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Abstract

Flexibilization of working time has been implemented in the last 30 years as a capital-driven phenomenon, deepening the unequal distribution of working time. It also has negative effectson women in terms of both productive and reproductive working time. This article discusses the flexibilization of working time and compares recent trends in different countries, including the USA, Canada, France, the UK and Brazil. It argues that working time inequalities are increasing and harming workers' lives. It also points out that it increases the exploitation of women and the gender gap.

Key words: working time; productive work; reproductive work; flexibility; inequality; gender.

JEL Codes: J16, J81, D63

AUMENTO DA DESIGUALDADE NO TEMPO DE TRABALHO: UMA TENDÊNCIA INTERNACIONAL

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Resumo

A flexibilização do tempo de trabalho implementada nos últimos 30 anos, impulsionada pelo capital, aprofunda a distribuição desigual do tempo de trabalho. Também tem efeitos negativos sobre as mulheres, tanto no tempo de trabalho produtivo quanto no reprodutivo. Este artigo discute a flexibilização do tempo de trabalho e compara tendências recentes em diferentes países, incluindo EUA, Canadá, França, Reino Unido e Brasil. Argumenta que as desigualdades no tempo de trabalho estão aumentando e prejudicando a vida dos trabalhadores. Também aponta que a flexibilização da jornada aumenta a exploração das mulheres e as desigualdades de gênero.

Palavras-chave: tempo de trabalho; trabalho produtivo; trabalho reprodutivo; flexibilidade; desigualdade; gênero.

Introduction

One of the aspects most discussed regarding inequality is income, which can be considered a limited approach (POCHMANN, 2015). Studies also take into account inequalities in access to social rights as a way to measure multidimensional inequalities (PNUD, 2014), how they vary in time (CAMPELLO, 2017) and how they interact with public policies (BICHIR, 2010). Finally, other approaches aim to understand the interactions between different social categories (such as class, race/color, gender, religion, nationality etc.) in explaining inequalities.

This paper argues that inequalities in the labor market cannot be completely understood if income is the only variable used as a measure. Therefore, it addresses inequalities in working time as an important dimension of social inequalities, considering class and gender perspectives. In this sense, it considers that the flexibilization of working time that has been implemented in the last 30 years is a capital-driven phenomenon which deepens the unequal distribution of working time. Additionally, it has negative effects on women in terms of both productive and reproductive working time.

The most recurrent forms of flexible working hours are working weekends, alternating shifts, hour banks and part-time work. However, due to the lack of quantitative data regarding flexibilization of working time, this article develops a methodology using hour bands data from 1981 or 1986 – depending on the data availability –to 2016, in order to demonstrate the redistributions of workers within the hour bands. Then it argues these redistributions are a result of the flexibilization of working time.

There are clear gendered implications to this increase as more companies demand more flexibility of working time while women are still attached to reproductive[1] labor, which, as will be discussed below, has a much more rigid schedule.

[1] Reproductive work is considered to be unpaid work in the forms of care and domestic work.

To investigate these questions, this article compares working time trends in developed countries (Canada, France, Germany, UK, USA) and Brazil using census data and bibliographic sources. It is structured in five sections: i) introduction; ii) literature review; iii) analysis of the redistribution of working hours; iv) the gender perspective, divided into productive and reproductive working time inequality and v) conclusions.

Literature review on working time and gender

Disputes about working time go back to the roots of capitalism. In Marxist terms the working day is composed of necessary labor-time and surplus labor-time. Therefore, the working day is a combination of a certain number of hours that reflects the time necessary for the worker to produce his/her wage and every extra hour is surplus-labor, the primary origin of the capitalist profit (MARX, 1990). Thus, the disputes about working time are fundamental to the capitalist system.

According to Sadi Dal Rosso (2000), working time has three dimensions: length, intensity and distribution. The dispute over the length of the working day was clearly the main matter after the II Industrial Revolution, when the limits of day and night were no longer strict limits due to the discovery of electrical energy, allowing up to 18 hours of work per day.

After World War II, the intensity of the working day could be increased due to the technological development of machinery and labor processes. Thus, the length of the working day could be reduced to 8 hours with this rapid intensification of productivity. Working time regulation was strengthened during the "Golden Age" (from mid 1940s to mid 1970s). This changed in the 1980's as growing international competition and pressure to reduce production costs provoked the adaptation of an increased focus on imposition of "flexibility" as a strategic necessity.

After the 1980s, the increasing importance of the distribution dimension can be observed by looking at the various flextime working arrangements in use

today: compensation arrangements ranging from individual agreements, to hour banks, and the annualization of working time; the intensification of shift work even when it is not required by the type of industry (continuous) or basic services (health sector, police, fire workers); the increase in swing shifts (and the variety of arrangements within the category including 12x36 hours, 5x1 days, 8x2 days) and work on Sundays and holidays. New types of flexible contracts have also been created in terms of working time or contract duration, such as part-time[2] work, fixed-term contract, temporary work, zero hour contracts and on-call (GIBB, 2017).

The implementation of flexibilization can take place in different ways: reducing or eliminating negotiated or statutory labor rights or even allowing collective bargaining to reduce statutory labor rights, thus modifying or invalidating the norms that regulate work (*ibidem*). Due to limits of space and scope, the history of each country's changes to labor law and practices will not be discussed in detail here[3]. However, the clear international trend of increases in working time inequality remains.

Dedecca (1998) shows that, in the 1980s and 1990s, labor movements in some countries were willing to accept forms of working time flexibility in exchange for the reduction of the working day/week. From the 2000s on, flextime has increased, and any progress in the reduction of working hours has slowed down.

Gender, for the purpose of this paper, is defined as a social relation between sexes, culturally constructed. Therefore, this paper rejects biological (natural) explanations (SCOTT, 1995).This paper argues that a "sexual division of labor" (HIRATA, 2007) relegates roles connected to care[4] – paid or not – to women (CARRASCO, 2014). These types of work are less socially valued in general. This does not happen by chance, but

[2] Up to 25 hours per week allowing wage reduction.

[3] For more information, see Gibb(2017).

[4] When entering the paid labor market, many women were inserted into fields related to domestic responsibilities, including education (teachers) and healthcare (nurses).

individuals' characteristics such as race and sex are used as discriminatory elements to justify the position of workers in the capitalist production system, which provides the camouflage it needs in order to ease social tensions (SAFFIOTI, 2013).

Based on this division, women over exploitation occurs in several ways, all of which are sources of extraction of more surplus value. First, it justifies reduced wages for women, as their remuneration would be complementary to the men's. Second, it offers women lower working hours, more precarious jobs and underemployed, which theoretically would give them the possibility of reconciling productive and reproductive labor. Third, by keeping them out of the labor market, given that the high opportunity cost resulting from the low remuneration of productive work and the relative high cost of domestic and care services outsourced to the market, and doing so, maintaining women as a reserve army, it exercises both the function of reducing the price of labor and available labor power when necessary. Fourth, by imposing free reproductive work on women, it fulfills two very important functions for the system: it subsidizes the reproduction of the labor force, thereby reducing wages and, at the same time, legitimizing the underutilization of this contingent of female workers by the capitalist system, avoiding exposing its contradictions (SAFFIOTI, 2013; GIBB, 2017).

Around the world, women spend two to ten times more time on unpaid care work than men due to discriminatory social institutions and stereotypes on gender roles (FERRANT, PESANDO & NOWACKA, 2014). Women who perform both paid and unpaid laborare double burdened (FEDERICI, 2017) and it also has significant impacts on their professional trajectories and in income (POLACHEK, 2014; GIBB & OLIVEIRA, 2015). The "motherhood gap" is a symptom that care work is very unevenly divided between men and women (DILLI, CARMICHAEL & RIJPMA, 2019) and has consequences to women: being a mother has a negative impact in income in most countries in the world, while being a father usually has a positive impact in income (ILO, 2018).

Additionally, literature refers very often to the phenomena of the glass ceiling, which implies that gender (or other) disadvantages are stronger at the top of the hierarchy than at lower levels and that these disadvantages become worse later in a career path (COTTER, HERMSEN, OVADIA & VANNEMAN, 2001). In many countries, such as Brazil, women pursue higher educational levels then men but still have lower income and the wage differentials increase the higher the educational level is (OLIVEIRA, 2019).

The next section makes an effort in order to understand the phenomena of increasing inequality in working time. Right after, the article aims to comprehendits impact on women. It hopes to contribute to the literature by integrating the discussion of gender and flexibility of working time, especially analyzing Brazil in comparison with selected developed countries.

Increasing inequality in working time

Average annual working hours have historically decreased, asobserved in Table 1: from the 1870 to 1979 it reduced by approximately 41% in Belgium and France, 43% in Austria and the Netherlands, 45% in the United Kingdom and United States and 50% in Sweden. The only exception is Germany (with an increase until the 1950's, followed by a decrease), which already starts from a much lower average than the other countries examined.

Table 1. Average annual hours actually worked per worker / per year – 1870-1979

Country	1870	1913	1938	1950	1970	1979
Austria	2935	2580	2312	1976	1848	1660
Belgium	2964	2605	2267	2283	1986	1747
France	2945	2588	1848	1989	1888	1727
Germany	1941	2584	2316	2316	1907	1719
Italy	2886	2536	1927	1917	1768	1566
Netherlands	2964	2605	2244	2208	1910	1679
Sweden	2945	2588	2204	1951	1660	1451
United Kingdom	2984	2624	2267	1958	1735	1617
United States	2964	2605	2062	1867	1707	1607

Source: Based on Silva, Terrazas, Proni & Pochmann (1999).

Table 1 shows the average annual hoursworked per worker for the period 1870 – 1979in Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden, United Kingdom and United States. From 1950 to 1979, considered the golden age of capitalism, the USA and France presented the lowest reductions of annual working time (by 260 and 262 hours), followed by Austria (316 hours), UK (341 hours), Italy (351 hours). The countries with the most impressive reductions were Sweden (500), the Netherlands (529), Belgium (536) and Germany[5] (597).

Table 2 also shows an overall decrease in working hours; however, more modest that in the previous period. In 35 years' time (1981-2016) France and Germany lowered their annual working hours by 262 hours and 181, respectively. Canada reducedit by 80 hours, the USA by 17 hours and the UK increased it by 46 hours.

[5] During and immediately after the two World Wars, Germany increased its working hours due to war and reconstruction efforts.

Table 2. Average annual hours actually worked per worker / per year - Dependent employment

Country	1981	1986	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016
Canada	1.793	1.783	1.760	1.783	1.764	1.743	1.706	1713*
France	1.645	1.520	1.523	1.491	1.423	1.390	1.407	1.383
Germany	..	..	1.479	1.423	1.353	1.344	1.315	1.298
United Kingdom	1.648	1.702	1.695	1.696	1.683	1.644	1.621	1.694
United States	1.806	1.826	1.825	1.844	1.812	1.799	1.791	1.789

Source: OECD Stat

*Refers to 2015

Table 2 presents the average annual hours worked per worker, for the period 1981-2016 for Canada, France, Germany, United Kingdom and United States. This data reflects the average hours for these countries in those periods. When analyzed in isolation, this data may under represent what this paper claims to be a significant variable to explain the recent reduction in working hours. It is understood that the reduction in working hours demonstrated in Table 2 relates to a more flexible and unequal division of working time, which implies that there was an increase in the dispersion of working hours among workers rather than shorter hours for all. In other words, there are more workers working long hours and, at the same time, more working less hours. The following table helps to support this argument.

Table 3. Incidence of employment by typical weekly hours worked - Dependent employment - Annual

		1981	1986	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016
Country	**Hour bands**								
Canada	1 to 19 hours	8.4	9.4	10.1	9.9	8.9	8.8	9.5	9.1
	20 to 29 hours	5.7	7.0	7.8	8.7	8.9	8.9	9.2	9.1
	30 to 34 hours	4.1	4.6	5.2	5.9	6.5	6.7	7.0	7.4
	35 to 39 hours	22.9	22.1	21.8	20.3	24.2	24.0	24.9	24.9
	40 hours or more	58.9	57.0	55.1	55.1	51.5	51.6	49.4	49.4
France	1 to 19 hours	..	4.8	4.5	5.1	5.4	5.5	5.6	5.6
	20 to 29 hours	..	7.7	7.9	9.7	8.8	8.4	8.5	8.6
	30 to 34 hours	..	3.2	3.8	5.3	6.6	6.4	5.9	5.5
	35 to 39 hours	..	58.8	59.4	58.3	60.9	52.7	50.7	52.6
	40 hours or more	..	25.6	24.3	21.5	18.3	27.0	29.3	27.6
Germany	1 to 19 hours	..	3.2	4.8	7.1	10.0	12.6	12.8	11.9
	20 to 29 hours	..	7.5	6.8	7.9	8.7	9.6	9.9	10.5
	30 to 34 hours	..	1.8	2.5	3.3	3.7	5.2	5.8	6.9
	35 to 39 hours	..	17.0	45.4	42.9	38.6	27.1	21.8	21.7
	40 hours or more	..	70.4	40.5	38.9	39.0	45.5	49.6	49.1
United Kingdom	1 to 19 hours	..	12.3	13.1	13.8	12.3	12.3	12.8	11.4
	20 to 29 hours	..	8.4	8.5	9.4	10.4	10.8	11.4	11.7
	30 to 34 hours	..	3.8	3.8	4.2	4.6	5.3	6.1	6.7
	35 to 39 hours	..	26.8	27.1	23.0	24.3	26.2	25.7	25.1
	40 hours or more	..	48.6	47.5	49.7	48.4	45.5	43.9	45.1
United States	1 to 19 hours	6.9	6.7	6.5	5.7	5.2	5.1	5.3	5.0
	20 to 29 hours	7.4	8.1	8.2	8.2	7.5	7.5	8.1	7.9
	30 to 34 hours	3.9	4.3	4.6	4.6	4.4	4.5	5.3	4.7
	35 to 39 hours	7.9	7.6	7.4	6.8	6.1	6.4	7.0	6.3
	40 hours or more	73.8	73.4	73.4	74.7	76.8	76.6	74.3	76.1
Brazil	1 to 19 hours	..	..	..	..	3.5	4.0	4.3	5.2*
	20 to 29 hours	..	..	..	..	6.7	7.6	6.5	7.1*
	30 to 34 hours	..	..	..	..	5.7	5.7	5.6	6.2*
	35 to 39 hours	..	..	..	..	3.8	4.2	3.7	4.2*
	40 hours or more	..	..	..	..	80.3	78.4	80.0	77.3*

Source: OECD Stat
*Refers to 2015

Table 3 shows the incidence of employment by typical weekly hours worked divided into 5 hours bands, from 1 to 19 hours, from 20 to 29 hours, from 30 to 34 hours, from 35 to 39 hours and from 40 hours or more for dependent employment in the period 1981-2016 for Canada, France, Germany, United Kingdom, United States and Brazil.

The increase of workers in the first band (1 to 19 hours) in Germany is very significant, from 3.2% to 11.0% in the period 1986-2016 due to the increased use of what are known as mini-jobs[6]. Canada and France increased the ratio of workers in this band by less than 1%. The United Kingdom, which departs from a more expressive level of part-time employment of up to 19 hours, shows a small decrease (from 12.3% to 11.4%).The United States reduced this category by almost 2p.p. For Brazil, the available data starts in 2001 and it is possible to observe an increase of 1.7 p.p. of workers in the shorter hour band.

In the second hour band (20 to 29 hours), Canada presents a more significant change: from 5.7% of workers to 9.1%. The United Kingdom shows 3.3 p.p. increase of part-time work. In Germany the ratio of workers in this band grew by 3 p.p. France showed an increase of workers in this band in the 1990s (around 2 p.p.), then it went down (around 1 p.p.) relative to the entire period. The United States and Brazil present no significant change.

In the third band (30 to 34 hours) an increase in the period analyzed is observed in Germany (5.1 p.p.), Canada (3.3 p.p.) and the United Kingdom (2.9 p.p.). There was almost no change inthe United States (0.8 p.p.) or Brazil (0.5 p.p.). France moved from a total of 3.2% in the 1980s to 6.6% in the early 2000s and, over the decade, only reached 5.5% of all workers in 2016.

Regarding the fourth band (35 to 39 hours) it is important to highlight some peculiarities. Germany concentrated 45.4% of its workers in this band in 1991. However, it falls to 42.9% in 1996 and continues to decrease to 38.6% in

[6] It is a form of employment characterized as part-time and low-wage. According to the latest law, the monthly income for a mini-job is less than € 450, exempting workers from income tax.

2001, 27.1% in 2006, 21.8% in 2011 and 21.7% in 2016. This is explained by the fact that, in 1993, the German automobile industry reduced the working week to 36 hours and in 1995 this was extended to West Germany as a whole. In 2003 the German unions attempted to expand the 35-hour week to eastern Germany, but they were unsuccessful. In 2004, these same unions established a 38-hour working week nation wide while maintaining many specific opt-out clauses. This explains the declining proportion of workers in this hour band and reveals the reversal of important gains. France has a similar pattern, showing a decrease in the number of workers in this range from 58.8% to 50.9% between 1986 and 2011, then returning, in 2016, to 52.6% (the 2006 level). In the 1980s, France reduced working hours to 35 a week, which explains the high number of workers in this band until the beginning of 2000, where, similar to Germany, it is observed a decrease in the proportion of workers in this band (HERMANN, 2012). The United Kingdom reduced its work force in this band by 1.7 p.p., but maintained a significant portion of its workers – 25%– in this band. Canada increased the ratio of workers in this band from 22.9% to 24.9 %. In the United States only 7.9% of workers were in that hour range in 1985 and that number reduced to 6.3% in 2015. In Brazil, the portion of workers in this band is very low (around 4%) and there was no significant change.

In the last band (40 hours or more), there was an increase from 18.3% (2001) to 27.6% (2016) of workers in France and from 40.5%(1991) to 49.1% (2016) in Germany, which indicates a clear loss regarding previous efforts to reduce working time[7]. Approximately 75% of US workers work more than 40 hours per week staidly. In the United Kingdom, there is a small decrease of 48.6% to 45.1%. Data also shows that Canada decreased the proportion of workers in the 40 plus hours band, from 58.9% in 1981 to 49.4% in 2016. Brazil also decreased the ratio of workers in the 40-hour plus band. Brazil has some specificities that are addressed in more detail.

[7] The reunification of Germany occurred in 1990. Previous data refers to the Federal Republic of Germany.

Table 4. Evolution of working time (number of hours typically worked per week - all jobs - ten or more years old) - Brazil: 1992-2013

Hours Band	1992	1995	1998	1999	2001	2003	2004	2008	2013
1 to 14 hours	5.8	6.1	6	6.3	6.1	6.6	6.3	6.2	6.1
15 to 39 hours	21.1	21.6	21.5	22.1	20.9	21.4	22.1	21.7	20.1
40 to 44 hours	31.3	31.7	30.9	31.7	32.1	32.3	33.6	38.8	45.4
45 hours plus	41.7	40.5	41.5	39.8	40.9	39.6	37.9	33.4	28.4
No declaration	0.1	0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0	0	–	–
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: PNAD-IBGE
*Refers to 2015

Table 4 displays the incidence of employment by typical weekly hours worked divided into 5 hours bands: from 1 to 14 hours, from 15 to 39 hours, from 40 to 44 hours, from 45 or more and no declaration for workers ten or more years old, all jobs, forthe period 1992-2013 for Brazil. Table 4 shows that official Brazilian data is collected differently than in the OECD. The band division chosen by IBGE (Brazilian National Accounts Institute) unveilsthe reality regarding working time in the country more accurately. Working hours in Brazil are higher than in the selected countries; however, it decreased the ratio of workers in its top hour band, 45-hoursor more, from 41.7% of in 1992 to 28.4% in 2013.

To continue addressing the changes in working time distribution among workers, we will now focus on the increase of part-time jobs. A significant growth of part-time work is clear in Table 5.

Table 5. Incidence of full-time / part-time (FTPT) employment - Dependent employment - Annual

		1981	1986	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016
Country	**Series**								
Canada	Full-time employment	85.9	83.6	82.1	81.4	82.2	82.3	81.4	81.7
	Part-time employment	14.1	16.4	17.9	18.6	17.8	17.7	18.6	18.3
France	Full-time employment	..	87.2	87.5	85.3	85.8	86.1	85.9	85.7
	Part-time employment	..	12.8	12.5	14.7	14.2	13.9	14.1	14.3
Germany	Full-time employment	..	89.3	88.4	85.0	81.3	77.8	77.3	77.6
	Part-time employment	..	10.7	11.6	15.0	18.7	22.2	22.7	22.4
United Kingdom	Full-time employment	..	79.2	78.4	76.9	77.2	76.9	75.8	76.9
	Part-time employment	..	20.8	21.6	23.1	22.8	23.1	24.2	23.1
United States	Full-time employment	85.6	85.2	85.3	86.1	87.2	87.4	86.6	87.1
	Part-time employment	14.4	14.8	14.7	13.9	12.8	12.6	13.4	12.9
Brazil	Full-time employment	..	..	..	..	89.8	88.4	89.2	87.7*
	Part-time employment	..	..	..	..	10.2	11.6	10.8	12.3*

Source: OECD Stat
*Refers to 2015

Table 5 shows the incidence of full-time and part-time employment for dependent employment in the period 1981-2016, for Canada, France, Germany, United Kingdom, United States and Brazil. Data reveals that, from 1980's and mid-1980 to 2016, there was an increase in the proportion of those working part-time jobs in all analyzed countries, except the United States. The UK, which already had 20.8% of workers on part-time contracts, increased the percentage to 23.1. In France it increased by 1.5, in Brazil by 2.1 and in Canada by 4.2. The most expressive change is observed in Germany, where the participation of workers with a part-time contract increased from 10.7% in 1981 to 22.4% in 2016. As mentioned previously, this is largely due the adoption of "mini-jobs" from 2003 on. According to Hermann (2012), more than 15% of the jobs in Germany are mini-jobs, and in sectors such as cleaning, almost half of workers have mini-jobs.

This evidence corroborates the thesis that part of the decrease in average annual working time results froman unequal redistribution of the work rather than a general decrease, especially when one considers that a significant minority of part-time jobsis involuntary. This is illustrated in Table 6.

Table 6. Share of involuntary part-time as % of part-time employment - Total employment - Annual

Country	1981	1986	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016
Canada	16.5	25.9	24.9	34.5	25.8	23.9	27.2	25.0
France	..	..	..	39.9	24.9	28.9	28.8	41.6
Germany	..	7.3	5.4	11.9	11.9	20.7	15.1	11.2
United Kingdom	..	10.1	8.0	12.6	9.0	8.5	17.3	14.3
United States	..	..	..	..	4.3	4.8	9.2	7.3

Source: OECD Stat

Table 6 shows the share of involuntary part-time as percentage of part-time employment incidence for total employment in the period 1981-2016, for Canada, France, Germany, United Kingdom and United States. The share of involuntary part-time workers is 41.6% in France, 25% in Canada, 14.3% in the UK, 11.2% in Germany and 7.3% in the USA. For these workers, this working arrangement was imposed, which probably means that their wages do not meet their needs. It is important to remember that the countries studied are considered high-income countries, and part-time contracts continue to provide at least partial access to social security, which means that this could be different if one verifies the same data for medium/low-income countries like Brazil (GIBB, 2017). Although working less hours is preferable according to a significant portion of workers, campaigns around the reduction of the working day are controversial within the labor movement. For example, analyzing Volkswagen workers, women tend to prefer reduction in working time, while men tend to prefer increase in wages and profit-sharing schemes (GIBB, 2017).

According to Table 7, in Germany, both "Employment/population ratio" and "Labor force participation rate" increased significantly. The unemployment rate trends also present an interesting change in pattern. From 4.5% in 1981, it grows to 10.3 in 2006, and from there to 2016 it drops back down to 4.1%, its lowest rate in the observed period. This decrease coincides with the increase in part-time jobs and can obviously relatesto implementation and increase of "mini-jobs". In the UK, unemployment decreased 11.2% from 1981 to 4.9%. However, as noted previously, in 2016 the rate of involuntary part-time work increased. Brazil

experienced a decrease in its usually high unemployment rate from 2001 (9.4%) to 2011 (6.7%); however, it went through a recession in 2015 and 2016 (ROSSI & MELLO, 2017), which took the unemployment rate back up to 9.6%.

Table 7. Employment, unemployment and labor force participation - Annual

		1981	1986	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016
Country	**Series**								
Canada	Employment/ population ratio	60.1	59.7	59.7	58.5	61.1	62.8	61.7	61.1
	Labor force participation rate	65.0	66.1	66.6	64.7	65.9	67.0	66.7	65.7
	Unemployment rate	7.6	9.7	10.3	9.6	7.2	6.3	7.5	7.0
France	Employment/ population ratio	52.8	50.3	49.6	48.2	49.9	51.4	51.3	50.6
	Labor force participation rate	56.8	55.9	54.6	54.8	54.7	56.1	56.3	56.0
	Unemployment rate	7.0	10.1	9.0	12.1	8.8	8.4	8.8	9.8
Germany	Employment/ population ratio	53.1	51.9	55.8	52.3	53.0	52.9	56.6	66.2
	Labor force participation rate	55.6	55.5	59.1	57.4	57.5	59.0	60.1	69.1
	Unemployment rate	4.5	6.4	5.6	8.9	7.8	10.3	5.8	4.1
United Kingdom	Employment/ population ratio	..	55.3	58.3	57.1	59.4	60.0	58.0	60.4
	Labor force participation rate	..	62.3	63.6	62.2	62.3	63.4	63.0	63.5
	Unemployment rate	..	11.2	8.4	8.1	4.7	5.4	7.8	4.9
United States	Employment/ population ratio	59.0	60.7	61.7	63.2	63.7	63.1	58.4	59.7
	Labor force participation rate	63.9	65.3	66.2	66.8	66.8	66.2	64.1	62.8
	Unemployment rate	7.6	7.0	6.8	5.4	4.7	4.6	8.9	4.9
Brazil	Employment/ population ratio	..	..	..	..	60.7	63.2	61.7	58.6*
	Labor force participation rate	..	..	..	..	67.0	69.0	66.2	64.8*
		..	..	..	..	9.4	8.4	6.7	9.6*

Source: OECD Stat
*Refers to 2015

Table 7 shows employment, unemployment and labor force participation in the period 1981-2016 for Canada, France, Germany, United Kingdom, United States and Brazil. The data analyzed indicates a clear increase in unequal redistribution of working time over the last 35 years. This paper affirms that the reason behind this change is the flexibilization of working time implemented in the period as it is a capital-driven strategy to increase the use of labor time and pay strictly for the time used, minimizingidle hours and externalizing labor costs. Increased working time flexibility is connected to increased working time inequality and has negative impacts on workers, especially on women.

Gender perspective

In order to discuss working time inequality, it is crucial to integrate a gender perspective, as discussed before. The historically and culturally accepted sexual division of labor in our societies dictates that men engage in productive work (broadly defined as paid work), while women take primary responsibility for household work (unpaid). In a society that links power to money, reproductive labor is valued less than productive in both social and monetary terms.

Data shows that women, when entering the labor market, remain the responsible for household work, thus accumulating two roles in the maintenance of society and, as argued, being overexploited by capital. This division is key to the existence of different working hours for men and women as well as wage and social prestige differentials. The high/better-paid jobs are occupied by men. Women commonly have more precarious jobs, lower working hours and pay (TEIXEIRA, 2013). Also, when women are forced out of the labor market due to involuntary unemployment or the right opportunity cost engage in productive work, they serve capitalism as well.

This paper affirms that the increase in flexibility of working time exacerbates an already existing unequal sexual division of productive and reproductive labor, as it demonstrates in the following sections.

Productive working time inequality

Supporters of a flexible working time advocate that more flexible or shorter working hours would allow women to engage more in productive labor.

Table 8 indicates a growth in women's labor force participation while both employment and labor force participation rates for women remained lower than men's in the countries analyzed.

Table 8. Employment, unemployment and labor force participation - Men and women - Annual

		1981		1986		1991		1996		2001		2006		2011		2016	
Country	Series	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
Canada	Employment/ population ratio	72.8	47.7	69.5	50.2	66.9	52.8	65.0	52.1	66.8	55.7	67.6	58.1	65.7	57.8	64.9	57.5
	Labor force participation rate	78.4	52.0	76.8	55.7	75.0	58.4	72.2	57.5	72.3	59.8	72.3	61.9	71.4	62.2	70.3	61.3
	Unemployment rate	7.2	8.3	9.6	9.9	10.8	9.7	9.9	9.3	7.5	6.9	6.5	6.1	8.0	7.0	7.7	6.2
France	Employment/ population ratio	66.4	40.2	61.2	40.2	59.3	40.7	56.2	40.9	57.4	43.1	57.4	45.9	56.4	46.6	54.7	46.8
	Labor force participation rate	69.9	44.6	66.9	45.8	63.8	46.0	62.7	47.6	61.8	48.3	62.3	50.5	61.7	51.3	60.7	51.7
	Unemployment rate	5.0	10.0	8.5	12.3	7.0	11.6	10.3	14.2	7.1	10.7	7.9	9.1	8.5	9.1	10.0	9.5
Germany	Employment/ population ratio	69.2	38.8	67.1	38.3	68.4	44.3	62.5	42.8	61.1	45.4	59.6	46.7	62.6	51.0	70.4	62.0
	Labor force participation rate	71.9	41.1	71.2	41.4	71.6	47.7	68.2	47.4	66.3	49.3	66.4	52.0	66.6	54.0	73.7	64.4
	Unemployment rate	3.8	5.6	5.7	7.5	4.5	7.0	8.3	9.6	7.8	7.9	10.3	10.2	6.0	5.6	4.4	3.7
United Kingdom	Employment/ population ratio	..	..	66.4	45.1	67.9	49.3	64.7	50.2	66.7	52.6	66.6	53.8	63.7	52.6	65.8	55.2
	Labor force participation rate	..	..	75.2	50.4	74.8	53.2	71.6	53.5	70.4	54.9	70.7	56.6	69.6	56.7	69.3	58.0
	Unemployment rate	..	..	11.6	10.6	9.2	7.3	9.6	6.3	5.2	4.1	5.8	4.9	8.4	7.2	4.9	4.7
United States	Employment/ population ratio	71.3	48.0	71.0	51.4	70.4	53.7	70.9	56.0	70.9	57.0	70.1	56.6	63.9	53.2	65.8	54.1
	Labor force participation rate	77.0	52.1	76.2	55.3	75.8	57.4	74.9	59.3	74.4	59.8	73.5	59.4	70.5	58.1	69.2	56.8
	Unemployment rate	7.4	7.9	6.9	7.1	7.1	6.4	5.4	5.4	4.8	4.7	4.6	4.6	9.4	8.5	4.9	4.8
Brazil	Employment/ population ratio	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	74.9	47.7	75.9	51.7	74.5	50.0	70.2*	48.0*
	Labor force participation rate	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	81.0	54.1	81.0	58.0	78.3	55.0	76.2*	54.4*
	Unemployment rate	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	7.5	11.9	6.3	11.0	4.9	9.1	7.9*	11.7*

Source: OECD Stat
*Refers to 2015

Table 8 shows employment, unemployment and labor force participation by sex in the period 1981-2016 for Canada, France, Germany, United Kingdom, United States and Brazil. Table 8 indicates that the unemployment rate for women in Brazil is higher than for men. Women are also more vulnerable to informal labor (GIBB & OLIVEIRA, 2015).

The unequal distribution of productive working time can be observed in Table 9. In general, men's working time is very concentrated in the 40-hour plus band, while women's is more distributed across different time bands. Women's share of part-time employment is much higher than men's in all countries studied.

Table 9. Incidence of employment by usual weekly hours worked - Men and women - Dependent employment - Annual

		1981		1986		1991		1996		2001		2006		2011		2016	
		M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
Country	Hour bands																
Canada	1 to 19 h	4.5	13.8	5.5	14.1	6.2	14.5	6.3	14.0	5.7	12.2	5.8	11.9	6.3	12.6	6.2	12.1
	20 to 29 h	2.3	10.3	3.0	11.9	3.6	12.3	4.3	13.6	4.5	13.6	4.8	13.3	5.3	13.1	5.5	12.8
	30 to 34 h	2.3	6.5	2.5	7.0	3.0	7.7	3.4	8.7	3.7	9.4	3.9	9.7	4.4	9.7	4.6	10.2
	35 to 39 h	16.2	32.3	15.9	29.8	15.5	28.7	13.9	27.4	18.2	30.6	18.0	30.1	18.8	31.0	19.4	30.6
	40 h +	74.7	37.1	73.1	37.1	71.6	36.8	72.1	36.4	67.9	34.1	67.5	35.0	65.1	33.6	64.2	34.3
France	1 to 19 h	..	..	1.8	8.5	1.6	8.0	2.0	8.6	2.0	9.1	2.2	9.1	2.4	8.9	2.7	8.6
	20 to 29 h	..	..	3.3	13.3	3.1	13.6	4.0	16.0	3.2	15.0	3.0	14.1	3.3	13.7	3.8	13.5
	30 to 34 h	..	..	1.5	5.3	1.2	6.8	1.7	9.3	2.9	10.7	2.8	10.3	2.5	9.3	2.2	8.8
	35 to 39 h	..	..	60.9	56.1	62.6	55.7	64.1	51.8	68.4	52.5	56.8	48.3	54.4	47.0	56.3	48.9
	40 h +	..	..	32.6	16.7	31.5	15.9	28.2	14.3	23.4	12.7	35.2	18.3	37.4	21.1	34.9	20.3
Germany	1 to 19 h	..	..	0.6	7.3	1.0	9.9	1.9	13.7	3.0	18.3	4.9	21.5	5.5	20.6	5.9	18.3
	20 to 29 h	..	..	0.7	18.1	0.8	14.8	1.4	16.1	1.8	17.0	2.4	17.8	2.5	17.9	2.9	18.8
	30 to 34 h	..	..	0.3	4.2	0.4	5.2	0.9	6.3	1.0	6.9	2.2	8.6	2.1	9.9	2.5	11.6
	35 to 39 h	..	..	19.5	13.1	52.4	36.0	48.7	35.4	44.2	31.8	30.6	23.0	24.5	19.0	24.0	19.2
	40 h +	..	..	78.9	57.3	45.4	34.0	47.1	28.4	49.9	26.0	59.9	29.1	65.4	32.6	64.8	32.1
United Kingdom	1 to 19 h	..	..	2.6	24.4	3.5	23.9	4.7	23.7	4.6	20.6	5.2	19.6	6.0	19.7	5.5	17.4
	20 to 29 h	..	..	1.7	16.9	1.7	16.3	2.5	16.9	3.1	18.3	3.8	18.0	4.5	18.4	5.1	18.4
	30 to 34 h	..	..	1.5	6.7	1.6	6.2	1.7	6.8	1.9	7.4	2.4	8.3	2.8	9.5	3.4	10.1
	35 to 39 h	..	..	24.5	29.7	24.9	29.6	20.5	25.7	22.6	26.0	25.4	27.0	25.6	25.9	25.1	25.0
	40 h +	..	..	69.7	22.3	68.3	23.9	70.6	27.0	67.8	27.7	63.2	27.1	61.0	26.5	60.9	29.1

United States	1 to 19 h	4.0	10.4	4.1	9.7	4.0	9.2	3.4	8.3	3.3	7.4	3.2	7.2	3.6	7.2	3.2	6.8
	20 to 29 h	4.2	11.4	4.7	11.9	5.1	11.6	4.9	11.8	4.7	10.6	4.6	10.6	5.4	11.0	5.3	10.8
	30 to 34 h	2.1	6.2	2.5	6.3	2.7	6.7	2.7	6.8	2.5	6.4	2.6	6.5	3.6	7.0	3.2	6.4
	35 to 39 h	4.3	12.2	4.4	11.2	4.4	10.6	4.1	9.7	3.5	8.9	3.9	9.2	4.5	9.6	4.1	8.7
	40 h +	85.4	59.8	84.4	60.9	83.9	62.0	85.0	63.4	86.0	66.7	85.8	66.5	82.9	65.2	84.2	67.4
Brazil	1 to 19 h	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1.7	5.8	2.0	6.5	2.6	6.4	3.4*	7.3*
	20 to 29 h	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3.2	11.5	4.0	12.2	3.5	10.2	4.1*	10.7*
	30 to 34 h	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3.4	8.8	3.8	8.2	3.6	7.9	4.3*	8.4*
	35 to 39 h	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3.0	5.0	3.4	5.3	3.0	4.6	3.6*	5.0*
	40 h +	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	88.8	68.9	86.8	67.7	87.3	70.9	84.6*	68.6*

Source: OECD Stat
*Refers to 2015

Table 9 shows the incidence of employment by typical weekly hours worked divided into 5 hours bands: from 1 to 19 hours, from 20 to 29 hours, from 30 to 34 hours, from 35 to 39 hours and from 40 hours or more by sex, for dependent employment in the period 1981-2016 for Canada, France, Germany, United Kingdom, United States and Brazil. From 1981/6 to 2016, in France, the UK and the USA, the proportion of women in the 40-hour plus band increased (respectively 6.32 p.p., 6.79 p.p. and 7.58 p.p.) and decreased in the 35 to 39-hour band in those same countries by 7.27 p.p., 4.69 p.p. and 3.56 p.p., respectively. This data runs counter to the idea that flexible working time would help women to reconcile productive and reproductive work.

During the same period, the proportion of men in the 40-hour plus band dropped significantly in the UK (8.82 p.p.), Canada (10.46 p.p.), Germany (14.15 p.p.), and in a much shorter time span (2001 to 2016) decreased 4.15 p.p. in Brazil. Additionally, women's participation in the 40-hour plus band dropped 25.25 p.p., and increased 6.09 p.p.in the 35-39-hour band, 7.44 p.p. in the 30 to 35-hour band and 11.07 p.p. in the 1 to 19-hour band in Germany. And, finally, despite the expressive increase in Germany and Brazil (1.47 p.p. from 2001 to 2016), in all remaining countries included in this study women's ratio in the 1 to 19-hour band diminished.

The unequal division of part-time work is one of the most striking components of gendered working time inequality. Table 10 highlights part-time work is mostly carried out by women. More than 75% of those working part-time in Germany, France and the United Kingdom and 65% in the United States, Canada and Brazil are performed by women.

Table 10. Incidence of FTPT employment - Common definition - Men and women - Dependent employment - Annual

		1981		1986		1991		1996		2001		2006		2011		2016	
Country	Series	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
Canada	Full-time	93.2	75.9	91.5	74.0	90.1	73.2	89.5	72.4	89.8	74.1	89.4	74.9	88.4	74.3	88.2	75.1
	Part-time (pt)	6.8	24.1	8.5	26.0	9.9	26.8	10.5	27.6	10.2	25.9	10.6	25.1	11.6	25.7	11.8	24.9
	Gender share of pt	28.2	71.8	28.6	71.4	28.9	71.1	29.6	70.4	29.6	70.4	30.3	69.7	31.4	68.6	32.4	67.6
France	Full-time	..	..	94.9	77.1	95.3	77.8	94.0	75.1	94.8	75.9	94.8	76.8	94.3	77.4	93.4	78.0
	Part-time	..	..	5.1	22.9	4.7	22.2	6.0	24.9	5.2	24.1	5.2	23.2	5.7	22.6	6.6	22.0
	Gender share of pt	..	..	22.6	77.4	20.7	79.3	22.0	78.0	19.3	80.7	19.3	80.7	20.4	79.6	22.9	77.1
Germany	Full-time	..	..	98.7	74.6	98.2	75.3	96.7	70.2	95.2	64.7	92.7	60.8	92.0	61.5	91.2	62.9
	Part-time	..	..	1.3	25.4	1.8	24.7	3.3	29.8	4.8	35.3	7.3	39.2	8.0	38.5	8.8	37.1
	Gender share of pt	..	..	7.1	92.9	8.7	91.3	12.4	87.6	14.0	86.0	17.4	82.6	18.4	81.6	20.4	79.6
United Kingdom	Full-time	..	..	95.7	58.7	94.8	59.8	92.8	59.4	92.4	61.1	91.0	62.4	89.5	61.9	89.4	64.1
	Part-time	..	..	4.3	41.3	5.2	40.2	7.2	40.6	7.6	38.9	9.0	37.6	10.5	38.1	10.6	35.9
	Gender share of pt	..	..	11.5	88.5	12.9	87.1	16.3	83.7	17.3	82.7	19.8	80.2	21.9	78.1	23.2	76.8
United States	Full-time	91.8	78.2	91.2	78.4	90.9	79.3	91.7	79.9	92.0	82.0	92.2	82.2	91.0	81.9	91.5	82.4
	Part-time	8.2	21.8	8.8	21.6	9.1	20.7	8.3	20.1	8.0	18.0	7.8	17.8	9.0	18.1	8.5	17.6
	Gender share of pt	31.2	68.8	31.4	68.6	32.3	67.7	31.1	68.9	32.5	67.5	32.2	67.8	34.4	65.6	34.2	65.8
Brazil	Full-time	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	95.1	82.7	93.9	81.3	93.9	83.4	92.5*	82.0*
	Part-time	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	4.9	17.3	6.1	18.7	6.1	16.6	7.5*	18.0*
	Gender share of pt	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	27.6	72.4	29.1	70.9	31.0	69.0	33.2*	66.8*

Source: OECD Stat
*Refers to 2015

Table 10 shows the incidence of full-time and part-time employment by sex and the gender share of part-time employment for dependent employment in the period 1981-2016 for Canada, France, Germany, United Kingdom, United States and Brazil. As noted before, there are more women than men working part-time. However, Table 11 displays women are more likely to choose part-time employment than men, since the share of involuntary part-timers as a percentage of part-time men is higher in all countries in our sample.

Table 11. Share of involuntary part-timers as % of part-time employment - Total employment - Annual

		1981	1986	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016
Country	**Series**								
Canada	Men	17.8	27.4	26.1	36.5	27.9	25.9	29.7	27.4
	Women	16.0	25.2	24.4	33.6	24.9	23.0	25.9	23.7
France	Men	..	..	..	52.3	35.9	31.9	30.0	43.7
	Women	..	..	..	37.1	22.7	28.2	28.5	41.1
Germany	Men	..	11.1	6.6	15.5	15.8	29.1	20.6	15.6
	Women	..	6.8	5.3	11.3	11.2	18.7	13.6	10.0
United	Men	..	25.6	15.8	25.4	17.8	15.6	30.3	23.4
Kingdom	Women	..	7.9	6.7	9.7	6.9	6.4	13.0	11.2
United	Men	..	..	..	..	5.2	5.7	10.4	8.7
States	Women	..	..	..	..	3.9	4.4	8.5	6.5

Source: OECD Stat
*Refers to 2015

Table 11 shows the share of involuntary part-timers as percentage of part-time employment by sex fortotal employment in the period 1981-2016 for Canada, France, Germany, United Kingdom and United States. The incidence of men involuntarily working part-time decreased between 1996 and 2011 and increased thereafter. The United Kingdom showed a significant increase between 2005 and 2010 and a small reduction in between 2011/2016. Involuntarily part-time work also increased in the United States, although less significantly between 2006/2011 and was maintained at roughly the

same level until 2016. The increase of men's involuntary part-time work in the analyzed period is an indicator of increasing precariousness.

Women's involuntary part-time work increased from 2006 onwards. It is also possible to observe increases in France, Italy, the United Kingdom and in the United States. In Germany there is a reversal to the 2001 rates.

This paper argues that the reasons why women are more inclined than men to choose a part-time job cannot be understood exclusively within the productive sphere, but rather that women choose to work less hours to reconcile productive and reproductive work.

Reproductive labor inequality

According to Teixeira (2013), reproductive labor is divided into: biological reproduction, referring to the procreation and care of children; reproduction of the labor force, associated with the daily maintenance of the labor force, including education, socialization and labor ideology; and social reproduction, which implies the transmission and access to control of economic resources from one generation to another through institutions, especially families. Reproductive labor is understood as unpaid labor carried out in the domestic sphere to reproduce the family or the work force, both care and domestic work. Daily tasks such as cleaning, washing dishes, washing clothes, buying and preparing food, taking care of children and the elderly, the emotional labor that involves conception and organization of household needs–all that plays a fundamental role in the reproduction of the workforce and thus can reduce the cost of wages for capitalists (MARX, 2010; OLIVEIRA, 2013). In this sense, unpaid reproductive work is essential for the reproduction of the capitalist system itself, despite this work has been systematically undervalued economically and socially.

Reproductive work is not paid nor even recognized as work, but the costs of labor reproduction are absorbed by women. If reproductive work was economically valued, it would increase the necessary labor time required

to remunerate the labor force, thus production costs would increase dramatically. Therefore, it can be affirmed that the reproductive work carried out almost exclusively by women sustains the maintenance of wages at current levels. In this sense, women's unpaid work subsidizes their families as well as employers because it reduces the cost of the labor required for production by allowing the reproduction of the labor force at a lower cost (IPEA, 2014; 2016).

Unlike productive working time, which has been substantially reduced with the introduction of labor-saving technologies, there has been no significant similar reduction in the demand for reproductive work, as it is labor-intensive. While the current labor market demands flexibility and total availability, reproductive work is highly rigid. Children's school hours, meal preparation, personal and home hygiene and care for the sick – all follow very inflexible schedules (GIBB, 2017).

ILO's (2016) Report "Women at work" compares time spent by men and women in productive and reproductive work. In developed countries men spend an average of 5:42 hours per day in paid work and 1:54 in unpaid work, while women spend 4:39 hours a day in paid work and 3:30 in unpaid work. In developing countries men spend 6:36 hours per day in paid work and 1:31 in unpaid work, while women spend 5:09 hours a day in paid work and 4:31 in unpaid work.

The volume of reproductive labor intensified from the 1980s onwards due to the reduction of social welfare policies linked to the implementation of neoliberal policies in all countries (FORNAZIER & OLIVEIRA, 2013). Thus, the work of caring for children, the sick, and the elderly that was previously done by the state was passed on to women (NOBRE, 2004).

Table 12. Time spent in unpaid, paid and total work by sex - selected OECD countries

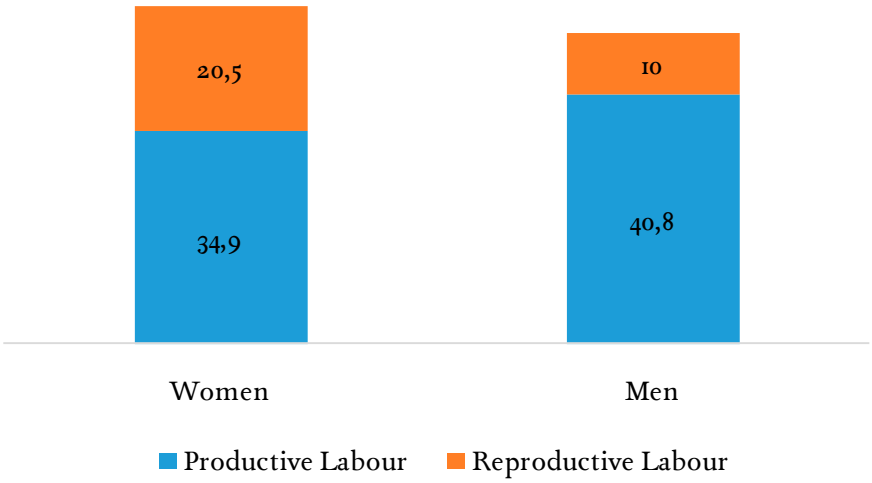
Time spent by sex - minutes per day				
Country	Sex	Unpaid work	Paid work	Total work (paid+unpaid)
Canada	M	159,6	341,4	501,0
	W	253,6	267,0	520,6
France	M	142,7	233,4	376,0
	W	232,5	172,5	405,0
Germany	M	163,8	281,6	445,4
	W	268,8	180,9	449,7
United	M	140,6	297,2	437,9
Kingdom	W	257,8	196,6	454,4
USA	M	148,6	322,4	471,0
	W	242,1	241,9	484,0
OECD	M	137,6	328,5	466,1
Average	W	271,7	215,3	487,0

Source: OECD

Table 12 exhibits the time spent in unpaid, paid and total work by sex for Canada, France, Germany, United Kingdom, United States and OECD average. Table 12 and Graph 1 show that in Canada, Germany, France, the UK and the USA, women work longer than men in both unpaid and total work. Women dedicate around 100 more hours per year than men in reproductive labor, while men only work more hours in paid work.

According to the IBGE (2015), in Brazil 51% of men with paid jobs declared having performed unpaid domestic work, while 91.9% of women with paid jobs also care for the house and other family members. Graph 1 shows that total working time for women with paid jobs was 55.1h per week (34.9h in paid labor and 20.5h in domestic labor), while men's was 50.5h per week (40.8h in paid labor and 10.0h in domestic labor).

Graph 1. Working time in productive and reproductive labor for men and women with paid jobs - Brazil, 2015



Source: IBGE

Graph 1 shows the time spent in productive and reproductive labor for men and women with paid jobs in Brazil in 2015.This picture has not changed very much in recent years. According to the IBGE (2018), in 2017 Brazilian women dedicated 20.5h per week to domestic labor, while men dedicated 10h. The conflict between productive and reproductive labor is intensifying in the current phase of capitalism because, on the one hand, women are entering the paid labor market (by choice or necessity) as companies demand more working time flexibility from both men and women, while, on the other hand, reproductive labor time is not flexible, has not decreased significantly nor has it been more equally shared between men and women.

The unequal sexual division of domestic labor directly impacts women's quality of life. They work longer hours, have less free time, generally have jobs with less social prestige, face many more challenges when pursuing a career, and receive lower wages. ILO (2016) estimated that, at the global level, the gender wage gap is 23%. This difference cannot be explained by age, education or working time. This same ILO study projected that

70 years are necessary to close the wage gap between men and women at the current rate of reduction.

It is understood that the flexibilization of working time imposed by capitalism in its current phase demands total availability of time for work, which harms women even further, since women can either fulfill this requirement and, therefore, take a double burden or, if they do not, they are more likely to get the most precarious jobs, or worse, to be unemployed. It reinforces the sexual division labor and contributes to maintenance of inequality between men and women.

Conclusion

Analyzing the hour bands data from 1981 to 2016, it was possible to observe the increasing inequality in working time among workers. The redistribution of those with paid jobs in the different hours' bands was significantly over the last 35 years. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that part of the decrease in average annual working time is due to an increasingly unequal redistribution of work, rather than a general decrease. Also, it is possible to affirm that the reason behind this change is that the flexibilization of working time has been implementedand intensified in the countries analyzed.

Flexibilization is a capital-driven strategy to increase the use of labor time and pay strictly for the time used, minimizingidle hours while externalizing costs. This strategy is consistent with advances of neoliberalism and a questioning of the welfare system or more social democratic arrangement.

Working time flexibility affects workers negatively, regardless of national boundaries, by creating a more unequal and competitive environment and reducing the possibility of workers' collective action.

Regarding gender, the increase in inequality of working time reinforces the uneven division of paid and unpaid work. Women are subject to more flexible schedules in their productive work, while their long and

rigid reproductive working hour schedules remained unchanged. Men did not increase the time worked in the reproductive sphere even in cases where their productive working time decreased. This thus contributes to the double burden women face and magnifies the role they play in the reproduction of the capitalist system, either by paid labor (generating surplus), or unpaid labor (reducing the cost of reproduction of the working force), and mitigating the real unemployment rates, as part of the potential feminine labor force excludes itself from the labor market.

Beyond the discussion on the effects of the polarization of working time for all workers, it is important to emphasize the need for public policies to tackle the gender differentials in this sphere for three reasons: i) to reduce the amount of time spent by women on reproductive work (such as daycare centers, full-time schools or long-term care institutions for the elderly); ii) to increase the valuing of reproductive work, which, as the data shows, is a recognized source of exploitation of women in the capitalist system and iii) to change the cultural status quo by incentivizing a more egalitarian sexual division of reproductive labor, including increasing paternity leaves, promoting public campaigns that reinforce the need to share reproductive labor and forbidding/discouraging the reinforcement of gender roles in the media, school system and other places where women are depicted as doing household work, while men perform productive work.

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