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CAPITALIST PERIPHERIES: PERSPECTIVES ON PRECARISATION FROM THE GLOBAL SOUTH AND NORTH

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Work, Development and Inequalities in Brazil[1]

Marcia de Paula Leite, Carlos Salas[2]

Over the past 12 years, Brazil has made important social and economic advances in terms of rising income levels, diminishing poverty levels, a better income distribution, greater access to education, job creation, greater social and labour rights enforcement and thus a growing number of people enjoying these rights (ILO 2014; Weisbrot et al. 2014). As Brazil is a country with a long tradition of persistent inequalities, even with these advances many problems remain to be solved (Morais/Saad-Filho 2012). In the middle of this development process, the persistence of bad quality jobs has been the focus of rather polarised academic discussions. Some analysis highlights the fact that there have been improvements in labour terms in recent years (Baltar et al. 2010; Mattei 2011), while other studies emphasise trends towards more precarious work, especially related to the processes of outsourcing and the diffusion of jobs considered as atypical work as well as the persistence of gender and race inequalities in the workplace (Druck 2011; Araujo/Lombardi 2013).

In this paper we discuss these issues using a two-pronged analysis. The first element is a general discussion on the links between globalisation and labour and the notion of precarious work and casualisation. The second element of our analysis deals with national statistics and information from our recent research on occupation, labour regulation and outsourcing, stressing the links with economic policies implemented in the country over the last decade.

Our starting point is to consider that, along with the general trends of the current process of globalisation on labour, there is a need to analyse the national situation also. This means examining the particular ways in

which different countries insert themselves into globalisation, a process that implies different consequences for labour.

This text is organised into four parts: the first part develops a theoretical and methodological discussion on globalisation and labour as well as precariousness and casualisation; the second part focuses on the debate around the current development model and its consequences for labour; the third part is directed to the analysis of data on the evolution of Brazilian occupational structure in recent years. In the final section we present some conclusions.

1. Globalisation and labour

Studies on the changes in labour in the globalised world have underlined, as a rule, the different forms of flexibility encountered by workers, which explain a paradigm shift from the previous expansion of wage labour and the rights associated with it (Castel 2003; Harvey 2005; Boltansky/Chiapello 2009; Pialoux/Beaud 2009). Caused by the change in accumulation mode, these trends are based on production flexibility and are therefore structural. They have generated new forms of business organisation, based on lean production schemes and the process of outsourcing production and labour, usually accompanied by precarious contracts and bad working conditions. They have also diffused new forms of labour organisation and management based on the requirements of quick and high returns on investment, which stimulate a process of labour casualisation.

Although these trends are general, their expression in a specific country also depends on the history of that country and on the correlation of forces between the various social actors in conflict and on their capacity for action and mobilisation. As a result, the real impact of those trends is also dependent on policy decisions that can be more or less favourable to labour. For example, the outsourcing process has effects on workers and labour in general, that depend on the way in which each country regulates labour (Castree et al. 2004).

The discussion on the role of national arrangements, in the context of globalisation and the dominance of neoliberal theory, has generated a fierce controversy between two approaches. There are those who believe that

there is no more space for national regulation and there are also others who believe that, although the high mobility of the capital caused by globalisation put constraints on national policy, the internal dynamics of nations (social movements, the specifics of each national state, the past trajectory of societies and institutions engendered in them) remain important in defining the paths followed by different countries (Weiss 2003). This discussion is neither new in sociology nor irrelevant. It was also intensely pursued in a previous period of capitalist accumulation, when Fordism expanded through the industrialised economies. Although many studies have helped to understand that reality by stressing its universal aspects (Braverman 1974), those researchers that tried to show how those general tendencies expressed themselves in different national economies (see Burawoy 1985) found a complex reality where national characteristics made a difference in the development process. Although recurrent, this discussion comes back to life today with an unusual strength because of the homogenising tendencies of national realities brought about by globalisation.

A perspective that focuses on national dynamic is especially important for the analysis of emerging economies, for which the search for alternative paths in relation to international trends is crucial for coping with chronic problems of poverty and social inequality. As Boschi (2011: 13) states: "despite the constraints that globalisation imposes on the periphery economies, development processes rest on national dynamics". A similar point is raised in Hirst et al. (2009), a text that examines critically the assertion of the existence of a true globalisation, in the sense of a process that subsumes and subordinates national level processes. As they show, we are far away from such a state of things at present.

Thus, when we take into account social relationships and the dynamics of actors within social conflict, we emphasise the ability of social actors to express their wishes and needs on the political agenda and to generate alternative ways from those of the dominant powers; in short, to put the mark of their struggles upon social reality. In fact, it is an approach that assumes casualisation trends cannot be seen as inexorable, or as purely economic or technologically determined, but should also be viewed as the result of political dynamics.

Although the importance of political dynamics is widely accepted, the theoretical standpoint that stresses the general tendencies of globalisation

has ended up acquiring prominence today. The deterministic character of this interpretation and its denial of the ability of social actors to intervene in national policy decisions ultimately supersedes the analysis of national dynamics, and ends up highlighting global regularities rather than seeking specific national characteristics (Hirst et al. 2009).

This is the trap that we wish to avoid in this text, aiming to revive a perspective that looks at the internal dynamics of the country, as well as the limits and potentialities of these dynamics. We thereby stress that external trends are shaped into different realities that have specific histories and different paths, in the course of which social movements constitute themselves and become active and institutions are shaped. Specific social realities are difficult to understand without taking these movements into account.

This point of view has led us to question the applicability of the casualisation concept in the Brazilian context. As a concept created in the context of developed countries, we believe that it does not have the same explanatory power in our case.

In order to discuss the precariousness of work, we need a definition of the phenomenon that allows us to analyse it with a minimum of rigor. Although this is not a simple task, we will use some elements of the discussion by Leite (2011). As was stressed in that text, the primary consideration in the analysis of this process is to differentiate between precariousness and casualisation, noting that they cannot be taken as synonyms. Casualisation is a relational process that has to be defined by taking into account changes during a specific historical period, while precariousness concerns certain forms of occupational conditions that fall short of the rights historically acquired by the working class. Whereas the concept of casualisation (the process of becoming more precarious) conveys the idea of decay, degeneration, or loss associated with previously acquired labour rights, that of precariousness does not carry the idea of damage or loss. A particular type of work can be precarious, and yet feature more satisfactory indicators in social terms than had presented in earlier periods, a situation that tends to be rather common in less developed countries.

An initial meaning attributed to precarious work is to consider it as work that differs in any way from the paradigm of homogeneous and stable employment that prevailed in developed countries until the 1970s, as Castel

(2003) shows. In refining the concept, it is helpful to recall the contribution of Gery and Janine Rodgers (1989), arguably one of the most important efforts already made within the literature on the subject. In the important state of the art section that opens the book, Gery Rodgers highlights the different dimensions of precariousness: (i) the degree of instability; (ii) the degree of workers' control over working conditions, wages, rhythm, etc.; (iii) the protection of the work through legislation or from collective bargaining agreements, and; (iv) income associated with the job. For the author therefore, the concept of precariousness involves instability, lack of protection, insecurity with regard to social protection and economic and social vulnerability. Yet the author w'arns that identifying these dimensions does not eliminate ambiguity, since "it is the combination of these that identifies precarious work" (Rodgers/Rodgers 1989: 3).

Here it is also important to note that the practices associated with precariousness are not new; rather they are usually older, re-signified practices, which were generally in place from the 1970s, promoting a process of social regression. In his account of European countries, Rodgers also identifies the growth of precarious work and points out the different forms taken by such growth in specific countries. The author emphasises the diffusion of almost all characteristics associated with precarious employment, such as temporary, part-time or home-based work, as well as self-employment throughout the European Economic Community (Rodgers/Rodgers 1989: 6-9). Thus we can say that the labour situation in European countries may be described as experiencing a process of casualisation (or precarisation) as well discussed by Castel (2003) to explain the French case.

According to Rodgers, the structural nature of instability is evident when taking into account several important conditions of the labour market. These conditions include unemployment, as it tends to relate to the most unstable, insecure and temporary jobs. Other elements include productive restructuring, which disseminates outsourced, insecure and short-term work, the institutional framework (the changing role of the state and the labour legislation, which tends to deregulate labour rights) and workers' resistance, which has been diminished by the weakening of trade unions. As trade unions lose their strength, precarious employment reaches primarily certain sectors of the labour force upon which employers

are better able to impose wages, working conditions and discontinuities in terms of hiring (Rodgers/Rodgers 1989: 9-13).

This theoretical endeavour around the concepts of precariousness and casualisation is important to understand in the labour trends in Latin America, and specifically in Brazil, where work has never ceased to be precarious, although this does not allow us to talk about casualisation of work in general terms. The differentiation of such concepts does not enable us to speak of precariousness in reference to working situations, which, although not resembling the stable and homogeneous labour model, have been improving in terms of associated salary, stability and rights. These are precarious jobs, but they may not necessarily have entered into a process of casualisation.

In this sense, we agree with Ramalho when he points out the challenges to the current Brazilian sociology of work, highlighting the inability of the conceptual instruments used within a literature emerging from the reality of industrialised societies to capture the complexity of a different reality; the inability of concepts created in the context of a formal labour market, to "explain the specificity of the employment, the labour market with the brand of informality, the late industrialisation process and, consequently, different characteristics assumed by the trade union organisation" (Ramalho 2013: 23).

In fact in European countries and in the United States, especially in the post-war period, the development of a wage society meant the diffusion of stable and permanent forms of employment, accompanied by an important range of labour rights. By contrast, in Brazil, precarious work without access to labour rights persisted during the industrial development process, creating a huge group of workers who were always inserted precariously in the occupational structure.

On the other hand, the institutional advancement created by Brazilian social movements in the 1980s allowed the institutions of popular sectors to continue acting and exerting pressure upon the government in subsequent years. Thus, casualisation trends (such as those associated with outsourcing and labour flexibility) have been countered by improvements in labour market conditions, as well as policies that improve labour regulation, although the latter also coexist with flexibilising trends.

If we take into account that the concept of casualisation makes sense only if used in a relational way to indicate a deteriorating condition, there is a clear conceptual imprecision when we try to apply it to the analysis of a complex reality such as that of present-day Brazil. In fact, we consider that the question of whether there is or is not a process of labour casualisation in Brazil is not the main issue. It is more important to analyse a social reality that has become more complex in recent years, given the presence of features that show an important process of social development coexisting with many aspects of social regression. We consider it inadequate to describe the current historical period in this labour market, which is going through a process of positive restructuring, as the 'casualisation' of the labour market in Brazil. We address these questions in the following sections, in which we aim to analyse labour in Brazil, starting with a brief discussion of the development model.

2. The development model

The question of development is present in Latin American sociology from its inception in the last century. Faced with the reality of developed countries, sociology as a discipline sought to discuss the transition from a rural and traditional to an urban and modern society, based on the modernisation theory. Such transitions from rural to urban, or from traditional to modern, were understood as linear, uniform and unavoidable processes that would eventually lead all societies to converge, with the economic and social conditions of developed countries.

This sociological interpretation was strongly criticised in later years because of its simplifying assumption that complex processes of social change could be explained by derivation from general explanatory models, seen as valid for any reality. This optimism, however, can be understood in terms of its coexistence with the national developmentalism of the years 1950–1960, during which Latin American countries developed by applying an import substitution model, anchored in the strong growth of the global capitalist economy occurring during the post-war years, with the tariff protection of our nascent industry and strong state intervention.

Brazil is one of the Latin American countries that advanced the farthest along this development path. Achieving high rates of economic growth through this period, the country reached the 1970s with a broad and integrated industrial base, especially for the consumer durables and non-durable goods industries. It should be noted that the integration of the general population within the development process was accomplished through work, and particularly registered work[3]. As explained by Santos (1979), the existence of a huge number of workers with no access to labour rights allowed the country to be urbanised and industrialised, while keeping most of its workers away from the rights pertaining to citizenship. The model excluded not only the rural population but also a huge number of urban workers who were employed as unregistered wage labourers, self-employed workers, workers in small businesses, as well as domestic workers or those in activities geared towards self-employment.

This highly exclusionary model produced a social structure characterised by the presence of a huge mass of workers existing at the fringes of the activities that fuelled the development process. It was based on a complex relationship between the various sectors of the economy where, as Oliveira (1972) showed, the development of the 'modern' sector was sustained by the 'backward' sector, as the latter provided low cost products, allowing the wages of modern sector workers to remain relatively low. In the 1970s, the model resulted in a general process of social exclusion that had reached dramatic levels by the end of the decade. This situation explains the fact that the country had one of the greatest income concentrations in the world.

In the early 1960s, a social and political crisis ensued that eventually turned into an economic crisis. With the 1964 military coup, the model survived for more than a decade of economic growth accompanied by high levels of income concentration and no wage growth. However, this development model finally ended in the early 1980s. After a decade of economic instability, by the beginning of the next decade new political and economic trends were imposed with the strengthening of neoliberal principles embraced by the core countries in response to the open crisis present since the beginning of the previous decade. Under the economic policies inspired by the Washington Consensus (Fine/Jomo KS 2006), the country

began to adopt privatisation measures, public spending restrictions and trade liberalisation, among other rules included in the Consensus.

For Brazil, as well as other Latin American nations, this disruption of the development process was calamitous in social terms: rates of unemployment and precarious forms of work rose dramatically, while the average real wage and percentage of registered working population dropped. Concomitantly, social inequalities, income concentration and levels of poverty and misery in the population increased. This situation would only change in the following decade, when new economic trends at the international level began to favour Latin American countries and new political influence rose in the region. The beginning of an international economic situation favourable to Latin American countries, driven by a strong demand for commodities produced in the region, facilitated the action of social actors clamouring for changes in economic and social policies, as well as for the problems of the least privileged social groups, historically left out of development, to be addressed.

Clearly, one would need to consider that the Brazilian social movement experienced a setback in the 1990s, having had a significant upsurge during the 1980s, one of whose more relevant advances includes the 1988 Constitution. Many of these advances were not put into practice, however, due to the neoliberal wave that took over the country during the 1990s and put the social movement on the defensive. Meanwhile, most of the institutions that were created and strengthened in the 1980s (especially trade unions and those related to feminists and the black population) continued acting during the1990s and were strong enough not only to elect a new government in 2003 but also to apply pressure to it in order to ensure it met their demands (Gohn 2010).

As detailed in the next section, this is the context in which the union movement managed to negotiate with the government a new policy establishing the minimum wage and the movement of women and black people through the Secretariat for Women's Policies and the Secretariat for Promotion of Racial Equality, which put forward a set of policies to promote gender and race equality at work.

In fact, when the political situation changed with the coming to power of political groups opposed to the neoliberal trends, policy measures addressed the strengthening of the state and the resumption of economic

growth. At the same time, policies were enacted aiming to reverse the social exclusion process evident during previous periods. Moving away from the recommendations proposed by neoliberal economic theory, the government sought support in theoretical tools aimed at a new development strategy supported on the one hand by the state and a strong market and, on the other, by a set of coordinated policies necessary for the realisation of a national development programme (Mattei 2011: 15).

This is the context in which the new development model came into being: characterised both by the action of social movements and by the institutionalisation they had won, and the economic trends of international capitalism. The specific way in which the new model is expressed in Brazil has features that characterise it as a form of distributive developmentalism led by the state ('social developmentalism', to use the terminology of Carneiro et al. 2012; Bastos 2012). It therefore has an important social orientation that was not part and parcel of national developmentalism.

The impacts of this process on labour are of enormous importance, producing a significant movement towards better conditions in the labour market. However, this does not mean serious problems that needed to be addressed to improve the living conditions of Brazilian workers were absent. They represent the inheritance of a social structure marked by a huge amount of precarious work and a high income inequality along with inequalities based on gender, race and skin colour, as well as by the emergence of new economic issues that impact on work, as discussed below.

Note that improvements shown in national labour data do not invalidate the existence of a set of general structural trends of this stage of capitalist accumulation that have important effects on labour. The first of these is the trend towards outsourcing work, which, as made explicit in the first section, relates to new forms of business organisation and has been widely applied in the country. According to many studies (Leite 2011; Dau et al. 2009), this trend has had important effects on labour precarisation and could spread further if the business sector wins the ongoing dispute around changes to the current legislation (Biavaschi 2013).

The second concerns the organisation and management of work, which are also a result of the current context of capitalist accumulation and the preponderant influence acquired by financial capital. This has made firms the hostages of financial capital, subjecting them to its short-

term logic, that has consistently led to the adoption of a set of cost-reduction techniques based on redundancies, strictly applied production goals, the requirements of involvement with the company and adherence to its objectives (Boltanski/Chiapello 2009; Gaulejac 2007) among other ways of establishing control over workers. Clearly such policies, which have spread in both private and public companies, also point toward a process of precarisation of labour, especially in terms of working conditions and occupational health.

The third general trend at this stage of accumulation refers to labour regulation, which has also been affected by corporate pressures to pursue major changes, especially in the area of flexibilisation. However, there is no clear trend in this case but rather contradictory trends, showing gains and losses for the workers, depending on the capacity to exert pressure of the different social actors involved in each dispute (Krein 2013).

This means that there is some scope for the national state and its economic policy remains of paramount importance in terms of defining different forms of social conformity (Dicken 2011: chapter 6). It also means that there is space for resistance and action by social movements. In fact, these remain fundamental in defining the nature of Latin American societies, which may have very significant peculiarities.

3. Work and occupation

Changes in the occupational structure and working conditions observed in the last decade are the result not only of economic growth but also explicitly of policies geared to the structuring of the labour market taken by the new government elected in 2003. Among those policies, we find an increased vigilance on the part of the Ministry of Labour against the use of irregular labour; action by the Labour Fiscal Office; and the ongoing regulation of paid domestic work. It is also important to note the creation of the Super-Simples[4], which resulted in MSE (micro and small enterprises) workers to have access to labour, and the policy to increase the real value of the minimum wage, which, as discussed below, has important effects on the wage structure.

The impacts of these new political and economic trends upon the structure of occupation are extremely significant. They are expressed in the data on employment levels, income, increases in registered labour work and a decrease in the number of unregistered workers, although there are continuing problems obtaining relevant figures for self-employment.

A process that epitomises progress since 2003 concerns the decrease in unemployment, particularly in major metropolitan areas of the country. As can be seen, the decrease in unemployment nationally is quite significant, from 9.3% in 2005 to 6.2% in 2012. It should be noted, however, that female unemployment rates are consistently higher than male rates, although the drop in women's unemployment rates (4.0 percentage points) is greater than the drop in men's rates (2.5 percentage points). Likewise, unemployment among blacks is consistently higher than among whites, even though the fall (3.2 percentage points) in the former rate is slightly greater than the one for white workers (3.0 percentage points).

	2005	**2012**
Sex		
Male	7.1	4.6
Female	12.2	8.2
Total	9.3	6.2
Race		
White	8.2	5.2
Non-white	10.3	7.1
Total	9.2	6.2

Table 1: Unemployment rate by sex and race, Brazil
Source: Own calculations based on IBGE, National Household Sample Survey (PNAD)

	2004		2012		2004–2012
	Absolute	**%**	**Absolute**	**%**	**Growth rate (%)**
Agriculture	17,879,703.00	21.2	13,781,590.00	14.6	-22.9
Other industrial activities	679,673.00	0.8	720,825.00	0.8	6.1
Manufacturing	11,659,802.00	13.8	12,493,318.00	13.2	7.1
Construction	5,340,487.00	6.3	8,243,623.00	8.7	54.4
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	14,586,805.00	17.3	16,836,341.00	17.8	15.4
Accommodation and food service activities	3,010,853.00	3.6	4,523,135.00	4.8	50.2
Transport, storage and communications	3,872,493.00	4.6	5,266,381.00	5.6	36.0
Public administration	4,192,186.00	5.0	5,179,232.00	5.5	23.5
Education, health and social work	7,380,265.00	8.7	9,104,624.00	9.6	23.4
Paid domestic work	6,452,374.00	7.6	6,418,859.00	6.8	-0.5
Other community, social and personal activities	3,483,557.00	4.1	3,761,432.00	4.0	8.0
Other activities	5,678,104.00	6.7	8,312,357.00	8.8	46,4
Undefined activities	226,365.00	0.3	71,169.00	0.1	-68.6
Total	84,442,667.00	100	94,712,886.00	100	12.2

Table 2: Workers distribution by economic activity
Source: IBGE, National Household Sample Survey (PNAD)

Analysis of the occupation structure by economic sector reveals two important trends: on the one hand, a significant reduction in agricultural labour (which tends to provide low-paying jobs) and some significant growth, with a decrease in recent years, in domestic work (also characterised by low pay). On the other hand, they reveal a less auspicious reality, in terms of a slow expansion in the industrial sector, which traditionally generates the best jobs in terms of qualification and remuneration. These data might indicate a worrying trend of de-industrialisation in the country, as suggested by several recent analyses (Barbosa 2013; Mattoso 2013; Beluzzo 2013). It is important to take into account that the new forms of production organisation, with reduced company size and the externalisation process that accompanies it, has tended to decrease proportionally the numbers of industrial jobs in almost all parts of the world. It is worth noting, however, that in the Brazilian case, studies of industry have pointed out that the rapid and uncontrolled process of trade liberalisation undertaken in the 1990s excluded the country from the production circuits of the most dynamic sectors, This situation, which the changes in economic orientation started in 2003 were not able to reverse, certainly has an impact on industrial employment (Krein/Baltar 2013).

It must be noted, however, that the slow expansion in manufacturing employment has not been reflected in the average labour income, which has shown upward movement across all economic sectors and occupations.

	2004	2012	Growth rate (%)
Waged worker with labour card	1,121	1,433	27.8
Military	1,821	2,514	38.1
Public employee	1,754	2,435	38.8
Waged worker without labour card	610	918	50.5
Domestic worker with labour card	518	811	56.6
Domestic worker without labour card	303	487	60.7
Self-employed	839	1,305	55.5
Employer	3,263	4,503	38.0
Total	**908**	**1,352**	**48.9**

Table 3: Monthly average wages (2012 prices)
Source: Own calculations based on IBGE, National Household Sample Survey (PNAD) and IBGE, Consumer Price Index (IPC)

The positive development in terms of income can be considered as the result of two processes; on the one hand, the fall in the unemployment rate, which improves the bargaining conditions of employees, and on the other hand, the increase in the real value of the minimum wage, which, as was made explicit earlier, has an impact not only on the lower levels of the wage structure, but increases the wage floor for all categories of workers. Another important effect is derived from the minimum wage growth, as pensions and retirement payments are regulated by the minimum wage.

It is also worth noting that the increase in real wages occurs both for women and for men, and for both blacks and whites, but also that it is more significant for women than for men and more for blacks than for whites.

	2004	2012
Sex		
Male	1,070.98	1,552.01
Female	681.61	1,080.84
Race		
White	1,179.72	1,746.69
Non-white	612.72	1,001.60

Table 4: Monthly average wages by sex and race (2012 prices)
Source: Own calculations based on IBGE, National Household Sample Survey (PNAD) and IBGE, Consumer Price Index (IPC)

Between 2004 and 2012, the increase in the average income of women (58.5%) significantly exceeded that of men (44.4%), which supported a decrease in the difference between the average income of men and women (moving from 36% in 2004 to approximately 30% in 2012).

We may assume that the efforts of women to participate in the labour market, including attaining higher levels of education than men, is an important element in reducing this difference. It is also worth noting that confronting this inequality has been the subject of special attention from recent governments and is a central objective of multi-year policy planning (Leite/Garcia 2012). Although many of the policies geared towards the promotion of gender-related equality of opportunity have only a weak impact on paid employment, given that most of them focus on promoting entrepreneurship, it is possible that they have also had an effect on women's income.

In the case of black citizens, it is important to consider that the system of self-declaration adopted by the Brazilian social statistics on race may be amplifying the levels of growth shown in the data for this population, when considering its historical evolution. It should be noted, however, that other data concerning the occupational structure also point to an even more significant improvement of the situation of black citizens, as set out below.

In relation to income inequalities by race, the gains are also significant: while the average income of the white population increased by 50.5% between 2004 and 2012, it grew by 63.5% for the non-white population during the same period.

It is also worth noting that the changing structure of employment by gender reveals an important trend: women remain concentrated in the agricultural sector, trade, education, health and social services, and in domestic services. These data evidence the enduring character of structural gender inequality.

These data show that a major consequence of the gender division of labour (which assigns the reproductive activities to women, and those related to production to men) still stands strong in Brazilian society: occupational segregation by gender. This has been repeatedly highlighted (Souza Lobo 1991; Bruschini 2007; Lombardi 2009) at the same time as an obstacle to women's autonomy and a promoter of gender inequality in the workplace, in view of the devaluation of activities considered feminine.

Regarding the changing structure of employment by race, data indicate a very large increase in the employment levels of the black population, compared to whites: while the occupation of the latter increases by approximately 1.5%, black citizens' employment grows by 23%. This sharp increase in the employment levels of the black population, make its presence grow in all sectors of activity, with the exception of agriculture, where it decreases, although at a lower rate (just over 20%) than among whites (about 50%).

Further evidence of an improvement in occupational conditions can be found in the significant real growth of the minimum wage. As the table below shows, the minimum wage increased approximately 64% in the period 2004–2012. This increase is the result of an explicit policy to recover the purchasing power of the minimum wage, which was negotiated with the Brazilian unions.

The positive evolution of the occupational structure is also evident when analysing the data on occupational status. Indeed, as shown in table 9, there is a very significant increase of registered employed persons (over 45%) and civil servants (approximately 25%), in parallel with a decrease in the number of unregistered workers. The same trend is shown in the increased numbers of domestic workers with a formal contract and the concomitant reduction of those who are unregistered. Perhaps

this movement is closely related to incentives to formalise employment, promoted since 2006, involving income tax reductions related to the employer's expenses incurred through formalisation. It is also highlighted by the significant decrease in unpaid work (over 50%), while the increase in self-employment reveals a worrying increase in a sector of workers without protection, who usually work in low-productivity activities.

An important trend shown by these figures, when analysed by gender, is a more significant increase in registered jobs among women than among men, although the decrease in unregistered work is less pronounced among women than among men. However, the data on unregistered paid domestic work also reveals an improvement in the working conditions of women, with such work showing a decrease of almost 6%, in the case of women while remaining practically stable for men.

Data broken down by race are especially interesting, as the growth rates of registered jobs among non-whites (in excess of 75%) are higher than among whites (just over 26%). Jobs in the civil service also increase more significantly among non-white citizens (almost 40%) than among whites (less than 15%), although unregistered employment decreases significantly among whites (20%) while it is still increasing among black citizens (at a rate of nearly 4%). Even if unregistered work, unregistered domestic work, and self-employed work among blacks increased, this fact does not necessarily indicate a worsening in their labour conditions. In the past, many poor and in particular black people were excluded from work altogether. As job creation gained strength, the overall numbers of new job positions includes both registered and non-registered jobs, and these numbers were large enough to incorporate many non-whites into the Brazilian labour market.

The data examined and discussed above, show an improvement in the occupational structure of the country, which has had important effects in reducing income inequality in Brazil, as expressed in the evolution of the Gini index. This index shows a remarkable decrease between 2004 and 2012, going from 0,612 at the start of that period to 0,530 in 2012.

Further improvements in employment and income levels and in social protection may have a limited effect because of structural constraints on the Brazilian economy, particularly the segmentation of economic activity. Such segmentation is shown in the importance and persistence of self-employment, particularly in agriculture and in the tertiary sector.

Agriculture
Other industrial activities
Manufacturing
Construction
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles
Accommodation and food service activities
Transport, storage and communications
Public administration
Education, health and social work
Activities of households as employers of domestic personnel
Other community, social and personal activities
Other activities
Indefinite activities
Total

Table 5: Distribution of workers by economic sectors and sex
Source: Own calculations based on IBGE, National Household Sample Survey (PNAD)

	2004				2012			
	Male		Female		Male		Female	
	Absolute	%	Absolute	%	Absolute	%	Absolute	%
	12,168,016	24.7	5,711,687	16.2	9,764,101	17.9	4,017,489	10.0
	603,555	1.2	76,118	0.2	628,183	1.2	92,642	0.2
	7,325,556	14.9	4,334,246	12.3	7,817,688	14.3	4,675,630	11.7
	5,206,965	10.6	133,522	0.4	8,008,721	14.7	234,902	0.6
	9,001,650	18.3	5,585,155	15.8	9,839,549	18.0	6,996,792	17.4
	1,511,441	3.1	1,499,412	4.3	1,981,254	3.6	2,541,881	6.3
	3,410,737	6.9	461,756	1.3	4,592,067	8.4	674,314	1.7
	2,629,394	5.3	1,562,792	4.4	3,036,439	5.6	2,142,793	5.3
	1,669,106	3.4	5,711,159	16.2	2,096,889	3.8	7,007,735	17.5
	433,441	0.9	6,018,933	17.1	496,746	0.9	5,922,113	14.8
	1,442,362	2.9	2,041,195	5.8	134,5091	2.5	2,416,341	6.0
	3,564,948	7.2	2,113,156	6.0	4,930,525	9.0	3,381,832	8.4
	206,514	0.4	19,851	0.1	60,180	0.1	10,989	0
	49,173,685	**100**	**35,268,982**	**100**	**54,597,433**	**100**	**40,115,453**	**100**

Agriculture
Other industrial activities
Manufacturing
Construction
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles
Accommodation and food service activities
Transport, storage and communications
Public administration
Education, health and social work
Activities of households as employers of domestic personnel
Other community, social and personal activities
Other activities
Indefinite activities

Table 6: Distribution of workers by economic sectors and race
Source: Own calculations based on IBGE, National Household Sample Survey (PNAD)

	2004				2012			
	White		Non white		White		Non white	
	Absolute	%	Absolute	%	Absolute	%	Absolute	%
	7,162,470	16.2	10,717,233	26.6	4,961,486	11.1	8,820,104	17.7
	350,013	0.8	329,660	0.8	343,354	0.8	377,471	0.8
	6,957,530	15.8	4,702,272	11.7	6,725,601	15	5,767,717	11.5
	2,341,895	5.3	2,998,592	7.4	2,990,471	6.7	5,253,152	10.5
	8,258,405	18.7	6,328,400	15.7	8,393,297	18.8	8,443,044	16.9
	1,606,195	3.6	1,404,658	3.5	2,019,382	4.5	2,503,753	5.0
	2,214,669	5.0	1,657,824	4.1	2,567,452	5.7	2,698,929	5.4
	2,326,570	5.3	1,865,616	4.6	2,620,813	5.9	2,558,419	5.1
	4,560,071	10.3	2,820,194	7.0	5,063,552	11.3	4,041,072	8.1
	2,738,335	6.2	3,714,039	9.2	2,331,847	5.2	4,087,012	8.2
	1,828,188	4.1	1,655,369	4.1	1,841,729	4.1	1,919,703	3.8
	3,659,849	8.3	2,018,255	5.0	4,859,427	10.9	3,452,930	6.9
	76,625	0.2	149,740	0.4	24,598	0.1	46,571	0.1

Waged with labour card
Military
Public employee
Waged without labour card
Domestic worker with labour card
Domestic worker without labour card
Self-employed
Employer
Workers in production for self-consumption
Workers in self-construction
Unpaid worker
Total

Table 7: Workers distribution by employment type and gender
Source: Own calculations based on IBGE, National Household Sample Survey (PNAD)

	2004				2012			
	Male		**Female**		**Male**		**Female**	
	Absolute	%	Absolute	%	Absolute	%	Absolute	%
	16,522,780	33.6	9,013,234	25.6	22,918,450	42.0	14,283,383	35.6
	254,083	0.5	6,859	0	334,619	0.6	15,034	0
	2,189,258	4.5	3,107,233	8.8	2,592,975	4.7	4,033,363	10.1
	10,507,722	21.4	4,911,270	13.9	9,440,548	17.3	4,906,382	12.2
	173,632	0.4	1,487,636	4.2	243,280	0.4	1,656,292	4.1
	259,809	0.5	4,529,883	12.8	253,466	0.5	4,265,821	10.6
	12,815,778	26.1	5,749,994	16.3	13,357,568	24.5	6,203,867	15.5
	2,575,927	5.2	893,151	2.5	2,536,348	4.6	1,027,686	2.6
	1,083,757	2.2	2,330,580	6.6	1,674,848	3.1	2,019,414	5.0
	85,768	0.2	13,149	0	68,848	0.1	8,359	0
	2,704,766	5.5	3,224,579	9.1	1,176,483	2.2	1,695,852	4.2
	49,173,685	**100**	**35,268,982**	**100**	**54,597,433**	**100**	**40,115,453**	**100**

Waged with labour card
Military
Public employee
Waged without labour card
Domestic worker with labour card
Domestic worker without labour card
Self-employed
Employer
Workers in production for self-consumption
Workers in self-construction
Unpaid worker
Total

Table 8: Workers distribution by employment type and race
Source: Own calculations based on IBGE, National Household Sample Survey (PNAD)

	2004				2012			
	White		Non white		White		Non white	
	Absolute	%	Absolute	%	Absolute	%	Absolute	%
	15,228,753	34.5	10,307,261	25.5	19,214,688	42.9	17,987,145	36-0
	141,130	0.3	119,812	0.3	181,402	0.4	168,251	0.3
	3,106,094	7.0	2,190,397	5.4	3,571,231	8.0	3,055,107	6.1
	7,036,185	16	8,382,807	20.8	5,699,370	12.7	8,647,560	17.3
	807,079	1.8	854,189	2.1	745,391	1.7	1,154,181	2.3
	1,930,686	4.4	2,859,006	7.1	1,586,456	3.5	2,932,831	5.9
	9,293,524	21.1	9,272,248	23.0	8,899,805	19.9	10,661,630	21.3
	2,517,173	5.7	951,905	2.4	2,400,592	5.4	1,163,442	2.3
	1,380,361	3.1	2,033,976	5.0	1,238,267	2.8	2,455,995	4.9
	43,890	0.1	55,027	0.1	23,019	0.1	54,188	0.1
	2,594,965	5.9	3,334,380	8.3	1,182,788	2.6	1,689,547	3.4
	44,080,815	**100**	**40,361,852**	**100**	**44,743,009**	**100**	**49,969,877**	**100**

	2004		2012		2004–2012
	Absolute	%	Absolute	%	Growth rate (%)
Waged with labour card	25,536,014	31.6	37,201,833	40.9	45.7
Military	260,942	0.3	349,653	0.4	34.0
Public employee	5,296,491	6.5	6,626,338	7.3	25.1
Waged without labour card	15,418,992	19.1	14,346,930	15.8	-7.0
Domestic worker with labour card	1,661,268	2.1	1,899,572	2.1	14.3
Domestic worker without labour card	4,789,692	5.9	4,519,287	5.0	-5.6
Self-employed	18,565,772	22.9	19,561,435	21.5	5.4
Employer	3,469,078	4.3	3,564,034	3.9	2.7
Unpaid worker	5,929,345	7.3	2,872,335	3.2	-51.6
Total	**80,927,594**	**100**	**90,941,417**	**100**	**12.4**

Table 9: Workers distribution by employment type
Source: Own calculations based on IBGE, National Household Sample Survey (PNAD)

4. Conclusion

The first aspect to be highlighted in all the analysed data is that a very different picture emerges compared to other periods of Brazilian history, including the national developmentalism period (as discussed in Section 2), a time when the country experienced both economic growth and an increase in the concentration of income. As can be derived from the previous discussion, public policies aimed at improving the occupational structure in the context of growth in recent years have played a significant role in improving the conditions of Brazilian workers. Those policies, together

with other social policies, were responsible for the drastic decrease of poverty and extreme poverty in the country. They also combined to remove Brazil from the World Hunger Map (FAO 2014). It is noteworthy that policies aimed at gender and race equality at work seem to start showing some effect, although it is necessary to stress the fact that there is still a long way to go before women and men, blacks and whites enjoy equal opportunities in employment, income and access to labour and social security rights in Brazil. Clear evidence of this is the continuing presence of waged workers without a labour card, and thus without access to social security.

The second aspect that must be stressed is related to the discussion of concepts of precariousness and casualisation as developed in Section 1. Data provide evidence of a persistent precariousness, as exemplified by the number of unregistered waged workers, yet also disprove the existence of a generalised casualisation process. Thus the data support the criticism of the imprecise use of the concept of casualisation to characterise the evolution of occupational structure, which shows evident signs of improving, even where precariousness continues to exist.

As discussed in Section 2, there are contradictory trends in Brazilian occupational structure: On the one hand, structural trends of a process of casualisation – related to outsourcing, forms of labour management and flexibility – have been operating in Brazil as in other countries. But on the other hand, we must consider that such trends have been partially countered by labour regulation and public policy aimed at improving the occupational structure of Brazil.

Two aspects that the data bring to light still deserve further attention. The first relates to the relatively slow expansion of the manufacturing labour force, which may be a consequence of the difficulties that the industry has faced in recent years, as previously noted. The intensity with which the sector lost workers during the period 2008–2011 is something that needs to be considered, although it should not be forgotten that these were years of crisis, and that the relative recovery in 2012 indicates a less worrying situation at present.

A second problem concerns the steady increase in self-employed workers over this period. If we take into account the working conditions for such occupations (especially at low-income levels), it is evident that current policies have not been sufficient to reduce this precarious occu-

pational condition, which represents a pocket of low labour productivity. However, this might also be evidence of new jobs being created because of the better overall economic conditions and growing incomes. This is an important hypothesis that nonetheless warrants deeper research.

Finally, in reference to the discussion developed in the first section, one should not forget the contribution made by black movements, the feminist movement and the trade union movement to the current reality. Ignoring these movements would be to disregard a history of struggle without which one may understand very little of the current situation in Brazil.

1 This text was written within the Project Fapesp 2012/20408-1.
2 Christian Duarte prepared all the tables that use PNAD –National Household Survey-microdata.
3 In Brazil, access to labour rights is guaranteed by means of a contract registered upon a labour card issued by the Ministry of Labour.
4 From 2006, a tax scheme was implemented for micro- and small enterprises (MSEs) in Brazil: The National Simple Tax Scheme (or 'Super Simples'). This scheme unifies federal, state and local taxation, enables certain tax exemptions, provides a new tax bracket, and thus lessens taxation pressures on micro-economic units. This policy has enabled medium-sized and small firms to register both themselves and their employees, which allows firms and workers access to credit.

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Abstracts

This article examines the labour situation in Brazil. Based on official occupation statistics, the impacts on labour of the economic policies applied in the country during the last decade are analysed. The article begins with the theoretical assumption that although the current globalisation process has universal implications for labour, it is important to analyse national realities by examining their internal dynamics. From here it is possible to show major improvements in job creation and in income distribution in Brazil, which have a great effect on the occupational integration of women and the black population. But although much has been achieved, great inequalities of gender and race still persist in the Brazilian labour market and this poses important challenges for Brazil's future development.

Der Artikel untersucht die Arbeitsmarktsituation in Brasilien. Auf der Basis von Beschäftigungsstatistiken werden die Auswirkungen der Wirtschaftspolitik auf den Arbeitsmarkt in den letzten zehn Jahren untersucht. Der Artikel beginnt mit der theoretischen Annahme, dass es trotz der überall beobachtbaren Auswirkungen des gegenwärtigen Globalisierungsprozesses auf die Arbeitsmärkte wichtig ist, bei der Analyse nationaler Realitäten die internen Dynamiken zu beachten. Dadurch können große Verbesserungen bei der Schaffung von Arbeitsplätzen und der Einkommensverteilung hervorgehoben werden, die sich entscheidend auf die Integration von Frauen und AfrobrasilianerInnen in den Arbeitsmarkt ausgewirkt haben. Doch obwohl viel erreicht wurde, bestehen auf dem brasilianischen Arbeitsmarkt weiterhin große Ungleichheiten bezüglich Gender und ethnische Zugehörigkeit. Dies stellt eine große Herausforderung für die weitere Entwicklung Brasiliens dar.

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