



## INFORMAL WORK: AN ANALYSIS OF THE PRODUCTION OF THE LAST 10 YEARS IN BRAZIL

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### ABSTRACT

According to the Institute of Applied Economic Research (IPEA), informal work, although prior to the 1990s, has its consolidation in the Brazilian economy as one of the side effects of the Real Plan. The objective of this study is to carry out a review of the national literature on informal work. Studies on informal work in national databases that include Brazilian scientific journals classified as A1, A2, B1 and B2 in the areas of Social Sciences, Human Sciences and Health Sciences published between 2008 and 2017 were reviewed. It could be observed that the study of informal work remained constant over the years, with a total of 14 (fourteen) articles between 2008 and 2010, 13 (thirteen) articles between 2011 and 2013 and 16 (sixteen) other articles between 2014 and 2017. Regarding the methodological approach, the research shows that, in the articles analyzed, the qualitative approach, working with values, beliefs, representations, habits, attitudes and opinions, useful to understand the context in which the phenomenon occurs, was used in 74% of the studies, while the quantitative studies that seek to generate accurate and reliable measures, and measure opinions, attitudes and models capable of predicting behavior represented only 19% of the articles. The cut made for this study showed that only 43 articles, out of a total of 440 previously researched and included in the original database, consisted of studies on the relationship with work among informal workers, noting that this theme in question is underrepresented in Brazilian research work.

**Keywords:** Analysis; Brazil; Informal Work; Literature review



## 1. INTRODUCTION

According to Rezende and Tafner (2005), the Institute of Applied Economic Research- IPEA (in Portuguese), in a study published in the book *Brazil: the State of a Nation*, associates the consolidation of informal work in the Brazilian economy with the Real Plan. However, it is important to note that informality in Brazil pre-dates the 1990s.

Noronha (2003) analyzes the economy in transition in the years 1960/1970, and points out that the exodus from the countryside to the industrialized cities generated a large number of unemployed who, for their survival, sought work in informality and underemployment. Nowadays, this condition of underemployment and informality is known generically as informal work and has become a characteristic feature of the Brazilian labor market and several other countries. Currently, informal work, derived from technologies applied to modern work and the economic dynamics of resection, among other aspects.

The literature finds a plurality of concepts and definitions in relation to informal work, without a consensual definition, which can be understood as a form of participation in the labor market, without the total or partial structuring of formal labor regulations, such as the signed portfolio, social security, guarantee fund for length of service and unemployment insurance. In some aspects, informal work can be confused with self-employment; however, some categories of self-employed workers, such as doctors, accountants and lawyers, have specific forms of work, with their own legislation and forms of access to social security.

Sasaki (2009) highlights the duality of formal and informal work as forms of work often seen as opposites. For the author, informal work can be understood, then, as workers whose capital-labor relationship has no clear outlines, displaced from the requirements and benefits of labor laws, especially regarding social security.

Cacciamali (2000) points out that informal work can be represented by street sellers, temporary work, self-employment or home office, as a consequence of an existing demand within the current economic and social order. For the author, this type of work is responsible for promoting tensions and uncertainties, by providing a context of increased competitiveness, while at the same time there is an absence of rules or legal consensus in its regulation as a form of work.

The concept of the informal sector given by the International Labor Organization - ILO (1972) associates the formal/informal condition with the existence or not of a process of subordination. Informal sector activities would occupy market niches not filled by typically



capitalist activity, since, according to the ILO, profitability would not be enough for capitalist operation.

According to ILO (2013), informal work is made up of poor working who produce their goods and services without recognition, registration, regulation or protection of their activities by public authorities. Perhaps from this conception comes the association to precarious work and the use of the term "fall into informality", because the informal labor force would be composed exclusively of poor workers and without an income option.

Krein and Proni (2010) also define informal work based on socioeconomic changes, being that exercised without framing the social security legislation and labor regulation. However, it is important to emphasize that the Brazilian social security system has several forms of adhesion to the National Institute of Social Security (INSS), allowing the inclusion of different classes of workers in its attention mechanisms.

The worker with a signed worker's license is affiliated to the Social Security and contributes to a general fund, self-employed workers and entrepreneurs are individual taxpayers. In the same way, self-employed, informal workers, students, housewives and the unemployed can make an optional contribution to entitlement to social security benefits in various forms (SASAKI, 2009).

Cardoso (2013) defines informal work by its characteristics related to work itself, which involves diversity of work arrangements, productive contexts, goods and services produced, working conditions and relationship with state institutions. The author states that, although the characteristics cited also apply to formal work, these often fail to meet the demands, allowing informal activity.

The author defends two main arguments. For him, the affirmation of the existence of continuities between the formal and informal spaces, in which the formal capitalist economy feeds on the circulation of goods of informality, while informality suffers the influences coming from the formal market. As a second argument, it points to the presence in informal environments of coordination mechanisms supported by sociability, linked to non-economic factors and sustained in social relationships of trust and anchored in social and family networks.

In addition, Cardoso (2013) proposes the construction of a concept of informality that aggregates the existing connections between the various elements of formal and informal work, as opposed to those that confer inferior *status* to the worker that is not exclusively regulated according to the logic of state rules and laws.



Starting from a different conception of Cardoso (2013), Kalleberg (2009) associates precarious work with activities in the informal sector and temporary jobs in the formal sector, because of the contingency and unpredictability characteristics, in which the worker is responsible for taking on the employment risks. The absence of labor ties is pointed out as one of the characteristics of precarious work, being directly related to the loss of labor rights and indirect benefits already earned, such as annual paid vacation, overtime, health plans, paid rest, transportation, food and wage losses.

Aspects such as the way in which work is organized and the conditions in which it is performed are factors of direct influence in the process of precariousness, such as unattainable goals, intense pace of work, time pressure, intensification of control and management by fear, physical, mental and subjective weakening of workers (GIONGO; MONTEIRO; SOBROSA, 2017). Sasaki and Vasques-Menezes (2012) argue that this association should not be generalized, since the working conditions inherent in the activities may prove precarious in both formal and informal work.

Ulyssea (2008) discusses that, in general, the studies on informal work do not address the problem through their articulations with the society and the economy of the country, treating it in a predominantly isolated and sparse way. Going further, it shows that if from a strictly economic point of view, companies perceive the onerous costs of entering the formal sector, with the legalization and registration of the business, operational costs of labor legislation, taxes and fees. From the same point of view, in the view of informal workers, withholding income tax and social security contributions represent formality costs, even though informality leads to the loss of benefits such as social security, unemployment insurance, paid vacations and thirteenth wages.

For Ulyssea (2008), one way to get informal workers out of informality would be to accelerate economic growth and create new jobs. However, according to Sasaki and Vasques-Menezes (2012), other factors interfere in this equation and informality may not be a direct reason for the scarcity of formal jobs, nor can the labor-labor relationship be explained by the mere formalization of an employment relationship.

On the other hand, Pastore (2006) analyzes informal work from a social point of view, and reports that the current labor legislation would have great weight for the increase of informal work, since for its protectionist characteristic it imposes difficulties and high cost for formal hiring. The main point to be discussed so that informal workers can have access to



formality would be the promotion of an adjustment in this labor legislation that would allow greater flexibility, stimulating formality.

These authors, while discussing the existence of informal work, differ on how to control its existence. While Ulyssea (2008) seeks economic growth to increase formal employment, Pastore (2006) proposes a set of laws or adaptations that allow informal workers to migrate their businesses to a greater formality.

Several empirical studies covering informal work are generally based on economists' perceptions and focus on the harmful aspects of this type of work for the current economy and for the workers themselves. Sato (2013) in addressing the gap in psychology in studying informal work, outlines a brief historical-cultural overview of work psychology and its focus of study over time. It emphasizes that, only from the 1980s on, psychologists started to study work realities less focused on meeting the demands of work and production organizations and more interested in the daily work-labor relationship, from the perspective of collective health and social psychology.

Sato (2013) concludes that this effort is worthy of appreciation, since informal work includes several ways of creating and thinking about work. Empirical studies on informal work are recent, and this is the main justification for choosing the theme. The systematic literature review found that the scientific production on the topic is still dispersed and punctual, requiring expanding this discussion to help the understanding of the settings adopted in the field of informal work (LIMA; COSTA, 2016).

The objective of this study is to conduct a national literature review on informal work. Studies on informal work in the national databases that include Brazilian scientific journals classified as A1, A2, B1 and B2 from the areas of Applied Social Sciences, Human Sciences and Health Sciences published between the years 2008 and 2017 were reviewed.

## **2. METHOD: PROCEDURES AND DELIMITATIONS**

In order to show the evolution of scientific production on informal work, a literature review of national publications of the last 10 years was conducted. The literature review included journals from the areas of Applied Social Sciences, Health and Human Sciences, in the years of 2008-2017, classified as A1, A2, B1 and B2, collected in the SCIELO, PEPSIC, LILACS and CAPES databases. The research flow is shown in Figure 1.

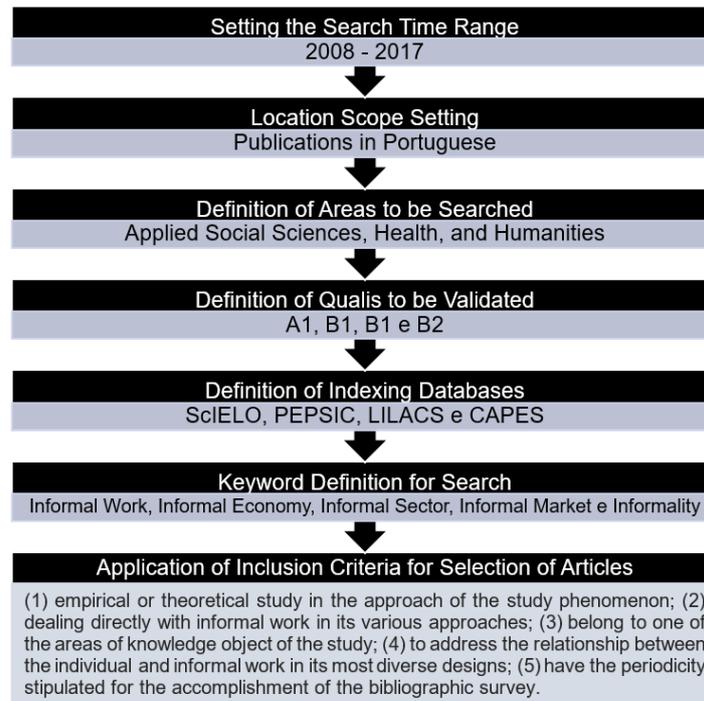


Figure 1: Methodological flow used

The choice of journals analyzed considered indexed journals with A1, A2, B1 and B2 concepts in *Qualis* CAPES in the areas of Applied Social Sciences, Human Sciences and Health Sciences. The key words "informal work", "informal economy", "informal sector", "informal market" and "informality" were used. As the reality of informal work is intrinsically related to the social, political and cultural context, we chose to analyze only studies conducted within the Brazilian context. However, articles in foreign journals have also been analyzed since they were published in Portuguese regarding the Brazilian reality. Table 1 provides a general summary of the articles found and selected.

These were criteria for the inclusion of the articles:

- (1) empirical or theoretical study in the approach to the phenomenon;
- (2) address informal work in its various approaches;
- (3) belong to one of the areas of knowledge object of the study;
- (4) address the individual's relationship and informal work in its most diverse forms;
- (5) have the stipulated periodicity for the bibliographic survey.

After the process of analysis of the study journals, the articles were grouped based on the following aspects: year of publication, area of work, type of research and data collection,

instrument used, public and specificity of the public. In principle, 440 publications were selected. Removing the repetitions of researched base articles, 144 articles remained.

After reading, some publications did not meet the criteria of the study, avoiding the theme or bringing a scope that did not represent the object of study of the research, being discarded. After using this criterion, 43 articles remained (Table 1).

Table 1: Selected/analyzed articles

| Indexed basis | Keywords                        |      |                 |      |                  |      |                 |      |             |      | Total     |
|---------------|---------------------------------|------|-----------------|------|------------------|------|-----------------|------|-------------|------|-----------|
|               | Informal Work                   |      | Informal sector |      | Informal economy |      | Informal market |      | Informality |      |           |
|               | Fou.                            | Sel. | Fou.            | Sel. | Enc.             | Sel. | Enc.            | Sel. | Enc.        | Sel. |           |
| SCIELO        | 20                              | 5    | 7               | 0    | 9                | 0    | 4               | 2    | 100         | 8    | 15        |
| PEPSIC        | 4                               | 1    | 1               | 0    | 0                | 0    | 0               | 0    | 10          | 2    | 3         |
| LILACS        | 24                              | 14   | 4               | 0    | 1                | 0    | 3               | 0    | 14          | 4    | 18        |
| CAPEL         | 34                              | 2    | 40              | 0    | 66               | 3    | 72              | 2    | 28          | 0    | 7         |
| <b>Total</b>  | 81                              | 21   | 52              | 0    | 76               | 3    | 79              | 4    | 152         | 14   | <b>43</b> |
| <b>Total</b>  | 440 items found and 43 selected |      |                 |      |                  |      |                 |      |             |      |           |

Legend: FOU.= Found; SEL.= Selected

For a better understanding of the distribution of journals in areas of knowledge, we chose to consider both the area of work of the authors and the journal originally classified. Thus, this distribution received greater emphasis in the area of Human Sciences, followed by the area of Applied Social Sciences and Health Sciences, as can be seen in Table 2.

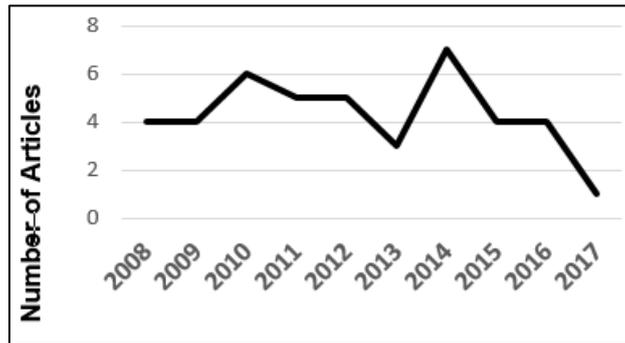
Table 2: Periodicals by area

| Knowledge area                 | Periodic and frequency                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Applied Social Sciences</b> | Paidéia (1), Revista Brasileira de Gestão Urbana (1), Revista de Administração (1), Revista de Administração Mackenzie (1), Caderno CRH (5), The Journal of Transport Literature (1), Cadernos EBAPE.BR (1), Cadernos de Pesquisa (1), Revista Brasileira de Estudos Populacionais (1), Serviço Social e Sociedade (1), Sociedade e Estado (1), Política e Sociedade (1)                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Health Sciences</b>         | Revista Brasileira de Educação Física e Esporte (1), Revista Gaúcha de Enfermagem (1), Revista de Saúde Pública (1)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Human Sciences</b>          | Arquivos Brasileiros de Psicologia (2), Caderno de Psicologia Social do Trabalho (4), Revista Estudos e Pesquisas em Psicologia (1), Psicologia em Estudos (3), Psicologia e Sociedade (2), Psicologia, Ciência e Profissão (1), Psicologia: Reflection and Criticism (1), Revista de Psicologia Organizacional e do Trabalho (1), Saúde e Sociedade (1), Universitas Psychology (1), CoDAS (1), Katálisis (1), Revista CES Psicologia (1), Ciências e Saúde Coletiva (3), Revista de Pesquisa: Cuidado é Fundamental Online (1) |

### 3. OVERVIEW OF PUBLICATIONS ON INFORMAL WORK IN BRAZIL

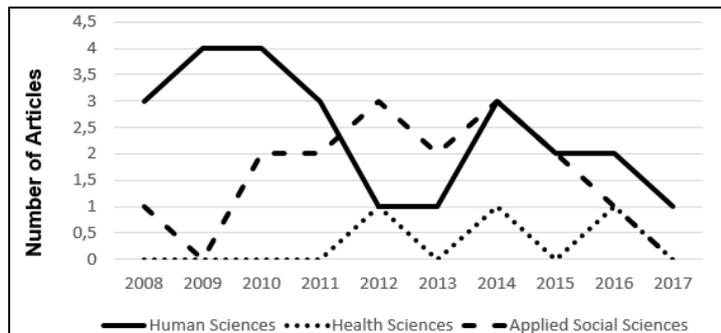
Graph 1 shows that the study of informal work remains constant over the years, with a relatively homogeneous distribution between 2008 and 2017, a total of 14 articles (33%)

between the years 2008 and 2010, 13 articles (30%) between the years 2011 and 2013, and 16 more articles (37%) between 2014 and 2017.



Graph 1: Articles selected by year.

Of the areas analyzed, some had more emphasis, while others appeared in a more punctual manner. Regarding Applied Social Sciences, sixteen articles were included in this field of study, corresponding to 37% of the total. The Human Sciences had a wider coverage, with more than half of the articles (56%) classified within this area. The Health Sciences area had only three article occurrences, corresponding to 7% of the total.



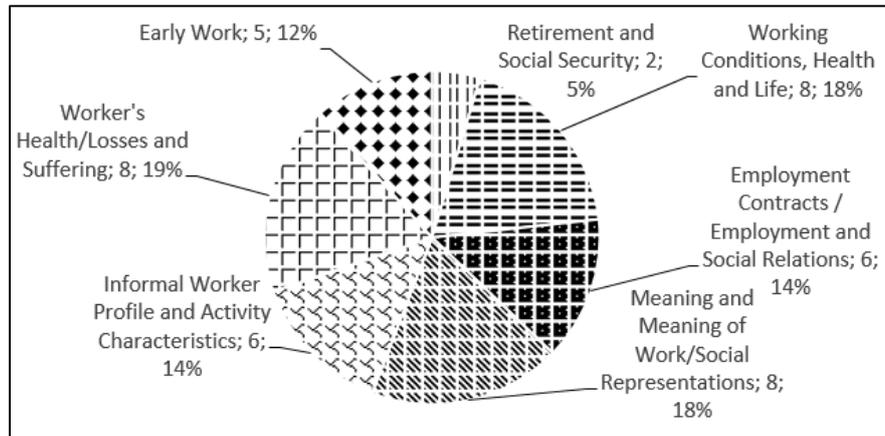
Graph 2: Articles selected by area and year.

The Human Sciences had a predominance in the publications, possibly because of social psychology, which has fostered a gradual increase of research on the subject through the sub-area of Organizational and Work Psychology. The articles in the area of Human Sciences are focused on the scenario of workers in an informal work regime, concerned with aspects of work organization, difficulties and advantages in the exercise of their activities.

The Applied Social Sciences also had a relevant number of articles, which makes sense to understand that it is a theme that involves the individual and the society in which he or she finds himself or herself. However, the articles discuss perspectives related, directly or indirectly, to economic aspects. It will be presented below how these publications are grouped in relation to the thematic and methodological approaches and in relation to the informal worker himself and his work.

### 3.1. Thematic Areas

Seven thematic areas were found: (1) characteristics of the activity and profile of the informal worker; (2) meaning and sense of work/social representations; (3) work and social relations/work contracts; (4) working conditions, health and life; (5) worker health/loss and suffering; (6) social security and retirement; (7) early work. These areas are described and detailed in Table 3 and Graph 3.



Graph 3: Selected articles by area.

Some studies focused on a descriptive analysis of both the social profile of the informal worker (ARAÚJO; LOMBARDI, 2013; COSTA, 2010; DUARTE; FUSCO, 2008; PAMPLONA, 2013) and the activity performed by him (MENDES; CAVEDON, 2012; XAVIER; FALCÃO; TORRES, 2015). Three studies focused on analyzing the types of employment contract found in informality (AZEVEDO; TONELLI, 2014; AZEVEDO; TONELLI; SILVA, 2015; COSTA, 2011), while three other authors analyzed the labor and social relationships found in informal workers (COSTA; TOMASI, 2014; LOURENÇO; BERTANI, 2009; MACIEL *et.al*, 2014).

Part of the studies analyzed the social representations of work for different groups of informal workers (DIAS *et al.*, 2014; IRIART *et al*, 2008; OLIVEIRA; IRIART, 2008). Other studies also used psychological concepts of the meaning and meaning of work to observe the relationship between informal workers and their respective works (BRAGA; LIMA; MACIEL, 2015; COUTINHO *et al.*, 2013; COUTINHO, 2009; LIMA, RIBEIRO; ANDRADE, 2011; THOMÉ; TELMO; KOLLER, 2010).

The working conditions to which they are exposed, and their consequences were also a very representative theme, with 19% of articles in this perspective. Some of them took a broader approach, including health and living conditions (COELHO *et al*, 2016; CUNHA;

VIEIRA, 2009; MACIEL *et al*, 2011; MENDES; AZEVÊDO, 2014; FIQUEIREDO; SILVA; BARNABE, 2016), in addition to work. The others focused mainly on working conditions and how these affected the individual in specific work situations (ASSIS; MACÊDO, 2010; CARVALHO; ESCARCE; LEMOS, 2016; GOMES; SILVEIRA, 2012).

In relation to the losses and suffering that can be caused by informal work, some studies have analyzed different possibilities. Cockell and Peticarrari (2011) observed the loss of working capacity in civil construction professionals, highlighting the fragility they experience when in a situation of misfortune.

Kopper (2015) analyzed the tensions at work arising from the transition of street sellers who worked on the street when transferred to a mall. Psychic repercussions of work were analyzed by Maronesi *et al.* (2014), who compared the level of stress and overload in cancer caregivers, and by Bernardo, Nogueira and Bull (2011), who compared the relationship between mental health and work with groups of formal (automotive industry) and informal (street workers) workers. Other authors also studied worker health, but more broadly: Ribeiro, Sabóia and Souza (2016); Rosa and Mattos (2010); Takahashi *et al* (2012); Giongo, Monteiro and Sobrosa (2017).

Another group analyzed was the category "Retirement and Social Security", which discusses the consequences of long-term work and showed concern for the future worker. Only two articles (CINTRA; RIBEIRO; ANDRADE, 2010; SASAKI; VASQUES-MENEZES, 2012) discuss aspects of importance to all workers such as social security and retirement. Sasaki and Vasques-Menezes (2012) point out an expansion of informal work and the need for the formulation of public policies and more comprehensive procedures for affiliation to social security, adopting contribution tables with more inviting values and that can attract in a massive and lasting way new inclusions of individual contributors.

The perspective of early work was also focused on the selected articles, being related to drug use (CIRINO; ALBERTO, 2009), schooling (SOUZA; ALBERTO, 2008), the motivation that leads parents to insert their children in this type of work (FERRAZ; GOMES, 2012), the emotional skills found in working children in street situation (MINERVINO *et al.*, 2010), and the social invisibility of children and teenagers in informal work situation (LOURENÇO, 2014).

The association of early work with informal work is explained by legal issues; access to formal work is forbidden for children and adolescent teenagers up to 14 years of age. The

alternative for those who want to start working before this age is informality (LOURENÇO, 2014).

Table 3: Themes

| Themes of the work                                          | Articles                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Retirement and Social Security</b>                       | The daily lives of retirees who continue to work informally in the footwear industry: perceptions about retirement and current work (CINTRA; RIBEIRO; ANDRADE, 2010); Informal worker and Social Security: the case of self-employed workers from Brasília-DF (SASAKI; VASQUES-MENEZES, 2012).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Working conditions, health and life</b>                  | Women waste pickers: living, working and health conditions (COELHO et al, 2016); Between embroidery and income: working conditions and health of the labyrinthine women of Juarez Távora/Paraíba (CUNHA; VIEIRA, 2009); Precariousness of the work and life of waste pickers in Fortaleza, CE (MACIEL et al, 2011); The work and health of the physical educator in academies: a contradiction at the heart of the profession (MENDES; AZEVÊDO, 2014); Public transportation: Whole-body vibration and comfort of passengers, drivers and collectors (FIGUEIREDO; SILVA; BARNABE, 2016); The work of musicians of a blues band under the gaze of the psychodynamics of work (ASSIS; MACÊDO, 2010); Work process, performance and profile of professionals of an Auditive Health Network: reference for satisfaction (CARVALHO; ESCARCE; LEMOS, 2016); About the use of qualitative methods in Public Health, or the lack that makes a theory (GOMES; SILVEIRA, 2012). |
| <b>Employment contracts/employment and social relations</b> | The different employment contracts between qualified Brazilian workers (AZEVEDO; TONELLI, 2014); Flexible employment contracts: different profiles of qualified Brazilian workers (AZEVEDO; TONELLI; SILVA, 2015); Subcontracting and informality in construction in Brazil and France (COSTA, 2011); From pedestrian to employee: rationalization and subcontracting in civil construction (COSTA; TOMASI, 2014); The work and health relationship in the footwear sector of Franca-SP (LOURENÇO; BERTANI, 2009); Social networks and social capital in the formation of socio-productive networks: Study in a clothing fair in Fortaleza (MACIEL et al., 2014).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Meaning and Meaning of Work/Social Representations</b>   | Surviving only through mercy: the experience of collectors of recyclable materials (BRAGA; LIMA; MACIEL, 2015); Every day in a different house: between trajectories, meanings and the daily work of day laborer's (COUTINHO <i>et al.</i> , 2013); Senses of contemporary work: the identity trajectories as a research strategy (COUTINHO, 2009); Perceptions of children and adolescents about their informal work (LIMA; RIBEIRO; ANDRADE, 2011); Youth labour insertion: context and opinion on work definitions (THOMÉ; TELMO; KOLLER, 2010); Social representations of papermakers about work and housing: the case of Vila Chocolate (DIAS et al., 2014); Representations of informal work and health risks among domestic workers and construction workers (IRIART et al, 2008); Representations of work among informal construction workers (OLIVEIRA; IRIART, 2008).                                                                                       |

**Profile of the informal worker and Characteristics of the activity**

Informal work, gender and race in Brazil at the beginning of the 21st century (ARAÚJO; LOMBARDI, 2013); Informal work: a basic structural problem in understanding inequalities in Brazilian society (COSTA, 2010); Migration and precarious employment in two distinct contexts: São Paulo and Toritama (DUARTE; FUSCO, 2008); Labor market, informality and street trading in São Paulo (PAMPLONA, 2013); The street vendor activity as an urban practice in the context of cities (MENDES; CAVEDON, 2012); Characterization of the labor activity of informal workers in Natal beach (RN) - Brazil (XAVIER; FALCÃO; TORRES, 2015).

**Worker Health/Losses and Suffering**

Health and work of cassinu community fishermen, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: social (in) visibility and struggle for recognition (RIBEIRO; SABÓIA; SOUZA, 2016); The health and risks of fishermen and crab collectors in Guanabara Bay (ROSA; MATTOS, 2010); Job insecurity and risk of accidents in civil construction: a study based on the Collective Labour Analysis (ACT) (TAKAHASHI et al, 2012); Portraits of informality: The fragility of social protection systems in times of misfortune (COCKELL; PERTICARRARI, 2011); From Camelôs To shopkeepers: the transition from the street market to a shopping mall in Porto Alegre (KOPPER, 2015); Indicators of stress and overload in formal and informal caregivers of cancer patients (MARONESI *et al.*, 2014); Work and mental health: repercussions of objective and subjective forms of precariousness (BERNARDO; NOGUEIRA; BULL, 2011); Suinoculturist: experiences of pleasure and suffering in precarious work (GIONGO, MONTEIRO; SOBROSA, 2017).

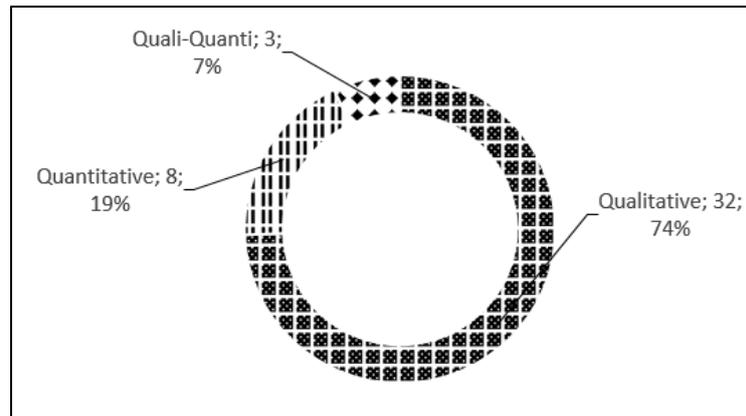
**Early work**

Drug use among early juggling workers (CIRINO; ALBERTO, 2009); Productive restructuring, informal work and the social invisibility of child and adolescent work (LOURENÇO, 2014); A precarious existence: the care of the offspring in the work of collecting recyclable material (FERRAZ; GOMES, 2012); Emotions in the streets: use of the "Test of Emotions Comprehension" in children in street work situations (MINERVINO *et al.*, 2010); Early Work and schooling process of children and adolescents (SOUZA; ALBERTO, 2008).

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### **3.2. Methodological Approach**

The analysis of the methodological approach, data collection and instruments used offers a look at how informal work is being studied. In the analyzed articles, the qualitative approach, which analyzes values, beliefs, representations, habits, attitudes and opinions was used in 74% of the studies, demonstrating the researchers' concern in understanding the context where the phenomenon occurs, considering the subjectivity of participants. The quantitative studies represented 19% of the articles and seek to generate accurate and reliable measures and models capable of predicting behaviors and attitudes towards informal work. Only 7% of the articles used qualitative-quantitative method.



Graph 4. Methodological approach of the articles.

Regarding data collection, most studies (88%) adopted the type of primary collection, making use of direct sources. The remainder (12%) used secondary data collection, having sources such as: Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílio - PNAD (ARAÚJO; LOMBARDI, 2013; COSTA, 2010), Microdados do Censo de 2000 (DUARTE; FUSCO, 2008) and Pesquisa de Emprego e Desemprego - PED (Pamplona, 2013). A single study (MENDES; CAVEDON, 2012) used previous ethnographic studies.

In primary data collection studies, a greater recurrence in the use of interviews was observed (74%). Semi-structured, open interviews and life history, individual or in groups, were used. Only one study used a focus group (COELHO *et al.*, 2016). The technique of *on-site* observation was used by 38% of the studies, questionnaires in 7% of the surveys. Only two studies used psychometric instruments: Lipp Symptom Inventory - ISSL and Zarit Burden Interview Protocol - ZBT (MARONESI *et al.*, 2014) and Emotions Understanding Test - TCE (MINERVINO *et al.*, 2010).

### 3.3. The Worker and Informal Work

Several professional categories were researched: musicians (Assis & Macêdo, 2010), marketers (CARVALHO; ESCARCE; LEMOS, 2016; MACIEL *et al.*, 2014), cleaning diarists (COUTINHO *et al.*, 2013), labirinteiras (CUNHA; VIEIRA, 2009), artisanal fishermen (ALVIM, 2012; RIBEIRO; SABÓIA; SOUZA, 2016), fishermen and crab collectors (ROSA & MATTOS, 2010), physical educators (MENDES; AZEVÊDO, 2014), truck drivers (FIGUEIREDO; SILVA; BARNABE, 2016), qualified workers with higher education such as lawyers, information technology and accounting professionals (AZEVEDO; TONELLI, 2014; AZEVEDO; TONELLI; SILVA, 2015), jugglers (COUTINHO, 2009), street vendors (KOPPER, 2015; XAVIER; FALCÃO; TORRES, 2015), street children and adolescents (MINERVINO *et al.*, 2010; SOUZA; ALBERTO, 2008).

The group of workers with the highest number of studies was that of collectors of recyclable material, with five studies (BRAGA; LIMA; MACIEL, 2015; COELHO *et al.*, 2016; DIAS *et al.*, 2014; FERRAZ; GOMES, 2012; MACIEL *et al.*, 2011). Another group that also had this number of studies was civil construction workers (COCKELL; PERTICARRARI, 2011; COSTA; TOMASI, 2014; COSTA, 2011; OLIVEIRA; IRIART, 2008; TAKAHASHI *et al.*, 2012). The footwear industry workers were the object of four studies (CINTRA; RIBEIRO; ANDRADE, 2010; LIMA; RIBEIRO; ANDRADE, 2011; LOURENÇO; BERTANI, 2009; LOURENÇO, 2014), the first of which was carried out with already retired workers who were still working in the sector.

Four articles from comparative studies between groups of workers were also found. Bernardo, Nogueira and Bull (2011) compared the influence of work on the mental health of formal workers in the automobile industry with trenches, informal workers in street situations. Coutinho (2009) compared the meaning of work for formal workers of an industrial organization with informal workers in precarious work situations.

Maronesi *et al.* (2014), stress and work overload in formal and informal caregivers of cancer patients. Figueiredo, Silva e Barnabe (2016), the work and health conditions of self-employed and contracted truck drivers. The common results obtained in these studies point to the perception of vulnerability of informal workers, mainly due to the fragile work bond and greater susceptibility to suffering.

Two other comparative studies were also carried out, but in contexts other than formality versus informality. Costa (2011) analyzed the scenario of subcontracting and informality in the civil construction sector in the comparison of France and Brazil, detecting structural differences in both scenarios.

For Costa (2011), the results of this research reveal similarities between the informal situations of the two countries, respecting the specificities of each one. In France, this type of work is basically carried out by immigrants with low levels of education, with the institutionalized action of agencies intermediating temporary workers in the hiring of these workers, although under different conditions from other local workers. In Brazil, the companies themselves allocate these workers through subcontracting or informality.

In another selected study, Thomé, Telmo and Koller (2010) analyzed the work for young people aged 14 to 24 workers and non-workers. It was found that despite the moralistic and market-oriented view of work, young people find more job opportunities in the informal market than in the formal labor market and that they are paid less than a minimum wage in most cases.



In relation to the age of the research participants, most of the studies (51%) did not precisely define the age group. However, the studies addressed adult workers. Only five articles mentioned children, adolescents and youth (CIRINO; ALBERTO, 2009; LIMA; RIBEIRO; ANDRADE, 2011; MINERVINO *et al.*, 2010; SOUZA; ALBERTO, 2008; THOMÉ; TELMO; KOLLER, 2010), while only two studies specifically cited adults (CUNHA; VIEIRA, 2009; DIAS *et al.*, 2014).

#### 4. DISCUSSION

The cutout made for this study showed that only 43 articles, out of a total of 440 previously researched, and included in the original database, consisted of studies on the work relationship with informal workers. The small portion of research on informal work found in the context of Brazilian work, corroborates what was highlighted by Sasaki (2009) and Sasaki and Vasques-Menezes (2012).

For the authors, the informal sector in question is under-represented in national labor surveys and, in general, the factors that led to their choice or the reason for their permanence are underestimated. This indicates a tendency to show the problems of informal work and little concern to better define it, or even analyze its participation in the production of services and the economy of society as a vector of foreign exchange production.

The humanities have a greater share of publications on informal work, highlighting the working conditions present in this sector and the significance of this work for workers. In general, the thematic profile of the studies on informal workers who used samples from the informal sector shows concern with the labor relations themselves and, especially, with the precariousness of work.

Although most of the articles analyzed present a discussion of the results that considers the specificities of the work context in the informal sector, a small portion does not make this association. This possibly leads to gaps or gaps in the construction of knowledge about informal work. The selected articles related to themes such as "well-being", "meaning of work" and "job satisfaction", did not deepen discussions about the sector, pointing to the difficulty of theoretical reflections and instruments of measures aimed at the informal sector.

It is interesting to point out that the precariousness of work is discussed almost as a prerogative of informal work due to the generalization of a portion of this type of work with street sellers, jugglers at traffic lights, scrap pickers, among others. The development of the productive sphere through informal activity has become more attractive, and today it is a reality for many workers who opt for a more flexible and autonomous work due to their personal needs

as small children, specific skills, entrepreneurship capacity and high cost of formality. The informal sector has also come to include small units such as small family businesses.

This conception is discussed in the studies of Cacciamali (2000) and Abramovay *et al.* (2003), and permeates the construction of the Urban Informal Economy (ECINF) research conducted by IBGE in the years 1997 and 2003 in households and establishments (Machado, Oliveira and Antigo, 2008). These aspects are not explored in the articles published in recent years, which demonstrates a direction or myopia in the perception of reality currently present in the Brazilian social scenario.

In relation to the methodological scenario, the studies in this context have followed the general trend of research in micro behavior in Brazil, in which little use of experiments is observed (BORGES-ANDRADE; PAGOTTO, 2010). Still in relation to the method, the qualitative approach was the most used.

The fact that the interviews represent the most used method for data collection is not compatible with the micro behavior articles in general - which use more questionnaires (BORGES-ANDRADE; PAGOTTO, 2010), but is consistent with the predominance of the qualitative approach. It should also be noted that the *on-site* observation is more representative in informal labor studies than in general publications on the labor market and workers, which may be justified by the greater need for immersion in the reality of informal workers and in the smaller number of official documents for this type of work.

## 5. CLOSING REMARKS

The analysis of the scientific production of a given area of knowledge is an important contribution to the scientific community and it is becoming more and more an object of investigation. The contribution of studies of this type lies in the generation of discussions about gaps, difficulties and limits encountered by the various researchers in their field of knowledge, in addition to fostering discussions and promoting debates about the need for new research on a given theme or approach.

The present literature review makes a cut of the national production of the last 10 years of its object of analysis, informal work. The data and information analyzed have some limitations. The collection and organization were based on complete articles published in the main databases of national journals, not including international databases. In addition, it considered the last 10 years to carry out its analyses as a period, although these periods have a good temporality and the journals always include psychology and administration, areas that host the main scientific articles on PO&T.

The analysis shows that studies on informal work are still incipient. Several researchers have treated informal work as something marginalized, with minimal gains for the worker and no gains for the society in which he is inserted. Studies point to a labor force without specialization and that, due to economic situations and lack of formal employment, "fall into informality".

In the same way, they indicate that informal work does not contribute economically and socially to the community in which it is inserted, since, among other things, it does not pay taxes and does not subsidize the formal sources of welfare and social protection. Although some studies indicate that there may be benefits and satisfaction in carrying out informal work, in general, scientific production points to work that is denigrated and harmful to all those involved in carrying it out.

Thus, there is a need to expand the studies on the topic, addressing aspects that are still little or no explored, such as job satisfaction of informal workers, their well-being, health and quality of life. These existing gaps in the study of informal work play an important role in its definition, seeking to understand its real role in contemporary society and also the existence of workers who choose to be in this market and who are satisfied with their choice, and informal work can therefore be a possibility.

In the same sense, there are still no specific instruments that can be applied to research that seeks an analysis of the work-labor relationship with a focus on informal workers. It is important to think of new research instruments that effectively cover the characteristics inherent to informal work, and these can provide a more effective study on key topics such as commitment, work overload, drawings at work, among others.

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