

Enforcing the social contribution of gender: the qualified female public servant versus the female executive

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This quantitative approach study analyzes a hypothetical model for the public service and its relationship with the social construction around gender. The research universe was limited to highly qualified women working in the public service and medium and large private companies in Brazil. From 1,464 valid questionnaires, 18.6% were completed by public servants. Hypotheses were tested to verify the relationship of dependence between the variables: women's income in relation to their husbands' and the type of career; women's responsibility for household chores and the type of career; women's and their husbands' income in relation to mutual responsibility for household chores; time spent by women and their husbands with their children and the type of career; and motivators of interest in remaining in the career.

Keywords: women empowerment; work-life balance; division of household chores with significant other; income and dedication to household chores.

Reforçando a contribuição social de gênero: a servidora pública qualificada versus a executiva

Este estudo constitui uma abordagem quantitativa com base na análise de um modelo hipotético sobre o serviço público e sua relação com a construção social em torno do gênero. O universo da pesquisa consiste em mulheres altamente qualificadas que trabalham no serviço público e em empresas privadas de médio e grande portes no Brasil. A amostra final foi composta por 1.464 questionários válidos; destes, 18,6% de servidoras públicas. Foram testadas hipóteses para verificar a relação de dependência entre as variáveis: rendimento da mulher em relação ao seu par amoroso e o tipo de carreira; responsabilidade da mulher pelas atividades do lar e o tipo de carreira; rendimento em relação ao seu par amoroso e responsabilidade pelas atividades do lar; tempo de cuidado das mulheres com seus filhos e o tipo de carreira; motivadores do interesse em permanecer na carreira.

Palavras-chave: empoderamento da mulher; equilíbrio entre trabalho e vida pessoal; divisão de tarefas com o par amoroso; rendimentos e dedicação às tarefas do lar.

Fortalecimiento de la contribución social del género: la servidora pública cualificada frente a la ejecutiva

Este estudio proporciona un enfoque cuantitativo basado en el análisis de un modelo hipotético del servicio público y su relación con la construcción social en torno al género. El universo de la investigación se limita a las mujeres altamente calificadas que trabajan en el servicio público y en las empresas privadas medianas y grandes en Brasil. Son 1.464 cuestionarios válidos, el 18,6 % de estos respondidos por servidoras públicas. Se probaron hipótesis para determinar la relación de dependencia entre las siguientes variables: rendimiento de la mujer con relación a su compañero y el tipo de carrera; responsabilidad de la mujer para con las actividades del hogar y el tipo de carrera; rendimiento con relación a su pareja y responsabilidad con las actividades del hogar; tiempo dedicado por las mujeres al cuidado de sus hijos y el tipo de carrera; factores motivadores de su interés en permanecer en la carrera.

Palabras clave: empoderamiento femenino; equilibrio entre trabajo y vida personal; división de tareas con la pareja; ingresos, dedicación a las tareas del hogar.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/0034-761220170156>

Article submitted on May 05, 2017 and accepted for publication on May, 09 2018.

[Translated version] Note: All quotes in English translated by this article's translator.



1. INTRODUCTION

This study starts from the premise that careers in the public sector create conditions that reinforce the social constructions around gender in which the feminine identity stems from the domestic sphere.

According to Morgado and Tonelli (2014), from the 1970s on there was a breakthrough in research regarding issues related to women in organizations. However, according to Souza, Corvino and Lopes (2011), from 2000 to 2010 a small percentage of papers was published about the subject in the main business journals in Brazil.

The contribution of the following study is anchored in the comparison between the work-life balance of highly qualified women who work in the public sector versus the work-life balance of women who work in large private companies.

The sample is significant, and also compares the dedication of these women to domestic activities and family care with the dedication of the men (their significant others) taking into account the income variable. As far as we know such comparisons do not exist in the national literature.

2. THE GENDER GAZE

This work builds on the concept, addressed by Louro (2013), that in order to understand the relationship between women and men, it is fundamental to observe not the sexes, but everything socially constructed about the sexes (Louro, 2013).

The view that addresses the 'natural' difference as the basis for social patterns of genders manifests, for example, when male dominance is related to high testosterone levels, and this hormonal difference is seen as a competitive advantage in the business environment (Connell & Pearse, 2015).

It was from the feminist movements after World War II that the concept of gender became more theorized (Haraway, 2004). But it is in the second wave of feminism that this concept became more problematic (Louro, 2013). Feminism in this second wave addressed the way women's bodies were represented and shaped (Connell & Pearse, 2015). In Brazil, feminism in the 1970s was seen as a women's movement within the opposition to the dictatorship, which developed in the following decades. The legacy of this movement differentiated generations of women and modified ways of thinking (Sarti, 2004).

Various aspects of women's lives have been altered and many of these changes stemmed from feminist movements (Lopes, 1998). The increase in education and qualification that, according to Bruschini and Puppini (2004), provided not only the entry into the labor market, but also women's permanence in it, also sparked from feminism.

Over time, women were not only in factories, but also in offices, hospitals and schools, as well as in secondary activities. Nevertheless they were always under the control of men (Louro, 2013). Thus, the debate of inequality shifted from the biological differences and focused on social arrangements, history and forms of representation (Louro, 2013). In other words, what undermines women's growth and visibility is not the physiological aspect, but convention and tradition. What separates women from men are customs, habits and not a natural "inability" *per se* (Chanter, 2011).

Hence, the priority is no longer the analysis focused solely on women and becomes relational, since it is within the framework of relationships that genders are constructed. Taking that into account, studies also deal with men (Louro, 2013). In fact, talking about gender is talking about fluidity. Currently, it can be verified that the notion of what is masculine is filled with much more feminine content than before (Souza, Corvino, & Lopes, 2015).

According to Butler (2014, p. 53), “gender is the mechanism by which the notions of masculine and feminine are produced and naturalized”. The gender discussion comes “to contest the naturalization of sex differences in multiple arenas of struggle” (Haraway, 2004, p. 211). Masculine and feminine are social constructs of what would be “appropriate” for women and men (Billing, 2011).

When talking about family, for example, we are talking about arrangements and relationships that vary historically from the unfolding of socially defined norms and practices that organize gender relations in a society (Biroli, 2013).

Cloaked in the role of mother, women could no longer avoid it. If this occurred, they would suffer widespread moral condemnation. This was a major cause of the difficulties women had at work. Women started to bear the burden of greater responsibility and guilt for not meeting the social expectations of being a “good” mother. The one who played the role of mother was admired and the one who failed was excluded from humanity, becoming an “error of nature” (Badinter, 1985, p. 275). The guilt and weight of the past can be felt to this day (Tanure, Mota-Santos, Carvalho, & Costa Nunes, 2015; Mota-Santos, Tanure, & Carvalho, 2014).

Until the 1960s, the difference between men / women was fixated in the biological or in natural differences. It was expected that men and women would perform different tasks and therefore not have equal rights (Badinter, 1986). In Brazil, under the Vargas dictatorship (1930-1945), what was considered feminine took on a perspective in terms of ‘public defense’. Caring for the home and family was a task considered, by the *Getulist* dictatorship, fundamental for building a “healthy and disciplined” Brazil (Ostos, 2012).

3. THE TRAJECTORY OF WOMEN AT WORK IN BRAZIL

According to Badinter (1986), patriarchy is, in addition to being a system of sexual oppression, an expression of a political system. The maintenance of a patriarchal family model where the woman has an identity built from the domestic sphere is reflected in the participation of women in the Brazilian labor market from the 1970s to the present (Mota-Santos, Carvalho, Versiane, Caeiro, & Martins, 2016; Mota-Santos, Tanure, & Carvalho, 2015).

Women’s work does not depend only on their qualifications and the demands of the market. It differs from men’s, since it needs to take into account the family as well as professional activities, which impair women’s availability for work (Carvalho, Tanure, & Andrade, 2010; Carvalho, Tanure, & Mota-Santos, 2014). Among all activities, motherhood is the one that most interferes, especially when children are young (Bruschini, 2000).

The trajectory of women at work becomes part of the political, social and economic transformations of Brazil. Nevertheless, household activities remain the responsibility of women (Bruschini, 1987, 1998; Bruschni & Puppini, 2004).

From the 1980s, the double shift of home and work becomes the great challenge for women. Those who receive higher incomes even try to negotiate the division of domestic tasks with the partner. However, they are always more overloaded, which increases the condition of inequality (Madalozzo, Martins, & Shiraton, 2010; Wolff, 2010).

The guilt and the fatigue appear precisely because they have nobody to divide the domestic activities with, and hence they attribute a negative experience to the conflict of balancing personal life with the professional one (Salvagni & Canabarro, 2015; Tanure, Carvalho, & Andrade, 2007). Married women with children spend more hours per week on household activities (Bruschini, 2006).

Despite the professional growth of women, we still have a social division of labor that separates activities attributed to each of the sexes and a demarcation of the masculine over the feminine (Bourdieu, 2014). However, phenomena such as: (1) the crisis of the bourgeois form of nuclear family; (2) the entry of women into the labor market; (3) the separation of sexuality from reproduction; and (4) a policy of visibility on homosexuality have attenuated the boundaries that separate women in the private environment from men in the public environment.. Thus, a different perspective on sexuality is being generated (Arán, 2003).

Attributes previously seen as feminine (sensitivity, politeness) are present today in the construction of what it is perceived as masculine. That is, one can speak of a 'smoothing' of the masculine (Souza et al., 2015). To speak of the masculine condition is to speak: of the entrance of the woman into the public space, of the transformation that modifies the family space, the parental roles and the professional spaces (Smigay, 2000).

In the home environment, as Fiorin, Oliveira and Dias (2014) emphasize, a more egalitarian division of the tasks can help women in career growth without renouncing maternity. The competitive, aggressive, hegemonic masculine model (Carvalho et al., 2014; Souza, Lopes, & Hilal, 2015) still prevails in the organizational environment, and this perception of inequality can even affect the intention to leave the company (Cavazotte, Oliveira, & Miranda, 2010).

Despite this context, some women do not make choices based on motherhood (Maluf & Kahhale, 2010), which reinforces the idea that motherhood seen as the only option for self-realization is being deconstructed (Fiorin et al., 2014).

4. WOMEN IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

This article is about the presence of women in the bureaucratic structure of public organizations. For Smith (2015), the theory of bureaucracy, in terms of representativeness, starts from two assertions. The first is that, for the effective representation of the population, public service work must be similar to the demographic characteristics of the population, and it must represent its diversity. It should, therefore, include women. Secondly, public sector workers must make decisions that benefit the various groups represented, including women.

The public sector career is generally considered less problematic in terms of the worker being able to reconcile personal and professional life. There is also a shared view that the work environment is less stressful compared to private sector (Schilling, 2015).

The female presence in the public sector has been the focus of studies in several countries. For Cullen and Christopher (2012), there is a challenge posed for women especially on how to deal with the compatibility of gender-related social roles and the conflicts arising from these roles. To minimize conflicts between personal and professional life, initiatives have been taken by public organizations to stimulate flexible work arrangements (e.g., part-time, 4 hours of work per day). These arrangements have translated into a reduction of the workday and the work of mothers in order to coincide with children's school schedules. In Australia, for example, the public sector has been recognizing the importance of flexibility at work because there are difficulties in attracting and retaining skilled female labor in areas such as finance and accounting.

Weerahann and Cohen (2013) argue that some countries have been concerned about the importance of work-life balance; however, implementation of organizational policies aimed at the balance between work and family in the public sector are still incipient. Sri Lanka, for example, is a patriarchal society but has 90 percent of working-age women participating in the economy, and the percentage of women in public or private management positions is 20 percent. To increase women's presence in the public sector, there is a stimulus from the government for the adoption of flexible jobs that accommodate flexible working hours and workplaces.

In Malaysia since 2004 it has been defined by legislation that 30% of the positions in the public sector should be filled by women. In 2011, the initiative was expanded to the private sector companies that were publicly traded (Abdullah, 2014).

In Eastern Europe, the public sector is mostly composed of women. In Poland, the job market has grown in terms of part-time jobs and new configurations have emerged. As of the year 2000, approximately 74% of workers in education and 84% in health were women. Despite these numbers, the way the changes are being implemented has ultimately increased the dissatisfaction of workers and even the evasion of female professionals in the Polish public sector. The form of remuneration with a focus on informality, low satisfaction and inadequate working conditions, and the difficulty of achieving a balance between work and family, have led women to rethink their careers in the Polish public sector (Stennin & Hardy, 2005).

Corroborating the views of Schilling (2015), Calas and Smircich (1997) affirm that there are many female Brazilian professionals looking to build their career as public servants. There is a socially constructed image that the career as a public servant is more stable than the career of executives of large and medium-sized private organizations. The public sector career offers more security and solid labor guarantees, and women fear less the prejudice of their employers when they become mothers.

Pinto and Midlej (2012) discuss gender diversity in the public sector and say that it is present due to legal impositions. However, gender bias still occurs. The small number of women at the top of Brazilian public sector organizations reflects this issue. In 2003, the Brazilian federal government, through the legal action *Medida Provisória 103/2003*, created a special secretariat called the *Secretaria Especial de Política para as Mulheres* (SPM) linked to the Presidency of the Republic. The secretariat is responsible for coordinating and articulating policies for women, promoting gender equality, monitoring affirmative action and defining public actions to comply with agreements, conventions

and action plans signed in the country. The implementation of programs in the Brazilian public sector organizations is occurring slowly, through voluntary adherence, after a diagnosis for the construction of an Action Plan.

Belle (1993) reinforces that in current times the definition of roles is less clear. The contours that define the roles reserved for what is “masculine” or “feminine” lose definition, with the massive presence of women in the professional contingent of organizations, be it in the public sector or private sector, in Brazil and abroad. However, because of the pace of work demanded by private organizations at the managerial levels, there seems to be a somewhat greater “space” in the public sector for contemporary professional women to better match their expected domestic roles due to security and stability, fixed working hours and to the less stringent requirements of the public sector in contrast to the private sector.

5. METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

The approach of this study is quantitative, and starts from a hypothetical model based on the assumption that the public sector career offers favorable conditions for strengthening the social construction around gender, in which the feminine identity stems from the domestic sphere. Data were collected on the perception of the lived experiences of a sample of executives working in private companies and public sector organizations, throughout their professional trajectories.

The sample was selected from the mailing list of one of the most renowned business schools in the world, *Fundação Dom Cabral* (FDC), which maintains a database with more than 100,000 students and alumni.

A questionnaire with 68 questions was developed in the Portuguese language and applied in a web environment, using the software *Survey Monkey*. These questions were analyzed and validated for clarity and relevance by a group of scholars and researchers from two highly respected universities in Southeastern Brazil. A pre-test of this collection instrument was carried out with the participation of teachers and students of these universities, as well as women with a profile similar to the target audience of the study. In addition to responding experimentally to the questionnaire, these professionals were asked to review the questions considering the clarity of the language and presentation. Based on their comments, the necessary modifications were made to the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was then published on the FDC website and sent by e-mail to 22,294 female Alumni members who had attended one of the executive education programs.

Respondents were asked to evaluate themselves in relation to their significant others regarding subjects such as income, workload, division of domestic tasks and parental time. They were also challenged to reflect and answer questions related to their professional experience, especially regarding the factors that guided their career path, career strategies, promotions and the intention of staying in the job market. Finally, the interviewees answered questions related to significant changes and their satisfaction with the multiple dimensions of personal and professional life.

In order to reduce any collection errors, especially those resulting from the subjection of responses to the respondents’ perception of social expectations, respondents were assured complete confidentiality and that there were no right or wrong answers. Such precautions were able to mitigate

the variance associated with systematic errors, which arise from the data collection method and not from the nature of the constructs studied, or Common-Method Variance (CVM).

After a period of approximately three months, 1,979 questionnaires were answered, out of the 22,294 that were sent. The sample was adapted in order to keep only the target audience of the research. This process was guided by four criteria:

- (a) the occupation of the women: aiming to keep only respondents working in the public sector or private organizations, excluding those that were self-employed professionals, teachers, entrepreneurs or that worked at home;
- (b) the hierarchical position: keeping only the women who occupied a managerial function (managers, superintendents, directors, presidents) and excluding those whose main function did not involve strategic decision making;
- (c) the size of organizations: maintaining only respondents of large and medium sized organizations with 250 employees or more;
- (d) the market coverage: maintaining the organizations that operated in the domestic market, and that may or may not have operations outside Brazil.

The final sample consisted of 1,464 completed responses, being significant and representative of the two groups, with the error probability at 5%. The T tests for the significance of nonresponse bias did not reveal any significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between respondents and non-responders. Comparisons of early and late respondents also showed no significant differences ($p < 0.05$) (Armstrong & Overton, 1977).

At the time of the survey, of the 1,464 women, 81.4% worked as executives of 771 medium-sized and large private organizations and 18.6% worked in the public sector at 101 public institutions (24 state-owned enterprises and 77 federal entities).

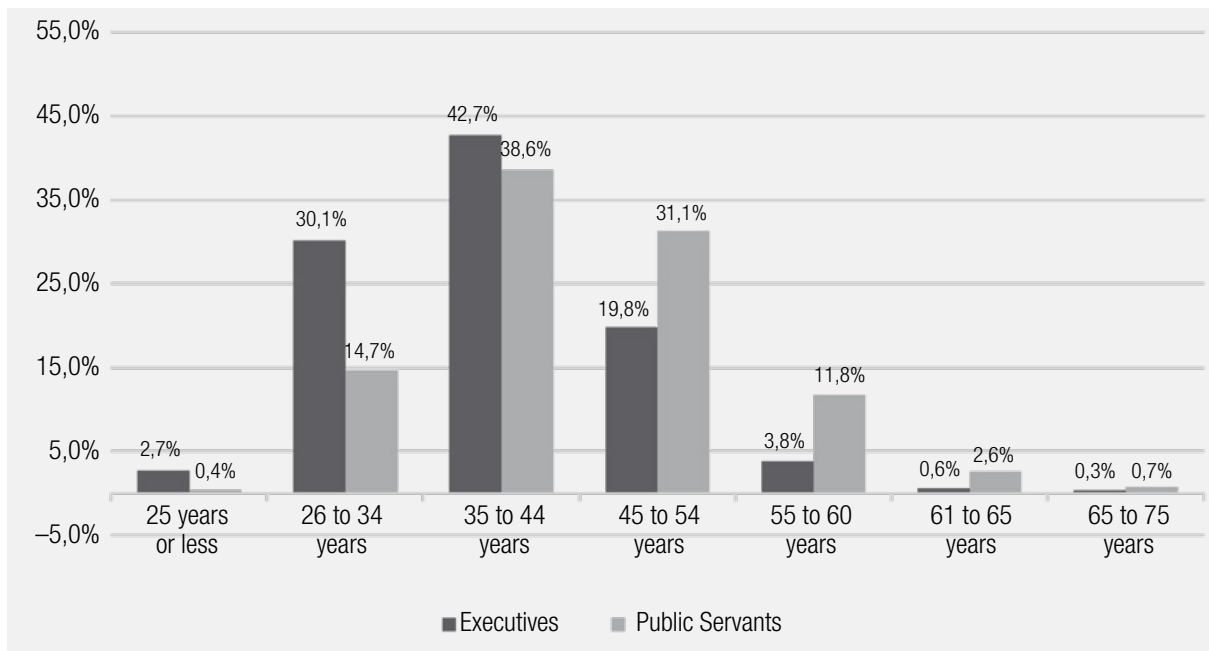
The difference between the samples of executives from the private and public sectors is due to the FDC Alumni list being traditionally (in its 42 years of existence) more focused on the private sector.

Of these 475 public servants, one to four are dispersed in 82 state-owned enterprises and public sector agencies, such as the Military Police, the Federal Police, Eletrobrás and the Ministry of the Environment.

Some 6 to 17 respondents were each from the following 10 institutions (Prefeitura de São Paulo/ Prefecture, Agência Nacional de Saúde/ Health National Agency, Hospital Sírio Libanês, Infraero/ Airports Maintenance, Embrapa/Research Company, Tribunal de Justiça de MG, Petrobras/Oil Company, Secretaria da Fazenda do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, Secretarias do Planejamento dos Estado de Minas Gerais, Secretarias do Planejamento de Alagoas). A range of 29 to 142 respondents were concentrated in the following four organizations: National Petroleum Agency, Fiocruz/Research on Vaccine Foundation, the Prefecture of Rio de Janeiro and the Prefecture of Belo Horizonte.

6. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The age comparison between the two aforementioned groups revealed significant differences in distributions (Graph 1). Executives in the private sector are younger than public servants, with a mean age of 39 and 44, respectively. Despite this age difference, respondents are predominantly married in both groups and usually have one or two children. Therefore, we considered that these groups were comparable, in regards to the socially constructed role of women in Brazil.

GRAPH 1 AGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY CAREER TYPE (EXECUTIVES AND PUBLIC SERVANTS)

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

6.1 INCOME IN COMPARISON TO THE PARTNER

As represented in the sample, in both cases, women seem financially empowered in relation to their partners. Previously, as seen in the literature, women in Brazil had very few possibilities to build a career outside the traditional jobs in health and education (Bruschini, 2004; Louro, 2013; Mota-Santos et al., 2014). Nowadays, they are beginning, to occupy strategic positions and earning similar salaries as men in the same positions, both in private organizations (Carvalho et al., 2014) and in the public sector. If the two groups are considered together, 49.9% of the respondents claim that their income is the only one or the primary one of the family. Only 15.9% state that their partners are the main source of income (Table 1). Such empowerment manifests itself in both groups: 51.3% of private sector executives and 44.1% of public servants have the sole or main income of the family (Graph 2).

The chi-square test showed that “Income compared to partner” and the “Career type (public or private)” are associated, especially in the main/complementary income categories (p value <0.05). It can thus be inferred that private executives in comparison to public servants are more financially empowered vis-a-vis their partners. The chi-square test worked with the following hypotheses:

H0: The woman’s income in relation to her partner’s is independent of the type of career (private executives or public servants).

H1: There is a relationship of dependence between the variables woman’s income compared to their partner and the type of career (private executive or public servants).

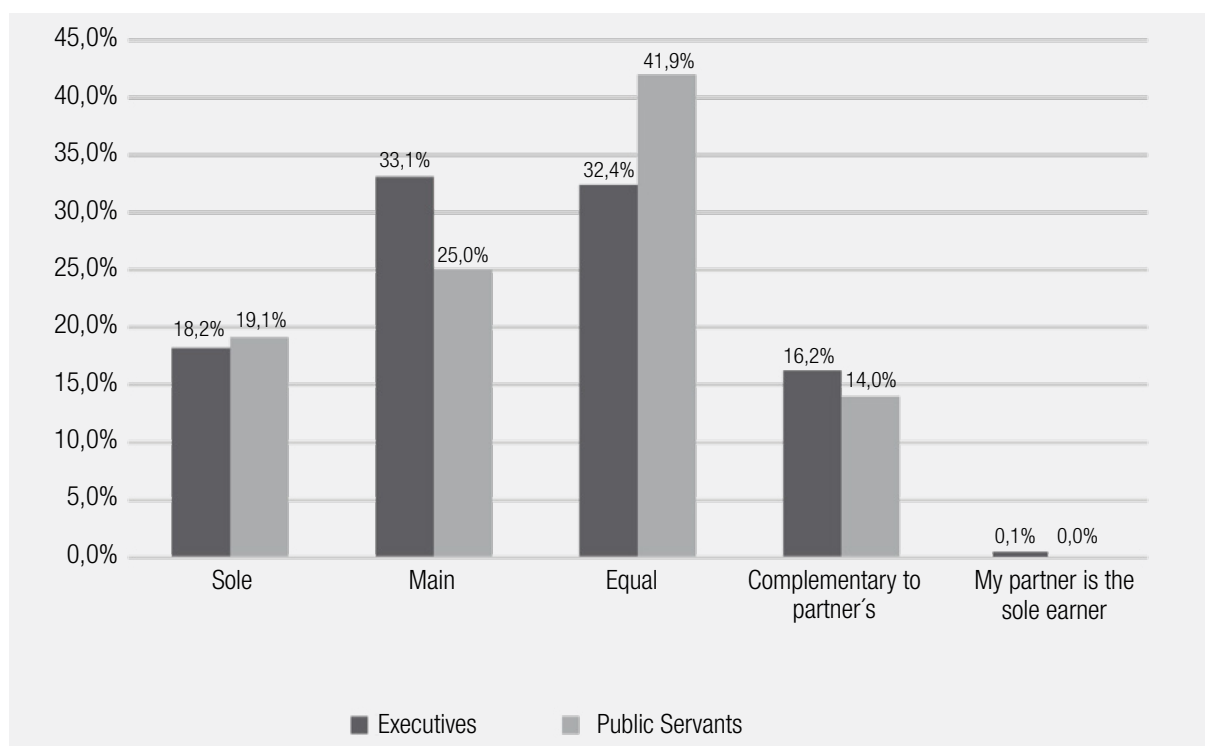
TABLE 1 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO INCOME IN RELATION TO THE SIGNIFICANT OTHER

Income compared to partner	Quant. of Respondents	%	% Accumulated
Sole	231	18,4%	18,4%
Main	397	31,6%	49,9%
Equal	430	34,2%	84,1%
Complementary to partner's	199	15,8%	99,9%
My partner is the sole earner	1	0,1%	100,0%
Overall Total	1.258	100,0%	

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

* Women who had no significant other at the time of the research and those whose income came from pensions, inheritance, retirement, rents and public benefits were excluded from this analysis.

GRAPH 2 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO INCOME IN RELATION TO HEIR SIGNIFICANT OTHERS AND CAREER TYPE



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

6.2 RESPONSIBILITY FOR DOMESTIC ACTIVITIES

The responsibility for domestic activities has always been more attributed to women than to their male partners, as has been widely emphasized in the literature (Badinter, 1985; Billing, 2011; Biroli, 2013; Mota-Santos et al., 2014). When considered jointly, 29.6% of the respondents coordinate by themselves the household activities performed by a hired domestic worker, and 20.7% of the women do the work themselves, either alone or with the help of their partner (Table 2). In addition, only 3.1% of the women interviewed responded that their partners do the household activities by themselves or with their help (Table 2).

TABLE 2 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO HOUSEHOLD ACTIVITIES IN RELATION TO THE PARTNER/SIGNIFICANT OTHER

Household activities	Quant. of Respondents	%	% Accumulated
Coordinate by myself	373	29,6%	29,6%
Coordinate together	492	39,1%	68,7%
Done directly and equally	95	7,5%	76,3%
Done directly with help from my partner	128	10,2%	86,4%
Done directly by myself	132	10,5%	96,9%
Done directly by partner with my help	30	2,4%	99,3%
Done directly by partner by himself	9	0,7%	100,0%
Overall Total	1.259	100,0%	

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

*Women who had no significant other at the time of the research and those whose domestic activities were carried out by children or stepchildren were excluded from this analysis.

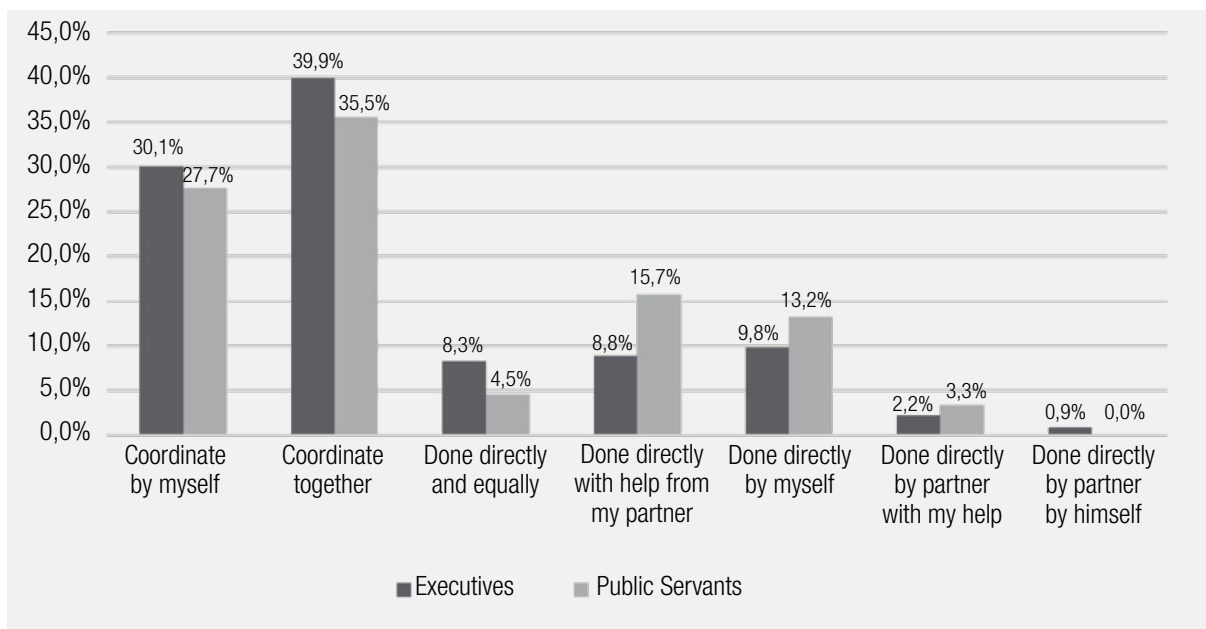
The chi-square test showed significant differences between private executives and public servants, regarding the responsibility for household activities (p value < 0.05). In these terms, it is worth noting that the equitable division of household activities, either by coordinating a hired domestic worker or by doing the work directly, seems more prevalent among executives (48.2%) than public servants (40%) (Graph 4). This is in agreement with literature (Belle, 1993; Calas & Smircich, 1997; Schilling, 2015), which emphasizes that the public sector career is less problematic in terms of reconciling the personal and professional in contrast to the private sector. In the same line of thought, the direct performance of the activities, sometimes alone and sometimes with the help of the partner, seems more prevalent among public servants (28.9%) than among executives (18.6%) (Graph 4). The chi-square test worked with the following hypotheses:

H0: The responsibility of the woman for the activities of the home is independent of the type of career (private executives or public servants).

H1: There is a dependence relationship between the variables ‘women’s responsibility for the activities of the home’ and the type of career (private executives or public servants).

The fact that less than 1% of women said that their partners perform household activities by themselves in both groups (Graph 3) further corroborates the social expectation of the attribution of these activities to women, as is also pointed out in literature (Badinter, 1985; Billing, 2011; Biroli, 2013; Mota-Santos et al., 2014).

GRAPH 3 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR HOUSEHOLD ACTIVITIES IN RELATION TO THE PARTNER/SIGNIFICANT OTHER AND TYPE OF CAREER



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

6.3 INCOME AND HOUSEHOLD ACTIVITIES IN RELATION TO THE PARTNER

Despite the greater financial empowerment in relation to the partner, in this study, the responsibility for the activities that care for the home seem to be more concentrated on women. We observed, for example, that only 6% of the respondents who have the sole or main income of the family said that their partners do the activities of the household by themselves or with their help (Table 3). This finding is in tandem with the literature that explores women’s income being superior to men’s while at the same time women remain unable to negotiate a more egalitarian division of household chores and parental time (Madalozzo et al., 2010; Wolff, 2010). It was also observed that for women with the sole income of the household, 55% coordinate by themselves household activities and 31% perform by themselves the household activities (Table 3).

TABLE 3 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO INCOME AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR HOUSEHOLD ACTIVITIES IN RELATION TO THE PARTNER/SIGNIFICANT OTHER

Income compared to partner	Responsibility for household activities in relation to partner							TOTAL
	Coordinate by myself	Coordinate together	Done directly and equally	Done directly with help from my partner	Done directly by myself	Done directly by partner with my help	Done directly by partner by himself	
Sole	55%	3%	1%	3%	31%	2%	4%	100%
Main	20%	48%	8%	13%	5%	5%	1%	100%
Equal	21%	50%	11%	13%	3%	1%	1%	100%
Complementary to partner's	24%	51%	7%	10%	4%	1%	3%	100%
My partner is the sole earner	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%
Overall Total	27%	41%	8%	11%	9%	2%	2%	100%

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

* The sample is not significant for this class, that is, the proportion of 100% is not representative of the distribution of the respondents in this class. Women who had no partner at the time of the survey were excluded from the analysis, as were those whose household income came from children, inheritances, public benefits and rents. Also excluded were those whose household activities were performed by children or stepchildren.

The chi-square test revealed an association between “income compared to partner” and “responsibility for household activities” for both career types: private executives and public servants (p-value <0.05). The chi-square test worked with the following hypotheses:

Chi-square test – private executives

H0: The variables income compared partner and responsibility for household activities are independent in the group of women executives.

H1: The variables income compared to partner and responsibility for the activities of the home are dependent in the group of women executives.

Chi-square test - public servants

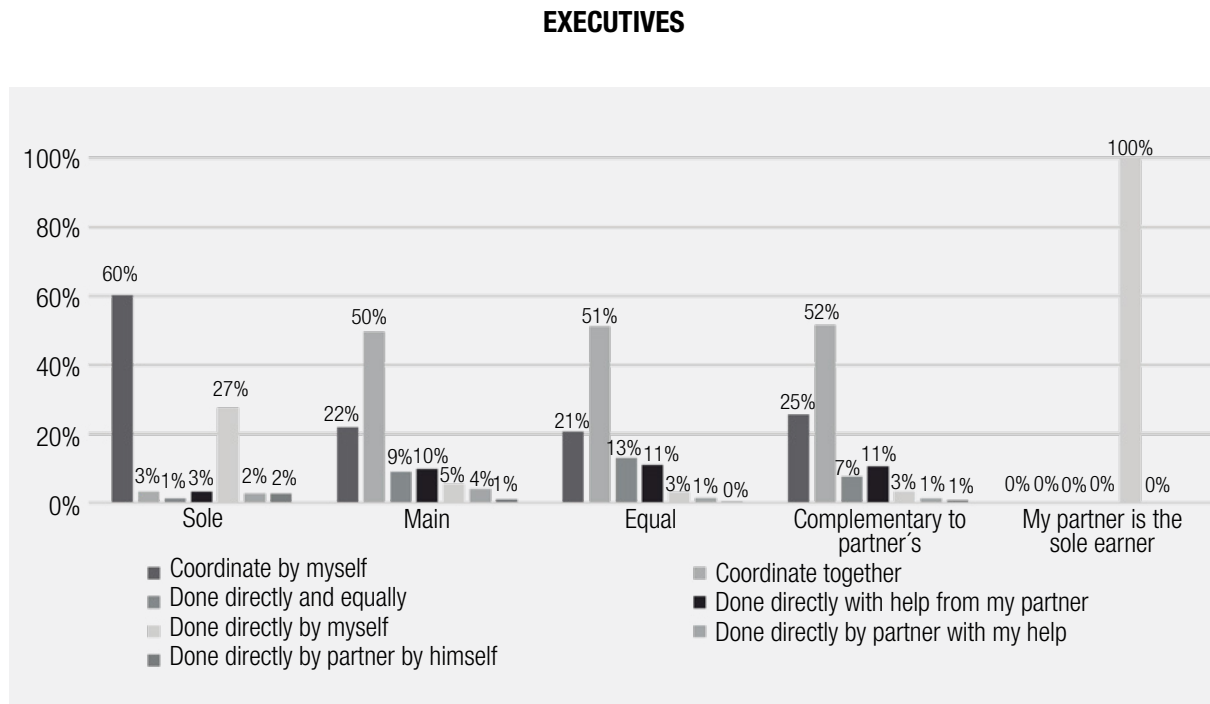
H0: The variables income compared to partner and responsibility for household activities are independent in the group of women who are public servants.

H1: The variables income compared to partner and responsibility for household activities are dependent in the group of women who are public servants.

For the group of private executives with the primary income, 60% coordinate by themselves and 27% directly perform household activities (Graph 5). In this group, however, it is also observed that the fair division of household tasks seems more prevalent in the categories of women with primary incomes, equal to and complementary to that of the partner (Graph 5). Nevertheless, around 40% of the women in each of these income categories concentrate either on the coordination or on the accomplishment of household activities. Again we see that, even though they are equally or more financially empowered than their significant others, this was not enough to change the balance unfavorable to women in Brazilian society in relation to men in the same social positions, as is also discussed in the literature (Madalozzo et al., 2010; Wolff, 2010).

The condition of public servants, regarding financial empowerment and responsibility for household activities, is analogous to that of executives. The greater financial empowerment does not favor a greater balance in the responsibility for household activities vis-à-vis men (Graph 5). For the public servants' group, however, there is a marked difference in relation to the executives. Public servants carry out household activities alone or with the help of the partner more often than executives, for whom coordination with the help of domestic workers seems the definite alternative (Graph 5).

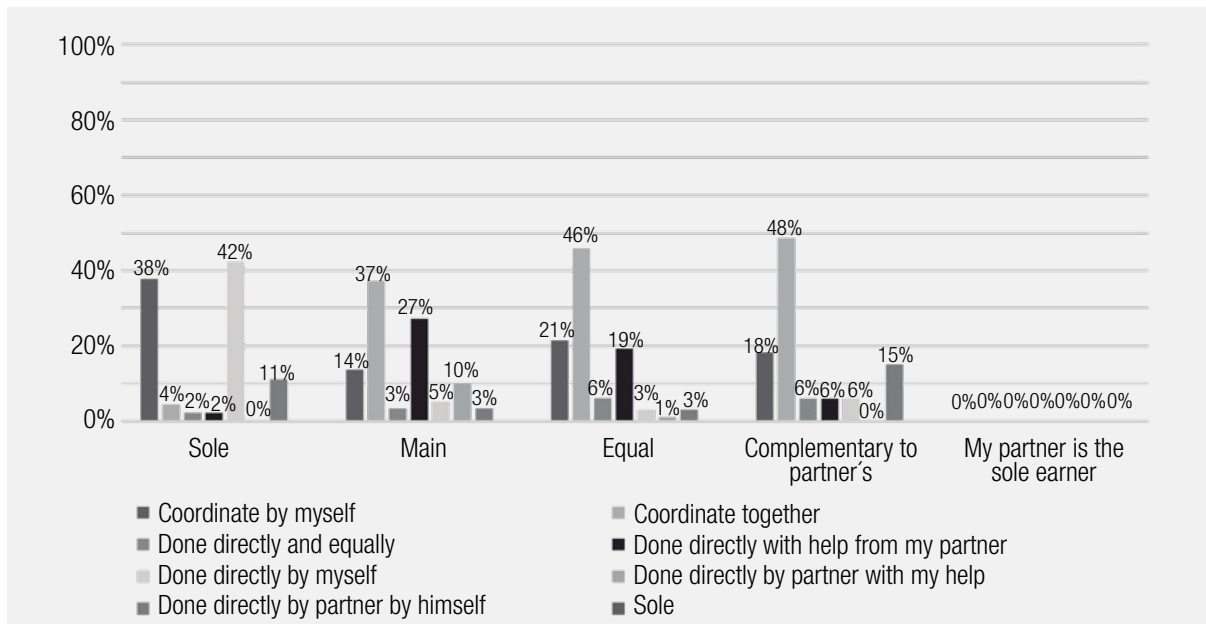
GRAPH 4 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO INCOME AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR HOUSEHOLD ACTIVITIES IN RELATION TO PARTNER/SIGNIFICANT OTHER AND TYPE OF CAREER



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

continue

PUBLIC SERVANTS



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

*Women who had no partner at the time of the research were excluded from the analysis, as were those whose household income came from children, inheritances, public benefits and rents. Also excluded were those whose household activities were performed by children or stepchildren.

6.4 CARE FOR THE CHILDREN

The chi-square test showed that the distribution of women, according to the time dedicated to children and career type (public or private), are strongly associated ($p < 0.05$). The chi-square test worked with the following hypotheses:

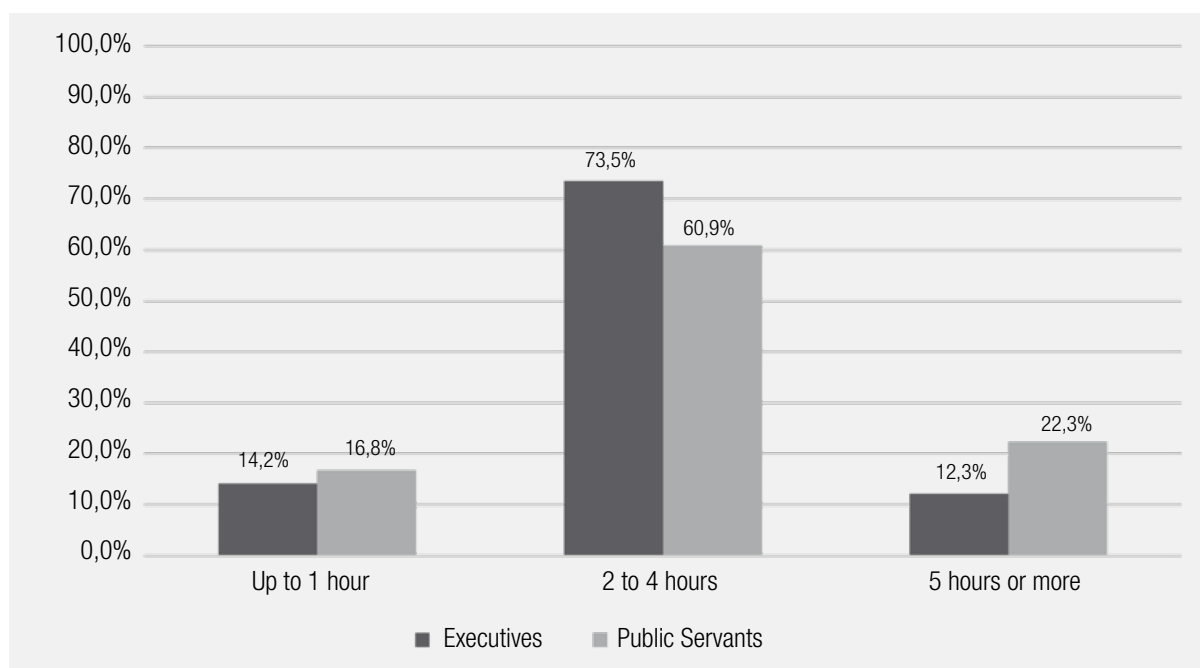
H0: The care time women dedicate to their children, when they are awake, is independent of the type of career (executives or public servants).

H1: There is a dependency relationship between the care time women dedicate to their children (when they are awake) and the type of career (executives or public servants).

In this perspective, the proportion of women who take care of their children for five hours a day is almost double among public servants (22.3%) when compared to executives (12.3%) (Graph 6).

This result is in accordance with the literature (Belle, 1993; Calas & Smircich, 1997; Schilling, 2015), which emphasizes the greater possibility of reconciling career and personal life demands in the public sector. Going beyond the literature, the results of this study reinforce the hypothesis that the public sector career, favors the social construction that the feminine identity stems from the domestic sphere. It is “expected” (socially) that they dedicate themselves more to children, since they have more flexible working hours and a lower daily workload, in addition to professional stability. In a sexist society, such a picture is even more favorable for maintaining the *status quo* of a woman “from/for the home.”

GRAPH 5 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO CARE TIME DEDICATED TO CHILDREN



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

*Women that had no children at the time the research was conducted were excluded.

To complete the picture, it should be noted that in both types of careers, the average time spent caring for the children is significantly higher than that spent by their male partners. However, among executives, this average time is 9.3% higher than for their partners, while for public servants this difference reaches the level of 25.6% (Table 4). In other words, the time spent caring for the children by the couple seems less unequal among the private executives than among the public servants.

TABLE 4 AVERAGE PARENTAL TIME

Caregiver	Executives	Public Servants	% Total
Women respondents	2,96	3,11	-4,90%
Partners	2,71	2,48	9,30%
Diference %	9,30%	25,60%	

Source: Elaborated by the authors

* Women that had no children at the time the research was conducted were excluded.

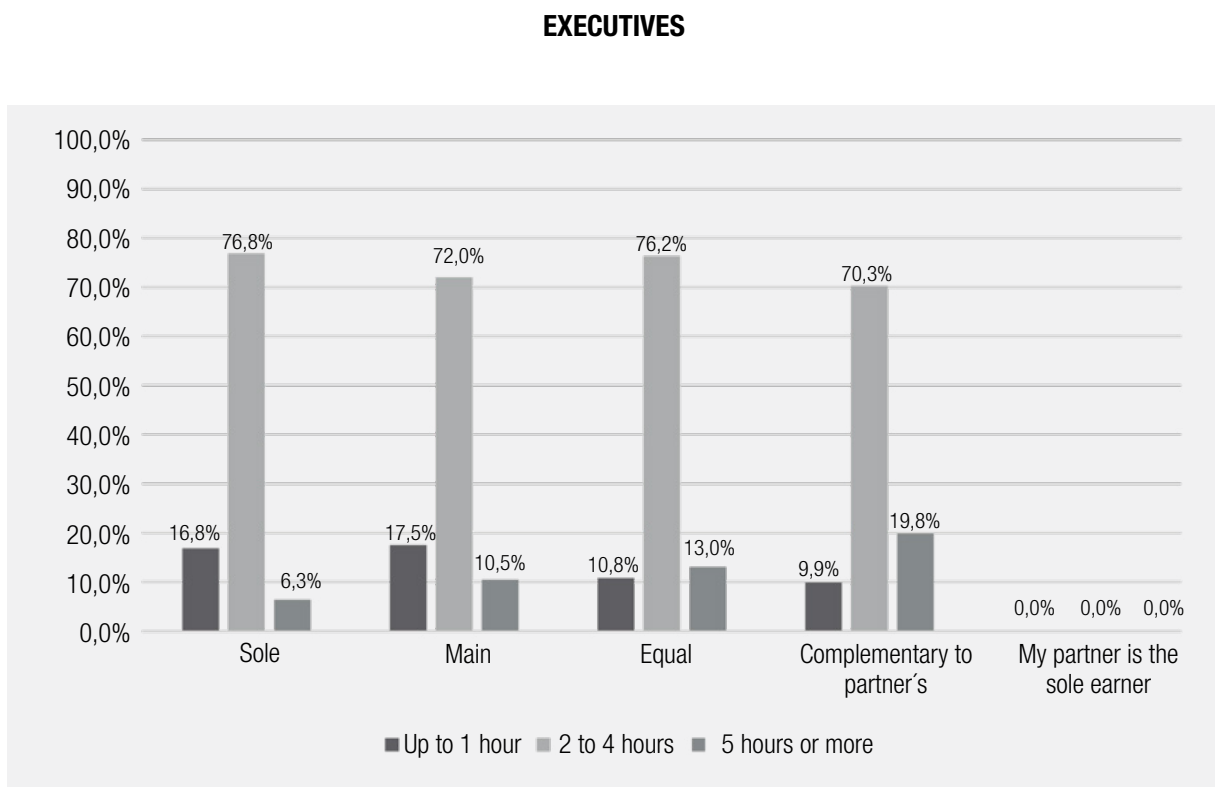
6.5 INCOME AND CARE FOR THE CHILDREN

The “income compared to the partner” and “care time for children” analyzed separately appeared to show that the career in public service, in contrast to the private sector, could favor the reinforcement of the historical social constructions around the feminine and the masculine. This finding goes beyond the literature. This precept seems even more evident when these two variables are combined comparing executive professional and public servants.

Women executives and public servants who earn the main income of the household or earn an income equal to the male partner appeared to exhibit the same behavior regarding time caring for the children. About two-thirds of them stay with their children between two and four hours a day (Graph 6).

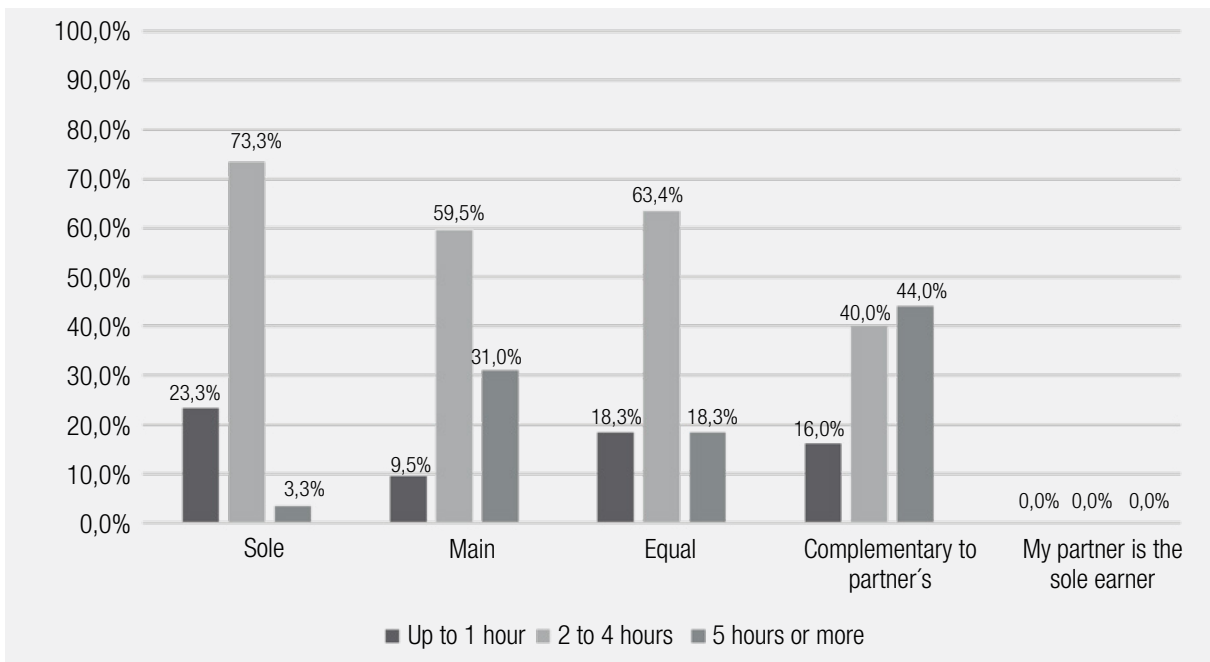
However, there are significant differences between the private executives and the public servants in relation to the time spent with the children, for the main income earners and those that complement the income of the partners. It was observed that 44% of the public servants who earn complementary income take care of their children for five hours or more daily, which happens only with 19.8% of the executives (Graph 6).

GRAPH 6 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO INCOME IN RELATION TO PARTNER AND PARENTAL TIME



continue

PUBLIC SERVANTS



Source: Elaborated by the authors

*Women who had no partner at the time of the research were excluded from the analysis, as were those whose household income came from children, inheritances, public benefits and rents. Also excluded were those whose household activities were performed by children or stepchildren as well as those that had no children at the time the study was conducted.

Among the public servants who earn the main income of the household, 31% take care of their children for five hours or more, which happens with only 10.5% of executives in this same situation (Graph 8). This result is also confirmed in the literature (Belle, 1993; Calas & Smircich, 1997; Schilling, 2015). It should also be noted that executives, regardless of income level, remain predominantly around two to four hours a day with their children. Among the public servants, this time varies according to the income class (figure 6).

Fisher's multiple comparison test pointed to the significance of differences in time spent caring for children between female public servants and female private executives, in the main and complementary income classes. For the other income categories, this difference was not significant.

6.6 INTEREST IN REMAINING IN THE ORGANIZATION

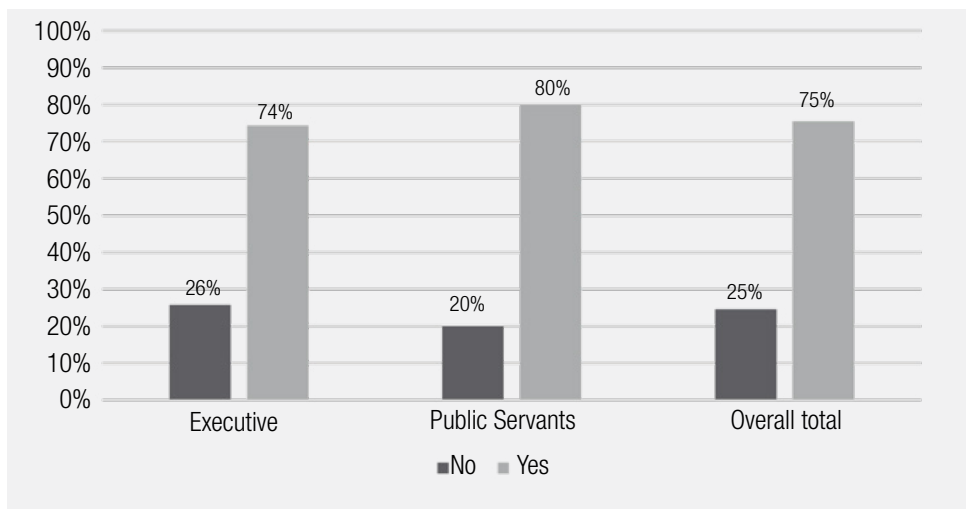
The investigation of the motivators for remaining in the organizations in which they work revealed significant differences between private executives and public servants.

Public servants seem significantly more interested in remaining in the organizations they are in when compared to executives. The difference in interest was significant (6%) (Graph 7). However, the reasons for this interest are diametrically different.

The "stimulating challenges" ranks at the top position for the reasons why executives are interested in remaining in the company in which they work. For public servants, however, this factor occupies the fourth position in the priority scale, being exceeded by "alignment with career and life planning",

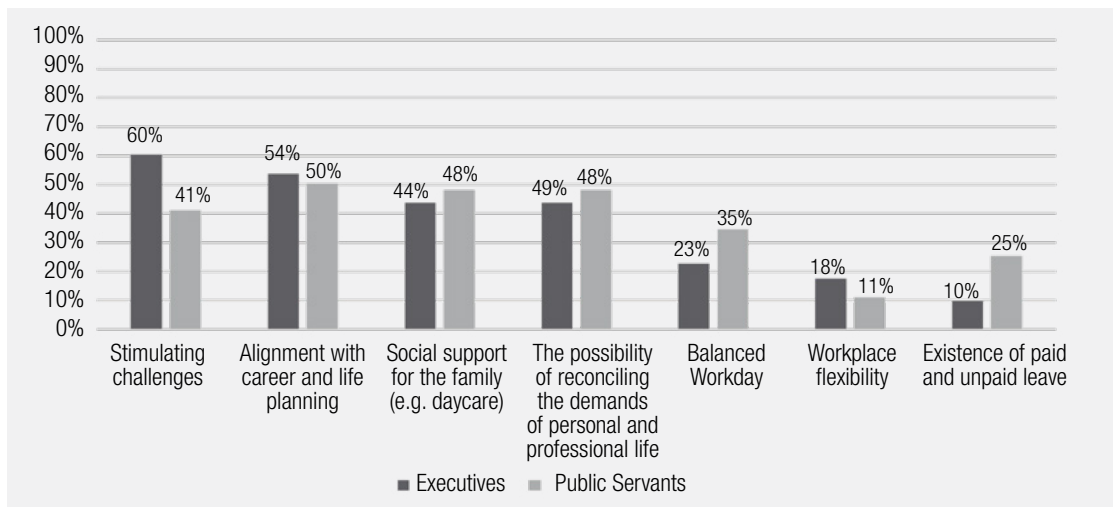
“social support for the family”, “the possibility of reconciling the demands of personal and professional life “. The study shows that the public servants value the work in the public sector in terms of reconciling professional life with personal life, which is in line with the views in the literature (Belle, 1993; Calas & Smircich, 1997; Schilling, 2015). These were also important factors for the executives, but not as preponderant as for the public sector workers. It is also worth noting that the “existence of paid and unpaid leave” is important for 25% of public servants and only 10% of executives (Graph 8).

GRAPH 7 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO THEIR INTEREST IN REMAINING IN THE ORGANIZATION IN RELATION TO THE TYPE OF CAREER



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

GRAPH 8 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO MOTIVATORS OF THEIR INTEREST IN REMAINING IN THE ORGANIZATION



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

The “stimulating challenges” were cited by 60% of executives, and by 41% of public servants. The “balanced workday”, followed by the “existence of paid and unpaid leave”, were significantly more cited by public servants (Graph 8).

It seems that career-related aspects and challenges of the organization are more stimulating for private executives, which could lead them to prioritize their career when it comes to the balance between work and personal life. For public servants, career alignment is also important, but balance, social support and the ability to reconcile personal and professional life are just as important (Graph 8).

The chi-square test pointed out significant differences between the private executives and public servants with regards to the beacons of interest in remaining in the organizations where they work. The chi-square test worked with the hypotheses:

H0: The motivators of interest in remaining in the current career are independent of the type of career (executives or public servants).

H1: The motivators of interest in remaining in the current career depend on the type of career (executives or public servants).

7. CONCLUSIONS

The assumption that was confirmed in this research was that the public sector career offers favorable conditions for the reinforcement of the social construction around gender, in which the feminine identity stems from the domestic sphere.

Public sector work can be an important alternative for women to balance the various demands that are unfavorable to them, and what society expects of men.

This study is in agreement with the literature regarding the public sector career, considering it less problematic in terms of the worker being able to better reconcile personal life and professional life when compared to the private sector.

However, this discussion goes beyond the literature, since not only a comparison of qualified and high-ranking women in the public and private sectors was made, but also a comparison between these women and their significant others, in relation to income and dedication to household activities. These comparisons are already part of the existing international literature, but non-extant (with a significant sample) in the Brazilian literature.

Another contribution that went beyond the literature and reinforces the hypothesis that the public sector career favors the construction of the feminine identity from the domestic world is the fact that the public servants dedicate more time to the care of children and the home than the executives.

The data highlights that both executives and public servants are more financially empowered when compared to their male counterparts. This reinforces the literature regarding the empowerment of professional women in relation to their partners. It is important to note that, even when financially empowered, they cannot escape the social role imposed by male domination.

In the case of women’s careers in the public sector, especially when associated with the higher income earner, there is an even greater exacerbation of the condition of women as the main person responsible for the care of the children. Public service, although demanding dedication to work and

high qualifications, nevertheless provides working conditions, such as fixed hours and shorter working hours, which allow for more “free” time, which is not provided in the private sector.

The literature emphasizes that guilt and fatigue appear precisely because they have no one to share the demands of the home, thus experiencing the conflict of balancing personal and professional life.

There seems to be a somewhat greater space in the public sector for contemporary professional women to better match the roles imposed on them by the patriarchal society due to security and stability, fixed working hours and the less stringent job requirements in the public service, if compared to private sector.

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