

# DELINKING AND RETHINKING: SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR WOMEN IN INFORMAL EMPLOYMENT

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# INFORMAL EMPLOYMENT, GENDER AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

- Exclusion from social protection = Informality of jobs + gender biases, norms, power relations
  - Occupational segregation (WIEGO pyramid)
  - Time bind (women's disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care and domestic work)
- Lessons from Latin America?
  - In most countries, contributory systems have been in place for a long time
  - Yet, only 4 out of 10 workers in Latin America contributes to social security at any given point in time
  - Women are overrepresented among those who lack social protection (e.g. pensions)

**LATIN AMERICA:**  
 PERCENTAGE OF THE ELDERLY  
 RECEIVING PENSIONS, BY  
 SEX, URBAN AREAS, 2007

Countries	65 and over		
	Men	Women	Total
Argentina <sup>b</sup>	74.6	66.9	69.9
Bolivia	38.0	12.3	23.9
Brazil	88.1	79.8	83.3
Chile	74.1	57.5	64.4
Colombia	22.1	11.4	15.8
Costa Rica	65.3	37.3	49.1
Dominican Republic	28.8	14.3	20.8
Ecuador	34.2	23.5	28.5
El Salvador	31.4	13.2	20.8
Guatemala	31.2	18.5	24.3
Honduras	16.6	10.0	12.8
Mexico	46.8	24.5	34.3
Panama	61.5	33.5	46.1
Paraguay	19.6	8.9	13.6
Uruguay	85.5	84.8	85.1

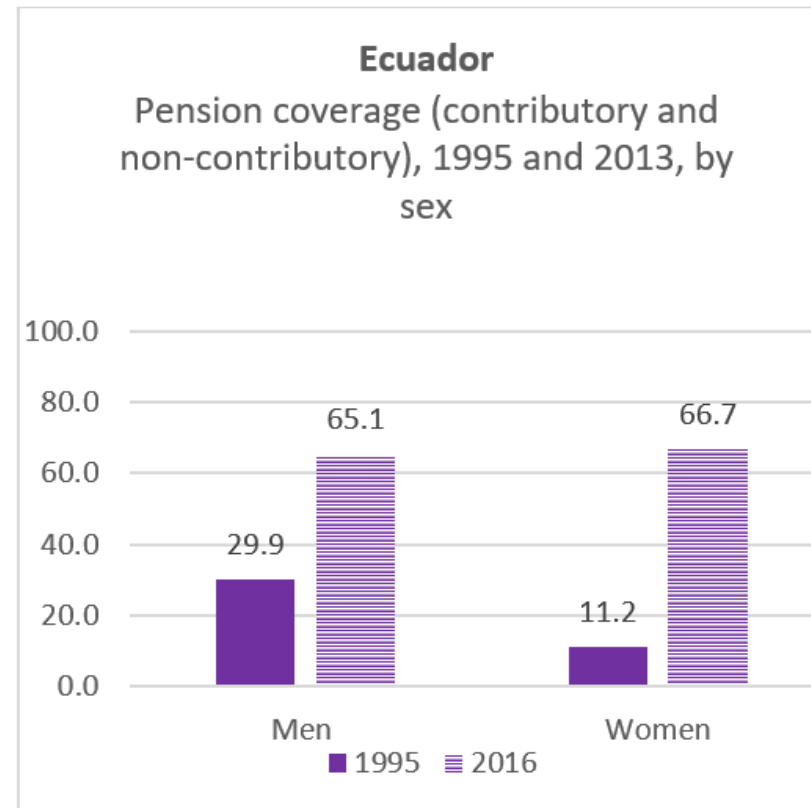
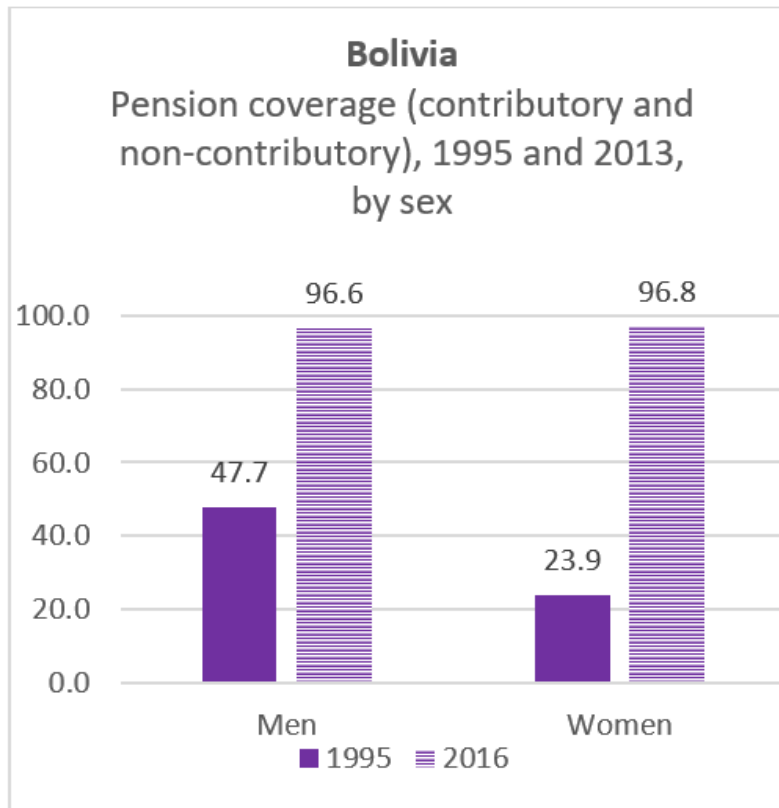
# IS DE-LINKING SOCIAL PROTECTION THE ANSWER?

- No, if delinking is presented as an alternative to all contributory forms of SP
- No, if delinking takes the form of isolated and narrowly targeted cash transfer schemes
- Yes, if it is part of a broader strategy to build universal social protection systems that combine linking and de-linking
- Aspiration to move towards such systems in Latin America (first decade of 2000s) has benefited women, including women in informal employment
- Strategies
  - Bringing informal workers under coverage of existing contributory schemes (linking)
  - Expanding access to non-contributory benefits (loosening the link)

# LINKING INFORMAL WORKERS TO CONTRIBUTORY SCHEMES

- Has worked well in *some* countries and for *some* groups of informal workers
  - Domestic workers in Uruguay: 27% coverage (2004) to 67% coverage (2014)
  - Formalization of informal enterprises (e.g. SIMPLES Brazil)
- Overall, this strategy seems to be more likely to work
  - in countries where contributory coverage is already high
  - for informal wage workers where employers can be obliged or incentivized to contribute
  - for a segment of the self-employed (with more regular and higher earnings)
- Not so much for the three groups of workers we discussed yesterday? Contributory capacity is very low

# DELINKING SOCIAL PROTECTION FROM CONTRIBUTIONS



In Latin America, the expansion of non-contributory social pensions has not only increased coverage overall, but also reduced gender gap in pensions

Source: Own elaboration based on data from The Labor Markets and Social Security Information System (The SIMS), Inter-American Development Bank.

# RETHINKING SOCIAL PROTECTION

- Social protection is often framed as a response to labor market or life course contingencies that constrain ability to engage in paid employment / access to earnings
- Access to earnings of women in informal employment is also compromised by unpaid care and domestic work (time bind, productivity losses)
- Needs to be considered in social protection frameworks, e.g. childcare = part of social protection, because it enables women to strengthen their basic income security
- Some Latin America countries have invested in expanding childcare services alongside classical social protection schemes (Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico...)
- State-led, fiscally funded---but how well adjusted to the needs of women in informal employment? → WIEGO childcare initiative

# IMPLICATIONS FOR WIEGO

- **Linked/delinked access to social protection:** Context- and status-specific analyses and approaches
  - What works for which groups of workers?
  - What might be gained and lost for informal workers by delinking?
- **Rethinking:** deepen understanding of relation between informal employment, care/reproductive work and public policy in the lives of women in informal employment
  - How does one type of work affect the other?
  - How well do social protection (and other policies!) respond to the multiple roles and struggles of women in IE?
- Develop a systemic perspective on social protection without losing the focus on your key constituency: social policy debates you want to engage in are no necessarily *about* informal workers
- Alliances for building and sustaining universal social protection systems financially and politically