

# WIEGO Child Care Initiative

## Literature Review

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## **WIEGO Child Care Initiative Literature Review**

**WIEGO's Child Care Initiative (CCI)** seeks to shift child care from the periphery of global social policy to the centre, so that it is seen as a core set of social services and as a core part of social security. The major concern for WIEGO within the wider debate on child care provision is the relationship between child care provision and the ability of women, particularly poorer women, to engage in income-earning work and to improve their economic position.

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## **1. Introduction**

The WIEGO Child Care Initiative (CCI) seeks to shift child care from the periphery of global social policy to the centre so that it is seen as a core set of social services and as a core part of social security. There are two important caveats to this stated aim. The first is that the initiative is focused particularly on Africa, Latin America, and Asia, the three regions in which WIEGO works most intensively, where levels of informal employment are high, and where the provision of state-based services/allowances for working women with children has generally been considered less of a priority by governments than other development goals (Esplen, 2009). The second is that the major concern for WIEGO within the wider debate on child care provision is that such provisions free up time for women to engage in income-earning work. The central concern then is the working woman and, in particular, the poor working woman.

The purpose of this paper is to provide a review of literature on the topic of women, work, and child care provision, with a focus on the following areas: i) to provide a review of the main conceptual issues which have underpinned child care as a policy issue; ii) to collect the available empirical evidence which links women's earnings to child care; iii) to analyse the place of women's employment within dominant discourses around care policy and, conversely, to analyse the place of child care in relation to women's economic empowerment discourses; and finally iv) to highlight positive policy practices in relation to child care provision from around the globe. This paper is intended to be read in conjunction with its companion paper, *An Institutional Mapping of Child Care Actors* (Budlender, 2014).

## **2. Background: Care as a Policy Issue**

In Part VI of Plato's *Republic*, the Greek philosopher Socrates engages with students on the role of women and the family in Socrates's model state where socialized child care is held to be an ideal. His attention to the subject is judged too brief by one student, Adiemantus, who asks him to elaborate further about "how the Guardians are to produce children, and look after them when they are born, and how this whole business of community of wives and children is to work." "It seems to us that this is a matter in which it is vital to society that the right arrangements should be made," argues Adiemantus. In response to this, a frustrated Socrates replies: "You don't know what you're doing, holding me up like this...It's an enormous subject, and you're starting again from the beginning just as I was congratulating myself on having finished, and was feeling glad that no one had questioned what I had said. You don't know what a hornet's nest you're stirring up by challenging me. I deliberately avoided the subject before, because of all the trouble it would cause" (Plato, Book V, *Republic*).

Socrates's hesitation to elaborate is justified and continues to be so. The care of children, how it is "properly" done, and whose responsibility it is to do it, is still a contentious issue within contemporary policy debates. It is also an issue which does not always divide neatly between those on the left and the right of the political spectrum. There is good reason for this. As Folbre and Nelson (2000) point out, care (be it for children, the sick or the elderly) has a dual meaning. It can refer to care activities, such as bathing, clothing, and feeding, but it also refers to feelings of care – something which takes it out of the realm of the functional and places it in the more ambiguous and contested realm of emotion. However, as Elson (2000) has argued, it is also important to remember that not all care work is related to feelings of care, or is committed to willingly by carers, who may be under psychological, social or financial pressures to engage in caring activities.

Underpinned by feminist theorising, policy activism around the issue of women, work, and care has proceeded along two main paths. The first of these initially arose from within the economics discipline, with a history that has been detailed by both Razavi (2011) and Eyben (2012). Originally inspired by Esther Boserup's *Women's Role in Economic Development* (1970), feminist economists began to challenge the then predominant idea that women contributed little to agricultural production. Their work showed that far from being "mere" domestic labour, women (particularly in sub-Saharan Africa) played a central role in agriculture and were therefore "productive members of society" and could be seen not just as recipients of development, but as its agents as well (Razavi, 2011; Eyben, 2012). The particular slant of this work was later criticised for giving in to patriarchal conceptions of production because it only looked at women's productive work outside of the domestic sphere.

Marxist feminist economists argued that it was also important to give attention to women's productive role in the domestic sphere – the free labour on which social reproduction ultimately depends (Molyneux, 1979 cited in Razavi, 2011; Delphy and Leonard, 1992). As Razavi (2011) points out, over time the Women in Development (WID) tradition and the Marxist critique of domestic labour contributed to a questioning of both the definition of work and to the ways in which national statistics, which were both defined by, and in turn defined, production, were collected. From the 1980s onwards feminist economists sought to expand the definition of work to include unpaid care activities, and to include these definitions within the international System of National Accounts (SNA), which determines what activities are to be counted in the calculations of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Eyben, 2012).

This advocacy work was partially successful, with the SNA expanding in 1993 to include two categories of unpaid work that had before then been ignored: undercounted work (work that is difficult to measure within traditional statistical frameworks and is therefore undercounted, including home-based work, unpaid family work, and self-employed work), and uncounted work (subsistence work) (Razavi, 2011). However, this did not include the “production of services for self-consumption,” which meant that i) preparation of meals, laundry, cleaning, and shopping; ii) care of children, the sick, and elderly; and iii) volunteer services were not included within the production boundary of the SNA (Razavi, 2011). According to Eyben (2012) this partial success spurred on feminist economists to produce data on this unpaid care work. Largely this has been done by using data derived from time-use surveys to impute the contribution of caring and domestic labour to GDP and to demonstrate the links between care work and women’s place in the labour market (Budlender, 2007). Analyses derived from these time-use surveys have provided a substantial amount of empirical evidence on the links between care work and women’s income-earning activities, and will be discussed further in Section Three of this review.

The second main path that policy activism around women and care work has followed has emerged from social policy analysis. Initially this work focused mainly on a gendered critique of the welfare state in the Global North. Again, Razavi (2011) has provided an excellent history of the development of this analysis and the following is a summary of her work. Central to the feminist critique of the welfare state was their critique of one of its foremost scholars of social policy – Gøsta Esping- Andersen. In his ground-breaking book *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (1990) he used data collected over many years to classify the European welfare states into three types: liberal, corporatist-statist, and social democratic. These three classifications were built on what Esping-Andersen argued were the three “dimensions” of welfare states: the relative power of the state versus the market, stratification (the extent to which social policies break down or reinforce class divisions in society), and decommodification (the extent to which welfare provisions free people from a reliance on the labour market and allow them to participate in other areas of life).

As feminist scholars such as Orloff (1993) argued, Esping-Andersen’s work was gender-blind, failing to ask the central question of whether the welfare state could alter gender relations, just as it was able to alter class relations. Indeed as feminist critics showed, in many cases the original form of the welfare state privileged the male-breadwinner model of the family, thereby reinforcing women’s economic dependence on men and their role in the home as unpaid domestic labour (Lewis, 1992; Orloff, 1993). Orloff (1993: 312) went on to “gender” Esping-Andersen’s three dimensions, arguing that the state-market dimension needed to include the “division of labour between states, markets and families” in the

provision of welfare; that the stratification dimension needed to include an analysis of how state policies reinforced or broke down existing gender relations; and that the decommodification dimension needed to include a new analytic of “the extent to which states guarantee women access to paid employment and services that enable them to balance home and work responsibilities.” This final addition in particular is an important critique which also has relevance for the developing countries (Razavi 2011). Instead of asking how state policies free people from the labour market, it asks how state policies can facilitate better access to the labour market – a question that is of great relevance in countries with low levels of formal employment and/or high levels of informal employment, and where women’s access to income is centrally important to the family income.

The cross-country comparison of welfare regimes started by Esping-Andersen has also inspired work in the Global South. Here the focus has not been on the welfare state, which is largely a Northern state formation, but on discerning the different “welfare regimes” through an analysis of social policies that do exist in developing countries and their effects on society (see, for example, Gough and Wood, 2004). Razavi (2011) has developed a specifically gendered model to analyse welfare provision, which she calls the “care diamond.” Alongside the traditional state-market actors, and the family, the care diamond includes an analysis of the not-for-profit sector, which has in certain contexts played an important, albeit controversial, role in the provision of welfare in developing countries. Razavi (2011) conceptualizes the diamond as something that is mutable, arguing that the boundaries of the diamond shift in response to interest groups, citizen, and state action. The history of care as a policy issue provides an important backdrop to the next two sections. The following section (Section Three) concentrates on detailing the quantitative evidence that has emerged from the work done by feminist scholars linking women’s earnings and unpaid care work. In large part, it draws from data generated by time-use surveys. Section Four looks more closely at care from the perspective of social policy, honing in on some of the underlying policy debates, and proceeding to analyse dominant development policy discourses which have had, and continue to have, implications for women and their responsibility for care work.

### 3. Evidence on the Link between Women's Earnings and Unpaid Care Work

The data generated by feminist economists, sociologists and political theorists has led to increasing acceptance of the fact that there are links between women's unpaid responsibilities in the domestic sphere, and their ability to engage in income-earning employment (Blackden and Wodon, 2006; Razavi, 2011). Unpaid care work here refers to household maintenance, "care of persons" and community service, all of which fall outside of the SNA production boundary (Budlender, 2002). The term "unpaid care work" will be used throughout this review as opposed to other common terms such as "domestic labour," "unpaid labour," "reproductive work," or "home work." For more information about why these terms are problematic see Budlender (2002).

Antonopoulos (2008:5-6) suggests that there are a number of channels through which unpaid care work is linked to labour market status, including the way unpaid care work: "a) shapes the ability, duration and types of paid work that can be undertaken and therefore limits access to existing and potential collective action processes and social security, b) ...reduces the exercise of 'voice' over decision making and ability to accumulate savings and assets, c) ...is regarded a woman's 'natural' work, performed in the 'private sphere of the family, it essentialises this work and strips it of its socioeconomic dimensions and contributions d) assigns paid social reproduction (care) workers to jobs that are presumed to be unskilled, with low pay, slender options for promotion and scant social protection."

The following section is concerned largely with Antonopoulos's point a): the ways in which unpaid work "shapes the ability, duration and types of paid work that can be undertaken" by women. It concentrates in particular on reviewing existing empirical evidence which highlights the way in which women's responsibility for the care of young children under 7 years of age affects their ability to earn an income in developing countries. The reason for the focus on developing countries in the Global South is that the dynamics of employment in developing countries where informal employment tends to predominate is distinct from that of the more formalized labour markets of developed countries. The different features of the labour markets mean that the dynamic between income-earning work and unpaid care work is likely to be different to some extent in developing countries.

The next three sub-sections look, first, at the empirical evidence on the links between women's unpaid care work and employment that has been generated through time-use surveys (TUS), second at data that has been derived from other survey data (which may or may not include a TUS as a component of a larger survey), and third at the data that has been generated by specific interventions around child care.

### 3.1 Evidence from Time Use Surveys

Many of the empirical studies which show a relationship between women's caring roles and their participation in income-earning work comes from the analysis of data derived from time-use surveys (TUSs). These were originally used in developed countries. Although TUSs had already been used in developing countries to a limited extent, the real push for their extension to these countries by feminist activists and scholars occurred after the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action as a way in which to make women's unpaid care work more visible in national accounting and statistics (Budlender, 2007, Esquivel, 2011). TUS methods allow researchers to count the time that household members spend on all the activities that make up their day or week, including caring for family members and other domestic chores.

TUSs use either diary-based methods, where participants are interviewed in order to compile a diary of their time use over a limited period of time, or stylised interview methods, where participants are given a pre-set list of activities and are asked to estimate how much time they spend on each activity during a set period (Budlender, 2007). There are now a number of developing countries which have conducted TUSs, either as a stand-alone survey or as one component of a larger representative survey. Budlender (2007) provides a useful summary of national TUSs in selected countries, including Argentina, Bangladesh, Benin, Brazil, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, India, Republic of Korea, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mexico, Nicaragua, South Africa, and Tanzania, with an emphasis on the survey design, the scope and information covered, the quality of the data produced, and the weaknesses in the data and survey design.

In terms of providing evidence on the links between women's care responsibilities and their income-earning activities, TUSs are useful, but there are also limitations to the data they produce. Budlender (2007) has laid out a number of considerations which can affect the quality of the data, including the type of survey used (diary based or stylised interview questions), the period of time which the survey covers, the administration of the questionnaire, and the ways in which activities are classified. When it comes to counting care work, a particularly important limitation of time-use survey data is the problem of simultaneous activities. Care work is often performed at the same time as other activities and tends to be labelled as a secondary or tertiary activity. Analysts who are looking to add up 24 hours of activity, however, may consider only primary activities, which means that the unpaid care work component is lost (Budlender, 2007; Charmes, 2006). Budlender (2007: 5) also points out that time-use variables cannot alone provide "a solid analysis of the interplay of economic work and other activities," which, in addition, requires comparisons across status in employment, further details on the characteristics of the economic work engaged in, and knowledge about earnings. This means that time-use questions need to be integrated



with demographic and labour force questions, which is what has generally happened when countries have decided to implement TUSs.

The amount of time that women spend on unpaid care of others does vary across countries. In some countries it is more socially acceptable for women to leave their children in care, and care facilities may be more readily available, while in other countries it is much less so. Family form, and particularly whether there are other female relatives present to provide care, also has an impact. Within countries there is always variation across classes and across the rural-urban divide. Nevertheless, cross-country analyses of time-use surveys consistently shows that it is women rather than men who shoulder the main responsibility for child care and that they are likely to earn less than men when participating in income-earning work (although this is not solely related to care work, but is also a result of the gender segregated labour markets, which itself is linked to care in that women tend to congregate in “caring” professions which are less well paid).

Budlender’s (2008) review of TUS data from six countries shows that across all countries the time spent by women on unpaid care work is twice that spent by men, while men spent more time on activities that fall within the production boundary of the SNA. In India, where social pressures on women to stay in the home are great, this rises to ten times. When SNA work and unpaid care work were combined, Budlender (2008: v) found that women do “noticeably” more work than men – in South Africa men do 74 per cent of the work done by women, while in India they do 94 per cent of the work done by women. In a review of time-use data from five sub-Saharan African countries that focused specifically on child care (as opposed to all unpaid care work, as in Budlender’s study), Charmes (2006) finds that women spend thirteen times more time on this activity than men in South Africa, seven times more in Benin, six times more in Madagascar, three times more in Mauritius and nearly double the time in Ghana. Charmes (2006) also finds that women spend significantly more time in other “core unpaid domestic duties” (washing and ironing, preparing meals, and washing up) than men across all countries (ranging from double the time in Ghana to thirteen times in Madagascar, Benin, and Mauritius).

The disproportionate amount of time spent by women on unpaid care work has several possible implications for their income-earning activities. The first of these is the fact that if women are spending a greater amount of time than men on unpaid care activities, this may restrict their chances in the labour market, the amount of time they can spend on income-earning activities and ultimately their levels of income. The second relates to what has become known as “time poverty” – the fact that women who do both income-earning and care work essentially work a “double shift.”

### 3.1.1 Effect on Participation in the Labour Market

Using data from the 2000 South African TUS, Floro and Komatsu (2011) find that working age men spend 1.4 hours more per day than women in labour market and subsistence work. Men also spent just over 5 times more time on searching for employment compared to women, whereas women spend a significantly greater share of their time on care work and the collection of fuel and water. For the unemployed of working age specifically, a gendered pattern emerges in relation to the undertaking of job searches (defined as “seeking employment and other related activities”): while 14.9 per cent of unemployed men reported a job search, only 1.7 per cent of women did so. Moreover, those women who did report undertaking job searches spent less time on this than men (215 minutes for women, compared to 300 minutes for men). The authors conclude that “the gender-based difference in time use suggests that higher unemployment among women may be also due to their onerous share of household and care work. The burden of home maintenance and caregiving tasks influences not only women’s availability for labour market work but also their ability to seek employment, to take up learning, and/or to socialize outside the family” (Floro and Komatsu, 2011: 46-7).

In Nicaragua, González (2008), using data from the 1998 *Encuesta Nacional de Medición del Nivel de Vida* (National Standard of Living Survey, EMNV in Spanish), shows that men’s rates of participation in work that falls within the SNA production boundary (SNA work) and paid work are higher than those of women in both urban and rural areas, with the gender disparity being larger in rural areas. Men are also able to spend more time in SNA work and, in particular, paid work than women, although this difference is only 30 minutes in rural areas. At the same time, there is a predictable pattern of women assuming the responsibility for unpaid care work, spending twice as long on this activity as men. González (2008) finds that as the number of children increases, men’s participation in SNA work and paid work increases while women’s participation in SNA work decreases. This is particularly the case when there are two or more children present, where women’s SNA and paid work diminishes by 10 per cent compared to women with no children, while their unpaid care work increases significantly. The author concludes that “the presence of children under six in the household leads to a reinforcement or resumption of traditional gender roles, as women reduce their participation in paid work to devote more time to unpaid care work, whereas men do the opposite (González, 2008: 23).

### 3.1.2 Time Poverty

Even though unpaid care work may circumscribe the amount of time women spend in income-earning activities, when these two types of activities are added together, women often work significantly longer days than their male counterparts. The lack of time that this leaves women for rest and/or leisure has become known as “time poverty,” which advocates argue should be seen as an essential component of holistic measures of poverty (Blackden and Wodon, 2006). According to Gammage (2010: 102) the concept of time poverty can “reveal important aspects of the determinants of those opportunities and capabilities that affect the poorest,” particularly when the interactions between time poverty and income poverty are explored.

In her study in Guatemala, Gammage (2010: 102) finds that just over double the number of women aged 12-65 are both time poor<sup>1</sup> and income poor compared to men of a similar age (7.4 per cent of women versus 3.2 per cent of men). Gammage (2010) argues that these represent the “hard-core poor” who, unlike those from higher income groups, are unable to alter the balance between income-earning work and unpaid care work either by dropping out of income-earning work, by shifting to work that is more productive, or by buying in domestic help. Gammage (2010) also finds that when children under the age of 7 are present in the household both men and women are more likely to be both time and income poor, but that the probability that women will experience this is, again, double that of men.

In Nicaragua González (2008: 23) finds that when two or more children under the age of 6 are part of the household, women’s time in paid work decreases from 8.7 hours (no children) to 8.2 hours (two or more children), but their time spent on unpaid care activities increases more substantially from 5.2 hours to 6.5 hours, thereby significantly increasing the length of the working day. In comparison, the time men spend on unpaid care work actually decreases slightly when there are two or more young children present (from 3.2 hours with no children to 3 hours), while time spent on income-earning activities remains more or less consistent, rising very slightly from 8.9 hours to 9 hours (González, 2010: 23). There is an interesting class dimension to this; although women’s participation in paid work differs little between income quintiles, their participation in unpaid care work increases with women in the lowest income quintile spending 7.4 hours on unpaid care work compared to the 5.5 hours spent by women in the highest quintile, suggesting that wealthier women are buying in the time of paid helpers (González, 2010: 25).

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<sup>1</sup> Time poverty here is defined as a lack of adequate time for sleep and rest. Acknowledging that this can vary between social and economic contexts, Gammage, citing Bardasi and Wodon (2006), determines a “relative time poverty line” which corresponds to 1.5 or 2 times the median for the sum of total hours worked. In this case, the time poverty line is set at 12 hours per day for the sum of paid and unpaid work.

González (2010) also finds that both men and women in Nicaragua spend very little time on “care of persons” (just more than an hour for women and 0.2 hours for men). González (2010: 34) suggests that this points to a worrying phenomenon of “younger people caring for themselves.” This finding is questionable, however, due to the problem of simultaneity, where care of persons may be classed under another, simultaneous activity. However, Budlender’s (2008) analysis of time-use data in six countries also found that relatively little time was spent by either men or women on the direct care of persons. Nevertheless, Budlender (2008) reports that what was hidden by the relatively low average was a high degree of variability in this for women, with a significant number spending a lot of time on care of persons, particularly if there was a young child in the house and the woman was married. The same degree of variability is not present for men. There is also possibly a question of further social dynamics at work. Budlender (2008) cites Franzoni’s (2005) comparison of time-use survey data from Mexico, Nicaragua, and Uruguay, which found, using proxies for social standing, that in all three countries women of lower social standing reported more preparation of meals but less child care than those with higher standing.

Outside of Latin America, Peng’s analysis of data from 1999 and 2004 time-use survey data from the Republic of Korea shows a consistent pattern of women spending a higher proportion of their time working than men (combined paid and unpaid work). This was most noticeable for married women as compared to married men and single women. Peng (2011) notes that child care takes up a high proportion of married women’s unpaid care work. Peng (2011: 9) goes on to argue that “the significance of women’s unpaid care work to the national economy cannot be underestimated. The calculations of the value of unpaid care work in 2004 as a percentage of the GDP show that it could reach as high as 29 per cent of the GDP, with women contributing 24 per cent and men contributing 5 to 6 percent.” Budlender (2008: 38) shows that the value of unpaid care work as a percentage of GDP in a further 5 countries is also significant, as high as 63 per cent in India, 63 per cent in Tanzania, 54 per cent in Nicaragua, 30 per cent in South Africa, and 12 per cent in Argentina. Budlender (2008) does note, however, that the high figures for India and Tanzania may be misleading in that many people in these countries do work which falls within the SNA production boundary, but is also unpaid, so that the GDP is lower than it should be. This is despite the fact that in theory a relative value for the unpaid work should be added to GDP – in practice, however, this has not been done in either Tanzania or India (Budlender, 2008).

### 3.2 Evidence from Survey Data

Evidence collected through surveys on women's employment and its relationship to child care does exist, although it is sparse. One of the more comprehensive studies that have been carried out is that by Jodie Heymann and her team of researchers on the Project on Global Working Families located at Harvard University, published in the book *Forgotten Families* (2007). The data contained in the book derives from a number of quantitative and qualitative studies carried out in 8 countries (Botswana, Brazil, Honduras, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, the United States of America, and Vietnam). Survey data from nationally representative samples was analysed for all countries. In addition to this, the project ran its own nationally representative "Special Topic Large-Scale Surveys" in Botswana, Mexico, and the United States<sup>2</sup>, and conducted in-depth interviews with over 1,000 parents of both sexes in Botswana, Honduras, Mexico, Russia, and Vietnam.<sup>3</sup> The following section reports on relevant findings from Heymann (2006) as well as several other, smaller, studies.

Antanopoulos (2008) has analysed evidence from a European Commission on Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) survey conducted in 2007. The author found that in several countries in the region over half of women aged 20-24 who were not in the labour market cited their domestic responsibilities as a reason for not entering the labour market. As Antanopoulos (2008) notes, this number was larger than those women who cited lack of education as a reason for not entering the labour market. As Gammage (2010) points out, the ECLAC data shows that while men's participation rates in income-earning activities average 79 per cent, the average for women is 54 per cent.

These patterns have also been found to exist outside of Latin America. Blackden and Wodon (2006) cite evidence from Malawi which shows that female farmers were more likely to limit their time spent on income-earning activities so that they could attend to their domestic chores. Similarly, Kes and Swaminathan (2006) refer to a longitudinal study carried out between 1982 and 1983 of 110 households in Rwanda. This study also showed that women substitute time spent on their agricultural work with their domestic responsibilities. In India, Hirway and Jose (2011) cite Kundu and Premi (1992) whose analyses of National Sample

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<sup>2</sup> The topics were: Work and the Caregiving Crisis: The Case of Botswana; Transnational Working Families: The Case of Mexico; and The Survey of Midlife in the United States and the National Study of Daily Experiences.

<sup>3</sup> The nationally representative surveys analysed in each country were as follows: Botswana: Multiple Indicator Survey (2000), conducted by Central Statistical Office; Russia: Russian Longitudinal Monitoring Survey (1998/99 round), conducted by the Institute of Sociology, Russian Academy of Sciences; Vietnam: Vietnam Household Living Standards Survey (1997/98); USA: The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, sponsored by the Department of Labour; Brazil: Brazil Living Standards Measurement Survey (1996/7), sponsored by the World Bank and the Brazilian Geographical and Statistical Foundation; Mexico: National Survey of Household Income and Expenditure (1996), sponsored by the National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Information; South Africa: South Africa Integrated Household Survey (1994), conducted by the South African Labour Development Research Unit, University of Cape Town.

Survey Office (NSSO) data between 1977 and 1983 found that 90 per cent of women who did not participate in the labour market cited a “pressing need for domestic work” as the primary cause for their non-participation. However, it should be pointed out that these studies are relatively old and that there have been major social changes in both India and Rwanda (not least of which was the 1994 genocide), which are likely to have altered the allocation of women’s time.

Other studies suggest that there are social factors which add further complexity to the picture described above. As mentioned earlier these factors include class, family form, religion, caste (in South Asia), and predominant social norms about women’s responsibility for care. In South Africa, poorer women, particularly those who are single mothers, often cannot afford to remain at home for long periods of time and have to look for employment. A 1984 study in South Africa by Cock, Emdon and Klugman (1984: 3) found that poor African women were forced (often reluctantly) to look for employment when their children were still very young. In their sample, 20 per cent of mothers went back to work when their child was less than two months old, 52 per cent went back to work when their child was 6 months old or younger, and 62 per cent went back to work when their child was a year old or younger. This was usually facilitated by the presence of an additional female carer in the family, such as a sister or grandmother.

Heymann (2006) cautions that the ability to rely on extended family for child care is something that is context specific and cannot be assumed. Across the seven countries surveyed in her study, she states that only one third of poor parents reported being able to rely on extended family to provide child care without assistance. At the same time, more parents (one half of low-income parents surveyed) reported that they were in fact further burdened with care responsibilities by their ill or elderly family members. Heymann (2006: 19) concludes that “while poor families have the greatest need, they are also the least likely to be able to rely on extended family for help as their extended family members are the most likely to have to work or to be in need of care themselves.” This may not, of course, be true for all countries. In places where there is high open unemployment, such as in South Africa, it may be easier to rely on younger extended family members who are not working.

Studies also suggest that poorer women may well enter employment when their children are young, but in doing so are forced to trade off stable and better paid employment for employment that offers greater flexibility. This allows them time to care for their children, but it is also informal, insecure, and poorly paid. Addati and Cassirer (2008) cite several studies which provide evidence of this. An International Food Policy Research Unit (IFPRI) study in Guatemala City found that 40 per cent of mothers working informally in the slums

were doing so because they did not have access to adequate child care and had to, or wished to, care for their children themselves. Two unpublished International Labour Organization (ILO) studies found that Costa Rican women tended to enter domestic work or informal employment because it gave them the flexibility to take care of their family responsibilities, and that twenty per cent of women surveyed in the Philippines cited family responsibilities as a reason for entering informal employment (cited in Addati and Cassirer, 2008). Other evidence cited by Addati and Cassirer (2008) includes a study which showed that 13 per cent of women working in surveyed informal enterprises in Bangladesh reported family responsibilities as a reason for starting their own business, compared to 1 per cent of men, and a study from Angola which showed that women working in the informal economy did so partly because of the flexibility it allowed them.

In rural areas of China, an analysis of survey data derived from a sample of 592 rural households by Wang and Dong (2010, cited in Cook and Dong, 2011) showed that women with children under 6 years of age are less likely to engage in better paid income-earning activities. Their regressions show that for each additional child under 6, women's participation rate in agricultural activities increases by 1.9 per cent and decreases in off-farm self-employment by 1.2 per cent and in wage employment by 0.7 per cent (Wang and Dong, 2010 cited in Cook and Dong, 2011: 957). Women with a child younger than 6 were also found to work half an hour less per day in waged labour than other women. Cook and Dong (2011: 957) argue that "these findings...provide strong evidence that care for young children constitutes a barrier to women's access to more lucrative off-farm employment and wage work."

That carers often end up in employment that is less lucrative, and often more unstable, is also confirmed in Heymann's (2006: 103-104) study, which shows the links between the difficulties involved in holding on to stable employment when caring for children. Forty per cent of the parents surveyed in her study reported that they had lost pay when they had missed work to care for a sick child (this was 21 per cent in Botswana, 45 per cent in Mexico and 62 per cent in Vietnam)<sup>4</sup>, 11 per cent reported missing out on job promotions because of caring for a sick child, and 46 per cent reported that they had lost pay or job promotions or "had difficulty retaining their job" because of the need to care for a sick child (this was 28 per cent in Botswana, 48 per cent in Mexico, and 62 per cent in Vietnam). Many low-income parents (earning less than \$10/day) also reported that they often had to take their children to work. This was especially true for informal workers, half of whom reported taking their children to work regularly (Heymann, 2006). As Heymann (2006) goes on to point out, the

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<sup>4</sup> It is not clear how this average was obtained, so the data from individual countries might be a more accurate representation of the actual situation.

burden of the conflict between caregiving and income-earning work falls disproportionately on women. Her analyses show that women are one and a half times more likely than their male counterparts to lose pay in order to care for a sick child and six times more likely than men to lose job promotions because of this.

### **3.3 Evidence from Specific Interventions**

This section reviews the evidence from specific interventions related to child care provision. The first group of child care schemes for which data is available are all from Latin America. In general, the data here has demonstrated the importance of child care schemes for both women and children. Similarly in India, the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA), an almost two million strong trade union of self-employed women workers based primarily in Gujarat, has produced data which claims to show that their child care programmes have had a positive impact on both women and children. The final piece of evidence that is discussed is from China and provides evidence on what happens to women's employment when existing state child care supports are removed.

In Latin America there are several schemes currently operating which involve the provision of child care services, a number of which have been shown to have significant effects on both child wellbeing and women's employment. More details on these programmes are included in the final section of this review. For this section, the focus is on the impact of the programmes on women's employment in particular. In Colombia, Attanasio and Vera-Hernandez (2004) look at a little-studied programme in Colombia called *Hogares Comunitarios de Bienestar Familiar (HC)*, a state-subsidized community child care programme which provides services to approximately one million children from birth to six years old. They compare participant families with non-participant families, and find that the probability of employment among women who participate in the programme is 0.37 compared to 0.12 for those women who do not participate in the programme (Attanasio and Vera-Hernandez, 2004: 32). They also find that the nutritional status of younger children and the academic performance of older children improved when they participated in the programme. These effects were not found, however, when different methods of analysis were used, suggesting that the adequacy of this particular method should be further investigated.

A similar programme has operated in Guatemala City since 1991 for children under seven years of age, and is known as *Hogares Comunitarios Program (HCP)*. Stating that there have been few evaluations of such programmes in Latin America, Ruel *et al.* (2006) conduct an in-depth mixed-methods assessment using interviews, observations, focus groups, and quantitative surveys comparing participant families to non-participant families who use



other means of child care. They find that the children who participate in the scheme have significantly better nutritional outcomes and that the programme benefitted two groups of women in particular. The first group were young, single, poorly-educated mothers living in “precarious conditions,” but who were nevertheless more likely to have formal employment and higher average incomes than mothers in the non-participant group. The second group of women to benefit were the caretakers themselves who were often older and less educated and had few opportunities for employment outside of the home.

In Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Barros *et al.* (2011) took advantage of the fact that the municipality’s free public child care programme (0-3 years) in 2008 used a lottery system to allocate places to simulate a randomized control trial. They analyse a specially developed dataset with a sample size of just over 4,000, divided in half between those children who were allocated places and those who, through the lottery, were placed on the waiting list. Interviews with the families took place four to eight months after the child care services started. The findings show that winning the lottery significantly induced families to use child care services, with 94 per cent of lottery winners enrolling their children in child care centres while only 54 per cent of those on the waiting list enrolled their children in alternative child care centres. Access to child care had a significant impact on women’s employment, which increased from 36 per cent to 46 per cent, while the employment among women who had not worked prior to enrolling their children in the programme almost doubled. No impact was found on the number of hours worked by women who were already employed, but the rise in employment led to a 16 per cent increase in household incomes for those families who participated in the scheme.

In Argentina, Berlinski and Galiani (2007) look at the impact of a large state building programme which substantially increased the number of pre-schools across the country between 1994 and 2000, creating approximately 175,000 new pre-school places. The authors use a “differences-in-differences estimation strategy” which takes advantage of the fact that the regions differed in terms of the number of facilities built and that different cohorts were exposed to the programme at different times due to the timing of the project. The analysed sample is drawn from a household survey (*Encuesta Permanente Hogares*) and included only households with a mother aged between 18 and 49 years and which had at least one child between three and 5 years of age. With this method they find that the pre-primary school building programme, which caters to children between the ages of 3 and 5, has had a positive effect on maternal labour supply, with the likelihood of maternal employment increasing between 7 and 14 per cent, depending on the proportion of children aged 3-5 attending pre-school.

An interesting, and potentially somewhat misleading, finding on the impact of child care on maternal employment is made by Quisumbing *et al.* (2003), who look at the effect of formal day care supply variables on maternal employment by comparing Accra with Guatemala City. Controlling for endogeneity, they find that accessible child care facilities do make a difference to women's employment in Guatemala City. A lot of the women in Guatemala City work as wage workers in *maquiladoras*, but in Accra many women are informal self-employed workers. Quisumbing *et al.* conclude that "day-care centres...may not be as critical an intervention to increase mothers' labour force participation rates in cities where the informal sector dominates, such as in Accra." (Quisumbing *et al.* 2003: ii). It is important to emphasize that this study shows that access to day-care may be a less important consideration for self-employed women workers when it comes to the decision to enter the labour market. However, it does not show how many women choose or are forced to enter informal employment, as opposed to more stable and higher-earning wage employment because of child care considerations, and it also does not look at the impact of child care on women's earnings.

Data from the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in India, for example, shows that access to child care facilities improves the earnings of self-employed women workers. SEWA's almost two million members are all poor, mostly self-employed women workers. Although SEWA is a trade union it also engages in developmental work to improve the livelihoods of its members. One of its many programmes has been to establish child care centres in which members can leave their children while they are engaged in income-earning work. The 2007 evaluation of these centres compared families who used the facilities to families who did not use the facilities, but lived and worked in a similar environment to the study group. According to SEWA, the study results showed that both the "quality of life" and the income of mothers was better among those who used the child care facilities (income improved by 50 per cent when mothers were able to access child care), expenditure on children was less, and children who attended the facilities were healthier and "better behaved" (SEWA, 2007).

China has a state policy intervention for which data is available on child care and women's employment. The Chinese state has reduced state support for child care as part of its wider neo-liberal reform programme. Cook and Dong (2011) draw together a variety of studies from Chinese scholars who have started to examine this topic. Their study looks specifically at the impact of the reduction in state-provided child care (and the concomitant increase in privatized and often unregulated child care services) on women's employment, which has both declined and become increasingly informal throughout the reform period. As Cook and Dong (2011: 952) argue, many of the studies which have attempted to provide an

explanation for these trends have focused solely on the paid economy and therefore fail “to pay attention to changes in the reproductive economy and the tensions between women’s dual role of care giver and income earner.” Prior to the reforms, child care was provided through the commune and brigade administrative structures and was widely available in urban areas. In rural areas, provision of child care facilities was less widespread and available only in wealthier communes and brigades, but nevertheless existed on a broader scale than at present. With the decrease in state support for child care services, privatized services, which are often unregulated and provide care of questionable quality, have sprung up, particularly in urban areas (Cook and Dong, 2011).

With the liberal reforms, greater emphasis was placed on child care provision as an educational tool for children rather than as a support mechanism for mothers. State subsidization for child care centres from birth to two year olds was cut because this age was not considered an important educational target group, and centres covering this age group have since all but disappeared. Accompanying this has been a marked decrease in labour force participation among women with children in this age group (Cook and Dong, 2011). There has also been a more general cut in state and employer subsidization of child care facilities. In urban areas, cutbacks in state funding and the pressure for profits among enterprises have led to the privatization of public child care facilities, and enterprises have significantly reduced their commitment to child care provision. In rural areas, the privatization of township and village enterprises has meant that local governments have fewer resources with which to subsidize child care (Cook and Dong, 2011).

Citing analyses of survey data from Du and Dong (2009) and Wang and Dong (2010), Cook and Dong (2011) describe the impact of these changes on women’s employment. Again, there are important class differences. Analysing a sample of women with children under the age of six, Du and Dong (2009: 956) show that women with university-educated husbands, or who are themselves university educated, are 11 per cent more likely to enrol their children in a child care facility than families where the parents have only primary education. This is because better educated parents are more likely to work in the state services where public child care services are available to working families. Their results also show that women in families with children under 6 years of age with lower educational status or lower levels of income are more likely to have withdrawn from the labour market.

Among migrant families, who are generally poor, women have to make stark choices between child care and income-earning activities. The child care services available to migrant women are cheap, but of very low quality – most are unregistered because they do not meet the basic requirements for registration (Cook and Dong, 2011). When interviewed,

migrant women workers said that they would prefer to look after their children themselves because the standards of care in such facilities are so low, even if this meant not working, engaging in self-employment, or working irregular hours (Cook and Dong, 2011). Regression results show that among migrant women, the higher the income level of the husband, the lower the probability that the woman will be engaged in income-earning activities. The authors conclude that accessible state-subsidized care provision is important for improving women's access to the labour market.

#### **4. Care Policy Debates**

Within the gendered analysis of social policy there have been a number of competing and conflicting ideological positions which have had an important impact on debates around women, work, and care. Although there has been increasing agreement among scholars that it is more beneficial to seek a middle path through these positions so that they tend not to operate as a hard and fast division, tensions do still exist in the framing and making of care policies. Most care-related policies do not fall easily into either/or categories; instead often their framing places them somewhere on a continuum between the extreme positions. For the purposes of the analysis in Section Five it is important to state explicitly what these tensions are. We have divided them into four categories: Equality vs Difference; Universalism vs Difference; Women's Rights vs Children's Rights; and Instrumentalism vs Social Justice

##### **4.1 Equality vs Difference**

The debate between equality and difference is one grounded in feminist philosophy. As mentioned above, feminist scholars have pointed out that women's access to income-earning activities, and therefore their economic rights, are affected by their role as carers in the home. Yet the framing of this problem and the solution to it have given rise to much debate. In essence this has been a debate about whether women's inclusion into citizenship should be based on equal status with men, or whether women have a different role to play in society, and it is the definition of citizenship that needs to change in order to be more inclusive of this role (Kymlicka and Norman, 1994). On the one hand, there are those who argue that women should be able to "participate as equals in the public sphere," and that care should therefore be removed from the responsibility of women either through the provision of socialized care facilities, or the encouragement of men's greater participation in care work (Lister, 1997: 93). On the other hand, scholars such as Gilligan (1977) and Tronto (1993) have developed the concept of the "ethic of care," which "highlights the importance of care as a relationship, and the interconnectedness and interdependence that characterise it" (Daly and Lewis, 2000). This concept has been used to form a critique of the patriarchal,

individualized framing of citizenship, as well as liberal market values, and to argue that a different vision of citizenship – one which valorizes care and therefore human interconnectedness – is more desirable than one which sees women and men as equals, yet devalues caring and the sphere of non-market values. In practical terms, advocates of difference have sometimes argued for policies such as “mother’s wages” which would pay carers a market-equivalent wage.

Since the late 1990s, this split within feminism has become less fierce. For example, scholars such as Lister (1997) and Williams (2000) have argued that the division between the advocates of difference and equality is too rigid and exclusionary, either positioning women as “citizen-the-worker” or as “citizen-the-carer,” when in fact the reality of many women’s lives is that they are both. The policy options emerging from this position emphasize flexibility and the importance of giving women a choice as to how they will balance their caring and income-earning roles. Espen (2009), for example, provides a comprehensive set of policy options which include a combination of cash payments, tax credits or benefits, socialized care services, and parental leave policies which encourage men to assume responsibility for care work. In relation to women working in the informal economy specifically, Chen *et al.* (2005) argue as well for a flexible and nuanced approach to policy which gives women the support they need to access economic opportunities. This, they argue, must necessarily take account of the fact that the majority of unpaid care work is performed by women.

However, the equality/ difference continuum also intersects with the more pragmatic economic concerns of governments looking to influence the size and shape of the labour market. In the Global North, for example, it has been a long-standing practice of governments to encourage women’s entrance into the labour market through supportive care policies when there is a high demand for labour (as was the case in Europe during the World Wars), and to discourage it when unemployment rises. This means that certain policies tend to be chosen over others, depending on the economic climate. Although social factors, such as the consensus on the acceptability of socialized care, can play a limiting role here – it has been shown that governments will even override that consensus in the interests of the economy (Bergman, 2004). For example, in South Korea, where there is a strong social emphasis on the role of women in the home, but which has an ageing population to support, the government is trying to encourage young women to enter the labour market as early as possible and as a consequence, there has been an increase in state-subsidized child care (Peng, 2011). It should be noted that such considerations do not extend to women workers in the informal economy in the Global South, who, on the whole, receive very little attention from labour and social policymakers.

The main point to be made here, however, is that in the making of policy there are often powerful considerations which operate alongside, but not necessarily within, the feminist debates outlined above. While feminists may have moved towards a position of flexibility and choice, government policy is often more narrowly determined by the structure of the population and the labour market and how women's employment will affect macro-economic dynamics. The choice of policies can also intersect with the dominant social values around women's role as carers, but as the case of South Korea shows, the need to get women working can trump social values (Peng, 2011). The more pragmatic concerns of governments mean that the equality / difference axis is still an important one from which to analyse care related policies.

#### **4.2 Women's Rights vs Children's Rights**

A second axis along which care policy debates run is that between women's rights to economic citizenship and the right of children to receive good quality care, especially when they are very young. There those who assume a gendered perspective on the issue of care and who argue that women's care burden should be relieved so that they may better access income-earning opportunities. This perspective can come into conflict with scientific understandings of what children need when they are very young, perspectives which come predominantly from the health sciences (particularly child nutrition) and the field of development psychology. Richter (2004), for example, argues that the "primary need" of young children is to experience the emotional and physical warmth of a primary care-giver. For this reason, argues Richter (2004), socialized care facilities for young children are not desirable, and the focus of care policy should be on measures which strengthen the relationship between primary care-givers and children, preferably in the home environment.

Although this approach may suit feminists of a maternalist bent, it has been challenged by feminists who see women's economic security as being of paramount concern. Underlying this challenge is the concern that the science which underpins such attachment theories is in fact a way to further justify women's position in the home and therefore their economic marginalization (Molyneux, 2006). However, again, within scholarly circles at least, there has been a softening of the conflict and an attempt to find a middle-path. Williams (2000: 57), for example, has pleaded for the softening of the binary between women and children, arguing that the status of women and children are deeply entwined and that "children suffer in a system that first allocates children's care to women and then marginalises the women who do it, thereby undercutting their power to stand up for children's needs." Sabates-Wheeler and Roelen (2011) have also argued that a truly "transformative" social protection

system needs to take account of both the needs of children and their carers and provide a policy framework which looks to address the “particular vulnerabilities” experienced by both groups.

Yet the fact remains that within the actual implementation of policy outside of the Global North, there has been, until very recently, very little in the way of care policies that address both children’s needs and women’s needs simultaneously. Staab and Gerhard (2010) show that this has started to change in Latin America with the introduction of programmes in Brazil and Chile which attempt to do both (discussed in more detail later in this review). As with the Equality vs Difference axis, however, political and economic forces can coalesce to ensure that the division remains. For example, in China, Cook and Dong (2011) detail the effect of the country’s neo-liberal reforms on child care provision. Prior to the reforms, China had a relatively well-funded system of socialized child care which had the goal of both freeing women up to work and providing children with good quality early care. Since the reforms, this “dual aspect” of child care has fallen away, and as a result publicly funded care centres now only cater to children from two years up because education for younger children is thought to be unimportant (Cook and Dong, 2011). As Cook and Dong (2011) argue, this policy fails to take account of women’s need for child care for their very young children while they work, and has had a negative effect on women’s employment.

### **4.3 Labour Market Context**

In analysing care policies, it is also important to take into account the labour market context in which they are situated. As Giullari and Lewis (2005) point out, employment was central to Beveridge’s design for the welfare state, and the structure of the labour market is therefore an important variable in the analysis of care policies. For the purpose of this review, what is important to note is that the labour market context in the Global South is very different from that of the Global North. This means that care policies which are appropriate in the context of the Global North are not always so in the Global South. Although this may seem like an obvious point, the dominance of feminist and activist voices from the North in global debates around care, means that this is not a factor which is always considered when policy recommendations are being put forward (Bedford, 2010).

Globalization has meant that labour is being informalized across the globe (Chen, 2012). However, this process has taken different forms in different places. In Northern countries it has resulted in more precarious forms of employment and, in particular, waged employment which takes place in formal workplaces but which is often temporary in nature and with weaker labour protections. In the South, however, globalization has led to an increase in informal employment, which can mean precarious waged work but also includes

forms of employment which have always existed in these countries, such as self-employment, home-based work, and unpaid family labour (Chen, 2012). As Chen (2012) points out, this is employment where employer-employee relationships are either ambiguous, do not exist, or are deliberately hidden. This means that “care-friendly” policies which rely on the presence of an employer-employee relationship (such as flexible working hours and maternity leave) may be less relevant to women working in a context where they may not have an employer, or if they do, they may know and engage with the direct intermediary only.

#### **4.4 Instrumentalism vs Social Justice**

A final tension that exists in the policy literature is that between care policies which are framed in “instrumentalist” terms and those which are framed in social justice terms. This is something that both Eyben (2012) and Esquivel (2013) identify as an opposition, with Esquivel (2013: 4) stating that “actors adopting a social justice perspective may consider care to be a right, while those adopting a social investment perspective may view care as a poverty or lack of employment issue.” The instrumentalist approach, argues Eyben (2012: 6) may “crowd out more socially transformative meanings about rights and collective action.” Yet this approach ignores the history of the development of the welfare states of Europe. While “socially transformative” views about social rights and social justice may have emerged from the institutionalization of welfare states, the push towards state-provided health and welfare, which began in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, was deeply embedded in questions about improving human efficiency and productivity. The two positions therefore, do not have to be seen as incompatible – the one may quite easily feed into the other.

### **5. Policy Framing: Development Policies, Women’s Employment and Care**

The following section looks at four major policy areas, which either relate to women’s economic empowerment or to unpaid care work. The aim of the section is specifically to look at what extent these discourses make room for child care provision as a service related to women’s employment opportunities.

#### **5.1 Women’s Economic Empowerment**

Women’s Economic Empowerment (WEE) has been defined in a number of ways. For some it is a purely economic concept – one which sees giving women greater access to market opportunities as its core goal, and which tends to have an entrepreneurial focus (Hallward-Driemeier, 2013). Others view it as a far more complex concept which, in addition to greater market opportunities, involves breaking down structural barriers to women’s participation



in economic life, as well as including a sense of personal empowerment as a precondition for economic empowerment (Kabeer, 2011; 2012). In general, unpaid care work as an issue within WEE is seen mainly in the latter approaches.

A review of the major institutional players in the field of WEE shows that as far as funded projects are concerned, the World Bank is one the most active donor agencies involved. A number of others have developed position papers on WEE, including the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the British Department for Foreign and International Development (DFID), and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), but it is not clear from a desk top review what (if any) work has been funded on the ground. WEE has also been featured in the corporate social responsibility literature. Here the ExxonMobil Foundation and the clothing giant GAP are working in the field.

The World Bank has recently been accused of being blind to unpaid care work in its gender-related projects in sub-Saharan Africa (Bibler and Zuckerman, 2013). The same could certainly be said of its approach to WEE. A review of the Bank's "Results-Based Initiatives" (RBIs), which form an integral part of its Gender Action Plan, show that unpaid care work as a feature of WEE is not addressed. The RBIs address issues such as promoting gender awareness in small and medium private firms (Egypt), land titling in order to increase access to financial markets (Ghana), supporting small business development (Kenya, Liberia, Cambodia, and Laos), and experimenting with business skills training (Peru and Tanzania).<sup>5</sup>

On the other end of the spectrum is SIDA, whose position paper on WEE is striking in its focus on structural barriers (SIDA, nd). In a SIDA Working Paper which lays out the entry points for SIDA's engagement with WEE, Törnqvist and Schmitz (2009) state that there are four "key areas:" entrepreneurship and private sector development; access to land and property rights; labour markets and decent work; and unpaid care work, which includes "promoting more equal sharing of unpaid care work between men and women, gradually increase affordable child care opportunities, promote infrastructure investments that reduce tedious household work." DFID, who have more recently entered the WEE policy space, have also included unpaid care work as a component of WEE (Hlanze, 2012). However, it has proved difficult to find examples of funded projects from either SIDA or DFID which concentrate on unpaid care work, suggesting that the currently more fashionable elements of WEE (women's entrepreneurship and small business development) may, in reality, get more attention.

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<sup>5</sup><http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTGENDER/0,,contentMDK:22333514~pagePK:210058~piPK:210062~theSitePK:336868,00.html> [accessed on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2014].

A slightly different position on WEE and unpaid care work has been put forward by the ExxonMobil Foundation in collaboration with the UN Foundation in their report *A Roadmap for Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment* (Buvinic *et al.* 2013). To define the research areas for the report, the Foundations developed a typology of work statuses in which women are predominantly employed. Additionally, research commissions were appointed to determine what barriers to women's advancement existed for each of these work statuses, and to explore the following topics: Entrepreneurship; Farming; Wage Employment and Young Women's Employment (as a cross-cutting theme). Interestingly, unpaid care work as a barrier to women's economic empowerment came up as an issue only in the work of the Wage Employment research commission (Todd, 2013).

As a consequence, the "Roadmap for Women's Economic Empowerment" sees unpaid care work as important only in relation to waged employees. Among other sources, the Roadmap report draws support for this conclusion from the paper by Quisumbing *et al.* (2003), mentioned in Section Two, which compared a mother's earnings and job choices in Guatemala City (where women have relatively high levels of waged employment in *maquiladoras*) to those of women in Accra (where women are largely self-employed own-account workers). Their analysis concludes that the provision of accessible child care services affects the labour market entry decisions only of the wage employed women in Guatemala and has no effect on the decisions of self-employed women in Accra. The conclusion that is drawn is that the provision of child care services is likely to have greater impact in environments where there are large numbers of women waged employees. The reality is, however, more complex than this. The use of this study to define child care services as an important issue only for women waged workers is questionable, particularly in light of some of the findings cited in Section Two. For example, there is SEWA's finding that child care services improved the earnings of their self-employed members. Moreover, as a number of the studies cited in Section Two showed, the provision of child care facilities can make a difference in women opting for flexible, lower paid self-employed, home-based work as opposed to better paid, more regular waged labour – a decision which certainly has an impact on their economic empowerment.

## **5.2 Child Care Services**

Although the data is limited, what does exist appears to show that the provision of accessible and affordable child care services is an important way in which to increase women's access to employment. Since the 1990s, however, the policy literature on child care has been dominated not by concerns with women's employment, but rather by concerns related to Early Childhood Development (ECD), referring in general to children under the age of 8 (Budlender, 2014). Children from poorer socio-economic backgrounds who grow up

without the same educational, nutritional, and emotional support that children from higher income groups tend to receive, have been shown to fare less well in later life – something which is central to the intergenerational transfer of poverty (Irwin *et al.* 2007; UNICEF, 2012). Numerous studies have also shown the positive impact of ECD programmes, such as Head Start in the USA, which target children from disadvantaged backgrounds, providing them with educational and nutritional support in their early years so that they are more able to keep up with their better-off peers in later years (Burchinal *et al.* 1989; Currie and Thomas, 1995; Garces *et al.* 2002; Irwin *et al.* 2007; Love *et al.* 2005; Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000).

ECD began to enter development policy as an issue during the 1990s, due to a confluence of factors. In 1989 the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and by the end of 1990, enough countries had ratified the Convention for it to become international law (Pence and Nsamenang, 2008). In 1996, the World Bank produced a report titled *Early Childhood Development: Investing in the Future* which argued for the importance of ECD from an economic perspective – that improved economic growth would rely on a competent future workforce. In the same year the World Bank began giving out loans for ECD development in the Global South (Pence and Nsamenang, 2008). Since then ECD has been placed on the global development agenda by a number of other international organizations, particularly UNICEF and the WHO (Budlender, 2014). As Budlender's (2014) institutional mapping of international actors in child care policy debates shows, of the international organizations it is really only the ILO who maintain the need for child care services from the perspective of women's employment, rather than from the child rights perspective.

As already discussed, women's economic rights and children's rights can be seen as compatible and mutually reinforcing. In practical terms this can be the case when ECD services are available for children from birth to 8 years, and include after school care. However, as shown by Cook and Dong (2011) in the Chinese context, when child care service provision is dominated by ECD rather than considerations related to women's employment, services tend to target children 3 years and older, meaning that women with younger children are excluded from accessing such services. Here both development psychology and nutritional science have meshed uncomfortably well with the neo-liberal focus on the privatization of care, where increasing pressure is placed on individual parents to use educative tools to ensure that their children perform well at school (Vandenbroeck, 2006).

### 5.3 Cash Transfers

Since the late 1990s, cash transfer programmes, which provide cash benefits to defined groups (usually means tested), have become an important element of social protection in the Global South. A significant amount of controversy has arisen in relation to their gendered impact. In an attempt to break the inter-generational transfer of poverty, some such programmes, which include the well-known *Progresal/Oportunidades* in Mexico and *Bolsa Familia* in Brazil, give out monthly cash grants to means-tested families on the condition that the children in the family are enrolled in school, visit health-care facilities, and sometimes receive nutritional supplements. Molyneux (2006; 2007) has argued that these conditions, which generally put the onus on mothers to provide the additional unpaid care work involved, may circumscribe their “economic autonomy” and further “discipline” them into predominantly domestic roles. These concerns have also been echoed by Adato *et al.* 2000; Bradshaw and Viques, 2008; and Holmes and Jones, 2013.

However, the evidence emerging from cash transfer programmes has not necessarily borne this out. Fultz and Francis (2013) have reviewed the evidence from cash transfer programmes in Brazil, Chile, India, Mexico, and South Africa from the perspective of women’s economic empowerment. In South Africa, both the Old Age Pension and the Child Support Grant have been shown to have a positive effect on women’s employment (Ardington *et al.* 2007; Posel *et al.* 2006). However, both of these transfers are unconditional transfers (i.e. they do not come attached to specific requirements related to child health and education), and it is with these unconditional transfers that the strongest effect on women’s employment has been found (Fultz and Francis, 2013).<sup>6</sup>

In the South African case, the effect is particularly strong for households where the Old Age Pension is received by a woman. These households have a greater likelihood of younger women with young children in the pensioner’s household leaving to look for a job because the pension allows for the financing of a job search as well as child care. The Child Support Grant is associated with a 7-14 per cent increase in women’s labour market participation, “with the largest impact for women with limited education living in informal settlements” (Fultz and Francis, 2013). In Brazil, a study has shown that participants in *Bolsa Familia* were 3 per cent more likely to be employed and 6 per cent less likely to leave their jobs than non-participants (CEDAPLAR, 2006 cited in Fultz and Francis, 2013). A study of Chile’s *Solidario* programme found that married women who were participants in the programme were more likely to be employed than married women who did not participate in the programme (MIDEPLAN cites in Fultz and Francis, 2013).

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<sup>6</sup> The Fultz and Francis paper also analyses findings from India’s Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MNREGA). Findings are not reported here because MNREGA is not considered a cash transfer scheme, but rather a public works scheme.

Nevertheless, the concerns of Molyneux and others do resonate in the available evidence. Qualitative research by Adato and Roopnaraine (2010) found that women participating in *Oportunidades* were happy to receive the associated training in nutrition, health, and childrearing, but they wanted this to be supplemented with education and training that would enhance their prospects in the labour market. A similar finding was made by Machado *et al.* (2011) in a study of *Bolsa Familia* participants in Brazil. This suggests that the transfers have had a bias towards the needs of children over women – borne out by the fact that, until recently, there has been very little in the cash transfers literature which discusses or encourages the provision of child care facilities as a means by which to free women up for the labour market. This means that even when women are using grants to buy in child care, they are likely to be relying on their own private networks and resources. This has started to change, however. Fultz and Francis (2013) report that governments in Brazil, Chile, and Mexico have begun to respond to this critique by creating and/or strengthening initiatives which promote women’s employment, including the provision of child care facilities as part of a package of services operating alongside the cash transfers. These responses will be described in the final section of this paper.

#### **5.4 Work/Life Balance**

In the Global North, Work/ Life Balance (WLB) has increasingly become part of the care policy landscape. It is often used in reference to the need to balance out time spent at work with life outside of the workplace. Although “life” of course has various aspects to it, in the WLB formulation it refers predominantly to care responsibilities, and workplace WLB policies are often targeted at female employees, including job sharing arrangements, part-time work and flexible working hours (Eikhof *et al.* 2007). Within the literature emanating from the North, there have been two main criticisms of the idea. Firstly, as a number of scholars have pointed out, the WLB idea is based on a number of questionable assumptions about both work and life – that life can be equated with care responsibilities, that people find work unrewarding, that people have too much work rather than too little work, and that the spheres of work and life can be clearly separated (Eikhof *et al.* 2007; Fagan *et al.* 2011; Fleetwood, 2007; 2007). Secondly, some authors have argued that while WLB can potentially refer to a wide range of policies both in and out of the workplace, including the “humanising” of the workplace, the actual interpretation through existing workplace policies through flexi-time, job sharing, and part time work has been very narrow and does little to act against labour market arrangements (such as zero hour contracts, unpredictable work hours, and the casualization of labour) which do not promote WLB (Eikhof *et al.* 2007; Fleetwood *et al.* 2007).

There have also been debates about the relevance of WLB to the Global South. On the one hand, there are those who argue that the concept has little relevance to the labour market context outside of the North. As Fleetwood *et al.* (2007: 354) argue “...while WLB might have some meaning for call centre workers in Indian cities like Bangalore, it is unlikely to mean anything for the vast majority of Indians who toil on the land, live in slums, or live (and die) on the margins of society.” Indeed, if WLB is interpreted as flexi-time and part-time working arrangements, this has little relevance to the many informal workers in the countries of the Global South, particularly those who are self-employed and/or work casually and part time because there are few other options. A challenge to this idea has, however, come from the ILO, which discussed WLB at the 2011 Governing Body Meeting (ILO, 2011), preferring to use the term “work-family reconciliation” which put a more explicit focus on care work. The ILO also chose to define a “package” of work-family reconciliation policies which go further than those commonly thought of as WLB policies and therefore may have relevance to more workers in the Global South. These include a combination of leave policies, social security measures, the provision of socialized care facilities, and infrastructure development that reduces the time spent on unpaid care work (such as improved access to basic services). In an accompanying report, Fagan *et al.* (2011) also argue that WLB policies can protect women in the Global South from having to leave formal employment for informal work arrangements because of their care responsibilities.

## **6. Examples of Child Care Schemes Currently Operating in the Global South**

This final section provides a summary of child care schemes currently operating in the Global South. This is not a comprehensive list by any means. The intention is to provide a snapshot of what currently exists. The schemes discussed below have been selected for several reasons. First, they already reach (or plan to reach) large numbers of women. Second, they represent a range of institutional models – from those which are provided by the state, to those which involve the private sector and unions, to those which rely on the involvement of parent committees.

Esplen (2009) has shown that there are a number of different policy tools which can be used to ease the burden of unpaid care work on women. Particularly in the context of the Global South, these include cash transfers. However, as already mentioned in Section 5.3, cash transfers do not automatically present a solution to unpaid care work. Without concomitant provision of accessible child care facilities women may continue to have difficulty in freeing themselves from care work. Moreover, cash transfers have been written about widely whereas, outside of the ECD literature, child care schemes feature rarely in the development literature. For these reasons this section concentrates only on child care services.

**Crece Contigo (Chile):**<sup>7</sup> Launched in 2006 under the presidency of Michelle Bachelet, this programme caters to children from birth to 6 from families in the lowest six income deciles. It forms part of Chile's Intersectoral System of Social Protection and is administered by the semi-public *Junta Nacional de Jardines Infantiles* (JUNJI), although services are offered by third parties (mainly municipalities but also NGOs) via JUNJI subsidies, as well as JUNJI itself. According to official sources, since the introduction of Crece Contigo the number of public crèches has increased from 700 in 2006 to over 4,000 by 2009, and in 2007 it was estimated to be employing 16,000 people. The scheme has also created a significant amount of employment. Employment as an "educator" in a crèche is subject to having a five-year university degree in early education. Support staff who have a direct role in the care of children are required to have a "technical degree" in early education from a recognized Chilean tertiary institution. All employees are considered public sector workers. Although the programme has largely revolved around ECD, it is also cognisant of women's employment issues, offering care from 8:30 to 16:00 and looking to extend this to 19:00 (Fultz and Francis, 2013; Staab and Gerhard, 2010).

**Estancias Infantiles (Mexico):**<sup>8</sup> Launched in 2007, this programme provides day care for children from 0 to 3 years of age from poor families. The focus is specifically on child care as a means to free up women for income-earning activities, with less of a focus on child development than Crece Contigo. *Estancias Infantiles* is run by Social Development Secretariat (SEDESOL) and provides both supply side and demand side subsidies in order to create a regulated market for child care. Individuals or organizations interested in running home-based child care centres can apply for a start-up lump sum of 35,000 Mexican Pesos. Families who meet the requirements for participation (low income and mothers actively seeking employment) can apply for grants of up to 700 Mexican Pesos per month in order to purchase child care from the accredited facilities. A secondary goal of the programme has been to create employment for "care professionals," although facility staff are required only to have a secondary school education, to pass a psychological test, and to participate in a basic training programme. The Mexican government claims that it has managed to create 38,000 jobs through the programme, although it has been argued that the quality of jobs is questionable and that the fact that care workers are considered self-employed, rather than as public sector workers, is a way for the government to abdicate financial responsibility for child care provision and bypass the need to involve formal labour unions (Fultz and Francis, 2013; Staab and Gerhard, 2010).

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.crececontigo.gob.cl/> (in Spanish)

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.sedesol.gob.mx/en/SEDESOL/Programa\\_estancias\\_infantiles](http://www.sedesol.gob.mx/en/SEDESOL/Programa_estancias_infantiles) (in Spanish)

**Brasil sem Miséria (Brazil); Brasil Carinhoso:**<sup>9</sup> Introduced by President Dilma Rousseff as an extension of the *Bolsa Familia* Programme, this programme concentrates specifically on the impoverished north-eastern regions of the country. The programme aims to extend a variety of social services to this area including publicly funded child care services for children under the age of 6 (under the Brasil Carinhoso sub-programme), microcredit, and skills training to women (Fultz and Francis, 2013). To date, the Brazilian government claims that approximately 580,000 children have been enrolled in the child care centres operating under the programme (Government of Brazil, 2014).

**Hogares Comunitarios (Colombia and Guatemala):** At least two countries in Latin America currently operate state-subsidized, community-led child care programmes. The longest running of these is the *Hogares Comunitarios de Bienestar Familiar* in Colombia which was launched in 1984. The programme targets children between 0 and 6 in poor neighbourhoods, where parents are encouraged to form “parent associations.” Parent associations are then able to select a “community mother” who fulfils two criteria: she has a basic education and lives in a large enough house to accommodate a maximum of 15 children. Parents are charged a relatively small monthly fee (approximately US\$4) which makes up the salary of the community mother. Parent associations receive a state subsidy for food which is delivered to the home of the community mother. In Colombia, the programme is now well established with an estimated 80,000 children attending a *Hogares Comunitarios*. A very similar programme to this is run by Guatemala City and is known as the *Hogares Comunitarios* Programme (Attanasio and Vera-Hernandez, 2004; Ruel *et al.* 2006).

**SEWA’s Crèche Cooperative (Ahmedabad, India):**<sup>10</sup> SEWA operates several crèche cooperatives to provide child care services to their members. The cooperatives are staffed by SEWA members who show a “positive outlook” towards children and who undergo basic training in child care at the SEWA Academy. These workers are not required to have any formal education, although it is mandatory for crèches to be staffed by at least one person with formal education. Currently, these cooperatives run in various towns and villages within Gujarat state. Wherever possible, SEWA partners work with government programmes in order to ensure that members receive optimal services. For example, the Sangini Cooperative in Ahmedabad has taken over the service delivery of the Government of India’s Integrated Child Development Scheme, and in Surendranagar, SEWA runs a crèche in collaboration with the Gujarat Rural Labour Board. Parents pay a “nominal sum” to the cooperatives, but this is usually not enough to cover the costs of all staff members

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.brasilsemiserialia.gov.br/> and <http://www.mds.gov.br/brasilsemiserialia/brasil-carinhoso> (in Portuguese)

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.sewa.org/Services\\_Child\\_Care.asp](http://www.sewa.org/Services_Child_Care.asp)



who must be paid at least the minimum wage. The cooperatives are therefore not yet financially sustainable and are forced to rely on charitable donations to supplement the income from fees (Anandalakshmi, 2013).

**Mobile Crèches (India):**<sup>11</sup> Mobile Crèches is a non-governmental organization which has been operating in Delhi, India, since 1969, providing both child care and aftercare services for children from birth to 12 on the construction sites where many Indian women work informally. The organization claims to have reached 750,000 children and now operates 650 child care centres. The centres provide nutrition and health services to the children as well as general education and care. An interesting aspect of its financial model is that Mobile Crèches attempts to secure at least partial funding from the construction industry and claims to have partnered with 200 building contractors.

#### **CSR/Formal Trade Union Initiatives which cross-over to the informal workforce**

**(Thailand; Brazil):** In Thailand there are two examples of child care schemes which are operated by formal labour unions, but which have been opened up to include the children of informal workers in the neighbouring areas. The Early Childhood Centre in Phra Pradaeng Industrial Zone and the child care centre in the Nawanakhon Industrial Area are both run by formal labour unions with the help of state subsidies and parent fees to serve the medium and large enterprises in the zone. Places are reserved, however, for street vendors in the area who earn the minimum wage. In Brazil, a pharmaceutical company (Medley) has established child care centres at two of its plants. About 30 per cent of the places are reserved for the children of community members who live in the adjacent areas (Budlender, 2014; Hein and Cassirer, 2010).

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.mobilecreches.org/index.html>

## **7. Conclusion**

This review of literature has covered several areas related to women's employment and child care provision, focusing particularly on developing countries where levels of informal employment are high. It shows that there is limited empirical literature which details the links between women's participation in income-earning work and child care services in such countries. However, the work that does exist suggests that the provision of child care facilities can have a significant impact on women's ability to work, and may improve earnings as well. On the policy side, access to child care services is relatively ignored in major policy spaces, except in the ECD sphere where the emphasis is largely on child development as opposed to women's employment. In both the Women's Economic Empowerment and Cash Transfers policy areas, child care services come up very rarely as an intervention, although this is starting to change in relation to Cash Transfers as some Latin American countries move to implement large-scale public child care schemes.

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