

## **Parental Rights and Responsibilities of Chilean Women: A Study of Child Education Arrangement for Different Marital Status**

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Keywords: marital status, gender roles, motherhood, work-family conflict, education investment

Paper prepared for the 2013 Annual IAFFE Conference, Stanford University, Palo Alto, California, July 12-14, 2013

## **Parental Rights and Responsibilities of Chilean Women: A Study of Child Education Arrangement for Different Marital Status**

Family life in Latin America in general, and in Chile in Particular, is changing rapidly as it is in other Western countries. A very important factor for the change in family structure and, as a consequence, in gender role in the family, is the changing marital status. When the proportions of cohabiting and single-parent households increased, family resource arrangement may also be expected to change as we have to reconsider the parental rights and responsibilities.

In this paper, we will focus on parental commitment in children's education attainment. Specifically, we want to find out if there are significant differences in children's education resource arrangement for different family categories. Among the other socioeconomic constraints which will affect intergenerational transfer within the family, we look at work-family conflict which is of particular relevance for women, as motherhood embedded in them being deemed so significant in Latin American countries. Many women entered workplace to supplement family income in order to support their children's education. However, this caused a conflict between women's roles as housewives and income earners. Consideration on social strata will have to be put in place to determine how women in Chile to balance between the above two roles and, therefore, how children fared in their education achievement.

Another key research question is how public policies regarding families in Chile, such as its *Chile Solidario* program, are changing and will they be sufficient for meeting the demands of the so-called "second demographic transition". In the following, we will first look at economic differentials emanating from different family structures in Chile. Then, in the second section, changes in Chilean family structure are reviewed to give us a clearer picture of how Chile's relatively high income inequality is embedded in its basic social organizations. In the next section, a framework of intergenerational transfer of educational resources is set and some empirical evidences are examined to provide an overview of how intergenerational income mobility would be in terms of children's educational achievement. And then some relevant government policies are examined to help us evaluate the effectiveness of Chilean government's endeavor in mainstreaming gender and to ameliorate the problem of income inequality, especially among families. The final section is a concluding remark.

### **Economic Differentials and Family Structure**

The economic differences between married, cohabiting and single-parent households are well documented in the U.S. Affluent women raise their children in

the context of marriage, and less advantaged women are likely to spend at least some time as single mothers (Lichter *et al.*, 2006). Despite the increase in cohabitation in the general population, cohabiting mothers still do not fare as well as married women, but they do better than single mothers, in terms of income and employment (Clarkberg, 1999).

The idea that marriage is the cause of economic wellbeing depends considerably on pulling together two sources of income, but this advantage vanishes when one person in the couple is unable to make such a contribution, for instance, because of unemployment (Manning and Brown, 2006). Cohabitors and single parents are overrepresented among people and unemployment is common. It is likely that people with these characteristics would have low standards of living even if they marry. If that is true, the economic advantage of marriage is contingent upon the union of people whose education, occupation, and ethnicity, among other characteristics, give them access to wealth, even if they would not be married (Lichter *et al.*, 2006; Osborne, 2005).

One could expect that in contexts where cohabitation is more diffused, it will be less selective. Such is the case of Chilean mothers at first birth. In the most optimistic scenario, differences in economic wellbeing according to marital status would be less notable when cohabitation is more diffused (Salinas, 2011: 679). What we know about traditional cohabitation in Latin America, though, reduces the chances for such an optimistic scenario to come true. Cohabitation has traditionally been a common type of union in Latin America, even though its prevalence has been higher in Central America and the Caribbean than in the Southern Cone, and that it has been more common among low socioeconomic status groups (Quilodrán, 2008). Because these groups usually represented a large proportion of the Latin American population, cohabitation was frequent, but it brought people down, rather than up, in terms of socioeconomic wellbeing. A dual nuptial system has been proposed for the region. In this system, the social value of marriage exceeds the social value of cohabitation, and socioeconomic constraints, rather than people's will, decide who marries and who cohabits. Marriage provides more economic and legal security for women and children, it is seen as a more enduring commitment, and it defines a clear status for women regarding her spouse and in-law relatives (Castro Martín, 2002).

There is some evidence that traditional cohabitation in Latin America is starting to be complemented by another type of cohabitation, rather different from groups with low socioeconomic status. Such evidence comes from the increase of cohabitation among more affluent groups in Uruguay, Argentina, Venezuela, Colombia, and Chile in recent years (Castro Martín *et al.*, 2008; Parrado and Tienda, 1997). Therefore, there are reasons to expect that large differences in socioeconomic

wellbeing in Chile would favor married women, but there are also arguments in favor of thinking that those differences may be reduced.

Differences in economic wellbeing with respect to marital status not only hinder people's present possibilities for prosperous life, but also likely to hamper their future wellbeing. In the U.S., there is evidence of intergenerational transfer both for family structure and economic wellbeing. Regarding the reproduction of family structure, people who live part of their childhood in one-parent families are likely to be having sex early in adolescence; girls raised in single mother households are likely to establish unions and bear their first child well before national average; and unions formed early in youth are more likely to dissolve than unions formed at older ages (McLanahan and Percheski, 2008). Regarding the reproduction of economic inequalities, children who grew up in economically advantaged settings, and with both biological parents, are less likely to be poor and more likely to overcome economic uncertainty than children raised by single parents, in more deprived settings (McLanahan and Percheski, 2008). The differences in economic outcomes are larger when comparing children raised by both biological, married parents (intact families) and children raised by single parents. Children raised in cohabiting families do not fare as bad as single-parents' children, but children in neither of these situations fare as well as children from intact families.

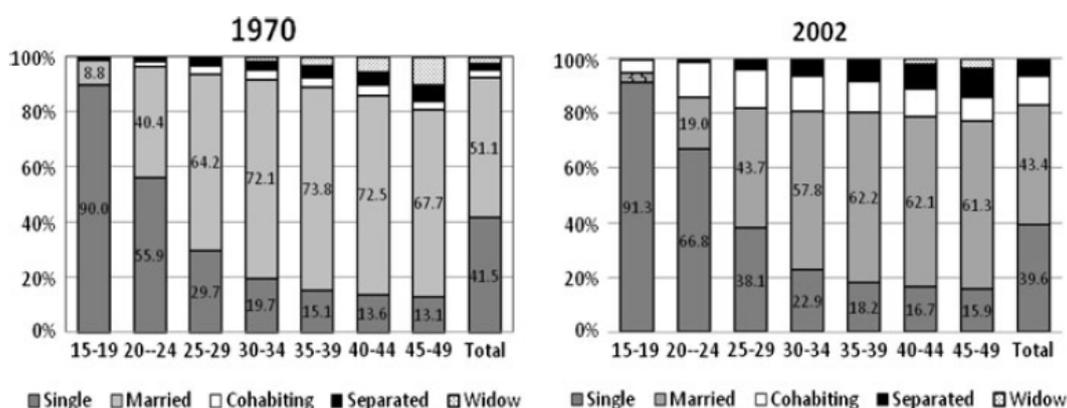
The reproduction of family structure and economic wellbeing probably takes place in Chile too. There are not empirical studies in this area, but there is consensus, supported by several historical essays, that people who were born to unmarried parents traditionally tended to form families outside of marriage (Ponce de León *et al.*, 2006). Chilean income mobility is relatively low, as compared with other developing countries (Núñez and Miranda, 2007), and income inequality in Chile has one of the highest levels of disparity in Latin America. Therefore, the reproduction of family structure probably goes along with the reproduction of poverty. If this is the case, married women probably were raised in intact and affluent families, and unmarried women probably come from non-intact families, with fewer economic resources.

### **Changes in the Chilean Family Structure**

Even though the dual Latin American nuptiality system can be used to describe Chile too, cohabitation is not as prevalent in the country as in the rest of Latin America. Marriage is still the main form of union in the country, even though it has decreased. The nuptiality rate reached its peak in 1930—when there were 9.2 marriages per thousand people—it remained relatively stable until the 1960s, and started to decline afterwards (Valenzuela, 2006), reaching 3.2 marriages per thousand people in 2008 (INE, 2010). In line with these rates, census data indicates

that the proportion of married women of reproductive ages in 1970 was 52%, as seen in Fig. 1. In 2002, the proportion of married women declined to 43%.

Scholars have noticed that the decline of marriage started after the 1960s, but accelerated in the 1990s, as cohabitation and proportion of people who remained single increased (Herrera and Valenzuela, 2006). Fig. 1 indicates that only 3% of women of reproductive age were cohabiting in 1970, whereas in 2002, 11% were, which means that cohabitation grew three times itself. The proportion of cohabiters, though, is certainly still low as compared to other Latin American countries, such as Colombia or Honduras, where about 60% of women of reproductive ages were cohabiting in 2005 (Castro Martín *et al*, 2010). A novelty that has been pointed out, though, is that since the 1990s cohabitation started to increase among groups of high socioeconomic status in Chile (Herrera and Valenzuela, 2006), which could mean that a new type of cohabitation is emerging, a type of cohabitation that may start to reverse the prevalence of the traditional Latin American nuptiality system in Chile. Fig. 1 also shows the increase in the proportion of single women. In 1970, 56% of women in the 20-24 age interval were single, a proportion that grew to 67% in 2002.<sup>1</sup> The reason that more women remain single until later in life is reflected in an older age at marriage, which was 23.5 in 1960 (García and Rojas, 2002), but went up to 26.7 years in 2004 (INE, 2010).



**Fig. 1** Percentage Distribution of Marital Status by Age, Women 18-45, Chile, 1970 and 2002

Source: Censuses 1970 and 2002 (Minnesota Population Center, 2010); cited in Salinas (2011), p. 681.

At the same time that the proportion of married people declined in Chile, the proportion of children born outside of marriage increased, by a more impressive amount. The proportion of children born outside of marriage was 16% in 1960, and it went up to 68% in 2010 (Registro Civil e Identificación, 2010). This not only means

<sup>1</sup> The proportion of single women also went up in the rest of the age intervals, but the increase was not so large as in the 20-24 age interval.

that marriage is not the preferred setting for childbearing anymore, but also that non-marital births are proportionately higher in Chile than in Sweden—where they reached 55% in 2008 (OECD, 2010), a country in which the increasing proportion of children born outside of marriage has been associated with the questioning of marriage as an institution and taken as a sign of the stability of cohabitation (Lesthaeghe, 2010). The proportion of children born outside of marriage in Chile is also higher than in the U.S., where it reached 38.5% in 2008 (OECD, 2010), a country in which the phenomenon has been linked to unfavorable social condition that the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

One explanation that has been proposed for this large increase is that the change is due to a decline in fertility of married women, whereas fertility in unmarried women remained with no major changes since the fertility decline started in Chile.<sup>2</sup> Larragaña (2006) shows that the number of births per thousand married women went from 259 in 1960 to 59 in 2003, whereas the number of births per thousand unmarried women went from 48 to 53 in the same period. Decomposing the increase in the proportion of non-marital fertility, and changes in the proportion of married and unmarried women, Larragaña sustains that the first factor is the main one responsible for the fertility decline in the whole period from 1960 to 2003, but that since the 1990s increases in the proportion of unmarried women are also important factors responsible for the increase in the proportion of non-marital births. This argument is built upon the use of vital statistics, which in Chile do not make any distinction within the group of unmarried women (never married, cohabiters, separated or divorced, widows). Therefore, besides noting the importance in the increase of unmarried women since the 1990s, he cannot tell anything about changes in the proportions of births to different types of unmarried women. Castro Martín and others have recently advanced in this direction, through their examination of the changes in the proportion of children born to women in different marital statuses in ten Latin American countries (Castro Martín *et al.*, 2010). By using census data, they are able to show that the proportion of children born to married women in Chile went from 85% in 1970 to 55% in 2002. The proportion of births to cohabiters went from 5 to 20%, and the proportion of births to single women (which includes never married, separated and widows) went from 9 to 25%.

Whereas the increase in the proportion of births to cohabiters can be linked to the increase in cohabitation, the increase in the proportion of births to single mothers can probably be related to relatively high rates of teen fertility. Census data indicates that, in 2002, 13% of teens between 15 and 19 years old have had at least one child. Teen fertility has certainly declined since the 1960s, but the trend is not

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<sup>2</sup> The fertility decline in Chile started in the 1960s. The TFR was 4.31 in 1960 and it is currently 1.9.

straightforward. The decline of teen fertility has been less pronounced than the decline in all the other age groups, and there was a period of 12 years (1987-1999) when teen fertility actually increased. Between 1999 and 2004, teen fertility decreased again, but the decline did not continue after that year (Rodríguez and Robledo, 2011).

Both the decline of marriage and the increase of the proportion of children born outside of marriage may have been affected by two legal changes that were introduced in Chile in the last decades. In 1996, a new *ley de filiación* (paternity law) was passed, ruling out the differences between children within and without marriage, in terms of inheritance rights, food and support rights, and the rights to use their fathers' last name. In 2004, the first divorce law was enacted in Chile. Before that, people willing to end their marriages could nullify the union, but the process was costly in terms of time and money, and therefore very hard to follow for the poor.<sup>3</sup> One may hypothesize that the paternity law may have stimulated the decline of marriage, since legally being born inside of marriage does not carry an advantage anymore. Passing a divorce law, on the other hand, could in principle have stimulated marriage among couples who were not sure about making a life-long commitment, since it makes it easier to put an end to an unsatisfactory union.<sup>4</sup> Finally, during his campaign, President Sebastián Piñera promised to legalize consensual unions, which to date do not have legal recognition in Chile. A bill was sent to the Congress in June of 2010, recognizing the rights and duties for people who choose that type of union. The project includes homosexual unions.

### **Theoretical Framework and Some Empirical Evidences**

This paper wants to analyze families' investment in children's education and its effectiveness, especially in view of the family structure of Chile. Specifically, we will use a simplified version of model suggested by Becker and Tomes (1979). A society wants to maximize its return from investing in education. Becker and Tomes assumes that a child's endowment of human capital is a result of his father's optimal allocation of his permanent income, where the father's utility depends on his own consumption and the child's permanent income. Simply put, the return from education investment is decided by family income (I) and personal ability (A). Therefore,

$$Y = Y(I, A | Z), \quad (1)$$

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<sup>3</sup> The poor can use public legal clinics in order to get a divorce, which they could not use to nullify their marriages.

<sup>4</sup> In 2005, the year in which the divorce law started to be applied, there were 5,743 nullified marriages, whereas in 2009, there were 53,581 divorces identification. See Registro Civil e Identificación (2010).

where  $Y$  is return from education investment, and  $Z$  is parameter affecting the effectiveness of education investment.

Altruistic parents concern their own consumption and their children's future income, so they may assist children's education through investing part of their current income or direct transfer. The format of assistance is related to social institutions, wherein parents may let their children receive general and public education provided by the government with revenues from taxation, or they may opt to let their children receive private education with their own financial resources. In this sense, families are investors who will affect their children's future labor income more or less dependent on the level of their investment.

On the other hand, people are born with different abilities which could be revealed as they enter labor force after receiving education resources. Thus, a person's wage income in labor force ( $W$ ) will be determined by the level of his/her education training ( $E$ ) and born abilities ( $A$ ):

$$W = W(E,A), \tag{2}$$

given the assumption that the more abled person can earn a higher future income by means of education. This also implies that a person with higher ability is more motivated to acquire resources just because he/she is assured higher education returns (see Checci, 2006: Chap. 5; also Núñez and Miranda, 2007: 4-5).

Several intergenerational income mobility studies on Chile have been conducted recently. Note that many of them employ the Greater Santiago sample, excepting those that employ the SIALS database (Contreras *et al.*, 2006; cited in Núñez and Miranda, 2007: 10). Employing the SIALS data for the Metropolitan Region (slightly larger than Greater Santiago) yield fairly similar result as those Greater Santiago studies. Both Contreras *et al.* (2006) and Núñez and Miranda (2007) studies reveal a relatively higher intergenerational income elasticity, which implies the country's higher inequality of opportunities: a higher level of equality of opportunities is expected to decrease the effect of an individual's early socioeconomic background in his/her economic achievement in adulthood, implying therefore a higher level of intergenerational economic mobility, or alternatively, a lower level of intergenerational transmission of relative socioeconomic status from parents to their offspring. In contrast, the study by Ferreira and Veloso (2005) on the more prosperous and more urban Brazilian Southwest produces a lower income elasticity than the rest of the country, and much lower than the poorer Northeast region.

Overall, Chile presents relatively low intergenerational income mobility as

compared to other developing as well as developed countries. Levels of intergenerational mobility in Chile are somewhat similar to Brazil's. As some authors have suggested, higher income inequalities in Chile and Brazil translate into intergenerational persistence of inequality: Children are poor mostly because their parents are poor. The evidence for Chile also seems consistent with this hypothesis considering that Chile has a particularly unequal distribution of income.<sup>5</sup>

### **The Effects of Work-Family Conflict on Intergenerational Transfer for Education**

Many women entered workplaces to supplement family income in order to support their children's education. However, this has caused a conflict between women's roles as housewives and income earners. Here, consideration of social strata is put in place to determine how women in Chile would balance between the above two roles and, therefore, how children fared in their educational achievement.

But, notwithstanding women's dilemma mentioned above, attitude regarding the proper roles of men and women in Chilean society seemingly no longer follow a fully traditional pattern. A 1984 survey conducted in Santiago by the Diagnos polling firm found widespread support among men (more than 80%) and women (more than 90%) of high, medium, and low socioeconomic status for the notion that "women benefit as individuals if they work outside the home". When asked if they agreed or disagreed with the notion that "it is better for women to concentrate on the home and men on their jobs," 43% of the national sample in the CERC July 1991 survey agreed, even though the term "concentrate" does not imply a denial of the right of women to work outside the home. There were some differences between the genders over this question, with 49% of men and 38% of women in agreement. The percentage in favor of this notion increased with age. Only 30% of those under age twenty-five agreed, while 61% of those over age sixty-one did so (Library of Congress, 1994).

Survey of working-class respondents can usually be counted on to capture the more traditional view of urban society toward male and female roles because such attitudes are usually associated with lower levels of educational attainment. But working-class Chileans are, in general, not as traditionally minded as could be expected about the issue of women working outside the home. In a 1988 survey of workers, 70% of the men and 85% of the women agreed with the notion that "even if there is no economic necessity, it is still convenient for women to work". The notion that "men should participate more actively in housework so that women are

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<sup>5</sup> For a comparison of international evidence on intergenerational income mobility please confer Table 4 of Núñez and Miranda (2007).

able to work” was accepted by 70% of men and 92% of women. 45% of men believed that “women who work gravely neglect their home obligations”, while 21% of women did so. However, male support for the notion of women working outside the home varied depending on the way the question was phrased. When interviewers presented the idea that “if men were to make more money, then women should return to the home”, 63% of men agreed, while only 33% of women did (Library of Congress, 1994).

Nonetheless, popular beliefs hold very strongly to the notion that women reach full self-realization primarily through motherhood. This generates strong pressures on women to have children, although most take the necessary measures to have fewer than their mothers and especially their grandmothers. Employed working-class women usually are able to find preschools and day care for their small children, as these programs are broadly established through the country.<sup>6</sup> The extended family also provides a means of obtaining child care (see, e.g., Medrano, 2009).

Middle-class to upper-class households usually hire female domestic servants to do housework and take care of children. This practice facilitates the work life of the women of such households. Women can frequently be found in the professions even outside such traditionally female-dominated areas as primary and secondary education, nursing, and social work. For example, among the nation’s 14,334 physicians in 1990, there were 3,811 women, or 27% of the total. This percentage has been increasing. Among the 7,616 physicians less than thirty-five years of age, there were 2,778 women, or 37% of the total. In 1991 about 48% of the nation’s 748 judges were women; although there was none on the Supreme Court, 24.2% of the appellate court judges were women. A slight majority of the roughly 4,200 journalists in the country were women (Library of Congress, 1994).

Regarding intergenerational transfer with respect to children’s education, it has scarcely been studied in Chile. Much of the literature has focused on the inequality of outcomes such as the distribution of income, but little is known about the country’s levels of inequality in opportunities, specifically in terms of intergenerational mobility: a higher level of equality of opportunities is expected to decrease the effect of an individual’s early socioeconomic background on his/her economic achievement in adulthood, implying, therefore, a higher level of intergenerational economic mobility, or alternatively, a lower level of intergenerational transmission of the relative socioeconomic status from parents to their children.

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<sup>6</sup> However, the next section has shown this is an overstatement.

As mentioned above, Núñez and Miranda (2007), using data of the Employment and Unemployment Survey for the Greater Santiago conducted annually by Universidad de Chile, has derived an intergenerational income mobility elasticity for Chile which is fairly high in comparison with international evidence, mostly for developed countries, but similar to elasticity found for Brazil. The elasticity is somewhat lower for younger cohorts. This may suggest an increasing intergenerational mobility in time as younger generations achieved higher level of education regardless of their parent's income or socioeconomic levels, which mattered very much for the older generations compared to developed countries. This is consistent with the significant expansion of school enrollment and of years of schooling in the last decades. Unfortunately, Núñez and Miranda used only fathers' income. Therefore, there is no way to tell if the fact that mothers worked outside the family could have any significant effect on their children's education achievement.

On the other hand, Chelhay *et al.* (2010), using panel data of CASEN Survey, where family income could be obtained, has also shown high intergenerational income elasticities even in comparison with other developing countries. Their results also suggest that there is no significant change in income mobility among different cohorts, implying significant dependency of children's education achievement on their parents' income no matter it's older or younger generation. Their results also show that schooling mobility is higher than income mobility, but not for high levels of education. This may be due to the increase in primary and secondary education coverage during the last 50 years, showing that schooling policies seem to be effective in coverage but not in promoting education as a source of higher mobility. Furthermore, their results also show that women are more mobile than men.

The small number of evidence may not be able to convince us that Chilean women's endurance of work-family conflict has increased their children's opportunities of higher earnings through better education, by infusing more resources in the family with their outside works. However, given larger enrollment and better facilities in Chile's schooling system, we can still infer, somewhat from the evidence, that many Chilean working mothers are endeavoring to increase their children's achievement in education.

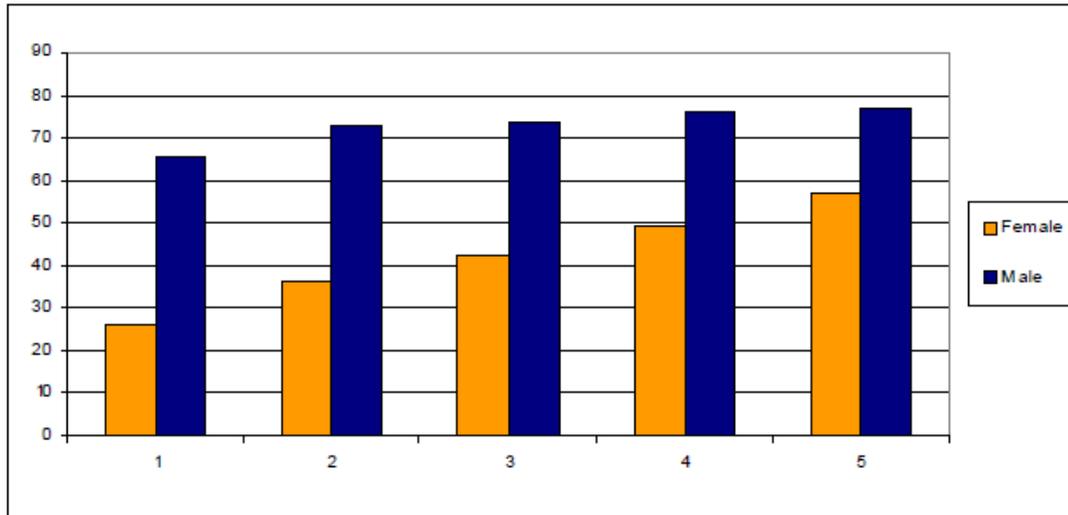
### **Relevant Government Policies**

Chile has seen a steady and remarkable increase in female labor force participation over the past twenty years, from 29% in 1986 to 38.8% in 2007. Nonetheless, even at its current level, Chile registers one of the lowest rates of women's participation in the labor market as compared to other Latin American (LAC)

countries and upper and medium income (UMI) countries (with average rates higher than 50%), and also well below the rates of OECD countries (which are generally higher than 55%) (World Bank, 2007: viii). In spite of great progress in gender equality in education, Chile's current female labor force participation rate remains low. Low labor force participation and occupational segregation by gender have well documented negative effects on productivity and economic growth (World Bank, 2001).

Global trends have demonstrated a strong positive correlation between the incidence of poverty and female labor force participation, and even child labor. In fact, households in extreme poverty often require as many members of the family as possible to work as a survival strategy. Contrary to this general trend, Chile has seen relatively lower rates of female labor force participation among low-income groups as compared to their counterparts in higher income brackets. Specifically, 26% of women in the lowest income quintile in Chile participate in the labor force, as compared to 57% of women in the highest quintile (see Fig. 2).

Nevertheless, Chile has made remarkable progress in developing public institutions, policies and mechanisms for the promotion of women and gender equality in the last two decades. Chile's experience of mainstreaming gender in the public sector is indeed one of the most innovative and ambitious in Latin America. Chile's Institutional Framework for Gender Equality is the outcome of a dynamic process shaped by different factors along the way. Following the creation of the National Service for Women (*Servicio Nacional de la Mujer, SERNAM*) during the democratic transition, the initial stage of development of the model was guided by the first Equal Opportunity Plan (1994-1999), which established the overall strategy for gender equality nationally. At the same time, parallel institutions, such as Regional Councils and Technical Committees, were created and piloted the same time, parallel institutions, such as Regional Councils and Technical Committees were created and piloted for implementing the plan at the decentralized level. The government commitment to gender equality facilitated rapid change at the institutional level through the creation of institutions such as Cabinet for Gender Equality and the adoption of Ministerial Agreements as specific mechanisms to link overall gender goals to specific sector targeted. After a decade of experience and an enabling national and international environment, a strengthened SERNAM led the expansion of the work to integrate gender in the rest of the public sector and strategically linked gender mainstreaming to the overall process of reform of the public sector.



**Fig. 2** Female Labor Force Participation Rates by Income Quintile: Women 15-65 Years Old, Chile 2003

Source: CARSEN 2003; cited in World Bank (2007), p. 39.

Creating the incentives for the delivery of gender-aware services through the Management Improvement Program (MIP) is the last step of the model to mainstream gender in the public sector. Most of the services affected by the Management Improvement Program (90% of the 178 services) adopted criteria on gender to evaluate their performance in 2002. There is a high degree of compliance with the gender criteria with only 3 out of 157 services failing to validate their gender component of the MIP in 2004 (Ministry of Finance, 2003).

Expanding public provision of affordable childcare and pre-school education has been identified as a policy priority by the Bachelet administration.<sup>7</sup> Pre-school education coverage (for children 3-6 years old) is very low, about 33%, compared to developed countries and other LAC countries, like Mexico where such coverage is above 70%. Childcare coverage (for children 0-3 years old) is less than 13% (Rofman, 2005). Most programs in Chile have centered on education and early childhood development, putting less emphasis on the needs of parents, particularly those of working mothers. The objectives of expanding high quality childcare to improve early childhood education could complement that of increasing female labor force participation.

The responsibility of women to care for dependents is not limited to young children under the age of six, but continues throughout the life cycle. Mothers

<sup>7</sup> The new minister of SERNAM announced the commitment to provide childcare to 20,000 additional children. President Bachelet formed a Childhood Commission to accelerate progress in early childhood education.

usually are in charge of taking care of school-age children after the school day finishes. The extension of the school schedule in Chile, to what is known as *Jordana Escolar Completa* (JEC), is an example of how the time involved in caring for school-age children restricts women's participation in the labor market. A recent evaluation commissioned by the Ministry of Education revealed that one of the main effects of the JEC on the family has been increasing the opportunities for mothers to work.

In Chile, the role of private providers remains central even with the current expansion of public childcare. Certification schemes and best practice dissemination can contribute to enhance quality of private providers. In order to improve equity and emphasize the needs of low-income households, income-tested subsidies to families using private childcare were implemented. However, this constitutes an unintended discriminatory mechanism against the employment of women. By linking the benefit of childcare to the number of women workers, firms have incentives to limit the amount of women they employ beyond the required number to avoid the extra costs. Studies about this issue in Chile have documented significant numbers of firms with 19 female workers (World Bank, 2007: 103). Changes in childcare legislation could go in different directions, but any regulation on the role of the private sector related to childcare should be gender neutral, requiring firms to offer the benefits to all workers, both female and male. Childcare is a responsibility of both parents, and the legislation must recognize this.

Among the social transfer programs, the *Chile Solidario* program introduced in 2002 is worth mentioning. The first component of the program reached households in extreme poverty (through a proxy means testing) and provides them with a two year period of psycho-social support through a local social worker. During this period, the social worker works with the household to assess their needs and to help them devise a strategy to exit extreme poverty in the short run, by providing direct cash transfer at a decreasing rate over time and by connecting households to various social programs. After the two year intensive period, households are ensured a direct cash transfer and preferential access to assistance programs for an additional period of three years. At the same time, the program aims at the long run by improving their human capital assets, their housing and their income generation capacity. As a result of legislation, Chile also has a large number of workplace childcare centers.<sup>8</sup>

The second component works on the supply side, by ensuring coordination among different programs. The objective in the long run is to move away from an approach based on single programs towards a "system" of social protection, where

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<sup>8</sup> Chile's labor law requires that establishments employing 20 women or more have to provide or subsidize a day care for their children.

the supply side provides bundles of programs that are tailored to meet the specific needs of households that are hard to reach.

The program scaled up and expanded a pilot program called *Puente*, previously operating in 4 provinces. The program was phased in four waves, from 2002 to 2005 to cover a target number of 225,000 households, the estimated number of households in indigence in the country. The program has subsequently been evolved to become a building block of the system of social protection in the country. The *Puente* also offers a job placement service for its beneficiaries in order to insert them into the formal labor market. In the case of women, the program tries to give preference to workplace with childcare services (World Bank, 2007: 100). While non-working adult women and mothers are not a specific target group, there are some programs that reach them, such as the system of tax exemptions and the national scholarship program. Within *Chile Solidario*, a labor program for young women by SERNAM—Programa de Habilitación Laboral para Mujeres Jóvenes, and labor training by PRODEMU (*Promoción y Desarrollo de la Mujer*) also may have reached these groups (World Bank, 2007: 97).

An evaluative study by Emanuela Galasso has shown a small and mainly insignificant impact of the program on total income and labor income. Participating households have a 'preferential access' to public transfers such as the family allowance (*Subsidio Unico Familiar*, SUF), the old age and disability pension (PASIS) and the potable water subsidy (SAP). On the other hand, *Chile Solidario* households exhibit very strong take-up of labor market programs: they are more likely to be participating to programs aimed at supporting self-employed and more likely to be participating to public employment/labor re-insertion and training programs. There is also a very strong effect in increasing the likelihood of household members to be enrolled in the local employment office (OML), one of the minimum conditions previewed by the *Chile Solidario* program for unemployed members (Galasso, 2011).

Of greater interest is the program's effect on education. The study results suggest significant and consistent increases in the likelihood of having all children aged 4-5 year olds enrolled in a pre-school. Availability of preschools or financial constraints are not perceived to be an issue: cultural perceptions that the child is too young, or that he/she is better off taken care at home account for 90% of the self-reported reasons for non-enrollment (MIDEPLAN, 2004). On the supply side, there are different pre-school programs that have been adapted to reach the target population by providing free access as well as flexible hours to meet the need of working mothers, even with temporary jobs, or households where the head of the household is unemployed and the mother is looking for work.

On the other hand, school enrollment of children from 6 to 15 year olds has

mildly improved. Households in urban areas are also more likely to have taken up complementary programs of school materials, meals, and dental care directed to subsidize direct costs of schooling for households with lower socioeconomic status. There are no fees for public schools in Chile, so most of the costs of enrollment are indirect. There are significant differences in terms of literacy of children aged 12-18 (Galasso, 2011).

### **Concluding Remarks**

Chile is a country of socially very conservative and with income unequally distributed, even compared to other Latin American countries. Traditionally, Chilean women were strongly committed to marriage and their role of motherhood for the sake of economic and legal security, as well as to abide by the social regulation. On the other hand, it also progressed very rapidly which can be evidenced from the recent fast increase of the ratio of cohabitation and a rising number of children born outside of marriage, which is even proportionately higher than Sweden. Will this be a hindrance in educational achievement for children in lower income families, especially those with female household heads? From the text we've seen that this could be the case given relatively lower intergenerational income mobility in Chile which is translated into intergenerational persistence of inequality: Children are poor mostly because their parents are poor.

Notwithstanding the above dilemma encountered by Chilean women and relatively low labor force participation rates, Chile's experience of mainstreaming gender in the public sector is one of the most innovative and ambitious in Latin America, as witnessed from all those programs delivered through Management Improvement Program (MIP). Public provision of affordable childcare and pre-school education has been a success, even though the needs of parents, especially those of working mothers, were not fully taken care of. Furthermore, the *Chile Solidario*, one of the social transfer programs, has helped to significantly and consistently increase the likelihood of having children of 4-5 years olds enrolled in pre-schools. Households with lower socioeconomic status, especially those in urban areas, were assisted with government subsidies. This could be a good news for those women hampered by non-traditional marriage/family structures with respect to their responsibilities in children's education.

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