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Blacks, Whites, or Grays? Conditional Transfers and Gender Equality in Latin America

Abstract

Can poverty and gender relations be disentangled? Conditional cash transfer (CCT) programs have spread throughout Latin America and beyond based on the claim that they are an effective social policy tool to combat poverty. While changing gender relations is not among CCTs' explicit objectives, gender relations are nonetheless shaped by these policies. Unfortunately, the debate concerning how CCTs shape gender relations has treated gender inequality as a one-dimensional matter. In this paper, we seek to overcome this limitation by offering a multidimensional analysis of programs in Chile, Costa Rica, and El Salvador. On the basis of empirical evidence provided, we argue that patriarchal materialism is still at the core of Latin America's new social policies. At the same time, we recognize the potential for CCTs to transform gender relations should mechanisms allowing childcare facilities and encouraging male participation in domestic labor become an integral part of these programs.

Introduction

Can poverty and gender relations be disentangled? Having reached over a hundred million poor Latin Americans (ECLAC 2010), conditional cash transfers (CCTs) are the centerpiece of the new generation of Latin American social policy. Aimed neither at promoting nor deterring gender equity, CCTs highlight gender relations as a crucial mediator between people and public policy (Molyneux 2007). Consequently, discussions of whether CCTs actually help combat poverty and if so, how and among whom, go hand in hand with whether it is “appropriate,” “fair,” or “necessary” to mobilize the time and energy of millions of mothers as instruments, rather than as subjects, of public policy (Bradshaw 2008; Molyneux 2006; Serrano 2005a, 2005b). Do these new programs alter the traditional sexual division of labor or is the sexual division of labor put to the service of the State? Can both phenomena occur at the same time, and if this is the case, how?

Following a rapid convergence of international ideas on social policy (Borges Sugiyama 2009; Jenson 2009), CCT programs are currently in place in seventeen of the eighteen Latin American countries. Based on the acclaimed experiences of Mexico’s *Oportunidades* and Brazil’s *Bolsa Familiar*, these programs entail a government subsidy to poor families on the condition that mothers send their children to school and for healthcare check-ups. Scholars do not agree on whether achievements are due to conditionality or to the CCT transfers themselves (Hanlon, Barrientos, and Hulme 2010). Nonetheless, evaluations show improvements in school attendance and nutrition (Valencia 2008; Villatoro 2005, 2007), short-term poverty and, remarkably, a drop in income inequality (López Calva and Lusting 2010) in countries with CCT policies.

Although there are important evaluations of CCTs from the point of view of gender relations, most studies view this as a binary matter (Martínez Franzoni and Voorend 2008). That is to say, are gender relations being positively or negatively affected by CCT programs (Adato et al. 2000; Daeren 2004; Escobar Latapí and González de la Rocha 2004; World Bank 2001). Such an approach makes sense in so far as the traditional division of labor between male breadwinners and female caretakers involves hierarchical relations, creating and recreating women’s subordination to men. Yet Fraser (1994) offers a more complex conceptualization of gender equity that depicts subordination as taking place alongside various and not always consistent lines, from income and physical autonomy to time use in the labor market, the household, or the realm of public policy.

There is much that can be learned from looking at how new social policies reshape gender inequality along several primary dimensions. This paper makes a contribution by creating an instrument suitable for empirical analysis and then applying it to CCT programs in three Latin American countries: Chile, Costa Rica, and El Salvador. Although distinct, all three programs share the same blueprint as part of the family of cash transfers focused on the formation of human capital among low-income children and/or youth. Our analysis is based mainly on secondary sources. For Costa Rica and El Salvador, we rely extensively on newspaper coverage of the programs. For our examination of Chilean policies, it was possible to draw instead from the considerable number of studies that have already been conducted.

Our contribution begins by first introducing CCT programs in Chile, Costa Rica, and El Salvador, which is followed by a discussion of the relationship between social policy and gender equity. We then introduce our empirical instrument, which sets the stage for our analysis of the way CCT programs in these countries shape gender (in)equalities. The final section provides a summary of our key findings.

CCTs in a Heterogeneous Region

As a collective allocation of resources, social policy interacts with markets and families, creating distinct welfare regimes (Martínez Franzoni 2008; Rudra 2007; Esping-Andersen 1990). In Latin America, these regimes vary significantly in terms of how effectively domestic labor markets absorb and remunerate the labor force. While this capacity building is relatively high in Chile and Costa Rica, the commodification of the labor force in El Salvador largely takes place beyond the national border, as shown by the prominence of remittances in the country's gross national product (GNP). Social policy also varies in strength and the distinct role it plays in people's lives (Filgueira 2004). While Chile and Costa Rica devote considerable resources to social expenditures (on average US \$733 and \$885 per capita, respectively, between 2006 and 2007 in 2000 dollars), El Salvador does not (US \$192) (ECLAC 2009). In addition, Chilean social policy focuses on the formation and acquisition of basic human capital on the part of the poor, to the successful commodification of social protection. In Costa Rica, social policy reaches both the nonpoor and the poor, with social protection playing a large role alongside the formation of human capital while in El Salvador, social policy, whether aimed at the formation of human capital or social protection, is embryonic and families comprise the primary safety net.

In Chile and Costa Rica, CCTs thus function within welfare regimes with greater state capacity and autonomy than in El Salvador. In Chile, the *Sistema de Protección y Promoción Social Chile Solidario* (“Chile Solidario”) serves as an entry point to an extensive array of social policies targeting poor families. Created in 2002 under the administration of Ricardo Lagos (2000–2006), *Chile Solidario* is a sophisticated program (Barrientos, Gideon, and Molyneux 2008) combining cash transfers with psycho-social support and preferential access to a broad network of social services (*Programa Puente*) and other monetary transfers (e.g. a basic pension and disability insurance) (Raczynski 2008). At the same time, a monthly conditional cash transfer, ranging between US \$6 and \$20 a month for poor families with children in primary school, is one of the main pillars of *Chile Solidario*, making it comparable with other CCT programs. The implementation of *Chile Solidario*, and in particular, the CCTs, is carried out by local governments in combination with the central government ministries of Healthcare and Education (Palma and Urzúa 2005). According to the Chilean Government, in 2008, *Chile Solidario* reached 1,467,467 people, representing 9.1 percent of the total Chilean population (Chile Government 2009).

Costa Rica’s *Avancemos* is a targeted program within an array of universal social policies. Its specific aim is the prevention of secondary education dropouts (Martínez Franzoni 2008). Launched in 2006 under the Arias administration (2006–2010), *Avancemos* integrates scholarships already in place under the National Scholarship Fund (*FONABE*, for its Spanish acronym) with a cash transfer program run by the *Instituto Mixto de Ayuda Social* (IMAS), a government antipoverty agency (Gallardo 2010). *Avancemos* differs slightly from the other CCTs in that it provides a cash transfer to youths in secondary school (between US \$27 and \$89, depending on the year the student is enrolled (IMAS 2009)). While primary schools in Costa Rica have a high completion rate, seven out of ten students drop out of secondary education. The program is centrally managed by the government through IMAS. In October 2008, *Avancemos*’ enrollment reached 130,586 students (Secretaría Técnica del Programa AVANCEMOS 2008), representing approximately 3 percent of the total Costa Rican population.

In sharp contrast to the Chilean and Costa Rican CCTs, El Salvador’s *Red Solidaria* is inserted into the context of a nonstate, informal welfare regime, where a large part of the population has little or no contact with public social programs (Martínez Franzoni 2008). Begun in 2005 under the administration of Antonio Saca (2005–2009),¹ *Red Solidaria* provides a CCT of between US \$15 and \$20 to rural families in extreme poverty with children in

primary education. The program includes supply-side investments in community public services as well as literacy campaigns and productive capacity building for adults.² Furthermore, *Red Solidaria* involves contracting with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) who work hand in hand with local networks (Feitosa de Britto 2008; Veras Soares and Britto 2007). According to the El Salvadoran government, 83,654 families received health and education vouchers during the period 2005–2008 (FISDL 2009), representing approximately 6.5 percent of the total Salvadorian population.³

Social Policy and Gender Equity: Theoretical Inputs for Empirical Analysis

Feminists have so far associated gender equity with either equality or difference, where equality means treating women exactly like men, and where difference means treating women differently insofar they differ from men. Theorists have debated the relative merits of these two approaches as if they represented two antithetical poles of an absolute dichotomy (Fraser 1994: 594).

Research shows that, through the allocation of collective resources and legislation, the state has long-term effects on gender equity which are neither univocal nor homogeneous (Molyneux 2000; Sainsbury 1996). Most studies, however, tend to focus on single rather than on multiple dimensions (Walby 1997). For instance, some focus on the impact of policy on domestic work and gender equity by examining women's access to paid work and their capacity to autonomously form and maintain a household (Orloff 1996); others focus on the shaping of traditional roles between male providers and female caregivers (Lewis 1992) and women's confinement to the domestic sphere (Rosaldo in Walby 1997); the reinforcement of heterosexuality (MacKinnon 1989) and/or the reproduction of sexual violence (Brownmiller 1975). Among these studies, Walby's comes closest to simultaneously addressing paid work, domestic production, and public policy as three distinct s“patriarchal structures,” namely “systems of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women” (Walby 1990).⁴

While providing a multidimensional approach to arenas where gender inequality takes place, Walby fails to provide a multidimensional approach to gender inequality. Fraser (1994), however, does offer a multifaceted conceptualization of gender equality, understood as a “complex, not a simple, idea [...] comprising a plurality of distinct normative principles” (Fraser 1994, 595). For a social

policy regime to be gender equitable, it has to meet five distinct normative principles: antipoverty, antiexploitation, the equality principles in income, time use and respect, antimarginalization, and finally, antiandrocentrism. Fraser's principles serve as Weberian *ideal types*: conceptually distinct but empirically intertwined components. Social policy may perform well on one principle, but on another.

Regrettably, Fraser's multivariate notion of inequality has been infrequently adopted in the conduct of empirical studies. We argue however that Fraser's approach can be used to develop a nuanced conception of the gender implication of social policy regimes in general and of individual programs in particular. More specifically, CCT programs combine three components in different ways: cash transfers, social services, and the conditionality of access to thereto. How, given the overall architecture of particular programs do they affect gender relations?

Our analysis is designed to assess gender equality across these components in a welfare regime (Martínez Franzoni and Voorend 2009).⁵ Building on the three patriarchal structures identified by Walby (1997)—paid work, domestic, and public policy—it is possible to construct a matrix based on six principles. Here, however, we adapt the analysis for specific application to a social policy program. While we recognize that CCT programs may have effects on paid work and domestic production structures, we focus here on public policy and gender principles. Our matrix thus is constructed on the basis of one structure (public policy) and six principles: antipoverty, antiexploitation, antimarginalization, leisure time, social income, and respect.⁶ We do not include Fraser's antiandrocentric principle. Table 1 summarizes the analytical framework and outlines the expected impact of CCTs on in terms of each of the gender equity principles.

Principle 1: Antipoverty

Fraser argues that “if it accomplishes nothing else, a welfare state should at least relieve suffering by meeting otherwise unmet basic needs” (1994, 596), therefore, reducing poverty at a minimum.

Consensus in the literature indicates that CCTs do help to reduce poverty. Providing CCT benefits to women carries positive effects, perhaps not sufficient to ensure economic autonomy (which may be too much to expect from such small transfers) but at least to improve women's access to social and economic resources (López 2004 (in Serrano), Molyneux 2006; Serrano 2005a, 2005b), including a greater voice in family dynamics (Villatoro 2005). As long as their children are eligible for CCTs through access to cash and basic

Table 1. Gender Equity Principles as They Concern Social Policy: Definitions and Expected Performance of CCT programs

Principles	Role of social policy	CCTs: expected performance
Antipoverty	Increasing female access to cash and social services	Good
Antiexploitation	Overcoming assumptions regarding women's sole responsibility for unpaid domestic work	Poor
Antimarginalization	Encouraging women's access to paid work	Poor
Anti-inequality		
Time use	Reorganizing gender roles to reduce or avoid tensions between paid and unpaid work	Poor
Social income	Reducing social income gaps between women and men	Good
Respect	Equal treatment of men and women reflected in the program design and exacted by public servants	Poor

Source: Own adaptation based on Fraser (2004).

social services, CCTs may have a positive effect on women's living conditions regardless of their spousal and family arrangements, supporting Fraser's antipoverty principle.

CCTs seek to improve children's basic education and healthcare (i.e. human capital) through access to social services. Such programs increase periodic gynecological check-ups among pregnant women (Rawlings y Rubio 2003) but they neither benefit nonpregnant women nor do they go beyond pregnancy-related needs (Serrano 2005a). The CCT measures aimed at adult women are confined to their needs as mothers rather than their needs as workers or citizens (Molyneux 2007).

Principle 2: Antiexploitation

The antiexploitation principle refers to the prevention of exploitation of vulnerable people. Closely related to the previous principle, poor women and children are vulnerable to exploitation. Welfare provisions should thus also avoid "exploitable dependencies" (Fraser 1994, 597) on family members, employers and supervisors, and state officials.

On the one hand, CCTs underline the prominent role played by women in managing the household's resources (Henríquez and Reca 2005; Morley and Coady 2003). On the other hand, CCTs assume that women alone are responsible for their children's school attendance and medical check-ups, thus holding accountable mothers, grandmothers, or other women in the family but not fathers, grandfathers, or other men in the household. As long as CCTs rely upon and help perpetuate traditional gender roles (Molyneux 2006; Serrano 2005a), these programs perform poorly regarding the anti-exploitation principle.

Principle 3: Antimarginalization

Fraser argues that even if the previous principles are adhered to, the welfare state could still marginalize women. The antimarginalization principle implies ensuring women's "full participation on a par with men in all areas of social life" (1994, 599). This is still inadequate because it could be assumed that women should follow men's current life patterns. The welfare state, then, needs to ensure the avoidance of androcentric views considering men as the norm.

While CCT programs do perpetuate a vision of female caregiving, the reality is that in many, if not most, Latin American countries, a large proportion of targeted, low-income households are headed by women and lack a permanent male presence. More specifically, in 2008, in Chile, Costa Rica, and El Salvador, the proportion of female-headed households in urban areas, as a percentage of the total households, was 31, 33 and 37 percent, respectively. Of these female-headed households, the vast majority (78, 87, and 87 percent, respectively) lacked a permanent male presence (ECLAC 2011).⁷ This makes the conditions of women's labor market participation and, therefore, access to cash regardless of their children's age or status, a pressing issue. Critics point out that while CCTs are directed at improving human capital formation among the population's youngest, they do little to enhance the status of adults for whom programs neither involve human capital formation nor improve the conditions for their labor force participation (Villatoro 2005). The lack of serious consideration of this matter makes CCTs perform poorly in negating antimarginalization. The commodification of the labor force requires the state action not only in the formation of human capital, but also in the creation of "decent" rather than informal jobs as established by the ILO/UNDP (2009). In addition, state actions need to tackle one of the primary factors preventing poor Latin American women from entering the labor market: the lack of childcare services (ECLAC 2009; ILO/UNDP 2009).

Without childcare services, today's female youth are likely to face similar difficulties in accessing formal jobs as did their parents and, in particular, their mothers (Molyneux 2008).

The welfare state should enable the equality principles of income, time use, and respect. Fraser argues that a welfare state could prevent poverty and exploitation, but without redistribution to reduce inequalities between men and women, it would still be unsatisfactory. The income equality principle "requires a substantial reduction in the vast discrepancy between men's and women's incomes" (Fraser 1994, 598). Similarly, the equality principle regarding the time use means reducing arrangements that involve long hours of unpaid work by women. The last of the equality principles concerns respect and the ruling out of "social arrangements that objectify and denigrate women – even if those arrangements prevent poverty and exploitation" (Fraser 1994).

Principle 4: Equality of Time Use

Conditionality could, in theory, promote a transformation of the sexual division of labor in the household. However, there is ample feminist literature that suggests CCT programs strengthen women's exclusive responsibility for the few resources available, leaving intact the traditional organization of domestic work and care (Martínez Franzoni and Voorend 2011; Molyneux 2006; Serrano 2005a). Conditionality intensifies the demand for unpaid female work, increasing women's total workload, and therefore tensions over women's time use (Molyneux 2008). Thus, unless CCTs propose some sort of reorganization of the sexual division of labor, these programs are expected to have negative effects for women's time use.

Principle 5: Equality of Social Income

While it may be too much to expect a social program to eliminate income gaps between men and women in the labor market, women's improved access to cash and basic social services could mean that CCTs decrease gaps between men and women in social income, thereby having positive effects concerning income equality. In addition, most evaluations are very positive about the effect of CCTs on school enrolment and performance (Villatoro 2005), two key indications of social income. CCTs enable poor families who are unable to afford school fees or the income lost when children are enrolled in school. There is considerable evidence that higher levels of education facilitate entry into the labor market (ECLAC 2010). In this sense, when combined with increased access to healthcare, CCTs seem to have positive effects on the commodification of the labor force.

Principle 6: Equality of Respect

A valuable aspect of CCTs is that they allocate resources through channels other than traditional patronage rules: access criteria for resources are made explicit and are known by the population (Molyneux 2008). Concurrently, CCT programs involve direct contact between target populations and civil servants charged with their implementation. Consequently, civil service paradigms of gender relations determine to a large extent the treatment women receive (Bradshaw and Quiros 2008). Moreover, specific aspects of the policy, such as training courses, reflect the lack of respect embedded in program design: on the one hand, programs share a technical bias in terms of who “knows” how to do what, placing a higher value on women as mothers than on women as citizens or workers. On the other hand, female unpaid domestic work is not seen as work. Overall, CCTs perform rather poorly on the equality of respect principle.

CCTs and Gender Equality in Three Contrasting Countries: More, Less, or Both?

To analyze how CCT programs shape various aspects of gender relations, we now focus on the three specific programs in Chile, Costa Rica, and El Salvador.

Antipoverty Principle: Increasing Female Access to Cash and Social Services

As in most CCT programs, the three programs under review target people in poverty. Expecting a relatively small program to “prevent poverty,” while complying with Fraser’s antipoverty principle is unrealistic. However, CCTs can make important contributions to poverty relief and prevention by granting access to cash and social services.

There have been several attempts to measure the impact of CCTs on household income. For *Red Solidaria*, one study demonstrated that nine out of ten recipients say their economic situation improved significantly since they enrolled in the program. Almost all are confident that this is a result of receiving the cash transfer (Gochez 2008). A more recent impact study finds that “despite the economic crisis, households’ incomes increased” (IFPRI 2010, xii) because of the CCT program. Raczynski’s (2008) summary of the impact evaluations of *Chile Solidaria* indicates that it has enabled families to access more monetary subsidies, thus improving their immediate

purchasing power. As in the case of El Salvador, these subsidies are highly valued by beneficiaries. Yet, several more recent studies question the evidence supporting this claim (Hoces de la Guardia, Hojman, and Larrañaga 2011; Larrañaga, Contreras, and Ruiz Tagle 2009). There are fewer impact studies of Costa Rica's *Avancemos*. While there is general evidence that secondary dropout rates have declined since the program started (Gallardo 2010; Marinakis 2009), effects on income have not been studied systematically.

In all three cases, the impact of CCTs on household income and poverty has yet to be established. It is safe, however, to assume that CCT benefits temporarily relieve some effects of poverty and increase household income. Under all three programs, cash transfers go almost exclusively to women. By granting access to social income and by improving access to healthcare and education, CCTs do offer some degree of de-commodification at least for children and pregnant women. As long as transfers go to poor youth, which is the case in the three CCT programs under review, they improve access to education and healthcare. While mothers are not the primary target population of these programs, that they receive the transfers implies an improved access to a social income.⁸ In El Salvador, the CCT is meant to purchase food, while in Chile and Costa Rica the money is expected to be spent mainly on school supplies. Nevertheless, because of the type of available services (related to pregnancy) in Chile and El Salvador, women's access to social services, particularly healthcare, improves when compared with men,⁹ who are not targeted in any particular way in any of the three CCT programs.

The extent to which access to social services has improved as the result of CCTs reflects the overall social policy regime as well as the linkages established between CCTs and other available social services.

Chile Solidario involves preferential access for women to a much larger array of existing services, and the program bridges access to these services. Through the Family Support element in *Chile Solidario*, a link is made between the "family and the public and private network of social promotion, in areas such as identification, healthcare, education, family support, habitability, work and income" (Chile Government 2011). Given the low coverage of social services in the rural communities where *Red Solidaria* was implemented, the Salvadorian program has clearly increased coverage, albeit to basic and often unreliable services. Costa Rica has an extensive array of social services and programs targeting the poor as

well as universal coverage of healthcare and education (Martínez Franzoni 2008). Avancemos does not create any specific links between the program and any of these services. It is aimed specifically at avoiding secondary school dropouts. Also, since children are the target population, it is children's access to social services that improves, not that of their female caregivers.

Antiexploitation Principle: Overcoming Women's Sole Responsibility Regarding Caretaking

While all three programmes share similar assumptions regarding women's sole responsibility for caretaking, there are small but meaningful differences in whether CCTs acknowledge departure from traditional family arrangements. For instance, in El Salvador, *Red Solidaria* explicitly includes potential male caretakers. Yet, in practice, there seem to be a few families with male caretakers (Duke 2008). *Chile Solidario* explicitly targets female income providers (Henríquez and Reza 2005). It does not promote a reorganization of domestic gender roles, and even though the program includes working mothers, this is not translated into measures to help them combine paid and unpaid work such as childcare services.

The money being transferred to women does imply some recognition of the crucial role that they play in managing household resources (Molyneux 2006), yet the three programs reflect traditional assumptions concerning gender roles. This is reflected not only in conditionality, which makes women explicitly responsible for assuring their children's school enrollment and participation in health check-ups, but also in the services made available to women, which are almost exclusively aimed at helping them become healthier and more suitable mothers. Such assumptions seem more evident in El Salvador than in Chile and Costa Rica, as *Red Solidaria* includes training on how to prepare food, improve hygiene, and enhance childcare. While measures empowering women to protect themselves and their families from sickness through the adoption of appropriate nutritional and hygiene practices are welcomed, the underlying assumption that women need to be educated as "better mothers" clashes with the broader task of promoting women's autonomy.

When programs consider women in their own right, it is usually in their reproductive role. For example, healthcare measures mainly look after women during pregnancy, delivery, and post-delivery, while capacity-building programs focus on improving their role in the household.

Antimarginalization Principle: Encouraging Women's Access to Paid Work

While the three CCT programs have done little to improve women's access to employment and income in the long run (antipov-erty principle), they show some evidence of linking the CCT program with income-generation elements. Of the three, this link is strongest in *Chile Solidario*. *Red Solidaria* does link to employment access and income on paper, but little is done in practice while employment is given scant attention in *Avanceamos*.

The three CCT programs have had little influence on the labor market. For example, *Avanceamos* does not try to improve women's labor participation since it focuses exclusively on teenager's education. It does include a modest incentive to enable the stronger students to follow tertiary programs in sectors with high labor demand. Yet, this is a small component and does little to tackle structural conditions posing employment barriers. Nor does it include day-care programs or any other initiative that would make it easier to combine paid and unpaid work. Overall, the program has little impact on gender roles.

Red Solidaria does incorporate some important components of capacity building and labor market incorporation, albeit almost exclusively on paper. Participants in the focus groups valued these elements but there is no clear link between these initiatives, employment, and production. The vast majority of the women receiving the transfers are housewives (78 percent), which is consistent with the rural setting in which the program operated; those who do have paid work are either self-employed or informal workers (Góchez 2008, 18). A promising, but until now little developed, component is the program's link to microcredit initiatives. Yet, care and nonpaid domestic work have been consistently taken-for-granted as the exclusive responsibility of mothers involved in the program.

The link to employment creation in *Chile Solidario* is perhaps the most explicit of the three CCTs considered here, but is the weakest component of the program. Moreover, employment creation is promoted mainly through supply-side initiatives. Given the structural barriers of the labor market, the results are much less encouraging in terms of the quality of women's employment and income generation (Galasso 2006). Women find jobs mainly in the informal sector (Ferre 2005) which is "related directly to poverty" (Cohen and Villatoro 2006, 204, own translation). Of the three, *Chile Solidario* is the only program that provides childcare services, even though they represent only a small element of the program.

The absence of child services and attention to the demand side of labor participation are not only bad news for antipoverty objectives pursued by CCTs, but also for the antimarginalization principles, since without them, CCTs fail to level the conditions for women's full participation in the labor market.

Overall, these programs centre on social, not labor market policy, and links between the CCT and productive programs are based on the implicit assumption that jobs will be somehow created and people who invest in human capital will benefit from them.

Equality of Income Principle: Reducing Social Income Gaps Between Women and Men

Unfortunately, the lack of data on who receives social income makes this proposition hard to assess. In theory, by assigning the transfer to women, not men, CCTs should decrease gaps in access to social income (Serrano 2005a). Channeling cash transfers to women does increase their social income, although these three programs focus on children's human capital. All three programs allow for higher degrees of female de-commodification and they reduce the social income gaps between men and women. However, the extent of these reductions or de-commodifications varies widely across the three programs.

Chile Solidario plays a key role in helping the poorest population access available social programs. The view that women are responsible for childcare goes unquestioned, but women enter social programs on their own terms through the link between the CCT and the larger network of targeted social policies. Women benefit from this program to a greater extent than men (Henríquez and Reca 2005) both as recipients of comparatively small cash transfers and as recipients of a number of other social programs (e.g. chances of receiving housing subsidies are improved (Henríquez and Reca 2005)).

Costa Rica also has a large range of social policies available. However, rather than helping women to gain access to a wider range of social policies, they are mere recipients of the cash transfer meant for teenage sons and daughters. Therefore, the effect of *Avancemos* in reducing the income gap between women and men is more limited than in the other countries. Despite its limitations in terms of infrastructure, human resources, and quality and range of services, *Red Solidaria* has increased the state's capacity to reach a rural population that previously went without access to social services. In El Salvador, therefore, the CCT program does improve women's access to social income.

Equality of Time Use Principle: Reorganizing Gender Roles and Reducing Tensions Between Paid and Unpaid Work

The three programs reflect the dominant paradigm of women carrying the main responsibility for domestic work. None promote the reorganization of gender roles. Instead, programs leave this role reorganization up to family “preferences.” There are however important differences in the women’s time use due to the extra unpaid work implied by these programs. Although *Chile Solidario* explicitly includes working mothers, in practice, it focuses on stay-at-home mothers (Henríquez and Reca 2005). While overall Chile has the lowest rate of women’s labor forces participation in Latin America (ECLAC 2007), qualified informants report that the target population of *Chile Solidario* needs to find paid work to increase its income. Thus, a significant proportion of these women hold informal jobs, which creates serious time use tensions (Carrera 2008).

In El Salvador, tensions over time use result from the lack of basic services rather than from paid jobs (Góchez 2008). In communities where there is no running water or electricity, women devote long hours to domestic chores such as gathering firewood and preparing meals (Gallardo 2006). Although under *Red Solidaria* on paper both women and men agree to share responsibility and male participation in the capacity-building component is encouraged (Ávalos 2008). In reality, workshops and the other tasks involved in meeting conditions are carried out by women. Nevertheless, women generally welcome the chance to get together outside the household. In rural El Salvador, where large groups of women have not had much access to formal education, the workshops are seen as an opportunity to learn new skills that may consequently translate into new economic opportunities (Duke 2008).

Avancemos does not create tensions over time use as it does not require women’s participation in additional activities. The program targets secondary students who are more independent than small children and can comply with conditions. This results in the program demanding considerably less time from women than in El Salvador and Chile.

Principle of Equality in Respect: Equal Treatment and Approach to Gender Roles by Civil Servants

This aspect of CCTs has received the least attention. Examining CCTs in Bradshaw and Quirós (2008) shows how interaction with civil servants has important implications for women participants. One example is women’s autonomy in deciding how to spend the cash transfer. Aspects of a program’s design can thus have

implications for the way women interact with different institutions and people. The influence on gender paradigms depends on whether intervention is done directly by the state (as in Costa Rica), through social workers (as in Chile) or indirectly through NGOs (as in El Salvador).

The greater the diversity of actors involved in the implementation of CCTs, the more heterogeneous visions of gender relations there are at work. Under *Chile Solidario*, families are supported by social workers. Social workers' assumptions about gender relations strongly influence how they relate to families and how they react to their client's sexual division of labor. The extent to which the CCT program could result in advances in gender equity "depends on the extent to which the social worker incorporates elements of a gender perspective into his or her intervention" (Henríquez and Reca 2005, 128, own translation). Henríquez and Reca (2005) interviewed several social workers and found that women are not only seen as responsible for care work and domestic chores, but also that they actively encourage men to find paid work. In El Salvador, NGOs play a prominent role in implementing *Red Solidaria*. On paper, the program functions as a network of cooperation between "a municipal liaison (usually the mayor) and the municipal and regional coordinators of the NGO in charge of family support" (Veras and Britto 2007, 19). In practice, the NGOs form a "link between beneficiaries and the programme" (Veras and Britto 2007, 19), taking charge of family support, follow-up, and other elements involving direct contact with the family. While, to the best of our knowledge, the way NGOs transfer gender paradigms to beneficiaries has not been studied for *Red Solidaria*, it could safely be assumed that their views on gender roles play an important role here just as in *Chile Solidario*.

In Costa Rica, there is relatively little direct contact (e.g. training and workshops) between state bureaucrats and women other than the cash transference itself. This makes it less likely that the bureaucrats' gender assumptions play a role in reshaping women's practices. The three programs seem to "honor" women as mothers rather than as workers or citizens. However, certain components of the programs, like training workshops, seem to assume that women-as-mothers lack valuable knowledge concerning a wide range of issues, ranging from food preparation to contraceptive practices. All three programs share the assumption that women need to be enlightened, albeit to different degrees. This is more evident in *Red Solidaria*, where women participate in workshops to improve their skills to cook for and look after their children, than in *Chile Solidario* and *Avancemos*. In *Red Solidaria*, paradigms of the sexual

division of labor are strongly anchored in social policy. The program incorporates some capacity-building components, but many of these components are aimed at “improving” women’s capacities to take care of their children. There is a tension between the notion of women as autonomous and effective household managers and (poor) women who need not only cash but also training to go about their domestic chores more effectively.

Conclusion: Neither Black nor White

CCT programs have spread throughout Latin America and beyond based on the claim that they are an effective means of combating poverty. In so doing, CCTs do shape gender relations and equity in various ways. Unfortunately, both sides of the debate on how CCTs shape gender relations have tended either to address gender inequality one-dimensionally or to compress various dimensions into one. Our treatment of gender as a multivariate concept leads to a better understanding of how CCTs affect gender, but also to less straightforward answers.

Evaluating the three CCT programs along Fraser’s gender equity principles, although there are modest differences in design and in the broader welfare regimes in which they are embedded, we find that their positive effects revolve around two out of the six principles: antipoverty and equality in social income. In the other four gender equity principles, CCTs perform poorly. In terms of antiexploitation, CCTs do not help overcome assumptions regarding women’s sole responsibility for unpaid domestic work. In terms of antimarginalization, CCTs do little to promote women’s access to paid work, but rather encourage their confinement to the household. CCTs do not reorganize gender roles to reduce or avoid tensions between paid and unpaid work, and in some cases increase tensions in terms of equality in time use. Finally, in terms of equality of respect, the kind of gender paradigms transmitted through the programs depend on the source of implementation (e.g. directly through state institutions or through NGOs). If these gender paradigms translate into measures that assume poor women have no, or inaccurate, knowledge, the programs do little for equality of respect.

CCT programs could have positive effects concerning dimensions of gender equity other than poverty and income gaps. For example, incentives for adult women to obtain paid work may not only increase family income, but also set examples for future generations, challenging traditional gender roles preventing poverty reduction. In addition, by promoting day-care services and male involvement in

caretaking, programs could have positive effects upon the principles of antiexploitation and equality in time use.

Incorporating specific objectives concerning gender equality would not only be beneficial for adult women, but also for ability of CCTs to achieve their primary objective of poverty reduction in the long run. Girls who will become women (and mothers) would benefit from policy incentives aimed at altering gender relations among adults. Adopting measures that aim to contribute to more equal gender relations would require changes in program design and in how these programs interact with other social and labor policy. It is necessary to define “critical paths” through which the CCT programs can combat women’s poverty, exploitation, marginalization, inequality, and lack of respect. The main political step required is to attach the same importance to women as is currently attached to the children by these programs. As yet, following patriarchal paradigms guiding social policy women are viewed as mothers, not as workers or citizens.

Patriarchy is defined as the rule of the father who controls, but also protects (Orloff 2009). Extending this definition to the public domain, patriarchy may also mean the rule of patriarchal institutions (Glass and Fodor 2007) which, by the same token, protect as much as control. In this regard, CCTs can be seen as examples of *patriarchal maternalism*: a gender hierarchy in which women are limited to their historical domestic roles as mothers and housewives. This is quite different from *feminist maternalism*—the ideology explaining, justifying, and celebrating differences rather than hierarchies between sexes. Orloff (2005) shows how such maternalism played a central role in challenging patriarchal ideologies and practices linking women’s “difference” to inequality, dependency, and exclusion from politics (Orloff 2009). On the basis of our multidimensional analysis, we argue that patriarchal maternalism remains at the core of Latin America’s new social policies. At the same time, the programs we examined have had some positive effects on gender relations. More importantly, they have the potential to reshape policy menus if they are redesigned to incorporate childcare facilities and actively work to involve men in domestic labor.

NOTES

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1. With the recent change of government, the programme was extended to urban areas, and renamed *Comunidades Solidarias*. Our focus is, however, on *Red Solidaria* alone.

2. The implementation of the latter component has been very limited.

3. Based on own calculations using an average of 4.5 members per family for rural areas (FESPAD 2006).

4. The other three dimensions that Walby proposes—violence, sexuality, and cultural institutions—cut across the first three, and therefore constitute variables rather than structures.

5. We initially looked into all three structures to analyze gender inequalities across welfare regimes but have later focused on the analysis of separate gender dimensions, both using quantitative and qualitative data.

6. The latter three are created by the disaggregation of the overall equality principle proposed by Fraser.

7. Moreover, female-headed households are over represented among lower income households, more specifically among the lowest 20 percent (Arriagada and Aranda 2004).

8. While first Avancemos channeled transfers directly to students, soon mothers became the recipients under the argument that CCT programs elsewhere suggested the latter made for a more cost-effective social investment.

9. *Avancemos* represents an exception here, since the program focuses explicitly on education for teenagers, and their mother's access to social services does not improve as a result.

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