

Gender Gaps and Family Policies in Latin America
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RIDGE WELAC Workshop

June 3, 2022

This Paper

Goal

- ▶ To document the changes in family policies in Latin American countries in 2000-2019
- ▶ What are the relationships between these policies and the evolution of labor market outcomes and perceptions of gender roles?

Main Findings

- ▶ Adoption of family policies is positively related with female employment
- ▶ Leave policies play a stronger role in reducing employment gaps for those countries with more limited initial coverage and more traditional perceptions on gender roles
- ▶ Preschool attendance has a negative effect on informality rates

Gender Gaps and Family Policies: Some Thoughts

Female Labor Supply

Some other key forces behind the rise in female LFP in the U.S. (Heathcote et al., 2017)

- ▶ Decline in marriage rates
- ▶ Narrowing gender wage gap
- ▶ Preference (or cultural) shift towards market work
- ▶ Change in women's bargaining power within the household

Another policy that greatly affects incentives — income taxation

- ▶ Separate vs. joint taxation of couples (Bick and Fuchs-Schündeln, 2017, 2018)

What can we say about the patterns in Latin American countries?

Gender Gaps and Family Policies: Some Thoughts

Informality

Informal sector is associated with a significant earnings penalty and higher earnings volatility for identical workers (Engbom et al., 2022) \Rightarrow imperfect insurance mechanism

Work Flexibility

Childcare services \Rightarrow women enter formal jobs with labor schedules rather than informal jobs which are often more flexible to adapt working hours or to take children with them

Has the picture changed with the rise in work from home nowadays?

Gender Norms

COVID-19 as an accelerator of progress towards more gender equality (Alon et al., 2020)

- ▶ Employer side (flexible work arrangements)
- ▶ Change in social norms and role models in families

Robustness

Thresholds for grouping countries

- ▶ Limited coverage (e.g., preschool attendance $\leq 60\%$)

Conclusions

Great paper and policy-relevant question!

- ▶ Evidence from developed countries does not necessarily carry over
- ▶ Informality does matter
- ▶ Gender norms do matter

Makes us to think harder about the interaction between economic policy, informality, and gender gaps

- ▶ Micro data
- ▶ How to measure informality?
 - ▶ Administrative data will not help here
- ▶ Gender and family in macro