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**POVERTY, NOUN
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POVERTY, NOUN

Female

The various female achievements throughout history – such as insertion in the labor market, the right to vote, the use of contraceptives, divorce -and the result of intense mobilizations- have made decisive contributions to the construction of more equitable societies. However, these advances coexist with other manifestations of gender inequality, a persistent mark in our society, in the formation of other scenarios: gender discrimination in the labor market, where women are still a minority and receive lower wages, underrepresentation in the spheres of power, and overload due to multiple working hours are just some of the many examples. The increase in poverty among women stands out among the perverse consequences of social and economic changes that have occurred in a globalized society, a phenomenon that has come to be called the feminization of poverty.

The term was first used in 1978 by the American sociologist Diane Pearce, aiming to portray the trend, in the United States of America, of an increase in the proportion of women among the poor and the growth in the number of individuals in households headed by women among the poor, which occurred between the early 1950s and the mid-1970s. To date, there is no consensus on the feminization of poverty. Thus, its understanding involves the comparison between women and men and between the situation of individuals in families headed by women and those in families headed by men (COSTA et al., 2005).

This issue of the Bulletin of the Observatory of Inequalities addresses the phenomenon of the feminization of poverty. We will begin by presenting its temporal perspective in the Brazilian scenario, and later analyzing some of its causes.

THE FEMINIZATION OF POVERTY IN THE BRAZILIAN CONTEXT

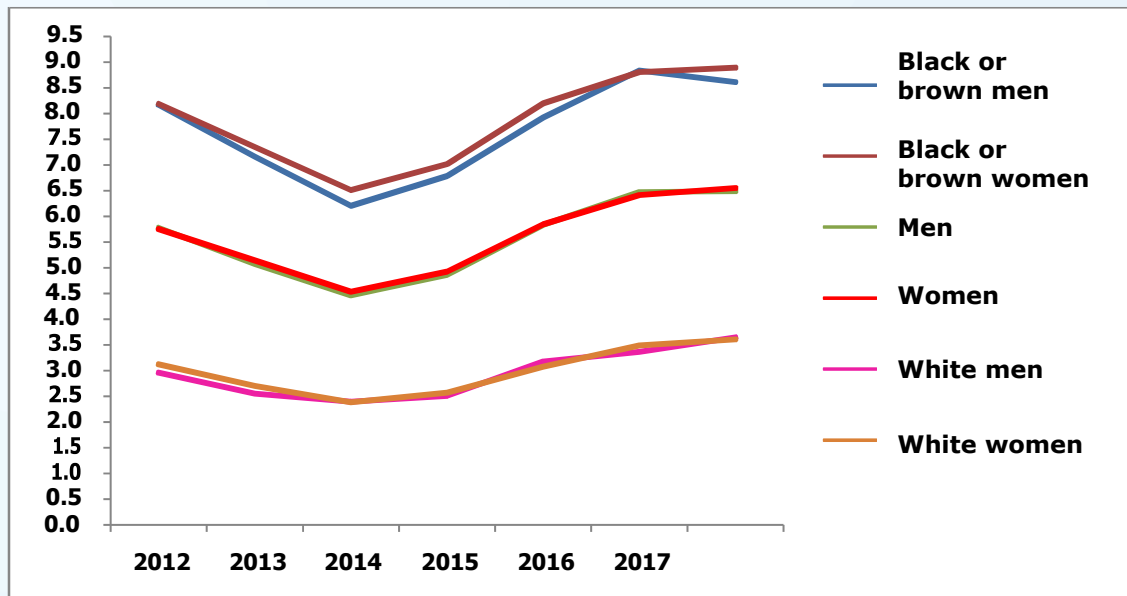
First, we will analyze the Brazilian scenario concerning the first approach presented, which understands the feminization of poverty as a change in poverty levels, and which shows a trend in disfavor of women in relation to men. Thus, it is verified that, in Brazil, the percentage of men and women below the lowest poverty line, as stipulated by the World Bank (less than USD 1.90 per capita per day¹ in Purchasing Power Parity - PPP²), has remained relatively close over the years, as shown in graph 1. For all groups analyzed, there was a decrease in extreme poverty until 2014, followed by an increase from 2015 that resulted in worse results for all in 2018 compared to 2012, the first year of the series. The most significant emphasis, in this case, is given by the skin color/race mark since black men and women are more prone to extreme poverty than white individuals, with black women being even more disadvantaged.

However, the study of the feminization of poverty has the absence of data on intrafamily income distribution as a significant challenge.

¹ The value of USD 1.90 per capita per day in purchasing power parity - PPP is currently the limit for defining global poverty and, therefore, indicated as the extreme poverty line. As of 2017, the World Bank presented two other options as the poverty line: USD 3.20 PPP and USD 5.50 PPP, built to account for differences in levels of development in low-middle income and high-middle income countries, respectively.

² The purchasing power parity (PPP) conversion factor is the number of units of a country's currency needed to purchase the same amount of goods and services domestically as dollars would purchase in the United States.

Graph 1: Proportion of people below the extreme poverty line by household income per capita (less than USD 1.90 daily per capita PPP), according to sex and color/race – Brazil (2012/2018)



Source: Continuous Pnad 2012/2018. Own elaboration of the graph.

This is because the information used to measure poverty levels is captured at the household level. Thus, it presupposes a uniform distribution of resources among all members of the same household. In this context, it should be considered that family formation composed of heterosexual couples, with or without children, remains predominant in Brazil. These questions are especially relevant when measuring poverty among women since measures that consider all people in a household are equally poor or wealthy can increase female poverty (COSTA et al., 2005).

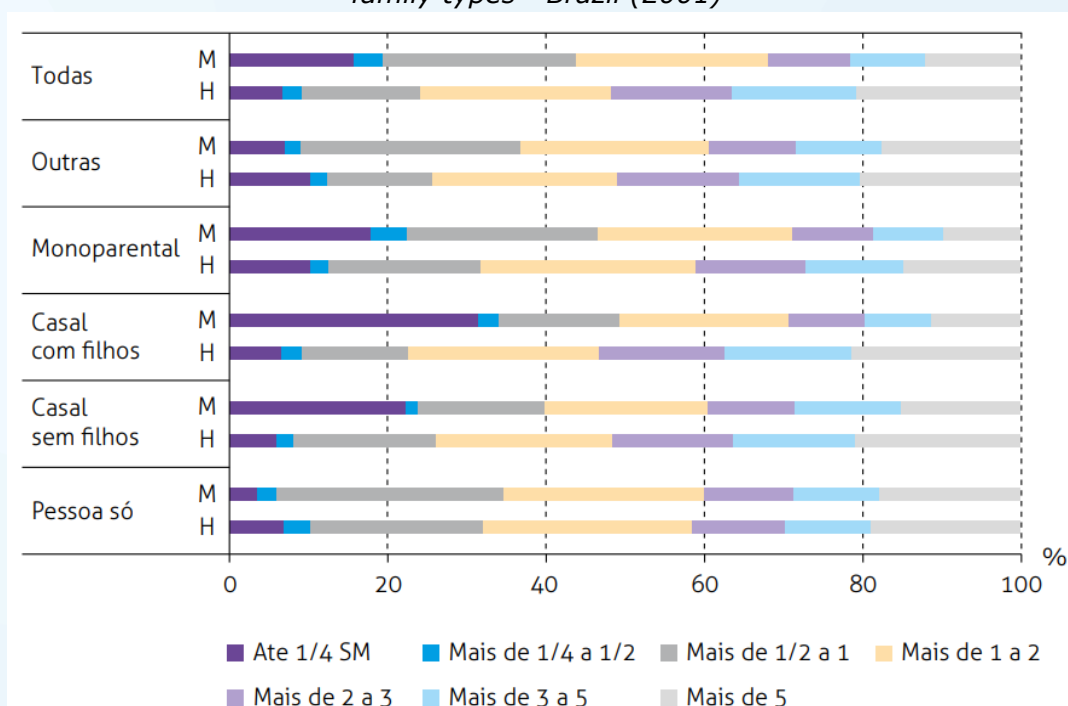
The second approach, concerning female-headed families, arises with the increase in this type of family formation due to changes in social behavior, such as the growth of female participation in the labor market, and the most significant number of marriage dissolutions. In Brazil, in 1995, 22.9% of Brazilian families were headed by women; in 2015, 40.5% of families had a woman as a family person of reference³ (Continuous Pnad).

This information is relevant because, in addition to many families headed by women having only one income provider, they may be in a worse situation than those headed by men due to the numerous disadvantages suffered by women in society, especially in the labor market (COSTA et al., 2005). In addition, these families tend to have more dependents since, when marriages or other unions are dissolved, the children are generally under the woman's responsibility, with or without the regular and fair contribution of the man to their expenses.

Graphs 2 and 3 detail the gender differences in the income of all sources of heads of households, by sex and family types, concerning the minimum wage (MW), in 2001 and 2015, respectively. It is noted that the male income is always higher than the female's. For all households in 2001, 15.7% of the female heads had incomes up to a quarter of the minimum wage, compared with 6.7% of male heads.

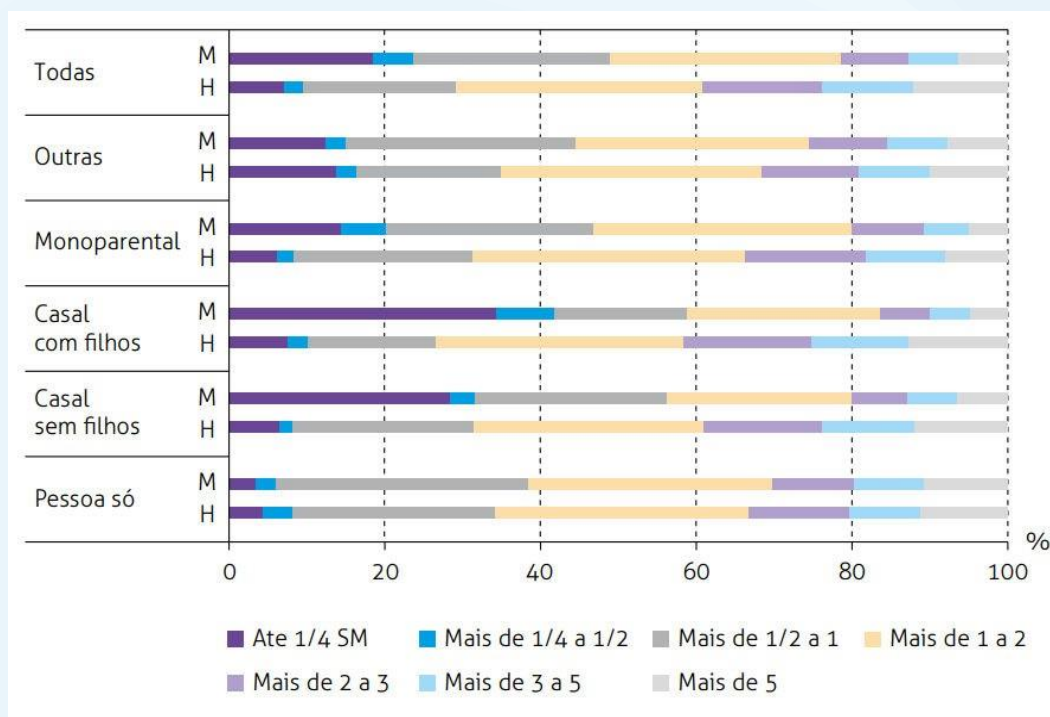
³The name "head" of the family was used until 2000, being replaced by "responsible for the family" from the Demographic Census 2000. In the national survey by Domicile Sample - PNAD, the "reference person" denomination was changed. However, the concept is the same: the person responsible for the household unit (or for the family) or who was considered so by the other members. Therefore, it does not necessarily mean that the person of reference is the one who holds the highest income in the family.

Graph 2: Relative distribution of income from all sources, in minimum wages, by sex and family types - Brazil (2001)



Source: Pnad 2001. Elaborated by CAVENAGHI; ALVES, 2018.

Graph 3: Relative distribution of income from all sources, in minimum wages, by sex and family types - Brazil (2015)



Source: Pnad 2015. Elaborated by CAVENAGHI; ALVES, 2018.

In 2015, for all households, the number grew to 18.5% of female heads with incomes up to a quarter of the minimum wage, compared to 7.1% of male heads.

In contrast, considering higher incomes, in 2001, 9.4% of female heads had incomes between 3 and 5 MW, and 12% had incomes above 5 MW, against 15.6% and 20.8% of male heads, respectively. In 2015, considering higher incomes, 6.4% of female heads had incomes between 3 and 5 MW, and 6.4% had incomes above 5 MW compared to 11.7% and 12% of male heads, respectively.

The smallest gender disparities in terms of income in both years were in sole proprietor arrangements. The most significant gender differences were in the arrangements of couples with children and couples without children. Therefore, the data suggest that marriage and children have very diverse weights for men and women. Thus, the percentage of men with an income of up to a quarter of the MW is similar for men in couples with children, couples without children, and sole proprietor arrangements. On the other hand, when women live alone, they have an income closer to that of men. Still, when they marry and have children, the situation worsens considerably for them, remaining similar, which increases inequality between the genders.

This difference can be explained, among other factors, by the increase in domestic work generated for women by marriage and children. According to a study prepared by IBGE economist Cristiane Soares (2008) for any type of family, with or without children, with older individuals, with a sick person at home, the woman works more if she is married, indicating that the husband ends up increasing domestic work instead of helping the woman. In the case of men, the situation is reversed: the working hours for men are lower among those who live with a spouse compared to male sole proprietor arrangements. The study demonstrates that the arrangements formed by a couple with children in families in which the reference person is the woman, are those in which she faces the longest working hours (28.4 hours). Compared to the arrangements in which the woman lives alone, there is an increase of more than seven hours in

the daily domestic working hours due to the presence of a husband and children. When comparing such working hours with that of another arrangement in which she lives only with her children (she has no spouse), it is observed that the presence of her husband increases the working hours by more than four hours. This burden may affect the insertion of women into the labor market, making them more susceptible to part-time or more precarious work and, therefore, with lower incomes.

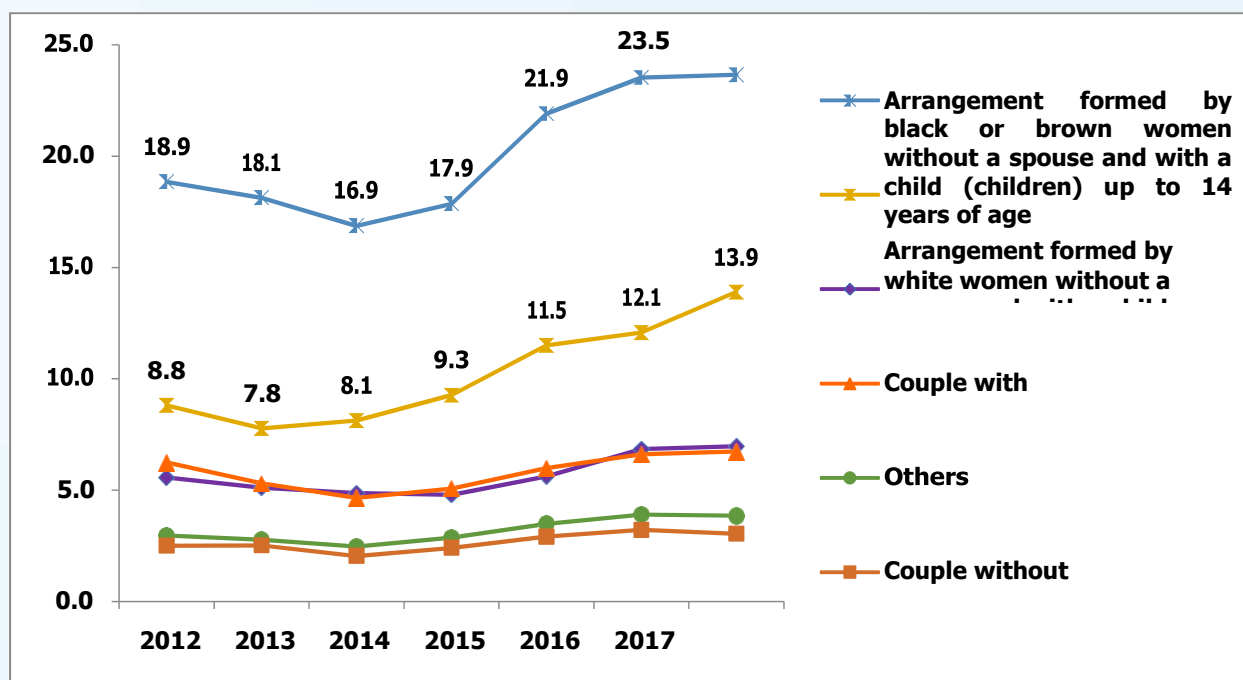
It is worth mentioning the family arrangement formed by women with children and without a spouse, especially those headed by black women. Graph 4 shows that the percentage of individuals below the extreme poverty line stipulated by the World Bank (less than USD 1.90 daily per capita PPP) is higher in this type of family arrangement. In 2018, 23.7% of people in family arrangements of the type "black women without a spouse and with a child under 14 years of age" and 13.9% of people in arrangements of the type "white women with a spouse and a child under 14 years of age" were in extreme poverty. The proportion was 6.7% among those who make up the "married couples with children" arrangement. The graph also shows the worsening of the situation from 2015 for all family arrangements, but much more significant for families with single mothers. In other words, the effects of the economic and political crisis that has plagued Brazil since 2015 are not felt homogeneously by all, affecting more seriously the most vulnerable, those who suffer the most from unemployment, the precariousness of the labor market, and cuts in social policies.

If we consider the line of poverty of less than USD 5.5 daily per capita PPP⁴, 39.6% of white women without a spouse and with a child under the age of 14 are in poverty, with 68.4% being among the 50% with the lowest income. Among black women with the same family arrangement, 63% are below the poverty line, and 87.8% are among the 50% with the lowest income (Continuous Pnad data from 2018).

Therefore, what the data set shows us is the increase in the proportion of people in families headed by women among the poorest,

⁴Suggested by the World Bank for countries with high-middle income, based on Gross National Income, a classification in which Brazil is found.

Graph 4: Proportion of people below the extreme poverty line (less than USD 1.90 daily per capita PPP) by type of family arrangements – Brazil (2012 to 2018)



Source: Pnad and Continuous Pnad. Own elaboration of the graph.

especially those without a spouse and with a child, which, according to a study by IPEA (2005), constitutes one of the existing concepts for the feminization of poverty. Still, it is impossible to ignore the racial dimension in this debate, given that the disadvantage faced by single-parent families headed by black women is increased. The data show that racial and gender discriminations

produce overlapping effects, making black women, who experience these two experiences, occupy the base of the social hierarchy (SILVA, 2013).

In addition, we must also consider that a single simple and objective measure, such as income, although important, cannot capture the multiple dimensions of poverty. This assessment is even more complicated when considered



BOX 1 - Mechanisms that contribute to the feminization of poverty in Brazil

- 1) *The sexual division of labor generates lower female participation in the workforce, greater occupation in more precarious positions, and economic and social devaluation of the tasks traditionally performed by women.*
- 2) *The discrimination inherent in the labor market causes women to receive lower wages and be the minority occupying positions of power.*
- 3) *Social changes related to the high number of divorces, with women remaining mostly with child custody.*
- 4) *The impact of recent changes in social policies affected women the hardest.*

from a gender perspective since various forms of poverty are insensitive to the specific deprivations suffered by women, such as vulnerability, domestic violence, and lack of autonomy (Baden and Milward, 1997, apud COSTA et al., 2005).

Thus, seeking to encompass this multidimensional approach to poverty and considering our focus on the analysis of inequalities, in the next section, we will seek to answer the following question: what are and how do the discriminatory mechanisms that make women more vulnerable to poverty act? The causes that we will analyze are summarized in Box 1.

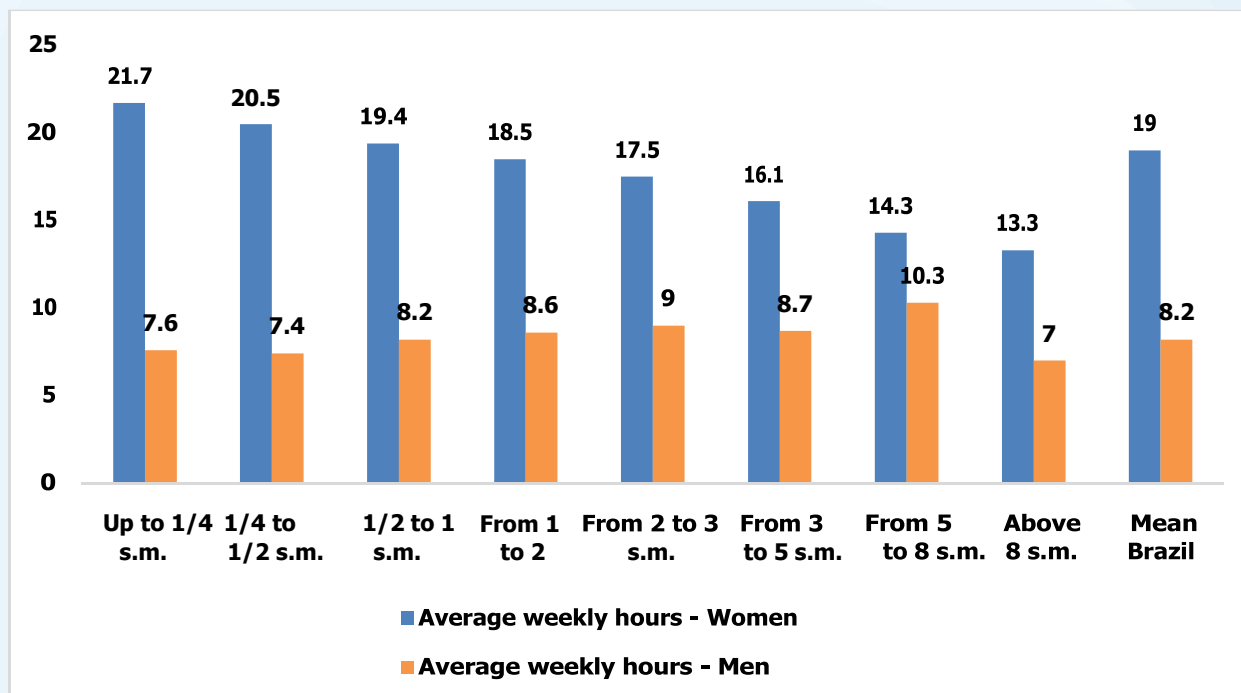
THE SEXUAL DIVISION OF LABOR

There is a sexual division of labor that has established itself as a standard in our society: while men are responsible for the sustenance and economic reproduction of the family and in charge of economically re-equipped, productive work performed in the public space, women are responsible for physical reproduction and domestic tasks, which constitute private and unpaid work.

The continued practice of this sexual division of labor naturalized and assumed as the male and female functions, respectively (FERNANDEZ, 2019).

However, on the one hand, women gradually achieved participation and have fought for equality in the labor market. This was not accompanied by a fairer division of domestic labor, limiting women's work opportunities and constituting what is known as double or triple working hours for women: paid work, followed by domestic chores and caring for children and other dependents. In this context, we will analyze how the sexual division of labor generates and deepens the picture of female impoverishment under two approaches. First, we will see how unpaid domestic work conditions women's entry into the labor market, causing them to enter the workforce less or occupy jobs with shorter working or informal hours. Second, how the sexual division of labor generates, within the labor market, the economic and social devaluation of the tasks traditionally performed by women.

Graph 5: Average weekly hours of unpaid domestic and care work, according to sex and household income class per capita - Brazil (2016)



Source: IBGE. Elaboration: IPEA,

Unpaid domestic work

Despite the efforts made to denature socially constructed roles, care - for the home, children, older people - is still understood as a predominantly female value, carried out free of charge in the family environment, bringing various social disadvantages (KUCHEMANN, 2012). Graph 5 shows that the burden of domestic work on women persists in Brazil at all income levels, although it is even more significant in households with lower per capita income. On the other hand, this inequality is reducing in the higher income strata, not because men take on substantially more work, but because households have a greater possibility of hiring domestic and care services (usually performed by another woman), eating outside the home and adopting technologies that render domestic and care work efficient. While a low-income woman spends an average of 21.7 hours per week in these jobs, a high-income woman spends 13.3 hours - about three times and two times more than men - from their respective levels of income (IPEA, 2019). Thus, it is noted, and according to graph 6, that the number of hours spent by men is very low

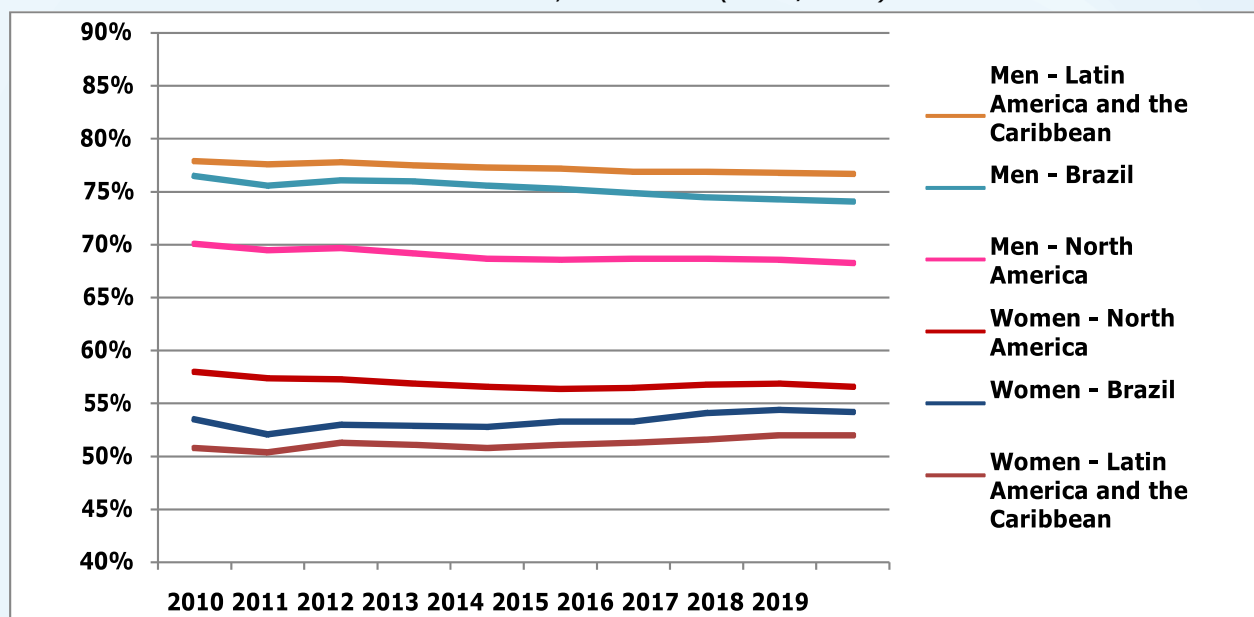
in all income levels and varies very little.

Housework overload helps deepen the poverty condition of women in various ways. First, it affects women's decisions whether or not to enter the labor market. In Brazil, there is lower female participation in the workforce⁵ (53.3%) compared to the participation of men (71.8%) (Continuous PNAD data; 3rd trim/2019). This factor reduces women's autonomy, as it operates not only a separation of activities but also a hierarchy since the work assigned to men is remunerated, has social protection, and is socially valued. In contrast, the work performed by women at home is not remunerated, is little socially valued, and does not result in social protection (IPEA, 2019). Moreover, it increases the economic and material dependence of women on men, also producing an inequality of power between men and women within the home.

In addition, if the unemployment rate of white women is more than 70% higher than that of white men, unemployment of black

³ The Workforce Participation Rate is the ratio between the Economically Active Population (part of the population employed or looking for a job) and the Working-Age Population.

Graph 6: Workforce participation by sex - Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, and Brazil (2010/2019)



Source: World Labour Organization.

women exceeds this parameter by more than 130%. The development of more fragile connections with the labor market removes the most effective possibilities for this group of the population to escape poverty.

Graph 6 compares the situation of Brazil with that of Latin America and North America concerning the participation of men and women in the workforce and allows the following conclusions: i) as in Brazil, the analyzed regions present gender inequality regarding workforce participation, which persists with few oscillations over the years; ii) there is the lowest female participation and the highest male participation in the workforce in Latin America and the Caribbean, which implies the most significant inequality between men and women; (iii) in North America, in addition to women participating in more in the workforce than in other regions, men participate proportionally less, resulting in lower gender inequality; (iv) Brazil is in a better situation than Latin America and the Caribbean concerning female participation in the workforce and inequality between men and women, but is worse than North America.

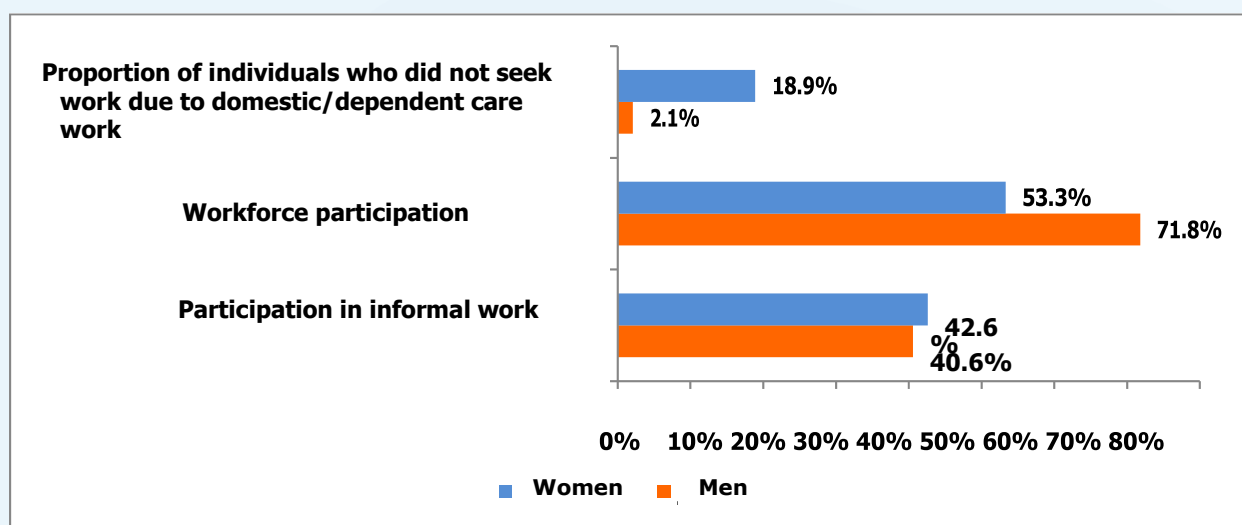
Second, this overload causes women to face more significant difficulties when entering the labor market. The setbacks begin with the very opportunity to look for a job. According to

data from Continuous PNAD (2018), among the people who would like to have a job but did not conduct an effective search for work in the reference week of the survey, 18.9% of women stated that they did not take such an action because they had to take care of household chores, their child(ren) or other relatives, while only 2.1% of men did not seek work for this reason.

Third, even when they overcome this barrier and take steps in the search for work, the pressure of domestic obligations determines that a considerable portion of women find more precarious jobs, which allow them to reconcile both activities, inside and outside the home. Thus, they occupy jobs with fewer weekly hours and, consequently, lower wages (average week of 36.2 h against 40.9 h for men), and are the majority in informal work (42.6% of women inserted in the labor market are in informality, against 40.6% of men). Graph 7 summarizes the information analyzed so far.

Still concerning informal work, generally more precarious and less protected, it is observed that it has been alarmingly growing in Brazil due to the economic and political crisis that has plagued the country since 2015, reaching its highest level since 2016, with 41.1% of the employed. This type of work

Graph 7: Workforce participation; the proportion of individuals who did not seek work due to domestic/dependent care work; participation in informal work, by sex – Brazil (2018).



Source: Continuous Pnad 2018 Own elaboration of the graph.

entails the lack of access to social protection mechanisms linked to formalization, such as minimum wage remuneration and the right to paid leave and retirement. Thus, in addition to women being more subject to informal work than men, it is necessary to consider the specific disadvantages in the lives of women, who suffer without the right to maternity leave and are the majority among older people in the country due to their longer life expectancy.

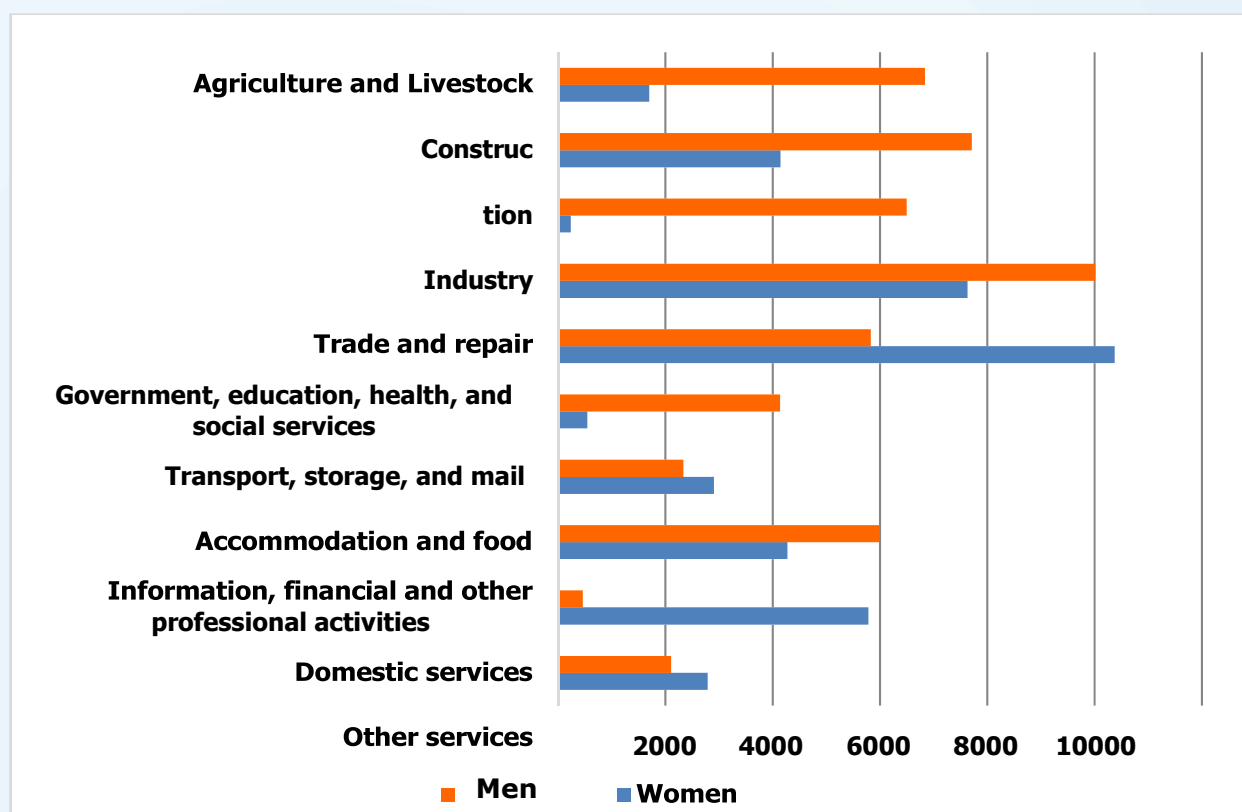
In addition to all the financial aspects of the labor market, it is important to consider the other impacts caused on people - usually women - who care for children and older people. Remembering that being a family caregiver demands work, time, energy, financial resources, affection, effort, goodwill, and patience, we can conclude that care tasks cannot be a task for one person alone, much less, especially in the case of older people, for a family caregiver who is professionally unprepared and who does not have support services and a protection policy for the performance of this activity. In this sense, it is

necessary to emphasize that Brazil is experiencing a process of demographic transition marked by accelerated population aging, which will further burden women in tasks related to care for older people if appropriate policies are not adopted by the state and society (KUCHEMANN, 2012).

The sexual division of labor in the labor market

In addition to unpaid work within the family, the sexual division of labor manifests itself in the organization of the labor market, based on the hierarchy established between better-paid and more socially prestigious occupations, understood as typically masculine, and poorly-remunerated and less socially valued occupations, primarily associated with care tasks, considered typically feminine, such as domestic worker, caregiver, social worker, and nurse (KUCHEMANN, 2012). Is the so-called horizontal segregation of the labor market.

Graph 8: Employed population, by sex, according to activity groups - Brazil (2018)



Source: Continuous Pnad, 2018 Elaboration: IBGE - Synthesis of social indicators, 2019.

As Vasconcelos points out (2009, p. 37, apud KUCHEMANN, 2012, our translation), this understanding has “socioeconomic and symbolic aspects that impact on the distribution of resources, goods, and services and decision-making power over them, playing a central role in the reproduction of social inequalities”.

Thus, inequalities are reflected in the occupation of less prestigious positions and remuneration. Graph 8 shows the horizontal segregation in the Brazilian labor market: the greatest disparity in domestic services concerning the distribution of men and women (5.8 million women and 458 thousand men). Domestic services in Brazil constitute the type of work with the lowest average remuneration among those presented, considering formal and informal workers, in the amount of BRL 878.00.

According to the “Dossiê Mulheres Negras: retrato das condições de vida das mulheres negras no Brasil”, published by IPEA (2013), black women are the majority of domestic workers - 57.6% of all workers in this position – and are less represented in the most protected positions, such as employment with a signed workbook. Black women are also the majority in social services in general, including domestic, health, and education functions. In addition, about 13% of employed black women perform activities for their consumption or without compensation. And although the participation of black women in government agencies is greater than that of white men, their presence is concentrated in social services and the municipal sphere, that is, at the lowest levels.

This discrimination is consolidated in the belief that women cannot be considered substitutes for men, and this is due to the most diverse reasons, or pretexts that rationalize or justify prejudiced or discriminatory attitudes. For example, in addition to considering that they are physically more fragile, it can also be assumed that they would be less intelligent, less rational, less reliable, less productive, or emotionally less stable than them (FERNANDEZ, 2019). In the case of black women, the positions are historically related not only to the function of care

but also reinforce the traditional roles attributable to black women (that of “serving”).

Moreover, these prejudices are reinforced by the link between women and domestic work: entrepreneurs do not want to employ women in positions that require much responsibility considering that they will not always be able to rely on them in the same way that they can rely on men. Even in cases where they have the same level of education, entrepreneurs assess that their domestic responsibilities could negatively affect their work capacity and, consequently, their salaries (FERNANDEZ, 2019).

THE DYNAMICS OF DISCRIMINATION IN THE LABOR MARKET

Even when women manage to practice the same profession as men, the labor market operates in a dynamic of gender discrimination. In this context, vertical segregation in the labor market comes into play, which occurs when the majority of workers who occupy the highest positions in a given profession are men. In contrast, the majority of workers who occupy the lowest ranks are women. Roughly speaking, in all professional branches, the male presence increases as one ascends the professional scale. It means that men are also more concentrated in the upper echelons of all economic sectors, in the spheres of command, leadership, management, board, and chairperson of private and public companies and organizations (FERNANDEZ, 2019).

The phenomenon known by the metaphor of the “glass ceiling” alludes precisely to this situation: to the invisible barriers preventing women from ascending to the highest hierarchical levels. A non-exhaustive list of the barriers that make up the glass ceiling could be comprised of the following elements: the stereotypes that society forms regarding women, the lack of opportunity for women to gain experience in management and develop a spirit of leadership, hostile business cultures, women's obligations at home, to cite a few examples (ENRIQUEZ, 2012, apud FERNANDEZ, 2019).

According to the IBGE (2018) publication “Estatísticas de Gênero: Indicadores sociais das mulheres no Brasil”, in 2016, men occupied 60.9% of managerial positions in the country, while women occupied only 39.1%. In the same year, the IBGE estimated the average number of years of study at 9.3 years among women and 8.9 for men. In other words, to say that women do not occupy as many managerial positions in the country as men because of their lower qualifications is not justified since, in general they are more educated than men.

This scenario is repeated in the context of the Federal Government. Graph 9 shows the percentage of women occupying Senior Management and Advisory positions (SMA) - positions at the highest level in careers, ranging from 1 to 6, with 6 having the highest remuneration, hierarchy, and, consequently, decision-making power. It is possible to see that women are the minority occupying these positions, except SMA 1 in 2017. Still, it is observed that the higher the level of the position, the greater the inequality between genders, which becomes more significant from SMA 4 – a scenario which has been persisting for years. This represents not only less income for women but also less opportunity to participate in decision-

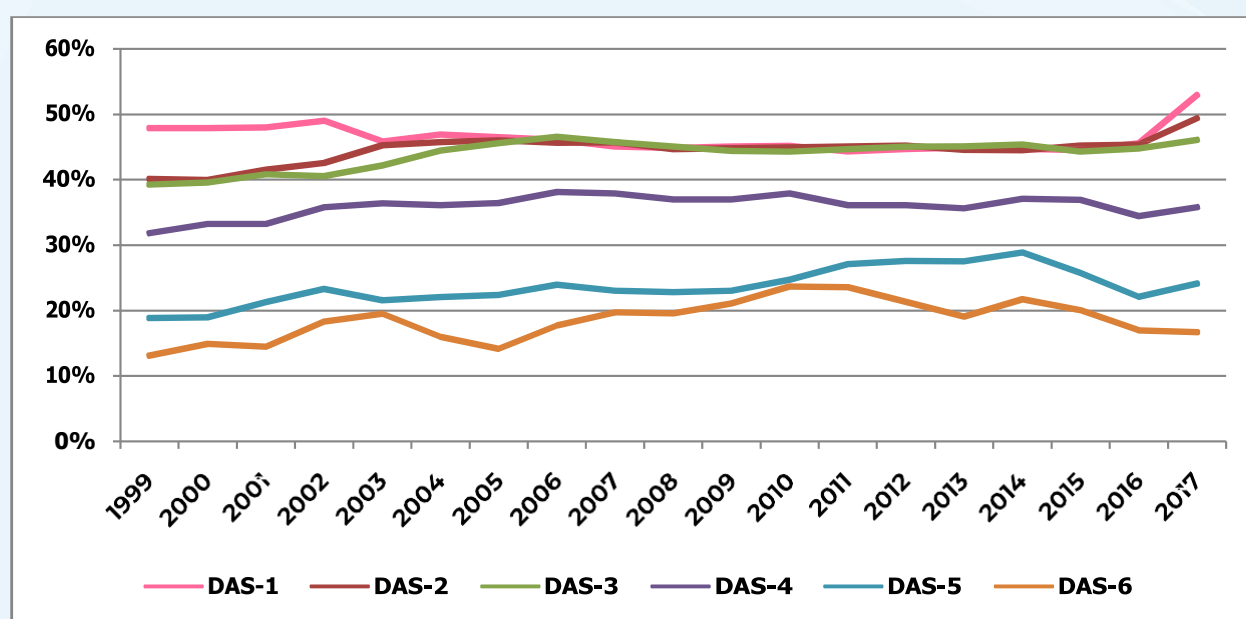
making, considering more equitable measures and public policies.

However, gender discrimination in the labor market goes further. According to a study by Souza Sant'Anna, from the Dom Cabral Foundation, women receive, on average, less than men even when both hold the same position in the private sector. The research analyzed the salaries of men and women in 12 large companies in the industry and services sectors, covering 50 thousand workers, and identified an average wage gap of 16% between men and women who hold the same position. The discrepancy reaches 27% in senior positions. The gap between the highest salaries of men and women at the top is 38% (BBC, 2019).

Graph 10 corroborates the research data by demonstrating that gender inequality is manifested in hourly earnings from work in individuals with similar levels of education, with the most significant discrepancy occurring somewhat among those with complete higher education.

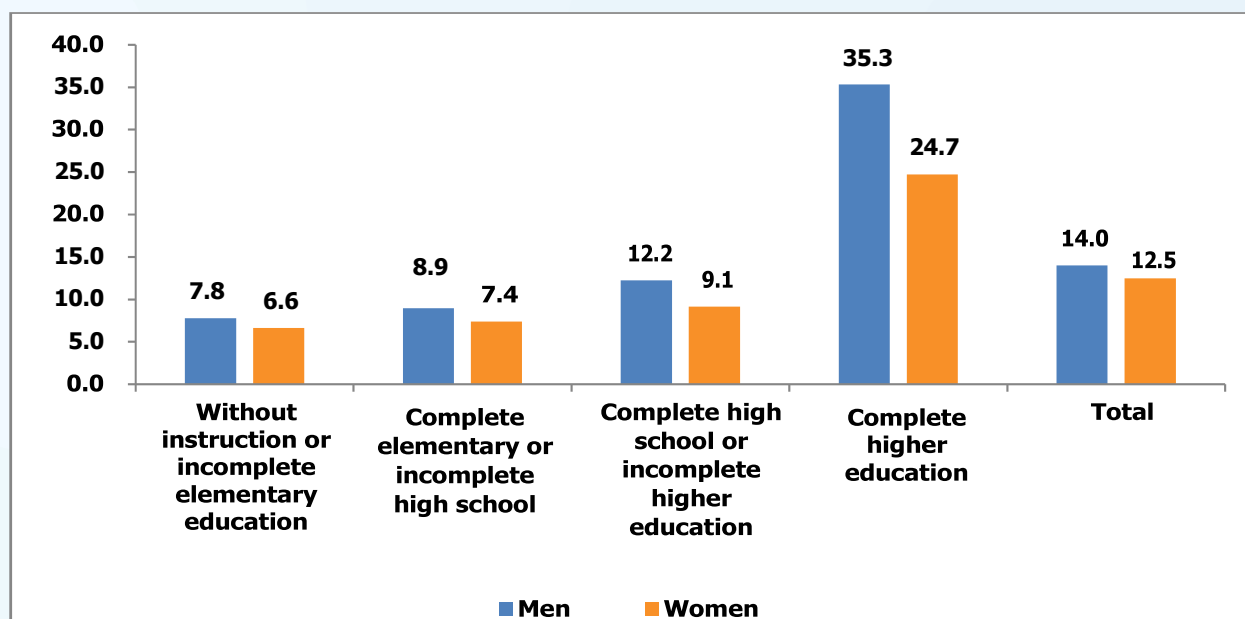
The consequence of all mechanisms shown in graph 11, which confirms the presence of gender inequalities and, even more, of race in the labor market: white men are better

Figure 9: Percentage of women holding positions of trust in Management Federal Public (DAS 1 to 6) - Brazil (1999/2017)



Source: Atlas do Estado Brasileiro, IPEA. Own elaboration of the graph.

Graph 10: Average real habitual hour-income of primary work of employed persons aged 14 years and over, by the level of education, according to sex - Brazil (2018)

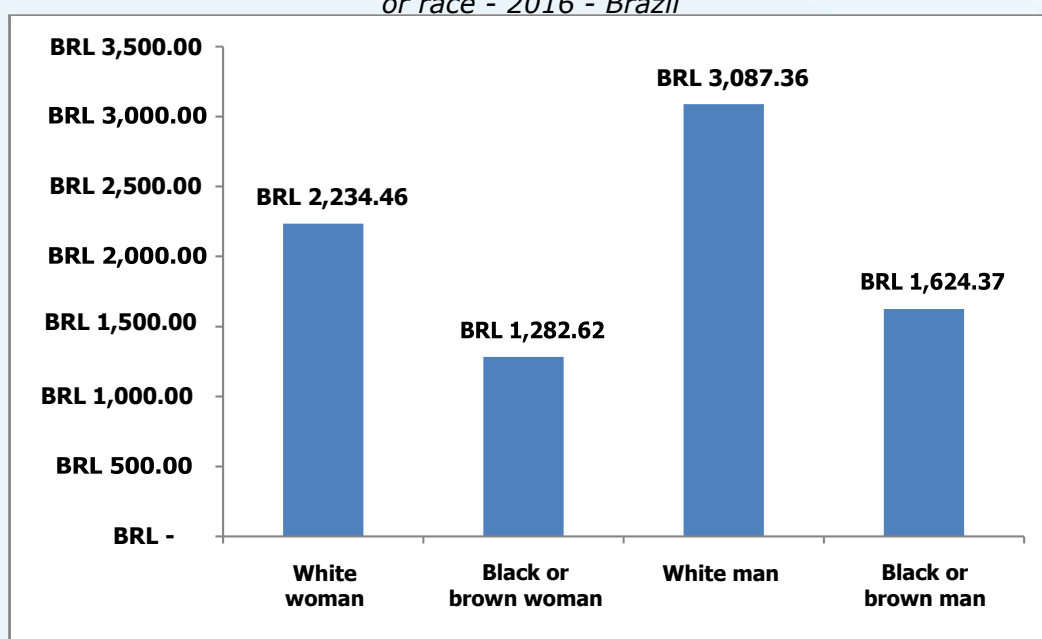


Source: Continuous Pnad 2018 Elaboration: IBGE - Synthesis of social indicators, 2019.

remunerated than white women (they receive 38.2% more than them), and black or brown men are better remunerated than black or brown women (here, the difference is 26.6%). In this scenario, black women are the most harmed by accumulating the marks of gender and race discrimination.

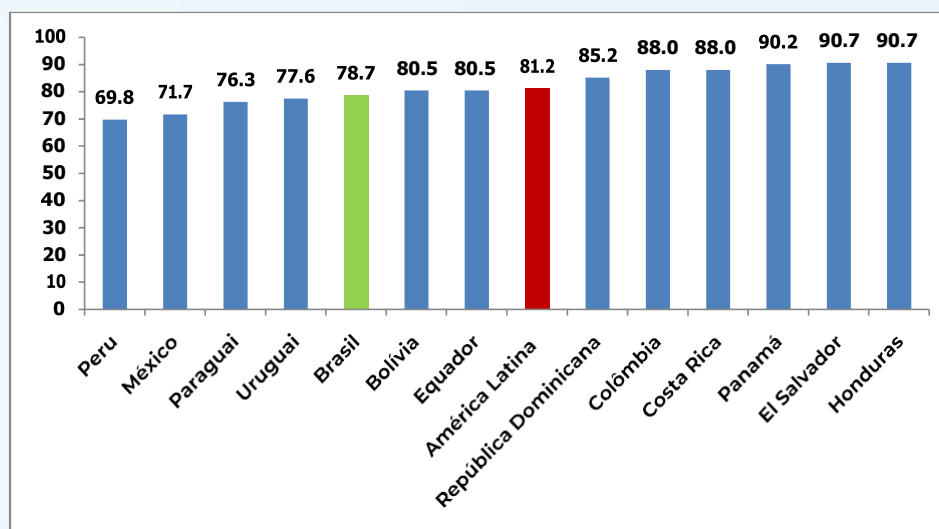
Finally, graph 12 shows the relationship between the average income of women and men in Latin American countries in 2018. It is possible to see that, in Brazil, women receive an average of 78.7% of men's income, a value below the average in Latin America, estimated at 81.2%. Still, it is important to note that in all countries,

Graph 11: Habitual income of all employed persons aged 14 years and over, by sex, color, or race - 2016 - Brazil



Source: Continuous Pnad 2016 Elaboration: IBGE - Gender Statistics - Social indicators of women in Brazil, 2018.

Graph 12: Relationship between the average income of men and women in Latin American countries (in %) (2018)



Source: Cepal - Cepalstat

women have lower incomes than men, and only Peru, Mexico, Paraguay, and Uruguay are in a more unfavorable situation than Brazil.

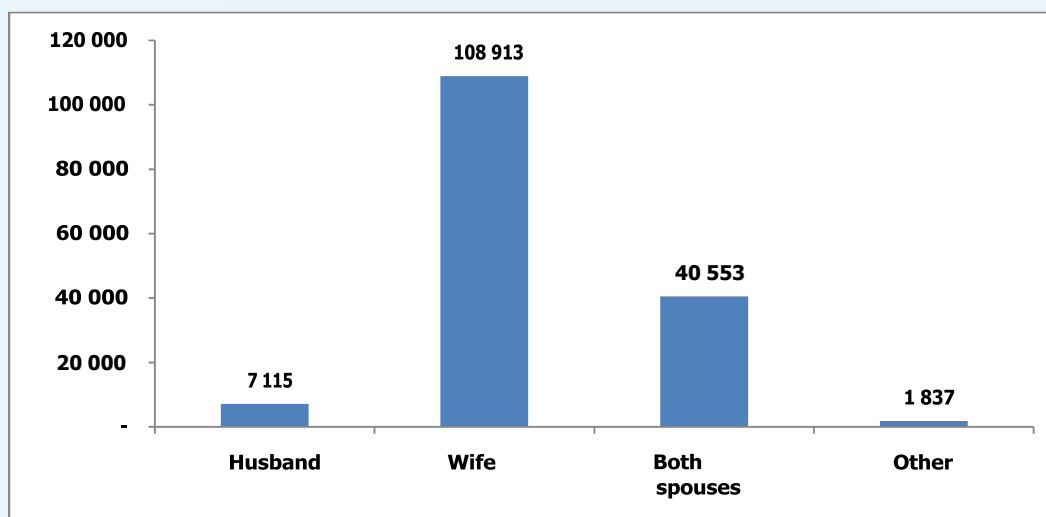
THE INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF DIVORCES AND THE FEMALE BURDEN IN CHILDCARE

The third cause for the increase in the poverty situation among women concerns the increase in the number of divorces in our society,

causing women to assume an overload with childcare. In Brazil, the data reflect this scenario: in 2018, IBGE found 385,246 divorces, which represents an increase of 3.2% compared to the total accounted for in 2017. Graph 13 shows that custody of children remains mostly with women, followed by shared custody and custody with the father.

As Paula England explains (1997), the number of divorces is reinforced with women increasingly taking paid jobs. This is because it would be expected that, with this social change, men would participate more in domestic work,

Graph 13: Number of court divorces according to the person responsible for the custody of children Minors - Brazil, 2018



Source: IBGE, Directorate of Research, Coordination of Population and Social Indicators, Civil Registry Statistics.

including with the children. However, while women's employment increased greatly, the time spent on domestic work by men increased only slightly, imposing double working hours on women. In this context, the exit from marriage predominated against attempts to improve marital life because there are deep cultural and structural resistances to see changes in the role assigned to the male sex. This is exactly what must change so that women can find their marriages more satisfactory.

Thus, for the author, the increase in the number of divorces is a modern paradox. On the one hand, the increasing female insertion in the labor market means that women increasingly earn income, become less dependent on men, and can leave unhappy marriages. On the other hand, most of them certainly remain in the custody of their children, and it is unrealistic to think that these women continued to receive the same financial value from the father. Therefore, gender inequality that assigns women the responsibility for raising children persists and is even reinforced when they live separately from men, which can contribute to the increasing female poverty⁶.

THE IMPACT OF RECENT CUTS ON BRAZILIAN SOCIAL POLICIES

Since 2015, Brazil has been subjected to the rhetoric that proposes austerity as the only form to recover the economy, aiming to improve public

accounts and restore the economy's competitiveness through reduced wages and public spending (Fórum 21; FES; SEP; and Plataforma Política Social, 2016). The arguments that support the policy of austerity are controversial among experts concerning the capacity for economic recovery and raise a dispute of undeniable importance. However, given our focus in this bulletin, we will limit ourselves to analyzing the impacts of austerity on social policies in Brazil and how they affect women more forcefully.

According to the report "Austeridade e retrocesso: impactos sociais da Política Fiscal no Brasil" (2018), published by Brasil Debate and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, in times of austerity, women's time and work are the adjustment variables, providing the sustenance of their families and transferring the responsibilities of the State to the private sphere through goods and services. Thus, austerity is sexist by promoting cuts in social policies because it contributes to the overload of women, who unfold in the so-called double working hours. After all, who cares for children when there are no more vacancies in public kindergartens? Who cares for older people who fall ill due to a lack of medical resources? A vicious circle is created in which women are deprived of time, energy, and monetary resources to fight for more equality. Still, the weakening of public services is the weakening of women's participation in public policy as nurses, teachers, and social assistants.

In addition to these indirect effects, the report shows that austerity policies have directly affected the budget for confronting several essential policies to guarantee greater autonomy to women. Budget forecast data for 2018 indicate the programs with the most significant impact, in comparison with 2014, measured in real values: policies to confront violence (-83.0%); promotion of racial equality (-71.3%); promotion of youth rights (-95.6%); promotion and defense of the human rights of children and adolescents (-83.2%); promotion and defense of human rights (-47.4%); agrarian reform and land governance (-86.5%); food and nutritional security (-97.7%)

⁶ *It is important to note that the current dynamics of the increase in the number of divorces only concern changes within mid- and upper-class families, as a rule, white. Single parenting has historically been the rule in the case of poor black families. The primary provider has always been the black woman, the only one to find work with more stable ties, such as that of a domestic worker. The main reason is the fact that black men have been systematically denied formal work with a signed workbook, according to black feminist studies. Given the limitations of this bulletin, we will not go into this issue in depth.*

and Bolsa Family Program (-16.0%). In 2014, the amount allocated to policies for women aimed at promoting autonomy and combating violence amounted to BRL 147 million and fell to BRL 24 million in 2018, a drop of 83% in the budget. According to INESC, between 2014 and 2017, around 164 specialized services, such as shelters, service centers, police stations, and courts were closed.

The report also indicates that one of the most important public policies that directly favor the poorest women and improves their insertion in the world of work is the provision of public daycare centers at times compatible with the working day. According to IBGE (2017), in a survey based on PNAD data from 2015, of the 10.3 million children under four years of age, 74.4% were not enrolled in daycare centers or schools. Among those responsible, women (83.8%) were the vast majority, and around 45% were employed. Among the universe of children at this age who were not enrolled, 61.8% of those responsible expressed interest in doing so, and interest grew among income strata of up to one minimum wage. However, the budget for early childhood education suffered a strong reduction from 2014 to 2017, from BRL 1,901.9 billion to BRL 332.3 million in nominal values, representing 17% of 2014 resources.

The cuts in the Bolsa Família Program also deserve special attention. According to a study by Marcelo Neri, published this year by the Getúlio Vargas Foundation, there were real losses in the value of the program benefit, which was not corrected for inflation in 2015 (when it was around 10%) and in 2017. More recently, there has been a reduction in the number of beneficiaries. In net terms, about 1.1 million families were disconnected from the program between May 2019 and January 2020, resulting in the emergence of an average annual queue of 500 thousand families who should be served but are still waiting to be covered by Bolsa Família. The program is focused on children and families below the extreme poverty and poverty lines, and the benefit is offered through a magnetic card in possession of the mothers and/or women of the family in 90% of cases. The program is the

primary instrument for fighting poverty in Brazil, so the cuts made led to the loss of welfare and growth in the contingent of Brazilians, especially women, in a situation of extreme social vulnerability.

In addition to its evident importance in the composition of family income, Bolsa Família offers essential contributions to re-reading the female role. However, it is not initially thought of as a program linked to gender. Among them, the shift that it promotes in the dynamics of gender relations stands out since women now have the power to allocate a part of the family's resources - which certainly influences the way they are perceived in the context of family relations. This economic autonomy also affects the public recognition of the role of women in society since it defines and prioritizes the destination of these resources, which, not infrequently, moves the economy in many small and medium-sized municipalities. Thus, in a broader sense, the program contributes to the social empowerment of women, which seems to constitute itself a force capable of reducing gender inequality (LUCAS; HOFF, 2008).

Another explicit setback for gender, race, and human rights agendas was the minimization of state institutions' political and budgetary status that address these issues. According to the IPEA report "Cadernos ODS" (2019), in 2001, the State Secretariat for Women's Rights (Sedim in Portuguese) was established, an integral part of the Ministry of Justice. It was responsible for articulating, promoting, and fostering the development of public policies for women, centralizing such activities in a single instance to ensure greater cohesion to actions in development. In 2003, the federal government created the National Secretariat of Policies for Women (SNPM in Portuguese), linked to the Presidency of the Republic, with ministerial status. SNPM existed in this configuration between 2003 and 2015. Not by chance, it was the period in which more initiatives were developed for women and in which discussions on gender issues began to be present in other ministries and subnational governments.

However, as of 2015, the SNPM loses its ministerial status and returns to the initial

position in the early 2000s, becoming a national secretariat linked sometimes to one ministry, sometimes to another. By the beginning of 2019, it had undergone five administrative changes, which created enormous obstacles to implementing policies for women. In addition to the loss of institutional relevance in this period, the SNPM also saw its budget significantly reduced. After a period of continuous growth between 2004 and 2015, the year with the highest value in its history (almost BRL 271 million), the authorized budget from 2016 decreased significantly, falling practically to half between one year and another. In 2017, it stood at BRL 93,7 million, a level similar to that found almost ten years earlier, in 2008.

In addition to budget cuts and the increasing difficulty in implementing the budget received, the ideological reformulation of the programs has contributed to the profound negative impacts on public policies aimed at women concerning: i) telephone assistance to victims of gender violence (Central de Atendimento à Mulher - Call 180); ii) support to local women's policies and social participation organizations; iii) on-site assistance to women in situations of violence (financing of the services of the care network or the "Casas da Mulher Brasileira"); and iv) support/direct execution of projects in the areas of economic autonomy, inclusive and non-sexist education, and women's participation in the spheres of power and decision-making, areas to which, traditionally, the secretariat has directed resources.

Finally, it is necessary to analyze how the recent social security reform, approved in 2019, specifically affects social protection and women's life and health conditions. The new regulation imposes the minimum retirement age and the age gap required to retire between men and women on everyone, which was previously five years and fell to three (increased to 62 years for women and remained at 65 years for men). In short, the reform dictates that women have a minimum age of 62 years of life and 15 years of contribution to retire.

The Technical Note "PEC 06/2019: as mulheres, outra vez, na mira da reforma da Previdência", published by Dieese (2019), explains the effects of the changes in the lives of women, especially the poorest. As social security is the reflection of the economically active life of the individual, the fact that women have less involvement with economic activity, work for less time, and are more subject to informality makes their contribution to social security also occur in a disadvantageous situation. Data from the "Anuário Estatístico da Previdência Social de 2017" corroborate this fact and reveal that retirement by age is the most common modality among workers due to the difficulty in accumulating the minimum time required for retirement by contribution period. In 2017, women accounted for 62.8% of the total age pensions granted in the RGPS, against only 37.2% of men. On the other hand, in pensions by the time of contribution, men corresponded to 68.1% and women to 31.9%. Therefore, the increase in the minimum retirement age for women is very harmful to many Brazilians.

The Technical Note also indicates that, in developed countries where this type of change has been implemented, inequalities between the sexes in the labor market are lower, and there are specific public policies aimed at families to stimulate a more equitable division of reproductive labor between men and women (HAKKERT, 2014; CAMARANO, 2017; MELO, 2017). These countries also have an extensive public support network for older people, which is fundamental in societies with an older age structure, to relieve women of the additional overload of caring for them. Thus, the greater equalization of retirement criteria between the sexes instituted with the pension reform, without the counterpart of public policies of this type, will probably imply an increase in female poverty in old age, making women even more dependent on non-contributory benefits.

CONCLUSION

In this issue of the Bulletin of the Observatory of Inequalities, we analyze the feminization of poverty in Brazil in the light of a multidimensional view of poverty. We have seen that the increase in the proportion of people in families headed by women among the poorest is a reality with complex causes and related to various aspects linked to gender and race discrimination. Concerning work opportunities, the sexual and racial division of labor acts both in conditioning women's entry into the labor market and in the economic and social devaluation of the tasks traditionally performed by women, especially by black women. Moreover, the discrimination inherent in the labor market causes them to receive lower wages and occupy fewer positions of power.

In turn, the increase in the number of divorces in society causes an increase in the burden of women from the financial and childcare perspectives, increasing poverty in these families - a reality that is already experienced historically by single-parent families headed by black women. In addition, the austerity policy that has prevailed in Brazil since 2015 has generated severe cuts in social policies, which mainly harm women. After all, they are the ones who take the most care of children when there are no more vacancies in daycare or when there is no care for older people in hospitals. There is also direct damage due to funding cuts for women's policies and the Bolsa Família Program. Furthermore, the pension reform may imply an increase in female poverty in old age by promoting greater equalization of retirement criteria between men and women, without the counterpart of public policies of this type.

Given the data and information presented in this bulletin, the need for policies capable of mitigating the causes of the feminization of poverty is evident. There must be monitoring mechanisms to ensure equal pay for men and women in the labor market and affirmative policies for the inclusion of women in decision-making spaces. Still, public policies must respond to the demands of population care, so that they do not continue to fall primarily on women.

These are programs aimed at children - especially the expansion of full-time kindergartens and schools -, older people, and sick people in situations of dependence. In this sense, the experience of Uruguay stands out; which implemented, in 2015, a National Integrated Care System, which includes a government subsidy for the treatment of caregivers for the elderly from low-income families, and expanded the number of full-time schools, which has already increased the participation of women mothers of children under six years of age in the labor market. Moreover, the granting of parental leave to men and women for a period of just over a year has contributed to a high participation of women in the labor market in countries such as Norway and Sweden (Cepal, 2018).

Finally, in the current context, it is necessary to point out the enormous difficulties that affect poor women with the new coronavirus pandemic. In the Brazilian scenario, we have a reality that, pointing to the existing inequalities, indicates that the disease outbreak will affect the most vulnerable populations differently. Women, especially black women, primarily residents of communities and peripheries, autonomous and informal workers, will feel the social impacts caused by the pandemic more strongly.

They are domestic workers, day laborers, nannies, manicurists, clerks, supermarket, pharmacy, and bakery cashiers, or who are on the front line of care services, and others in a situation of underemployment, for whom there is no home office option, for whom social distancing measures mean a lack of immediate resources. In addition, these communities, agglomerates, and "favelas" suffer from a lack of basic sanitation and adequate housing, which hinders access to the hygiene measures necessary to avoid contamination.

Even those who have been able to enjoy the right to telecommute find themselves with domestic service overload, made invisible and unpaid, which leads us to question once more the sexual division of labor and the care services as a female condition.

In this sense, it is urgent that public policies that confront the pandemic contemplate the specific needs of women in situations of vulnerability or social risk, such as priority support for women who work to contain the disease, flexible work arrangements for women, and protection of essential health services for women and girls, among others (ONU Mulheres, 2019). From a broader and longer-term perspective, it is necessary to adopt social protection policies that counteract austerity measures that negatively affect labor relations and expose the population to a higher level of vulnerability.



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