

LABOUR AND TRADE UNIONS IN THE FINANCIAL SECTOR: CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES IN CONTEMPORARY BRAZIL

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Abstract

The configuration of the liquid wealth involved a reorganization of society and the financial system with impacts on labour and trade union organization in Brazil. The changes involved the redefinition of the profile of the bank and regulation standards with implications for collective bargaining. These changes involved the reorganization of work in the financial sector according to the new investment trends organized through financial holding companies that turned out to exceed their operations in the traditional banks' branches. Thus, the organization of the workers in the financial system no longer fits within the bank workers' category. In this framework, the trade unions developed strategies of adaptation and resistance in order to maintain and expand the ability to represent the workers effectively. As a result, we must rethink the boundaries of the concept of category of workers and the possibilities of new forms of workers' representation in the financial system that could now be articulated in organizations based on their branch of activity.

Key words: banking industry, financial holdings, labour, trade unions, financialisation

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Introduction

The configuration of the liquid wealth involved the redefinition of the social dimensions of work, skills and abilities, with decisive impact on the Brazilian trade unions. The changes observed in the working world are bringing profound implications for the reconfiguration of categories and branches of activity within a changing framework where the union organization tended to expand the number of entities.

When analysing the recent dynamics of the financial system and its impact on the labor conditions, there could be identified a tendency to re-distribute the work in the banking industry in which investment is organized through financial holding companies, capital investment groups with diversified management of centralized assets whose strategic operations are based on networks of retail outlets offering banking services (*correspondentes bancários*).²

As a result, nearly half of the workers in the financial sector do not belong to the bank workers' category. Consequently, they are outside the representation of the bank workers' unions that have a rich tradition of organizational and bargaining power.

It is in the context of this recent set of transformations in the banking industry that unions must learn to face their own modifications. Accordingly, the purpose of this article is to suggest elements for discussion regarding the possibilities of the trade unions under the impacts of changes in the banking industry. In section one, we present the changes in the investment dynamics in the financial system, with emphasis on the social impact of the financial holding companies with operational strategies supporting a network of *correspondentes bancários*. Section two examines the quantitative and qualitative changes in employment in the financial sector. Section three identifies the main trends of trade unionism in Brazil. Finally, Section four points out elements for discussion concerning trade union organization in the financial sector under the impact of these changes in investment and labour.

1. Contemporary investment dynamics in the financial sector

Although the observed changes in the organization and dynamics of the

² In Brazil, there are various retail outlets where bank services are offered. They can be post office agencies, lottery offices, supermarkets, etc. In Portuguese, these places are referred to as *correspondente bancário*)

financial system in Brazil fall within international trends of deregulation and the overall consolidation of the system, it is important to note that such changes were driven by political and institutional guidelines that are expressed in changes in the regulatory framework. In this sense, the relaxation of the banking capital requirements with regards to concentration and diversification was already present in the dynamics of the national financial system by the end of the 1980s. In 1988, new regulations³ officially sanctioned multi-function banks, which can be characterized by flexibility in the management of assets and liabilities integrating several financial portfolio movements (such as the commercial portfolio, investment, consumer finance, credit, real estate, leasing operations and development). In the period from November 1989 until July 1990 the growth of the number of multi-function banks was 73.86% (from 88 to 153). However, it should be noted that this result was due mainly to the migration of specialized financial institutions designed to operate as multi-function banks with diversified portfolios and their own legal structure. In this context, brokers and distributors of securities and exchanges, in addition to the commercial retail businesses and business conglomerates, all tended to create their own multi-function banks.

In the first half of the 90s, the strategies for expansion of banks were subject to the parameters set by the stabilization plans. After the *Real Plan (economic stabilization plan)*, price stability and financial integration were pillars of the expansion for financial activities in Brazil. The capacity of banks to cope with the new reality was supported through a process of restructuring and strengthening the financial system stimulated by the Central Bank. In the immediate period after the introduction of the *Real*, there was a threat of systemic crisis caused by the weakening liquidity position of banks creating a scenario of revenue losses and the need for a reorientation of the liabilities and assets. This boosted measures for prudential regulation and protection in the Brazilian financial system.

³ With regards to the regulatory framework and the evolution of the Brazilian financial system, it is important to emphasize the creation of the multi-function bank officially with Resolution No. 1524, in 1988 from the National Monetary Council, Resolution No. 2099 in 1994 on the adoption of new requirements for corporate and prudential regulation, Resolution 3040 in 2002 published in order to give guidelines to the new conditions of access to the financial system, in addition to Resolution No. 3110 in 2003 regarding the possibilities of expansion of correspondent banking. It also recalled that in the absence of regulation of Article 192 of the Federal Constitution, the Ministry of Finance through the Explanatory Memorandum No. 311, 24/08/1995, proposed the release of the entry of foreign capital in the institutions of the national financial system, which could be authorized by the President, when approved by the National Monetary Council.

In this sense, the liquidity crisis created after the *Real Plan* was introduced, was confronted by the Central Bank through decree mechanisms for temporary intervention and injection of funds into the financial system. This injection aimed to save institutions by modifying who had control over their equities or the ability to manage their assets and liabilities. Similarly, they began to privatize banks formerly held at the individual state level while strengthening federal institutions. The liquidity of the system was propelled by two programs, PROER and PROES, designed to reorganize private and public banks, respectively.

As a result, the Central Bank acted beyond simply being the lender of last resort. Furthermore, the changes in the regulatory framework encouraged capitalization and the increase of the scope and scale of the banking institutions. Additionally, the Basel Agreement was adopted as a prudent guide. The key idea was that banking capital should be adjusted to risk assumed by financial institutions in the context of self-regulation and transparency of the markets. At this very juncture, the entrance of the international retail banks contributed to accentuate the transformations already underway. In the late 1990's, the financial system in Brazil became even more concentrated, privatized and internationalized. However, this caused the large private banks to adopt national strategies for consolidation and expansion in the domestic market based on acquisition of control of small and medium institutions. Thus, mergers and acquisitions in the financial sector began to dominate the scenario of consolidation in the industry towards new structures further concentrated.

Thus, a main feature of this adjustment was to reduce the total number of banks and increase the participation of foreign capital in the assets of the system by 2002. With the opening of the banking sector to foreign capital in the second half of 1995, there began a growing process of mergers and acquisitions resulting in the acceleration of the trend towards concentration of the system. In 1994, there were 243 banks: the ten largest banks held 60.2% of total assets and 66.1% of total deposits. In 2002, there were 180 banks. The top ten had total assets of 68.3% and 75.7% of deposits. The new configuration of the banking sector in Brazil in terms of shares of domestic and foreign banks in total assets, can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1
Banking System in Brazil: Total Assets
(in %, 1993-2004)

Banks	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Foreign Control	8.35	7.16	8.39	9.79	12.82	18.38	23.19	27.41	29.86	27.38	20.73
Domestic Control	40.67	41.21	39.16	39	36.76	35.29	33.11	35.23	37.21	36.93	40.76
Public Control	13.41	18.17	21.9	21.92	19.06	11.37	10.23	5.62	4.3	5.87	5.79
Caixa Econômica Federal.*	14.51	14.98	16.4	16.47	16.57	17.02	17.06	15.35	10.97	11.66	13.04
Banco do Brasil*	22.93	18.28	13.91	12.52	14.42	17.44	15.75	15.63	16.76	17.12	18.4
Credit Unions	0.13	0.2	0.24	0.3	0.37	0.5	0.66	0.76	0.9	1.04	1.28
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Central Bank of Brazil

Note: *public banks

In the second half of 1990, the demand for new sources of revenue, in addition to the traditional activities of financial intermediation, stimulated new movements to diversification in the financial sector. The search and consolidation of new opportunities for expansion strengthened and increased the performance of existing financial conglomerates, enhancing activities related to asset management (mutual and pension funds), insurance, credit cards, consumer credit, venture capital, consortiums, and brokerage. The form of expansion of these activities took place beyond the legal existence of the multi-functional banks and involved the consolidation of new forms of concentration, diversification and management of capital in the financial sector.

Table 2
Brazil: Number of financial institutions per type, 2001-2007

Sector	2001 Dec.	2002 Dec	2003 Dec.	2004 Dec.	2005 Dec.	2006 Dec.	2007 June	2007 July	2007 Aug.
Multi-Function Bank	153	143	141	139	138	137	135	135	134
Commercial Bank	28	23	23	24	22	21	20	20	20
Development Bank	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Caixa Econômica (Saving Banks)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Investment Bank	20	23	21	21	20	18	17	17	17
Credit, Finance, & Invst. Corp	42	46	47	49	50	51	51	51	52
Brokers (securities)	177	161	147	139	133	116	113	112	109
Brokers (exchange)	43	42	43	47	45	48	48	48	48
Dealers (securities)	159	151	146	138	134	133	132	132	132
Leasing	72	65	58	51	45	41	40	40	40
Real State credit institutions and Savings and Loans	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18
Mortgage Companies	7	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Development agencies	9	10	11	12	12	12	12	12	12
Subtotal	733	693	666	646	606	606	697	695	693
Credit Unions	1379	1430	1454	1436	1452	1452	1461	1464	1466
Microcredit Lenders	23	37	49	51	56	56	54	54	55
Subtotal	2135	2135	2169	2133	2114	2114	2112	2114	2114
Consortiums	399	399	365	364	333	333	332	330	330
Total	2534	2536	2534	2497	2464	2447	2444	2444	2444

Source: Banco Central do Brasil

In 2002, changes in regulation sanctioned a new dynamic that favoured the expansion of activities beyond the multi-function bank. The advances in flexibility of the banking capital operations were made possible by encouraging the formation of financial holding companies. Following the international market organization guidelines, the regulating agency began to enforce the requirements for business plans and definitions of corporate governance standards. The new access guidelines were surrounded by complex relationships between investors and administrators in a global context. The Central Bank consolidated a process characterized by the prior approval of owner/investors and of new forms of operations. In this sense, the regulation created a new environment that facilitated the expansion of networks within the financial system, with relevant impacts on the future of work and their forms of organization in this sector.

The social impact of this new model based on “financial holding companies”, which fragmented the workforce in the banking system, has been strengthened by the changes that allowed the spreading of access to banking services with the expansion

of *correspondentes bancários* (regardless of whether or not they are a part of the National Financial System) that provide services to financial institutions and other institutions authorized to operate by the Central Bank. Beyond the strategy of reducing costs with diversification of channels of service, the expansion of the *correspondentes bancários* is related to the “inclusion” of lower income people into the banking system (people usually excluded from banking) offering and extending services to them, such as opening accounts, withdrawals, deposits, loans, payment of accounts, tax collection, and payment of pensions, among others. The ATM network has expanded from 14,453 in 2000 to 34,790 in 2007, while the number of bank branches and traditional jobs has had little significant increase, rising respectively from 16,396 to 18,308 and 9,495 to 10,427 in the same period.⁴ As for Internet banking in 2007, users of Internet banking totalled 25 million individual clients, after a growth of 12.6 million in last year alone.

In this context of diversification of channels, with emphasis on self-service, the number of *correspondentes bancários* is proliferating intensively, from 13,731 in 2000 to 84,332 in 2007. In 2005, 82.94% of Brazilians who use the services of *correspondentes bancários* earned up to 3 times the minimum wage.⁵ Thus, the channel represented by the *correspondentes bancários* in 2007 showed a growth of 15.5% and currently represents over 80% of all physical facilities provided by banks. In 2007, 10.4 million new current accounts were opened (a growth of almost 10%) and 5.7 million savings accounts.

The expansion of the *correspondentes bancários* network has allowed for full coverage of the entire national territory by the national banking system. However, the configuration of the *correspondentes bancários* cannot be seen as homogeneous, as there is not a single model. In Brazil, the plurality of relationships that the

⁴ In 2007 alone, there was a rise of 29% of transactions made through *correspondentes bancários* resulting in an expansion of 15.5% of units in this channel and its greater convenience for conducting bank transactions for the lower income population, or for those without bank accounts. The self-service channel also showed a significant growth of 15.4%, showing its growing acceptance by users. Transactions in Internet Banking rose 12.6%, following growth of 9.2% in the number of users in 2007. The growth of 12.7% of the volume of cases handled by agencies, 10.5% of transactions in call center and 13.9% of POS's operations in the trade, reflected an increase of 9.3% of current accounts in the year. The number of checks offset continued falling, in 2007 showing a decrease of 42% compared with 2000. Today, the participation of checks of total transactions is only 3.7%, when in 2000 exceeded 13%.

⁵ According to the Federation of Brazilian Banks:
<http://www.febraban.org.br/Arquivo/Servicos/Eventoscursos/Palestras/O%20Papel%20do%20Sistema%20Fin%20no%20des%20nacional/Marcio%20Cypriano.pdf>. [2005 data]

correspondentes bancários have with the banks they represent is crucial for understanding the nature and scope of the policy of banking inclusion. The expansion of their activities is embedded in a dynamic of diversification. Thus, without abandoning the transactional activities (means of payment) many *correspondentes bancários* are entering into other business activities (marketing of financial products and services).

2. Employment in the Financial Sector

The flexibilisation strategy for expansion of banking services set a new atmosphere for labour relations. By constantly seeking flexibility and mobility, the banking system has adopted strategies for managing the liquidity of its assets and liabilities that favour the short term, making use of the advances in information technology to implement strategies for operational efficiency. In fact, since the 1980s, workers in the banking sector in Brazil have been repeatedly affected due to banks adjusting their assets. Between March and December of 1986, there was a reduction of 109,000 jobs. The industry began the 1990s with 800,000 jobs and, by the end of the decade, the number had reduced to almost half that (in 2005, there were 420,036 bank). According to the DIEESE, in 1989 banks in Brazil employed 811,400 workers. During the layoffs of 1995 and 1996, on average 174 workers were dismissed per day. In the first 8 months of 1997, some 28,000 jobs were cut. This trend was exacerbated through a process of privatization, mergers, acquisitions and liquidations that reduced the total number of banks by 12% between 1999 and 2002. An important fact to note would be the change in the composition of the distribution of workers between public and private banks after the process of privatization and liquidation of public banks. Reducing the number of employees was also associated with the intense process of outsourcing, especially from the 1990s onward.

Despite the different identities between the banks, the trend only affects activity on the customer services side, so that all other processes that take place behind the scenes (processing documents, the infrastructure and support technology, the legal areas, human resources, call centres, etc.), are to a greater or lesser extent, outsourced (Table 3). In recent years, one can note the increase in outsourcing of services related to telecommunications, help desk, projects and maintenance of systems, in addition to the processing of cards.

Table 3
Brazil: Total of workers in selected banks, 2001 and 2006

	Itaú		Bradesco		Banco do Brasil		Santander Banespa	
Total number of workers (conglomerate/financial holding)								
2001	45.409	81,3%	65.713	89,0%	78.122	85,1%	20.428	81,7%
2006	59.921	79%	79.306	90,9%	86.672	84,5%	23.355	67,7%
Total numbers of workers outsourced								
2001	10.132	18,1%	7.194	9,7%	1.761	1,9%	968	3,9%
2006	14.764*	19,5%	7.293	8,4%	5.995	5,8%	7.848	22,7%
Total number of interns								
2001	305	0,6%	903	1,2%	11.880	12,9%	3.600	14,4%
2006	1.082	1,5%	676	0,8%	9.947	9,7%	3.298	9,6%

Source: Balanço Social das empresas, IBASE, 2008.

Note: * Itaú did not divulge information on outsourcing after 2004. This data reflects 2003 figures.

In this context, besides the outsourcing, there was observed the growth of other non-bank financial institutions⁶, increasing the number of workers in the financial system that are not bank workers⁷ and therefore are not protected by collective bargaining agreements. Considering the data from RAIS (2006) it is possible to identify the existence of 1.4 million (Table 4) employees in occupational families related to the financial system, although it is not possible to gauge whether in fact they would be considered under the “financial branch”. Between 2002 and 2005, the participation of formal employment in the “financial branch” reduced from 1.9% to 1.87%. Despite this reduction of participation during this period, there was a growth of employees directly linked to the financial system, bringing it to a total of 621,000 in 2005. It is important to emphasize that many of these workers are not represented by the bank workers’ union.

⁶ The statement refers to the growth of the number of financiers, credit unions, leasing companies, factoring, insurance companies, and other financial institutions.

⁷ More recent data from the PNAD (2002) indicate that there are around 1 million people who identify themselves as working in the “financial branch”, while there are less than 400,000 bank workers.

Table 4

Brazil: Number of workers employed in the occupational families related to the financial system, 2003 and 2006

Occupational Families	2003	2006	% Change
Professional Marketing, Consulting and Banking Services	36.811	46.727	26,9
Brokers of Values, Financial Assets, Commodities, and Derivatives		3.715	6,5
Technical and Related Services	22.431	25.921	15,6
Technical and Related Services in Banking	24.147	28.360	17,4
Insurance Brokers	709	908	28,1
Supervisors of Financial Services, and Exchange Controls	48.121	57.009	18,5
Banking Services Clerks	279.878	302.977	8,3
Tellers and ticket offices (except for bank tellers)	388.037	510.376	31,5
Collection Agents from Gambling and Betting	10.187	12.149	19,3
Collection Agents and related services	45.460	64.746	42,4
Telemarketing Operators	125.154	266.369	112,8
Sales and Service Supervisors	54.450	70.960	30,3
Total	1.038.873	1.390.217	33,8

Source: Garrido e Santos, 2008. Fonte: RAIS/MTE

Analyzing the jobs directly tied to the “financial branch” it can be observed that there was growth, between 2002 and 2005 in the following sub sectors: other activities auxiliary to financial intermediation not listed above (holdings etc.) (99.55%); credit, finance and investment corporations (91.3%); health plans (60%), credit unions (41.43%); activities auxiliary to insurance and supplementary pension (23%). The activities that have remained as the most important in terms of generating jobs in the “financial branch”, accounting for 80% of formal jobs are: multi-function banks with commercial portfolios, saving banks, health plans; ancillary activities of insurance and supplementary pension, non-life insurance, and other activities related to the granting of credit, such as credit unions, as seen in Table 4.

Other occupational activities related to the financial activities showed a growth of 34% in just 3 years, a rate higher than that throughout the industry itself and the country. Based on the formal sector, 415,870 workers can be identified in these activities in 2006, most of which are in the tele-services activities and mail. For example, tele-marketing has grown 112%; tellers and ticket offices (except bank tellers) grew 31%. They are activities that gather: a) many *correspondentes bancários*, such as mail and *lotéricas* (agents from gambling and betting) or b) other related activities, such as transport of values, charge services and cadastral information. In the group of the employees engaged in mail activities, transport of

values, tele-services, charge services and cadastral information, operation of gambling and betting (415,870) 46.85 % develop some activity related to the financial sector (194,822). Therefore, there is a significant contingent of people who are involved in financial intermediation activities, without, however, being considered as workers in the branch of activity.

The quantitative changes were accompanied by qualitative changes in the category of the bank workers. In terms of age, young people up to 29 years old increased their participation in the financial sector, 31% in 2002 to 35% in 2005.⁸ Considering only the bank itself, the index also rose, and in 2005, 29.85% were in the same age group. Corroborating with the statement above, it can be verified that workers over 50 represent only 7.9% of formal employees (in 2002 represented 6.4%), most of which is concentrated in public banks, especially the Central Bank. The number of employees between 30 and 49 years of age fell from 62.6% in 2002 to 57.3% in 2005.

Thus, the banking system overall, especially in private institutions, is currently characterized by a very professional profile of youth, driven by a strong turnover rate, on average 16% per year. Accordingly, 42.32% of employees in the financial system had less than 2 years in their position in 2006, according to RAIS. Given the low participation of people over 50 years, few can retire as employees of a bank or financial holding company. More recently, the phenomenon of rotation is also present in some public banks, as the demotion of status, income and working conditions in these institutions. In relation to gender, women's participation shows some stability after two decades of growth in the recent period, in 2005 reaching around 46% by the RAIS data. The level of education is still increasing, as between 2002 and 2005 the participation of workers in the financial industry with complete higher education increased from 45 to 55%. If we consider the bank sector alone, 68% had higher education in 2005.

In the process of flattening the level of intermediate hierarchies, we can see other changes in the category. Firstly, there is an increase in the percentage of workers in positions of management, which aims to make the services more qualified and more personalized. At the same time, workers require continuous improvement of

⁸ The increase of the participation of the youth occurred mainly in the commercial banks, in the multi-function banks, public savings banks, and credit companies. The public bank Caixa Econômica Federal was obliged to contract 20,000 employees directly, after having completed a TAC (Term of Adjustment of Behavior) with the Labour Minister to replace interns and sub-contracted workers.

their skills, trying to follow the demands of banks. According to the changes noted, there is a reduction in the number of workers in the front office, due to the intensification of technological resources.

In short, among the strategies adopted by banks to reduce costs and increase competitiveness, one can highlight three aspects: 1) the process of outsourcing, 2) the adoption of organizational innovations, and 3) a new policy on relations of work. Consequently, the result has been a diversification of employment contracts in the banking system.

Regarding the work shift, which formally is 6 hours daily and has no legal amendment, there are two new developments: firstly, in real life (in practice) there has been an extension of the work day beyond what is legally outlined, often without overtime pay, as it is often unseen. This takes place by boosting the amount of take home work employees engage in, often requiring them to sell their products (to meet their goals) to friends and family. Secondly, there is a change in the classification of a considerable amount of jobs to other categories such as commission workers (or confidential employees or management), which have an 8-hour day and, thus, is circumventing the law of 6 hours. These two practices were widely used from the 1990s onward. The change of the day, for a significant part of the bank workers, occurred despite the law still maintaining the right of 6 hours work day.

As for employment contracts, the introduction of variable remuneration in the majority of financial conglomerates, which ties the income of the worker to the achievement of productivity goals, with enormous pressure or coercion of forcing the employee to meet the goals of the company, is also facilitated by high unemployment and the process of desestructuration of the labour market. In this context, the adoption of new standards of performance and disruptions caused changes in collective bargaining, pointing to a movement of fragmentation within the category.

Considering the conditions of pay, there has been an advancement of flexible remuneration, with particular reference to *PLR (profit sharing)* and *abono (bonus)*⁹ as well as other programs of variable remuneration (dependent on selling services and products, goals, awards etc). In this context, the PLR becomes central, because, generally, its value is greater than the value of the wage hike this year. It is an added bonus, received by the employee, which fits and reinforces the culture of short term

⁹ PLR is a system of profit-sharing used in Brazil. *Abono* is a similar, though complex bonus system used in Brazil. The amount is the same with all banks as it is negotiated annually.

thinking and contributing to the environment of great instability and insecurity experienced by workers.¹⁰ (Madi, Gonçalves and Krein, 2009). PLR's participation in the worker's annual pay more than doubled between 1999 and 2005, from 2.85% to 6.38%. In the same period the share of salary and hourly income fell from 58.3 to 55.8%. The benefits hardly varied (9.45% in 2005). In 2000, the strategy of banks to reduce their fixed costs regarding remuneration led to the creation of a bonus for length of service instead of the maintenance of benefits in the contract.¹¹

When we take into consideration all the workers directly identified with activities in the financial system (without including the *correspondentes bancários* and those linked to tele-services), it shows that 46% earned up to 2 times the minimum wage and only 7% earned more than 10 times the minimum wage in 2006. In the banking sector, the pay is much higher (91% earn more than 2 times the minimum wage), showing that the activities outsourced and which are outside the financial system have worse pay conditions. Chart 1 on the following page provides information on the benefits and income differentiation between bank workers and those outsourced.

(see following page for Chart 1)

¹⁰ There have already been situations where the union has failed to make its strategy to prioritize the growth of real wages because the base did not give importance to achieving a 5% real increase. However, the base is mobilized to increase the extra payment, not necessarily wages, as was the case with the bank workers strike in 2004.

¹¹ This right was removed from the convention through a referendum that favored the position of banks from the following proposition: that the union does not know what is best for the bank, but the employee is free to decide. See a review in Gonçalves, Kerin and Madi, 2006.

Chart 1

Brazil: Benefits and Remuneration: Bank Workers & Sub-Contracted Workers, 2004

	<i>Formally contracted workers of sub-contractors (per side agreement)</i>	<i>Formally contracted workers of sub-contractors</i>	<i>Temporary sub-contracted employees¹²</i>	<i>Sub-contracted workers working as interns</i>	<i>Sub-contracted workers working by "piece-work"</i>	<i>Bank workers hired by Banks</i>
Place of work ¹³	Bank / outsourced company	Bank / outsourced company	Bank / outsourced company	Bank / outsourced company	Outsourced company	Bank
Monthly Salary	Clerk: R\$ 702,00 Teller: R\$ 992,00	<i>Administrative Assistant:</i> Min: R\$ 300 Max: R\$ 500 (according to the company)	<i>Administrative Assistant:</i> Min: R\$ 300 Max: R\$ 500 (according to the company)	<i>Administrative Assistant:</i> Min: R\$ 300 Max: R\$ 500 (according to the company & education ¹⁴)	"Free-lancer" income based directly on production	Clerk: R\$ 702,00 Teller: R\$ 992,00
Work Day	6 hours	8 hrs, 48 min	8 hrs, 48 min	8 hrs, 48 min	12 hrs (avg.) ¹⁵	6 hours
Differential for Check Processors	Value varies according to company ¹⁶	Do not have	Do not have	Do not have	Do not have	R\$ 65,31
Night Shift Differential	Do not have	Do not have	Do not have	Do not have	Do not have	R\$ 40,25
Average # of Authentications per hour of work (peak period)	250	250	250	250	250	108
PLR – (Profit Sharing)	Paid until 1997	Do not have	Do not have	Do not have	Do not have	80% monthly salary + fixed value of R\$ 650,00
Transportation Aid	Company follows general law paying expenses over 6% of monthly salary	Limited to the cost of one round trip journey	Limited to the cost of one round trip journey	Do not have	Do not have	Bank pays expenses over 4% of monthly salary
Meal Ticket (restaurants)	Value varies according to company ¹⁷	For those that pay, R\$ 5,00 / day (avg.)	For those that pay, R\$ 5,00 / day (avg.)	Do not have	Do not have	R\$ 11,67 / day
Meal Ticket (restaurants & supermarkets)	R\$ 200,00	For those that pay R\$ 30 – 50 / month ¹⁸	Do not have	Do not have	Do not have	R\$ 200,00
Day Care supplement	Value varies according to company ¹⁹	Do not have	Do not have	Do not have	Do not have	R\$ 163,00
Cannot be fired during pregnancy	During length of pregnancy + 30 days after birth	During length of pregnancy + 30 days after birth	No rights	No rights	No rights	During length of pregnancy + 60 days after birth
Maternity leave	Have the right	Have the right	Have the right	Do not have the right	Do not have the right	120 days after birth
Medical Insurance	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes ²⁰

(continued on the following page)

¹² Workers from employment agencies that continue to work beyond minimum period set by the law. This is not seasonal or short-term work. These workers are an integral part of the workforce. It is common for the name of the employment agency or workers "cooperative" to change, as the legal time limit is reached, while the worker continues the same position.

¹³ The majority of the services are done inside the contracted company.

¹⁴ High school interns have different salaries than college level interns

¹⁵ Average number of hours during peak days

¹⁶ Workers employed prior to 1998 have rates grandfathered in.

¹⁷ In several companies, rates are grandfathered according to the last value received in 1998 (R\$ 8,11 per day).

¹⁸ The right to a meal ticket is invalidated with a single absence.

¹⁹ Workers who began work prior to 1998 receive R\$ 163,00.

²⁰ All medical plans offered to employees are subsidized by the different employers. It should be noted that the bank workers' plans are much broader and of a higher quality, when compared to the others.

(continuation from prior page)

	<i>Formally contracted workers of sub-contractors (per side agreement)</i>	<i>Formally contracted workers of sub-contractors</i>	<i>Temporary sub-contracted employees²¹</i>	<i>Sub-contracted workers working as interns</i>	<i>Sub-contracted workers working by "piece-work"</i>	<i>Bank workers hired by Banks</i>
CIPA (Internal Accident Prevention Commission)	Workers are unaware of the electoral process	Workers are unaware of the electoral process	Workers are not allowed to participate in the electoral process	Workers are not allowed to participate in the electoral process	Workers are not allowed to participate in the electoral process	Workers know and participate in the electoral process
Prevention of workplace injuries and illnesses	Do not have	Do not have	Do not have	Do not have	Do not have	In general, banks have SESMT ²² and in some cases they have their own plan
Professional Education	Do not have	Do not have	Do not have	Do not have	Do not have	There is a program
Training	Do not have	Do not have	Do not have	Do not have	Do not have	There is a program
Union Representation	Do not have	In isolated cases	Do not have	Do not have	Do not have	Strong representation in the majority of Banks

Source: Sanches, 2006. pp 80- 81

3. Trade Unionism in Brazil: Recent Trends

In the context of globalization, the trajectory of trade unionism in Brazil has been quite distinct due to Brazil's unique history. In the 1990s, practically all political initiatives, such as economic adjustment policies and internal trade union struggles, exerted damaging pressure on workers' organizations. It is in this setting that legal initiatives increased, moving the collective norm well into the practice of flexibilisation and precarious working conditions.

From an international perspective, the implications of social and economic transformations for trade union organizations has been susceptible to the same homogenizing tensions built into the system. Studies about the changes in trade union organization point to seven key strategies (Kumar and Schenk, 2006:36). These strategies have evolved as follows:

1. Restructuring organizations by means of mergers and internal re-organization: The use of mergers, modifications of the structure, and modernization of the service model have all been popular responses within unions. Mergers have been common in the majority of developed countries, where often they receive the support of national trade union centres or confederations to increase the resources,

²¹ Workers from employment agencies that continue to work beyond minimum period set by the law. This is not seasonal or short-term work. These workers are an integral part of the workforce. It is common for the name of the employment agency or workers "cooperative" to change, as the legal time limit is reached, while the worker continues the same position.

²² SESMT – *Serviço Especializado Saúde e Medicina do Trabalho* (Specialized Health and Workplace Medical Aid)

construct economies of scale and build the capacity to mobilize. Ebbinghaus (2003), who studied the European experience, points out a growing concentration of power in a few large trade unions and a potential competition between them, being able to threaten the weaker unions. On the other hand, the use of computer technology to promote changes in union structures has led to decreasing personal contact and control, increasing tensions between generations, loss of confidentiality, and overwork of the members.

2. Organizing non-union workers through innovative approaches and tactics:

This strategy has become common in Anglo-Saxon countries where the decline of the membership levels was intense and in which the negotiation structures are decentralized with low coverage. Despite the efforts in this direction, membership continues to fall, but at lower rates than in the 80s and the beginning of the 90s.

3. Supporting political action and campaigns to increase activism of the base and workers' mobilization: Hamann (2004) highlights six forms of political action: links with political parties, electoral activity, mobilization of voters, "lobbying" to exert legal influence over the formulation of policies, political strikes and legal changes. In the two last decades, the revitalization effort has been concentrated in political actions with workers, and the action through political parties is losing importance. In the U.S.A., this form of revitalization has been receiving high priority as a form to affect labour legislation.

4. Construction of alliances and coalitions with other elements of civil society and community groups to legitimize actions for social and economic change: This strategy has been considered one of the most innovative to expand the legitimacy of wider social aims of unions in their renewal projects. This legitimacy should be anchored in actions together with other unions and organizations of the civil society, and the communities. Frege, Heery and Turner (2004: 138) believe that this strategy will be vital in the future due to the necessity to widen unions agenda incorporating topics like the environment, working standards, gender equality and balance between work and family.

5. Unions cooperation with other movements, at the national and international level: Up until now, international cooperation has been quite fragile, in relation to the construction of a revitalizing agenda. The difficulties of cooperation should be interpreted in their historical dimensions of labour and international spaces of struggle (Nissen 2002, 265).

6. Partnerships with employers and governments in areas of mutual interest and/or developing initiatives of changes in the workplace to favour the protection and improvement of the workers' interests: This strategy has been common in Western European countries and Scandinavia. The partnerships differentiate themselves from cooperative actions, as the partnerships occur in the workplaces. Fitcher and Green (2004) show scepticism in relationship to the limits of this strategy of revitalization, as the partnerships strengthen the contribution of workers to the company results.

7. Expansion of education programs, training and research for the development of new leaderships and a better understanding from the workers of the transformations in course: Although neglected as a revitalization strategy, its importance in terms of critical thought about labour and the formation of leaderships, should be recognized (Eischenscher, 2002).

The recent experience in Canada indicates the difficulties in organizing a structure characterized by decentralized organizations and low sector coverage. Services expansion with the increase of small and medium workplaces puts pressure for a more centralized union action. Although these external factors have been decisive in the evaluation of obstacles, there are strong internal limits in terms of union structure and renewal.

The external barriers include four categories: *1. Economic:* capital mobility, corporative restructuring and downsizing, outsourcing, growth of the service sector, more precarious work conditions; *2. Legal:* legal restrictions on the organization of the workers; *3. Social:* hostility of employers towards unions, resistance of the workers to join the union for fear of losing their jobs, individualism ideologies of workers, instrumental perception of the union; *4. Politic:* unfavourable scenarios for union actions, legal penalties and strike restrictions.

Amongst the internal factors, institutional inertia is pointed to as a very important one, besides consolidated bureaucratic structures, differences between the leaderships and the composition of workers, union division, lack of a future vision and fear of change. Kumar and Schenk (2006) highlight the following challenges in the Canadian context: democratization of the unions; leadership and alternative visions about the role of unions and the social changes; expansion of the trade unions organization; organization and negotiation in small workplaces; increasing precarious work conditions that stimulate polarization in the labour market; organizational innovations, strategies and functionality; inclusion and diversity.

However, the understanding of the challenges for the different categories of workers depends on their comprehension of the objective conditions based on a recent history of union fights to affirm the union in the recent Brazilian society. In Brazil, under the adverse economic conditions of the 90s, unions had to search to develop new strategies of class action according to the different ideas of union and the objective conditions of the represented category. In the collective bargaining sphere, the introduction of several initiatives of flexibilisation can be seen. Due to worker pressure from the threat of unemployment, many times unions ended up accepting demands of employers or the government regarding profit sharing, one off payments (fixed costs), working hours ('banking of hours' and work on Sundays) and contracting forms (outsourcing, temporary contracts, etc).

From the point of view of the union actions and agenda, three common topics have been relevant since the 1990s: 1) the option to participate in central unions that represent articulations with other entities of the workers' movements and the participation in the general fights coordinated by these central offices; 2) the provision of services to the associates so as to take care of specific groups of the category;²³ and 3) the search for maintenance of the representation and affirmation of their political dimension in the society by incorporating contemporaneous issues related to gender, race, culture, besides the generational ones, in order to link the questions of the base and the general social fights (Gonçalves, Krein and Madi, 2006).

²³ In addition to possible questions about this union concept, it is clear that such policy serves specific groups of workers, as it is financially unsustainable to incorporate the whole category. For example, the services offered by the unions analyzed in the research were: judicial assistance, programs of professional qualification, housing credit programs, credit unions, medical and dentist assistance, partnerships with cultural, leisure and educational institutions to give workers discounts, etc.

An analysis of the unions' positions leads to their classification in four types: 1) the ones that had been involved in the resistance and have tried to maintain the same fighting strategy as in the 80s, but without achieving success; 2) the ones that have incorporated the ideas of the "Washington Consensus" and have developed pragmatic actions searching for the best possibilities in a given scenario; 3) the ones that have laid-back and developed actions to remain in the union structure; 4) the ones that have been, trying new strategies, learning from their mistakes, and trying to maintain an open attitude that includes mechanisms of intervention and execution of social policies, initiatives in the area of solidarity economy, in the defence of the 'union pro-citizenship', etc

In the 90s, new union strategies have tried to solve the problems that arose from the transformations of global capitalism and labour in Brazil. Amongst the new strategies of union reorganization, the following can be noted:

1. Consolidation of central unions of different political ideologies, that would try to build their own union structure and;
2. Creation of new union entities that answer to the changes in the composition of the working class, given the emergency of new categories.²⁴
3. Magnifying the spaces of interlocution of the union movement, with consolidation of negotiation strategies in different spaces as a reply to the context of re-democratization of the Brazilian society. In this sense, the intervention in institutional spaces to argue, negotiate and elaborate public or regional policies can be remembered. According to Pochmann and Mendonça (1996), the union movement participates in more than of 40 institutional spaces;
4. Magnifying the union agenda to incorporate themes of interest of the general society such as gender, race, education, culture and fight against all types of discriminations;
5. Development of partnerships with employers and governments in areas of mutual interest and/or development of initiatives to promote changes in the workplace that favour workers;

²⁴ For example, tele-marketing, autonomous agents changed the strategy of unions in an attempt to keep/increase their political influence or maintain their structures. They were stimulated by the regulation defined in the Federal Constitution/88, that has facilitated the process of dismembering and creating new union entities.

6. Partnerships with other social movements to establish a common agenda of resistance to neo-liberalism or to defend common positions in the Brazilian society. The dispute is not only for hegemony in the criticism, but also in the presentation of alternatives (“suggestive unions”);
7. Strengthening of the citizenship dimension as a space for union action. The idea of a “union pro-citizenship ” was proposed;
8. Increase of the role of the union as a service provider to its members;
9. Substitution of general mobilizations for other creative forms of interest manifestation of the category;
10. Expansion of the programs of education, training and research for the development of leaderships and a better understanding from the workers of the transformations in course;
11. Development and follow-up of the execution of public policies, especially in the area of the professional qualification, intermediation of human resources, generation of jobs and income; social policies, etc;
12. Search for interlocution in public agencies and institutions in the perspective to keep a certain power in the country.

Although there were multiple strategies, it is possible to affirm that the union crisis is expressed in the expansion of the union entities.²⁵ Several reasons explain such expansion during the 90s. First, the regulation of the unions in the Federal Constitution of 1988, which has stimulated the creation of union entities, as it introduced the statutory freedom and the end of the need of State recognition. Secondly, the expansion of the services sector has deepened the heterogeneity of the labour market. Also, the recent economic growth in some Brazilian great geographic regions where there is less trade union tradition, especially in the North and Central-West regions, has contributed to the tendency.

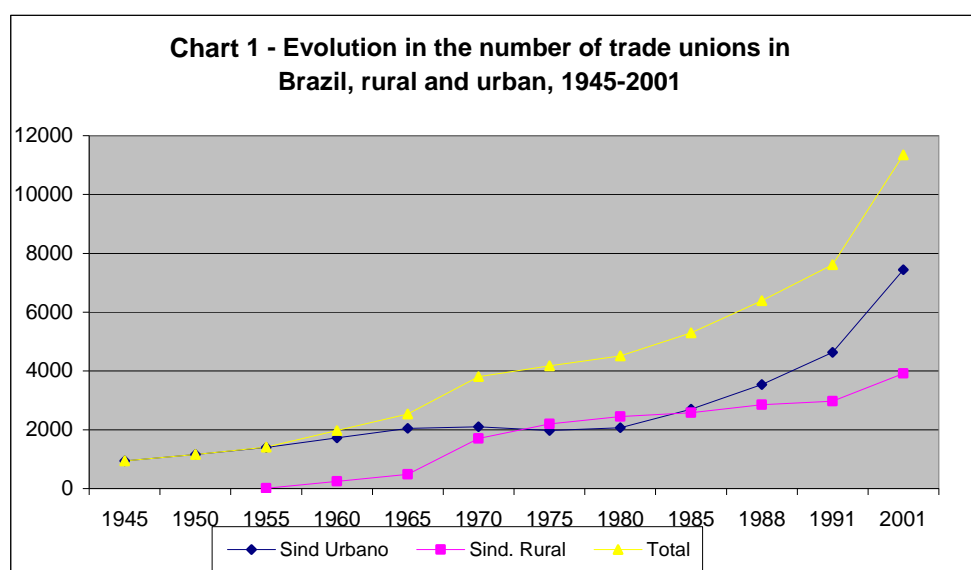
In fact, there is a current trend of the unionism to deepen the expansion of the union entities with the creation of unions for more specific segments, overlapping the representation of workers who are already in a union of wider representation. In reality, the number of unions has been growing since 1945 (Filgueiras, 2008 and

²⁵ The phenomenon of atomization of the unions kept increasing significantly in the 90s.

Pochmann, 1996). In the Trade Union Research of 2001, the total number of mergers in the country was only 156.

Between 1998 and 1992, the rate of growth of unions, according to the IBGE research, was of 5.3% per year. From the point of view of the base coverage, the great majority of the unions are active in the municipal or inter-municipal scope. Although the number of unions has decreased the participation in the total of entities, 83% in 1992, and 78% in 2001, this result does not evidence a process of unions merging, but the creation of new state level entities (unions and federations).

Between 1992 and 2001, the growth rate of the number of unions lost intensity, but it remained at a high level of 4% a year, being more expressive for urban workers (5.2%) than agricultural ones (2.7%). The rate of annual average growth was higher amongst the autonomous workers (17.4%). In absolute terms, the number of entities increased from 10,000 in 1990 to approximately 16,000 in 2001.



Source: Trade Union Research, IBGE, 2001 and Pochmann, 1995

In the private sector, the prominence was the growth of entities in services, especially in commerce, road transport and education that had been responsible for 30% of the new entities created. In the area of commerce, the average rate growth of entities increased more intensely for autonomous workers (7.3%), tourism and lodging sector and retailing (5.7% a year in each one of these, representing 11% of the total of entities created in the period). The sector of education and culture had a similar performance (5.7% to the year). The expansion of the entities in services is

simultaneous to the transformations of the labour market during the 90's, revealing the increase of jobs in the service sector²⁶ and the increasing heterogeneity in this sector. However, the greatest increase was observed amongst public servants, rising 12.1% annually, after 1992. Their participation in all trade unions of workers moved from 9% to 17% between 1992 and 2001. In fact, public employees account for one third of the new entities created in the period.

In summary, there was an expansion of the number of trade unions that is related to changes in regional and sector composition of the labour market, with the normative framework of trade union rights and the expansion of trade unions into sectors and regions with a higher absence of union organization. Finally, this process is directly tied to a process of transformation occurring in society. The changes in society have opened up space for more pragmatic and personalistic attitudes that have contributed to the formation of new entities as a way to preserve political influence, survival or even to increase personal prestige. As part of that process, there is a movement that tends to accentuate the segmentation and fragmentation of interests, not only by changes in the composition of the labour market, but as part of cultural traits that exacerbate more individualistic, immediate and concrete values. The specific local issues have tended to be overvalued at the expense of the universal issues (Madi, Gonçalves and Krein, 2009). However, fundamentally, it is possible to identify a process of fragmentation of the existing entities, "pulverization" of a trade union organization that already had presented a wide dispersion, within a wider context of profound changes in the labour market, in the economic structure and in society.

In fact, the expansion of the trade unions reflects the challenges to overcome structure and organization obstacles that trade unions already detected in the 1980s in the context of crisis and democratic transition. Since the 1980s, the proposal for a trade union branch of activity began to be held within a logic that supported the construction of entities with a greater base of representation. Usually, but not always, the proposal appeared next to the defence of an union reform that removes much of the corporatist system, and to be based on ILO conventions. In this context, the central trade union that worked hard to build an organization by its own line of

²⁶ The formal work in the service sector increased its participation on the total formal occupation from 48,8% in 1989 to 55,8% in 1999. In 2004 it decreased to 54,1% according to RAIS/MTE.

activity was the CUT.²⁷ More recently, union reform measures introduced in 2008, if not declared unconstitutional, would sanction such a dynamic, namely recognition of labour unions and the legalization of access to resources such as the Required Union Contribution.²⁸ These measures have strengthened, legally and financially, several entities that were outside of the traditional confederative system of trade unions. However, the construction of new forms of representation and organization based on “branches of activity” presents challenges. The recent experience in Brazil shows that not only is there a lack of consensus on the very definition of the branches of activities, as well as in some branches, there is a "cluster" of workers that can not be articulated in a formal central structure.

4. Bank Workers and the Financial Sector

The transformations in the banking system had affected the trade union’s power and stimulated the search for new strategies to face the new scenario. Consequently, a significant fall in membership rates is observed in the sector, according to PNAD. Membership fell from 59% of the sector, in 1992, to 41% in 2004. This fall is related to the outsourcing process, the changes in the dynamics and structure of the financial system and the general context within the economy, politics and the society, all unfavourable to collective action. The membership decrease is also articulated to the change in the nature of the jobs of significant part of the category and the difficulty to obtain results in the collective bargaining.

Therefore, this can be seen as a symptom of the trade union changing reality in the period, also evidenced in the loss of influence of the unions in the society in general. In this scenario, although the union action and organization of the bank workers is very traditional, two concomitant transformations have occurred. On one hand, the banks made important changes in the forms of manpower management and bank occupation reorganization despite all the tradition of struggle in the category. For example, there were significant transformations in central aspects of the labour

²⁷ The bank workers, by its strong presence with affiliated entities, founded a department in 1986, after the CNB (National Confederation of Bank) and finally the CONTRAF in 2006.

²⁸ The Decree 186, lowered the MTE abril/2008 in setting the rules on registration of trade unions and changes in statutory bodies, accepting in practice the existence of more than one trade union organization.

regulation that were not negotiated with the union, such as: the introduction of technological and organizational innovations, goals plans, the intensification of the work rhythm, the commissioned 8 hours work, the lay-off process and the outsourcing.

The mentioned measures evidence the difficulties faced by unions to oppose the process of adjustment that happened in the sector during the 90's. This certain weakening is related to an unfavourable context to workers, from the economic point of view as well as cultural and political, parts of deeper changes in the society.

On the other hand, in this unfavourable scenario, the bank workers' unions, specially those related to the state of São Paulo, have looked for strategies to keep their membership level and political influence. The magnifying of the union agenda followed three complementary actions: 1) the incorporation in the daily struggle, in a more explicit form, of issues related to gender, age and race, fighting discriminations; 2) the development of several services for specific segments of bank workers, such as programs of professional qualification, housing program (cooperative for construction of houses and apartments- Bancoop); credit cooperative (Bancredi); partnerships with cultural, leisure and educational institutions with the purpose to obtain discounts to bank workers and to facilitate the access of retired workers; 3) the adoption, from middle of the 90's on, of a conception of "union pro-citizenship", expressed in the vision that the union cannot be restricted to specific questions of the employment relation, but also it has to assume an intervention role in the public policies elaboration and management, an active participation in social movements and a role in the development of specific projects in the social area.²⁹

In the last decade, the changes in unions have evidenced the transformations in the nature of unions and its forms of action. At the same time that unions did not have strength to oppose flexibilisation and precarisation of labour, they managed to preserve themselves as institutions, by searching new strategies of action, organization and mobilization. In the first place, they extended the union agenda, including new questions of interest such as gender, race and culture. Secondly, they started to offer diversified services to the category. Additionally, although there were

²⁹ For example, the presence in general struggles of the working class, especially those coordinated by CUT. This means that the represented people are not only workers but citizens. In this way, the trade union agenda is turned to daily matters of worker's lives out of the workplace (in the society). At the same time the union assumes and develops social projects. Amongst them, the union supported the project "Travessia", which assisted street children.

pressures, they managed to keep the national collective convention and preserve their organizational structure, what, amongst other factors made the strikes in 2004 and 2005 possible. The resistance strategy also bet in the participation of more general fights of the working class and the society in the period, so that the bank workers' union would not be isolated and exclusively focused on corporatist demands.

In other words, the bank workers' unions looked for other forms of legitimization in the society and in the category, incorporating important interests of the population in general (like fighting discrimination) and developing activities to serve the needs of specific segments of the category (groups of interest). Thus, a defensive strategy has been configured, of resistance and adaptation in face of the difficulty to confront transformations in the banking system, in the labour market and in the society. The magnifying of the union agenda can be characterized as the search for new answers to the transformations in course and the search to establish universal flags. Such innovations are surrounded by social tensions expressed in the base and in the union itself, as a result of the relations that the union historically built with the category and with the workers' and social movements in general.

In this sense, according to the Unions Research of the 2001 (IBGE) the great majority of unions represented a very small base, and couldn't exercise its own prerogatives. Only 13% of the unions had knowledge of the strikes carried through in their base and only 46% of the union had made collective bargaining in 2001 (Table 5).

Table 5 – Brazil: Trade union base - Financial System Branch - 2001

<i>Central Union entity</i>	<i>Base(number of workers)</i>	<i>Number of unions</i>
Workers not affiliated	97.492	110
CAT (Central Autônoma dos Trabalhadores)	4.226	3
CGT (Central Geral dos Trabalhadores)	850	3
CUT (Central Única dos Trabalhadores)	362.656	109
FS (Força Sindical)	34.882	6
Total	500.106	231

Source: Trade Unions Research, IBGE, 2001

In this picture of challenges to the representation, some initiatives are being articulated. There has been an orientation to increase the base of representation of unions in the perspective to agglutinate all the workers of the branch. It is possible to observe that some unions had carried through statutory changes and/or have changed their names to extend the base of representation in the “branch of activity”.

Since the 80s, the bank workers have incorporated in their agenda the proposal to construct a national organization of the financial sector. In 1987 they organized a national department (DNB - National Department of the Bank Workers). Later on, the CUT clearly opted for enhancing a structure based on central offices, a vertical structure denominated as “confederations” or “federations” where these institutions would assume the role of collective bargaining in the national and state level beyond the professional categories. The nature of the bank workers’ category - national banks - and the union strategy of the main entities affiliated to CUT favoured the first national convention signed in 1992. In the following year the National Confederation of the Bank Workers (CNB) was created as a structure apart from the official unionism, but that in practice managed to lead the fights and to undertake national negotiations in the period. Since the old CNB till the current CONTRAF (National Workers Confederation of the Financial Sector), from 2006 on, the representation of the workers of the financial sector has found innumerable difficulties, remaining the national organization basically an organization of the bank workers.

On the other hand, some bank workers unions have been trying to represent outsourced workers, offering services, leading mobilizations and strikes; unionizing them etc. Among the initiatives, there is also proposal to sign contracts with differentiated clauses. However, there is also a strategy to fight for the reversion of the outsourcing and reincorporate the workers into the banking category. Other initiatives involve the development of distinct negotiations for the workers of different sectors of the financial system. For example, in 2008 there was the initiative to develop a specific campaign for the insurance workers and the workers of the credit unions. At last, initiatives that meant the creation of new union entities were supported, such as sales promoters, in the perspective to unify them at the moment of integrating them to the financial sector.

Although the initiatives were diverse, the representation still finds difficulties to move beyond the traditional bank workers’ category. The advances in representation happened due to a series of specific characteristics, such as: 1) the

national and centralized negotiations for all banks, including the public banks Banco do Brasil and the Caixa Econômica Federal; 2) there is an union tradition, and this is one of the main categories that helped the development of the “new unionism movement”; 3) there is a hegemonic group that gives direction to the bank workers’ movement;³⁰ 4) the category is strongly concentrated in the state of São Paulo (more than one third of the national base); 5) strong participation of the public bank workers, the basis of the main mobilizations of the category.

Chart 2 - Brazil: Trade Union sub-sectors representation in the city of São Paulo

Sub-sectors	Trade Union representation
1. Central Bank	Own Union
2. Commercial banks	Bank Workers Union
3. Multi-function banks (with commercial portfolio)	Bank Workers Union
4. Caixas econômicas	Bank Workers Union
5. Credit Unions	Bank Workers Union
6. Multi-function banks (no commercial portfolio)	Bank Workers Union
7. Investment banks	Bank Workers Union
8. Development banks	Own Union negotiates with government
9. Mortgages	Banks portfolio/outourcing
10. Credit and Investment societies	Bank Workers Union
11. Arrendamento mercantil	SEAAC (Union of employees and autonomous commerce workers)
12. Sponsor agencies	
13. Other credit concession activities	
14. Sociedades de capitalização	SEAAC
15. Management of untangible non-financial assets	Insurance Workers Union SEAAC
16. Other activities of bank intermediation	SEAAC
11. Life insurances	Insurance Workers Union
18. Insurances	Insurance Workers Union
19. Re-insurance	Insurance Workers Union
20. Closed Supplementary Private Pension	Insurance Workers Union
21. Open Supplementary Private Pension	Insurance Workers Union
22. Medical insurance plans	
23. Stock market management	Insurance Workers Union
24. International transactions of titles and values	SEAAC
25. Activities auxiliary to the financial market	Insurance Workers Union
26. Activities auxiliary to insurances and pensions	

Source: Teixeira, 2005. p. 42

However, even with the advances of the national entity CONTRAF, the construction of an organization based on “branch of activity” is much more a dream than a reality. In fact, the unification of entities did not happen and the expansion of unions with no commitment to the strategy of constructing the financial branch has been growing, as it can be observed in the Charts 2 and 3. The Chart 2 shows the

³⁰ According to the IBGE trade union research of 2001: out of the 211 unions of the banking sector, 109 are affiliated to CUT, representing 72.4% of the total workers of the base.

existence of 5 different unions in the financial sector. Moreover, it is observed the presence of unions that represent outsourced workers, as in Chart 3.

Chart 3 – Brazil: Union representation of outsourced workers

Collection, Savings, Revenues, Check Clearing, and back office workers	Union Representation (Sindeepres)
Janitorial/ Sanitorial work	Cleaning and Conservation Workers' Union
Security	Security Guards Union
Call centers	Telemarketing Workers' Union (Sinratel)
<i>Correspondentes Bancários</i> (Banking correspondents)	Retailing Autonomous Workers' Union (SEAAC)

Source: Teixeira, 2005, p. 43

Final considerations

We can think about the reinforcement of categories through the actions of unions whose actions were based on the finality of work and the workers' functions. The financial activity becomes a reference to the various unions that represent the work in the financial sector.

The joint negotiation represents the articulation taking into account the branch of activity. The construction of these identities becomes natural in the process. In this form, the work organization would be represented by interlocutors whose interests would be related to the job reality in the banking sector.

In this context, the national organizations CONTEC and CONTRAF, for example, express a reality in transformation. The extinction of the category of workers is, therefore, not necessary as it gives to the workers a professional identity in the society. The impact of innovations in the financial strategies makes the category more fragile as they redefine workers functions, as well as the required abilities and skills socially defined.

It is suggested, therefore, that the issues proposed around the boundaries of the "categories of workers" and the "branches of activities" in terms of the future possibilities of representation and organization are established in a framework in transformation, where the dynamics of the investment in the financial system and the abilities of the workers are being redefined. The challenges to the representation reveal the impasses imposed to the organization of the work that should be compatible to the new scenario.

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