

Hypocrisy around abortion in Brazil and Neide Mota's death

I had the opportunity to meet Neide Mota, anesthetic doctor, in 2008, during a feminist women's group's visit to Campo Grande when they were seeking to understand the critical situation involving the invasion of Neide's family planning clinics (Clinica de Planejamento Familiar de Campo Grande), by the local police.

The action took place after Rede Globo's local branch disclosed news on the clinics' activities, and a demand from Federal Representatives was directed to the Public Ministry (Brazilian Federal Institution). The most enthusiastic among them was Luiz Bassuma, leader of the Parliament Front in Defense of Life - Against Abortion and of the Brazilian Movement without Abortion, who was punished by his political party – PT (Labor Party).

Besides the anesthetic doctor, the case involved other professionals and many other women. Actually around ten thousand of them who went to the place in the last 20 years seeking for help solving their desire not to have children.

Criticized by too many people, Neide Mota can be regarded as controvert and daring, at least. She confronted the public power and local authorities and revealed the hypocrisy of institutions and characters that, according to her narrative, paid for young women's abortions at her clinics in order to get rid of mischievous public situations and moral, ethical and financial future commitment. The face shown to the public world criticized the right to decide. In a private world the payment was cash.

Neide Mota and her clinics' case make us really wonder. Between the State and the market, she was actually asked to be a reference and a partner in the performance of legal abortion by SUS, what would change her clandestine situation, but at the same time would exclude her from the position of witness and denouncer of the injustice and disrespect to human rights in that city. The invasion produced many questions that haven't been completely answered so far: Why the sneaky visit by Rede Globo at that moment? How to explain such short time span between the TV program and Bassuma's demand for an action to denounce the clinics to the Public Ministry? Why such huge exposition of so many women, which brought to memory the scenario of the hanging in public squares? What's the excuse for the Medicine Ethical Counsel not to denounce the irregularity by the judiciary power at disclosing private medical data from the records collected by the police at the clinics? How to overlook the fact that the judiciary power let those records in the open for free examination and that there were even eliminated files? How to forget that some women were picked to serve as escape goats allowing an opened field to build up a larger plan to annihilate Neide Mota's public image? What's the excuse for the stepping back from Justice and Law in such universe that so clearly criminalizes and kills women?

Everything pointed out to their desire for an exemplary action, and so it was from the beginning. Neide Motta's death sealed one more life's chapter, while at the same time Rede Globo comes around with one more electronic lecture, and the 8 o'clock soap opera shows messages that strongly stimulates the accusation and inflicts guiltiness in every spectator who slightly though of the abortion choice as a human right. This resembles an ideological and metaphoric powerful game. New discursive forms are empowered. The mass media shakes hands with conservative sectors of Catholic Church and other religions in a "fraternal" and unequivocal alliance aimed at preventing the advance of sexual and reproductive autonomy and of solidarity and freedom for the population, especially for all women.

But they are deeply mistaken by thinking they can do it. Neide Mota's death as well as other women's who underwent clandestine abortion will only bring more visibility to the injustices that go around in the country. According to WHO's estimates more than 30%

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of pregnancies end up in abortion processes. So approximately one million and four hundred thousand spontaneous or clandestine unsafe abortions take place annually, which represents 3,7 occurrences every 100 women between ages 15 and 49. According to the Health Ministry an average 250 thousand women, most of them young, poor and black are annually interned at public hospitals to undergo uterus curettage after unsafe abortions. The practice of clandestine abortions in Brazil has become a serious issue for the public health system and is responsible for the fifth cause of women's death in the country, having the rank of first cause in Salvador since 1990 and the third women's death cause in São Paulo. Abortion-related deaths are more frequent among black women than white one's, and the incidence is heavier among girls up to 15 years old and women between 30 and 39.

Neide would probably undergo Popular Jury in the next few months and most certainly use her tribune to speak one more time. She would talk aloud about the national hypocrisy regarding reproductive rights, revealing that everything is allowed to a few while others are silenced, lied to and killed.

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