

Gender Assymetries In The Brazilian Labor Market: Crisis And Public Policies*

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Resumo: Este trabalho objetiva subsidiar o conhecimento da situação assimétrica entre gêneros no mercado de trabalho brasileiro. Apresenta inicialmente considerações teóricas sobre estas disparidades, que resultam em bloqueios estruturais ao desenvolvimento econômico. Em sequência uma análise empírica avalia a desigualdade ocupacional brasileira segundo gênero, incluindo as diferenças nos rendimentos médios, que tendem a se exacerbarem no país como efeito da crise econômica atual. Finalmente são discutidas as necessidades de implementação de políticas públicas para a correção das assimetrias, desde que políticas globais de apoio ao trabalho que não incorporem a abordagem de gênero, tendem a determinar a permanência de desvantagens femininas.

Palavras-chave : Trabalho, Gênero, Discriminação, Políticas públicas, Crise.

Abstract: This paper aims to contribute to the study of the asymmetric gender situation in the Brazilian labor market. It first presents theoretical considerations on these inequalities, which result in structural impediments to economic development. An empirical analysis follows on Brazilian occupational disparities including differences in average earnings that tend to be exacerbated in the present international crisis. Finally, public policies implemented to minimize these asymmetries are discussed, since labor market policies that do not include a gender approach, tend to maintain disadvantages for women workers.

Keywords: Labor, Gender, Discrimination, Public Policies, Crisis.

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the questions that has historically preoccupied economists is the division of labor in society and its implications for economic production and distribution – whether as a result or as a determinant of economic processes. The objective of this article is to explain through theoretical premises and empirical evaluation the process of the distribution of tasks and functions among individuals who are agents of the process of economic production as factors of production or as productive forces.

The world economic scenario described by Juan Somavia, the Director-General of the International Labor Organization (ILO), in his opening speech to the 98th International Conference of Labor in 2009, called attention to a series of challenges in the world of work

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such as increases in unemployment and poverty as well as the difficulties faced by companies: “When we see all these things together we can affirm that the world is confronting a crisis of employment and of social protection that could last six to eight years” (SOMAVIA, 2009).

The current crisis suggests a systemic connotation, expressing the death of a world financial model in distinct spheres. The responses of the market have meant increased concentration of poverty, the intensification of the exploitation of the work of men and women and the strengthening of inequalities. Among inequalities, that between genders in the labor market has been particularly marked, requiring an evaluation of which transformations and responses are necessary to avoid accentuating or creating new forms of asymmetry.

In Brazil, specifically, the emphasis of government planning and public policies in the last two decades has been the creation and maintenance of economic stability. Since the financial crisis of September 2008, the priority has been implementing stabilizing measures to contend with the unfavorable aspects of the crisis on the Brazilian economy.

Questions of disparity between genders in the world of work have been largely ignored just as the formation of managerial capacities among public sector agents who are charged with implementing equality and fomenting dialogue among other social agents with the beneficiaries of policies intended to reduce inequalities has been put off. In this context, it is clear that gender inequality in the Brazilian labor market, as in other Latin American countries, is a structural problem that has been constructed over the long term, but the global financial crisis has probably aggravated this situation. Researchers have shown that the negative consequences of economic crisis more quickly affect women and that their recuperation occurs more slowly.

It is necessary to emphasize that gender inequality in the Brazilian labor market ends up complicating economic developments as a whole since even though it impacts more directly on the feminine population, the total costs implicated are also reflected in production, consumption and investment statistics of the entire country. This causes an increase in costs to the welfare of the population, decreasing the capacity to effectively manage poverty reduction and, consequently, sustainable growth, as well as blocking the implementation of the capacities of human resources to increase economic production and productivity.

This article thus has the objective of exploring a considerably precarious situation in the Brazilian labor market with respect to the unfavorable conditions of Brazilian women workers that may be exacerbated in the context of the current crisis. The next section presents theoretical considerations about the determinants of gender asymmetry in the labor market that result in structural blocks to the diminution of inequalities. Section 3 is dedicated to an analysis of the structural tendencies in Brazilian occupational inequality related to gender, examining through an empirical approach, the differences in the conditions of work of men and women in the labor market and evaluating this unequal situation among genders that tends to be exacerbated as a result of the crisis that began in 2008.

Section 4 deals with the question of occupational qualifications and their association with gender from the point of view of human capital. Sections 5 and 6 examine women’s position as the head of the family through their insertion in the Brazilian labor market and the gender inequalities in average salaries. Finally, the conclusion shows the necessity to correct such significant asymmetries since general policies related to work that do not incorporate a

gender dimension end up determining the permanence or growth of disadvantages to women workers.

2. Determinants of gender asymmetries in the labor market: discrimination or segmentation?

The literature dedicated to gender economics discusses the prevalence of certain factors in the determination of the distribution of work between men and women related as much to the offer as well as to the demand for jobs that establish the occupational structure of a market. Various specialists² offer the following explanations for gender disparities:

- a) differences between genders are due to preferences for certain jobs which are influenced by social values and in this way present differentiations between societies in one period or even in the same society through time;
- b) gender differences in capacities for work lead to the exploitation of comparative advantages through the division of labor in the market. If in reality each gender is really disposed to execute some type of job, then this society would achieve better efficiency with segregation. It should be underlined that these different capacities are transformed through the possibility of the qualification of the labor force;
- c) genders are separated so as to reduce conflicts in work related to tensions between the sexes;
- d) women need to balance work in the labor market with domestic and other family responsibilities. In some currently advanced societies, some activities are encouraged in the domestic environment as a form of reduction of costs and better efficiency for society as a whole (for example, the caring of the elderly, children and the sick);
- e) employers have imperfect information about the relative capacities of the genders;
- f) women are exploited by men or by other sub-sectors of society;
- g) economic activity should be compatible with reproductive responsibilities and the care of children;
- h) women's activities are frequently seen as an extension of domestic work. This occurs with tasks typically considered as feminine work and not masculine;
- i) each gender presents a combination of and a differentiated stock of both general and specific human capital;
- j) differences in the planning of useful life time in the work of women and men leads to the consideration on the part of employers that there are better returns in training masculine labor.

In these views, men and women, employers and workers, may express different preferences for determined working conditions and may classify job opportunities based on these preferences. Some characteristics of jobs may lead to differentiated choices among genders such as variety in the number of tasks, the autonomy of functions, clarity about

² Abramo e Todaro, 2002; Abramo e Todaro, 1998; Gardner, 1993; Bettio, 1987 e 2009; Bruschini, 2006; Cambota e Lopes, 2007; Baltar e Leone, 2008.

certain types of work, effort, level of challenge, relations with colleagues in the job, level of control, the time required to arrive at the workplace, freedom from expenses, use of certain skills and health conditions, among others.

However, empirical evidence reveals a tendency for the segmentation of labor to favor the masculine gender. Primarily female occupations pay lower salaries than those of men, show higher turnover rates and enjoy fewer protections under labor laws and regulations. Jacobsen (1998) inquires if segmentation is basically in an immutable state or if there are possible shifts in this condition. If there are larger forces that impel a society to segregation, there is a great probability that policies designed to reduce it will be adapted to actually maintain it, for example, in such a way that it may arise again in new less visible forms. Nonetheless, in some societies, interventionist policies against segregation based on race in the workplace have resulted in considerable changes while gender differences in relation to salaries and absorption in the workplace have been more resistant to changes. Jacobsen emphasizes that, in general, gender segmentation has diminished since the 1960s, but at a much lower level than racial segregation; consequently, the rate of gender segregation is considerably superior than that based on race.

Flexibilization of the labor market – salary, number of jobs and functions – has been suggested as a crucial dimension of the process of the reduction of inequalities between genders as a way to allow companies to adapt to changes in market conditions. The question of gender adds a new perspective to this analysis of flexibilization since gender strongly influences each of these forms of flexibilization.

Flexibilization of salaries affects the family salary of the male worker since more and more jobs pay salaries in consonance with lower female salaries (when it is possible to substitute with a woman worker). Job flexibility is frequently obtained through the use of part-time or temporary workers which is particularly adapted to the female worker. Internal flexibility, for its part, transforms the conditions of industrial work in which male workers predominate through the substitution of stable jobs by a similar but “secondary” position (with few prospects of promotion and vague definitions of job description) exercised by a woman (Dombois, 1999; Kon, 2005; Yañez, 2003).

A large part of the flexibilization of the labor market was the result of the lack of equity in salaries between the sexes, defended by many analysts as a form of allowing market forces to adapt and respond to the conditions of economic change. In this way, higher salaries are utilized to diminish the shortage of job offers in a particular occupation or job post while lower salaries are used when there is a surplus of job offers; comparative or equitable values do not permit this flexibility. From then on in, feminization was considered as a part of a direct strategy of employers to reduce salaries and increase control over internal job markets within the company and outside (Dombois, 1999; Yañez, 2003; Bettio, 2009).

Another cause of the considerable asymmetries between genders is the direct effect of gender discrimination, a concept that should be differentiated from segmentation. From an economic point of view, discrimination is present when two people who possess equal productivity and desire for a job, but are from different groups (defined in accordance with some characteristic whether it is gender, race, class, sexual preference, religious belief, etc.) receive, in the same workplace or job classification, different salaries and/or access to particular job posts (Jacobsen, 1998: 304).

Debates within the field of economics tend to be limited to discrimination in remuneration, contract conditions and practices of promotion. Proof of discrimination in these areas is difficult, taking the form of direct testimony, audits and indirect evidence through statistical information. However, these methods frequently lose their power of explanation due to the interference of other factors that influence the variables even though one may find in the literature some neoclassical models that try to explain through maximization of utility or profits the equilibrium mechanisms considered to be discriminatory.

These theories are based on a notion of prejudice, seen as a divergence from the model of perfect competition. The sources of prejudice in these models may be employers as well as workers or consumers. The divergences from perfect competition through jobs for the two genders point to the power of the market of groups in society or imperfect information regarding the productivity of the worker. Thus, these models attempt to justify the practice of discrimination through the idea that the market will establish equilibrium in the long run.

3. Brazilian occupational gender inequality: a structural tendency

3.1 Initial Considerations

It is necessary to emphasize at the outset that the term *gender* is utilized when such an identity of the individual is claimed as a *social being* that could be affected by a series of social aspects such as family, ethnicity, religion and others that confer to it a specific social and cultural role. The social role of the gender of persons, in turn, may be defined by the type of activities that a society determines as appropriate for individuals who possess the physical genetic configuration of a particular sex. Empirical data utilized in the literature to analyze sex refers to the characteristics of men and women. Using this type of information, however, it is impossible to separate the identity of sex and the identity of gender and, therefore, in the analysis that follows the differences between sexes are considered as representative of the differences between genders.

Women have increased their participation in the Brazilian labor market in recent decades as has historically occurred in more developed countries. Yet the economic difficulties that the country faced in the 1980s and 1990s had particular effects on women's jobs and occupations since the increase in their participation during these crisis years was due more to the necessity to complement family income than to a historical tendency of socio-economic modernization as in more developed countries.

An empirical observation about the diversified conditions of work among genders in Brazil, as will be discussed in the following subsections, shows that the segmentation resulting from the specific factors outlined in the previous section, in spite of or due to the growth in women's participation in the labor market in recent decades, ended up establishing a structural inequality that has persisted for a long time which has disadvantaged women workers.

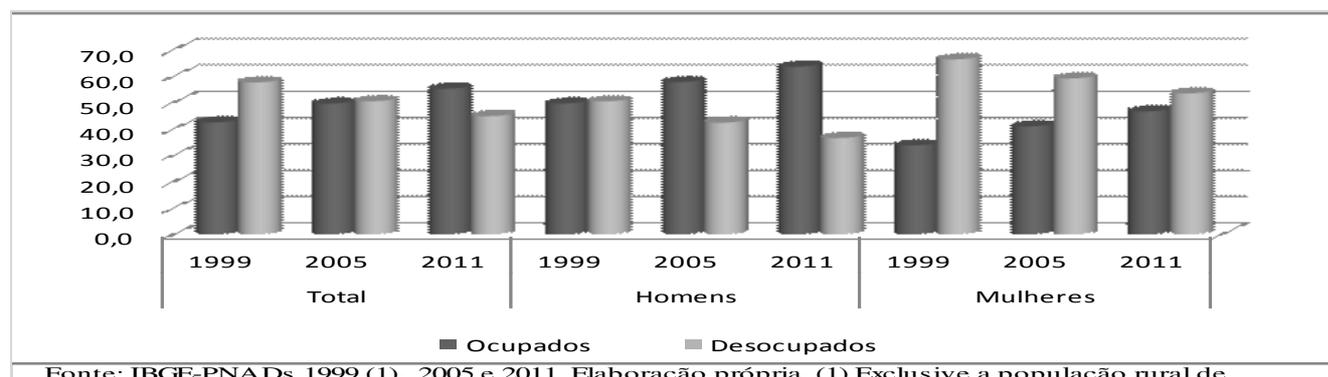
3.2 The distribution of labor by domiciliary situation and condition of employment

The distribution of the Brazilian labor force among genders may be initially observed through the localization of workers according to their participation in an urban or rural region. Women workers constitute a little more than half of the workers in urban regions and 39% in the rural regions, numbers that did not change in the first initial years of the period studied. (IBGE, 1999 e 2005). However in 2011 these proportions showed a slight change: women's participation in the rural work force constituted a little more than 36% (IBGE, 2012),

revealing an increasing number of women who moved to urban zones in search of work. It is worth noting the still predominant mentality in rural regions that the primary feminine functions are domestic work and caring for children, something that has delayed the overall evolution of the generation of income in the labor market in the sense of diminishing gender asymmetries.

On the other hand, more than 80% of both male and female workers are found in urban regions with a slightly higher concentration of women workers (86%) than male workers (82%). The high urban concentration characterizes the situation of countries in which agricultural specialization has given way to industrialization and a less precarious process of development, where, hypothetically at least, inequality would be less.

Figure 1: Economically Active Population (EAP) By Employment - Brazil, 1999, 2005 and 2011.



Homens: Men; Mulheres: Women

Ocupados: Active; Desocupados: Inactive

Source: IBGE-PNADS (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics-National Households Research) 1999(1), 2005 and 2011. Elaboration of the author. Not including the rural population of the states of Rondônia, Acre, Amazonas, Roraima, Pará and Amapá]

Figure 1 shows that economically active population (EAP) of workers increased during the years observed with 58% inactive in 1999 which respectively fell to 55% in 2005 and 50% in 2011. The situation according to the genders shows that in 1999 the proportion of male workers who were active was almost equal to those inactive. At the end of the period studied, however, the number of active male workers rose considerably to higher than 63% despite the relative decrease of men among the EAP. Among women, in 1999 only one third

were among the active population, but in 2005 and 2011 there were increases even though the number of inactive women still remained at almost 60% and 53% respectively in these years.

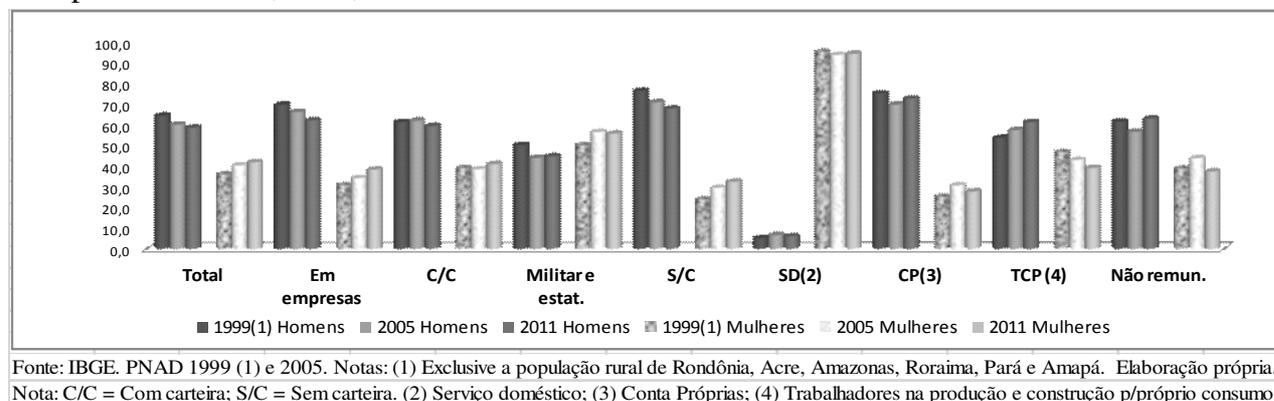
The increase in the female EAP in the period may be explained most adequately by the intense entrance into the labor market due to the necessity to complement family income rather than the argument that centers on cultural development and autonomy, as in more developed countries. On the other hand, IBGE data also show that the number of women living in poverty in Brazil increased more than men.

In sequence, the following section will analyze the differences between the distribution of genders in the labor market according to some relevant characteristics highlighted in the literature such as occupational position, representation as heads of families, age, education, workday and income. The section concludes with an analysis of the question of segmentation as a result of skill qualifications.

3.3 Employment Position: composition among genders

An examination of the employment position among genders is first observed through the distribution of persons (and their current job) who were looking for work in a determined week (Figure 2). In 1999, male workers were much more represented than women (64% and 36% respectively) a situation which slightly decreases in intensity in 2005 with a proportion of 60% and 40% respectively and again in 2011 with 58% and 42% respectively.

Figure 2: Distribution of Persons Looking for Work in a Particular Week By Gender and Occupation – Brazil, 1999, 2005 and 2011



[Em empresas: In companies

Militar e estat.: Military and State Companies

Não remun. – Unpaid

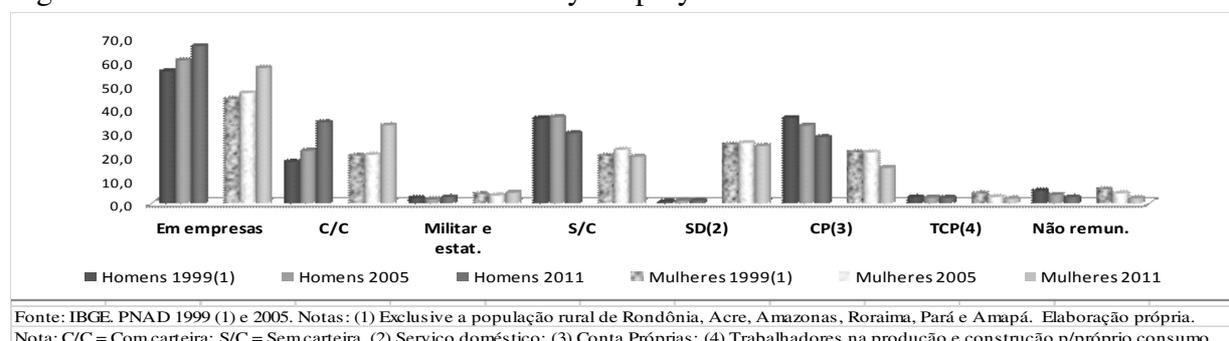
Source: IBGE PNAD 1999 (1) and 2005. Notes: 1) Not including the rural population of the states of Rondônia, Acre, Amazonas, Roraima, Pará and Amapá. Elaborated by the author. Note: C.C.-Registered Worker (RW); S.C. –Unregistered Worker (URW); (2) SD: Domestic Service (DS); (3) Contas Próprias: Self-employed (SE); (4) TCP – Production and Construction Workers who produced for their own use and consumption (PC]

Among people working in companies, the relative proportion of participation by gender remains the same among registered workers in the entire period with female representation at approximately 40%; yet among unregistered workers, men represented 76% in 1999, 71% in 2005 and almost 68% in 2011. Therefore, the condition of female workers working in a company increased relatively more if they had previously worked in informal conditions, that is, of the total number of formal workers 1/4 were women in 1999 which increased to 1/3 in 2011.

A similar relation is seen among self-employed workers (SE) while workers who produced for their own use and consumption (PC) showed less disparity in the initial year analyzed, representing a little more than 53% of men and 47% women, but in the final year witnessed more asymmetry with 61% and 39% respectively.

Of the total number of active persons, the distribution by employment position in Figure 3 shows men more concentrated in companies or in the military/state sector area with 55% of the male EAP in relation to the total numbers of their gender in 1999, of which the position of unregistered workers prevailed (35.7% of the total of male EAP) in relation to registered workers (20%). However, there was an increase among workers in companies since in 2011: 66% worked in companies or in the military and state area and among these registered workers they had a higher representation (37% EAP) than unregistered workers (30%).

Figure 3 – Distribution of Active Persons by Employment Position and Gender



[Em empresas: In companies

Militar e estat. : Military and State Companies

Não remun. – Unpaid

Source: IBGE PNAD 1999 (1) and 2005. Notes: 1) Not including the rural population of the states of Rondônia, Acre, Amazonas, Roraima, Pará and Amapá. Elaborated by the author. Note: C.C.-Registered Worker (RW); S.C. –Unregistered Worker (URW); (2) SD: Domestic Service (DS); (3) Contas Próprias: Self-employed (SE); (4) TCP – Production and Construction Workers who produced for their own use and consumption (PC]

Yet despite the lower representation of women in companies and in the military/state sector in relation to the total number of women in 1999 (44%) the condition of registered women workers is relatively higher (23%) than those unregistered (20%). At the end of the period analyzed, the participation of women also increased in companies although at a lower level than registered male workers (37%) and unregistered male workers (20%). This is verified by the tradition of a greater concentration of female workers in domestic service since almost 1/4 of female workers participated in this area in the entire period; 95% of the total number of workers in this sector were women.

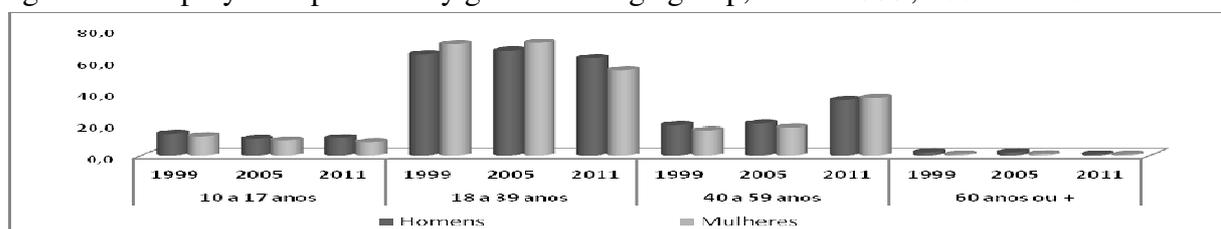
In the self-employed, production for use and unpaid categories, there was a reduction for both genders throughout the period studied which shows a more favorable position of workers in the labor market at least when just this question is analyzed and not average incomes. Men in these sectors diminished their representation from 44% of all workers of their gender to 33% while the reduction for women was respectively from 32% to 19%.

3. Qualifications and gender: age and human capital

The skill levels of the labor force is one of the principal questions to be explored in relation to gender inequalities, which from a theoretical point of view directly affects the economic development of the country. First, it is necessary to observe the age structure of the EAP since the representation of workers with less than 17 years corresponds to an incomplete state of schooling and human capital formation. At the other end of the scale, the larger concentration of active workers with more than 60 years is marked by more intense human capital formation, but also by a tendency for lower productivity.

In relation to employment, age and gender, Figure 4 shows that in Brazil persons aged from 10-17 years old were composed of 11% male workers and 9% female workers. This participation represents a contingent of young workers who are not yet qualified and find themselves looking for work at a time when the priority should be schooling. Women were more favorably positioned than men in this respect.

Figure 4 – Employed Population by gender and age group, Brazil 1999, 2005 and 2011.



[10-17 years; 18-39
years; 40-50 years;
60 years or more
Men; Women

Source: IBGE. PNAD 1999 (1), 2005 and 2011. Note: 1) Not including the rural population of the states of Rondônia, Acre, Amazonas, Roraima, Pará and Amapá. Elaborated by the author.]

Female participation in the 18-39 years category (which concentrates a majority of workers) demonstrates that women were slightly higher (around 71%) compared to men (65% and 67%) in 1999 and 2005 while in 2011 men were more concentrated (62%) than women (55%). In the other age groups, men are always more represented than women with the largest difference between the genders in the 40-59 years category. In 2011, this age group witnessed a significant increase in representation by both genders, indicating an extension of active economic life in relation to earlier ages and reflecting gradual changes in pension laws that were instituted with this very objective.

Economic theory has traditionally highlighted the strong relation between the age of the worker, skill level and productive capacity, confirmed by empirical research that has tested these correlations (Hoffman, 1986:150; Schultz, 1961 e 1967; Mincer, 1958; Becker 1993). It is clear that other factors such as investment in capital, technology, regulation and foreign commerce are also involved. Yet there has also been an increase in consciousness for the necessity to improve skill levels through public policies related to improvements in educational institutions at the regional and national level, allowing workers to make a greater contribution to the process of economic development.

The ILO's 2010 Report on global tendencies in employment shows that in recent years there has been an intense and growing capacity of the generation and utilization of human capital as one of the most relevant tools for the success of government policies of social inclusion in economic development. The growth of human capital is the base upon which the fundamental institutions of current social and economic growth have been constructed.

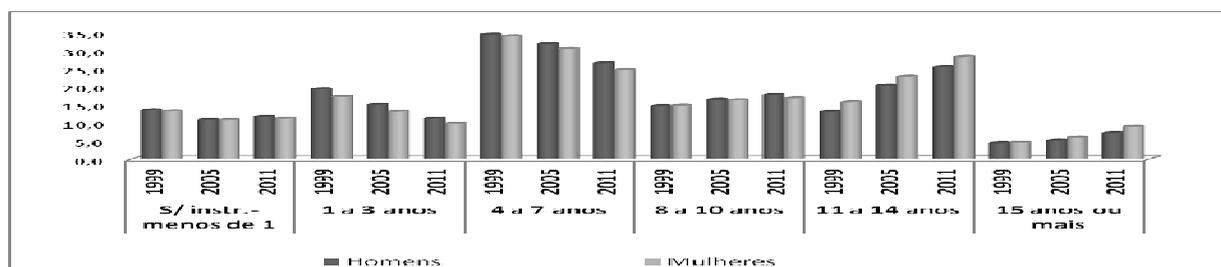
Differences in skills and qualifications are recognized as a new group of factors that may explain differences in income between individuals and the behavior of those seeking and offering work in the context of the structural and conjectural conditions of the labor market. As a result, the analysis of poverty and wealth, incorporated in the personal distribution of income and inequalities of opportunity in the market, has become an integral part of studies of labor and the economy. Analysts have also become interested in the process through which individuals acquire more valuable qualifications in the labor market. Workforce qualifications are now being treated as an endogenous variable in the model of supply and demand, contrary to anterior models in which they were treated as an exogenous form, that is, they were considered as given and not requiring a more profound analysis.

Particular functions or occupations present distinct characteristics in the endowment of physical capital and workforce qualifications whether they are inserted in more advanced capitalist sectors or in more "traditional" sectors despite having roles or functions similar to the productive types to which they belong. In this respect, certain productivities and their respective remunerations may be differentiated in the same occupations located in equal sectors of activity, although in different regions or even in diverse sectors in the same region. Although the endowment of human capital involves diverse determinants in addition to

education levels, it is a fundamental variable and frequently used as a proxy in analyses of qualifications in labor markets (Kon, 2007).

However, when we consider the distribution of Brazilian workers by years of study, as analyzed above, the theory is not confirmed, since females are concentrated in the highest levels of educational attainment while female salaries are lower. In this way, a more detailed analysis is necessary of the distribution of labor by specific categories of qualification in the country as an addition to the diagnostic that may form the basis for adequate public policies for the reduction of gender disparities.

Figure 5: Distribution of the EAP Brazil by Gender and Years of Education, Brazil, 1999, 2005 and 2011.



Fonte: IBGE/ PNAD 1999*, 2005 e 2011. (*) Exclusive a população rural de Rondônia, Acre, Amazonas, Roraima, Para e Amapá. Elaboração própria.

The educational levels in Figure 5 show that the differences in the conditions of work between genders that are unfavorable to the female workforce cannot be explained by educational levels since women present equal levels until 10 years of study, but are superior in the higher levels of study beyond 11 years. The data reveal that among the employed who are looking for work, men are predominant in all periods and even higher in the lower levels of schooling which range from no schooling to three years (74%). However, in the two higher categories of schooling, the representation of men gradually decreases to approximately 68% in the category 4-7 years of study to 50% in the category 11-14 years of study.

Table 1 presents a differentiated approach to the distribution of the employed by qualification and gender and the evolution of this composition. The qualification categories were elaborated by the author from micro data from the PNADS-IBGE based on a typology of specific concepts extracted from economic theory (Kon, 1995:100). In almost all situations, male representation is relatively superior, but with different intensities among the various forms of labor. The participation of the total number of male employed in the semi-qualified and non-qualified levels decreased considerably from 2002-2008, confirming conclusions from the IBGE of the gradual and sustained participation of women in the labor market.

Table 1 – Participation of the Economically Active by Employment Relationship, Gender and Qualification (%) – Brazil, 2002 and 2008

Qualification		Period	Qualified		Semi-Qualified		Non-Qualified	
			M	F	M	F	M	F
Occupational Position			M	F	M	F	M	F
Companies	Registered	2002	54,1	45,9	77,5	22,5	55,7	44,3
		2008	46,8	53,2	66,4	33,6	43,5	56,5
		2008/2002 (%)	-13,6	16	-14,3	49,5	-21,9	27,6
	Unregistered	2002	65,7	34,3	81,2	18,8	23,1	76,9
		2008	63,5	36,5	71,9	28,1	21,5	78,5
		2008/2002 (%)	-3,4	6,4	-11,5	50	-6,8	2
Self-employed		2002	78,4	21,6	54,7	45,3	54,1	45,9
		2008	72,4	27,6	55,1	44,9	52,1	47,9
		2008/2002 (%)	-7,7	27,7	0,9	-1,1	-3,6	4,3
Total		2002	61,2	38,8	68,5	31,5	41,2	58,8
		2008	59,2	40,8	63,7	36,3	35,9	64,1
		2008/2002 (%)	-3,2	5,1	-6,9	15,1	-13	9,1

[Source of the raw data: IBGE/PNADS 2002 and 2008. Special tabulations by the author.]

Among registered workers, both qualified and non-qualified, there was a peculiar structural change since in 2002 men represented approximately 55% of positions in the two levels of qualification, but in 2008 there was an inversion of these figures by gender, given that women represented more than 53% in 2002 and almost 57% in 2008. This increase in female workers was considerably higher in the registered worker category than in others. Among the semi-qualified, the difference in representation was relatively more considerable since women participated in 2002 in almost 23% of formal jobs. However, at the end of the period analyzed, women's participation increased to almost 34%, reaching a representation of 1/3 of the formal jobs in the skilled qualifications level, an increase of almost 50% in participation in this period.

From this data, it is possible to infer that superior schooling by women and their lower salaries (which will be shown later) allowed for a partial substitution of men during a context of slow economic growth and attempts at economic stability.

With respect to unregistered workers in companies, male participation in the qualified and semi-qualified categories is still higher in relation to registered workers, but fell relatively during this period; among semi-qualified workers, job posts occupied by women rose to 50% representation. Among non-qualified unregistered workers, differently from other levels, women occupied more than 3/4 of the posts with little increase during the period. This means that among less qualified workers, in which the level of turnover in companies is much higher, women were prioritized in hiring as long as they accepted less

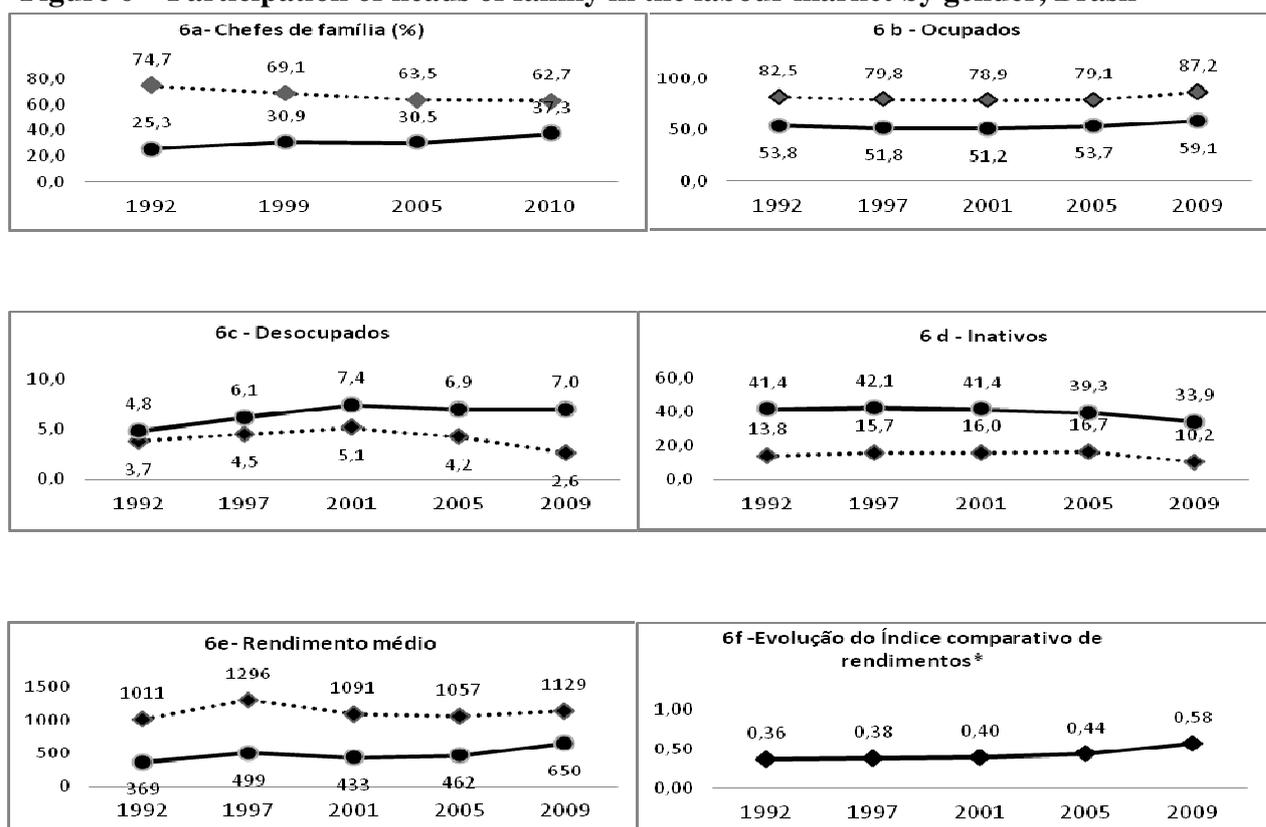
favorable working conditions such as lower salaries and lack of protection as unregistered employees. (Fichtenbaum, Gyimah-Brempong e Olson, 1994).

On the one hand, the moderate structural transformations that occurred internally in the formal sector of the economy were packaged as innovations. On the other hand, they played an unbalancing role in relation to the creation of a volume of formal jobs necessary to incorporate an additional portion of workers who were still not protected by registered worker status as well as absorb the increase in the workforce. This is borne out by the fact that the skill level of the workforce presents a mismatch in relation to the opening of more highly-skilled positions and does not completely attend to the necessities required for such positions.

4. Women's Position as Head of the Family

During this period, there was a considerable increase in the number of families sustained by women that may be associated with the different factors that have brought about socio-demographic transformations in Brazil. Among others, these factors include the decrease in fertility levels, reduction of family size, greater life expectancy of women in relation to men, the aging of the population and the processes of the individualization of subjects (Berquó, 2002). These social changes altered as much the cultural standards of women as the forms of their social insertion and behavior. Yet the increase in the representation of these women workers could also be caused by the growth in the number of people with the necessity to survive or the rise in the necessity of increasing family incomes. In this way, the female trajectory in the long term has led to women as heads of families in the domestic sphere, either through the situation of single mothers, widows or separated with children or through women who live with their partners and children or even the situation of women living with their parents and others.

Figure 6 – Participation of heads of family in the labour market by gender, Brasil



[First line: 6a) Heads of Family, 6b) Active Women Workers
 Second line: 6c) Unemployed, 6d) Inactive
 Third line: 6e) Average Income, 6f) Evolution of the Comparative Indicators of Income
 Source: IBGE-PNADS. Note: Men, Women. Elaboration by the author.
 Income indicators=male/female incomes.]

The relationship between poverty and women's situation in the family is clearly shown by the rapid increase in women's position as head of the family that has intensified since the 1990s. In this family situation, women's position in the labor market is constantly unfavorable as is shown by various data in Figure 6 for the period 1992-2010.

In relation to heads of families (6a), men represented around 75% of the total at the beginning of the period but showed a gradual decline to 63% in 2010 that signifies a considerable increase of women as heads of family (40%).

Among economically active workers, workers of both sexes showed a tendency to increase by about 5% in the whole period (6b); however, men represented about 85% of the total of their gender while women only represented around 55%. The situation was different among unemployed women: from less than 5% in 1992 they increased to 7% in 2009; among men, it declined slightly from 4% in 1992 to less than 3% in 2009 (6c).

It is interesting to underline that the inactive workers among family heads³ was much higher among women who represented more than 40% of their gender at the beginning of the period studied (6d), but fell considerably to 34% in 2011, reflecting the increase of women's participation in the labor market. But it also shows the continued prevalence of women's dominant cultural role in the family, in Marxist terms known as producers and reproducers of the labor force, taking into account the high proportion of women as inactive in comparison to a considerably lower male level of heads of family (10% in 2009).

Concomitantly with their increases as heads of families, women continued to present higher and growing levels of unemployment that have aggravated poverty in the country in addition to their lower salaries as is observed in 6e and 6f. The gender gap in incomes (6f) demonstrates that in 1992 the incomes of women heads of families was on average only 36% of men although it increased to about 58% of men in 2009.

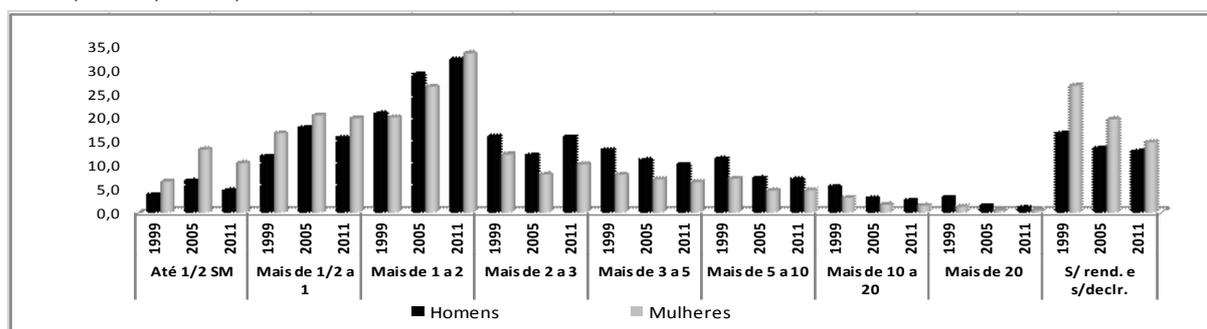
We may thus infer that women's unfavorable position in the labor market weighs more heavily on women heads of families who have to provide for all the costs of survival of the family, demonstrating the urgency of public policies to rectify such a situation among these workers.

5. Asymmetries in Average Incomes

³ IBGE defined economically inactive workers in the reference week as those who were not classified as employed or unemployed in the period

There is considerable gender inequality among the average monthly incomes of the employed. Older research established that this occurred even in the same occupations and similar educational levels and length of the workday (Kon, 1995 e 2007). As Figure 7 shows, the concentration of workers has gradually elevated in each category from the level of those who gain up to half the minimum wage (MW) up to those who earn from 1-2 MW (almost 27% of men and 26% of women); from this point on, it decreases. Women are more represented than men in the inferior category of up to 1 MW (19.5% of women and 10% of men) and among workers who declared no income. In all the other categories, male incomes are superior.

Figure 7 – Distribution of the Employed among Each Gender By Average Monthly Income, Brazil, 1999, 2005, 2011



Fonte: IBGE/ PNADs 1999*, 2005 e 2011. (*) Exclusiva a população rural de Rondônia, Acre, Amazonas, Pará e Amapá. Elaboração própria.

[SM=Minimum Wage (MW)

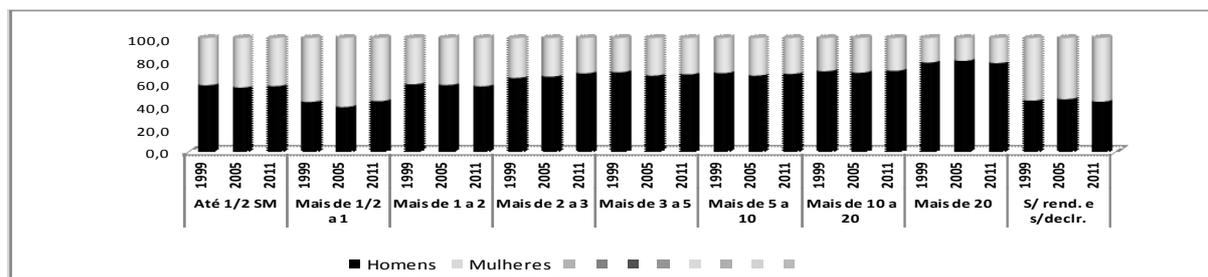
Last Column: No income or undeclared

Source: IBGE/PNADS.]

It is noteworthy to observe that in the categories of up to 2 MW, the concentration of workers gradually increases in the period for the two genders, but in the higher income categories, the opposite occurred. The largest concentration of women workers, which even surpasses men, was in 2011 in the category of incomes between 1-2 MW, yet in the higher categories male incomes were always higher. In the period studied, therefore, there was a slight drop in the Gini coefficient, demonstrating an improvement in income distribution overall, but at a much lower rate for women.

Figure 8 displays the distribution among genders in each category of income, verifying that in the categories between 1-20 MW, male incomes (between 65% to more than 78% in diverse categories) was significantly higher than female incomes (between 22% and 39%). The variations between the periods are not significant, showing that policy initiatives to reduce inequalities have not yet been effective or were not sufficient enough to register changes in the statistics. Only in the more than 1/2 MW and 1 MW categories and those without income or undeclared are women in a superior position.

Figure 8 – Distribution of the employed among gender in each category of average monthly income, Brazil, 1999, 2005, 2011



Fonte: IBGE/ PNADs 1999*, 2005 e 2011. (*) Exclusiva a população rural de Rondônia, Acre, Amazonas, Pará e Amapá. Elaboração própria.

[SM=Minimum Wage (MW)]

Last Column: No income or undeclared

Source: IBGE/PNADS.]

As is shown in the IMH (Income gap indicator) in Table 2, the gap in salaries among women and men increases gradually as incomes reached the higher categories. This shows that the concentration of women decreases as income levels increase. If the total average of the IHM shows that in 1999 female salaries represented around 40% of male salaries with the gap narrowing in 2005 to 47%, the only categories in which female incomes increased were in the 3-10 MW.

On the other hand, women workers were only more concentrated in the lower income category of up to 1/2 MW with 19% more in total salary mass. The annual rates of increase in income by gender from 1999 to 2005, according to income categories, shows that in the categories of more than 2-5 MW, women's salaries increased slightly more than men's and in the categories of more than 20 MW showed a superior increase of around 3%. However, in all the other categories of income, male salaries had annual increases that reached up to 6% more than female salaries.

Table 2: Differentiation of Average Monthly Incomes of Employed Workers By Gender and Household Situation, Brazil.

Situação de	Valor do rendimento médio mensal (R\$) ⁽¹⁾			IHM (2)	Quociente de Diferenciação (3) (QDDij)			Quociente de Diferenciação (4) (QDSij)		
	Total	Homens	Mulheres		Total	Homens	Mulheres	Total	Homens	Mulheres
1999 (5)										
Total	313	436	197	0,45	1	1,39	0,63	1	1	1
Urbana	355	498	226	0,45	1	1,4	0,64	1,13	1,14	1,15
Rural	138	202	70	0,35	1	1,46	0,51	0,44	0,46	0,36
2005										
Total	527	695	371	0,53	1	1,32	0,7	1	1	1
Urbana	583	772	413	0,53	1	1,32	0,71	1,11	1,11	1,11
Rural	247	343	142	0,41	1	1,39	0,58	0,47	0,49	0,38
2011										
Total	1241	1424	1003	0,70	1	1,15	0,81	1	1	1
Urbana	1358	1571	1092	0,70	1	1,16	0,80	1,1	1,1	1,0
Rural	604	713	419	0,59	1	1,18	0,69	0,5	0,4	0,8

Fonte: IBGE. PNAD 1999, 2005 e 2011. Elaboração própria.

(1) Inclusive as pessoas que receberam somente em benefícios; (2) IHM: Índice de defasagem de rendimentos = rendimentos femininos/rendimentos masculinos; (3) QDDij = Rij/Rtj, onde: R = rendimento médio mensal; i = gênero (Total, homens e mulheres); j = situação do domicílio (Total, urbana e rural); t = Total do gênero por situação do domicílio (j); (4) QDSij = RIj/Rti, onde: R = Rendimento médio mensal; i = sexo (Total, homens e mulheres); j = situação do domicílio (Total, urbana e rural); t = Total da situação do domicílio por gênero (i); (5) Exclui a população rural de Rondônia, Acre, Amazonas, Roraima, Pará e Amapá.

[Situação de domicílio: Household Situation (urban or rural)

Valor do rendimento médio mensal: Average Value of Monthly Income

IMH: Income Gap Indicator

Quociente de Diferenciação (3): Differentiation Quotient (QDD)

Quociente de Diferenciação (4): Differentiation Quotient (QDS)

Urbana: Urban

Rural: Rural Including persons who only received benefits.

Source: IBGE PNAD 1999, 2005 and 2011. Elaboration by the author.]

In relation to the Differentiation Quotients of incomes according to the MW categories, we may verify that in the interior of each category, the average of each gender in relation to the category as a whole shows little difference. In most of the categories, female salaries are lower with the exception of those employed who earned between more than 1/2 MW to 1 MW. Yet in the overall average, considering all the income categories, the differences are quite consistent with male income increases around 20% during the period and female increases around 15%.

As Table 2 shows, male workers in urban areas earned considerably more than in rural areas as well as more than female workers in the two periods analyzed. For the overall average of monthly incomes of R\$313 in 1999 and R\$527 in 2005, the QDD (based on the locality of the household) shows differentiations for men of 39% and 32% *above* the average while women were situated at 36% and 30% *below* the average in each respective year. These differences are less expressive in the urban than in the rural areas where men reached around 46% and 39% *above* the average and women 49% and 42% *below*. The IHM shows that in 1999 female incomes were equivalent to 45% and 35% of male incomes, respectively in urban and rural areas, which diminished in 2005 to 53% and 43%. These results also show the considerably unfavorable situation of unregistered workers and the self-employed.

Taking as a comparison the average total of each gender separately, male incomes in the urban zone were 15% and 11% higher than the averages of R\$436 and R\$695

respectively in the first and last year analyzed; in the rural zone the differences were considerably higher, respectively 54% and 51% in relation to the lower average rural incomes of R\$202 and R\$343. Urban women also gained respectively in the period 15% and 11% above the average although real average salaries were inferior to men's, that is, R\$226 and R\$413. Women's gains in the rural area were even more unfavorable, showing 64% and 62% below the average or R\$70 and R\$142.

7. The condition of asymmetries and the recent world crisis

As a result of the international financial crisis that began in September 2008, the Brazilian economy has experienced a contradictory conjuncture with some economic indicators showing weaknesses while in other macroeconomic aspects the economic situation continues to be favorable. In the labor market, the repercussions of the crisis were most greatly felt in the decline in overall employment in Brazil that in May 2009 showed its worst performance in 8 years, particularly in industry. The number of jobs created have not been sufficient to cover the increase in population and job creation continues to grow very slowly. The labor market indices have not been worse only because disincentives have stalled an increase in unemployment.

Figure 8 – Rate of Economic Activity by Gender in Brazil

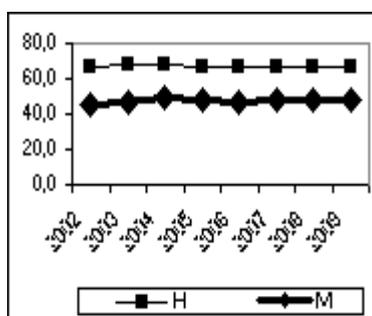


Figure 9 – Indicator of Economic Activity by Gender (ITA)

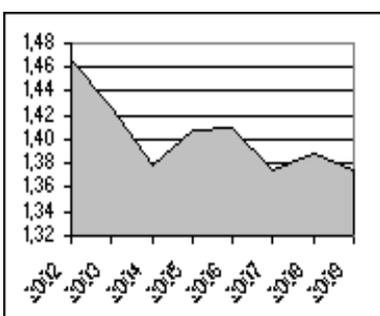
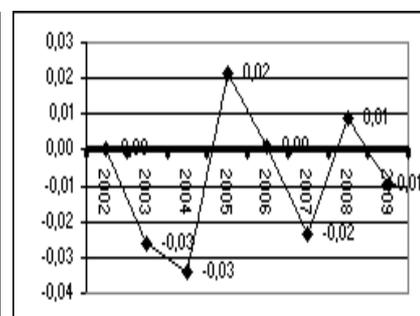


Figure 10: Annual Evolution of ITA



Source: IBGE- PME, 2002-maio/2009, Regiões metropolitanas; * ITA =TAM/TAH.

The rates of economic activity (REA) on metropolitan areas does not change significantly from 2002 to 2009. by gender in the EAP (the ITA) from 2002 to 2009 (Figure 8). However, the relationship of these rates considering gender (Figures 9 and 10) show that the gap in unemployment which has been showing an inferior level since 2008 (Figures 11, 12, and 13) but the gap among the genders increased with a clear disadvantage to women workers in the IDG (Index of Gender Disparity among the Unemployed). But we do also not see significant transformations in the anterior structural conditions. Structurally, as we have

seen, female unemployment has always been higher than male unemployment (between 20% and 35% higher).

Figure 11 – Unemployed Population by Gender

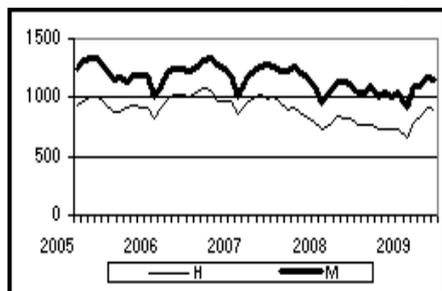


Figure 12 – Index of Gender Disparity among the Unemployed

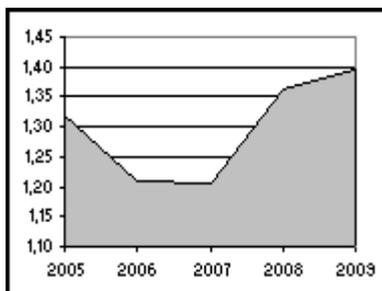
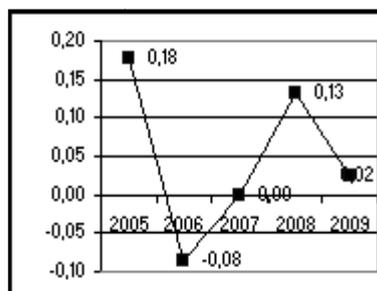


Figure 13: Annual Evolution of the IDG



Fonte: IBGE- PME, 2002-maio/2009; * IPD = PDM/PDH. Elaboração Própria.

Figure 14: Employed Population by Gender in Brazil

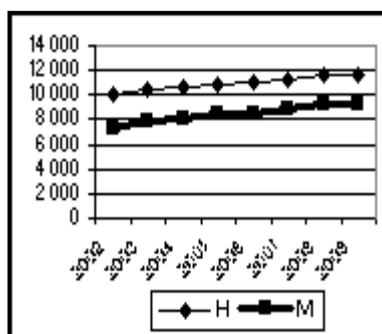


Figure 15: Index of Gender of the Employed Population (IGE)

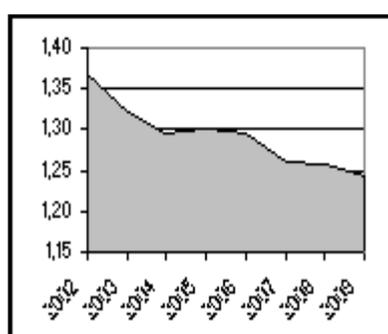
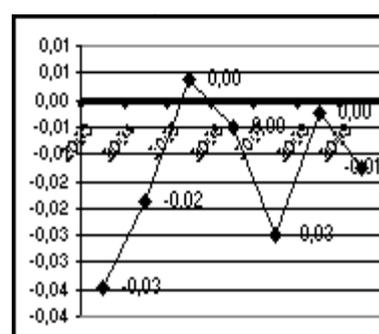


Figure 16: Annual Evolution of the IGE



Source: IBGE-PME, 2002-2009. Elaboration by the author..

Despite the increase (albeit insignificant) of employment for the two genders (Figures 14, 15, and 16) the structural distance between the level of employed persons among gender, which was higher than 35% in 2002, and which the IGE shows was slowly decreasing, has remained stagnant since 2008.

6. Final Considerations: the recent world economic crisis and necessary public policies

The results of this empirical study of the labor market and gender in Brazil have shown that in recent years gender disparities have presented considerably unfavorable conditions for female workers, maintaining the structurally disadvantageous situation of these

workers. Public policies related to the reduction of disparities and the effective integration of women in the labor market have been discussed since the 1990s and the question of gender has gradually occupied an agenda of government debates on the issue although in a very incipient form.

The recommendations of the ILO and the UN's Millennium Development Goals have been debated to elaborate legal policy instruments to stimulate private initiative for the execution of policies for reducing gender asymmetries. An analysis of the Multiyear Plans of the Brazilian federal government and other institutional measures show that there are already some specific instruments for this, but there have been little effective results, as this article has shown. In almost all empirical indexes, that is, rates of economic activity, unemployment, occupational position, educational levels and incomes, the disadvantages of women workers are considerable and notorious (OIT, 2009).

It is important to highlight the relevance of international and regional conferences organized by the United Nations and the ILO on the question of gender disparities in the labor market and Brazilian constitutional documents that have introduced principles of equality among genders. Yet it is also clear that such initiatives have not been accompanied by effective instruments for the direct application or control of implementation of such measures so such initiatives have had little real effect. Particular mechanisms of protection have been legally conceived (such as maternity leave and the construction of daycares by companies), but in the great part of cases, the impacts on absorption of women in the labor market were negative due to the costs involved for the employers.

As Bandeira (2005) highlights, poverty weakens women's citizenship and impedes women to participate in political actions and institutional and legal interventions to modify their condition. Moreover, it also maintains the precariousness of possibilities to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty. In Brazil, as in other Third World countries, the growth of the productive capacity of women would be an essential factor in breaking the cycle of poverty. Various studies have demonstrated that when women assume a family income, the welfare effects on the family are significantly broad, since a considerable proportion of this income goes to the food, education and healthcare of children.

If gender inequalities continue to be obstacles for equitable development, the integration of the dimension of gender in public policies should prioritize the formulation of new articulations between formal and informal spaces in regions (of work and leisure), between the productive and reproductive economy, between the public and the domestic sphere (Jasmine, 1999). Examples of actions and proposals from other countries show that a series of public policies related to the labor market to affect women's absorption in the labor market, either through training programs or anti-discriminatory policies, have positively influenced segregation patterns. To ignore inequalities that arise from gender discrimination brings high costs to the welfare of the population and for the capacity of countries to achieve sustainable development, effective government and the reduction of poverty.

In the Brazilian context, the creation and implementation of public policies of social inclusion and combat against poverty should presuppose that one of the causes of such problems is the gender disparity in the labor market, as this study has shown. Moreover, since the crisis is systemic, the market has re-accommodated such inequalities without however affecting the structural inequalities among genders.

Existing institutional instruments in Brazil to diminish such disparities do not take into account the integration of macro, meso and micro economic factors nor the integration of different spheres of government, that is, the transversalization of gender dimensions in labor policies, as it has been denominated in the Brazilian literature on gender (Bandeira, 2005). As the ILO underlines, a decisive element for transversalization of the dimensions of gender in the labor market is the recognition of women as fundamental subjects of these policies. In Brazil, the traditional vision that men are the breadwinners of the family and the role of women is the maintenance and reproduction of the labor force or just a secondary labor force is still predominant.

While female participation in the labor force has increased in Brazil, it has been caused more through the necessities of complementing family incomes or through women's necessity to become heads of families (even when the family is composed of a complete couple) rather than through shifts in traditional thinking. In this respect, it is necessary to overcome this vision of women's role and the social attributes applied to them in the domestic and familiar sphere since it does not allow them to be adequately inserted in the labor market in a permanent form, but rather as just a non-essential and secondary fraction (OIT, 2005 e 2009).

The negative effects of this traditional vision gained greater expression at the beginning of the 1990s with discussion coordinated by the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) that emphasized the damages of gender discrimination to public policies of employment and income and the necessity to promote gender equity. In the formulation of public policies on gender in Brazil, there are still obstacles to women's full access to equal opportunities and rights. For instance, this is found through policies that focus solely on heads of families (which presume that they are only men) and which aim to avoid or retard the entrance of women (and of youth) in the labor market.

As was pointed out above, the condition of women as poorer and as heads of the family in Brazil has grown which, in turn, is directly related to difficulties in achieving economic development. In this sense, the creation and implementation of policies of social inclusion and combat against poverty need to presume that one of the causes of this situation is that women are increasingly the heads of families and earn lower salaries, necessitating a treatment which is not "neutral" in relation to gender. In the same way, the other disadvantages mentioned in this study should receive similar differentiated treatment.

As discussed in the theoretical section, some relevant social factors weigh more heavily on women's condition in the labor force, for instance, the burden of family responsibilities, cultural restrictions to the exercise of paid work, the difficulty of accessing employment networks and others, which affects their ability to find work and the specific professional qualifications needed for particular jobs. So that policies and programs may promote equality of opportunities, this reality should be incorporated in a transversal manner into the process of the formulation and execution of all phases of economic planning in such a way that programs do not ignore questions of gender and consider the specific conditions and characteristics that women experience in the labor market.

In the Multiyear Plan 2004-2007 (MPOG 2003) of the Brazilian federal government, a proposal was made that a transversal approach to gender be implemented in the formulation and implementation of public policies in the country, through the articulation of the Special

Secretary for Women's Policies in the federal government in conjunction with the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL). It was entitled "Transversalization of the Perspective of Gender in Public Policies and in the Politics of the Overcoming of Poverty". Yet it is necessary that such measures be elaborated and implemented through legal and organizational means so that transversal articulation is achieved in the short term. Questions of the articulation between Ministries, Secretaries and other public and private institutions requires the creation of an infra-structural organization to effectively implement public policies through monitoring, evaluation and constant improvements in action programs. Moreover, the difficulty of a common language that facilitates micro, meso and macroeconomic policies is one of the principal obstacles to such an effort. It even exceeds the question of sufficient financial resources.

Government measures since the world crisis have focused on economic stabilization and programs to accelerate productive and consumer growth. Policies related to gender have been little prioritized in the same way that the formation of management capacities in the public sector capable of dialoguing constantly between other social agents and the beneficiaries of programs for the reduction of gender inequalities have been put off.

The OECD recommends strategies of gender transversalization such as the implementation of specific actions directed toward women, highlighting the importance of promoting articulations between labor policies and other areas of public policies such as education, professional training, childcare, healthcare, social protections, productive incentives, etc. Such measures recommend, among others: a) female access to policies in the labor market in equal conditions to men in a proportion equivalent to their participation in the EAP and/or the level of unemployment; b) revision of tax systems to facilitate the incorporation of women in the labor market, reducing disincentives to such an effort; c) permitting women access to areas and jobs related to information technology through education and professional training; d) childcare and services for other dependent family members (the elderly and sick); e) not restricting policies for the reduction of gender inequalities to short-term pilot programs with limited objectives, but rather actions that aim for improvements in the medium and long term (OECD, 2007).

Among the proposals for actions and programs in developed capitalist countries, there have also been a series of public policies related to the labor market such as improving the conditions of absorbing women in the labor market, training programs and anti-discrimination measures that have positively influenced patterns of segregation. They may be summarized as follows: i) policies to raise salaries in predominantly female occupations for parity with sectors dominated by men, taking into account similar jobs; ii) policies which aim to modify the behavior of employers in relation to contracting and promotion; iii) policies aimed at workers in relation to training and educational programs; iv) subsidy programs for childcare which affect the family decision for a woman to enter in the labor market or not; v) measures which specifically aim to integrate genders as a desired result.

Other policies destined to influence patterns of contracting and promotion among employers may be organized through legal restrictions that determine a compulsory minimum of contracts for specific genders (generally women) such as in affirmative action programs for racial and other minorities. In some sectors, there were vacancies in posts where it was not possible to fill due to the shortage of qualified candidates. The results, therefore, depend

on the relative offer of workers of each gender for specific posts. Training and educational programs aim to create a sufficient target workforce (in the majority of cases, women) with the conditions of assuming particular posts. Yet this does not necessarily guarantee getting the job since other requisites are demanded by employers for contract and promotion. An additional policy could be the concession of subsidies or exemptions for employers who show proven efforts to integrate women and equalize salaries.

The incorporation of women in the paid labor market in Brazil has not meant in the majority of cases the abandonment of domestic tasks, but rather the extension of the workday, combining productive, reproductive and community activities. In this sense, policies related to the institutionalization of childcare through the adequate provision of daycares also impinges on the responsibilities of the planning of urban space and urban norms to facilitate women's current family functions. This is also related to the availability and localization of housing, complementary services, equipment and sources of jobs that respect the necessities that will allow women access to the public sphere (differentiating them solely from the domestic sphere). In the same way, this institutionalization could be rethought to permit more male participation in childcare responsibilities, amplifying labor laws that affect men in this position.

Another relevant question refers to the fact that despite equivalent or even higher educational levels, women have not improved their position in jobs in general, verified by occupations reserved for women at lower salary levels. Salary differentiation between genders remain high even for jobs of equal value and have grown in moments of economic crisis.

In this way, if gender inequalities have acted as obstacles for balanced development, the integration of gender in public policies should be affected through new articulations between the formal and informal spaces of region (work and leisure), between the productive and reproductive economies and between the domestic and private sphere.

In summary, as a result of the barriers shown in this study, the effective participation of women in equal conditions in the labor market in Brazil does not depend exclusively on the recognition of the positive force of the female workforce in official documents. It also depends on changes in the social patterns and mentalities of the population so that effective implementation of policies is achieved. In a parallel manner, the role of the state is relevant for the promulgation of norms, legislation and mechanisms of control of effective implementation of transversal protectionist measures that favor greater equality of opportunity in the labor market.

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