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**New approaches to social protection and
gender equality at work:
The effect of childcare on the quality of working life for
low-income women in Chile and Mexico**

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Outline

- The origin of the issue: changing patterns in paid and unpaid work
- The theoretical approaches for policy formulation and evaluation
- The emerging relevance of childcare in the anti-poverty agenda
- The analytical framework to assess childcare policies in Chile and Mexico



Changes in paid and unpaid work

- Increasing labour force participation of women
- Unchanged share of unpaid work in the household
- Higher demands of care work
- Lack of public policies :
 - Education;
 - Health;
 - Social protection;
 - Basic infrastructure and transportation.
- Work intensification with high adjustment costs.



Consequences

- **Inactivity, informality and low quality jobs**
 - Lower LFP among women
 - Over-representation in informal economy and low quality jobs (domestic work)
 - **Discrimination at work**
 - Pay gap
 - Vertical and horizontal segregation
 - **Workplace Productivity**
 - Absenteeism, turnover, work-related stress
 - **Lack of ‘voice’**
 - at the workplace, civil society and political levels
 - **Child Labour**
 - Children as childminders
 - Children in the workplace
- => Perpetuation of poverty, social exclusion and gender inequality**
- “*vicious cycle of care*” or “*care crisis*”.



The theoretical approaches

- Decent work
 - ILO standards
 - Measuring Decent Work
- Human capital
 - Investing in children
 - Measuring poverty reduction
- Care economy
 - Unpaid Care Work
 - Measuring changes in gender roles



'Decent work' approach

- **ILO Convention on Workers with Family Responsibilities, 1981 (No. 156) - Work/family policies:**
 - Family/child allowances (cash transfers, tax breaks);
 - Leave policies (maternity, paternity, parental, care-related);
 - Working time and work organization arrangements;
 - Infrastructure to reduce households' unpaid work;
 - Training and employment services.
 - **Social care services** (young children, elderly, ill, disabled);
- **Childcare:** a family benefit in kind consisting of the direct provision or reimbursement of non-family care services to children *below mandatory school-age* during the working hours of parents (Cichon et al. 2004; Hein and Cassirer 2009).
- **Measuring decent work** (ILO, 2008).
 - Focus on the 4 decent strategic objectives: promoting employment; social protection; social dialogue and tripartism; rights at work.
- “*Decent work at centre of economic and social policies*” (ILO, 1999 and 2008).



'Human Capital' approach

- 'Developmental social policies' or 'social investment state' (Giddens 1998; Mkamdawire 2004)
- EU's Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs (2000) and Barcelona targets on childcare coverage (2002)
- **OECD Measuring 'active labour market policies'**
 - "Baby and Bosses" and OECD Family Database (OECD 2007; Lohmann et al., 2009);
 - Focus: maternal employment and developmental outcomes for children.
- **World Bank and IADB 'Measuring Poverty'**
 - Emphasis on cash transfers;
 - Evaluation of pro-poor programmes (Baker, 2000; Carvalho and White, 1994; Hicks, 1998);
 - Focus: employment and income (Benus et al., 1998; Card et al., 1996) and child-centred objectives (Karoly et al. 1998; Vegas et al., 2006).



'Care economy' approach

- **Unpaid care work:** Non-SNA, non-economic activities (care for dependents, household maintenance, community services);
- Unpaid labour supply is the backbone of social protection and is not 'infinitely elastic' (Elson, 1991; Folbre, 2001);
 - *“The ‘productivist’ logic remains problematic because it does not take into account the relationship between paid and unpaid forms of labour and does not acknowledge that the latter is just as much at the heart of provisioning of needs as the former” (Razavi and Hassim, 2006).*
- Review of the gendered nature of social policies (Beneria, 2008; Antonopoulos, 2007; Molyneux, 2006; Razavi, 2007; Teixeira, 2008).
 - Focus: change of gender roles in the households.
- Unpaid work has to become part of the analysis and gender equality an explicit objective of social policies.



Empirical evidence of childcare effects

Western welfare states

- ‘Active’ work-family policies have positive results on employment, child poverty and demographic outputs (OECD 2007, Lohmann et al., 2009).
- Good quality care policy “*implies a free choice for both women and men*” and expands women’s ‘*capabilities*’ (Daly, 2001; Robeyns, 2003; Sen, 1985).
- ‘*Service-heavy states*’ tend to be more ‘*women-friendly*’ (Esping-Andersen, 1990 and 1997; Huber and Stephens, 2002; Morgan, 2006).
- Childcare and short-term leaves have powerful effects on poverty reduction (Misra et al., 2007)
 - “*Parallel to previous arguments about the importance of combining market and transfer income to combat poverty, our findings suggest that it is equally important to combine measures that allow families to provide some caregiving within the home with high-quality care outside the home*”.



Empirical evidence of childcare effects (cont')

Developing Countries

- Childcare is an essential social service for low-income women since care is one of the main areas of insecurity in their lives
 - (Beneria, 2008; Jhabvala, 2003; Kabeer, 2007 and 2008; ILO, 2001; Lund and Srinivas, 2000; Chen et al., 2005)
- Expanded women's employment opportunities
 - (Chatterjee and Macwan, 1992; Deutsch, 1998; Kabeer, 2008)
- Increased number of hours in paid work
 - (Cassirer and Addati, 2007; Hallman et al, 2002)
- Improved profitability of enterprises
 - (Jonhson, 2005; ILO 2005; Marcucci, 2001; Seguino, S. 2003)
- Reduction of absenteeism and stress at work => improved productivity
 - (Bocaz 2003; Hein and Cassirer, 2009; Idrovo Carlier, 2006);
- Improved physical and educational development of children
- Reduction of children's presence in hazardous workplaces and domestic work
- Encouraged behavioural change of men
 - (Beneria and Floro, 2006; Esplen, 2009).



The emergence of childcare in the anti-poverty agenda

- **Chile**

- *“Chile crece contigo”* (2006)

- Objective: Promote child protection and reducing poverty through higher women’s LFP, better share of unpaid responsibilities between women and men;
- Increased supply of free childcare centres for the 40% poorest households.

- **Mexico**

- *Childcare programme for working mothers* (2007)

- Objective: Support vulnerable women’s and lone fathers’ participation in the labour market, reducing poverty and promoting child development.
- Increased supply of childcare centres + childcare subsidy for the lowest income quintiles.



Hypotheses

Objective: assessing the effect of childcare provision on the quality of working life of low-income women.

- **Hypothesis 1: Availability of free/subsidized childcare services will release women's time for paid work.**
 - Job quality and potential changes in employment patterns.
 - Low-income, unskilled women in rural areas and informal economy.
- **Hypothesis 2: Availability of free/subsidized childcare services will induce gender-sensitive intra-house behavioural changes.**
 - More equal sharing of unpaid work between women and men.
 - More equal decision-making over resources and time allocation.
- **Hypothesis 3: Availability of free/subsidized childcare services will have positive effects on child and family well-being.**
 - Short and long terms goals of poverty reduction and human development.



Analytical framework for policy assessment

- **“Quality of working life” indicators:**
 - Actual hours in paid work (vs. preferred)
 - Incidence of long, atypical and unpredictable hours (vs. statutory maximum)
 - Level of incomes/wages (below 2/3 of median hourly earnings or as a share of MW)
 - Employment status (incidence of informal work or own-account + family workers)
 - Type of job (occupational segregation / incidence of domestic work)
 - Health and safety risks at work (occupational injury; workplace hazards)
 - Access to rights at work (weekly rest, paid annual and sick leave)
 - Access to social protection (health and maternity protection, old-age pension)
 - Access to voice and representation (membership in a trade union or other organizations)
- **“Intra-household behaviour” indicators**
 - Hours allocated to unpaid care and domestic work by household’s members (vs. preferred)
 - Hours allocated to rest, leisure and “organization” by women and men (vs. preferred)
 - Household consumption and saving decisions (household decision-making)
 - Incidence of domestic violence
- **“Human Capital” indicators**
 - School enrolment of siblings
 - Incidence of child under-nutrition
 - Incidence of child morbidity
 - Incidence of household poverty



Methods and data

- Programme evaluation methodology
- A combination of quantitative and qualitative data:
 - National monitoring and evaluation systems;
 - Labour force and employment and occupation surveys;
 - Time-use surveys;
 - Qualitative case studies.
- Cost-benefit analysis
- Comparing the effects of work-family policies through the three-dimension analytical framework



The way forward

- Decent work and gender equality as key dimensions of policy evaluation frameworks.
- The importance of data collection on:
 - Working conditions;
 - Unpaid care work.
- Childcare services as a valid policy field to test this multi-dimensional analytical framework.