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Comparison of the two reformed models of old-age security in Chile and Costa Rica: is one more gender friendly (or gender neutral) than another?

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Comparative research about gender and social security in developing countries faces two major shortcomings: first, the analytical frameworks in relation to social policies and institutions of social security developed so far reflect a particular Western perspective discarding important models developed in other parts of the world (Kenneth 2004; Gough et al. 2004; Gough 2004), and second, only recently have scholars begun to incorporate gender into the core concepts but these approaches have remained marginal (Orloff 1993; Sainsbury 1994; 1999; 1996). The aim of this article is to focus on these two shortcomings, by choosing a particularly interesting area Latin America and analysing old age pension models from a gendered perspective.

Latin America has been a field of experimentation in political and social policy regimes. In particular as a result of the crisis in the 1980s-1990s a broad array of new models have emerged (Mesa-Lago 2002; Mesa-Lago et al. 2000; Mkandawire 2004). Chile's novel neoliberal model for old age security reflects a paradigm change with regards to its underlying assumptions. It serves as a model for East-European countries. Costa Rica by contrast is characterized by an unknown novel socio-democratic model where many actors influenced its design and organization. Both models do not conform to the traditional typologies used, although these provide a first approach for analyses.

We analyse two novel old age pension models in Chile (1981) and Costa Rica (2005) from a gendered perspective and ask whether one model might prove to be more gender friendly than the other. With gender friendly we mean whether the disadvantages or privileges are distributed evenly among men and women within the old age pension systems, so that they should result in reducing gender inequalities in old age on the long run. The gendered perspective requires taking into account the assumptions underlying the pension system that build on the identification of the public-private divide, the actual division of labor between men and women in the family and in society and gender roles. In addition we take into account the reform

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process and political power constellation, the implicit assumptions regarding provision for old age and the design of the corresponding institutions. Building on the typologies of Esping-Andersen (1990) and Korpi and Palme (1998) against the background of Gough's "informal insecurity regime" (2004) we analyse the structure of the old age pension system, its implicit organizational principles, their modi of access (basis of entitlement), defined benefits and benefit levels. In a first step we venture to assess the importance of the distinct pillars for (possibly different groups of) men and women and then to compare the two country models. The analysis is based on literature and secondary data available from the two countries. First results indicate a complex picture with different advantages and disadvantages for different groups of men and women in different social classes.

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