

19th Gender Summit – Global for SDGs,

19-21 August 2020

Gender, Labour Markets and Public Action in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Mexico

Author: Sandra Bustamante, PhD

Universidad de Belgrano, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Keywords: *Latin America, Feminization, labour markets, inequities*

1. Summary Even when female visibility in the economic domain increased in some Latin American countries (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Mexico), inequities still exist. In this research, with an innovative theoretical corpus we show the evolution of women in the labour market during the period 2009 - 2019, the public policies implemented, and how diverse actors made advocacy to change this situation.

2. Relevance Nowadays, a great deal of literature as well as international campaigns (with different views about how power, privilege, choice and agency play out in the marketplace), highlight the extremely exploitative terms on which most women take up paid work and contest the view that increased access to paid work has been empowering for women.

3. Aims & Objectives. The main objective is to analyze the situation of women in the labour market in some middle-income countries of Latin America and the need to take certain public actions to improve the real empowerment of women, considering how market forces are restructuring women's position within their families and the wider society and evaluating various forms of public action (public policies, corporations and civil society) in those countries.

4. Methods Regarding the Methodology, it is qualitative and quantitative. The methodological strategy designed focuses on a comparison between Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico for the period 2009 – 2019 considering several indicators and sources. The Qualitative strategy includes some interviews to representatives of Ministries of Labour, corporations and CSO's.

5. Results: Much of the gap observed between the countries, especially in rural areas, is associated with a greater insertion of Latin American women in precarious jobs. These are characterized by monetary non-remuneration and high levels of informality, which implies low income, job instability, lack of protection and absence of rights. Other important result is the lack of childcare centers and preschool services, extended hours schools, the availability of senior care services. Likewise, it has been shown that balanced and non-transferable maternity and paternity leave contribute to promoting co-responsibility in the home to overcome gender stereotypes, empower women and facilitate their labor insertion.

6. Conclusions The reality is that, although women represent slightly more than half of the population in Latin America, their contribution to economic activity, growth and well-being in the region is well below their potential. In fact, the evidence shows that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Latin America and the Caribbean would grow an additional 16% if the gender gap in the labour market were closed completely. However, much remains to be done and success will depend on governments, businesspeople and civil society joining these efforts.

7. Contact details: Sandra Bustamante – sandra.bustamante@comunidad.ub.edu.ar – sabustamante@gmail.com