



ICDD

Eleonor Faur

Inequalities in childcare
strategies among domestic
workers and teachers
in Argentina

The International
Center for Development
and Decent Work

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Abstract

The objective of this paper is to examine and analyse how care workers in Argentina organize the care of children under the age of 12. The paper explores and compares the strategies developed by educators and domestic employees, involved in two highly feminized occupations, where employment conditions and access to social rights and services differ significantly. The study is based on statistical information, gained from Argentina's National Survey on Social Structure (*Encuesta Nacional de Estructura Social, ENES-Pisac*), representing both sectors. The article looks at the ways workers organize childcare within their own families and the inequalities that surface in the process. The paper looks at their household structures and practices; access to state, private, and community care; the hiring of care staff; and the role of families and family members in providing care. While examining the heterogeneous character of the category of care workers, the paper seeks to understand how social class affects both employment conditions and care strategies which in turn reproduce different forms of inequality.

Key words

Care occupations, class inequalities, gender, political and social organization of childcare



1 Introduction

The objective of this paper is to explore and analyse how care workers in Argentina organize the care of their children while they are under the age of 12. The paper examines and compares the strategies developed by educators and domestic employees, who have been involved in two highly feminized occupations, as well as their employment conditions and access to social rights, which vary significantly. This article looks at the extent such inequalities prevailing between workers are reflected in the manner childcare is organized within their families.

The interdependence of the spheres of unpaid care work, paid work and paid care work is referred to in the ILO report *Care Work and Care Jobs* as a circle. “The conditions of unpaid care work impact how unpaid carers enter and remain in paid work, and influence the working conditions of all care workers. This also affects gender inequalities in paid work outside the care economy and has implications for gender equality within households as well as for women’s and men’s ability to provide unpaid care work” (ILO, 2018: 10). But can we assume that the constraints faced by different paid care workers are identical?

Around the world, the majority of care workers are employed in education (123 million) and in healthcare and social work (92 million). This total of 215 million workers (143 million women and 72 million men) represented 6.5% of the total global employment in 2018. Domestic workers amount to at least 2.1% of the total global employment: some 70 million workers are employed by private households (ILO, 2018). In Argentina, the distribution of care workers is quite different from the world’s average: most of them are domestic workers, followed by teachers and health workers (Esquivel and Pereyra, 2017a). This structure reflects the pattern of an unequal society, one in which part of the care work is transferred from the poorest households to those who can pay for it.

In all, it is clear that care jobs are (and will increasingly be) an important source of female employment, but employment profiles and working conditions vary from one care job to the next (ILO, 2018), as do the social values of each job, in both monetary and recognition terms (Vega and Gutiérrez, 2014). They also vary from one context to the other.

In developed countries, empirical studies showed that care occupations usually have lower salaries than those which are not related to care (Budig and Misra, 2010). Studies from the Global South, in turn, revealed that care worker’s working conditions cannot be framed as a whole, as they reflect the pattern of labor markets having widespread inequalities.

The heterogeneity within the care sector has been thoroughly analyzed in Argentina, wherein education and health workers enjoy greater protection while domestic employees who work in private homes experience much more precarious employment conditions (Esquivel and Pereyra, 2017a, 2017b; Rodríguez Enríquez and Marzonetto, 2015b). This article seeks to advance one step further, exploring care worker's rights and practices as care providers of their own children. This analysis opens up unexplored edges in the way in which inequalities among teachers and domestic workers are (re)produced.

This article proposes that the social organization of childcare among teachers and domestic workers reflects and reproduces persistent class inequalities amongst them. From this perspective, childcare emerges as a territory in which different layers of inequalities are accentuated among care workers. Discriminations exist, on the one hand, in the way they participate in the labor market and access social protection rights, on the other hand, deeply imbricated with this, the way how children's daily care is organized. The paper explores the institutional mechanisms and practices that reproduce such inequalities.



2 Conceptual framework

Feminist scholars have understood care activities as work since the 1970s (Larguía and Dumoulin, 1976; Benería, 1979), but it took almost 40 years for Resolution I to be adopted by the Nineteenth International Conference of Labor Statisticians (ICLS), which introduced a definition of work as “any activity performed by persons of any sex and age to produce goods or to provide services for use by others or for their own use” (ILO, 2018).

Care work refers to occupations that develop the human capacities of recipients, including “physical and mental health, physical skills, cognitive skills, and emotional skills, such as self-discipline, empathy, and care” (England, Budig, and Folbre, 2002: 455). It combines direct personal assistance to others and indirect domestic work required for people’s well-being. “Direct” care encompasses those activities that involve face-to-face interaction to satisfy the physical and emotional needs of others (which range from feeding or bathing someone to telling bedtime stories). Care work also includes reproductive labor that goes beyond the face-to-face provision of care (Razavi and Staab, 2010), usually called as “indirect care work” (ILO, 2018). The existence of indirect care is a precondition for the provision of direct care.

Care work normally requires a combination of paid and unpaid labor (Jelin, 2010). Paid care work is performed for pay or profit and comprises personal service workers like teachers, healthcare, social, and domestic workers, who provide both direct and indirect care in households and institutions (ILO, 2018).

All over the world, women shoulder most of the burden of both paid and unpaid care and domestic work. They are responsible for 76.2% of the total time devoted to unpaid care work within the home (ILO, 2018). The size of the burden of unpaid care work responds to several factors, including demographic transformations (population aging), labor market conditions (gender segmentation, the fact that unprotected work and low salaries are widespread and commonplace), and limited access to basic services such as clean water or electricity, and also to preschool and public care institutions (Esquivel and Kaufman, 2017; Hujo and Carter, 2019). Traditional cultural norms and values also play a decisive role when it comes to assigning unpaid work to women.

Paid or unpaid, care is provided within particular political, economic, cultural, and social contexts. In fact, the design and implementation of social policy within a national context has a significant impact on how care strategies and activities are organized at both the macro and micro level (Daly, 2001; Daly and Lewis, 2000).

Feminist research in northern countries identified the way in which the orientation of social policies acts in the configuration of gender social relations, through the provision of services and transfers, the allocation of responsibilities to market institutions, the community, and families, which, in turn, attribute differential positions to men and women (Orloff, 1993; Lewis, 1992; Creighton, 1999; Folbre, 1994; Sainsbury, 1999, among others).

This work has illuminated an area unexplored by the theory of welfare states, accounting for the role of the state in the construction of certain family models and the effects that its policies have on the lives of the main caregivers, mainly women. As for Diane Sainsbury (1999: 246), different welfare regimes “reflect different notions of ‘family obligations’ and the appropriateness of state involvement in helping families to cope with their responsibilities in providing care”. Each regime would tend to consolidate or transform the historical sexual division of labor that assumes men as providers and women as caregivers. Both make up what Sainsbury called different “care regimes”: corporate conservative, social democrat, and liberal.

In the Global South this debate took on a new twist. Razavi (2007) introduced an analytical scheme that she called the “care diamond” taking into account that care is provided within particular contexts by different institutions: families, markets, states, and communities. By action or omission, the role of the state is fundamental within this as it provides care but also establishes the rules of play for other agents and institutions that are involved. Countries usually go back and forth across sectors, thus questioning the “modernization narrative, of a linear path along which all countries move with an inevitable shift from ‘private’ (especially family and voluntary) provision of care to ‘public’ provision (by the state and market)” (Razavi, 2007: 22). The care diamond recognizes the important role that communities (and civil society organizations) play in Southern countries, where poverty continues to penetrate the living conditions of the population. There are different mixes between the institutions involved in the care diamond, whose nature and scope is intrinsically diverse.

While the analytical framework of the care diamond is very productive, its main limitation would be to assume a relatively stable scheme in terms of the function that each institution assumes in a given time and context (Faur, 2014). In Latin American countries, marked by strong social inequalities and high levels of informality in the labor market, care itself was conceived as “a stratified regime” (see Martínez Franzoni, 2008; Aguirre and Ferarri, 2014). Different studies have highlighted care inequalities within countries (Batthyány, 2015; Bidegain and Calderón, 2018, among others). A previous study in Argentina showed that the supply of care services provided by different institutions affects care arrangements in households differently depending on geographic location, occupational status, and socio-economic position of its members. Households from different social classes and their members have unequal access to care services provided by the state, markets, and communities, and thus develop specific strategies to cover the demands that care work imposes on them (Faur, 2011). Moreover, state services do not provide similar coverage for the entire population: the poorer social sectors have less access to care services while women from these households spend more of their time on unpaid care work and less time on paid work of any sort (Faur, 2011; Faur and Pereyra, 2018). Other forms of inequality overlap with that of gender, particularly, but not only those relating to social class, migration, ethnicity, and race (Pérez Orosco, 2009).

Following Jelin (2018), horizontal differences among workers (in terms of gender and occupations) are clearly “entangled” with vertical inequalities (socioeconomic status). In this regard, different “layers of inequalities” are present (Motta, Jelin and Costa, 2018), though this does not mean that they all respond to a similar dynamic. In fact, as for Juan Pablo Pérez Sainz (2018), inequalities need to be analysed in the way they reflect different results based on unequal power relations.

Within this conceptual framework, instead of discussing “care regimes” or “care diamonds”, I refer to care arrangements in terms of political and social organization, one which is constantly developing through the interventions of public and private offerings, and which takes different shapes and leads to different outcomes across social classes (Faur, 2011). This is understood as a political process, insofar as it implies making decisions about the redistribution of public and private resources. It takes into account the assignment of rights related to care, the provision of care services, and the access that different social groups achieve effectively.

This study, at the starting point, understands that paid care workers are part of the political and social organization of care in two senses: both through the labor they contribute and as potential or actual recipients of such services. In this way, for the purpose of this paper it is relevant to analyze the way in which an unequal system of rights interlocks with unequal care practice in two specific sectors: teachers and domestic workers.

3 Contextual features

In Argentina, as in most of the world, a strong maternalist culture has shaped the traditional perception that care should be provided within the family and that women should be responsible for such tasks (Nari, 2004; Barrancos, 2017; Jelin, 2017). The extended household model with a male breadwinner and a female carer was firmly established in rules and culture. However, this model faded out as a consequence of two interconnected processes. On the one hand, continuous financial constraints on state social institutions undermined their capacity to provide stable and efficient social services and cash transfers for the whole population. One of the major effects of the neoliberal policies of the 1990s was the increasing casualization of labor market conditions, leading to rising inequalities, high unemployment and poverty levels, and incorporation of a large number of female workers into the labor force. The feminization of the labor force reduced the historically high gender gaps in economic activity rates (Cerrutti, 2000; Cerrutti and Almejeiras, 2016). At the same time, women's greater autonomy and longer life expectancy brought changes in conjugal models and reproductive practices, reflected in the increasing prevalence of consensual unions, higher divorce rates, and a rise in the average age at which women have their first child, all these affected the formation of households (Jelin, 2010). This turned the previous male-breadwinner/female housewife and carer model on its head (Wainerman, 2007). However, gender gap in labor market and care practices remains.

Nowadays, women's participation in the labor market is 46% while men's is 70%. Women's unemployment is higher than men's (8% compared to 6%) and 40% female salaried workers are informal (compared to 30% for men). With regard to care occupations, they account for a significant share of the female labor force: 38% female workers and 43% of all women in formal employment. Of these, 39% are domestic workers, 30.9% are employed in education, 16.8% in the healthcare sector, and 13.3% in other occupations (Esquivel and Pereyra, 2017b).

Teachers are among the workers whose regulatory framework (the "Teachers' Statute") is the most advanced. It includes greater job stability, and entry and promotion mechanisms in which both training and tenure length play a part. Teachers tend to be employed by highly regulated public-sector institutions. In all, 87% teachers are in stable employment and 70% education workers are formally employed (Esquivel and Pereyra, 2017b).

Regarding domestic service, this occupation is also regulated in a Special Regime (Law 26,844 of Work Contract for the Personnel of Private Houses). Unlike teachers, until 2013, this statute was highly restrictive in terms of social protection and stability. It was only in 2013 that Law 26 844 on private house workers put an end to more than half a century of discrimination against these workers. The new regulatory framework equalized many rights of domestic workers with the rest of those in the private sector. Hence, though they remained less protected than teachers, they have been in a better position than what they used to be earlier (Faur, 2014).

The vast majority of teachers and domestic workers are salaried employees and nearly all of them work in a single place (only 5% domestic workers and 8% teachers work in more than one private home or school).¹ Even though, and in spite of the passing of the law for domestic workers, almost 77% of them are not registered with the social security system. Being unregistered poses important restrictions in terms of the effective application of the regulations. It means not having access to critical social rights: health protection, coverage for occupational accident and illness, maternity leave, paid vacations, sick leave and Christmas bonus (López Mourelo, 2020). In fact, less than 60% domestic workers are in stable employment, while around four out of every ten of these perceive their work as temporary (as an odd job) (Esquivel and Pereyra, 2017a).

As for their salaries, data from the ENES reflects that in 2015, domestic workers earned \$2,600 per month, on average, while the average teacher salary was around \$7,000.² Given that the minimum monthly wage at the time was set at \$4,716, the inequality in the employment conditions between the two occupations is manifest. Even though, based on their salaries, teachers cannot be considered as “privileged” workers. In fact, their average income is far below than that of other professional sectors such as transportation, real estate, health services, etc. (UNIPE, 2018).

1 Own calculations based on ENES-Pisac.

2 Own calculations based on ENES-Pisac.

With regards to parental leaves, provisions are highly varied for different workers. Generally speaking, in Argentina there is greater protection for those employed in the public sector than in the private and there are significant differences from one province and employment sector to the next. The outcome is that paid maternity leave ranges from between 90 and 200 days for mothers and 1 to 15 days for fathers (Faur and Pereyra, 2019). Though disparities are present among provinces, usually teachers are among those who have broader and longer leave entitlements up to 165 days for mothers and 10 days for fathers when they work in the province of Buenos Aires, up to 135 days for mothers and five days for fathers in the city of Buenos Aires. Since 2013, private home workers have 90 days for mothers and two days for fathers, but this benefit only protects those who are in formal employment (Faur, 2014).

Not surprisingly, strong trade unions represent teachers' interest, which is not the case among domestic workers (Esquivel and Pereyra, 2018b). In Argentina, teacher unions were created at the end of the 19th century and since the 1960s the unions have been organized, strengthened and associated in five large third-level associations, which include both public and private sector teachers (CEA, 2010). Domestic workers unions also have a long history (Acha, 2012-2013) but their relative power is much more limited. The data from the ENES suggest that around 40% of education workers are union members but this is only the case for 2% of domestic workers.

With respect to childcare services employment-related crèches had never been extensively enforced in Argentina, and access to such facilities was in fact thwarted by labor market deregulation and informality. The supply of childcare services is provided by different institutions with various regulatory frameworks. Primary education is a constitutional right in Argentina and its coverage is almost universal. Up to 75% of this is covered by state-run institutions, while 25% is provided by private schools (Faur and Pereyra, 2018). Early education was recognized by the 2006 National Education Act (Law 26.206) as a 'Special Pedagogic Unit' divided into two categories: crèches for children between forty-five days and two years of age and kindergartens for three to five-year-olds). Attendance is compulsory since 1993 for the five-year-old cycle but only on 2015 it recognizes obligation for four-year-olds. This is relevant because it defines the obligation for subnational governments to provide such services (Faur, 2014). Even though pre-school schemes and kindergartens are meant to enhance children's opportunities in the education sector, families opt for them as they also provide care for their children. Indeed, given the weakness of other conciliatory mechanisms, education services for children of all ages continue to be one of the main resorts parents have in order to reconcile their remunerated work obligations with their care responsibilities (Faur, 2017; Redondo and Antelo, 2017).

Additionally, care services related to community or the 'social development' sector is installed for children under five years. These facilities do not respond to a framework of rights, but rather form part of community-based responses to continuous socioeconomic crisis. They tend to cover poor children and are partially supported by the country's 'compensatory' measures. All in all, they are based on a different logic from kindergartens (which fall within the education sector) (Faur, 2011).

In part, it is evident that the environment in which care workers perform their labor activities affects their employment conditions. Domestic workers perform their jobs in private homes and their incomes and labor conditions are negotiated against a backdrop of unequal power relations between employers and employees which often include a form of affection or emotional intimacy that may appear to render the need to provide decent employment conditions unnecessary (Poblete, 2018; Carnevaro, 2019). For their part, teacher's rights are defined within the framework of joint negotiations among trade unions, employer's representatives (mainly, the ministries of Education at national and subnational levels) and Ministry of Labor and Social Security representatives.

All in all, the different working conditions between both sectors need to be understood within a framework of unequal power relations. Following Perez Sainz's analytical framework, the fact that domestic workers come from underprivileged social sectors is not just a problem of redistribution but especially, a result of unequal distribution of resources in the context of a labor market that does not operate in a neutral way, but is marked by profound asymmetries (Pérez Sainz, 2018).

How does this organization affect childcare strategies of teachers and domestic workers? How does the unequal framework of rights of both groups of workers intervene in this regard? In public education, particular regulations define the way in vacancies must be allocated and prioritized. As compulsory schooling begins at four, vacancies are not guaranteed for the youngest, the definition of criteria for prioritizing vacancies are especially relevant to guarantee access. Within a federal country, in Argentina, each provincial government establishes its own criteria. Being a child of a staff member or school teacher is part of the public education vacancy allocating criteria for 17 out of 24 country's jurisdictions (Cardini and Guevara, 2019).

In private education, teaching, auxiliary, and administrative personnel have the right to obtain a scholarship for their children under 18 years of age at the institution where they work. It is a mandatory commitment for the employer and optional benefit for the worker (Resolution 459/84 of the Private Education Union Council). The centre that gathers the different private education trade unions –SADOP- takes legal action when the right is not respected properly by the employers.

Against this background, the analysis of childcare strategies developed by both populations of care workers will allow us to understand the interaction between institutional mechanisms of distribution and redistribution of rights and their incidence in the reproduction of class inequalities in the realm of care.



4 Materials & Methodology

The paper analyses childcare strategies of teachers and domestic workers with children aged 12 or under. It draws on data from Argentina's National Survey on Social Structure (Encuesta Nacional sobre la Estructura Social, ENES). The survey was part of the Research Program on Contemporary Argentinian Society (*Programa de Investigación sobre la Sociedad Argentina Contemporánea*, PISAC), a joint initiative coordinated by the Council of Deans of Schools of Social and Human Sciences of Argentina and the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Productive Innovation of Argentina, with support from the Secretariat of University Policies.

The ENES is representative of the country's entire population. It provides information on class structures, stratification and social mobility, living conditions, and the conditions of social reproduction (Piovani and Salvia, 2018). It contains information on 8,265 households and 27,609 people in areas with over 2000 inhabitants in Argentina's 24 jurisdictions. The fieldwork for the survey took place in the second half of 2014 and the first half of 2015.

For the first time ever in Argentina, this survey provided a single database that allows exhaustive information on homes/individuals and care strategies to be cross-referenced.

The sample population comprises households inhabited by domestic workers or education workers with children up to the age of 12. The information was weighted and the data was specifically tabulated to enable researchers to explore the socio-demographic characteristics of the workers and their households, the articulation between paid and unpaid work, the time they spent on each activity, who within the family was responsible for care work and domestic tasks, and whether they had access to other care services, either free or paid-for, in institutions or within the household.

5 Results

Paid care workers: Socio-demographic characteristics

Focusing on the two sectors in question in this paper, it is worth getting a sense of their profiles and household's main characteristics before exploring their childcare strategies.

Paid care workers in the education sector and private homes are women of around 40 years of age on average. Regarding their educational qualifications, Figure 1 shows that 91% of female teachers have completed some form of higher education, ranging from full tertiary education to a full university degree. In contrast, 45% of domestic workers have only attended or completed primary education, and other 45% have attended or completed secondary school (Figure 2).

Figure 1. Teachers' education level

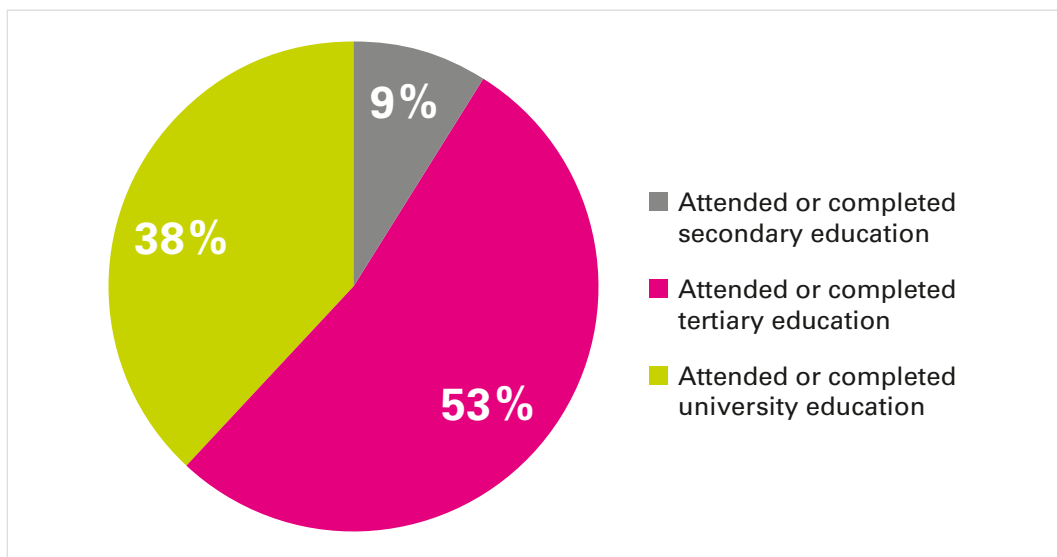
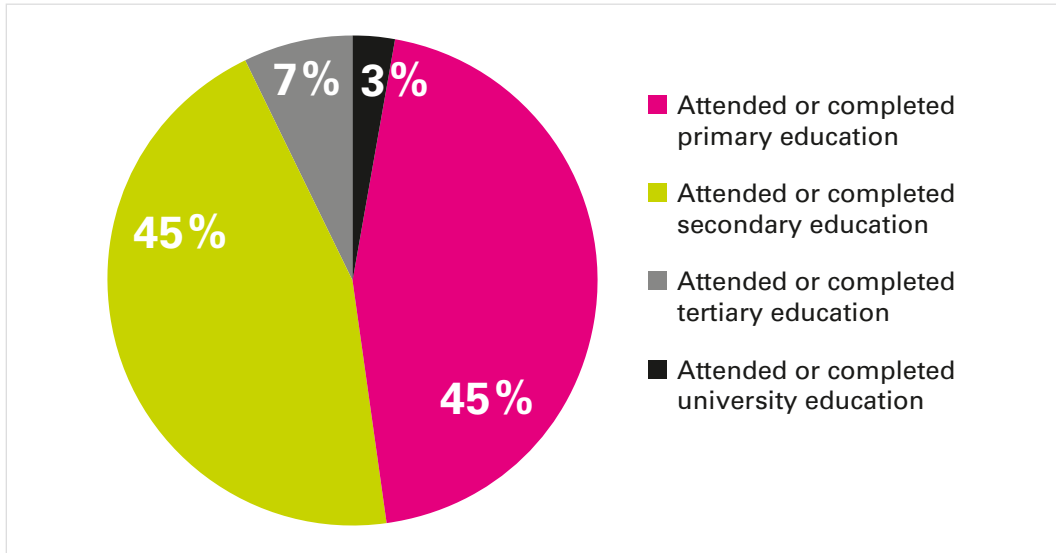


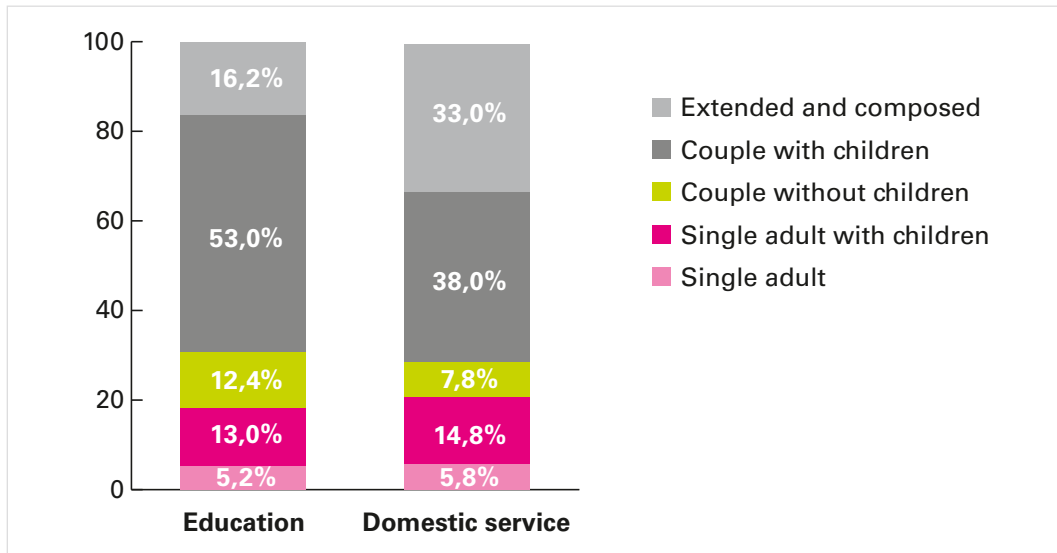
Figure 2. Domestic workers' education level



As shown in Figure 3, teachers usually live in nuclear households, with a partner and children. This type of household accounts for 53% of their living arrangements, almost one-third more than in the case of domestic workers, among whom this household type accounts for 38% of the total.³ Extended households are also prominent among this group, accounting for 32.4% of households, a number that reaches 33% when composed households are also included. Female-headed households represent around 15% of those of domestic workers and a little less in the case of teachers. On average, domestic workers' households are larger than those of teachers, with 4.2 members versus 3.4. Adding to this, in almost a third of both types of households, the female care worker is the main breadwinner.

³ The National Survey on Social Structure showed that, in 2014, 38% of total households were made up of a couple and children, 11% were headed by a single parent (primarily mothers), and 1% by a same-sex couple (Binstock, 2018). There is at least one child of 12 or under in 39% Argentinean households (Faur and Pereyra, 2018).

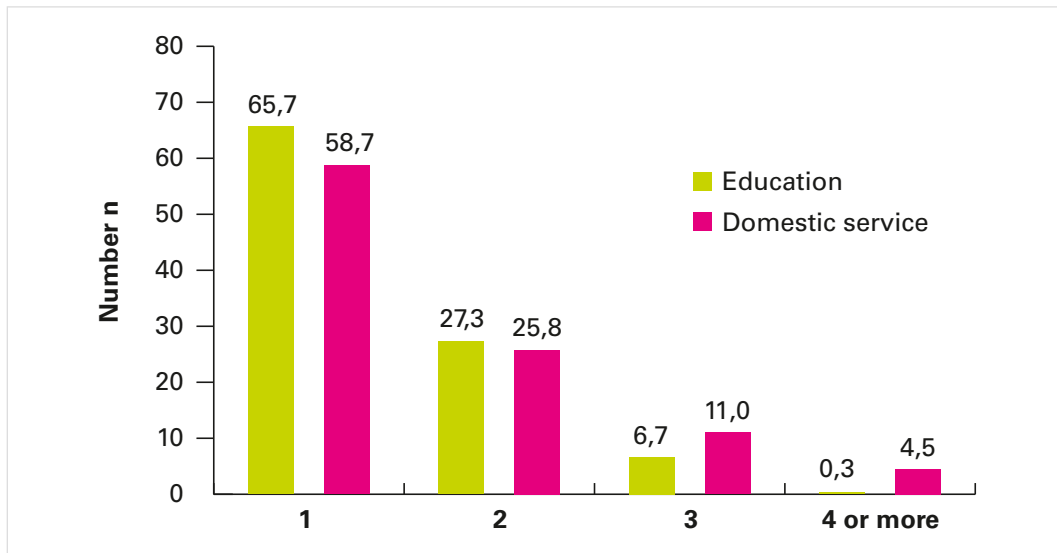
Figure 3. Household composition according to type of care worker



Some 38% of domestic and education workers have at least one child under the age of 12, almost 17% have a child under the age of four.

Among those who have children, data shown in Figure 4 shows that teachers are more likely to have fewer children than domestic workers: 93% teachers have one or two children, as opposed to 84.5% domestic workers, while there are more than double the number of mothers with three or more children among domestic workers than among teachers (15.5% versus 7%).

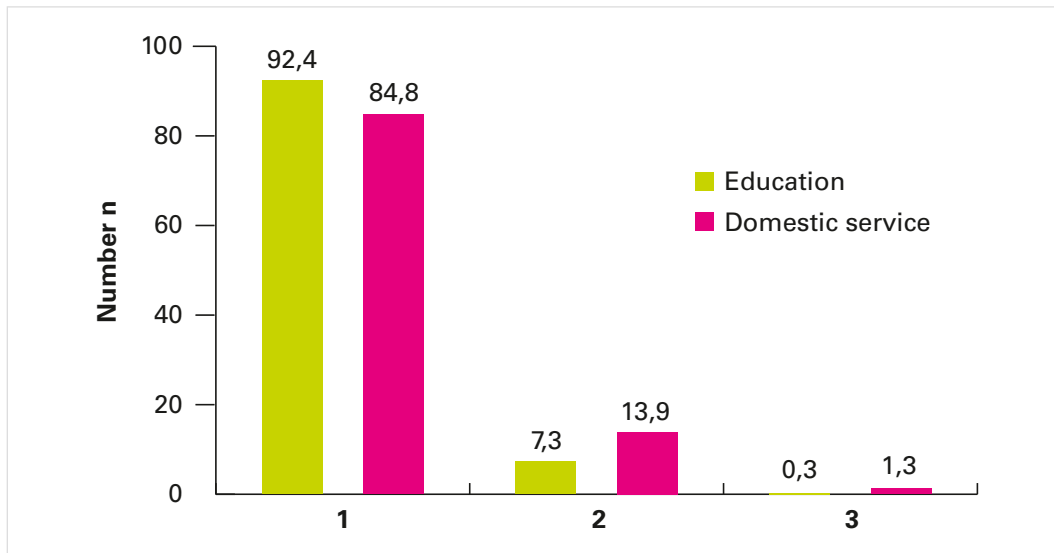
Figure 4. Number of children by employment sector (employed women with children up to 12 years of age).



Focusing on under four-years-old age group, this gap is wider (Figure 5). Some 92.4% of female teachers with children of that age only have one child and 7.3% have two. Among domestic workers, although only one child up to the age of 4 is the norm (accounting for 85%), 15% have two or three children. In all, this implies that domestic service workers have a higher burden of childcare than teachers.



Figure 5. Number of children by employment sector
(employed women with children up to four years of age)



It is worth to highlight the context in which selected care workers' households cope with their childcare needs. Around half of all domestic workers (43.6%) live in households whose incomes place them in the first quintile in terms of income per capita, while 23.5% are in the second quintile. This implies that two out of every three domestic workers are living in socioeconomically vulnerable situations or in poverty. In contrast, around 60% education workers live in homes whose per capita income is between the fourth and fifth quintiles. It is unsurprising, therefore, that 53.1% domestic workers with children under the age of 12 receive Argentina's Universal Child Allowance (*Asignación Universal por Hijo*, AUH), a national income transfer plan that seeks to guarantee a minimum income for vulnerable households with children up to the age of 18. Only 15.5% of those who work in the education sector receive this.⁴

Summing up, in the case of domestic workers, women have a lower educational level and income than educators, who live (and sometimes sustain) in larger households, have more children and, therefore, greater demand for care. In this context, access to child care services is particularly relevant.

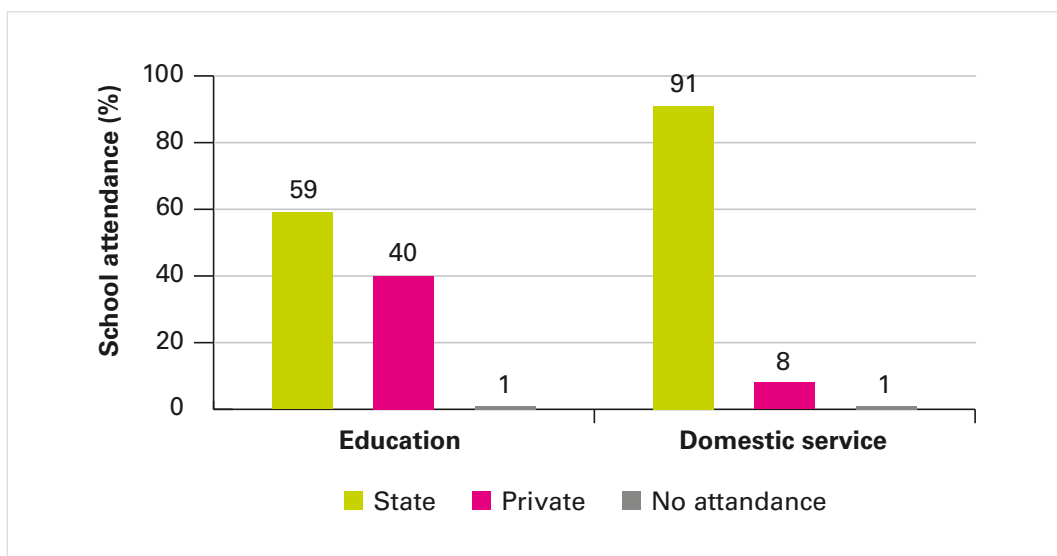
⁴ For more information on the AUH, see Danani and Hintze, 2011

Access to care services

Given the lack of care services provided by employers and the high levels of informal employment among domestic workers', access to state-run schools, kindergartens, and community services play a fundamental role in their participation in the labor market.

For children between the ages of five and twelve, attendance at educational establishments is mandatory in Argentina. Provision of the services is thus guaranteed by the state and coverage is almost universal. Within this age range, as can be seen in Figure 6, around 60% teachers' children and over 90% of those of domestic workers attend public schools. As can be seen, the proportion of teachers' children who attend private schools is relatively high, accounting for around 40% of the total, while according to Faur and Pereyra (2018) as a whole this figure is just 25%.

Figure 6. School attendance (%) of children between 5 and 12 years of age by type of establishment and mother's employment sector.

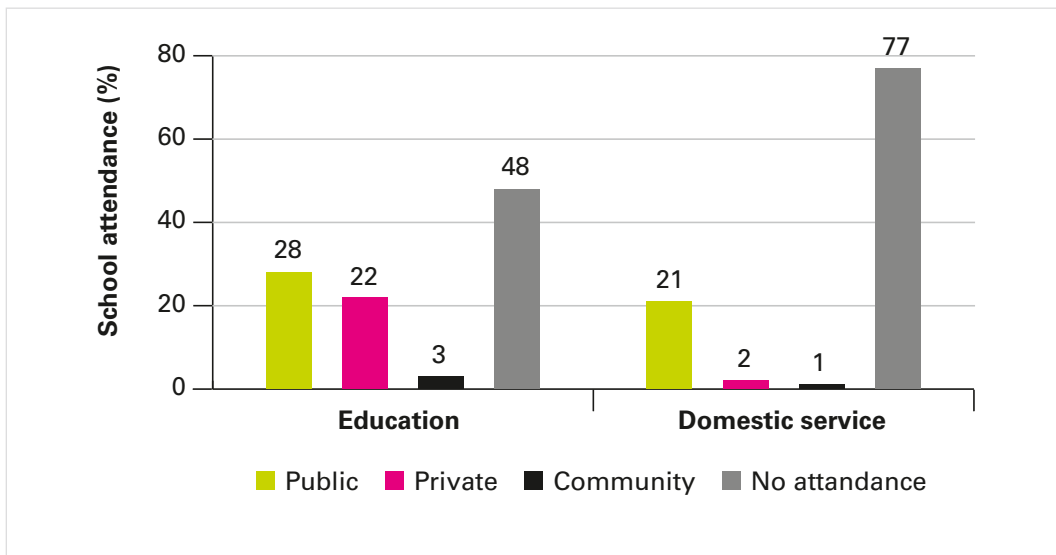


Regarding the caring potential of the school, it should be noted that school schedules often clash with standard working hours. The supply of full-time schools could have directly affected women's ability to enter and remain in the labor market, thereby augment the household's income level. How far do these institutions cover the care needs of the households of teachers and domestic workers?

Generally speaking, among five-to-twelve-year-olds, 91 % are at school for half the day (four to five hours per day) and only 9% are there for the full school day (eight hours) (Faur and Pereyra, 2019). Among care workers’ children, only 5.5% domestic workers’ children and 10.2% of those of teachers attend establishments that provide full-time services. This makes childcare arrangements for domestic workers even more complicated.

For children under four years old (Figure 7), who have not yet reached the age at which schooling is compulsory, the disparities in the availability of education and care services are even more profound. Only four out of every ten children of care workers under the age of four attend an educational or care establishment. However, these rates are over twice as high among teachers’ children as among domestic workers’ children (52% versus 23%). This divide between children whose mothers are teachers and those who are domestic workers is visible in access to both state and community-run services and in private services, although it is much more pronounced in the latter case. In fact, the attendance rate at private kindergartens is 11 times higher among teachers’ children than among those of domestic workers.

Figure 7. Children up to four years of age. Kindergarten/nursery attendance by type of establishment and mother’s employment sector.



How far do kindergartens provide care services? Pre-school and kindergarten timetables often clash with standard working hours, which is perhaps the most significant difference between these and crèche or day-care services provided by employers. As a consequence, the number of hours children spend at school is a key factor when parents are choosing educational establishments. In the case of kindergartens (for children up to the age of 5), data for the whole of Argentina shows that only 2.5% of such services cover a full school day (seven hours) while 97.5% only cover half a day (three-and-a-half hours) (Faur, 2014).

Finally, in addition to having greater access to educational services, Figure 8 shows that around 15% teachers with children under the age of 12 also employ domestic workers and a further 15% employ nannies. In contrast, only 6.2% domestic workers employ domestic workers themselves and just 4% appoint nannies to look after their children at specific times.

Figure 8. Mothers of at least one child under the age of 12. Hiring of domestic and care services.



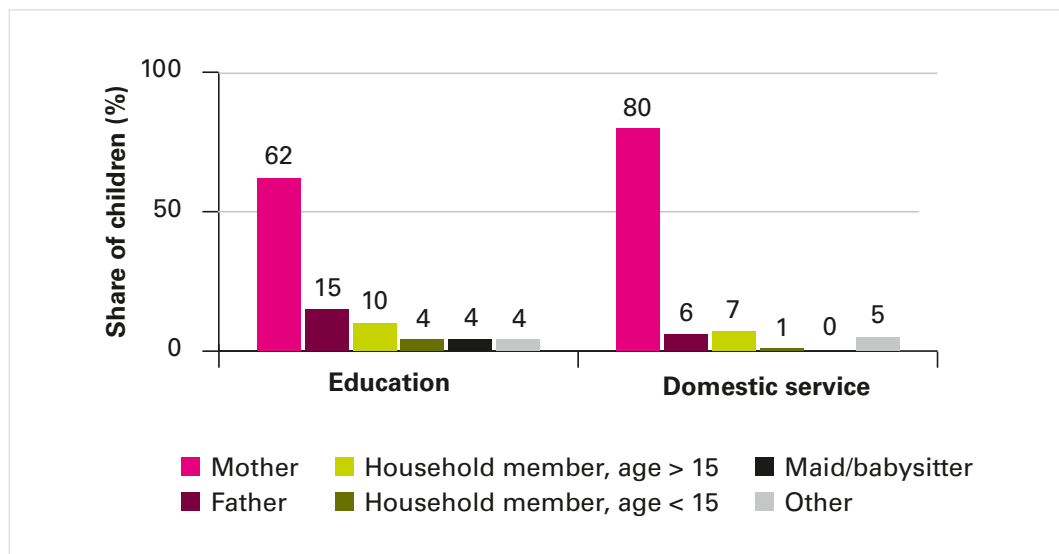
In all, it is clear that domestic workers, who mostly depend on public provisions, have fewer chances to defamiliarize childcare than educators, who can also resort to private facilities and to hiring of nannies. How does this situation impact on their participation in the labor market and unpaid care work? Next section will focus on this question.

The struggle to balance paid and unpaid care work

The amount of time that care workers spend looking after their children depends largely on whether outsourcing care is a possibility. In addition, cultural patterns play a significant role in the way unpaid care and domestic work is distributed amongst teachers and domestic workers' households.

When analysing the response to the question of who stays with children under the age of 12 for most of the day between Monday and Friday, the primary answer in teachers and domestic worker's households was "the mother", which reflects the strong maternalistic culture that still persists with regards to childcare. However, there are significant differences between the two populations in this regard. The tendency for the mother to be the main person responsible for looking after young children is more widespread among domestic workers (80%) than among teachers (62%). Among the latter, the responses are more varied. Fathers play a more prominent role in teachers' households than in those of domestic workers; the relative importance of other household members is also greater; and teachers make recourse to a strategy that is practically absent among domestic workers: 4% of teachers' children spend most of the week with paid carers or domestic workers (see Figure 9).

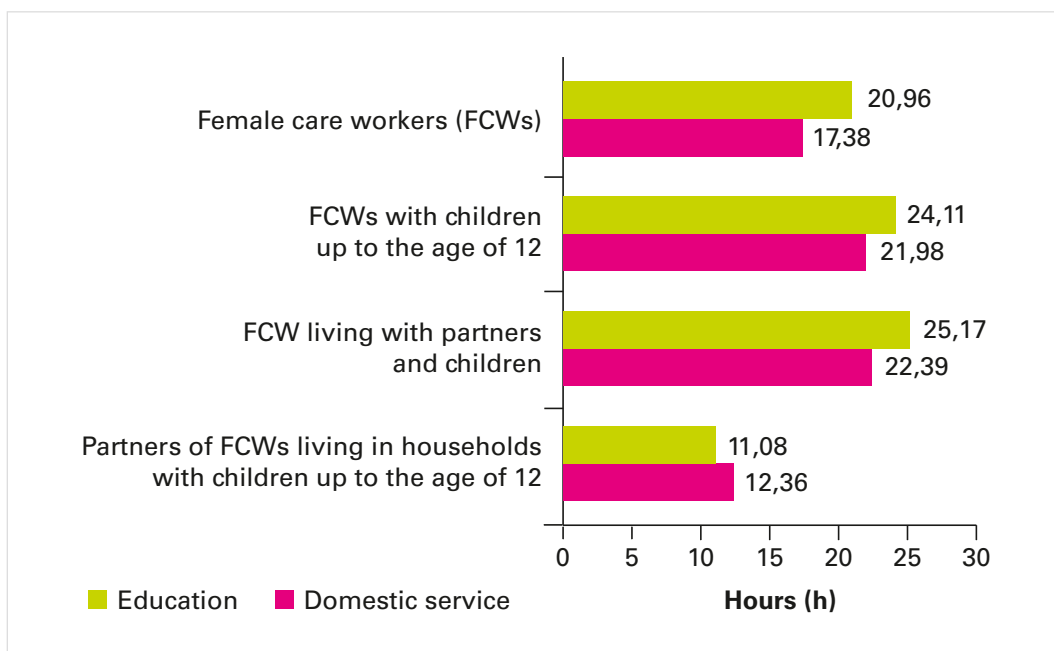
Figure 9. Whom children under 12 spend most of the day with, by mother's employment sector.



For its part, the feminization of indirect care activities is similar between the two groups: around 85% of care workers with children are the main person responsible for unpaid domestic work in their household (84.4% among teachers and 85.9% among domestic workers). However, there are differences in terms of the amount of time each group spends on these activities. Figure 10 allow us to analyse different patterns in this regard. Regardless of whether they have children or not and how old they are, teachers invest 17.4 hours per week in unpaid care work while domestic employees spend 21 hours per week on this. When they have children, the time teachers spend on these tasks increases to 22 hours per week, and to 22.4 when, in addition to having children, they live with a partner. Among domestic workers who are mothers, the average time spent on unpaid care work is 24.1 hours per week, and 25.2 when they have young children and live with a partner.

Care workers' partners spend much less time on domestic tasks than their female partners, although those who live with teachers spend a little more time on these than those who live with domestic workers (12.4 hours versus 11.1 hours per week on average). Relatively speaking, while teachers' partners invest around half the time that the teachers themselves do in unpaid care work, domestic workers spend two and a half times more time in this than their partners do. Inequalities in the sexual division of unpaid care and domestic labor are evident amongst both, though in highly educated households it is slightly less.

Figure 10. Average time spent on unpaid care and domestic work by type of care worker and household (in hours per week)



Generally speaking, care worker's participation in unpaid care and domestic work affects the way these women organize the time they spend on paid work, particularly when they are mothers. On average, women working in the education sector spend 27 hours per week on paid work while domestic employees spend 24.5 hours per week on this. When narrowing this sample to those with children under the age of 12, paid work time comes down to 26.4 hours for teachers and 23.3 hours for domestic workers.⁵

In short, having children and living with a partner increases the volume of unpaid care work that female care workers have to undertake, leaving them lesser time available for paid work. However, this difference is more marked amongst domestic workers who, in fact, have lesser access to care services and limited chances to commodify childcare.



While feminization of direct and indirect care activities remains very high in both groups, in teachers' households the gender gaps in housework and childcare barely diminish while their participation in paid work increase. This can respond to different convergent processes. On the one hand, as they have a greater possibility of outsourcing care through educational services and hiring domestic servants (as seen in the previous section) the dedication of women to housework and childcare is less. On the other hand, there is a small group of fathers who assume domestic responsibility and care (as for Figure 10) and augment the average hours spent by male partners.

⁵ It is interesting to note that the time that both domestic workers and teachers with children spend on paid work is below the average for women with children of the same age in Argentina, which is around 30 hours per week. This data is from the same source (Faur and Pereyra, 2018).

6 Discussion

The analysis above sheds light on the social organization of care for children whose mothers are paid care workers in private homes or educational establishments. Workers in these two sectors participate in both supply and demand for care services. However, they do so in profoundly unequal conditions. These conditions give teachers a series of comparative advantages. On the one hand, as for data gathered for this article, many private schools subsidize tuition for the children of teachers they employ, either in part or in full. In addition to this, being employed at any educational institution gives teachers' children priority access to the educational service. Also, as highlighted in previous research, it allows them to have direct information and to institutional mechanisms for demanding care services in their role as mothers trying to find a place at the school for their children (Faur, 2012). This widens the opportunity gap between domestic workers and teachers when it comes to accessing services that allow them to defamiliarize care work.

Although domestic workers also play a part in supplying care services, they are in a very different situation to teachers. Unlike working at a school, domestic service does not bring any special benefits or provide access to privileged information with regard to finding places for children at educational institutions. Nor does it entail advantages when it comes to hiring paid childcare, as the ability to access this depends exclusively on financial resources. As teachers earn significantly more than domestic workers, their demand for paid childcare is three times higher than that of domestic workers.

In addition to their paid employment, mothers from both groups are heavily involved in caring for their children. In the vast majority of cases, they are the primary caregiver. This makes care work into a double shift which brings together paid and unpaid work performed by women. The sociocultural notion that understands care as a "feminine" activity is clearly reflected in this pattern. However, these women's role as breadwinners in their households is also very significant, as is manifest in the fact that a third of them are the main source of income.

Although this pattern is largely true for both types of care workers, there are significant differences between them in terms of demographic characteristics, employment status, and the resources at their disposal for redistributing outsourcing part of their unpaid care work.

Domestic workers live in larger households, have more children, the vast majority of them are employed cash in hand, their income levels barely reach 55% of the basic wage in Argentina, and their education levels are relatively low. In contrast, teachers live in smaller households with higher average income levels, can access social services via their jobs, and earn at least 50% more than the minimum wage. Even if both teachers and domestic workers spend a large amount of time on unpaid care work and do so much more than their partners (when they live with one), teachers spend 10% less time on this than domestic workers do.

These differences, which are substantial from a socioeconomic point of view, are compounded by others relating to practices within their homes or their access to public and private care or education services. It is significant that union membership rates are 20 times higher among teachers than among domestic workers. This implies that they have greater political capital when it comes to negotiating working conditions and access to services.



Among teachers' households, there is greater diversity in how care responsibilities are divided up. Although they are the main ones responsible for care, other people play a more frequent role in this (fathers, domestic workers, etc.) than is the case in domestic workers' households. This combines with marked inequality in access to spaces for childcare.

Among younger children (up to the age of four), the coverage rates of care or education services are almost twice as high among teachers' children than among domestic workers' children, and this difference is even greater in community spaces. From the age of five, when education becomes compulsory in Argentina, twice as many teachers' children have access to full-day education as do domestic workers.

For both preschool and primary education, it is noteworthy that attendance rates at private schools are much higher among teachers' children than in the population as a whole (around 25% higher, according to Faur and Pereyra, 2018). As stated above, employment as a teacher brings with it a series of resources that reach beyond mere income levels, both in terms of social protection and childcare facilities.

Among the workers analyzed in this study, the differences between the ways in which teachers and domestic workers organize care for their children are similar to the gaps existing between homes in varied socioeconomic classes in general. However, the inequalities in the manner the two groups organize care is not limited to their access to financial resources. The analysis in this paper shows that different sorts of symbolic, cultural, and power-related resources also come into play.

All this points to how the deficit in public care policies has a much greater impact on more disadvantaged social groups, which include domestic workers.

In this sense, it is important to consider the political and social organization of care not only by focusing on gender relations but also on the broader context of class inequalities. This perspective allows contemplating upon the multiple dimensions of deprivation; in other words, in terms of not just income levels but also access to resources and rights and the time spent on reproductive labor. In this sense, the analysis in this paper provides a situated reading and a specific exploration of "unpaid care work–paid work–paid care work circle" that the ILO (2018) describes. This exploration reveals the importance of social class when it comes to analyzing the relative disadvantages of care workers.

That is, far from offering equal rights to citizens through a system with a strong universalist cast, these institutional arrangements reflect the ethos of the current welfare 'model' in Argentina—a fragmented set of social policies based on disparate benefits for different social groups, which in turn filter down to the social organization of childcare.

7 Conclusions

In the last few years, research in Argentina has shown that the social organization of childcare reproduces class inequalities that are present in society: households that are lower down the socioeconomic scale have less access to care services; women in these households spend more of their time on unpaid domestic and care work and less on paid work, while among the more affluent sectors the ability to outsource care services converges with greater access to public services and greater opportunities for participating in the labor market (Faur, 2011; Faur and Pereyra, 2018; Rodríguez Enríquez and Pautassi, 2014, among others).

By examining care workers' childcare strategies for their own families, this study sought to advance the debate understanding the way different layers of inequalities are present within these groups of workers.

The problem intersects two lines of analytical interpretation: 1) the organization of a labor market that not only segments and assigns care-related jobs on a gender basis but also fragments them according to social class; and 2) the logic of assigning care services and rights as part of state social policies. The study shows that in both cases there is an unequal distribution of rights and benefits.

From the labor market angle, there is a profound inequality in the distribution of employment conditions, rights, and benefits. These inequalities, following the analytical framework of Pérez Sainz (2018), need to be understood as power inequalities reflected in dissimilar results for both populations. In the case of teachers, the existence of a formalized labor market, with broad rights and strong trade unions allow them to have a larger relative negotiation capacity. In the case of private house workers, a context of disadvantages reveals its weakness when negotiating their employment conditions, within the framework of labor relations agreed in the private sphere of the households, under markedly unequal power conditions between employers and employees.

As for the access to care provisions that the state redistributes through social spending such as educational and care services, there is also unequal access with greater advantages for education workers, precisely by virtue of their employment in the sector.

Thus, while in their capacity as care workers teachers and domestic workers participate in the labor market in highly unequal conditions, as caregivers they encounter a system that does not generate the mechanisms to compensate for the care gaps between both sectors. In all, childcare gaps are (re)produced not only in unequal access to care services for their children, but also in the care practices inside the homes and the time dedicated by both to unpaid care work.

While it is essential for quality jobs to be made available for all care workers to improve the way that care is redistributed, this needs to go hand-in-hand with initiatives to expand and strengthen care policies based on a progressive, inclusive approach.

Clearly, access to educational services from an early age can narrow the huge gaps between the wealthiest and poorest children, the supply of full-time, state-run pre-schools may also directly affect women's ability to enter and remain in the labor market, hence the household's ability to increase its income level and well-being. Providing access to kindergartens and day-care services is probably the most comprehensive equalizing strategy for guaranteeing equal opportunities for parents, especially mothers, as caregivers and children as recipients of care. Nevertheless, such strategies need to be complemented by processes to formalize the employment status of domestic workers, whose working conditions tend to reproduce the vulnerability of their households.

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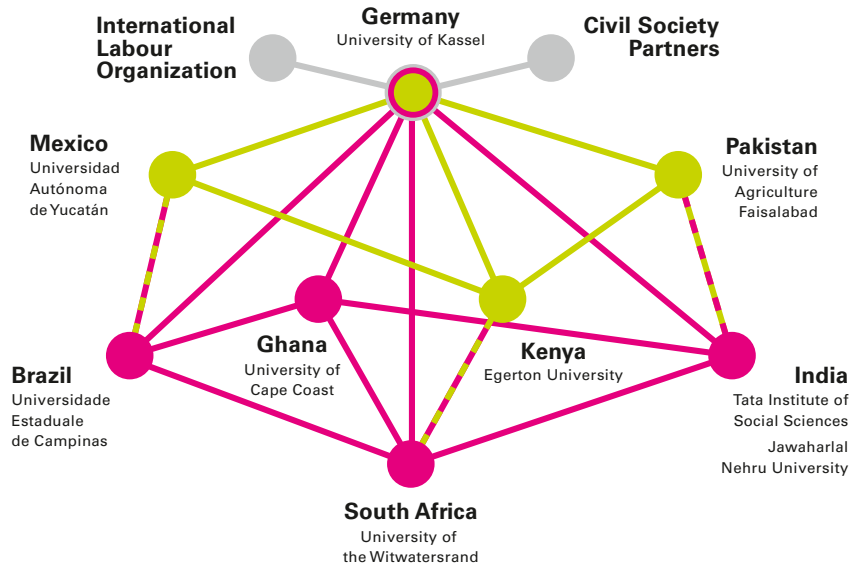
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