducing its harm, making it difficult to establish relationships between the supporting CBOs and some governments members, such as the municipal government of São José, Santa Catarina. This led, in one specific case, to the practice of violent and prejudicial actions towards the homeless researchers, both by the local

government and by a collaborating community-based organization, whose partnership was replaced.

These challenges faced in partnerships with homeless researchers were also reflected in partnerships with supporting organizations. Before beginning the project, ICOM thought that the greatest challenge throughout the project would be to keep the homeless researches motivated and active, but they were surprised to find that the greatest challenge was to deal with partnerships with local homelessness organizations. When ICOM decided to partner with a them, only a handful of organizations expressed their interest, compared to the number of local organizations working with the cause. Many organizations doubted that the homeless were responsibly working and could be trusted.

Upon reflecting on these challenges, a ICOM worker recalls an experience when she encountered the homeless researchers using drugs. When they saw her, they felt embarrassed, but she stated that the experience was nothing more than natural, as such behavior is common among homeless people, and should not be seen as irrational or unhealthy. After conducting the project with partner organizations, the ICOM worker affirms that one of the most important project achievements was the ability to change their perspective. Partner organizations learned the advantages of pursuing an emphatic approach, by listening, co-creating and learning from their beneficiaries, as opposed to working in a top-down, one-sided manner.

Lastly, it was reported by ICOM that, as a community foundation that had never experienced such approach before, the project provided a significant learning experience. When the project was created, ICOM humbled itself, acknowledged its lack of experience in the field and accepted the challenge to embrace the new experiences on both an individual and organizational level.

As researchers, the experience was also significant for our own studies, work, and perspectives. In the following session, we provide a brief reflection on the project.

(iii) Personal Reflections on the project

After observing, participating, listening, and reflecting upon ICOM and MNPR/SC's partnership throughout the project development, we have concluded that the Homeless Survey provided much more than real-time data on homelessness in Florianópolis. The

project's results were tangible and relevant, but its creation and execution journey also deserve praise.

On a personal level, this experience changed the way we study public policy and the way we interact with others. We are now able to study public policy by listening more than speaking. We have discovered the benefits of bottom-up politics, especially in a democratic environment, and we have learned that the best public policies are built on interaction and respect, and that a democracy is not sustainable without active participation from all races and socioeconomic classes, including those who are marginalized.

The homeless still face uncountable challenges to be able to secure their rights. However, this fight needs partners in all areas of society, including the public sector, markets, academic, and civil society organizations. Without any of these actors, solutions to the problem will not be complete and sustainable. ICOM and MNPR/SC's project is a clear and an outstanding example of effective integration between public, private and the third sector. The intersectoral committee is a good example of a tool that allowed all actors involved with homelessness to gather and discuss feasible solutions. By gathering policemen, store-owners, public defenders, spiritual leaders, CSO representatives, students, and the homeless in one room, we were able to build a thorough picture of the problem, and discuss how each actor could contribute to finding a solution. It was challenging, and it required several hours of negotiation, debriefing, and, especially, listening. However, such hours paid off as we saw the project progressing and reaching its goals, while being flexible and ensuring that every person was adequately represented.

After the project was finished and all results were accommodated into one document, partner organizations organized an event to present it before local public authorities in the Grande Florianópolis region. Similar to the previous phases of the project, the homeless were the protagonists in the final stage. They had the best seats at the legislative room, and were called to the front to present the results of their survey and share their experience several times during the event. These moments were crucial for the project. Having public authorities and previously marginalized homeless people in the same room not only brought legitimacy to our survey, but put faces to the numbers we presented, and empowered the homeless by giving them an important tool to fight for their own rights.

In a democracy, human rights and politics are siblings. They must always walk together, and one should reflect the way the other is carried out. The more marginalized

groups are represented in public spaces, the more democratic a region is. Poverty-related problems are complex and will not be solved with a simple, one-sided, top-down solution. ICOM and the National Homeless Movement formed a partnership that should serve as an example to all humanitarian, human rights-related work.

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