

## Perceptions of women executives about symbolic violence in labor relations in the Brazilian banking sector, a challenge to human rights



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### ABSTRACT

This article aims to reflect on patriarchy as a product of Judeo-Christian culture that contributed

to the invisibility and silencing of women throughout the historical process, transforming them into secondary labor and feeding gender discrimination by assigning them qualifying and stereotyped social roles of sinners, procreators, servants, as well as a commodity of exchange in marriage and patrimonial assets. It also discusses how the symbolic violence present in private spaces also reverberates, for public spaces, as in the work environment. It has the following problem: How is it that the power relations exercised there, even in contemporary times, are mostly presented in a discriminatory and misogynistic pattern, with women always receiving lower remuneration than men, despite the creation of laws and legal instruments protecting their work, however, almost always, ineffective? The hypothesis is that the empowerment of women with the conquest of good jobs, the advances and the mastery of new technologies with the improvement of the level of schooling or the modifications in family relations and spaces of sociability have not been enough to guarantee gender equality, since social practices persist and reaffirm such biological dichotomies between the sexes. The present research used as a methodological basis a qualitative-quantitative approach for data analysis, with the objective of knowing opinions, interests, expectations and situations experienced by women in executive positions in the banking sector, as well as analyzing their profiles (personal and professional) and their perceptions in the face of the adversities that are daily submitted. Pierre Bourdieu with the concept of symbolic violence was used as a theoretical framework, which allowed, along with the other data collected, to analyze the moral and psychological damages suffered by women bankers.

**Keywords:** Symbolic violence, gender discrimination, labor relations, women's human rights, female empowerment.



## 1 INTRODUCTION

This article aims to present the perceptions and profile of women executives, occupying positions of managers in the Brazilian banking sector on the work environment, regarding issues involving labor relations and the managerial function. In this direction, it aims to reflect on patriarchy as a product of Judeo-Christian culture that contributed to the invisibility and silencing of women throughout the historical process, transforming them into secondary labor and feeding gender discrimination by assigning them qualifying and stereotyped social roles of sinners, procreators, servants, as well as a commodity of exchange in marriage and patrimonial goods. It also discusses how the symbolic violence present in private spaces also reverberates, for public spaces, as in the work environment. It has the following problem: How is it that the power relations exercised there, even in contemporary times, are mostly presented in a discriminatory and misogynistic pattern, with women always receiving lower remuneration than men, despite the creation of laws and legal instruments protecting their work, however, almost always, ineffective? The hypothesis is that the empowerment of women with the conquest of good jobs, the advances and the mastery of new technologies with the improvement of the level of schooling or the modifications in family relations and spaces of sociability have not been enough to guarantee gender equality, since social practices persist and reaffirm such biological dichotomies between the sexes. It used as a methodological basis a qualitative-quantitative approach for data analysis, with the objective of knowing the opinions, interests, expectations and situations experienced by women in executive positions in the banking sector, as well as analyzing their profiles (personal and professional) and their perceptions in the face of the adversities that are daily submitted. The theoretical framework focused on the analysis of the theme was based on Pierre Bourdieu with the concept of symbolic violence and also his discussion on male domination, together with the data collected, allowed to analyze **the moral and psychological damages, suffered by women bankers** The analysis was also based on the studies on the feminization of the world of work made by Mazzei Nogueira and the studies on women's work and sexuality by RAGO.

Historically, banking activities have always been carried out almost exclusively by men. The bank is the symbolic representation of the world of money, in the social imaginary, thus understood as a 'masculine space', since the idea that 'dealing with money' requires a unique 'rationality' and 'responsibility' – qualities, culturally, attributed only to men.

Under this aspect, it is understood that the professions considered proper to women were those restricted to the private life of the domestic space. In the social imaginary, the appropriate professions for women were restricted to those of teacher, nurse, seamstress, confectioner, washerwoman and others that meant an extension of motherhood/family. In all of them, women were servants and submissive to other people, either by socioeconomic status or by gender.



Despite the scenario of changes and advances, it revealed that there is still a certain fragility of women's achievements. An example of this vulnerability of jobs was the slowing down of the advancement of women in the labor market observed during the world crisis of capital that manifested itself in 2009. Even in the face of new configurations of labor relations, the old sexual division is ultimately reproduced. Old and new mechanisms for maintaining inequalities overlap, and the space predominantly reserved for women remains the least valued and most vulnerable to the negative consequences of the panorama (GONÇALVES, 2010).

## 2 THE FEMINIZATION OF BANKING WORK

New technologies have caused a significant reduction in the total number of workers in the banking sector, on the other hand there has been an increase in female participation in that sector. The so-called feminization of banking work coincides with a tendency for women to occupy less valued positions. This fact implies a significant wage differentiation, since full-time workers receive around 25% more than their colleagues with six-hour days. In the Brazilian banking sector, Segnini (1998) points out that the largest number of workers is in bank branches, where they develop support and customer service activities and occupy, primarily, part-time positions, such as clerk and cashier.

Given this scenario, Oletto (2011, p.58/60) considers that:

Since the Banking Reform of 1964, the volume of services provided by banks has grown intensely, due to economic growth and the diversification of services provided. Banks began to receive taxes and social security contributions, to make collection operations, to sell insurance, to manage different types of investments (savings, CDB, others) and to offer lines of credit, among other services.

The intensification of the process of bank restructuring can be understood in the context of the changes that occurred in the productive sector, in general, since the 1970s.

(...) In Brazil, this reality of feminization of banking work occurred simultaneously with the process of diffusion of computerization and changes in the organization of work, especially since 1970.

In this context, however, it is noteworthy that, with rare exceptions, women occupied managerial and/or leadership positions in banking institutions that were usually intended only for men. According to the Inter-Union Department of Statistics and Socioeconomic Studies (DIEESE, 2011), "banking companies will mainly occupy the jobs related to the simplified and repetitive operations that computerized systems began to demand from the 1980s onwards." Thus, the feminization of banking work coincides with a tendency for women to occupy less valued positions.

As a result, the banking sector is nicknamed, in some contexts, the "pink ghetto", "ghetto of female employment" or "*Pink Collor*" (SEGNINI, 1998). In Brazil, as already discussed in this research, the feminization of work in the banking sector occurred simultaneously with the process of diffusion of computerization and changes in the organization of work, especially from the 1970s onwards.



From January to December 2010, 57,450 workers were admitted to the banking sector in Brazil. The positive balance of employment in this year meant the expansion of 5.19% of the stock of jobs in the category. In the last disclosure of the Annual Report of Social Information (RAIS, 2009), there were 462,164 thousand bank employees.

The increase in female participation is remarkable, with women currently occupying more than half of the positions in the Brazilian banking sector. However, the question arises: are the conditions offered to women in this sector the same as those offered to men in terms of salary, opportunity for professional growth and working hours?

On this issue, a survey conducted by DIEESE (2011) showed that women who work in banks, even with a higher educational level, receive, on average, 24.10% less than men. According to the dossier published by the entity and analyzed by the Gender Observatory (2012):<sup>1</sup>

(...) Despite receiving lower salaries, in terms of level of education, women outnumber men: in general, 71.67% of bank employees have higher education, against 66.52% of men.

It is possible to perceive wage differences even when the wages of workers with the same educational level are compared. **A banker who has a doctorate receives approximately R\$ 12,595.93, while a bank with the same level of education receives approximately R\$ 5,889.10 – a difference of 53.25%** (Emphasis added).

According to the study, the wage differences can be explained by the fact that women occupy positions at the bottom of the pyramid, with the lowest salaries.

**Only 18% of bank employees hold board positions and yet they receive lower salaries than men who occupy the same position. While a director earns, on average, R \$ 23,688.10, a director tends to earn R \$ 18,936.18** (Emphasis added).

In Brazil, more than 234,000 women work in banks, which corresponds to 48.8% of vacancies in the sector. Women are the majority in private banks (53.05%) and represent 42.97% of the workforce in public banks.

The research also reveals that women spend less time in banks, and this would be justified by the difficulties arising from the scenario in which they are inserted in these jobs: low salaries and lack of prospect of promotions towards more prestigious positions. While 17,000 men remained employed at banks for three decades, only six thousand women had the same time at home, the data reveals.<sup>2</sup>

This reality was also diagnosed in the present study, since, according to the data collected and analyzed in the bank branches, surveyed, it was possible to verify the occupation of 55% of women and 45% of men of the job vacancies, as well as in the occupation of the managerial positions, where 53% are occupied by women and 47% by men, as will be shown below. To fulfill their new roles, these women must be much more qualified, with extensive knowledge of the financial market, mastery of technology to perform financial simulations and customer relationship skills.

It is appropriate here a reflection of Cláudia Mazzei Nogueira (2004, p 44)

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<sup>1</sup> Women bankers are paid less than men in the same role. *In: Portal Brasil*. Citizenship and Justice. Available from: <http://www.observatoriodegenero.gov.br>. Published on 13/03/2012. Last modified: 07/28/2014.

<sup>2</sup> Information collected by the Dieese subsection in the National Confederation of Financial Sector Workers (Contraf-CUT) through an analysis of data from the Annual Social Information Report (RAIS), of the Ministry of Labor and Employment (MTE). On the Dieese website it is possible to access the complete dossier: 'The Insertion of Women in the Labor Market in 2011'.



The feminization of the world of work is certainly positive, since it allows the difficult process of female emancipation to advance, and thus minimize the forms of patriarchal domination in the domestic space. But it is also marked by strong negativity, because it has significantly aggravated the precariousness of working women **who are subjected to various** forms and modalities of labor exploitation. **For the author**, it is in this dialectic that the feminization of work, at the same time, emancipates, albeit partially, and makes labor relations precarious.

The data collected in this investigation corroborate the previous assertion.

### 3 PRODUCTIVE WORKS VERSUS REPRODUCTIVE WORK

Social recognition of domestic tasks performed by women consists in attributing a value to activities, since gender inequalities in the labor market and, especially, in companies are still justified by common sense, which attributes to women greater direct and indirect costs of hiring, especially those related to the legal protections of workers to motherhood and child care. For Abramo (2007), these justifications are also linked to impediments that would be attributed to women, such as greater absenteeism, impossibilities for travel, overtime or participation in courses. These myths, in addition to imposing on women the exclusive responsibility for the home and children, contradict studies on the issue.

The articulation between paid work and reproductive work has been a challenge for women. The latter, because it does not have a mercantile character, is ignored by the economic sciences and devalued by society, which depends on it to reproduce. The sexual division of labor segments productive activities, linked to the market, and reproductive activities, related to the care of human beings, which go beyond motherhood as a biological factor and encompass all domestic work. Who performs the domestic chores are the women, both the housewives and the maids, with some help from men; But this universe is naturally feminine. In Brazil, according to the National Household Sample Survey (PNAD/IBGE), the difference in the average number of unpaid hours worked at home was quite significant. While employed women spent, on average, 22 hours per week, busy men spent 9.5 hours (IBGE, 2010).

Thus, in addition to unpaid domestic activities, the care of children, the elderly or the disabled also falls, as a rule, on women. This is due, in part, to the insufficiency of health and education policies that meet this demand and the low quality of existing services, without disregarding the cultural factor involved.

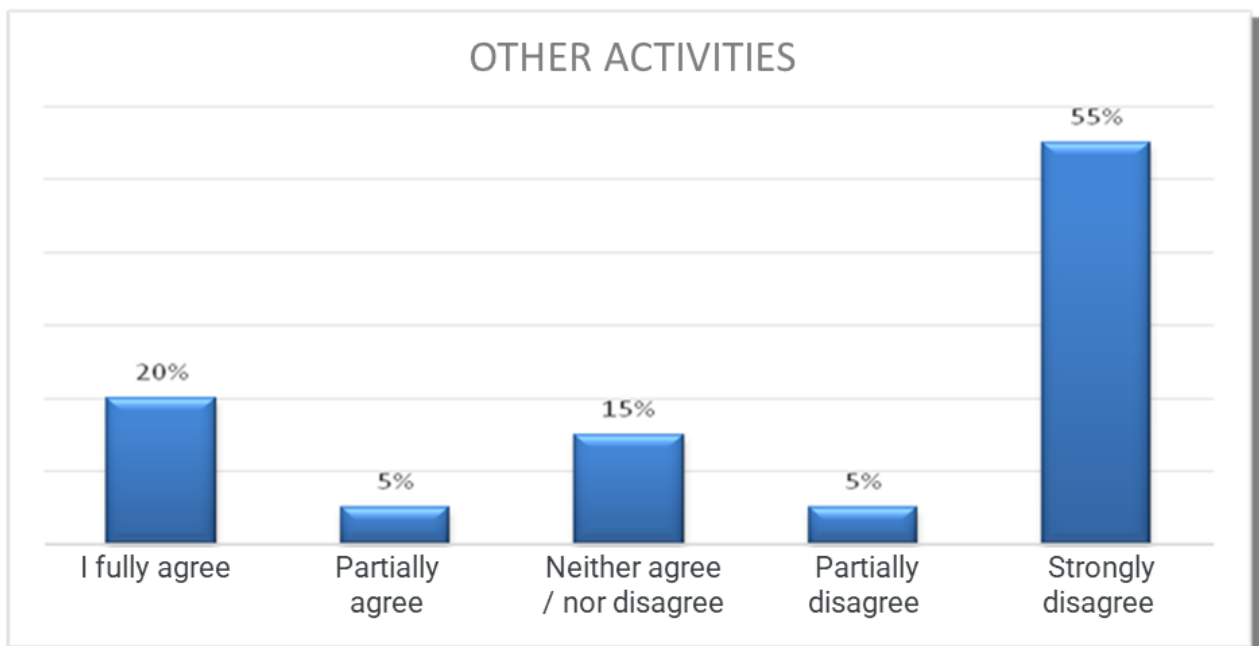
In companies, union bargaining clauses with a gender character are usually aimed at the protection of maternity and child care. This fact has a contradictory connotation, since it can serve both to reinforce the sexual division of labor and the responsibility of women for social and biological reproduction, and to depend on the level of organization of the category, it can serve to guarantee conquered rights and advances towards a greater responsibility, also, male of domestic functions and care (ABRAMO, 2007).



Bruschini and Rosenberg (1982) stress another fundamental point. According to the authors, women's participation in activities outside the home does not depend only on existing opportunities in the labor market, but also on the result of the place that women occupy in the family and the social class to which they belong.

Thus, family and domestic responsibilities have a central place in the discussion about gender discrimination in the labor market. Social policies and affirmative action programs should not ignore this point, trying to consider, primarily, the fact that men and women have differentiated concerns that are reflected in a differentiated insertion in jobs. Women are responsible for the double daily journey of articulating their time, space and knowledge between work and home, even if domestic activities and care are also delegated, generally, to other women. It is necessary to recognize this, especially with data that demystify the reflections of socially and culturally justified discrimination on this basis. Graphs 01 and 02, below, clarify whether this process of double or triple working hours also occurs with bank managers.

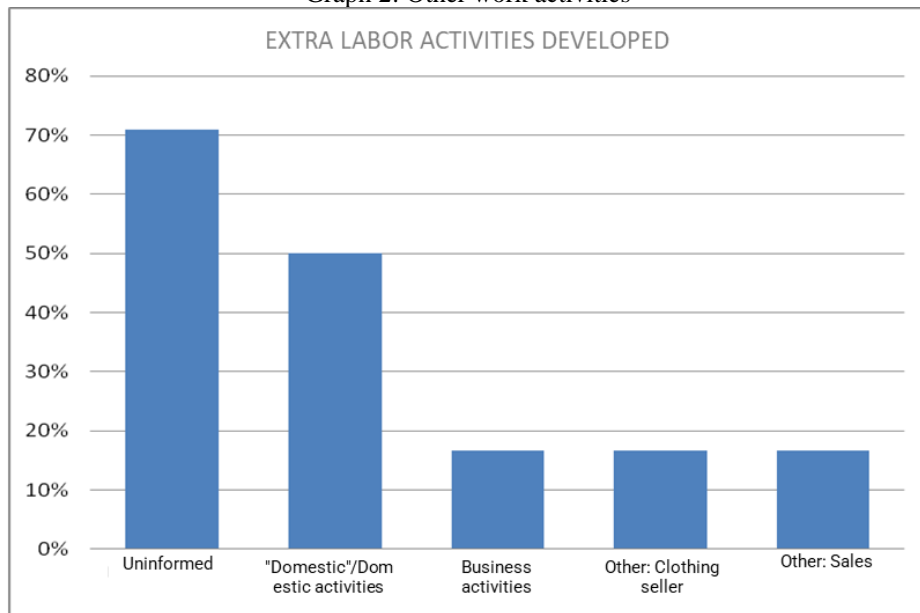
Graph 1 - Relationship between banking working hours and other activities



Org.: ARBUÈS, M.P. (2015)



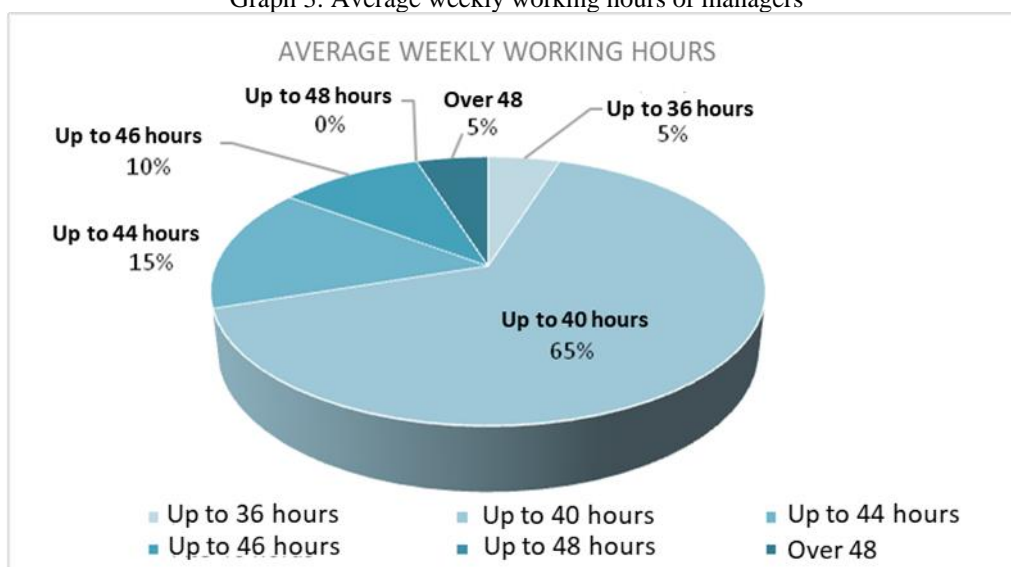
Graph 2: Other work activities



Org.: ARBUÉS, M.P. ( 2015)

Regarding the working day, the average of the women interviewed is up to 40 hours per week (65%), but there is identification of those who work up to 44 hours per week (15%), up to 46 hours per week (10%) and even more than 48 hours per week (5%). It is observed, again, with greater differentiation for women who are employees in banking institutions of a public nature, being exactly in the Caixa Econômica Federal where the working day above 48 hours per week was identified.

Graph 3: Average weekly working hours of managers



Org.: ARBUÉS, M.P. ( 2015)



The condition of the occupation of the position, as a rule, leads to excessive working hours in the managerial function. In this sample, about 30% of the interviewees perceive themselves in a journey of more than 40 hours per week. However, it is noteworthy that the participants did not identify themselves or perceived themselves in a significant way, double or triple working hours, beyond the public space. About 60% of the participants disregarded having other working hours, including not even identifying themselves as "mother" or "housewife" or "homemaker", corroborating the information already presented that 50% of them are single (20% separated or divorced). 60% do not have children (and, of the few who do, as presented, there are those who disagree to be the guardian of the children, with a percentage of 5% of women who "strongly disagree" and another of 5% of women who "agree" only "partially" when asked if "in case of children, they live with the interviewee.

Specifically, regarding the labor practices and careers of the women interviewed in managerial positions in the bank branches surveyed, in addition to the aspects already observed about the average weekly working hours, salary range, percentage of women in the agency *versus* percentage of women in managerial positions, an important fact to consider is that it does not take many years of professional career or performance within the same private banking institution to Achieve a managerial position.

#### **4 PROFESSIONAL CAREER VERSUS SALARY PROFILE OF MANAGERS**

Regarding the time of professional life to reach the managerial position, despite the high incidence of interviewees who chose not to answer (45%), there is a large concentration of women who reached the position in private banking institutions, between three and four years of professional career (25%), that is, relatively little time. And, there is another concentration of women who have reached the managerial position at the current level, on average, with ten to eleven years of professional career (15%). This last reference concerns women who are managers in public banks.





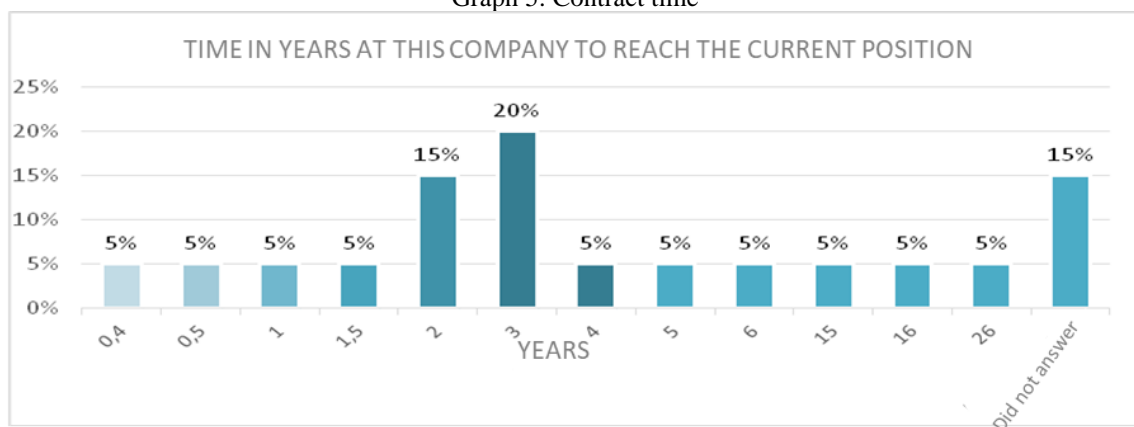
Graph 4: Hiring time



Org.: ARBUÈS, M.P. ( 2015)

Regarding the time of contract and performance within the same company for the conquest of the management position, the research showed that the average, regardless of the institution, is two to three years, with a total of 35% of respondents who worked for this period in the same institution until reaching the said position, 20% that ranged between four months and a year and a half, 15% who did not respond. Again, public banks proved to be the ones with the greatest obstacles and difficulties for women, with cases (5%) in which they needed twenty-five years at Caixa Econômica Federal to win the position of manager.

Graph 5: Contract time



Org.: ARBUÈS, M.P. ( 2015)



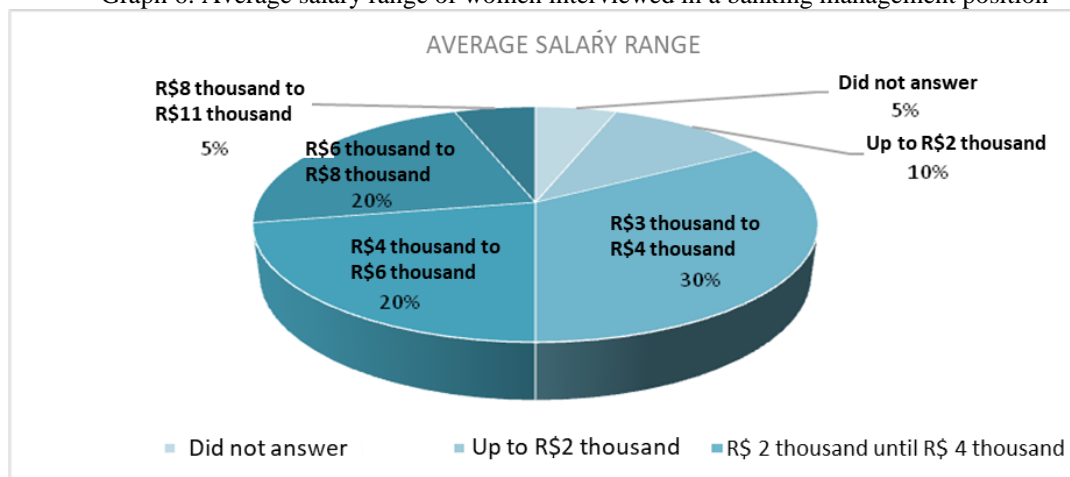
Table 01: Relationship between salary and banking institution AVERAGE Salary Range

Bank	Until R\$ 2 thousand	R\$ 2,01 thousand to R\$ 4 thousand	R\$ 4,01 thousand to R\$ 6 thousand	R\$ 6,01 thousand to R\$ 8 thousand	R\$ 8,01 thousand to R\$ 11 thousand	Higher than R\$ 11 thousand
Bank of Brazil	-	-	-	21%	-	5,3%
Itaú	5,3%	11%	5,3%	-	-	-
CEF	-	-	-	-	-	5,3%
Bradesco	5,3%	-	-	-	-	-
Santander	-	11%	5,3%	-	5,3%	-
HSBC	-	5,3%	11%	-	-	-

Org.: ARBUÈS, M.P. (2015)

According to Table 01 and Graph 06, the salary range of women exercising managerial function varies between R \$ 2 thousand to above R \$ 11 thousand, but the general average is in the range between R \$ 2 thousand and R \$ 8 thousand, with most in the range that varies between R \$ 2 thousand and R \$ 4 thousand.

Graph 6: Average salary range of women interviewed in a banking management position



Org.: ARBUÈS, M.P. (2015)

It is observed, however, that the salaries of bank managers are not fixed. And yet, in addition to accumulating functions, such as customer service, problem solving, making investments, participating in large operations of transfer of resources, supervision, satisfaction of customer needs, etc., they also act in fundraising and, obviously, in the search for better financial results for the institution. They must also offer and/or sell products and services, such as: letters of credit, insurance, capitalization bonds, among others, as well as encourage the client to maintain their investments to increase and optimize the bank's profits. Consequently, from pre-stipulated goals, it is possible to increase the variable monthly earnings in addition to the fixed salary, through commissions, bonuses and the like.

In this new model of management of banking institutions, such strategies subtly modulate the subjectivity of workers, co-opting them to be productive, flexible, motivated, etc. In addition, the introduction of variable remuneration, linked to productivity and the achievement of goals, is also an element responsible for the intensification of work and extension of the working day.

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It also contributes to the compromise of social relations between colleagues, considering that remuneration depends on the productivity of the work group, generating control over the activity of each one and feeding competitiveness. It is also noteworthy that the goals are commonly established by higher hierarchical echelons, in an authoritarian and unilateral way, and are not infrequently considered unattainable by the workers. (JACQUES; AMAZARRAY, 2006, p. 97)

In this sense, the authors mentioned above, analyzing the role of quality programs applied through the Human Resources (HR) programs of banking institutions, demonstrate how the institutionalization of variable wages, linked to productivity and achievement of goals, constitutes a subjective element that intensifies work and extends the working day, in addition to other aspects that such a remuneration model generates for the bank worker.

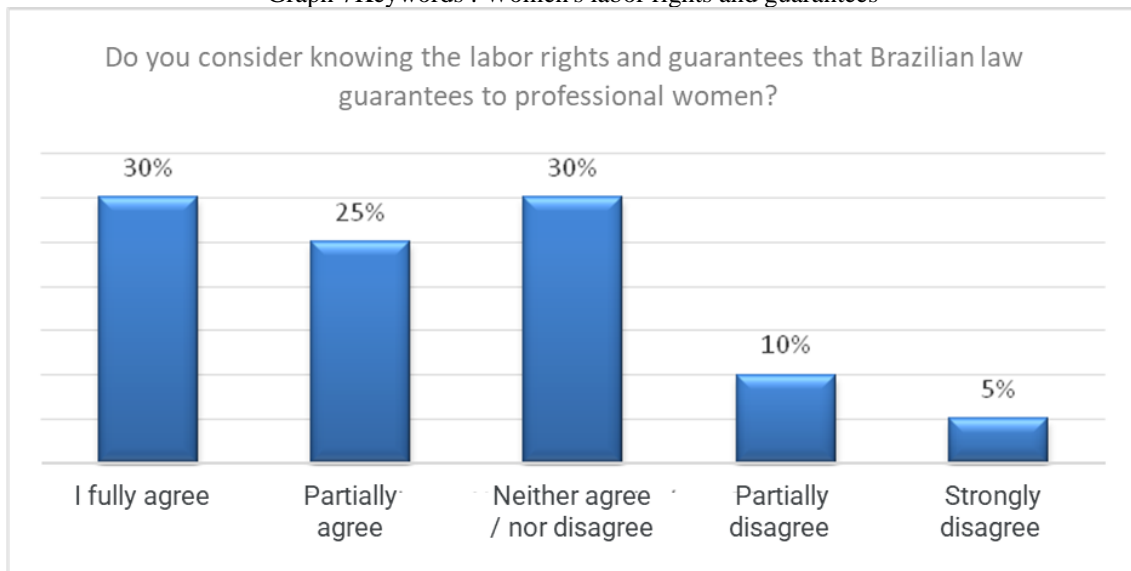
## **5 PERCEPTIONS OF THE LABOR RIGHTS AND GUARANTEES OF WOMEN MANAGERS**

Regarding the labor rights and guarantees provided for in the current Brazilian legislation, especially those related to working women, it is noticed that just over 50% demonstrated to know them, even partially, as shown in Graph 17.

Given this result, we consider the little engagement of these women managers with the struggles and demands of social movements, when they manifest themselves, in the same way, regarding their perception of knowing the legislation and at the same time omitting themselves (by not declaring) on the issue. It is observed, in view of this scenario, that this reflects in the conformation of these women about their conquests and rights, which seem to have already been achieved, having nothing more to conquer.



Graph 7 Keywords : Women's labor rights and guarantees



Org.: ARBUÈS, M.P. ( 2015)

In view of all the obstacles faced by women for their advancement, especially with regard to the difficulty of simultaneously maintaining their professional life, personal life and family life (noting that most are single, separated or divorced, with 50% in the first category and 20% in the following; 60% do not have children and a significant percentage understand having double shift, also playing the role of "from home"), it is also observed that in public banks such as Banco do Brasil and Caixa Econômica Federal, women take much longer to achieve a managerial position and never reach the maximum position of general manager or branch manager.

## 6 CAREER, BEAUTY AND PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT

The French philosopher Gilles Lipovetsky (2000), sees the contemporary woman in constant mutation, reinventing herself before the roots of patriarchal society and with a long way to go; However, the author points out the emergence of the 'third woman': the one who owns her destiny, her body and her social position. For him, the third woman is no longer defined as the second sex or 'woman-object' and is understood in relation to the other and the world – a woman who is no longer an invention of man, is constantly changing and reinventing herself in the face of machismo, still in force in contemporary society.

Analyzes Lipovetsky (2000, p.34-35):

(...) In the last fifty years the female condition has changed more than the sum of the last millennia (...) The women's revolution is unprecedented. Contraception and women's professional engagement never existed. And it's not a question of its nature, it was a social construction ... It may be that progress is very fast, but I still don't see the fourth woman.



The thinker also considers that the modern woman has her juggling facet, of trying to reconcile two, sometimes three journeys and, in the Brazilian case, where a dictatorship of aesthetic standards is lived, the 'third woman' tries to take her personal life and career side by side, without neglecting beauty.

However, he criticizes the fact that even though he performs his duties very well in the professional field, his salary is much lower than that of men. Even so, the author assesses the existence of a relative historical, social and political progress with the entry of women into power; However, there are still few who hold leadership positions in the corporate world.

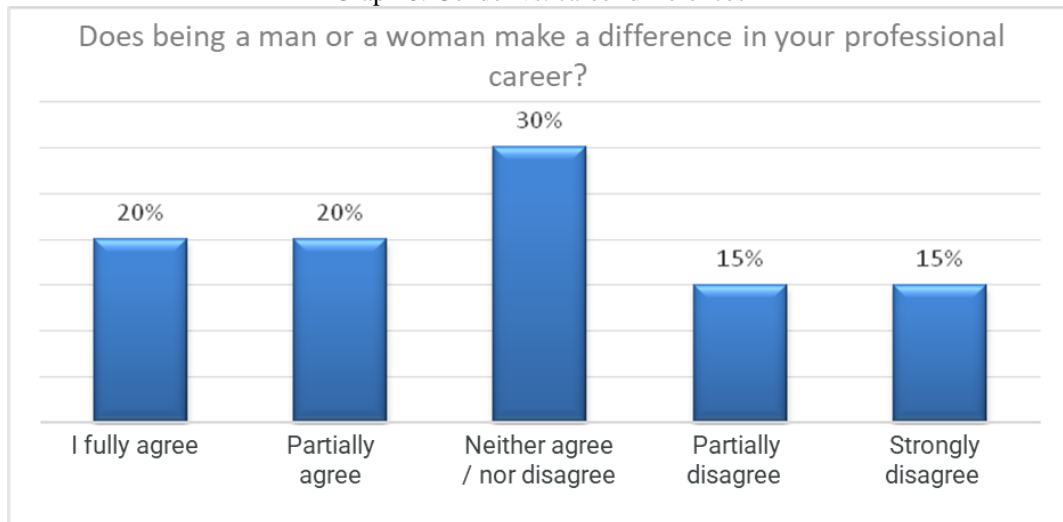
This phenomenon Lipovetky (2000) calls the '**glass ceiling**' (emphasis added), that is, the higher the hierarchy, the fewer women present. He makes two readings of the secondary role of women in the hierarchical context: one is the persistence of machismo, which keeps men in power and prevents the rise of women. The other is a consequence of the first - they are the remnants of centuries of submission - from which she has been freeing herself gradually, transforming her into the 'woman-subject' or 'the third woman'. (LIPOVETSKY, 2000).

In this sense, the contributions of Lipovetsky (2000) allow us to adduce that in the case under study, the woman bank manager can be considered 'the third woman', since, despite the 'glass ceiling', she has managed to occupy a significant number of hierarchical positions in the banking structure, which, historically, were occupied by men. In the fight for gender equality, the diagnosis below also reveals the long way she will have to go.

When asked if the gender difference makes it easier or difficult for professional advancement, 15% of the women strongly disagreed that there is some difference established by gender; 15% partially disagreed; 30% adopted a position of neutrality and 40% agreed that it is more difficult for women to achieve professional advancement, of which 20% partially agreed and 20% fully agreed (Graph 08).



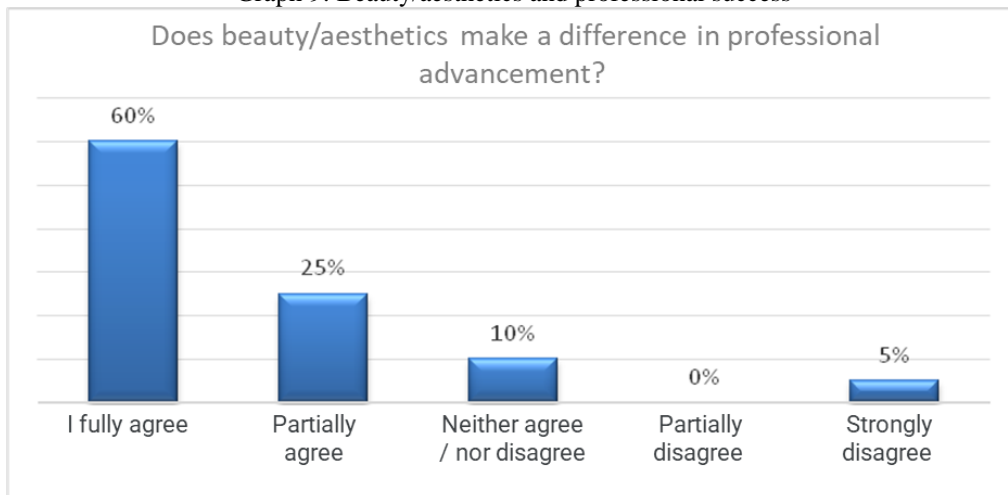
Graph 8: Gender vs. career differences



Org.: ARBUÈS, M.P. ( 2015)

Another relevant aspect demonstrated in Graph 19 is that, even though there is some divergence in the questioning about whether or not there are obstacles related to gender, contradictorily, almost all participants considered that the aesthetic factor is, in fact, an influence on the professional advancement of women, understanding beauty/aesthetics, good presentation, good dress, among other aspects concerning feminine attributes.

Graph 9: Beauty/aesthetics and professional success



Org.: ARBUÈS, M.P. ( 2015)

The results presented in graph 19 demonstrate contradiction in relation to graph 18, given that, if there is no difference in being a man or a woman to obtain professional promotion, why would aesthetic factors and beauty start to determine differences as an influencing factor?

In this aspect, Tozzi (2012) explains: "Appearance matters when it comes to career, for better or worse", when referring to the work: 'The Value of Beauty - Why Attractive People Are More Successful', by Daniel S. Hamermesh, the American economist brings up this discussion that is still a



great taboo within organizations. For the author, based on the data presented by Daniel S. Hamermesh, the "results of research show that appearance can greatly influence wages." (TOZZI, 2012)

It should be noted, however, that:

Daniel's research was done in the United States and perhaps the Brazilian reality is different. Even so, the question remains: what reasons make the beautiful are privileged and earn heavier salaries? Daniel risks the answer: self-esteem on high. After all, when you are satisfied with your appearance (and have the competence to exercise your position) it is easier to face career challenges. "Those who feel good about their way of being are safer," says *headhunter* Adriana Prates, director of *Dasein Executive Search* in Belo Horizonte. "And confidence helps convey ideas and skills, which ultimately wins over bosses." (TOZZI, 2012)

Another point and perhaps the most important to note is that:

Looking good has another advantage: it increases the chances that others will pay more attention to what you have to say. According to a survey by Rice University in the United States, made with professionals looking for a job, striking facial signs, such as scars, distract recruiters and cause them not to focus on the candidate's content, only on their external appearance. "Any very flashy element weighs in an interview," says Marcela Esteves, a consultant at Robert Half, a São Paulo-based recruitment firm, who admits to policing herself so as not to do injustice to less aesthetically privileged candidates. (TOZZI, 2012)

Closer to the Brazilian reality, Gomes (2010) interviewed women from 32 to 37 years old, young executives and, based on the literature on female identity and consumer behavior, found that there are certain characteristics related to image and aesthetics that do not usually appear in job ads or business magazines, but that influence the choice of the professional and career advancement. For the author it is

It is important to emphasize that beauty is defined in this study as a set of aesthetic, behavioral and physical factors, and thus contemplates characteristics related to appearance such as hair, nail, clothing, etc., as well as attributes related to personality, such as sympathy, charisma and good humor. In this context, knowing how to explore your physical characteristics, valuing them in the best way, and behaving properly in a certain environment are more important than having innate beauty. (GOMES, 2010, p.72)

In Brazil, if it were not enough for feminine beauty and aesthetics to be valued, there is also the stereotype of 'successful executive' whose model involves professional, behavioral and physical characteristics, not only the analysis of the behavioral aspects of professional women.

(...) The pattern influences the professional trajectory of the executives. The one that is out of the norm, will have a harder time moving up in the career and, if it reaches the top, will probably be molded. The image of the model executive was created and the market expects those who become or aspire to become executives to follow this pattern (GOMES, 2010, p.57)

Further on, in her analysis, the author follows:

Whether by choice of the client or the manager, who likes to deal with and hire beautiful people, the truth is that beauty comes to be almost required of the Brazilian professional, because it is related to their competence and performance. In this way, beauty can be used as

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a tool, useful in hiring and in the day to day of the executive. It opens doors, creates a positive (or negative) image, is a way to draw attention and give access to people and environments (GOMES, 2010, p. 72).

Other conclusive observations achieved through the studies analyzed by Gomes (2010) demonstrate that 'beautiful' women (within the established standards) have greater chances of hiring for jobs in which they will have direct contact with the public, while those considered 'not beautiful' tend to be hired for internal functions.

There is a (false) confidence associated with beauty that creates the belief that these employees are more competent than others. Thus, the salary increase derived from promotions, raises and professional advancement is faster among the 'beautiful' over time (while the 'not pretty', in addition to having more difficulties for promotions, raises and professional advancement, also receive lower average salary than those classified as 'beautiful'). And yet, there is a social perception that the most 'beautiful' employees are usually more communicative and sociable, and this interaction positively impacts their salaries.

The three main factors that influence the differentiation between the largest opportunities to the most 'beautiful', in the words of the women themselves, according to the researcher, are: self-confidence, perception of competence and greater sociability (GOMES, 2010).

There is no taboo on the part of women to deal with the subject. In this sense, the researcher considered it surprising how the question was treated naturally by the interviewees and appearing so explicitly in the professional trajectory. Regarding the feeling of having a double journey addressed by some of the interviewees, Gomes (2010, p.74) concluded:

The woman has, therefore, the social pressure to be efficient at work, in the care of the house, in the attention to the family and still be well cared for physically, creating high expectations and an unattainable ideal.

Corroborating with the results obtained in the analyses carried out by Gomes (2010), this research conducted in the banking sector in Goiânia, with women working in managerial positions, demonstrated that almost all of them believe that the aesthetic factor interferes in professional advancement, totaling 85% of the interviewees who agree with this statement, 60% fully agreeing, 25% partially agreeing, 10% putting themselves in a position of neutrality or avoiding answering, and only 5% disagreeing with this relationship.

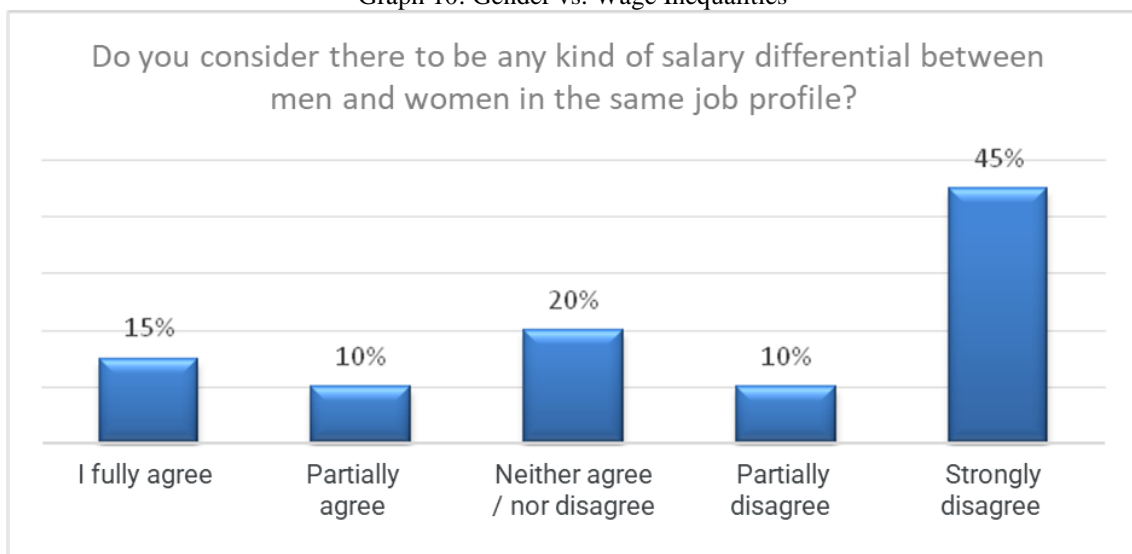
However, when the relationship between gender and salary is observed, this discrepancy seen in relation to aesthetics is no longer perceived. In the perception of women in managerial positions in the banking segment of Goiânia – interviewed for this work – there is no relationship between salary and gender.





When asked about this topic, confirming that the banking sector is a professional area increasingly segmented to women, 55% of them disagreed that there was any relationship between gender and salary, 45% strongly disagreed, and 10% partially. While 20% placed themselves in a position of neutrality and/or avoided answering, 10% partially agreed that there is a relationship between gender and salary and 15% totally agreed that there is this relationship (Graph 10), probably due to the differences already perceived between the policies in private banking institutions with national capital and private banks with foreign control, which differ from those in public banking institutions, where women encounter greater obstacles to professional advancement and greater differentiations with inferiority in relation to men.

Graph 10: Gender vs. Wage Inequalities

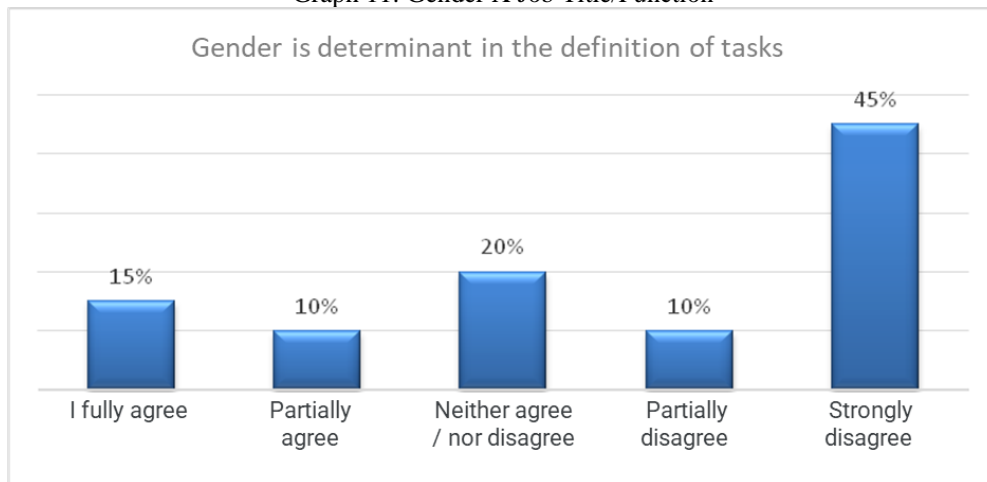


Org.: ARBUÉS, M.P. (2105)

The same response profile is presented in Graph 11, when it is sought to verify whether the interviewees consider that there is some kind of differentiation in the distribution of activities between men and women in the same position, confirming the pattern of the previous answers and the impact of the difference in HR policies that differentiate private banks, whether national or foreign-controlled, with public banks (Caixa Econômica Federal and Banco do Brasil). That is, 45% strongly disagreed with this distinction in the definition of tasks, however 15% of the managers interviewed fully stated that there are differences regarding the assignments of tasks.



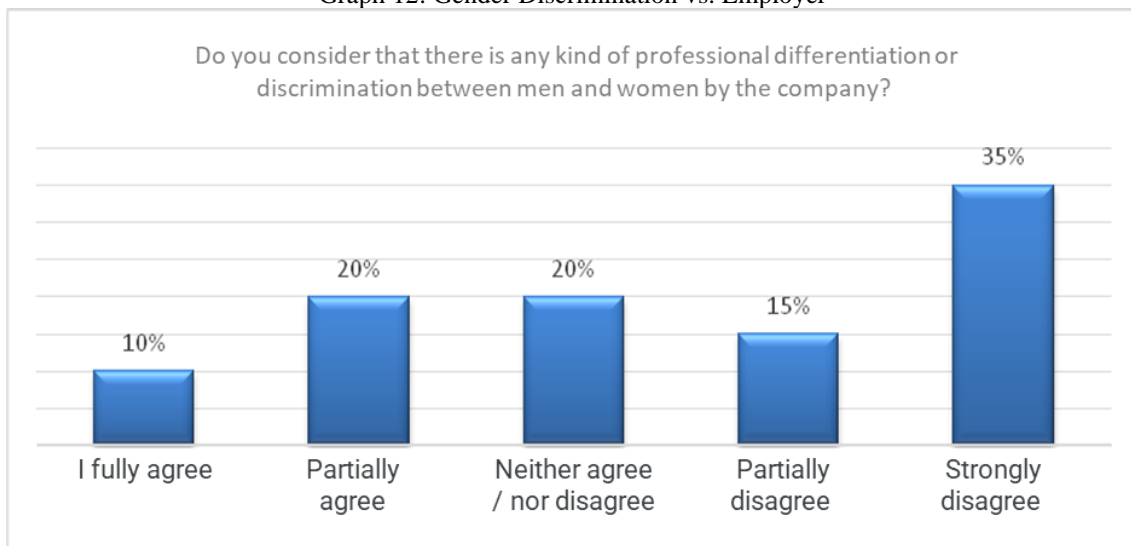
Graph 11: Gender X Job Title/Function



Org.: ARBUÉS, M.P. (2015)

However, even with greater explicit detection of differentiation in Human Resources policies, only between private banks and public banks, with greater obstacles to the professional career verified in public institutions, this prevalence is not so clear when analyzing the existence of some type of general or gender discrimination within the company. In this case, 35% strongly disagree and 15% partially disagree with some discrimination, while 20% were in doubt or avoided answers, according to Graph 12. The rate of those who agree that there is some kind of gender discrimination on the part of the company reaches 30% (20% partially agreeing and 10% fully agreeing).

Graph 12: Gender Discrimination vs. Employer



Org.: ARBUÉS, M.P. (2015)

Gomes (2010), in addition to concluding that aesthetic issues serve as a differential in the labor market, also found that it is common to identify discrimination in relation to women in professional practice, especially in aspects such as hierarchy, remuneration and area of activity, with some areas and positions that are still exclusive to men.



As discussed earlier, women still occupy subordinate positions to men, receive lower wages, are more present in professions related to areas such as education, social assistance and service delivery, and are a minority in so-called masculine areas such as steel or automotive, among others.

In addition, the relationship of friendship is differentiated in the work environment when, in moments of leisure, meeting, corridor conversation, etc., there is the presence of women, with evident distancing between men and women in what goes beyond the professional field, and a better relationship of men with men and greater isolation of women.

These discriminations are discreet, not very explicit, but not so non-existent and reflect, in a veiled way, the patriarchal culture still very present, both in the domestic space and in the public space, in labor relations. (GOMES, 2010).

## 7 SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND BULLYING – THE NATURALIZATION OF (SYMBOLIC) VIOLENCE IN LABOR RELATIONS

According to the Brazilian Penal Code (CPB), sexual harassment constitutes an unlawful act under article 216-A which defines:

Sexual harassment: Embarrassing someone in order to obtain sexual advantage or favor, prevailing the agent of his condition of hierarchical superior or ancestry inherent in the exercise of employment, position or function. Penalty: imprisonment from 1 (one) to 2 (two) years<sup>3</sup>

From the wording of the article, it appears that the criminal type in reference requires the intentional form, that is, the intention to embarrass someone in order to obtain sexual advantage or favor. In order to repress *sexual harassment at work*, since such conduct *consists of a frontal attack on the fundamental principles of the dignity of the human person of the worker, equality among workers and sexual freedom*, the ILO has tried to regulate and broaden its understanding, treating sexual harassment as:

Acts, innuendo, forced physical contacts, impertinent invitations, provided that they present one of the following characteristics: Be a clear condition for maintaining employment; Influence the promotions of the career of the harassed; Harm professional performance, humiliate, insult or intimidate the victim; Threatening and causing victims to give in for fear of reporting abuse and Offer of growth of various types or offer that disfavors victims in academic and labor circles among others, and that in the act can give something in return, such as enabling intimacy to be favored at work. (ILO, 2001)

According to Pamplona Filho (2005), the problem of harassment, however, is much broader than the form conceptualized and criminalized in Brazil. For the jurist, sexual harassment is all **conduct of an unwanted sexual nature** that, although repelled by the recipient, is continuously

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<sup>3</sup> Law No. 10,224, of 05.15.2001, amended the Brazilian Penal Code to provide for the crime of sexual harassment. Available in <http://jus.com.br/artigos/assedio-sexual>. Access in: 8 jan. 2015.

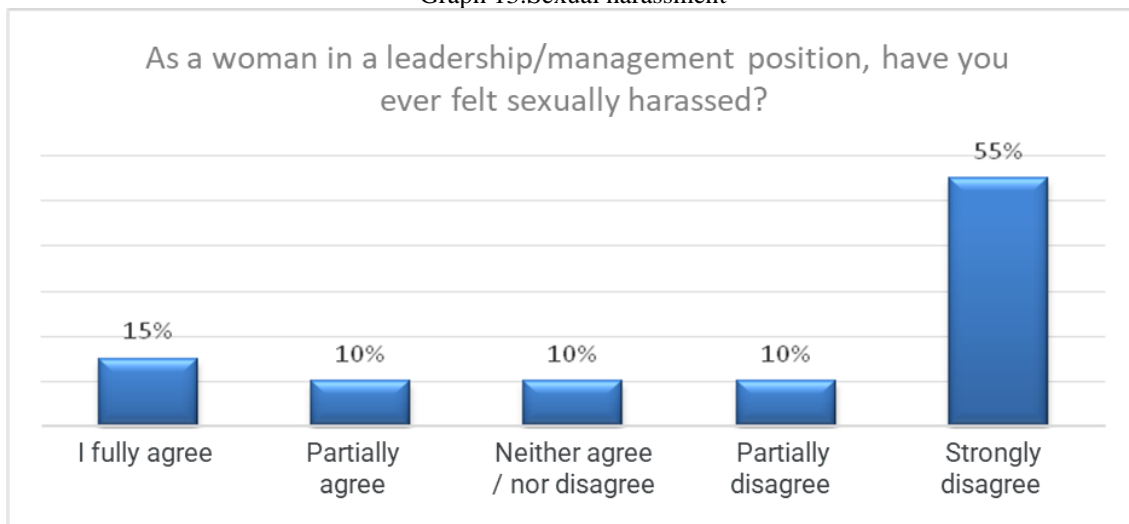


reiterated, curtailing his sexual freedom. Because it constitutes a violation of the principle of free disposition of one's own body, this conduct establishes a situation of deep embarrassment and, when practiced in the context of labor relations, can generate even more harmful consequences. Sexual harassment at work results in a "tense and hostile work environment, causing headaches, back and stomach, as well as insomnia, depression, lack of concentration and interest in work" (PAMPLONA FILHO, 2005, p. 2.735)

For Barros (1999, p.5), "a survey conducted in 1995, in twelve Brazilian capitals, found that 52% of working women have already been sexually harassed." For the author, women are afraid to report sexual harassment at work, since they fear losing their job or good reputation. Female occupants of more modest positions are the biggest victims, as the loss of their jobs threatens their own livelihood and that of their family.

In the present research, the incidence of professionals who have already felt sexually harassed is not observed with significance among the interviewed participants, but it is still worrisome to realize that 15% fully agree that they have already been sexually harassed, if we take into account the sample of the research, among which 10% partially agree and 10% neither agree nor disagree (preferring to omit the question), totaling 35% against 55% who say they strongly disagree with having already suffered any type of sexual harassment in the exercise of professional banking activity, as shown in Chart 13 below.

Graph 13:Sexual harassment



Org.: ARBUÉS, M.P. (2015)

Regarding moral harassment, unlike what was found in relation to sexual harassment, the incidence of women in managerial positions who felt morally harassed increased considerably, with 15% who fully agreed, 10% who partially agreed, 20% who preferred not to declare and 40% who strongly disagreed with having suffered any type of psychological harassment, as shown in Graph 14. That is, somehow, to a lesser or greater degree of moral harassment, 60% of managers perceived themselves harassed in their jobs. This means that moral harassment is a reality in banking labor



relations and, even occupying leadership positions, the woman bank worker is a victim of this form of symbolic violence that plagues the labor market.



Org.: ARBUÉS, M.P. (2015)

Psychological harassment in the workplace can manifest itself in three variants: vertical (violence from the management or the hierarchical superior), horizontal (the violence is practiced by one or more colleagues of the same hierarchical level) or ascending (the violence is practiced by the group of workers against a boss or superior). In the process of moral harassment of the vertical type, the action does not necessarily need to be triggered by the boss, but he can count on the complicity of the co-workers of the victim(s) and, through these, violence is triggered. In this sense, a national study on psychological harassment in the banking category (MACIEL et al., 2006) found that:

At least 40% of bank employees have experienced embarrassing situations at work. In contrast, only 5.2% of respondents who reported having been victims of bullying talked about it with someone, 34.65% sought support from the family, 14.85% spoke to friends, 10.89% sought a colleague from the company and only 6.52% sought the union. The same survey identified that the main difficulties at work pointed out by the interviewees are: lack of personnel (70.97%), excessive workload (54.66%), competition between people (34.09%) and non-respect for schedules (27.36%)." (JACQUES; AMAZARRAY, 2006, p.103).

On this issue, data collected by the Union of Bankers of São Paulo, Osasco and region, recently,<sup>4</sup> they're scary. In Regarding sexual harassment among women bankers, the survey showed an increase of 1,500%; bullying increased by 26.58%; Racial discrimination increased by 252.31% and sexual discrimination increased by 69.23%. All these rates are for the year 2014. In an interview with the entity's newspaper, the vice president of SindBan, Ângela Isabel Ulices Savian, highlighted the importance of

<sup>4</sup> The survey was conducted from January to March 2015 and published in the entity's newspaper in April. The article with the data of the complete research available at: [www.spbancarios.com.br/noticias](http://www.spbancarios.com.br/noticias).



disclosing the data to show how much the financial system "is white, elitist, dominated by men and discriminatory" (SAVIAN, 2015). And yet, the trade unionist points out that:

The profile showed that women have to unfold more and more to exercise high positions and, when talking about black women, the difficulty of reaching higher levels within the bank is even greater. What drew the most attention this year were the issues surrounding harassment, especially sexual harassment. It has had a very high evolution and, as much as we have fought and carried out actions, this continues because women continue to be exploited and marginalized.

(...)

It increased the woman's awareness because before she was ashamed to expose the harassment. It is very positive when it reaches a degree of politicization and feels safe to denounce, because before it was not declared, complete. (SAVIAN, 2015)<sup>5</sup>.

For Pamplona Filho (2005), moral harassment at work consists of a process of persecution of the victim characterized with the objective of the aggressor, consciously or not, to exclude him from the work environment. In turn, sexual harassment is also configured in a process of persecution of the harassed, but with the intention of obtaining sexual favors from the victim. For the jurist: "the essential difference between the two modalities lies in the sphere of protected interests, since sexual harassment is against the sexual freedom of the individual, while moral harassment hurts the psychic dignity of the human being" (PLAMPLONA FILHO, 2005)<sup>6</sup>.

From a legal point of view, both moral and sexual harassment are unlawful acts that attack the honor of the worker. They are, therefore, unjust forms of persecution, which manifest themselves through the symbolic violence impregnated in labor relations, in which the majority of victims are women. There are undeniable points of contact between the two legal institutes: bullying and sexual harassment at work. There is, in both, a persecution that disrupts, humiliates and attacks the dignity of the victim who, in most cases, is forced to leave his job.

## 8 CONCLUSION

It remains to consider that, when addressing the issues that permeate the work environment that involves managerial activity in the universe of the banking sector, the lessons of Bourdieu (2005) are once again present, as a reflection to understand how male domination and symbolic violence are present in the work environment. It is not the direct and simple effect of the action exerted by a set of agents on others (dominant and dominated), but the indirect effect of a complex set of actions that are engendered in the structure of the field through which domination is exercised over others. Such domination is not evident, but masked, camouflaged, invisible, to the point that often those who suffer it do not perceive it.

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<sup>5</sup> Bank sheet. Available at: < [www.spbancarios.com.br](http://www.spbancarios.com.br)>. Accessed 15 Apr. 2015).

<sup>6</sup> Full text available in: <http://jus.com.br/artigos/14675/assedio-moral-e-assedio-sexual-notions-distinctive>.



Thus, symbolic violence consists of a violence that is exercised with the tacit complicity of those who suffer it and also, often, of those who exercise it, to the extent that both are unconscious of exercising it or suffering it. In other words, symbolic violence is constituted, at first, as a disguised violence, confers particular powers and specific efficacy. It is soft, subtle, sweet that makes the violated act with the way of thinking of the dominator.

It turns out that in the space in question, the banking sector, the process is identical: the recognition of legitimacy is rooted in the immediate agreement between the incorporated structures, rendered unconscious. In turn, this agreement potentially explains the astonishing and recurrent ease with which the dominant impose their domination, allowing us to affirm that this domination is not only a domination of class or groups, but a male domination (BOURDIEU, 2005).

Transporting, therefore, the concept of legitimacy, to the nuances of male domination, which is based on androgenous laws, the author considers that the paradox is not in the visible differences of the female or male body, which occurs from an androcentric view but in the institution of biological characteristics as being two hierarchical social essences, which legitimize and naturalize themselves in front of the dominated (in this case, women bank executives).

With this (prejudiced) thinking of women, which is the result of the incorporation of power relations and the sexual division of labor, expressed in the founding and structuring oppositions of the symbolic order, women banking executives, despite the social achievements and advances resulting from modernity arising from globalized times and the world of work, are still subordinated to the dictates of patriarchal culture, a reflection of a significant and conforming power, which interferes as a constituent in gender identities, therefore, in equality in labor relations and in the realization of their human rights.

It is concluded, therefore, that women banking executives, despite the social achievements and advances resulting from modernity arising from globalized times and the world of work, also attribute to patriarchal culture, a significant and conforming power, which interferes as a constituent in gender identities, therefore, in equality in labor relations and in the realization of their human rights.



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