

GENDER AND EMPLOYMENT IN BRAZIL: INEQUALITY CHALLENGES

Marcia de Paula Leite

Introduction

Brazilian occupational structure data regarding last year's shows relative decrease in gender inequalities. In fact, women upgraded relative positions concerning unemployment rate, average income and number of formal workers. However, we must emphasize that inequalities persist, and this is because of labor market segmentation, or in other words, segregation of women in certain activities. This structural issue has little changed over the years.

Segregation of women at work has already been analyzed by several theories, trying to explain why they are inserted in most precarious occupations, where wage tend to be lower¹. However, we owe to feminist theories elucidating relationship between domestic and productive work sexual division (Hirata and Kergoat, 2007; Humphries and Rubery, 1984; Hirata and Maruani, 2003; Kergoat, 1998 and 2000), stressing this persistence has to do with social gender construction, giving them responsibility for household tasks, and to men the role of provider.

Although these theories have started to develop since the decade of the 1980s, these ideas are still applicable, currently defining relationships between the sexes in society. Considering this concerns to cultural patterns deeply rooted and difficult to be modified, this social construction poses serious challenges to feminist movements, to trade unions and social movements, in general, in a struggle for a less unequal society. This paper is focused in discussing these issues. To do so, it is organized in three parts. In the first one we will discuss the occupational structure characteristics in the period 2004/2015, under a gender point of view; in the second one we will debate about reconciling employment and family; and, in the third one, we will analyze reconciliation measures in the public agenda. To conclude, we will state final considerations.

Employment and gender in the 2.000s

Unlike international trends, Brazil lived at the beginning of 2000s, an economic and social development process showing significant labor market structuration. Main data confirming this process are a decrease in unemployment,

¹ This paper is based in discussions on ILO Program GRPE (Gender, Race, Poverty and Employment) of which I was consultant for several years between 2000/2014. It is also based in materials developed by Maysa Garcia and me at Argumento Consultants. I thank Maysa and trade unionists, particularly the women with whom we had thorough discussions on this issue. Here I particularly refer to neoclassical theories, which with several nuances searched (and still search) explaining business decisions to hire workers, through rational calculations, related to profits and productivity. This would explain companies' preferences for male workers, especially for better qualified and paid posts, for better men's qualifications and lesser costs, when compared to women. For a deepen discussion on this issue, see DeGraff and Anker, 2004; Abramo and Todaro, 2002.

increase in minimum wage and real value of wages; rise in formal employment (registered jobs and with social security rights); and reduction of inequalities, among other aspects.

This process was the outcome of political decisions taken during period 2003 to 2014, establishing development with social inclusion as main public policy objective. Among main measures, we may highlight increase in minimum wage above inflation, improvement of labor inspection and Public Ministry of Labor improvement actions. As stated by several studies (Leite and Salas, 2014; Krein and Manzano, 2014; Baltar, 2014), these measures reached occupational structure as a whole, affecting more significantly workers at the base of social pyramid. Data shows that, in spite of structuration process being significant, it began reverting from 2015, with deepening of economic and political crises. Occupational structure improvement is evident, especially in period 2004/2012. It kept in 2013 and 2014, but began deteriorating in 2015.

Table 1 - Rate distribution of workers by sex: Number of occupied people per sector, and per gender

Activity sectors	2004		2012		2013		2014		2015	
	Men	Women								
Farming	24,7pct	16,2pct	17,9pct	10,0pct	17,7pct	10,1pct	17,5pct	10,7pct	17,4pct	9,7pct
Other	1,2pct	0,2pct	1,1pct	0,2pct	1,2pct	0,2pct	1,2pct	0,3pct	1,1pct	0,2pct
Processing Industry	14,9pct	12,3pct	14,3pct	11,7pct	13,8pct	11,1pct	13,4pct	10,9pct	12,8pct	10,5pct
Construction	10,6pct	0,4pct	14,7pct	0,6pct	15,5pct	0,7pct	15,6pct	0,7pct	15,1pct	0,7pct
Trade and repairs	18,3pct	15,8pct	18,0pct	17,4pct	18,0pct	17,4pct	18,6pct	17,5pct	18,7pct	17,5pct
Board and food	3,1pct	4,3pct	3,6pct	6,3pct	3,5pct	6,2pct	3,5pct	6,2pct	3,8pct	6,4pct
Transport, storage and communication	6,9pct	1,3pct	8,4pct	1,7pct	8,5pct	1,7pct	8,3pct	1,7pct	8,5pct	1,6pct
Public Administration	5,3pct	4,4pct	5,6pct	5,3pct	5,8pct	5,2pct	5,3pct	5,0pct	5,5pct	4,9pct
Education, health and social services	3,4pct	16,2pct	3,8pct	17,5pct	4,2pct	18,4pct	4,3pct	18,2pct	4,5pct	19,4pct
Household services	0,9pct	17,1pct	0,9pct	14,8pct	0,9pct	14,6pct	0,9pct	13,9pct	1,0pct	14,2pct
Other services: collective, social and personal	2,9pct	5,8pct	2,5pct	6,0pct	2,5pct	5,9pct	2,7pct	6,2pct	2,7pct	6,3pct
Other activities	7,3pct	6,0pct	9,0pct	8,4pct	8,5pct	8,4pct	8,6pct	8,7pct	8,8pct	8,5pct
Poorly defined activities	0,4pct	0,1pct	0,1pct	0,0pct	0,1pct	0,0pct	0,1pct	0,0pct	0,1pct	0,0pct
Total	100pct									

Source: PNAD 2004, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015

In fact, above table shows substantial decline of farm workers, mainly in 2013/2014 and 2015 periods, meaning reduction in one of most precarious working ways. Another important fact to comment is constant increase along whole period of workers in areas of education, health and social services, thus showing increase in offer of these services to population. It also must be highlighted household decrease, mainly performed by women. Rates show constant decrease up to 2014, while in 2015 there is a reversion. Rates begin growing again for both men and women, showing workers' difficulties for accessing other activities. To conclude, it is worth mentioning decrease in industrial activities, showing Brazilian deindustrialization process, as stated in several studies, and formal – and in general better paid job losses. (Oreiro and Feijó, 2010).

When analyzing data under gender point of view, women's segmentation is basically focused in three activities: education, health and social services, segment where women are more concentrated; trade and repairs; and household services. And it is not coincidence; these are the worst paid activities in worst working conditions. However, it should be noted that women's occupational structure improvement for the period is quite significant, when considering that in 2004 the activity where they concentrated most, were household services.

Table 2 - Percentage of workers in occupation, per gender

	2004		2012		2013		2014		2015	
	Men	Women								
	pct									
Registered workers	33,6pct	25,6pct	42,0pct	35,6pct	42,5pct	36,3pct	41,8pct	35,7pct	40,7pct	35,7pct
Military forces	0,5pct	0,0pct	0,6pct	0,0pct	0,6pct	0,0pct	0,6pct	0,1pct	0,6pct	0,1pct
Statutory civil service	4,4pct	8,8pct	4,7pct	10,0pct	4,8pct	10,1pct	4,6pct	9,9pct	5,1pct	10,3pct
Other non-registered workers	21,4pct	13,9pct	17,3pct	12,2pct	16,8pct	12,0pct	16,7pct	12,0pct	16,1pct	11,3pct
Registered household workers	0,4pct	4,2pct	0,4pct	4,1pct	0,4pct	4,6pct	0,4pct	4,2pct	0,5pct	4,3pct
Non-registered household workers	0,5pct	12,8pct	0,5pct	10,6pct	0,5pct	9,9pct	0,5pct	9,7pct	0,5pct	9,9pct
Self-employed	26,1pct	16,3pct	24,5pct	15,4pct	24,5pct	15,3pct	25,2pct	16,1pct	27,0pct	17,4pct
Employers	5,2pct	2,5pct	4,7pct	2,6pct	4,7pct	2,5pct	4,8pct	2,4pct	4,7pct	2,4pct
Workers producing for own consumption	2,2pct	6,6pct	3,1pct	5,0pct	3,5pct	5,6pct	3,4pct	5,9pct	3,0pct	5,2pct
Construction workers building for own use	0,2pct	0,0pct	0,1pct	0,0pct	0,2pct	0,0pct	0,2pct	0,0pct	0,2pct	0,0pct
Not remunerated	5,5pct	9,2pct	2,1pct	4,2pct	1,7pct	3,5pct	1,9pct	4,1pct	1,7pct	3,4pct
Total	100pct									

Source: PNAD 2004, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015

Data regarding percentage of workers per occupation and sex ratify previously mentioned segregation. As we can see, there are less women than men

among registered workers, (it is important mentioning that along the period, women increased their relative participation in this category) and although they are less concentrated than men among non-registered workers and self-employed, they do have higher concentration than men in household jobs (with or without register), in production for own consumption and in not remunerated jobs, among most precarious occupational structure positions. On the other side, there is higher women's concentration in statutory public employees (almost double when compared to men), since access through public procurement exempts them from discriminatory measures adopted by companies. Although over the period they might be fluctuations, they do not affect significantly segregation by sex in most precarious labor market categories.

Table 3 - Rate of unemployment and average income, by gender and color

	2004	2012	2013	2014	2015
Men	6.8pct	4.7pct	5.0pct	5.4pct	7.9pct
Women	11.6pct	8.3pct	8.5pct	8.9pct	11.8pct

Source: PNAD, 2004; 2012; 2013; 2014 and 2015.

Table 4 - Relative 2014/2015 unemployment growth rates for men, women, white and black people

	2004	2015	Increase 2004/2015	Increase in percentage
Men	6.80pct	7.90pct	1.20pct	17.20
Women	11.60pct	11.80pct	0.10pct	1.10

Source: Based on data from PNAD 2004 and 2015.

Data on unemployment shows considerable improvement for period 2004/2012, with inflection of this trend starting in 2013, when rates began increasing again for both men and women. If we analyze 2004/2015 period as a whole, we see rates increasing higher for men than women. This suggests they could retain their working post better than men.

Table 5 - Average income, by gender

	2004	2012	2013	2014	2015
Men	R\$ 1,359.09	R\$ 1,914.61	R\$ 1,982.76	R\$ 1,990.30	R\$ 1,901.36
Women	R\$ 865.01	R\$ 1,330.61	R\$ 1,392.60	R\$ 1,408.64	R\$ 1,383.21

Values calculated at constant prices of 2015

Source: PNAD 2004; 2012; 2013; 2014 and 2015.

Table 6 - Average income relative growth between 2004/2015 for men and women*

	2004	2015	Increase 2004/2015	Increase in percentage
Men	1,359,09	1,901,36	542.3	40
Women	865,01	1,383,21	518.2	60

2004 Values calculated at constant prices of 2015. Source: Based on data from PNAD 2004 and 2015.

Finally, when assessing evolution of income data by gender, we see that income grows for both men and women, from 2004 to 2014. The inflection begins in 2015, when both have a decrease in their income. But when comparing growth evolution along the period as a whole, we see that women's income increase - 60pct - was higher than men's income increase - 40pct -, showing decrease in income differential between both sexes. Actually, in 2014 women outweighed for the first time the threshold of 70pct of men's income (10 years before, rate was 63pct). This decrease of differentials is due, in great part, to equal opportunities policies between men and women amidst labor market indicators improvement, besides the effort women have done to obtain better qualifications, by improving their educational levels: in 2014, Average years of study amongst men was 7.45, while in women it was 7.98 (PNAD, 2014).

However, we must consider that although there is a decrease, these income differentials between both sexes, are still high, and decrease is slow. One important factor to be considered regarding remuneration is educational level. Besides the fact that men earn systematically more than women in every educational level, women face a paradoxical situation: their remuneration differentials regarding men, increases as educational levels are higher.

When analyzing this data altogether, we see that women have significantly improved their situation in labor market during period 2004/2014, and although they manage to preserve better their situation regarding income and unemployment in 2015, occupational structure has little changed, keeping focus in lower paid activities, and those where jobs tend to be more precarious. This gender segregation in labor market is closely related to cultural barriers associated with gender stereotypes, tending to strengthen women's unfavorable position in labor market. Widely accepted notion that women's main role is taking care of household responsibilities, and that reproductive role restricts their access to employment, is an obstacle to their professional mobility and chances of developing a career in a job, issue we will see in next topic.

Balance between employment and family

Traditional gender roles have been socially constructed. According to them, men should play a part of "providers", responsible for productive work, with a salary which should be enough to support family. To women it was at-

tributed a part of “care takers”, which should assume family responsibilities, without pay. This idea was based in the notion that performing family responsibilities – take care of children and household tasks – would be related to female abilities, considered “natural”. On that logic, labor market was structured for men, seen as workers which did not need to be worried about family responsibilities and, therefore, could be fully available for work.

This traditional conciliation model between employment and family does not correspond anymore with current labor market and family life scenario, since nowadays women are much more present in labor market, and families have changed. Number of homes where women are head of the family, is increasing since the 1990s. In this context, women’s income became fundamental for maintenance of families. Besides, demographic factors such as aging population, contributed to add new jobs for women, since taking care of older people is traditionally done by women. Therefore, women began sharing with men time dedicated to paid jobs. However, they keep being main responsible for productive and household work. It has not occurred an equivalent redistribution of household activities and family care. So, defining strategies to match these responsibilities and activities, and also other coming from insertion in labor market, is managed by women. They adjust their insertion in labor market, postponing entry, reducing their stay in the market, or developing non-continuous work paths.

Productive and reproductive work, they are different spheres, but at the same time are fundamental for social reproduction. The interweaving between productive and reproductive sphere, shows that working hours are not only the time spent at work, but also include paid and not paid work, focused in social reproduction activities, particularly those related to caring people, especially minors and seniors. (Laslett and Brenner, 1989; Elson, 2016).

In this context, women live an intensification of working hours. In an increasing proportion, they began sharing with men role of income providers, without them having assumed in an equivalent manner the co-responsibility of household activities. Although women’s working hours in general are shorter than those of men, if we add working hours spent taking care of children, especially if they are babies plus household activities, including supermarket shopping, they work more hours than men. Data from 2015 PNAD states that while 86pct of women do household activities, spending 24 hour per week in these tasks, only 45pct of men do these activities and spend only 9.7 hours per week.

The reproductive work includes activities covering all tasks related to survival of families and that, in spite of being fundamental for social reproduction, are not valued. Although many studies have already focused this work, showing its importance for managing society and economies, it is not being recorded by statistics, being considered “non-work”, therefore is not considered in GNP calculations, such as productive work, related to activities producing goods or services, with economic value in the market.

The absence of conciliation measures between employment and family leads to negative consequences, mainly affecting families, but usually going beyond family circle. Besides having social costs, they have an economic impact, affecting countries growth and development.

Tensions arising between professional and family life restrict women's available options, forcing them to choose between work and family, driving them to inactivity or forcing them to combine family and informal, part-time, or precarious and poorly remunerated jobs, thus seriously affecting their careers.

Besides, informal jobs, mostly used by women as strategy to match remunerated and reproductive jobs, represent even harder conciliation tensions than formal jobs, considering they are not regulated, and many times demand long working hours.

Men, in turn, have few possibilities to participate in their families lives, since most of conciliation measures are focused in women. Men are discriminated when assuming family responsibilities; they are not considered good professionals since they don't fit in the ideal worker model, always available for the labor market. Regarding families, besides impact on people needing special cares, such as children, elderly and sick, difficulties to conciliate employment and family may influence in decision of having a baby, postponing it, or even not having children. For the society, absence of conciliation measures between employment and family, and restrictions to insert women in labor market, especially low-income people, is a reason to perpetuate poverty, social vulnerability and socio-economic inequalities. Besides the fact that these measures may lead to a fall in fertility in some countries, it also contributes to a waste of labor force, due to difficulties women will face to enter into labor market, due to their high qualification regarding jobs they perform, or because of choosing precarious and informal jobs as conciliation policy. Absence of these measures may impact countries growth rate, because skilled force, underemployed or inactive, implies in inefficient distribution of resources and wasted investment.

Another consequence of absence of conciliation measures between employment and family is paid domestic work growth. Insertion of women in labor market and need to carry on activities in the family, led paid domestic work to become center of conciliation policies between employment and family. It represents an alternative to family care's needs, to be done in a way to grant men's insertion and, especially, women, in labor market. But at the same time than it is fundamental for care's sphere, domestic work is one of most women's precarious jobs, especially black women. Domestic workers have capital importance in chains of care, because they assume great part of reproductive work previously executed by other women in family environments. But, at the same time, they do not have support to see their own needs regarding balance between professional and family activities. With lower income than other workers, their difficulties to have enough resources to hire good services, is even bigger.

Balance between employment and family in public agenda

The issue on balance between employment and family went into public exposure in second half of 20th century, when discussion on women's conditions, raised by feminist's movements, was widely disseminated. Many international meetings have been held since then, granting a prominent place for the issue, and placing it in global agenda², drawing attention to relevance of struggle against social inequalities.

The advance occurred in policies focused in promoting balance between employment and family, reflects increasing importance of the issue, and a change in notion of gender present in policy formulation and processes. Although the idea of men providing and women taking care of family still persists, pillar of concept they are a secondary labor force, a concept seeing both men as women being responsible by functions of providing and taking care, begins to gather strength. This prospect has highlighted the role of four main agents granting balance between employment and family: the State, the companies, trade unions and civil society.

The State

The State is main player in promoting conciliation between productive employment and family responsibilities. Acting as employer, the State implements conciliation measures for civil servants, therefore contributing to expansion of new practices. But this action goes far beyond role State may play as employer. The State must develop public policies laws and offer of quality services, to meet demands of society in what concerns conciliation public policies and co-responsibility.

Concerning legislation, it is a complex situation. Maternity protection initiatives and conciliation between employment and family may - and quite usually they do - strengthen traditional gender-specific labor market segmentation. In order to prevent reproduction of inequalities, conciliation policies must be focused to both men and women, considered also responsible for domestic tasks, based in concept of parental responsibilities, already adopted in many countries, regarding care that both partners of the couple must provide for their children.

Families may also benefit from several State initiatives, such as: implementation of full-time quality childcare facilities, with schedules adapted to the needs of workers with family responsibilities; providing school busing and health care for children at schools; setting up of collective laundries and low budget restaurants. All these measures help supporting domestic tasks and

² Clear evidence of the importance this theme acquired is ILO Convention 156 on workers with family responsibilities, not ratified by Brazil, and Recommendation 165, both of 1981, dealing on equal opportunities and treatment for workers of both sexes, with family responsibilities. The Convention and the Recommendation see conciliation between employment and family as a social question, and therefore, subject to interventions based in public policies. (ILO/DIEESE, p. 47)

reduce reproductive employment burden on families.

Another important State action is granting fulfillment of norms oriented to conciliation between employment and family, and respect acquired rights. In this respect, it is worth mentioning main role labor inspection could do in monitoring and supervising compliance of maternity and paternity protection law, regarding workers with family responsibilities being discriminated. However, since these subjects are still recent in business world, it is necessary labor inspection officers become aware of the importance of these issues to have an efficient supervising.

The companies

For corporate sector, assuming balance between employment and family among its concerns, is an important change of behavior, with impact in employment organization.

Companies tend to react negatively to conciliation proposals coming from unions or workers collectives, without considering that tensions between employment and family responsibilities may lead to a decrease in productivity and create job rotation, since absenteeism and getting late to work, many times are the consequence of these tensions and could be avoided by implementing actions to support workers. Corporate resistance to these measures shows little understanding from them than organizing employment in a way to favor conciliation with family life, would be the chance to grant well-being to employees, and this could increase productivity targets.

Nevertheless, it is worth emphasizing that while measures propose an important cultural change, they demand a series of care turning difficult its effectiveness. Between them, we could highlight: (1) in contrast to what was done until recently (and many times, it is still done), measures must not be addressed, even primarily, to women. On the contrary, it is important implementing measures being applicable to all employees, women and men. (2) To give support to conciliation between employment and family, it is not enough changing internal regulations, since it is a change of awareness, without which practices will not change. It is fundamental assume the commitment, it is needed an organizational culture valuing balance between employment and family and stimulating its use. It is necessary having a fluid communication and participation of employees of both sexes and their organizations to define measures. Managers responsible for implementation of measures must be trained and oriented. This will be an important instrument to grant its effective date. Promote information services and professional formation on policies focusing conciliation between employment and family is a fundamental action. (3) Considering these measures are innovative, uses of conciliation mechanisms must be a continuous and in constant evolution process. The content and application of measures must periodically be assessed and monitored, considering changes personnel and company's needs.

The trade unions

It is capital union's role in spreading ideas to conscience about importance of adopting conciliation measures between employment and family for all workers, men and women. As representatives of set of categories, they must disclose importance of these measures to grant social equality, and fight for its implementation, be it through adopting laws, or through collective bargaining. They will act as fundamental tools to promote advances in workers' rights, because they will allow already granted rights, and institute new ones, assuming main role in adopting employment and family conciliation measures.

But incorporating gender equality issue and family responsibilities in negotiating tables becomes a challenge for unions. Used for employment organization in companies where always model of female and male roles were: men exclusively performing productive activities, unions did not pay enough attention to conciliation between employment and family, which in general is still treated as an exclusive women's issue.

It is significant considering that internal feminist trade union movement struggle, which in Brazil became more aggressive since the 1970's, had a main role in awareness than unions should also have a space to fight for gender equality. Many papers have confirmed such evolution, showing women's opening of more room space in union's leadership and gender equality related issues in their agenda. (Delgado, 2009; Souza-Lobo, 1991; Soares, 2016). It has been especially emphasized organization within entities, by developing women's collective/secretariats/departments, and advance of gender issues in collective bargaining (DIEESE/OIT, 2011). However, the study of collective bargaining shows gender equality has not yet reached core of union's agenda, and also is not yet spread awareness than this issue must be embraced by men and women, to make workers interests with family responsibilities be defended in an efficient manner. Data from SACC-DIEESE³ shows that even if clauses on women have increased from 407 to 553 along studied years (1993/2009), not many of them are specifically focused on family responsibilities or gender equality. In the first case, they went from 5pct to around 15pct along the period. In the second case, from 1pct to 3pct. It is also worth mentioning that most of clauses are limited to short paid leaves to accompany spouses/family members in medical emergencies, or establishing flexible daily start and finish working times.

An organized civil society

Civil societies, especially women's organizations, are fundamental to promote social co-responsibility notion of care. The mobilization of society highlighted reproductive employment value, importance of public equipment to support conciliation between work and family life, need of recognizing role

³ The Dieese's Collective labor convention monitoring system Monitoring System, recalling terms negotiated by 30 professional categories in 90 collective labor agreements, since 1993.

performed by paid domestic work, importance of redistributing care activities between men and women, and balance between employment and family. Through these actions, a new model of balance between employment and family is spreading, based in social co-responsibility notion of care. In this new model, family responsibilities are recognized as a social function, requiring a major participation of State and other sectors of society. The idea of social co-responsibility implies in a redistribution of caring activities between men and women, and strengthening of State's role, companies and unions in development of actions oriented to conciliation between employment and family. Although it might be look obvious, importance of changing conceptions and social practices, in such a way to follow up transformations occurring in labor market and families, these changes are not easy to be admitted. Organized civil society, because of its capillarity, is a fundamental element to spread the idea of a society based in a view of co-responsibility.

Final considerations

Brazilian occupational structure data reveals that, in spite of whole structure improvement in period 2004/2012, and that women have advanced more than men regarding formalization process, still exists income improvement and decrease of unemployment, differentials between female and male employment conditions. This persistence is related to employment gender segregation, driving women to be included in more precarious and less valued activities, with more adverse working conditions, less benefits and lower salaries. Such segregation, at his turn, is related with gender roles social construction, awarding to women responsibility for reproductive activities, and men the role of providers. This concept, not much complying currently reality, where families have considerably reduced number of children, and women more and more exert paid activities, continues to be valid. In fact, it drives male behaviors, not considered as responsible for care activities; business practices, resisting to modify employment organization in the sense to make easier for both men and women doing care activities; and State action, removing responsibility for the supply of fundamental services to facilitate balance between employment and family, such as child-care centers, collective laundries and low budget restaurants, and promoting more equitable legal standard, encouraging stimulate changes in gender paid and not-paid jobs. It is also this concept, behind union's strategies, which is having difficulties to embrace men and women's co-responsibility social reproduction concepts, even if little by little the discussion is gathering strength within trade union movement, and clauses related to family responsibilities and gender equality are increasing in last year's collective bargaining. This set of difficulties that are in front of gender equality in employment, reveal that, in spite of advances observed, this is a complex situation demanding a cultural change which must disseminate in the whole society, to drive more effective transformations being adopted by labor market.

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