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## Gender Inequalities and Food and Nutrition (In)Security: Views from Nancy Fraser's Gender Justice Concept

*Desigualdades de gênero e (in)segurança alimentar e nutricional: olhares a partir do conceito de justiça de gênero de Nancy Fraser*

### Abstract

**Introduction:** several international reports have presented women and girls as more vulnerable people who demand social and gender justice to promote food and nutrition security (FNS). In Brazil, the National Food and Nutrition Policy (NFNP) and important FNS programs have a priority focus on women. This essay aims to examine the Brazilian Food and Nutrition Policy from the perspective of Nancy Fraser's concept of gender justice. **Method:** We analyzed NFNP from Fraser's three-dimensional gender justice concept, with special attention to women as producers, consumers and food managers at home and in the community, as well as the implications of inequalities in access to food, public policy, and programs that aim to overcome the situation of food insecurity among women. **Results:** The results of this analysis suggest that NFNP promotes mechanisms to expand the conditions of access to food, water, employment, and income redistribution. Likewise, it aims to preserve people's autonomy and respect for their dignity, without discrimination of any kind; and it encourages social participation in the formulation, execution, follow-up, monitoring and control of food and nutrition security policies and plans at all levels of government. **Conclusion:** NFNP is thus gender-sensitive, considering women as a vulnerable group to food and nutritional insecurity. However, subsequent NFNP-based programs and actions are limited in this regard since, in practice, they have included partial, apolitical, and sexist arguments when addressing problems of food and nutrition security.

**Keywords:** Food and Nutrition Security. Gender Analysis. Women. Public Policy.

### Resumo

**Introdução:** diversos relatórios internacionais têm apresentado as mulheres e meninas como pessoas mais vulneráveis e que demandam justiça social e de gênero para promoção da segurança alimentar e nutricional (SAN). No Brasil, a Política Nacional de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional (PNSAN) e importantes programas de SAN apresentam foco prioritário nas mulheres. Este ensaio objetiva examinar a política de segurança alimentar e nutricional brasileira dentro das perspectivas de justiça de gênero de Nancy Fraser. **Métodos:** Analisamos a PNSAN a partir do conceito tridimensional de justiça de gênero de Nancy Fraser, detendo especial atenção nas mulheres como produtoras, consumidoras e gerentes-chave de alimentos em casa e na comunidade, as implicações de desigualdades no acesso aos alimentos, a política e aos programas públicos cujo intuito é superar os quadros de insegurança alimentar nas mulheres. **Resultados:** sugere-se que a PNSAN promove mecanismos para ampliar

as condições de acesso aos alimentos, água, emprego e redistribuição de renda. Da mesma forma, visa preservar a autonomia e o respeito à dignidade das pessoas, sem discriminação de qualquer espécie; e a participação social na formulação, execução, acompanhamento, monitoramento e controle das políticas e dos planos de segurança alimentar e nutricional em todas as esferas de governo. **Conclusão:** a PNSAN apresenta uma sensibilidade ao gênero, considerando as mulheres um grupo vulnerável à insegurança alimentar e nutricional. Contudo, os programas e ações desenvolvidos apresentam limitações em considerar o gênero, pois, por vezes, apresentam argumentos parciais, apolíticos e sexistas dos problemas de segurança alimentar e nutricional.

**Palavras-chave:** Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional. Gênero. Mulheres. Políticas Públicas.

## INTRODUCTION

Food and nutritional insecurity (FNI) is an indicator of social inequity,<sup>1</sup> which is related to the lack of regular and permanent access to nutritious food in sufficient quality and quantity,<sup>2</sup> or even to the concern about the lack of food in the future, compromising access to other essential needs.<sup>1</sup> FNI comprises a multidimensional phenomenon of a political, economic, environmental, and socio-cultural nature, which impacts the availability, access, use, and stability of local, regional, or national food supplies, as well as global socioeconomic systems.<sup>3,4</sup> FNI situations can result in hunger, malnutrition, overweight, specific nutritional deficiencies, chronic non-communicable diseases, consumption of food of dubious quality or that is harmful to health, stress and emotional suffering, loss of self-esteem, or social exclusion. Nutritional status may become compromised and aggravated by the structure of unsustainable food production in regard to the natural environment or socioeconomic relations; food and other essential goods with inflated prices; or the imposition of dietary standards that do not respect cultural diversity.<sup>5-7</sup> FNI is a global health problem directly related to the struggle for the human right to adequate food (HRAF), which is a concern of international organizations such as the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

In recent years, several reports have shown that women and girls are more vulnerable to FNI than men and boys; therefore, gender justice is an important element in promoting food and nutritional security (FNS) to various sociocultural groups.<sup>3,8,9</sup> In Brazil, data from the 2013 National Household Sample Survey (PNAD 2013) pointed to a prevalence of approximately 19% of moderate or severe food insecurity in households headed by women.<sup>10</sup> Brazilian data suggest that gender inequalities are a condition for FNI status among women and their families, especially when they are mainly responsible for family income.

Constructed sociocultural stereotypes of gender roles obstruct women's access to food regularly, permanently, in sufficient quantity and quality, and without compromising other needs.<sup>11</sup> For the female population, the capacity to access food depends on power relationships within patriarchal and capitalist systems that sometimes give women and girls less power than men and boys, and consequently less access to food and other goods and services.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, women and girls play an important role in the production, processing, distribution, and marketing of food, performing related tasks without remuneration in their family or community.<sup>3,9,11</sup> In short, low social status, lack of access to goods and services, and greater responsibility for the production, preparation, and distribution of food make women and girls more cyclically or persistently susceptible to instability in regard to food prices, climate change, political conflicts, and FNI and its outcomes.<sup>3</sup>

This essay aims to examine the Brazilian food and nutrition security policy from the perspective of the three-dimensional concept of gender justice proposed by Nancy Fraser. Special attention is paid to the following dimensions: (1) the concept of gender justice proposed by Nancy Fraser; (2) women as producers, consumers, and key food managers at home and in the community, and the implications of gender inequalities in access to food; and (3) public policy and programs whose aim is to overcome FNI within the Brazilian population, especially women.

Before focusing on gender justice and FNS, I will describe some general aspects of the Brazilian National Food and Nutrition Security Policy and Nancy Fraser's concept of three-dimensional gender justice.

## Brazilian food and nutritional security policy

In Brazil, food and nutritional security (FNS) is understood as the realization of everyone's right to regular and permanent access to quality food, in sufficient quantity, without compromising access to other

essential needs. It is based on health-promoting food practices that respect cultural diversity and that are environmentally, culturally, economically, and socially sustainable.<sup>13</sup>

Two concepts are strongly related to FNS: HRAF and food sovereignty (FS). The right to food is part of the fundamental rights of humanity, inherent to human dignity and essential for the enjoyment of the rights enshrined in the Brazilian Federal Constitution and other legal instruments. It is considered a duty of the public authorities to adopt concrete government policies and actions to promote and guarantee adequate food, in an equitable way, and without any type of discrimination among all Brazilians.<sup>14</sup> Food sovereignty, in turn, comprises the right of each country to define its own policies and sustainable strategies for food production, distribution, and consumption, according to the cultural characteristics of their peoples and FNS concepts.<sup>15</sup>

In Brazil, the concept of FNS is complex, as it brings together the biological, economic, political, cultural, and social dimensions that determine food within human processes. From this perspective, a systemic paradigm emerges, which considers the processes that produce FNI as frames of interrelated, systematic crises and require equally systematic and coordinated solutions.<sup>16</sup> Such a paradigm contributes to the understanding of these interactions at the same time that it presents several requirements for the process of building a national food and nutritional security system.<sup>17</sup>

In 2006, the National System of Food and Nutrition Security (NSFNS) was created through the Organic Law on Food and Nutrition Security (OLFNS) — Law nº 11.346, September 15, 2006 —, whose objective is to stipulate the duty of public authorities in respecting, protecting, promoting, providing, informing, monitoring, inspecting, and evaluating the accomplishment of HRAF, as well as guaranteeing the mechanisms for its enforceability.<sup>18</sup> The purpose of NSFNS is to increase dialogue between agencies of the three levels of government and civil society organizations, and to jointly act in the formulation and implementation of policies and actions to fight hunger and to promote FNS, as well as accompany, monitor, and evaluate the nutritional situation of the population, defining the rights and duties of the public authorities, the family, business, and society.<sup>19</sup>

The formulation and implementation of the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy (NFNSP) are legal determinations of OLFN. NFNSP, instituted through Decree No. 7,272, on August 25, 2010, is a set of actions designed to guarantee the rights of the Brazilian population to: (a) be free from hunger and inadequate nutrition; and (b) have a healthy and appropriate diet.<sup>16</sup> In addition, NFNSP assigns to the State the functions of: (1) identifying, analyzing, disseminating, and acting on the factors that contribute to FNI in Brazil; (2) coordinating the programs and actions of different sectors, so as to respect, protect, promote, and provide for HRAF, observing social, cultural, environmental, ethnic-racial diversity, gender equity, and sexual orientation, as well as providing instruments for its enforcement; (3) promoting sustainable agroecological, food production and distribution systems that respect biodiversity and strengthen family farming, indigenous peoples, and traditional communities, and that ensure consumption and access to adequate and healthy food, respecting the diversity of national food culture; and (4) incorporating into State policy respect for food sovereignty and the guarantee of the HRAF, including access to water, and promoting them within the scope of international negotiations and cooperation.<sup>2</sup>

Considering the systematic logic of NSFNS, there exists a sociopolitical network among NFNSP and the programs and actions derived from this policy, which brings together multiple centers of non-hierarchical decisions and a more or less stable pattern of relationship between the actors.<sup>20</sup> At stake in these political spaces are the confrontations of interests and powers that generate the direction of the country's political, economic, and social development. However, when a national system is instituted, debates about FNS become sectorialized, which can generate autonomy, bringing together the various actors involved in the

political process and accentuating demands for State intervention. Consequently, it can cause not only greater internal differentiation of the state apparatus, but also delegate function and co-responsibility, as well as the need to share resources that can open spaces for new forms of coordination.<sup>20,21</sup>

### **Nancy Fraser's three-dimensional gender justice concept**

Nancy Fraser, an American philosopher affiliated with the Critical Theory school of thought, defends the latter as a theory that informs her research program and its conceptual structure with attention to the most significant contested political struggles of a given era, such as feminism.<sup>22</sup> Fraser considers feminism to be a political movement that includes all thoughts and activities aimed at overcoming androcentrism, sexism, subordination of women, and patriarchy.<sup>23</sup> In this perspective, Fraser's concept permeates the institutionalization of male domination and the subordination of women in different spheres of society: family, world of work, and public policies, among others.

Since the late 1980s, Fraser has devoted herself to the theoretical formulation of a conception of gender justice that escapes the dichotomy between socioeconomic and cultural differences.<sup>24</sup> In 1994, she proposed a reconceptualization of gender justice as a complex idea that was located within a plurality of distinct normative principles involving an alliance between women's emancipation and women's social protection.<sup>23,25</sup> In 1995, Fraser published the article "From Redistribution to Recognition? Dilemmas of Justice in a 'Post-socialist' Age," in which she presented a two-dimensional concept of gender justice. She considered that gender injustices had a double dimension: on one hand, it is linked to the political-economic structure of society, which is rooted in differences in social classes and in the sexual division of labor; on the other, it is associated with a cultural-symbolic devaluation of femininity and women.<sup>26</sup> From this perspective, gender injustice could be overcome through a political-economic-cultural-symbolic restructuring based on the dimensions of income redistribution and recognition (and appreciation) of cultural-symbolic diversity.<sup>26</sup> Thus, Fraser considers that the resolution of gender injustices cannot occur only by income redistribution, but needs independent and additional measures of cultural-symbolic recognition of female practices and characteristics, as well as women themselves.

The *redistribution* dimension considers socio-economic injustices that promote exploitation, economic marginalization, and resource scarcity.<sup>27</sup> Struggles for redistribution seek to abolish political and economic arrangements based on specific groups and social classes. In regard to gender, for example, problems related to economic non-redistribution could be attributed to the sexual division of labor, which is expressed in the conception of "productive" paid work and "reproductive" and domestic unpaid work. There is also the idea of the internal division of paid work between the highest paid professional occupations and manufacturers, of which men predominate, and the "pink collar" occupations and low-paid domestic services often predominated by women.<sup>26</sup> The *recognition* dimension, in turn, considers cultural injustices, which are rooted in social standards of representation, interpretation, and communication that result in cultural domination, non-recognition, and disrespect for women.<sup>27</sup> The struggles of recognition aim to eliminate androcentrism — a construction that authorizes norms that privilege traits associated with masculinities and disqualifies practices and characteristics considered feminine, as well as women themselves.<sup>26</sup>

Within the dimensions of redistribution and recognition, Fraser<sup>26</sup> considers that remedies for gender injustice have two natures: (a) affirmative, which is intended to correct the unequal effects of social arrangements, without disturbing the underlying structure that generates them; and (b) transformative, which aims to correct unequal effects precisely by remodeling the underlying generative structure.

In 2001, Fraser added a third dimension to her concept of gender justice with the aim of achieving a meta-political democracy: *representation*.<sup>28</sup> The representation dimension is expressed by participatory parity, which concerns the ability of minority groups to equally participate in the formulation of public policies, programs, and actions. Representation seeks to overcome institutional injustices, in order to dismantle the formal mechanisms that prevent minorities from participating, on parity, as integral partners in social interaction.<sup>29</sup> According to Fraser,<sup>29</sup> the obstacles to equal participation are: (a) economic, relating to the lack of resources needed to interact with others as peers; (b) cultural appreciation, in regard to those who are denied the status necessary to relate in a similar way those within the institutional hierarchy; and (c) a policy in which representation is a matter of social belonging that legitimizes people to make legal claims, as well as their access to the procedures that structure public contestation processes.

In sum, the key points of Fraser's theory are the dimensions of redistribution, recognition, and representation. These are aligned in economic, political, cultural, and symbolic terms, as well as with the struggles of class, status, and social participation. The concept of gender justice proposed by Fraser thus places a focus on feminism in the context of female emancipation and the social protection of women, with particular concern on modes of male domination and female subordination in institutional terms.

### NFNSP and Nancy Fraser's three-dimensional gender justice concept

Given the gender justice dimension proposed by Fraser, this essay considers that public policies should focus on financial emancipation, social protection, and the political participation of individuals and communities. NFNSP seems to comply with these principles by guiding programs and actions that aim to respect, protect, promote, and provide HRAF, food sovereignty and FNS — observing social, cultural, environmental and ethnic-racial diversity, and equity in terms of gender and sexual orientation — as well as instruments for its enforcement.<sup>2</sup>

Regarding *redistribution*, the policy considers the socioeconomic vulnerability of individuals. NFNSP aims to serve any Brazilian citizen who is unable to eat properly because they do not have enough income or access to food or productive means; the policy's scope is therefore not limited to members of the population who are hungry, impoverished or socially excluded.<sup>30</sup> In this sense, one of NFNSP's challenges is "to identify, analyze, disseminate, and act on the conditioning factors of food and nutritional insecurity in Brazil",<sup>2</sup> since FNS is experienced differentially by people or groups, based on gender, race, socioeconomic class, place of residence, and other conditions.

Individuals or groups in a socioeconomically vulnerable situation — such as Brazil's black population, women, youth, indigenous people, quilombolas (Afro-Brazilian resident of hinterland settlement founded by people of African origin), and other traditional peoples and communities — are most affected by the lack of access to inputs or technologies to produce their food. Likewise, they do not have access to other goods and services necessary to guarantee a dignified life, such as housing, clothing, transportation, basic sanitation, leisure, health, education, and other goods and services.<sup>31</sup> It should be noted that women and girls experience policies and public FNS programs in a different way from men and boys because, in many societies, the female population is primarily responsible for symbolic (cultural maintenance of society) and material (material and economic maintenance) reproduction related to food in familial and community contexts.<sup>32</sup>

According to Fraser,<sup>22</sup> female food work is both material and symbolic because it promotes material and economic survival for members of the family and community, as well as for the identity, religion, language, and other socio-cultural elements of the social group. That is, women do not simply produce food as a material resource, but also as something full of social and symbolic meanings for the individual and

community that consumes it. The food work performed by women occurs through political, social, economic, cultural, and symbolic relations, which determine norms and rules that serve to form, maintain, and modify the dynamics of food systems, inclusive of the maintenance of society and people's social identities directly involved and indirectly affected by this work.

At the same time, the female population is more vulnerable to situations of poverty. Several researchers acknowledge the occurrence of the phenomenon of the “feminization of poverty,” that is, an increase in the levels of poverty among women or female-headed households.<sup>33-35</sup> Women face more situations of vulnerability related to poverty, unemployment and underemployment, informal work, unpaid homework, low-wage jobs, poor working conditions, less profitable farming activities, and great responsibility for the care of family and community members.<sup>35</sup> Gender dimensions of poverty are related to the unequal position of women in all sectors of society — family, community, economy, politics, among others —, the consequences of which are situations of social vulnerability, violation of HRAF, and FNI.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) considers that poverty is one of the biggest obstacles faced by women; thus, reducing the burden of poverty provides women with greater opportunities for education and employment. Gender roles associated with the division of labor are also obstacles to breaking the cycle of female poverty; women's time spent on household chores further prevents them from accessing education and better job opportunities.<sup>8</sup>

In this sense, feminist and women's movements present demands, for NSFNS, related to social, economic, cultural and symbolic gender inequalities that impact the ways in which women have access to resources for the production, processing, distribution, and commercialization of food; valuing women's work; legitimizing the participation of women in public policy decisions on FNS; among other demands related to the effectiveness of FNS, HRAF, and FS.<sup>36</sup> To meet the demands for gender justice related to FNS, it is suggested here to adapt all three dimensions of Fraser's paradigm to the objectives of OLFN and NFNSP, especially when the target audience of programs and actions are women.

To meet the demand for income *redistribution*, Brazil invests in a conditional cash transfer program in which women are the priority focus and subject to intervention.<sup>37</sup> The Bolsa Família Program (PBF), created in 2004, aims to achieve a direct transfer and conditional income for: (a) families with an income of up to R\$ 70.00 per person per month, regardless of family members and composition; and (b) families with monthly income between R\$ 70.00-140.00 per person and who have children or adolescents up to 17 years old.<sup>38,39</sup> The PBF aims to combat poverty and hunger, as well as to promote FNS of the beneficiaries.<sup>38,39</sup> Medeiros & Costa<sup>40</sup> and Rubalcava et al.<sup>41</sup> consider that women are priority beneficiaries because they are seen as more careful in administering the benefit, using it in a way that favors the family, because they think about the family's future and take care of their children and the daily life of the house. Brazilian studies have shown that the PBF has had positive impacts on the socioeconomic status of women, enabling women to make decisions about the use of money, in addition to promoting a reorganization of space and domestic work, and increasing self-esteem, empowerment, and the ability for women to access the public space (such as community and school councils).<sup>42</sup>

However, due to its focus on the family, feminist scholars have considered PBF's use of the “gender” category.<sup>43-45</sup> According to Mariano & Carloto,<sup>37</sup> the PBF favors the crystallization of women's social roles around motherhood and the care of offspring, given the program's guidelines which focus on the health and education of children and adolescents. Consequently, feminist studies contribute to updating the gender dimension debates in public policies, critically presenting the weaknesses of discourses related to care, motherhood, and the social reproduction of stereotypes.

From this perspective, the *recognition* dimension emerges as a demand for prioritizing vulnerable groups in FNS programs and actions. NFNSP already recognizes the need to prioritize families and people in situations of socioeconomic vulnerability and FNI, as well as the quilombola population and other traditional peoples and communities.<sup>2</sup> In addition, it considers the “social, cultural, environmental, [and] ethnic-racial diversity” of individuals and the population at-large, as well as the food practices that promote FNS.<sup>2</sup> However, programs and actions derived from Brazilian FNS, still, have failed to recognize the differences and inequalities in social gender roles that persist in the lives of women. In the domestic private sphere, where PBF outcomes are expressed, traditional gender roles have an effect on people's lives through ideologies and ways of reproducing masculinity and femininity, which impact gender inequality and the reproduction of their traditional roles.<sup>46</sup> Fraser<sup>24</sup> denotes that, in the domestic space, women are assigned to services called “female specialties,” which are oriented towards servitude to family members. In this sense, the PBF presents a redistribution with a “false conscience” of gender, which promotes little social emancipation of women, as it demands from the female population the exercise of traditional gender roles related to the care of children and the domestic economy.

According to Fraser,<sup>47</sup> *recognition* does not only concern the identity of a social group, but the conditions of social interaction that occur in its social or community nuclei. Non-recognition, then, would be social subordination in the sense of being deprived of participating in parity in social life. Thus, Fraser suggests that public policies that seek true recognition should examine institutionalized patterns of cultural valuation in terms of their effects on the relative position of social actors. The purpose of such a policy would be to overcome subordination and promote standards of cultural values that encourage participation in parity by individuals and collectivity.<sup>47</sup>

In order to achieve real recognition, in addition to income transfer, FAO suggests a series of measures to reduce the burden on women's responsibilities related to domestic work, such as: better public transport services, water, and energy, as well as childcare and institutional care for the sick and elderly. FAO believes that these measures would benefit both women, promote greater gender equality, and decrease FNI numbers in the female population.<sup>8</sup>

Regarding the *representation* paradigm, gender justice requires institutional arrangements that allow all adult members of a society to participate in public policy decisions, programs, and actions for FNS. OLFN's eighth section highlights the importance of social participation in the formulation, implementation, monitoring, and control of FNS policies and plans at all levels of government.<sup>13</sup> NFNSP, in turn, spotlights social participation through a mandatory institutional structure — municipal, state, and federal food and nutrition security councils (COSEA).<sup>2</sup>

COSEAs were popular achievements that could intensify the dialogues between the government and society, providing more fair and effective conditions for FNS programs and actions.<sup>48,49</sup> For example, the federal COSEA was an advisory agency to the Presidency of the Republic; its institutional representative was to present proposals and exercise social control in the formulation, execution, and monitoring of food and nutrition security policies.<sup>49</sup> However, this agency was disbanded by President Jair Bolsonaro on his first day in office through Provisional Measure No. 870 (MP 87).

Castro<sup>49</sup> argues that the COSEA extinction process is particularly worrying in an economic scenario combined with a policy of fiscal austerity, which is marked by the dismantling of social policies and the stagnation or worsening of indicators sensitive to the degradation of living conditions: increase in infant mortality, interruption of the process of reducing income and race inequality, increasing unemployment and poverty (with indications that Brazil will return to the Hunger Map), and an increase in violence in the countryside, among others.

The scenario exposed here reflects an impasse of redistribution and recognition as unique paradigms for social and gender justice. Fraser<sup>29</sup> argues that participation in parity can only occur when there exists material distribution that guarantees the independence and “voice” of the participants, as well as institutionalized standards of cultural value that express equal respect and opportunities for all participants. Regarding women, the cultural-symbolic devaluation of feminine characteristics and practices, and of women themselves, promotes less participation by women in political decision-making spaces. In general, women tend to be less integrated into political spaces than men, due to the lack of access to resources, having their time more occupied with household and childcare tasks, and stereotyped social norms and restrictions by the roles of traditional genders.<sup>9</sup> Concurrently, economic equity, the cultural valorization of femininity and women, and the participation of women in political spaces cannot only alter the traditional definitions of gender roles, duties, and responsibilities, but also the main components of masculine and feminine identity.<sup>9</sup>

In summary, OLFN and NFNSP are gender sensitive, considering women as a vulnerable group to FNI. However, current programs and actions to address FNI have limitations when it comes to gender, sometimes due to partial, apolitical, and sexist arguments about the problems of food and FNI. A more gender-sensitive FNS policy would be based on a fundamental respect for human rights, dignity, and the recognition that everyone has the right to nutritious food produced in an ecologically sustainable way. It would also promote economic redistribution in order to reduce the socioeconomic inequality experienced by women, girls, and other vulnerable social groups. In addition, it would promote mechanisms to address and transform social and gender inequalities rooted in the devaluation of characteristics and practices related to women. Finally, it would promote fairer participatory mechanisms that considered dimensions such as social class and the place of women’s speech. Thus, this policy could respond to FNS needs of women, girls, men, boys, transsexuals, and other gendered individuals, in all periods of life.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this essay, Nancy Fraser’s three-dimensional gender justice concept served as a framework for analyzing FNI, OLFN, and NFNSP in the Brazilian context. Based on Frasean theory, FNI situations may be considered as a result of economic, social, and political injustices. At the economic level, FNI is rooted in the socioeconomic structure of society, in which wealthy social classes concentrate the means of production and material goods promote the exploitation of lower classes, further social marginalization, and continue the expropriation of these classes from the fruit of their labor (preventing access to goods and services necessary for a dignified life).

In the cultural sphere, FNI delves into the social patterns of representation, interpretation, and communication, which are expressed in terms of cultural domination, social concealment, and disrespect in stereotyped social representations and/or interactions of everyday life. At the political level, FNI results from the lack of social representation of the populations most affected by hunger, lack of access to food, low nutritional quality food, or other FNI situations, as these people do not have access to the political spaces where such discussion occurs, inclusive of the formulation and implementation of policies, programs, and actions that promote FNSO.

The remedy for FNI would then be a kind of political, economic, and cultural restructuring, involving redistribution of income, reorganization of the division of labor, democratic controls on investment, or the transformation of basic economic structures — mainly activities related to the production system of national food. OLFN guides NFNSP and the National Plan for Food and Nutritional Security to promote mechanisms that expand the conditions of access to food, water, employment, and income redistribution. Likewise, it aims to preserve people’s autonomy and respect for their dignity, without discrimination of any kind, as well as

social participation in the formulation, execution, follow-up, monitoring, and control of FNS policies and plans at all levels of government. In short, OLFN presents guidelines that favor an economic, cultural, and political restructuring that seeks to favor the FNS of Brazilian citizens.

However, the implementation of FNS policy, via programs and actions, is operated through a national plan and national priorities. There is a political dispute for the maintenance and financing of programs that focus on FNS, mainly in the most vulnerable parts of the population. Currently, there exists an increase in the prevalence of moderate and severe FNI in Brazilian households; whereas the reduction of hunger in the country may have once been celebrated, today there remains an ongoing concern with the rise of this misfortune. Moreover, equally concerning in the area of health and social development are the impacts of FNI among women who are considered reproducers and caregivers of their family and community members. Thus, profiles of protein-energy malnutrition and nutrient deficiencies are once again haunting public managers, who are concerned with the increase in maternal and child mortality and the decrease in labor in the country.

In this sense, establishing food and nutrition security alongside gender justice requires political and economic efforts that have not yet been incorporated into the FNS programs developed to date. Gender becomes a paradigm of ambivalent collectivity, which implies redistribution, recognition, and representation. Thus, responses to FNI should contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment. The commitment to transforming gender inequalities is not negotiable and should always be on the public agenda of FNS.

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Conflict of interest: the authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Received: December 10, 2019

Accepted: December 22, 2019