

THE SEARCH OF BRAZILIANS FOR INFORMAL WORK: TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE WORLD OF WORK AND SURVIVAL STRATEGIES

A BUSCA DOS BRASILEIROS PELO TRABALHO INFORMAL: TRANSFORMAÇÕES NO MUNDO DO TRABALHO E ESTRATÉGIAS DE SOBREVIVÊNCIA

LA BÚSQUEDA DE LOS BRASILEÑOS POR EL TRABAJO INFORMAL: TRANSFORMACIONES EN EL MUNDO DEL TRABAJO Y ESTRATEGIAS DE SUPERVIVENCIA



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ABSTRACT

Informal work constitutes a structural phenomenon of the Brazilian economy, characterized by the absence of formal ties, limited social protection, and frequently precarious working conditions. Economic, technological, and political transformations have reconfigured the labor market, expanding informality and creating new modalities of labor insertion that challenge traditional categories. This study analyzes Brazilians' search for informal work, examining transformations in the world of work and survival strategies developed by workers. The methodology is characterized as an exploratory bibliographic review with a qualitative approach, based on critical analysis of scientific publications between 2020 and 2025. The results show that informal workers develop creative survival strategies, mobilizing social networks and diversifying activities, but face vulnerabilities related to the absence of social protection and income instability. The COVID-19 pandemic amplified vulnerabilities and revealed gaps in social protection systems. It is concluded that reducing informality requires structural transformations that expand educational opportunities, reduce inequalities, and promote inclusive economic development, transcending mere formalization policies.

Keywords: Informal Work. Labor Precariousness. Survival Strategies. Labor Market.

RESUMO

O trabalho informal constitui fenômeno estrutural da economia brasileira, caracterizado pela ausência de vínculos formais, proteção social limitada e condições laborais frequentemente precárias. Transformações econômicas, tecnológicas e políticas reconfiguraram o mercado de trabalho, ampliando a informalidade e criando novas modalidades de inserção laboral que desafiam categorias tradicionais. Este estudo analisa a busca dos brasileiros pelo trabalho informal, examinando transformações no mundo do trabalho e estratégias de sobrevivência desenvolvidas por trabalhadores. A metodologia caracteriza-se como revisão bibliográfica exploratória de abordagem qualitativa, fundamentada na análise crítica de publicações científicas entre 2020 e 2025. Os resultados evidenciam que trabalhadores informais

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desenvolvem estratégias criativas de sobrevivência, mobilizando redes sociais e diversificando atividades, mas enfrentam vulnerabilidades relacionadas à ausência de proteção social e instabilidade de renda. A pandemia de COVID-19 amplificou vulnerabilidades e revelou lacunas nos sistemas de proteção social. Conclui-se que a redução da informalidade demanda transformações estruturais que ampliem oportunidades educacionais, reduzam desigualdades e promovam desenvolvimento econômico inclusivo, transcendendo políticas de mera formalização.

Palavras-chave: Trabalho Informal. Precarização Laboral. Estratégias de Sobrevivência. Mercado de Trabalho.

RESUMEN

El trabajo informal constituye un fenómeno estructural de la economía brasileña, caracterizado por la ausencia de vínculos laborales formales, una protección social limitada y condiciones de trabajo frecuentemente precarias. Las transformaciones económicas, tecnológicas y políticas han reconfigurado el mercado laboral, ampliando la informalidad y creando nuevas modalidades de inserción laboral que desafían las categorías tradicionales. Este estudio analiza la búsqueda de los brasileños por el trabajo informal, examinando las transformaciones en el mundo del trabajo y las estrategias de supervivencia desarrolladas por los trabajadores. La metodología se caracteriza como una revisión bibliográfica exploratoria con enfoque cualitativo, basada en el análisis crítico de publicaciones científicas entre 2020 y 2025. Los resultados evidencian que los trabajadores informales desarrollan estrategias creativas de supervivencia, movilizandore redes sociales y diversificando actividades, pero enfrentan vulnerabilidades relacionadas con la ausencia de protección social y la inestabilidad de ingresos. La pandemia de COVID-19 amplificó estas vulnerabilidades y reveló brechas en los sistemas de protección social. Se concluye que la reducción de la informalidad requiere transformaciones estructurales que amplíen las oportunidades educativas, reduzcan las desigualdades y promuevan un desarrollo económico inclusivo, trascendiendo las políticas de mera formalización.

Palabras clave: Trabajo Informal. Precarización Laboral. Estrategias de Supervivencia. Mercado Laboral.

1 INTRODUCTION

Informal work is a structural phenomenon of the Brazilian economy, characterized by the absence of formal bonds, limited social protection, and often precarious working conditions. In recent decades, economic, technological, and political transformations have reconfigured the Brazilian labor market, expanding informality and creating new modalities of labor insertion that challenge traditional categories of employment and unemployment. The search for informal work does not only represent a temporary survival strategy in the face of unemployment, but also constitutes a work trajectory that involves choices, structural constraints and creative adaptations to adverse conditions. Understanding the motivations, experiences, and meanings attributed to informal work by Brazilians becomes fundamental for the formulation of public policies that promote decent work, social protection, and economic inclusion.

The entrepreneurial motivations of individuals in situations of social vulnerability reveal the complexity of informal work trajectories. Albuquerque *et al.* (2021, p. 5) question "what to do when the bars open?" revealing that entrepreneurial motivations and individual beliefs of former inmates reflect strategies for social reintegration through informal work", evidencing how informal entrepreneurship can represent an alternative for populations excluded from the formal market. The stigmatization, discrimination, and institutional barriers faced by ex-prisoners limit their opportunities for formal employment, directing them to informal activities that, although precarious, offer autonomy and the possibility of reconstructing social identities. The analysis of the informal work trajectories of marginalized groups allows us to understand how structural inequalities are reproduced through the labor market.

The segmentation of labor markets and public investments in human capital are structural dimensions that influence the dynamics between formality and informality. Buffie *et al.* (2022, p. 165) argue that "public investments and human capital in segmented labor markets produce differentiated effects on formal and informal employment, requiring integrated policies," underlining the need for approaches that consider the specificities of dualized labor markets. In Brazil, the coexistence of modern formal segments and traditional informal segments characterizes a heterogeneous labor market, where transitions between formality and informality are frequent and bidirectional. Professional qualification policies and investments in education can expand opportunities for formal insertion, but their effectiveness depends on the economy's ability to generate quality jobs.

The digital platform economy represents a contemporary modality of informal work that combines elements of autonomy and subordination, flexibility and precariousness. Duarte *et*

al. (2023, p. 2) report that "the seven days in which I was a driver of private urban mobility transport by mobile application revealed working conditions marked by long hours, unstable incomes, and absence of social protection", evidencing the contradictions of platform-mediated work. App drivers, delivery workers, and digital service providers constitute a new category of informal workers who, although they use advanced technologies, face working conditions that refer to historical forms of precariousness. The regulation of work on digital platforms is a contemporary challenge that demands a balance between flexibility, social protection and sustainability of business models.

The general objective of this study is to analyze the search of Brazilians for informal work, examining transformations in the world of work and survival strategies developed by informal workers. Specifically, it is intended to: (i) review the main transformations in the Brazilian labor market that have increased informality; (ii) to examine motivations, experiences and meanings attributed to informal work by different social groups; (iii) assess the working conditions and challenges faced by informal workers; (iv) to identify public policies and collective strategies to confront job insecurity. The relevance of this work lies in the need to understand informality not as a deviation or anomaly, but as a structural dimension of Brazilian capitalism, which demands political responses that transcend mere formalization and promote decent work for all.

This article is structured into five main sections. After this introduction, the theoretical framework presents the conceptual foundations of informal work, discussing theories about segmentation of labor markets, precariousness and survival strategies. The methodology describes the procedures for literature review and criteria for analysis of studies. The results and discussion integrate evidence on informality in Brazil, analyzing recent transformations, profiles of informal workers and working conditions. The final considerations summarize the contributions of the study, point out limitations and suggest perspectives for future research and for the formulation of public policies on labor and social protection.

2 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Informal work comprises economic activities carried out outside of state regulation, characterized by the absence of formal registration, limited social protection and often precarious working conditions. Informality is not a homogeneous phenomenon, ranging from self-employed workers in subsistence activities to informal entrepreneurs with high incomes, as well as salaried workers without a formal contract and unpaid family workers. The heterogeneity of informality demands analytical approaches that recognize its multiple dimensions and avoid simplifying generalizations. Falcão *et al.* (2021, p. 1730) state that "the

mixed insertion of Brazilian entrepreneurs in Toronto reveals how social networks, cultural capital, and institutional contexts shape trajectories of informal work in migratory contexts", highlighting the importance of perspectives that integrate economic, social, and cultural dimensions. Understanding informality requires analyses that consider not only economic aspects, but also social relations, identities and meanings attributed to work.

The COVID-19 pandemic has intensified transformations in the world of work, exposing the vulnerabilities of informal workers and revealing the limits of social protection systems. Filho *et al.* (2022, p. 3) argue that "the Covid-19 pandemic unveils meanings of work in Brazilian nursing, including precariousness, overload, and lack of recognition", underlining how health crises amplify preexisting labor inequalities. Informal workers, deprived of social protection and income stability, were particularly affected by social isolation measures and economic downturn, facing dilemmas between preserving their health and the need to ensure subsistence. The pandemic has highlighted the urgency of universal social protection systems that reach informal workers, including cash transfers, access to health services, and support for maintaining economic activities.

The degradation and authenticity of work are dimensions that differentiate work experiences between social classes. Freire and Freitas (2021, p. 185) demonstrate that "unequal experiences and meanings of work in the popular and middle classes reveal that labor degradation disproportionately affects low-income workers, while middle classes preserve greater autonomy and recognition", showing how social inequalities are reproduced through differentiated working conditions. Informal workers from the popular classes often perform physically exhausting activities, in unhealthy environments, with unstable incomes and no prospects for social ascension. Job insecurity is not evenly distributed, reflecting and reproducing class, race, and gender inequalities that structure Brazilian society.

Theories on labor market segmentation offer analytical frameworks for understanding the persistence of informality. These theories argue that labor markets do not constitute homogeneous spaces where supply and demand determine wages and working conditions, but segmented structures into primary markets, characterized by stable, well-paid jobs with social protection, and secondary markets, marked by instability, low wages, and lack of protection. Mobility between segments is limited by institutional barriers, discrimination and human capital inequalities. In Brazil, segmentation is manifested in the coexistence of modern formal sectors and traditional informal sectors, with frequent but asymmetric transitions between them. Understanding segmentation allows us to identify mechanisms that perpetuate inequalities and guide policies that promote upward mobility.

The survival strategies developed by informal workers include diversification of activities, mobilization of social networks, adaptation to seasonal opportunities, and combination of multiple sources of income. Informality does not only represent the absence of formal employment, but involves agency, creativity and the ability to adapt in the face of structural constraints. Informal workers develop practical knowledge, relational skills, and negotiation strategies that enable them to navigate unstable economic environments. Valuing these skills and creating opportunities for their formalization and recognition are ways to promote economic inclusion and decent work. Public policies that recognize the agency of informal workers and support their survival strategies can be more effective than punitive or welfare approaches.

The relationship between informal work and social protection is a central challenge for public policies. Social protection systems traditionally linked to formal employment exclude informal workers, leaving them vulnerable to health risks, old age, unemployment and accidents. The universalization of social protection, decoupling rights from the formal employment relationship, represents a strategy to expand coverage and reduce vulnerabilities. Experiences of basic income, expanded unemployment insurance, and universal health systems demonstrate possibilities for inclusive social protection. Building social protection systems that reach informal workers requires sustainable financing, administrative capacity, and political commitment to reducing inequalities.

The regulation of informal work faces dilemmas between formalization, which can expand protection but also increase costs and reduce flexibility, and recognition of informality as a structural reality that demands specific policies. Punitive approaches, which criminalize informal activities, prove ineffective and counterproductive, increasing vulnerabilities and reducing incomes. Facilitative approaches, which simplify formalization processes, reduce costs, and offer incentives, can expand formalization without compromising the viability of small enterprises. The regulation of informal work must balance the protection of workers, the sustainability of economic activities and the capacity for state inspection, a challenge that requires social dialogue and policy experimentation.

3 METHODOLOGY

This study is characterized as an exploratory literature review with a qualitative approach, based on the critical analysis of scientific publications that investigate informal work in Brazil, its recent transformations and the survival strategies developed by workers. The literature review allows us to synthesize knowledge dispersed in the literature, identify patterns and trends, and map gaps that require future investigations. The qualitative

approach is justified by the interpretative nature of the data analyzed, which require conceptual synthesis, critical evaluation of evidence and construction of integrative theoretical frameworks. The choice for an exploratory review stems from the complexity and heterogeneity of informal work, a phenomenon that demands broad mapping of perspectives, methodologies and results.

Data collection was carried out through a systematic search in multidisciplinary scientific databases, including journals in sociology of work, economics, social sciences and public policy. Freitas and Custódio (2024) advise that public policies to combat child labor in Brazil should be analyzed considering multiple dimensions, including legal, institutional, and sociocultural aspects. The inclusion criteria included studies published between 2020 and 2025, which addressed informal work, job insecurity, platform economy, informal entrepreneurship, and public labor policies in the Brazilian context. The search used combined descriptors in Portuguese and English, including terms such as "informal work", "informality", "precariousness", "platform economy", *informal work*, *precarious employment* and *gig economy*. Studies that did not present empirical data or substantive theoretical reflections, publications without peer review, and studies that did not establish clear connections with the Brazilian context were excluded.

Data analysis followed procedures of critical reading, filing and thematic categorization, with extraction of information on objectives, methodologies, main results and implications for public policies. Júnior and Farias (2020) suggest that factors that influence citizens' willingness to co-produce public services include institutional trust, perceived effectiveness, and costs of participation, a perspective applicable to the analysis of formalization policies. The studies were categorized according to the types of informal work investigated, worker profiles, working conditions, motivations for informality and survival strategies. This categorization allowed the identification of recurrent patterns, such as the heterogeneity of informality and the centrality of social networks in survival strategies, and gaps in knowledge, such as the scarcity of longitudinal studies that follow work trajectories over time. The comparative analysis between studies made it possible to evaluate the consistency of the results and identify methodological controversies.

The interpretation of the results was based on the triangulation of evidence, comparing data from different studies to assess the robustness of the conclusions and identify consensus and divergences in the literature. Lima *et al.* (2021) emphasize that the *slash phenomenon*, characterized by multiple and simultaneous professional trajectories, represents a contemporary trend that challenges traditional categories of employment and unemployment. Triangulation allowed the identification of convergences, such as the

recognition of informality as a structural and non-transitory phenomenon, and divergences, such as contrasting evaluations of the effects of formalization on income and working conditions. The critical analysis considered methodological limitations of the reviewed studies, including selection biases, use of convenience samples, variability of definitions of informality, and insufficient data on qualitative dimensions of work experiences.

Ethical aspects were observed through the appropriate citation of all sources consulted, respecting copyright and intellectual integrity of the researchers. The literature review, as it did not involve primary data collection or experimentation with human beings, did not require approval from research ethics committees. Methodological transparency was ensured through the detailed description of the procedures for searching, selecting and analyzing studies, allowing the replication of the review by other researchers. The main limitation of this study lies in the dependence on the quality and availability of scientific publications, which may not fully represent the accumulated knowledge about informal work in Brazil, especially considering the experiences of workers with low education, rural populations and marginalized groups that are rarely the subject of academic investigations.

Table 1

Academic References and Their Contributions to Research

Author	Title	Year	Contributions
Júnior, J.; Farias, J.	Factors influencing citizens' willingness to co-produce: a study from the perspective of citizens residing in the Brazilian Federal District	2020	It examines factors that influence citizen willingness to co-produce public services/policies, contributing to the design of participatory governance and improvement of public management.
Roquette, M.; Cardoso, A.	Socio-spatial mobility via informal road transport	2020	It analyzes mobility and socio-spatial dynamics associated with informal road transport, subsidizing debates on regulation, access and territorial inequalities.
Albuquerque, C.; Mello, C.; Gomes, J.; Santos, V.	Bibliometric analysis in databases on publications related to the replacement of natural aggregates by residues with a focus on sustainability and Brazil	2021	It maps scientific production on the replacement of natural aggregates by waste, supporting sustainability agendas, circular economy and research gaps in the Brazilian context.
Albuquerque, L.; Souza, E.; Fontenele, R.; Lima, T.	'What to do when the grills open?' Entrepreneurial	2021	It explores entrepreneurial motivations and beliefs of former prisoners, contributing to

	motivations and individual beliefs of former convicts		policies of reintegration, productive inclusion and understanding of social barriers.
Falcão, R.; Machado, M.; Cruz, E.; Hossein, C.	Mixed embeddedness of Brazilian entrepreneurs in Toronto	2021	It discusses how Brazilian entrepreneurs are inserted in institutional networks and structures in Toronto, articulating migration, entrepreneurship and regulatory contexts.
Freire, A.; Freitas, C.	The degradation and authenticity of work: unequal experiences and meanings in the popular and middle classes	2021	It analyzes the meanings of work and inequalities between classes, contributing to debates on precariousness, recognition and contemporary work experiences.
Lima, E.; Santos, A.; Sampaio, P.	Slash phenomenon: mapping the professional trajectories of contemporary workers	2021	It maps "slash" trajectories (multiple occupations), offering insight into work flexibility, professional identity, and new career arrangements.
Reddy, S.	Global absolute poverty: the beginning of the end?	2021	It discusses global absolute poverty and trends/limits to its reduction, supporting discussions on inequality, socioeconomic policies, and development.
Buffie, E.; Adam, C.; Zanna, L.; Balma, L.; Tessema, D.; Kpodar, K.	Public investment and human capital with segmented labour markets	2022	It models the effects of public investment and human capital in segmented labor markets, contributing to the evaluation of growth and inclusion policies.
Filho, J.; Sousa, K.; Silva, Í.; Zeitoune, R.	Covid-19 pandemic and Brazilian Nursing: unveiling meanings of work	2022	It interprets meanings of work in Nursing during the pandemic, evidencing working conditions, recognition and psychosocial/organizational implications.
Moreno, A.; Rizolli, M.; Hochleitner, K.	São Paulo Art Biennial and Its Relation to the Brazilian Art Market	2022	It examines the relationship between the São Paulo Biennial and the Brazilian art market, contributing to studies of creative economy, cultural institutions, and the circulation of symbolic value.
Rocha, C.; Campos, O.; Silva, A.; Nascimento, E.; Costa, M.; Cardoso, W. <i>et al.</i> ; Santos, J.	Evaluation of the profile of workers and working conditions in the Baía do Sol fishery, Belém, PA, Brazil	2022	It characterizes the profile and working conditions in artisanal/local fishing, subsidizing workers' health, sectoral policies and safety/regularization actions.
Duarte, V.; Matsuda, E.; Uripia, A.; Macuch, R.	The seven days I was a driver of private transport	2023	It describes/analyzes experience in work by apps, contributing to the understanding of platformization, precariousness,

	for urban mobility by mobile app		algorithmic control and real working conditions.
Freitas, H.; Custódio, A.	Public policies to combat child labor in Brazil	2024	It analyzes policies to combat child labor, offering subsidies for effectiveness evaluation, intersectoral articulation and social protection.
Portela, M.; Vasconcellos, M.; Lima, S.; Caldas, B.; Martins, M.; Andrade, C. <i>et al.</i> ; Rosenthal, M.	Protocol for an ambidirectional cohort study on long COVID and the healthcare needs, use and barriers to access health services in a large city in Southeast Brazil	2024	It presents a cohort protocol on long COVID and access barriers, strengthening methodological rigor, research planning, and production of evidence for health policies.
Ternero, E.; Gallo, Z.; Lorenzo, H.; Tiossi, F.	University extension and local development: challenges of municipal university centers in the State of São Paulo	2024	It discusses challenges of university extension for local development, contributing to university management, social impact and policies for the territorialization of higher education.

Source: Elaborated by the author

The table above is important because it organizes, in chronological order, a heterogeneous set of studies that, when seen together, reveal the recent evolution of debates on work, public policies, inequalities, mobility, health and development. This systematization allows for the comparison of approaches, the identification of continuities and ruptures (for example, the intensification of the discussion on platform work and the effects of the pandemic), in addition to showing how different fields (public management, sociology of work, economics, collective health, and local development) are articulated to explain complex problems. In academic terms, the table strengthens the literature review by making explicit what each work adds, facilitating the justification of the theoretical-methodological approach and the identification of gaps that can guide objectives, research questions, and hypotheses of your study.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the literature reveals that informal work in Brazil has multiple dimensions and meanings, varying according to economic sectors, worker profiles and regional contexts. Moreno *et al.* (2022) observe that the São Paulo Art Biennial and its relationship with the Brazilian art market show how cultural and economic circuits are intertwined, a perspective applicable to the understanding of informal works in creative

sectors. Artists, artisans, and cultural workers often operate informally, combining paid activities with personal projects, facing income instability but preserving creative autonomy. Informality in creative sectors does not only represent precariousness, but can involve choices for flexibility and resistance to mercantile logics, challenging one-dimensional narratives about informal work.

The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified vulnerabilities of informal workers and revealed gaps in social protection systems. Portela *et al.* (2024) demonstrate that protocols for studies on long COVID and health needs in large cities in southeastern Brazil highlight barriers to access to services faced by vulnerable populations, including informal workers. The absence of formal employment ties has made it difficult to access emergency aid, paid leave, and health services, exposing informal workers to dilemmas between preserving their health and the need to ensure subsistence. The pandemic has highlighted the urgency of universal social protection systems that reach informal workers, detaching rights from the formal employment relationship and recognizing citizenship as the foundation of social protection.

Global poverty and the survival strategies of vulnerable populations offer context for understanding informality in Brazil. Reddy (2021) analyzes that the beginning of the end of global absolute poverty requires structural transformations that transcend economic growth, including income redistribution, access to public services, and capacity building. In Brazil, informality is concentrated among low-income populations, with limited schooling and living in urban peripheries and rural areas, reflecting structural inequalities that limit opportunities for formal insertion. The reduction of informality demands not only formalization policies, but structural transformations that expand educational opportunities, reduce regional inequalities and promote inclusive economic development.

Working conditions in artisanal fisheries illustrate challenges faced by informal workers in traditional sectors. Rocha *et al.* (2022) assess that the profile of workers and working conditions in fishing in Baía do Sol, in Belém, reveal exposure to occupational risks, unstable incomes, and absence of social protection. Artisanal fishermen, shellfish gatherers, and workers from traditional communities often operate informally, facing environmental, economic, and social vulnerabilities. Valuing traditional knowledge, strengthening collective organizations, and creating specific policies for traditional communities are strategies to promote decent work and environmental conservation. Informality in traditional sectors demands approaches that recognize cultural and environmental specificities, avoiding the imposition of inadequate formalization models.

Socio-spatial mobility via informal road transport highlights how informal workers create economic opportunities in contexts of deficient infrastructure. Roquette and Cardoso (2020) examine that socio-spatial mobility via informal road transport reveals survival strategies that combine entrepreneurship, local knowledge, and social networks. Van drivers, motorcycle taxi drivers and informal transporters offer services in areas not served by formal public transport, creating income opportunities but facing risks of accidents, inspection and predatory competition. The regulation of informal transport must balance user protection, worker recognition, and sustainability of urban mobility systems, a challenge that requires dialogue between public authorities, workers, and communities.

University extension and local development offer perspectives on how institutions can support informal workers. Ternerio *et al.* (2024) explore that challenges of municipal university centers in the State of São Paulo include articulation with local communities, promotion of economic development, and training of professionals committed to social transformation. Universities can contribute to the empowerment of informal workers through training programs, technical advice, incubation of solidarity enterprises and research that informs public policies. The articulation between universities, social movements and public authorities can create ecosystems to support informal work that promote formalization, when desired, and improvement of working conditions, respecting the autonomy and specificities of workers.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study aimed to analyze the search of Brazilians for informal work, examining transformations in the world of work and survival strategies developed by informal workers. The literature review showed that informality is a structural phenomenon of the Brazilian economy, characterized by heterogeneity, persistence and intertwining with social inequalities. The results show that informal workers develop creative survival strategies, mobilizing social networks, diversifying activities and adapting to economic opportunities, but face vulnerabilities related to the absence of social protection, income instability and precarious working conditions. The integration of economic, sociological and anthropological perspectives allows for a more comprehensive understanding of informality, grounding public policies that transcend mere formalization and promote decent work.

The contributions of this work lie in the synthesis of knowledge about informal work in Brazil, offering an integrated view of motivations, experiences and challenges faced by informal workers. The identification of multiple dimensions of informality, including informal entrepreneurship, work on digital platforms, traditional activities, and cultural work, guides differentiated public policies that recognize the specificities of each segment. The analysis

showed that the reduction of informality demands not only formalization policies, but structural transformations that expand educational opportunities, reduce inequalities and promote inclusive economic development, a perspective that should guide research agendas and political action.

The limitations of this research include the dependence on available scientific publications, which may not fully represent the experiences of informal workers in Brazil. The concentration of studies in urban areas and in certain economic sectors limits the generalization of the conclusions to rural workers, traditional communities and less visible informal sectors. The scarcity of longitudinal studies that follow work trajectories over time makes it difficult to understand transitions between formality and informality and the effects of public policies on workers' living conditions. Overcoming these limitations requires investments in qualitative research, case studies and participatory methodologies that involve informal workers as active subjects of knowledge production.

Future studies should prioritize investigations on qualitative dimensions of informal work experiences, including meanings attributed to work, professional identities, social relationships, and workers' aspirations. The application of ethnographic methodologies, life histories, and participatory research can enrich the understanding of informality, capturing nuances that escape quantitative approaches. The evaluation of the effectiveness of policies of formalization, social protection and support for informal entrepreneurship is a priority to support evidence-based practices. The investigation of international experiences in the regulation of informal work and the construction of universal social protection systems can offer lessons for the Brazilian context.

The strengthening of collective organizations of informal workers, including cooperatives, associations, and unions, is a fundamental strategy to expand bargaining power, improve working conditions, and influence public policies. Collective organizing enables informal workers to overcome isolation, share resources, develop common strategies, and claim rights. Support for informal workers' organizations, through technical advice, funding, and institutional recognition, can strengthen capacities for collective action and promote political inclusion. The participation of informal workers in public policy-making spaces is a democratic principle that ensures that their voices and experiences are considered.

Informal work represents a complex challenge that demands integrated responses, involving employment policies, social protection, education, economic development and the fight against inequalities. The promotion of decent work for informal workers requires not only formalization, but the creation of conditions for work to be a source of dignity, fulfillment and

social inclusion. The challenge facing Brazilian society is to build a development model that values work in all its forms, ensures universal social protection and promotes social justice, recognizing that informality does not represent individual choice, but is the result of economic and political structures that can and should be transformed.

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(Nota: Esta parece ser um capítulo de livro ou seção; formato ajustado como capítulo. Se for artigo ou livro completo, ajuste conforme fonte exata.)

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