



## GRADUATE SCHOOL OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Towards A '*Body-sensitive*' Approach to Human Development:  
A Framework of Analysis Illustrated with Cases from the Brazilian Sertao of  
Pernambuco

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## ***Abstract***

Human development has been increasingly explored in terms of enhancing people's choices, capabilities and well being. This paper acknowledges the shift from a monetary to a people's centred approach to human development as a major advancement. However, it is argued that people have "bodies", which also deserve special attention while looking at processes of human development. This paper is an exercise of looking at human development from a *body-sensitive* approach. Towards this aim, the paper proposes that human bodies should be understood and dealt with beyond its biological features: as a basis for active participation in social life.

The routes chosen to carry on this exercise have been to identify: (1) approaches to look at bodies in processes of human development; (2) Core roles that human bodies play in people's lives. The "bodily roles" – as they will be called along the paper – to be addressed are: sexuality, reproduction, mobility, nutrition, labour, communication and leisure; (3) "Context-specific" conditions, which may act as enabling or disabling in relation to these bodily roles. The conditions to be addressed are: (a) Bodily Health (as basic human needs) and Autonomy; (b) "Marked Bodies": intersected inequalities and discriminations; and (c) Institutional and Economic settings.

As a result of a methodology combining theoretical analysis and an exploratory study - done in the municipality of Calumbi, located in the Sertao of Pernambuco region, North-east of Brazil – this paper will present a framework of analysis, describing the aspects that mostly come up during this exercise of looking at the mutual interrelations among *bodies, bodily roles, bodily integrity and human development*.

**TO DONA CELIA, NINA AND DOUGLAS**

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*The bodies of Sertao*

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Thank You all!

*The Hague and Rio Families*

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## **Acronyms or Abbreviations**

**ABIA** - Brazilian Interdisciplinary Association on AIDS.

**AIDS** - Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

**BHN** – Basic Human Needs

**CA** – Capability/capabilities Approaches

**CCT** - Conditional Cash Transfer

**Dawn** - Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era

**FETAPE** - Federação dos Trabalhadores na Agricultura de Pernambuco (Rural workers Federantion of Pernambuco)

**GLBT'** - Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals and Transgenders

**HD** – Human Development

**HDR** – Human Development Reports/ United Nations Development Program

**HIV** - Human Immunodeficiency Virus

**HR** – Human Rights

**HS** – Human Security

**IBGE** - Instituto Brasileiro de Analises Sociais e Economicas

**IMF** - International Monetary Fund

**IPEA** – Instituto de Pesquisa Economica Aplicada

**IRRAG** – International Reproductive Rights Research Action Group

**IWGSSP** - International Working Group on Sexuality and Social Policies

**MMTR** – Movimento de Trabalhadoras Rurais (Women Rural Workers' Movement)

**NGO** – Non Governmental Organization

**PE** – State of Pernambuco/Brazil

**PNUD** – Programa das Nacoes Unidas para o Desenvolvimento

**Redlac** - Latin American and Caribbean Rural Women's network

**SRHR** - Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights;

**STDs** - Sexually Transmitted Diseases

**TB** - Tuberculosis

**UN** - United Nations

**UNDP** - United Nations Development Program

**US** - United States

**WHO** - World Health Organization

**WCAR** - World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance

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## PREFACE

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This paper is a product of a privileged life. Enabling conditions related to my bodily characteristics, health status, level of autonomy as well as to the economical and political environment that surround me, have been determinant throughout my life. Being white and middle class in a country where prejudices of race/ethnicity and class have been historically a barrier to human development, the type of prejudice that I've encountered were mostly related to the fact that I am a woman, living in a patriarchal society.

Living in Brazil, a country that, as many others in the world, unemployment has reached unacceptable proportions, it has been also a privilege to not have encountered many barriers to find a job and carry on a professional life. And, for that to happen, my educational background as well as the fact that I am physically and mentally healthy, have been also crucial. For this and many other reasons, I became one more in a group of people that perpetuate a vicious cycle: The more we have, the more we get. Being a daughter of two university professors and having worked in NGO's sector projects<sup>1</sup> related to diverse issues, my privileges were not only restricted to my bodily characteristics and for having enough financial resources to live, but also to having access to an enriching intellectual environment.

The motivation and inspiration to go though the exercise of writing this paper recalls to decades ago, when I was still a child, and kept making the same question to my parents, every time I would see homeless people begging for money and food in the streets: why do we have [food, money, etc] and they don't? At the time, I was not satisfied with the answer that my parents and other adults benevolently gave to me: "they are poor". Time passed and the question remained. With time, I got to realise that this disparities were not only related to the fact that some people had more financial resources than others. By studying, working, talking to people, as well as by travelling to different countries and having contact to others cultures, it became clear that, although it may vary according to the specific context, other characteristics such as gender, race/ethnicity, place of residence, health, educational background, sexual orientation, age, among others, are determinant for such social inequalities. This research paper is about exploring these "other characteristics", about posing the question of why and how they affect, positively or negatively, ones' lives. It has been an exercise of

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<sup>1</sup> Specially the "Social Watch Brazil", project that aimed at monitoring national public policies in light of the agreements made in international arenas of negotiation; Dawn and other feminist networks, the "Dialog Against Racism", the World Social Forum, and, more recently, working in an the Brazilian Association of AIDS (ABIA).

looking for the “differences that make a difference” (Crenshaw, K., 2000) to people’s process of human development.

Such discomforts and insights have led me to pay more attention to “people’s bodies”, instead of only at “people”, and seeing that bodies have specific “marks”<sup>2</sup> which play a determinant role in either opening doors to human development or constitute strong walls. By reading this paper, one should not expect to find an in-depth analysis. For dealing with the complexity that this paper is to address, in such a limited scope, specific focus and priorities were predefined. This research paper is, in fact, a product of an analytical exercise, where my own lens, combined with the methodology applied, have served to zoom in and identify some relevant aspects about the mutual relationship between *bodies and human development*. This paper is not about presenting “the” complete framework of analysis, but, rather, an exercise of developing a framework that can possibly serve as a contribution to ongoing and challenging processes of putting “bodies” also at the centre of the human development agenda.

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<sup>2</sup> The feminist network DAWN – Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era, has put forward the notion of “marked bodies”, during the process of the World Conference against Racism (WCAR), referring to concept of “interssectionalities”, to be further addressed in Chapter III.II. For further information see website [www.dawnorg.org](http://www.dawnorg.org)

## **INTRODUCTION**

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*“Human development is about creating an environment in which people can develop their full potential and lead productive, creative lives in accordance with their needs and interests”* (UNDP 2006). This paper shares this notion of human development (HD) put forward by the United Nations Development Program, especially for the fact that “people” are put at the centre of the agenda. Yet, it will pay special attention to how “people’s bodies” may be related to processes of human development.

This research is based on the belief that there is a need to further look at human development from a “body sensitive” perspective and to reinforce the calls that have been done, for decades, specially by women’s rights and feminists activists and academics, that “our bodies belong to ourselves” (not to anyone else) and that “rights of the body” (see Correa & Petchesky 1994 and Petchesky, 2005b) should be guaranteed to every human being. This paper bases on many of the ideas and arguments pushed by these groups, as well as others, such as GLBT (Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals and Transgender’ rights’ activists, which aim at bringing in bodily integrity as well as sexual and reproductive health and rights into local, national and international arenas of debate.

It acknowledges that the processes of the *International Conference on Population and Development* (Cairo, 1994), and the *IV World Conference on Women* (Beijing, 1995) have been an advancement to addressing “human bodies” related matters<sup>3</sup>, particularly as during these meetings, arguments based on principles of “bodily integrity”, or of “the rights of the body” (usually used in relation to “sexual and reproductive health and rights”) were pushed in the agenda of “development”. During these conferences, Malthusian or neo-Malthusian theories, that usually link poverty and human development directly to high fertility rates, were strongly debated and attacked, both by civil society and UN-member countries representatives. Despite the controversial environment that surrounded these negotiations, the final document of these Conferences included some progressive language related to “human bodies”. Since then, despite the barriers that have been put by conservative Nation-states and sectors of civil society, the effort of pushing the “rights of the body” agenda have been carries on.

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<sup>3</sup> According to Petchesky, “the Beijing Platform, together with Vienna, Cairo and Copenhagen Conferences and their outcome documents five and ten years later, carved-out a new normative and conceptual terrain – the rights of the body, and bodily integrity” (Petchesky, 2005:27)

The historical experiences of dealing with such matters have proved that addressing the mutual relationship between bodies and human development is a complex challenge. However, this paper argues that such complexity should not be avoided. Rather, that there is a need to find ways to better understand the complex dynamics that human development and bodily integrity encompass. It is exactly in this sense that an option has been made to look at this complexity – within a predetermined focus -, instead of at a more specific issue.

### ***“Human Bodies”***

The notion of “human bodies” applied here is not be the one limited to its biologically determined aspects. Rather, “bodies” are to be dealt with as “an integral part of one’s self, whose health and wellness are a necessary basis for active participation in social life”. (Correa and Petchesky, 1994:113). Such conception implies that “bodies” will just have a meaning as looked at within social contexts, as interacting through cultural processes (Louro, 2000). Moreover, such “integral” perspective put forward here implies that bodies do not encompass only its “material”, or “touchable” parts, but also the mind<sup>4</sup>.

As an entry point to analyse the mutual relationship between *bodies* and *human development*, this research has identified *bodily roles* (meaning aspects of life in which the body plays a core role), which are dealt with along the paper, in correlation with the principle of *bodily integrity* – defined either as “a *right* to security in and control over one’s body, including an affirmative right to enjoy the full potential of one’s body, whether for health, procreation or sexuality” (Correa & Petchesky, 1994: 113) or as a human capability of “being able to move freely from place to place; to be secure against violent assault, including sexual assault and domestic violence, having opportunities for sexual satisfaction and for choice in matters of reproduction.”(Nussbaum, 2000:78). The “body sensitive” approach to human development put forward here is, therefore, carried out by looking at how the mutual relationships among principles of *bodies*, *bodily roles*, *bodily integrity* and *human development* takes place.

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<sup>4</sup> Such perspective is in line with two notions of “body” provided in official documents the World Health Organization: (1) Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health, known as ICF, where “‘Body’ refers to the human organism as a whole; hence it includes the brain and its functions, i.e. the mind. Mental (or psychological) functions are therefore subsumed under body functions”. (WHO 2006) (2) The Pan American Health Organization refer to “Body” as “the human organism as a whole, and thus, the mind is included in the definition.” (PAHO 2006).

### **Research Objectives and Questions**

The general objective of this research has been to find ways to look at how human development can more fully incorporate bodily integrity as a core value. For it, is argued, a “body-sensitive” approach to human development is needed. It is clearly a broad and complex objective. However, as the process of this research has shown that restricting this exercise to look at one specific area or issue would not lead to a great understanding of the mutual relationship *bodies-human development*. There was a need to find ways to combine an analysis covering such broad range of matters, while not losing focus. The routes taken towards finding this balance were to: (a) Search for a greater understanding about the meaning and current use of the notion of bodily integrity within human development related analysis; (b) Look for approaches that may be useful to carrying on such analysis; (c) Identify “bodily roles”; (d) Identify “context specific” enabling and disabling conditions that influence such bodily roles and integrity; and (e) Find ways to make the bridge between theory and practice.

The main question that inspired this research, to be tackled along the paper is that of how “human bodies” relate to processes of human development. The best direction found to start an attempt to answering this broad question has been to tackle more focused ones. They are: (1) What are some aspects of people’s daily life that are directly related to their bodies? (2) Which enabling or disabling conditions influence these bodily roles?

### **Research Methods**

This research paper is primarily a theoretical exercise of reviewing, questioning and analyzing concepts and approaches. Aiming to strengthen the link between the theory and practice, the research methods applied to this exercise has been a combination of literature review, theoretical analysis and an exploratory study. That way, the method of data collection and analysis consisted of three major steps:



The first step aimed at searching for a basic understanding of how *human bodies* related issues have been placed, so far, in the current literature about human development. The main sources of literature used at that stage were: feminist theories, specially these focusing on the notions of bodily integrity and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR); GLBT’ rights related theories,

specially those on SRHR; general sources of information about human development, specially of the United Nations Development Programs (UNDP) and its annual Human Development Reports (HDR); theories of several authors – to be pointed out in Chapter I.I - who have been debating and proposing theoretical approaches towards a better understanding of processes of human development; and also theories of diverse authors who address the issues referred to the bodily roles pointed out here.

The second step accomplished an exploratory study (see Chapter II and *Annexes A* and *B* for further information) not meant to be statistically representative, but to serve as illustration to the theoretical framework as well as an empirical exercise of looking at practical daily life matters through a “body-sensitive” perspective. Finally, a third and final step constituted of reflecting, understanding and developing a framework of analysis, which can serve as a contribution to further research *towards a body-sensitive approach to human development*.

### ***Boundaries of the research***

To meet the challenge of making a sharp analysis, taking also into account the complexity of the issues in question, priorities had to be set. The scope of this research paper has been defined according to the following boundaries:

- (a) The literature review has focused on analysis from 1970 to the present - the period that the notions of “human development” and, later, of “bodily integrity” have started to gain space in the academic field and in international arenas of debates and negotiations.
- (b) Most of the aspects of life are somehow related to people’s bodies. This research paper does not aim at covering them all, but, rather, to give examples of key ones, that have mostly come up along this research process.
- (c) There would be a big range of micro and macro level private and public policies, related to economic, political and cultural settings, that would enhance substantially the analysis done in this research paper. However, they will not be the focus. The analysis in that sense will be restricted to some examples of how some of the current Brazilian public policies may influence some of the “bodily roles”, pointed out in Chapter I.I
- (d) The exploratory study did not have a scope of being statistically representative. That way, the examples of cases provided here are not meant to be a source for generalization but to be analysed and understood according to the specificities of the context where they take place.

(f) Finally, some analyses – especially in the area of non western biomedicine - suggest including the “spirit”, or the “soul” as part of the conception of human body. This paper argues that this aspect deserves more attention and further research, however, this possible dimension of the human bodies will not be incorporated in the analysis at this point.

### ***Structure of the research paper***

After this introduction, the paper will be divided into four chapters. *Chapter I* will propose that, looking at processes of human development by focusing on “bodies”, rather than only on “people” would require “multiple theoretical lenses” and well as a refined look at core aspects of people’s lives that are directly related to their bodies. The theoretical “lenses” used were: a feminist approach, human rights approach, basic human needs approach, human security approach and capability/capabilities approach. A second section of this chapter will introduce and provide a brief definition of the following *bodily roles*: reproduction, sexuality, mobility, labour, nutrition, communication and leisure.

*Chapter II* will describe the process of applying a “lens of practice” to this research. It will explain, therefore, the context and the method used in the exploratory study, done in the municipality of Calumbi – State of Pernambuco - Brazil. Assuming that such relationship *bodies - bodily roles - bodily integrity -human development* depend on “context specific” determinant factors, *Chapter III* will be divided in three sections, addressing conditions that may act as enabling or disabling within people’s daily life. These conditions are: (1) Bodily Health and Autonomy (2) “Marked Bodies”: intersected inequalities and discriminations (3) Institutional and economic settings. In order to make the analysis more clear, along this chapter, there will be illustrative examples, based on cases collected during an exploratory study. Finally, *Chapter IV* provides a conclusion, highlighting the main findings of this research, as well as posing a reflection on issues to be further explored in further researches.

## **CHAPTER I - Approaches and “Bodily Roles”: theoretical dimensions to looking at bodies within processes of Human Development**

Many theoretical approaches have been developed within the field of human development. Most of them have among its aims to strengthen the focus on “people”. For the purposes of this research, these approaches – also referred here as theoretical “lenses” - seemed not to be able to fully tackle some important issues, and were better used in an integrated manner.

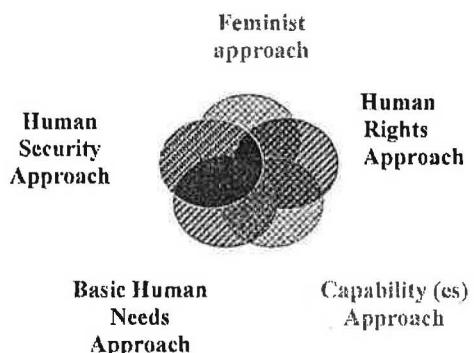
Moreover, such “body-sensitive” perspective to human development required that these “lenses” zoomed into specific aspects of peoples’ lives, directly related to their bodies. The “bodily roles” - as these aspects will be called for the purposes of this research – which will serve as analytical tools to this research are: reproduction, sexuality, mobility, labour, nutrition, communication and leisure. This chapter presents, therefore, a set of multiple and integrated theoretical “lenses” as well as a description of these “bodily roles”.

### **I.I. “Theoretical lenses”: integrating approaches**

The approaches to human development that have been mostly useful along this research were: feminist approach; human rights approach; capability(es) approach; basic human needs approach; and human security approach. They have differences, similarities, and complementarities, which will not be addressed in detail. This section will, rather, aim at pointing out characteristics of each one, bringing to light some of the main advantages that they may offer *towards a body-sensitive approach to human development*.

**Chart I**

⊕ “Theoretical lenses”\*:



\* In this illustrative chart these circle shapes are displayed as being of the same size. However, in fact, they shall be of different sizes, according to the case you are looking at.

**Feminist Approach** - Through its focus on women's bodies, feminists and feminist theories have been pivotal to putting forward a "body-sensitive" approach to human development. The main aspects of such approach, which were greatly useful to this exercise, are, to start with, the very fact that looking at bodies, as inserted in social contexts requires an understanding of how bodies are related to sex-gender systems, which take place within unequal power dynamics. The idea that for changes in social structures to happen (specially in relation to gender structures), a broader and structural system of power dynamics to be understood, tackled and changed, becomes a core necessity.<sup>5</sup> Within this perspective, it is important to be aware that "power" goes beyond strictly physical or clearly violent acts and behaviours. In line with Foucault's ideas, "there is no need for arms, physical violence [...] Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by exercising this surveillance over, and against himself". (Foucault's 1977:155, in Bordo, 1999:252). In that sense, it is crucial to recall that discourses are to be read and understood within this existing power dynamics.

Another aspect, that has been highlighted specially by some sectors of the feminist movement, is that of looking at "human bodies", as encompassing male', female' and inter-sex' bodies and being inclusive of a wide range of gender and sexual identities and orientations. Moreover, feminist theories highlight that power dynamics are related to other intersected inequalities and discriminations based on other social identities, such as race/ethnicity, class, age, religion, nationality among others.

The fact that a private/public divide can be very problematic to processes of generating equality and justice has also been of a great contribution of feminist thought to this analysis. Finally, for looking at bodies, the feminist "core values" related to gender, sexuality, reproduction and health are essential, and always to be looked at within its interrelations with other relevant issues.

**Human Rights (HR) approach** - The Human Rights framework is also of great use to such body-sensitive approach to human development. Sexual, reproductive, labour, nutritional, mobility, leisure, freedom of speech, among other rights, constitute core strategies to guaranteeing the fulfilment of the "rights of the body" and to looking at human development from the perspective posed here. In addition, the idea of a claim (together with that of duties, responsibilities and accountability) enforced by the human rights framework, is central, particularly for it involves and highlights the mutual relationship between persons/individuals and other social structure spheres – other individuals, groups, societies or states (UNDP 2000). In that sense, Human Rights becomes especially useful to the

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<sup>5</sup> Likewise, the idea that "the definition and shaping of the body is the focal point for struggles over the shape of power" (Bordo, 1999:252).

analysis made here, among other reasons, because it is an approach that is, as Petchesky (2005:6) argues:

“Necessary to empower people to make social and gender justice claims and to provide mechanisms for holding governments, private corporations and international agencies accountable. It implies duties, not charity; standards for evaluating programs and services from the standpoint of the needs and well-being of those they were designed to benefit; and mechanisms of accountability for enforcing those standards. [...] Without the rhetorical structure of human rights, however, such translation of bodily claims into social action would be literally unthinkable.”

Moreover, the fact that, for decades, many bodily related rights have been debated negotiated and being through processes of international, regional and national legitimization and application represents the opening of strategic spaces for reinforcing a “body-sensitive” approach. The gradual introduction of principles of bodily integrity and sexual and reproductive health and rights, for instance – within the human rights framework, have been core in that sense. As highlighted by the “Vienna Plus Five” NGO Forum (1998), the debate about gender-based violence, for instance, has shown that:

“the evolving concept of bodily integrity is central to questions of gender-based violence and discrimination. Work on violence against women as a human rights violation has highlighted the way in which women's sexualized bodies are often the target of human rights abuse. [...] A deeper exploration about the relationships among violence, gender and bodily integrity can help extend the analytical boundaries of rights as individually held and socially constituted. It highlights the importance of acknowledging the multiplicity of identity of those pursuing their rights in a public/societal context.”

This and other advancements in terms of bodily integrity rights – have shown that the human rights framework has been crucial to tackle human bodies related matters. However, it is also important to acknowledge that there have been many barriers to legitimizing such bodily rights. One example is the notion of “sexual rights”, not yet fully accepted in the human rights system, having no official, internationally agreed definition.

**Basic Human Needs (BHN) approach** - The notion of human needs has been useful for this exercise particularly as it helps bringing to light that the idea of a “context specific environment” can coexist with that of “universality”. This aspect is rather important to the analysis put forward here especially because the notion of human bodies applied here shall encompass these two dynamics. In other words, core factors that influence ones bodily integrity, such as bodily health and autonomy, are to be seen as being both universal -in the extent that they are present in every human being - and

context specific – as they shall be present, in more or less intensity, according to the context the persons and their bodies are shaped.

Physical health (or physical survival) and autonomy are addressed as “basic human needs” by Doyal and Gough (1991). This paper addresses bodily health – as encompassing physical and mental health, instead of only physical health - and autonomy, as key conditions, which may act as enabling or disabling to people’s bodily integrity and process of human development.

**Human Security (HS) approach** - In the 1994 Human Development Report, the concept of human security was for the first time formalised as an approach. The seven core aspects of human security<sup>6</sup> pointed out by the UNDP in 1994, that encompass a bid range of issues, such as health, food security, socio-political environment, violence of many types, among others, specifically contributed to this analysis for helping to look at how the many bodily roles and context specific conditions are somehow interrelated under the dynamics of security (or lack of it).

The HS approach was also crucial to addressing issues of violence, which represents a major source of human insecurity for people around the world. This broader concept of HS put forward by the UNDP also helps by opening space to addressing violence as beyond physical acts, including, therefore, psychological and mental. One way to see how this approach can be applied to looking at bodies (in this case, specifically on violence against women) is that, as Bunch (2004:3) recalls, a recent study done by the WHO showed that about one third of the girls around the world experience their first sexual encounter in some forced or coercive manner. Reflecting on the processes of socialization of these girls, Bunch sets the question: *what does it embed and reinforce in terms of female insecurity around the body?* This question deserves to be further looked at – also in relation to mens’ and transgenders’ bodies.

By using a body-sensitive perspective, a link can be clearly made between issues of security or “lack of security” with the matters to be addressed in chapter III.II, stressing that, such atmosphere of human insecurity tends to affect some “marked bodies” more than others. That way, this approach is useful to bring to light, for instance, the fact that women with certain characteristics – poor, lesbians, blacks, indigenous, rural women, among others – shall be more vulnerable a environment of insecurity

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<sup>6</sup> These aspects are: economic security (freedom from poverty), food security (access to food), health security (access to health care and protection from diseases), environmental security (protection from the danger of environmental pollution), personal security (physical protection against torture, war, criminal attacks, domestic violence, ...), community security (survival of traditional cultures and ethnic groups), political security (civil and political rights, freedom from political oppression). (UNDP, HDR 1993/1994)

than other women. Similarly, in other cases, the “victims” can be men of specific marginalised identities, who may be more likely to be oppressed by context specific atmospheres of violence, prejudice and disrespect than others.

**“Capability/capabilities” approaches (CA)** - The definition of human development, provided by the UNDP sets the idea that – “Development is about expanding the choices people have to lead lives that they value” (UNPD 2006). This definition relies substantially – as it also does in terms of human rights – in the CA arguing that “fundamental to enlarging these choices is building human capabilities —the range of things that people can do or be in life.” (Ibid)

Nevertheless, in theoretical terms, It is not so easy to clearly state what the CA is, what it contains or not, how these contents are defined, and how it relates to the “development as freedom” and the human development approaches, and moreover, if they stand and fall together or are separable. (Gasper, 2006). But, one way or the other, this notion of capabilities has been very useful - especially as it inspired the idea of bodily roles, to be addressed in the next section of this chapter. And, here we will be referring to both “capability” and “capabilities”<sup>7</sup> approaches, to which the inputs and theories of Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum have been playing important roles.

Sen’s Capability approach represents, in many ways, a great contribution to the analysis put forward here. To start with, the very change of focus proposed by his theories, from a “monetary” to a “freedom” perspective for human development, that Sen have brought up together with the perspective of “enhancing human capabilities”. In that sense, Sen. A (1999:3), argues, specially in his book “development as freedom”<sup>8</sup>, that “focusing on human freedoms is a way to contrasts with a narrower view of development, that identifies development with growth of gross national product, rise in personal incomes, industrialization, technological advance, social modernization, among others”. This thought turns to be a core entry point to intents of developing a body-sensitive approach to HD, for the very fact that it proposes that alternatives for a simplistic and monocular “income–sensitive” perspective prevails. Moreover, this change in focus is also significant, as, by representing a shift in

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<sup>7</sup> To make a distinction between the “capability approach”, that refers to Sen’s work, and the “capabilities approach” that relate to Nussbaum’s is as Gasper (2006:1) states: “Capability” is the full set of attainable alternative lives that face a person; it is a counterpart to the conventional microeconomics notion of opportunity set defined in commodities space, but is instead defined in the space of functioning’s. “Capabilities”, in contrast conveys to more concrete focus on specific attainable functioning’s in a life, and connects to ordinary language’s reference to person’s skills and powers and the current business jargon of ‘core capabilities’”.

<sup>8</sup> Such perspective, that Amartya Sen calls “capability–poverty” (Sen. A, 1999: 87) does not deny the importance of income in processes of human development. In fact, it incorporates the idea that “low income is clearly one of the major causes of poverty, since the lack of income can be a principal reason for a person’s capability deprivation” (Sen, A., 1999: 87)

the way poverty and human development are seen and understood it opens space for other ways in which policies are conceived and implemented, as well as to how human development and poverty are measured..

Sen's focus on human freedoms is also essential as Sen, A. (1999:74) brings the idea of freedoms to the center of human development, implying also that development "requires the removal of major sources of unfreedoms". And, needless to say, bodies are many times the first injured party in actions where freedom are restricted or taken out from people. Finally, two aspects of Sen's theory to be highlighted here are (1) Sen's perspective is highly emphatic on the notion of agency, by presenting "persons as reasoning agents with the rights to make choices" (Gasper, 2006: 3) and (2) Sen's CA also brings in many ways the issue of multiple inequalities, specially in their relation to poverty and capability deprivations.

Nussbaum's Capabilities approach also adds many critical elements. Firstly, the very fact that she introduces "bodily integrity", within her proposed "list of Central Human Functional Capabilities"<sup>9</sup> and provides the accompanying definition, represented a major entry point to carrying out a research aimed at relating issues of the body to human development.

Secondly, while emphasizing women's capabilities, Nussbaum does not lose sight of the notion of "human beings", which is included in her theory as a whole. That way, she sets, in my viewpoint, a pattern of a feminist perspective that include both man's and women's matters, as part of a bigger framework of "human development" and social justice.

Thirdly, in understanding and dealing with the mutual relationship between bodily roles and its (dis)enabling conditions, the distinction that Nussbaum (2000:84-85) makes between "basic capabilities" (as "the innate equipment of individuals that is the necessary basis for developing the more advanced capabilities, and a ground of moral concern"); "internal capabilities" (as "developed states of the person herself that are, so far as the person herself is concerned, sufficient conditions for the exercise of the requisite functions"); and, "combined capabilities" ("defined as internal capabilities combined with suitable external conditions for the exercise of the functions") has been very useful.

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<sup>9</sup> Nussbaum's list of Central Human Functional Capabilities encompass: *Life; Bodily health; Bodily integrity; Senses, Imagination, and thought; Emotions; Practical Reason; Affiliation (A and B.); Other species; Play; and Control over one's environment (Political; Material.)*

Finally, Nussbaum contributes a great deal by incorporating issues that were not highly focused within the analysis of bodily integrity. One is that, as she defines bodily integrity, she adds the capability of being able to “move freely from place to place” – or the bodily roles of mobility, as it will be referred along this paper. And another major contribution comes from her more recent analyses (2006) about “disabilities”, that is an indispensable aspect to any attempt to relating bodies to processes of human development.

Building on all these approaches, the body-sensitive “lens” applied to carrying out this research is a combination of these many aspects mentioned above. Applied in an interrelated manner, they help to look at bodies within social dynamics. In addition, it serves to grasp the mutual relations between individual and society, by addressing, for instance, how human capabilities, needs and rights sit together or how human security, bodily integrity and human development are linked.

Although these integrated lenses have been useful for this exercise, there has been a need for a greater focus and to zoom in these lenses while looking at bodies in a sharper manner. It was in that sense that the notion of “Bodily Roles” – to be addressed now – has came up, along the process of this research paper, as a way to look at bodies interacting in social contexts.

### **I.II. Diverse “Bodily roles”**

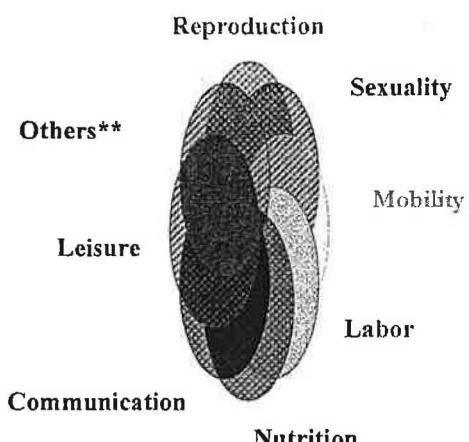
Current literature and analysis about bodily integrity give emphasis to reproduction, sexuality and mobility as the main aspects of bodily integrity. However, there are other aspects of people’s lives that are also directly related to their bodies – such as labour, nutrition, communication and leisure, among others. This list could be broader. Being impossible to deeply address and cover all the possible “bodily roles” at this point, this paper will tackle some of them, not as the exclusive aspects of life related to human bodies but, rather, as key areas to be looked at towards searching for a body-sensitive approach to human development.

Reproduction, sexuality, mobility, labour, nutrition, communication and leisure, are the “bodily roles” to be dealt with in this paper. For analytical purposes, these roles can be named and analysed separately. However, it is to be recalled that, in day to day life, these roles are interconnected (as some examples provided in Chapter III will illustrate).

This section will provide the basic elements for a theoretical understanding of how these roles have been understood and dealt with along this research.

**Chart II**

⊕ “Bodily roles”\*



\* In this illustrative chart these circle shapes are displayed as being of the same size. However, in fact, they shall be different, according to the case you are looking at.

\*\* Although they will not be addressed here, this chart includes “others”, in order to call attention to the fact that there may be other bodily roles.

**Reproduction**, within a human development perspective, may represent much more than the biological fact that women are able to give birth. Within its social dimensions, reproduction and reproductive health go beyond fertility management, encompassing many other issues, related, for instance, to preventing and treating reproductive tract and infections, HIV/AIDS, infertility, gynecological cancers; protection against sexual violence, among many other aspects (Petchesky & Judd, 1998).

This paper also shares the perspective that reproduction should not be a field with focus only on women. Male roles, responsibilities as well as perceptions about reproduction matters are also important issues to be tackled toward human development.<sup>10</sup>

**Sexuality** is another core bodily role, which shall also be dealt with in a broad perspective, going beyond matters directly related to sexual acts. The World Health Organization (WHO) provides

<sup>10</sup> See International Reproductive Rights Research Action Group' (IRRAG) second research on "Men's Responsibility in Sexual and Reproductive-health Decision-Making." (Portella et al 2004).

a “working definition”<sup>11</sup> that encompasses a big range of issues, such as sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction as well as sexuality dimensions regarding thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviors, practices, roles and relationships. And also highlights that “while sexuality can include all of these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed. Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, ethical, legal, historical, religious and spiritual factors.” (WHOa)

Within this big range of matters, sexuality is an area of life that raises many “taboos” and controversies, specially related to issues of sexual orientation, sex work, domestic violence, gender inequalities, mechanisms of birth control, among others. As will be dealt with in Chapter III, this core aspect of life also meets big barriers - rooted in cultural norms, spread out by religious dogmas, family and peer group’s pressures - to being fully exercised.

**Mobility** is also an aspect of people’s daily life that is very much related to people’s bodies. This apparently simple daily act or ability to “move freely from place to place” (as described within Nussbaum’s definition of bodily integrity) can be made more or less difficult (or even be impeded) by many (dis)enabling conditions. Another way to refer to mobility is from a perspective of having or not having “freedom for coming and going” (see Petchesky & Judd 1998). This freedom can be affected by many cultural norms and beliefs, especially these rooted unequal power relations and discriminations of different kinds. It is also a bodily role that is mostly affected by one’s health conditions and level of autonomy, as will be highlighted in chapter III.

**Labour** is also part of the set of roles that human bodies play in life. This research will deal with labour as including domestic work, assuming that the latter should be recognized as a type of labour, specially if seen from a gender perspective, and “recognising that women stand at the crossroads between production and reproduction, between economic activity and the care of human beings, and therefore between economic growth and human development.” (Sen, G. 1995:12, in Kabeer, 2003)

The labour bodily role brings to light many inequalities present in one’s daily life, setting the challenge of tackling power relation. In the case of gender inequalities, for instance, although there is still a long way to go towards reaching equality of opportunities, many women have been advancing in

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<sup>11</sup> These definitions do not represent an official WHO position, and should not be used or quoted as WHO definitions.

terms of this bodily role, by gaining more space, respect and autonomy both in the labour market and at home – in the case of domestic work.

In addition, labour goes much beyond the domestic or even national spheres. It is a bodily related aspect of life that may be linked, through different ways, to broader social spheres, such as macro economic and political structures of trade and market systems.

**Nutrition** is another core aspect of human life. It is about being able to drink water – the most important nutrient for life maintenance - or to have food with enough and adequate nutrients for a good functioning of the body. In a human development perspective, the notion of nutrition may go beyond that. It is to be dealt with throughout a person's life cycle, from foetal to adulthood, as a core right to be fulfilled. It affects all the other bodily roles. And it is very much influenced by the (dis) enabling conditions that are to be addressed in the next chapters.

**Communication** is another important bodily role. According to the perspective put forward here, in which the body includes the mind, this intrinsic aspect of daily life becomes rather indispensable. The notion of communication used here follows the ideas<sup>12</sup> put forward by the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1921- 1997) where the notion of communication is directly linked to the one of Education, involving mutual and dynamic dialogues, embedded in politics and dynamics of power relations.

In this perspective, *communication* can be seen as a “communication for freedom”, or as a “human communication”<sup>13</sup> (Safar, 2001), meaning a non alienating communication, where there are no passive actors, but speakers which exercise acceptance, within a diverse and multicultural dialogues. (Ibid). Moreover, applying this view of communication (as well as education) to a body-sensitive perspective towards human development may also imply that the relationship among people may not be limited to verbal-communication, but also to other ways through which people communicate to each other, for example, via the physical body contact or “body-language”.

**Leisure** is also presented here as a key “bodily role”. This notion is colloquially seen as time that is spent in activities that are not compulsory, also, usually referred to as “free time”. Despite its crucial importance, in the field of human development, this aspect of life still lacks to be further addressed and emphasized, specially in relation to adults and elderly people (as, when applied, it is

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<sup>12</sup> specially in the books “Extension or Communication? (1969, 1973) and *Education as the practice of freedom* (1967, 1974) See website [http://www.wier.ca/~%20daniel\\_schugurensky/freire/freirebooks.html](http://www.wier.ca/~%20daniel_schugurensky/freire/freirebooks.html) for reviews of this books.

<sup>13</sup> See paper entitled in a paper addressing how the notion communication is applied in the thoughts of Paulo Freire.

usually applied to children - as the reference given to the “right to rest and leisure” present in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 highlights). In other words, one’s time spent in resting, playing, dancing, reading, listening to music, among many other activities deserve more attention among the core factors to reaching human development as well as bodily integrity.

#### *Bodily roles interrelated in real life*

For analytical purposes, these bodily roles presented here can be analysed and dealt with separately. However, in the daily life of peoples, they are interrelated in many ways. Several examples could be pointed out here, as illustration of such interconnections. In the case of sex workers, for instance, sexuality is directly related to labour, mobility, reproduction, communication and other bodily roles. Likewise, labour and mobility are directly related, as the first, most of the times, depend of the latter. Leisure is linked to all the other bodily roles, in the extent that a well functioning bodily well-being, greatly depends on moments where the body can rest.

These and many other examples, such as the ones based on cases of Calumbi (to be further addressed in chapter III), helps to make it clearer how these bodily roles are present in an interrelated manner, in people’s daily lives. The chapter that follows explains the process of the exploratory study, which had among its aims, to identify these bodily roles.

## **CHAPTER II - The “lens of practice”: searching for bodily roles in peoples lives (see also Annexes A and B)**

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Theoretical approaches are extremely useful in looking at human development. Nevertheless, looking at such processes uniquely from a theoretical or conceptual perspective seemed not to be enough. That way, a further exercise have been made along this research, to capture, through peoples life histories, how these bodily roles take place in “real life”. This chapter will address the context and method used to carrying out the exploratory study.

### **II.I The context of the exploratory study**

A clear understanding of the cases to be provided as illustrations in the chapters that follow require at least a basic understanding of the context in which the exploratory study took place: municipality of Calumbi, state of Pernambuco, Northeast of Brazil.

Brazil is the fifth biggest country in the world both in area and population. Its land area extends over 8.5 million square kilometres, occupying just under half (47%) of Latin America. (Government of Brazil, 2006). The population is 176.3 million (UNDP, 2004), of which 81% lives in urban areas and the national birth rate, which reached as high as 6.3 in 1960, currently stands at 2.1 children per female. (*Ibid*)

Along the past years, Brazil gained macroeconomic stability, although it is also fact that the internal and external debts have increased substantially. However, real poverty has only moderately declined, and inequality persists - at the end of the 1990s, the richest 1% and the poorest 50% of the population each commanded 10% of national income; 3% of Brazilians hold approximately 66% of the country's arable land - and economic and social status tends to vary by geography, race/ethnicity, gender, among other factors, as legacy of the country's history. (UNDP 2004)

Race compositions<sup>14</sup> are very important to understanding inequalities in Brazil. The research Radar Social showed that Brazil had in 2003, 53,9 millions of people living in poverty situation (meaning that 31,75% of the population lived with a household income of less then a half of a minimum salary per capita). And, among those, the majority is composed by coloured women and man (almost 36 millions). (Werneck, 2005, in Observatorio da Cidadania 2005)

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<sup>14</sup> According to the 2000 census (IBGE 2000) the Brazilians self identified themselves as: white (53,7%), coloured (38,5%), Black (6,2%), yellow or indigenous (0,9%).

Luiz Inácio Lula de Silva - who was elected president in 2002 and just re-elected, for another 4 years - , made the fight against hunger and poverty a national priority when he became President, launching, from the start, a 'Zero Hunger' campaign and social programmes that target causes of poverty and poorest groups. It also sought to resolve some of the land tenure problems (UNDP 2005). Since the mid 1990's, local governments (Brasilia and Campinas states) and, later, the Federal Government, launched poverty reduction programs based on income transfer to poor families (mostly conditioned to school enrolment of children under 14). In the Lula government, these programs have recently been unified and expanded in terms of coverage under the Bolsa Família program - which most of the informants of the exploratory study receive. It is a priority policy targeted to families with a monthly per capita income of up to 100 Brazilian Reais (approximately US\$ 40)<sup>15</sup>, which encompasses programs and actions covering five large areas: food and nutritional security, citizen income, infra-structure programs, emergency actions and citizenship education (Suplicy, 2004). The Social Security system is another important area of income transfer in Brazil. The 1988 Constitution has defined a series of rights based benefits to disabled persons and rural workers that had not previously contributed to their pensions (the Rural Social Security). All the elderly informants of the exploratory study are benefited by this benefit.<sup>16</sup>

#### *Municipality of Calumbi –PE - Brazil*

Getting to the specific context in which the exploratory study took place: Calumbi, a small municipality with a population of 7.079 habitants - 1.914 in the urban and 5.165 in the rural area, respectively (IBGE 2000). Situated in the state of Pernambuco, Northeast of Brazil, Calumbi is located in the "Sertão of Pernambuco" region, the largest region within the State of Pernambuco (occupying 70% of the state territory), in which the economy is based, overall, on livestock farming

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<sup>15</sup> The Bolsa Família benefit implies monthly complement of income that will be equal to R\$ 50.00 plus R\$ 15.00, R\$ 30.00 or R\$ 45.00 respectively, if the family has one, two, three or more children. (the 2006 annual average exchange rate – source: <http://www.x-rates.com> – is that US\$ 1.00 is about R\$ 2.2) The conditionalities are that families will have to show that their children from 0-6 years are effectively having the recommended vaccines, according to the Health Minister calendars; that children are from time to time being weighed and following the nutritional instructions, that the children from 7-15 are really going to school, and that the adults are enrolled in some literacy or skills-building course (Suplicy, 2004)

<sup>16</sup> The *Rural Social Security* foresees universal access to social security to elderly and disabled people, of both sexes, and is conceived as a special concession, in the amount of one national minimum salary monthly, for every elder citizen (55 years, for men and 50 years for women) living in a rural area, and that can prove his/her condition of "family producer", meaning that they work for their subsistence and do not have permanent employees (see Federal Constitution, 1988, art. 195, § 8º).

and subsistence agriculture. Moreover, it is a region that has been historically hindered by the droughts that affect the semi-arid northeast region of Brazil. (PNUD, 2003)



- Municipality: Calumbi
- State: Pernambuco
- Country: Brazil

Source: [http://go.hrw.com/atlas/norm\\_htm/brazil.htm](http://go.hrw.com/atlas/norm_htm/brazil.htm)

In 2000, the mortality rate in Calumbi was of 73,8 (per 1000 live births), life expectancy was 61,8 and the fertility rate was 2,9 (compared to 5,1 in 1991). The illiteracy rate has improved highly in the last decade, going from 62,1 in 1991 to 48,6 in 2000<sup>17</sup>. Income per capita increased 57,18% between 1991 and 2000. Poverty (measured by the proportion of persons with per capita income inferior to R\$ 75,50<sup>18</sup>, equivalent to the half of the minimum salary of August of 2000) diminished 15,94%, from 89,2% in 1991 to 75,0% in 2000. But still remains very high.

Income inequality increased, as the Gini index increased from 0,54 in 1991 to 0,60 in 2000. In 2000, the richest 20% had 0,8 of the income, and the 20% richest 61,5. The percentage of children living in a household with income inferior to half of a minimum salary decreased, from 93,2% in 1991 to 85,8% in 2000. In terms of Human Development Indicators, in the period 1991-2000, the Human Development index for the Municipality (IDH-M) of Calumbi increased 21,85%, from 0,476 in 1991 to 0,580 in 2000. The variable that contributed the most for this growth was Education, with 58,0%, followed by the Income, with 24,0% and by the Longevity, with 17,9%. (PNUD, 2003)

<sup>17</sup> The numbers for 1991 and 2000 are respectively: age 7 to 14: 64,8, 28,9; 10 to 14: 53,3, 18,4; 15 to 17: 33,6, 12,6; 18 to 24: 38,9, 20,2; and over 25: 62,1, 48,6. (PNUD, 2003).

<sup>18</sup> USD 1 = 2,2 R\$

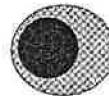
## II.II – Primary data collection method

The main method used to gather data for the exploratory study was the collection of life stories, which were analyzed as to provide illustration of various elements that compose the theoretical frame offered in *Chapter I*. Twenty eight persons were chosen according to some predetermined criteria and were interviewed about their life experiences. This was the main path towards an exercise of bridging theory with practice in the process of this research paper.

### Chart III

#### ⊕ “Lenses of practice”\*:

Listening to People’  
Life history



Identifying Bodily roles (areas of life in  
which body plays a core role) -

In total, 44 persons, earning equal or less than minimum salary per month<sup>19</sup> were involved as informants to this exploratory study. 28 interviews and 5 small workshops (with 6 to 8 participants) were organized, with male and female participants<sup>20</sup>, divided by age groups (6-12; 15-24; 25-45; 46-58; 59-70), race/ethnicity<sup>21</sup> and place of residence (different communities, in that case).<sup>22</sup> This sample was not aimed to be statistically representative, but rather to explore aspects of the lives of people that could sharply illustrate the various elements of the theoretical framework.

The exploratory study could have taken place in any city or community, in Brazil or elsewhere. The place chosen was the city of Calumbi, state of Pernambuco, Brazil, in an area called “Sertão of Pernambuco”. Apart from the fact that its specificities in terms of economic, social and other vulnerabilities, and also its insertions within the current national political context make the “Sertão of

<sup>19</sup> Except for one representative of the city council, who earned more than that.

<sup>20</sup> One of them has only girls as participants. And this was because, originally, the methodology did not encompass persons below 15 years old. However, during the process of the exploratory study, a group of girls aged 6-12 came to ask why they were not part of the research, and demand to have a workshop as well as to be interviewed. That way, it was decided that there would be a workshop for this age group. Unfortunately, there was no more time available to organize a mixed workshop and, in the end, the workshop counted with a presence of 6 girls, within this age group.

<sup>21</sup> According to the IBGE/PNAD 2004, the majority, 58% of the population of Pernambuco is coloured.

<sup>22</sup> Not all the participants of the workshops were interviewed. Like wise, some people that were interviewed had not participated in the workshops.

Pernambuco" an interesting area to run such exploratory study, the choice of this specific region was also largely related to operational matters. Partnerships developed with local social movements<sup>23</sup>, in previous visits to this region, combined with the fact that these partners were willing to assist in carrying on this exploratory study were crucial.

Having chosen the "Sertão of Pernambuco" region for such reasons, other factors also counted for choosing this specific city. In a first meeting with the social movement partners, the city of Calumbi was chosen based on two main criteria: (1) comparison among human development indicators of different cities (Calumbi has one of the lowest indicators of the region - 0,58, while the Brazilian HDI: 0.777). (2) having members of the rural workers local social movement willing and available to assist caring on the logistic aspects of the exploratory study.

The method did not consist in asking predetermined questions but, rather, to looking at the life histories of the informants and search for areas in which their body play a large role - bodily roles. A second attempt was that of identifying some of the enabling or disabling conditions that influences the exercise of these bodily roles. And, this paper is to be one contribution of a process that is likely to continue, in an activity that is planned to happen, gathering all the informants, in 2007.

Having explained the main tools developed to carry on this exercise of combining lenses of theory and practice to look at bodies in processes of human development, the chapter that follows will describe some of the main findings of this exercise, providing examples of enabling and disabling conditions that directly influence people's bodily roles and integrity.

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<sup>23</sup> Some key partners that assisted in carrying on the exploratory study were: Rural Women Workers' Movement (MMTR); Federação dos Trabalhadores na Agricultura de Pernambuco (FETAPE, Federation of the agricultural labours of Pernambuco); Redlac, Latin America and Caribbean Rural Women's network. Rural Workers Trade Union of the city of Calumbi.

## **CHAPTER III - Enabling and disabling conditions directly influencing bodily “roles” and “integrity”**

*Human development is about creating an environment in which people can develop their full potential and lead productive, creative lives in accordance with their needs and interests (UNDP 2006).* This “environment” can act as enabling or disabling conditions to people’s process of human development.

By looking at these conditions from a body-sensitive perspective, there are these that are mostly “bodily external”<sup>24</sup> – such as social, cultural, economic and political dynamics, that occur, by and large, outside the borders of human bodies. And there are the ones mostly “bodily internal”, such as bodily health and ones’ levels of autonomy, agency and empowerment. In addition, there are conditions related to characteristics of people’s bodies, usually related to social identities – based on gender, class, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, and others.

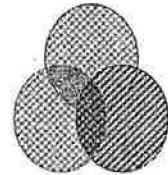
*Chart IV*

This chapter is divided in three sections, addressing the following sets of conditions:

- (1) Bodily Health and Autonomy (as basic human Needs);
- (2) “Marked Bodies”: Intersected inequalities and discriminations;
- (3) Institutional and economic setting

⊕ Enabling/disabling conditions influencing bodily “roles” and “Integrity”\*

Institutional and economic setting



*Marked Bodies:  
Intersected  
inequalities  
and  
discriminations*

*Bodily Health  
and Autonomy  
(as basic human  
Needs)*

\* In this illustrative chart these circle shapes are displayed as being of the same size. However, in fact, they shall be different, according to the case to be looked at.

An in-depth analysis of how “bodies” are affected positively or negatively by these conditions would require further research. The three following sections will aim at providing the enabling and

<sup>24</sup> These notions of “internal” and “external” are applied here in order to highlight the difference of such conditions. However, in fact, they are constantly and mutually influencing each other.

disabling conditions that mostly came up from the process of this research. In order to make the analysis more clear, examples, based on the cases of Calumbi, will be provided along the chapter.

### ***III.I – Bodily Health and Autonomy as Basic Human Needs***

Bodily health and autonomy are presented here as two key conditions that directly act as enabling or disabling towards peoples' bodies and bodily roles. These conditions are dealt with as basic human needs, basing on Doyal and Gough theories (1991:54), according to which, “physical survival and personal autonomy are preconditions for any individual action in any culture [...] those which must be satisfied to some degree before actors can effectively participate in their form of life to achieve any other valued goal.”

This paper supports and builds on this framework proposed by Doyal and Gough, pointing out these two elements as basic human needs, which directly affect people's bodies and human development. However, for this research does not limit to addressing physical bodies, instead of referring to “physical health”, the notion to be used will be “bodily health”, including, therefore, both mental and physical health.

#### ***Bodily Health***

The most basic capabilities for human development are, among others, to lead long and healthy lives (UNDP2006). The notion of health<sup>25</sup> is central to dealing with processes of human development and represents a key factor towards the body-sensitive approach put forward here. Health, specially related to the bodily roles of reproduction and sexuality have been, so far, the main areas of concern when dealing with bodily matters, in the international arena of debates. The interrelation among health, sexuality, reproduction (as well as gender and other issues) have been brought up to the agenda of “development” in the 1980es, when feminists and women's rights activists started to get actively engaged in debates about population growth and fertility rates. It had been an attempt to demystify and challenge the dominant demographic paradigm that blamed widespread poverty and environmental

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<sup>25</sup> “Health”, as defined by the World Health Organization, is “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”. (WHO2006). This broad notion of health is strongly in line with the definition of human body proposed here: while the concept of health shall include mental functions, the notion of human bodies shall include the minds well being.

degradation to women's high fertility, ignorance, and lack of fertility regulation. (Petchesky & Judd, 1998).

Recent analysis point out to a return of such correlation between poverty and "excessive" use of the reproduction bodily role (in other words, high fertility). As Alves & Correa (2005) point out, sectors of the classical neomalthusian argument have come back into the scene (especially in occasion of the Millennium Summit process) arguing that the solution of poverty is to reduce fertility as well as family planning programmes. In Brazil, this simplistic way of seeing poverty (as directly related to increase in fertility) has been gaining place again. During the exploratory study, this view point was also present. A family constituted by 16 people (whose case will be further addressed in the next chapter) have been suffering a lot of prejudice from the other citizens of Calumbi. The reasons given by many community members were, among others that "they are too many and that is why they are poor", as Andressa (12) explained. In that specific case, the arguments that relate high fertility rates to poverty or human development, bodily health and reproduction, are a clear result of lack of information. In this context, such analysis would not apply. In Calumbi, the fertility rate has been dropping significantly, from 5,1, in 1991, to 2,9 in 2000. And, moreover, historical facts show that, at national level, the same tendency can be verified: Brazil's ascending social mobility in the 70es (when poverty declined and the country progressed economically) came together with a rate of fertility well higher than today's: 5,8 born children per woman in fertile age, against 2,1 in 2006. (Lavinas & Correa, 2006).

Another example of way in which bodily health can be directly related to issues of sexuality and reproduction (brought up in two particular interviews) refer to a practice that, is being pointed out by several studies as having been increasingly happening around the world, in relation to HIV and STD's transmission: without telling their wives, married man have sex with homosexuals, do not use condoms, and go back home to do unprotected sex with their wives. Junior, (21, who identifies himself as "gay") mentioned that, in Calumbi, there are many married man making sex with other man but who doesn't usually use condom. Based on his experiences, he said that "if they don't have condom, I have it and I give to them". Tata (21) also mentioned that most of the men she has had sexual intercourse with do not want to use condom, or say that they've "forgotten it". Like Junior, she said she is constantly carrying condoms in her bag, so, in such situation, she can give it to them.

Bodily health is also closely connected to the bodily roles of nutrition and labour (as well as to issues of gender, poverty and other human development related issues). Having been brought up

within poor rural workers' families and environments, most of the exploratory study informants strongly emphasized the fact that they usually start to work when they are still in their childhood, and in a very intensive manner. In that sense, most of them highlighted that, having started to work very hard and very young, when they turn around 30 years old, they already start feeling more difficulties to doing some tasks related to their nutrition and work, such as to fetching water or walking to the land where they work or grow their crops.

The case of Carminha (47) also illustrates how bodily health matters – in her case, specially mental and psychological health – are related, for instance, to her ability to work, to communicate, to “go from place to place” and also very determined by gendered and generational unequal power relations. According to her, the fact that she was a woman, for instance, counted for her father to “give” her to a stranger – and chose to keep her brother, “the man”, with him. This case brings up matters of bodily health, mobility, labour and communication, combined with these of lack of financial resources, dynamics of unequal power relations, among others.



*Carminha suffers from a psychological illness. According to her, this problem has been making it difficult for her to work properly, and also to doing simple actions of life, such as talking to people, going to places nearby.*

*She tearfully assumed that she thinks that these headaches and psychological matters are related to the fact that the women that raised her used to beat her with a thick firewood stick (for reasons such as not having washed the clothes “properly”). She mentioned that she spent six years very ill, lost her memory, and would not remember anything.*

*She was glad to say that she found a doctor that prescribed her a medicine that makes her feel really better, but, still, she regrets the fact that it costs more than her whole monthly salary.*

Cases of people with physical disabilities are also illustrative of how bodily health is closely related to many of the bodily roles. Joao (21), became blind at 16, in a violent situation and, although he expressed comfort with the fact that he has been having help from friends and family to go to places, to do his things, he strongly regrets the fact that he depends on others to “move from place to place”. Another bodily role directly influenced by bodily health is leisure. Being psychologically and mentally healthy is a core determinant to enjoying free time, doing things we may choose to do. The

same happens to the other way round, reserving time for leisure in daily life, also helps keeping peoples bodily health and integrity.

### *Autonomy*

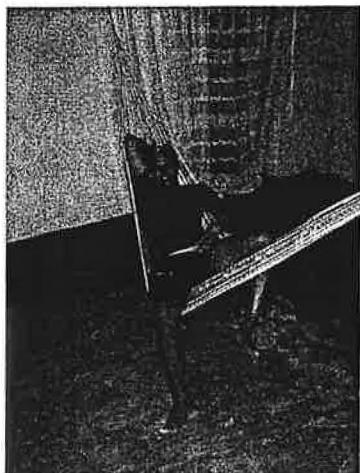
“Our bodies belong to ourselves”. These words of order spread out by feminists in the 70es brought to light that woman around the world were demanding to fully exercise their freedom and self determination. But, for that to happen, contemporary feminists argued that a non-negotiable premise of “autonomy” – in the sense that women need to have their own “project” and “existence” - is needed. (Ávila & Correa 2003)

Autonomy will be generally referred here as “the ability to make informed choices about what should be done and how to go about doing it” (Doyal and Gough 1991: 52). In addition, it will be argued that, for autonomy to be reached, mental and psychological functions - included in the notion of “bodies” put forward here – are essential. Autonomy is pointed out here as a basic human need, exactly because it strongly determines every action (or non action) that people take in life, which are directly related to their bodies.

Autonomy also refers to one’s level of empowerment, which here is not deal with in terms of a “zero-sum” perspective of power relations, meaning that one group’s increase in power necessarily involves another’s directly proportional loss of power. Rather, it sees individual and collective processes of empowerment as done through all people and to the benefit all people. This shift from a zero-sum perspective implies, for example, that men shall also benefit from the results of women’s empowerment, specially for having the chance to live in a more equitable and just society. And the same would apply to other identity groups which have also not been benefiting from current systems of unequal power relations.

Both “autonomy” and “empowerment” are in line with the notion of “agency”, meaning that a person shall be able to be an “agent” in their lives, specially for deciding and choosing what to be and to do to themselves, their lives, their bodies. The notion of agency is useful for a body-sensitive perspective especially as it highlights the mutual relationships among claims, duties and responsibilities, helping to grasp the mutual relation individual-society or how “individual” bodies are constantly influencing and been influences by social dynamics.

Along the exploratory study in Calumbi, there were clear cases in which empowerment processes have been determinant for people to get more autonomy and agency, particularly in relation to some bodily roles. Adriano (21) expressed how important it was for him to gain what he called “self confidence”, in order to “come out” and accept his homosexuality. He explained this process by saying that:



*When we are to “come out” we feel a bit ashamed. But time goes by, you tell someone today, this person tells the others [...] I started accepting it [homosexuality] with time. I went through a lot of humiliation, but I sustained myself [...] to be who we are we have to go through lots of barriers. I’ve gone through them. There was a time that I looked like a clown for people [...] Before, I used to lower my head. Today, I don’t do it anymore. I raise my head, because the more we ‘lower our heads’, the more people put us down [...] Now I say [to people] who I am [and] they get used to the way I am. Today, If someone comes to me and ask: are you a homosexual? I say Yes, I am, I say it full of pride.*

Tata (21) - expressed how important it was for her, the process of getting “stronger” along her life, marked by suffering and struggles for finding ways for subsistence and survival. Cleide (30) is another example of how empowerment and autonomy directly influence many bodily roles. Actually, she is a strong example of a woman that have been through sexual and psychological domestic violence and had courage to break the public/private divide and speak out. Her interview got to happen after many people had mentioned her as being one of the few women that have had courage to say in public that she was suffering domestic – physical, sexual and psychological – violence. Her history has to do with sexuality, reproduction, gendered power relations, poverty, cultural norms, prejudices as well as to the risks of a “private/public” divide. Her story is about her process of empowerment, of becoming an autonomous agent to gear her life. As she explained:

*Since I was a child, I have been living a suffered life. In order to survive, we had to work hard [...]. I married very young, spent many years married [...] Apart from physical, there was psychological violence. You know, there are things a person say that hurts more then a slap on your face [...] I got depressed, was put into a mental clinic, as if I was crazy [...] the doctors said I could even die. I spent 3 years very ill, because I suffered and kept it quiet. [...] With time I started facing it, had courage and asked for the divorce.*

*First we have to like ourselves, to then like the others. I got into a depression because I only cared about the others. I suffered many prejudices because people said that married women could not do this [ask for a divorce] [...] it has been one year since we got divorced. I have a boyfriend, he has a girlfriend. I suffered a lot but for the effort I made, today I can say I am victorious!*



Yet, it is to be highlighted that autonomy is not a linear process that can be dealt with in a simple either/or manner. There is always to be contextualization. Moreover, a person can be autonomous at certain aspects of life and not so much at others. Case of sex workers, for instance, brings to light this “agent”-“victim” mutual dynamics. One case that I came across in Calumbi is useful to understanding such dichotomy. A sex worker, who has asked not to reveal her name, has expressed with pride the fact that she does sex work not only as a way to get money to survive, but because she likes it. For her, sex work is a way to combine “enjoying” and “making money”, as she described. However, she also highlighted that, although she has currently been making sex work, and enjoys it, she does not feel “strong enough” to tell her family about it. As she pointed out: they’d never accept. In this case, for instance, taking into account that she speaks proudly about it, despite the disabling context she is placed, where prostitutes are highly discriminated, she can be seen as a strong women (instead of as a “victim”) that is expressing an unusual sense of agency, breaking strong cultural norms in order to carry on doing what she finds it is best for her at the moment.

In fact, the issue of sex work have came up in other interviews as a major case of prejudice in Calumbi, sometimes reinforcing a “victimization” perspective and others, a notion of agency and autonomy. On one hand, Tata (21) placed the opinion that prostitution is not a “valuable work”. On the other hand, Chico Bras (60) thinks that “if these women [prostitutes] are intelligent, they may save money and manage to make her life better”. For him “it is also a profession [that] is only worth if it is to receive a lot of money”.

Another example relating agency, autonomy with bodily health, mobility and other issues, is the case of Joao (21), mentioned previously. In terms of agency, what can be highlighted about him is that, even if regretting having got blind and being dependent on others in terms of mobility, he also strongly emphasised in his interview that problems should not “let us down”. That way, he spent a big part of the interview stressing that he still can do many good things in life, such as, for example, playing musical instruments. In fact, he highlighted that, for having lost the vision sense and enhanced others (specially the hearing), he has been able to enhance substantially his skills in playing two musical instruments - accordion and guitar.

Such conditions of bodily health and autonomy are part of a bigger range of factors that strongly determine ones actions and lives. Apart from pursuing to be healthy or autonomous, people of specific identity groups have a further challenge of breaking barriers put by society. They have to “remove the un-freedoms” (Sen.A 1999:74), related to fact that their bodies are “marked”, by characteristics such as class, gender, race/ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and others. The next section will zoom-in these “marked bodies” and use the framework of intersectionalities to further look at how the processes of creating these “unfreedoms” take place and what are some possible reasons for that.

### **III. II – Marked bodies: intersected inequalities and discriminations as barriers to human development**

People have bodies that are marked<sup>26</sup> by gender, race, ethnicity, caste, sexual orientation, nation and other social identities. (Correa, 2002). A body-sensitive approach requires a further understanding about the logic of the social structures that reinforce and perpetuate the multiple oppressions that certain identity groups face. Such oppression are rooted in multiple inequalities that get manifested in the form of sexism, homophobia, racism and other discriminations and prejudices. These dynamics constitute strong barriers to processes of human development.

The framework of “intersectionalities” helps understanding, analyzing and tackling such matters. It may serve as “an analytical tool for studying”, as a “methodology for development and human rights work”, as a “feminist theory”, a “methodology for research”, and moreover, as “a springboard for a social justice action agenda”. (AWID, 2004). Its main message is that of calling attention to the fact that class, gender, race, color, ethnicity, caste, religion, sexuality, nationality, age,

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<sup>26</sup> See footnote 1 or visit website [www.dawnorg.org](http://www.dawnorg.org) for further information.

among other social identities are present in peoples lives, in intersected ways. In a gender analysis, for example, this framework can be useful to address the ways in which racism, patriarchy, class, and other systems of discrimination create inequalities that structure the relative positions of women. (Ibid)

In regard to women's identity groups, Crenshaw, K (20005) explained the use of the "intersectionalities" framework<sup>27</sup> by stressing that there are "differences that make a difference", referring to the ways in which various groups of women experience discrimination differently. According to her:

"While it is true that all women are in some way subject to the burdens of gender-discrimination, it is also true that other factors relating to women's social identities such as class, caste, race, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, and sexual orientation are "differences that make a difference" in the ways in which various groups of women experience discrimination. These differential elements can create problems and vulnerabilities that are unique to particular subsets of women, or that disproportionately affect some women relative to others".

Cases of Calumbi, help bringing to light how these intersected inequalities, vulnerabilities and discriminations take place in the daily life of people.

### *Intersected inequalities*

*A family that people in Calumbi nicknamed by "Coloral" [a word that is applied to certain spices that make the food look "reddish"] consist of 16 people: 14 children (should be 21 but 7 have died before or after birth), the mother and, the father (not counting the grandchildren).*

*Whenever the issue of prejudice came up during the exploratory study in Calumbi, the case of this family was brought up, usually referred to as the major example of a whole family that has been currently been discriminated and marginalized in this municipality.*



Maria and Valdeci (the parents) came from a very poor family and, like their parents, are both illiterate. Maria, is "coloured" (as she identifies herself) and Valdeci, the father, is "white" (or

<sup>27</sup> The relevance of applying the framework of "intersectionalities" to analysis, research and also to design and implementation of policies gained force during the process of preparation to the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerances (WCAR, Durban, 2001) in which state representatives (as well as non-governmental organizations and social movements) got together to debate, negotiate and agree on a document regarding these themes.

“Galego”, a word that refers to people from the region of “Galicia”, currently used to refer to “white” people). Some of the children have white skin and blond hair and others are coloured, with black hair. None of the family members have a stable job. They get food for their subsistence by working as “hired” - meaning that they work in a piece of land, and for each 5 sack of crops they get out of plantation, one will be given to the land owner.

This seemed to be a clear case where a body-sensitive approach, combined with the use of a intersectionality framework are useful to grasp a further understanding. From every perspective one may look at this case there are strong and determinant factors related to their bodies that represent barriers to carry on a “life they’d value” (UNDP 2006). Valdeci, the father, explained that people put the nickname of his family of “coloral” and everywhere they go people look at them, and even beat and pull the hair of their children. Maria, said that she and her husband do not mind, they pretend that they are not listening. But, as she enforced, her children do mind, and end up not wanting to go out, nor to go to school, because people do not respect them. This situation restricts significantly their mobility, or their freedom to come and go.

#### *Different opinions about this case*

There are different opinions about the causes of the prejudice this family has been suffering. As I left the house of this family and took the school transport to return to the village I was based, some of the students that were in the school truck started asking me what I was doing in the house of the “Coloral” family. As I asked them what was wrong with going there, they answered that a lot of people in Calumbi have prejudice with this family. One of the girls, Pamela, 12 years old, agreed to give me an interview, and, she explained that “they have prejudice with this family because some are ‘galegos’, have blond hair and some are ‘coloured’ and have black hair”. As I asked her who have told her and the others not to get close to this family she said, “it is people in the street, that, when the children of this family are passing by, start yelling at them: ‘Coloral’!, ‘Coloral!’ [...] some also say swear words. They [the children] keep quiet, but sometimes they answer to them”.

Another opinion about this case was raised by Tata (21). For her, the prejudice against this family is also because of their poverty situation, particularly as they are usually seen in the streets, eating things from the garbage. Moreover, another reason pointed out by many informant for the prejudice against this family, is that they think that it is not right that “the mother only have children to

get money" (as expressed by Andressa, 12, referring to the state policy of maternity-salary<sup>28</sup>, in which the mother gets every time she has a baby). Yet, during the interview, Maria, the mother, mentioned that, even though people think they are too many, she stressed that having her children was, for her, the best thing that happened in her life.

#### *Other "differences that make a difference"*

The same logic applies to other identity groups. Sexual orientation, for instance, may be a major "difference that makes a difference" among men. Many cases have come up in the exploratory study, which illustrate such matters. Adriano (21) stressed how much prejudice him and his brother have had to face along the process of "coming out" and accepting their sexual orientation. And, while telling his life history, he pointed out that he doesn't notice any prejudice when he goes to Calumbi - fact that, in his opinion is mainly related to the fact that he does not live there. For him, if he and his brother lived there, there would probably be more prejudice. At this point of the interview, he gave an example that clearly illustrates how some "differences" really make a strong "difference":

"My brother dresses up like women [...] the prejudice is bigger [comparing to him, who do not like to "dress up" like a woman...] And, it is even bigger if the homosexual does not look well in a women's clothes. Even the other "gays" laugh at them, because it looks neither like a man nor like a woman."

The case of Nayara (21), who identifies herself in terms of sexual orientation as "lesbian"), also shows this multi layered structure of prejudice. For her, there is a lot of prejudice against homosexuals in Calumbi (although she feels that it is getting better) and it is both against lesbians and gays. However, she highlighted that, in her perception, stronger prejudices related to sexual orientation comes from heterosexual man to lesbian women, as the first do not agree with the idea that women can prefer to be with other women than with man. Another way in which the "intersectionality" between sexuality and gender takes place is related to sex work. According to Junior (21), for instance, female sex workers suffer more prejudice than "gays" sex workers of Calumbi. In his opinion, they suffer prejudice for being prostitutes but also for being woman.

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<sup>28</sup> They have to have worked, even if of discontinued form, in the 12 immediately previous months to the birth or to the concession of crammed medical that recommend the distance of the work (Law 8213/91). This law (number 7360/06) was recently changed by the Brazilian Senate, reduces for ten months the time that the rural worker have to prove activity in order to get the concession of salary-maternity.

These intersected inequalities are present in the *Sertão* and are to be further analysed within structural and interrelated dynamics of unequal power relation that affect many bodily roles simultaneously. As Thayer, M (2001:2) points out, while describing the region where the exploratory study took place, in her thesis article entitled *Transnational Feminism: Reading Joan Scott in the Brazilian Sertão*:

“[on one hand] an agricultural landscape where precarious subsistence farmers and cattle-raising latifundia still seem linked in semi-feudal relations, and, on the other, a patriarchal family structure where women’s back-breaking labor is made invisible, while both her sexuality and her mobility are strictly controlled.”

The body-sensitive perspective applied in this section, with specific zoom on these “marked bodies” have provided us an idea of how these multiple inequalities and prejudices constitute a great barrier to reaching bodily integrity and human development. These and many other cases that combine discriminations of various forms, lack of information, unequal power dynamics are part of a puzzle that is just to be resolved with structural changes. And, for this broad social transformation to happen, social, cultural, political and economic dynamics of power are also to be understood and tackled, as will be addressed now.

### **III.III – Institutional and Economic Setting Influencing Bodily Roles and Integrity**

This chapter will deal with socio-political and economic conditions – and how they may affect one’s bodies and bodily roles. It will be done by pointing out examples of how *social Institutions* – understood here as societal norms, codes of conduct, traditions, laws and state policies and other social mechanisms that strongly influence people’s behavior – influence bodily roles and integrity. Economic dynamics will be addressed mainly by providing examples of how some of the income transfer policies, currently implemented by the Lula government, influence some bodily roles.

#### ***State Policies and Bodily Roles***

Nation States or governments are powerful social Institutions. They can conceive and implement policies that powerfully act as enabling or disabling in peoples’ lives and bodily roles. In an attempt to grasp a better understanding of the relationship between *State policies* and *bodily roles*, this section will point out some of the social policies that have been implemented by the currently Brazilian

government and provide some examples – based on the cases from Calumbi - of how such policies can influence, positively or negatively, the diverse bodily roles.

A social policy that is based on providing financial resources to people is the set of Income Transfer Programs (also called CTT – conditional cash transfer), that are currently one of the main strategies used by the Lula government to tackling poverty and inequality. These have clear effects on people's bodily roles. For instance, most of the informants of the exploratory study receive the Bolsa-Familia benefit and their life history provided examples of how these policies directly affect some bodily roles. In this specific context - where most of the people still live under the fear of getting in a situation of hunger, because of the droughts that historically affect the semi-arid northeast region of Brazil, this benefit can be pointed out as having a positive impact, specially in the bodily role of nutrition.

Yet, despite this positive short term effect, studies have been showing that such benefits have been failing to tackle more structural social structure barriers. An example that can be given here to illustrate this challenge is the current dilemma that the family of Maria and Valdeci's have been facing, in order to continue receiving the Bolsa Familia program benefit. They want their children to go to school to get educated and to seek for a "better life". However, their children do not want to attend school for the fact that the other students "punch them, pull their hair, and keep teasing them: 'Coloral!', 'Coloral!'". A dilemma is then set: on one hand, the whole family needs the income provided by Bolsa-Familia for their daily nutritional subsistence.<sup>29</sup> But, on the other hand, Maria and Valdeci do not force their children to go to school, to face disrespect, prejudice and discrimination.

A similar challenge may apply to tackling gender inequality. Although the program accomplishes a conditionality of giving the benefit directly to the women, - explicitly aiming to tackle gender unequal power relations -, some of the exploratory study informants have said that, many times it happens that the husbands are the ones that control the money. Many women get the money, but, by the time they get home with it, they are asked or forced to give it to their husbands. Both situations are not exceptions that take place only in Calumbi. And, in a country where such diverse inequalities impede people's process of human development, deserves more attention.

Another Bolsa-Familia action highlighted by the informants, and that has its direct impact on children's ability to have leisure is the PETI (National Program for Eradication of Child Labour). This

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<sup>29</sup>They are just entitled to receive the full benefit (R\$ 45, 15 for each child, with a maximum of 3 children per family) once at least three of their children are attending school.

program aims at reducing child labour by creating an after-school program as an enabling condition to guarantee children rights to leisure and recreation. It does so by providing a monthly benefit for the family (an extra income that comes as part of the Bolsa-Familia benefit). This program seems to act positively in such a context, where children usually start working very early. As it was the case of Ze Gordo (52 years old) who could not enjoy much his childhood, for having started to work when he was 9 years old.

Apart from such programs, conceived as benefits and of those that target more specific matters, there are programs that are longer term oriented, which represent rights, based on the national legislation. One example of such policies, apply to the elderly informants of the exploratory study: the Rural Social Security. This program has been conceived as a special protection for the family's rural production and several researches have demonstrated its strong positive impact on the rural poverty and inequalities. Being a program based on people's professional trajectory, it has been successful in tackling gender gaps as well as has an impact on enhancing self esteem of the elderly women and men (see Lavinas and Dain, 2005)

The interview with Dionisio (70) and Duca (68) was very illustrative of how the Rural Social Security has been important for them, especially as, because of their age, they no longer feel healthy enough to work as they used to. And, in addition, they have been able to help their family.



*Dionisio, 70 years old, explained that his 10 children worked in the land since they were young. The whole family would leave home daily at 4am, walk about 4 km to get to the plantation and return home in the evening. Duca, his wife (68), would have already prepared the night before the food for them to take to the field. During their interview, it was strongly emphasized that the Rural Social Security has changed the life of their family, as they now can at least guarantee the "every day" food and that the children can go to school.*

Another example of policy, that constitute a "rights", directly related to bodily role of reproduction is the "maternity-salary" (see footnote 27 for further information), policy that consist of a minimum salary, provided by the government to poor pregnant women. This policy has been showing to have positive effect in terms of reproductive health matters. However, some policy makers are still of the opinion that it works as an incentive to increase poverty, through encouraging the increase of fertility rates.

### *Other Social Institutions influencing bodily roles*

Apart from the State, there are other social institutions that also serve as an “external” factor to influence people’s bodily roles and integrity. One example, which has come up in many interviews, is the powerful influence that the Church, or the institution of “Religion”, has on people’s perceptions about reproduction matters. Many informants mentioned, for example, that women’s sterilization and use of contraceptives to prevent pregnancies are in many cases not perceived as a “right action to be done by religious people” (Cuca, 39). Bira (29) expresses his catholic-based belief that preventing pregnancies is a sin. However, said that he breaks the [Gods’] “law” because of income constrains. Moreover, in his interview it also got clear that, he is the one to decide whether his wife will get pregnant or not, demonstrating a clear power over his wife’s body. About his opinion about contraceptives to prevent pregnancies he pointed out that:



*“In my own view, it is a sin [...] I myself do not “order” my wife not to take the pills, but I do think it is a sin. I think that if you get married, you should have as many [babies] as God wishes. You see me, if I had [financial] conditions to raise my children, I would not let my wife prevent. I do not do it because I can’t afford it [Having many children]”*

Peoples’ perceptions about sexuality issues are also deeply influenced by religious beliefs. During the interview with Adriano (21), he mentioned that “people say that gays do not go to heaven. We do not know if gays or prostitutes go to heaven, only God knows”. Moreover, he explained that some people in his community think that “homosexuals” are persons who incorporate spirits (that they call “pomba gira”, based on the Umbanda afro Brazilian religion) and that “the evangelic keep telling us to go to church, so that they can clean our souls [...] I don’t believe these things”, he said. Edvanio (32) who is also catholic has a strong opinion about homosexuals. For him, “the right” thing would be that “gays” should not exist. In his opinion “if God wanted man with man, he would not have created the women”.

The Family is also a social institution that is well known for influencing people's beliefs and actions. In relation to sexuality, for instance, one of the informants, who is very close to the family of Adriano and Nikita - two brothers who identify themselves as homosexuals - recalled the moment when she and their family found out that their sons were not heterosexuals: "I got sad to know that they [the two brothers] were not happy. Their parents made an effort to change them, they beat them a lot, but I do not know what they have. It is illness, isn't it? Mental illness. And there is no doctor to make them go back to how they were. The parents didn't allow, but one put earring, and the other did the same [...] His dad was very disappointed to have two 'gay' sons".

Peer groups also play an important role in influencing people's bodily roles. Such groups, usually based on some identity (gender, age, social status, interests, among others) represent a major influence in people's socialization processes. Regarding male reproduction, for example, some informants mentioned that most of the men in that region don't like to do the prostate exam – which is key to male reproductive health. The main reason given was that this exam is usually associated to homosexuality. Peer groups may also influence ones' mobility. The case of Tata (25) is illustrative of how male peer groups have restricted her "freedom to come and go":

*Tata, 25 years old, shows how gendered cultural norms influence ones freedom to come and go. She regrets the fact that, around two years ago, she decided not to go to the parties in the city of Calumbi anymore, because, as she explained, she would go to parties and men would pinch her, point their finger at her. According to her, it had to do with the fact that, in Calumbi, men think that, if you separate from your husband (that is her case), women become "Mulher da vida" [Brazilian slang, translation would "women of life", referring to prostitutes].*



Similarly, Junior (21) who identifies himself as a homosexual pointed out that, despite the existing prejudice, he continues going to parties, especially when he is presenting with his musical and dancing group. Nevertheless, his mobility would be restricted, according to him, if he wanted to go out "during the day" dressed up like a woman. It is fine for people in the community if he goes out with "normal" closes anytime of the day, but not "dressing up" – that is just "allowed" during his presentations.

Another social institution that have been gaining more and more power world wide and that influences people's ideas, behaviours, as well as bodily roles is the Media. In Calumbi, the two main Media vehicles that I came across were the television and the radio<sup>30</sup>. In relation to the role of television – which 79,3% people in town have - in influencing people's lives and bodily roles, it can be given as an examples, the fact that, during the interviews with the group of girls aged 7 to 12, sexuality related matters were highlighted, specially as they said that it was in the TV that they have seen, for the first time, a couple making sex.

Last but not least, another social institution to be recalled here are the social movements. In the Sertão Region, for instance, for more then two decades, rural workers movement - such as the Rural Women Workers' Movement (MMTR) and the Rural Workers Federation of Pernambuco (FETAPE) -, have been strongly working on disseminating information on citizen rights and also doing specific target actions. In terms of bodily roles, one example of action is the cisterns governmental program, which has been successfully implemented in partnership with local social movements and that has been core to guaranteeing people's nutrition, through guaranteeing access to water. Another example where social movements played a important role in guaranteeing "the rights of the body" is the case of Cleide, whose case the local social movements played a important role in providing support and information, in order to helped her process of having courage and deciding to ask for the divorce, after many years of silence, about the domestic violence she had been suffering.

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<sup>30</sup> As many people are still illiterate in that region, newspapers are not a major source of information

## CHAPTER VI - CONCLUSION

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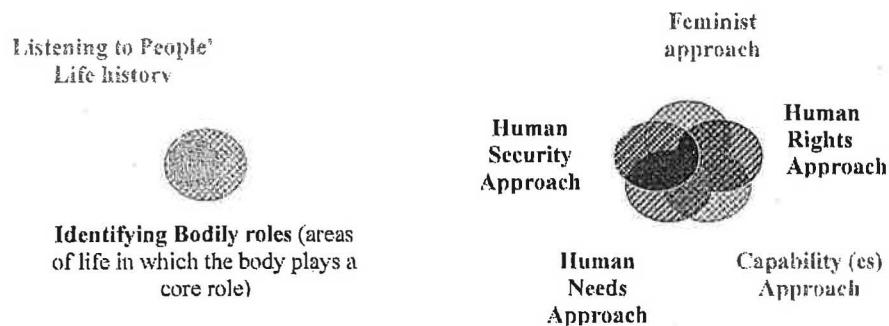
This paper has been an exercise of looking at human development by paying special attention to people's bodies. Many routes were taken towards meeting its general objective of finding ways look at bodies within processes of human development. A first stage was to acknowledge, from the start, that a "body-sensitive" approach was needed. Another important step was that of recognizing the relevance of the principle of bodily integrity as a core part of such approach. A further step taken was that of coming up with the notion of "bodily roles", as a possible way to refine the analysis and give it a greater focus on the diverse aspects of peoples' lives that are directly related to their bodies.

Apart from this broad objective, other more specific ones were tackled along the paper. The objective of identifying useful approaches was dealt with in Chapter I. This same chapter has covered a significant range of "bodily roles". Towards meeting the objective of finding ways to make the bridge between theory and practice, Chapter II presented the methodology used for carrying on the exploratory study. The objective of identifying "context specific" enabling and disabling conditions that affect people's bodies and bodily roles was dealt with by using a body sensitive lens, zooming in three sets of conditions, which appeared with stronger intensity along the process of this research. Finally, the objective of reflecting on how these several factors are interrelated was tackled, to some extent, along the paper, especially in the last chapter, which provided examples of cases in which these interrelations clearly take place.

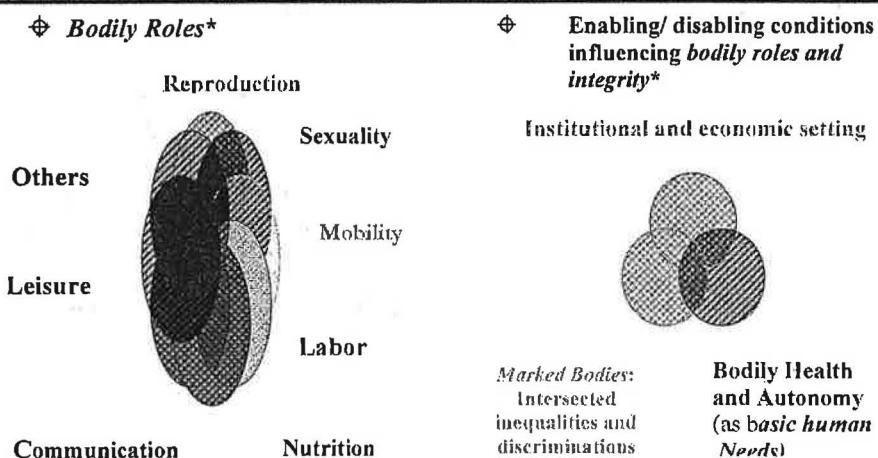
That way, the broad question that inspired this research (that of how "human bodies" are related to processes of human development?) was tackled along the research, to the extent that its scope permitted, and have, as a first attempt to answer this question, the combination of factors illustrated in framework of analysis displayed below. As to the specific questions – related to (1) significant aspects of people's daily life that are related to peoples bodies and (2) identifying some enabling or disabling conditions that influence these bodily roles –, they were dealt with, specially in chapters I, in the case of the first question and chapter III, for the latter.

## Framework of analysis\*

### Multiple lenses of analysis\*:



### Towards a “body-sensitive” Approach to Human development



The ranges of issues addressed in this framework are clearly broad and complex. This research has led –as predicted - to some reflections and suggestions, rather than definitive findings.

\* For these illustrative charts the circle shapes are displayed as being of the same size. However, according to the analysis they shall differentiate, according to the context and the case you are looking at.

## Reflections and suggestions

Along this exercise, reflections for further research have emerged. A first one is the confirmation of the assumption which inspired this research: peoples' bodies constitute a major locus for diverse and interconnected actions of their daily life, and, therefore, deserve attention, in the field of human development.

Another major reflection, which has come up along this process, was that of whether using a body-sensitive approach to human development would differ from a "people-sensitive" way of seeing it. In that sense, this research has lead to a strong belief that a body-sensitive approach can be very useful, particularly as it helps bringing to light bodily health and bodily "marks" as determinant conditions to people's process of human development.

A third direction in which this research have strongly pointed to is the development of conceptual tools to help carry out further research in this area. In that sense, this research confirmed the usefulness of the principle of bodily integrity to carrying on such analysis, and, moreover, that bodily integrity should not only be seen as a means to human development but also as an end in itself. Yet, although bodily integrity constitutes a great advancement towards a body-sensitive approach, this research has identified aspects that would directly relate to bodily integrity but that have not been addressed within its current definition. For instance, if you look at the bodily roles pointed out here in terms of capabilities, Nussbaum's definition of bodily integrity (that refers to sexuality, reproduction and mobility) could be broadened, in order to incorporate other bodily related capabilities, such as that of being able to have moments of leisure, to work (including domestic work), to freely communicate, to be well nourished, among many others<sup>31</sup>.

Finally, this research has also lead to reflecting on matters that have been subject of debate along the past decades: which areas to prioritize towards human development analysis and policies. In that sense, from this research, the following question can be put forward as inspiration for further reflection: should there be a hierarchy among bodily roles in terms of policy priorities? In light with the cases from the Sertão region pointed out along this paper and having the Brazilian current political framework as an example, an attempt towards a body-sensitive approach to human development would imply that such questions are further understood and answered. The interview with the Calumbi city councilor, Antonio Elias (56) was very illustrative on this matter. According to him, public

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<sup>31</sup> In that sense It is to be reminded that some of this aspects are already included in other parts of Nussbaum's list of human basic capabilities.

policies towards social development should take “income and food” as the pillars, as “the structure of the building”. And his opinion is not an exception; it is actually shared by many other policy makers from local to international spheres. In fact, this idea has been, many times, the major guidance for conceiving policies in the current Brazilian and others governments.

This is a complex matter that will not be deeply addressed here. However, seen from a “body-sensitive” lens, some aspects of it can be highlighted. The current Brazilian social policies, as well as the examples extracted from the cases of Calumbi indicate a clear hierarchy among bodily roles, as possible targets of social programs. Efforts of enhancing nutrition level, for example, are usually dealt with under the assumption that other developments will “naturally” follow. The Bolsa Família, for instance, limits its sexuality and reproduction actions to a conditionality of pre-natal health care. This and other examples invite us to reflect on a old but still unresolved matter: although it is agreed that food is the first priority to keep one alive, can it be justified that sexuality, reproduction, mobility, labour and other issues are in some cases not given priority or even disregarded within the main governmental policies to tackle poverty and inequality?

#### *Refining a “macro-micro” lens*

Although the scope of this research does not include macro/micro socio political and economic conditions that influence bodily roles, this exercise shows that they are spheres that deserve to be further looked at, from a body-sensitive perspective. The impact of macro and micro national or international politico-economic matters are a core part of a mutual cycle, that goes from local to global spheres and it has powerful effects on peoples’ bodies and bodily integrity. One example of how this global-local dynamics may take place are the international agreements made among Nation-states. Such agreements – many times made under unequal power relations – have direct impact on the various bodily roles addressed in this paper. On sexuality issues, for instance, market forces and powerful countries have been using their economic and political power to impose conservative policies. An example is that, since 2001, the Bush administration has been imposing conservative policies, based on moral beliefs, specially related to prostitution and homosexuality, through a set of conditionalities placed for other countries that want to receive part of the funds of the US development aid. (see Girard, 2004 for further information).

And such relationships go far beyond relation between states. By using a body sensitive approach to human development, it is important to acknowledge the interrelations that occur among

many areas at macro level. The so called “fundamentalism of the market”, for example, joins the fundamentalisms of ethnic, religious and moral right-wing groups in dismantling women’s livelihoods, economic security and control over their lives and bodies. (UNFPA 2002, in global health watch 2005). That way, to carrying on an analysis of this kind, it is rather relevant to incorporate a “local-global lens”, not to lose sight that, for example, as Farmer 1999 and Stillwaggon 2001 recall, a persons bodily health might be linked to the current tendency of imposition of user fees in the health sector, and to perpetuating a “vicious cycle”, that involves, unaffordable charges for health care, also resulting in greater malnutrition, hence worse health and greater poverty – specially under conditions of gender subordination for women and girls (see Farmer 1999; Stillwaggon 2001, in Petchesky 2005b). These and many other interrelated dynamics are to be acknowledged, towards any attempt to enhance people’s process of human development.

Going back to the micro level in which the exploratory study took place, it shall be brought to light that, this mutual “micro-macro” dynamics also take place in proactive ways, and can serve as an enabling condition towards social change. As Thayer, M (2001:1) points out, about the region in which the exploratory study took place:

“In the global imaginary, the vast, semi-arid reaches of the Northeast Brazilian *Sertão*, or ‘backlands’, have long been synonymous with poverty, backwardness, and remote desolation [...] Yet, despite its seeming isolation and supposed ‘backwardness’, there are signs that the *Sertão*—and the women who live there—are, in fact, deeply embedded in global flows. In the mid-1990s, peasant women from the rural interior of northeast Brazil negotiated with international funders, attended the UN women’s conference in Beijing, and grappled with feminist theories.”

*Last but not least...*

This research has ended with more questions than answers. The framework of analysis above has probably much space for being further developed, especially by looking at other social contexts though a body-sensitive approach. However, it has been a useful exercise to reaffirm that towards human development, there is a strong need to further focus on bodily integrity, both as a means and a end in itself and, moreover, to acknowledge that bodily integrity does not happen naturally. On the contrary, there are many disabling conditions that represent barriers and that deserve to be further explored, understood and tackled towards a human development process that incorporates bodies also as a central aspect.

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## **ANNEX A – Exploratory study: methodology and ethical principles**

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### **1. Methodology**

This exploratory study had as its main aims to (1) serve as a mechanism of primary data collection to this MA research paper and (2) be a way of enhancing debates about topics of the interest of the local citizens and social movements.

In that sense, a partnership has been made with local social movement's representatives – specially from the Women Rural Workers' Movement (MMTR); Federation of the agricultural labours of Pernambuco (FETAPE); Latin America and Caribbean Rural Women's network (Redlac) and Rural Workers Trade Union of the city of Calumbi. The methodology for data collection encompassed:

#### **Small workshop:**

- ◆ Number of workshops: 4 + 1 extra (with a group of girls from 6-12 years old)<sup>32</sup>
- ◆ Number of participants: between 6 and 8, divided according to:
  - Sex: 50% men and 50% women
  - Age: 15-24; 25-45; 46-58; 59-70
  - Race/ethnicity: there was an attempt to balance, among the workshop participants, diverse race/ethnicity groups.
  - Duration: 3 hours
- ◆ Methodology:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> step: Introduction
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> step: Participants would be divided in 2 groups (women and men)
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> step: participants meet again for debate
  - 4<sup>th</sup> step: End of activity/ arrangements of the individual interviews.

#### **Individual interviews:**

- ◆ Number of persons interviewed: 28
- ◆ Duration: from 15 minutes to 2 hours.
- ◆ Method: life history + semi-structured questions. This method consisted of:
  - 1<sup>st</sup>. Making an appointment in advance with the person to be interviewed

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<sup>32</sup> Originally, for the workshops, this research was focusing on the age groups from 15 to 70. However, during the process of the exploratory study, a group of girls aged 6-12 came to me to ask why they were not part of the research, and demand a workshop. That way, it was decided that there would be a workshop for this age group. Unfortunately, there was no more time available to organize a mixed workshop and, in the end, the workshop counted with a presence of 6 girls, within this age group.

- 2<sup>nd</sup>. Meet her/him in the place of their choice (usually their house, but sometimes other)
- 3<sup>rd</sup>. Explain the main purposes of the interview
- 4<sup>th</sup>. Explain a set of criteria for the interview, according to the pre-established ethical principals
- 5<sup>th</sup>. Data registering: in some cases recording by tape and in others by taking notes
- 6<sup>th</sup>. Proposed question: ask the person to tell about their life history, considering the “positive” and “negative” events they had experienced.
- 7<sup>th</sup>. Identify aspects raised by them which would have a direct link to their bodies (bodily roles) and make further, more specific questions based on these aspects.
- 8<sup>th</sup>. Taking a picture, if the person agreed.

#### Follow up/Future activity

- ◆ Translation of the research paper to Portuguese (by March 2007)
- ◆ Feedback about the research: workshop (to take place in Calumbi, March/April 07) with exploratory study participants, in partnership of local social movements.

#### **2. Ethical principles pre-established for the exploratory research:**

- ◆ Standpoint of the researcher: provide explanation about (1) researcher (2) the objectives of the research (3) partnership with local social movements.
- ◆ This research had within its principles that researcher, interviewees and participants of the workshop were to benefit from the process. In that sense, only the persons that have shown interest in contributing to the research and to attend future workshop have participated.
- ◆ Privacy: the real names of the interviewees only appeared in the paper once they have given permission.
- ◆ Agreement and transparency in relation to the objective of the interviews/workshop:
  - Before every interview and workshop: moment reserved to explain the objective of the research, in order to provide the interviewee total freedom to either decide not to collaborate with the research or to establish any necessary limitation.
  - To the end of the workshop/interview: moment reserved to observations, questions, and requirements from the interviewees/ workshop participants.
  - Future activity: the interviewees/ workshop participants were asked about their interest in having a future activity to provide feedback about the research paper results and have all shown interest in participating in a workshop, scheduled to take place in April 2007.

## Annex B – Exploratory Study: human development related indicators<sup>33</sup>

Country: Brazil

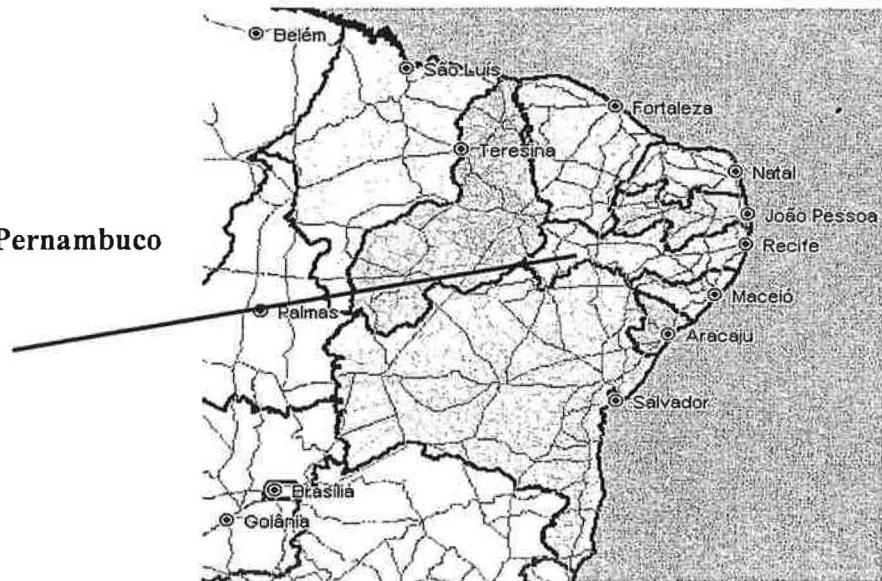
Region: North-East

State: Pernambuco

Meso-Region: Sertão of Pernambuco

Micro-region: Pajeú

Municipality: Calumbi



Between 1991 and 2000 the Human Development Index (HDI) of Brazil has increased from 0,696 to 0,766. Within the municipalities located in the micro-region of Pajeú, Calumbi had the lowest HDI in 1991 (0,476). In 2000, it has increased to 0,580, but continued being the lowest HDI in this micro-region, as shown in table 1.

**Table 1 – HDI municipalities of the Pajeú sub-region**

Municipality	Human Development Index/UNPD Municipality (year 2000)
Afogados da Ingazeira (PE)	0,683
Brejinho (PE)	0,586
<b>Calumbi (PE)</b>	<b>0,58</b>
Carnaíba (PE)	0,583
Flores (PE)	0,613
Iguaraci (PE)	0,604
Ingazeira (PE)	0,638
Itapetim (PE)	0,62
Quixabá (PE)	0,581
Santa Cruz da Baixa Verde (PE)	0,655
Santa Terezinha (PE)	0,602
São José do Egito (PE)	0,657
Serra Talhada (PE)	0,682
Solidão (PE)	0,581
Tabira (PE)	0,63
Triunfo (PE)	0,714
Tuparetama (PE)	0,662

<sup>33</sup> Source: Atlas do Desenvolvimento Humano 2000/PNUD, original in Portuguese. Free translation

## Municipality of Calumbi: Socio-economic indicators

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### Demographic indicators

#### Population per household (1991 and 2000)

	<u>1991</u>	<u>2000</u>
Total population	6.878	7.079
Urban	1.629	1.914
Rural	5.249	5.165

#### Age Structure, (1991 and 2000)

	<u>1991</u>	<u>2000</u>
Below 15 years	2.923	2.447
15 to 64 years	3.524	4.133
Equal or more than 65 years	431	499
Dependency ratio	95,2%	71,3%

#### Longevity, Mortality and Fertility indicators (1991 and 2000)

	<u>1991</u>	<u>2000</u>
Mortality rate (up to 1 year old per 1000 live births)	78,4	73,8
Life expectancy (years)	58,4	61,8
Fertility Rate (births per woman)	5,1	2,9

### Education

#### Educational level youth population (1991 and 2000)

Age groups (years)	Illiteracy rate		Less than 4 years of study (%)		Less than 8 years of study (%)		% attending school	
	1991	2000	1991	2000	1991	2000	1991	2000
7 a 14	64,8	28,9	-	-	-	-	63,1	92,7
10 a 14	53,3	18,4	82,7	66,0	-	-	64,3	92,3
15 a 17	33,6	12,6	57,8	37,6	94,5	89,0	40,6	68,9
18 a 24	38,9	20,2	54,2	40,9	86,8	77,5	-	-

- = do not apply

**Educational Level adult population (equal or more than 25 years, 1991 e 2000)**

	<u>1991</u>	<u>2000</u>
Illiteracy rate	62,1	48,6
Less than 4 years of study (%)	80,8	66,8
Less than 8 years of study (%)	94,8	90,1
Average years of study	1,6	2,6

**Income**

**Income, poverty and inequality Indicators (1991 and 2000)**

	<u>1991</u>	<u>2000</u>
Per capita income	42,8	67,3
% of poor	89,2	75,0
Gini Index	0,54	0,60

**Percentage of Income according to population stratus (1991 and 2000)**

	<u>1991</u>	<u>2000</u>
20% poorest	3,5	0,8
40% poorest	10,7	6,0
60% poorest	22,7	17,8
80% poorest	43,6	38,5
20% richest	56,4	61,5

**Basic servises**

**Access to basic services (1991 and 2000)**

	<u>1991</u>	<u>2000</u>
Running water	23,8	36,8
Electric power	44,6	94,4
Garbage collection <sup>1</sup>	29,0	42,5

<sup>1</sup> only for urban households

**Access to consumer goods (1991 and 2000)**

	<u>1991</u>	<u>2000</u>
Refrigerator	9,7	44,4
Television	24,3	79,3
Telephone	0,1	3,0
Computer	ND	0,3

ND = data not available

## Vulnerability

### **Household vulnerability indicators (1991 and 2000)**

	<i><b>1991</b></i>	<i><b>2000</b></i>
% of mothers with 10 to 14 years old	ND	0,6
% of mothers with 15 to 17 years old	33,6	4,4
% of children in households with income less than 1/2 minimum salary	93,2	85,8
% of single mothers, head of households, with children bellow 18 years old	7,8	5,5

ND = not available

## Human Development

	<i><b>1991</b></i>	<i><b>2000</b></i>
Human Development Index for the municipality	<b>0,476</b>	<b>0,580</b>
Education	<b>0,471</b>	<b>0,652</b>
Longevity	<b>0,557</b>	<b>0,613</b>
Income	<b>0,400</b>	<b>0,475</b>