

Economic Crises and Unpaid Work: A Gender Analysis

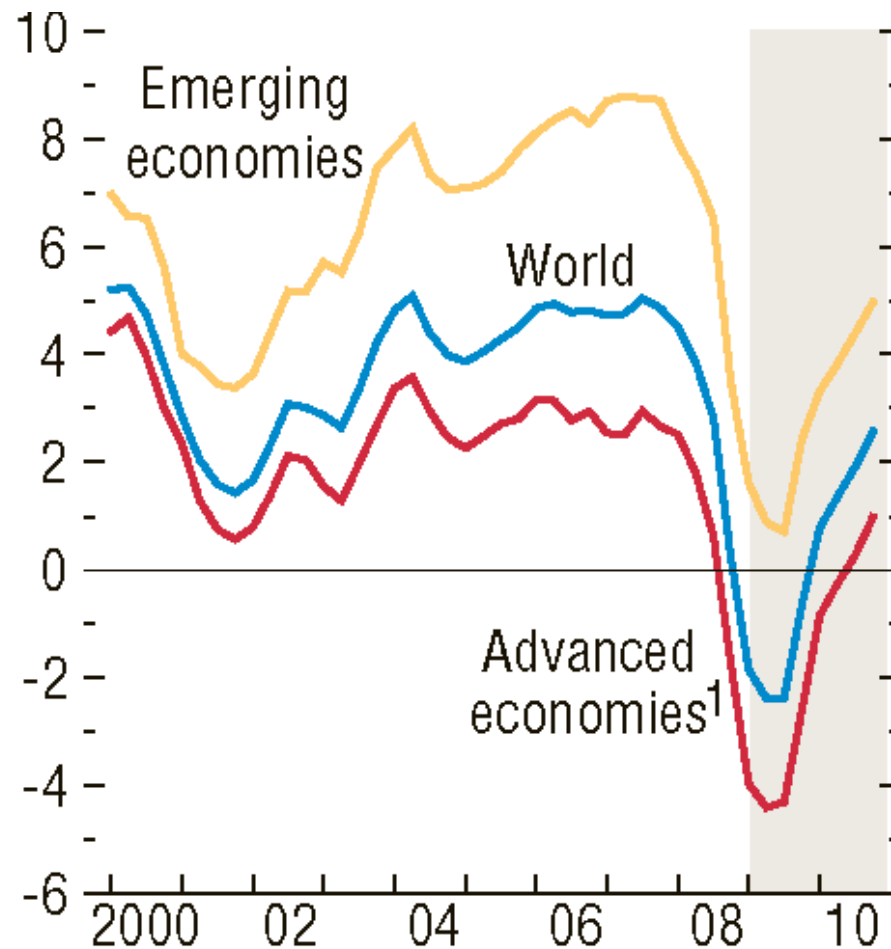
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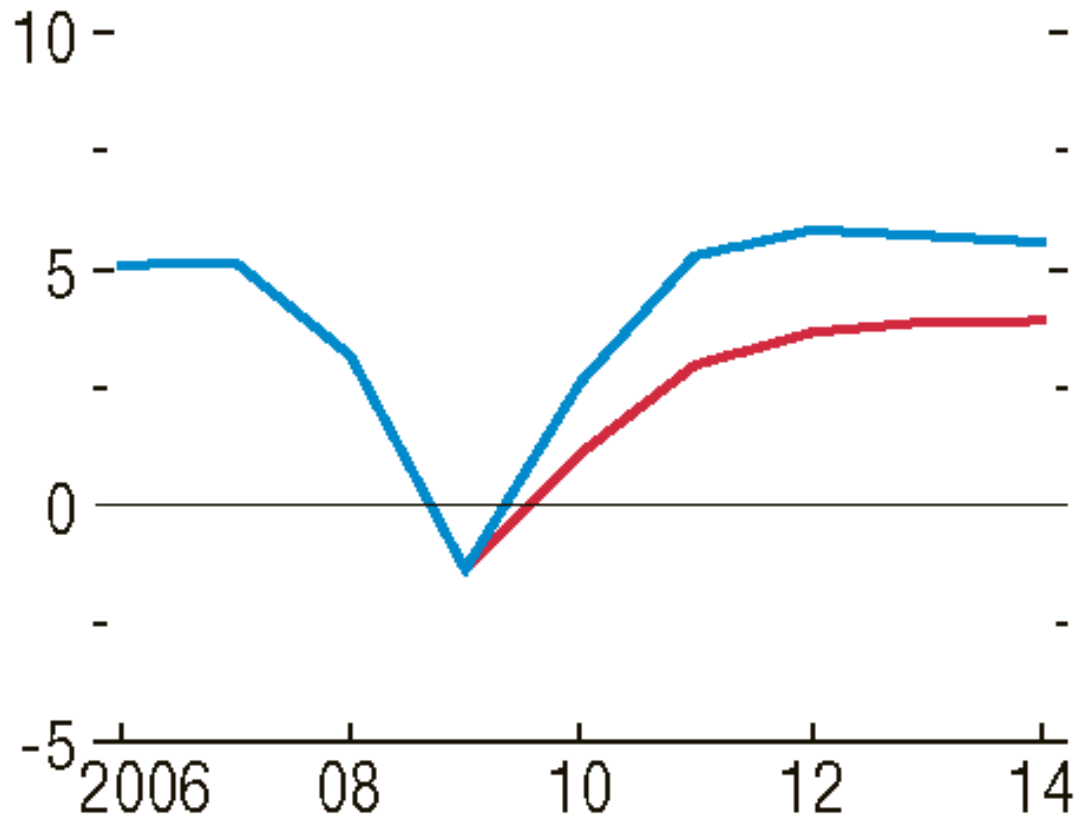
Real GDP, percentage change from year earlier

Source: IMF World Economic Outlook, Crisis and Recovery, April 2009



Alternative Medium Term Scenarios for growth of world GDP

Source: IMF World Economic Outlook, Crisis and recovery, April 2009



Gender Analysis of Economic Crisis

Gender analysis is most easily introduced via sex disaggregation of employment and unemployment, but gendered pattern of job losses is contingent on economic structure.

A deeper gender analysis treats labour as a produced means of production; produced in non-market relations; requiring unpaid work; requiring an irreducible level of care, and basic goods and services.

Gender norms everywhere currently assign to women the primary responsibility for nurturing labour.

The deeper analyse enables us to go beyond the gendered impact of the crisis to examine gender relations as a factor in the trajectory of the crisis: how destructive and how deep the downturn is.

Female and Male Job Loss in Current Crisis: Evidence from Some Developing Countries

“Women’s jobs are first to go” Oxfam International Discussion Paper, March 2009

“Women are the backbone of industries that have been hit hard “

Sri Lanka and Cambodia have each lost 30,000, mostly female, garment industry jobs

Nicaragua’s export processing zone has lost 16,000 jobs

More than half of the 40,000 jobs lost in Philippines are from export processing zones

But men also lose jobs, in activities like mining

Overseas Development Institute Working Paper 306 reports

Zambia: 8100 jobs lost in copper mining

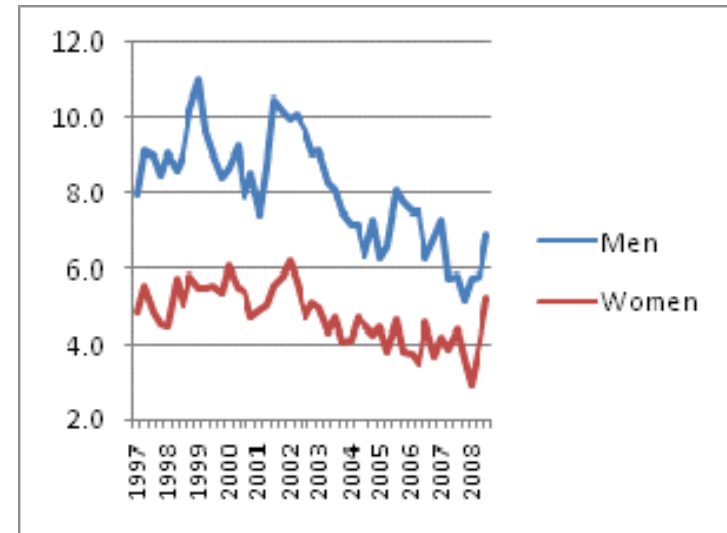
Where the export sector is female labour intensive,
women’s jobs will be first to go

Where the export sector is male labour intensive,
men’s jobs will be the first to go

Job Loss in UK: Report from Trades Union Congress, Jan 2009

Female and male redundancy rates
Q1 1997 – Q3 2008

Jan-Sept 2008 female rates
increased at double the rate for
men



Bringing in Unpaid Work and Labour as a Produced Means of Production

A four sector economy:

Private sector : formal and informal paid work;
contributing family labour (unwaged but producing for market)

Public sector: formal paid work

NGO/voluntary/community sector: formal paid work,
volunteer unpaid work

Domestic sector: unpaid domestic work: unpaid care work, unpaid production of goods for own consumption, site of production of the labour force; labour as a 'fictitious commodity'

Source : Elson (ed) 2000

Social Reproduction of the Economy

The social reproduction of the economy needs all sectors to contribute and circular flows between them to operate on a continuing basis.

All of the sectors and flows are gendered, in terms of divisions of labour, control of resources, norms about responsibilities and decisions.

From private sector:

production and supply of money, marketed goods and services ,wage and other payments,

From public sector:

production and supply of public services, infrastructure, transfer payments, wages, levying of taxes and user fees

From the domestic sector

production and supply of labour services

From the NGO/voluntary/community sector:

production and supply marked and non-marketed goods and services, including information and advocacy

Unpaid Work and the Production of the Labour Force

Transforming earnings into consumption

- we don't eat money, we eat meals

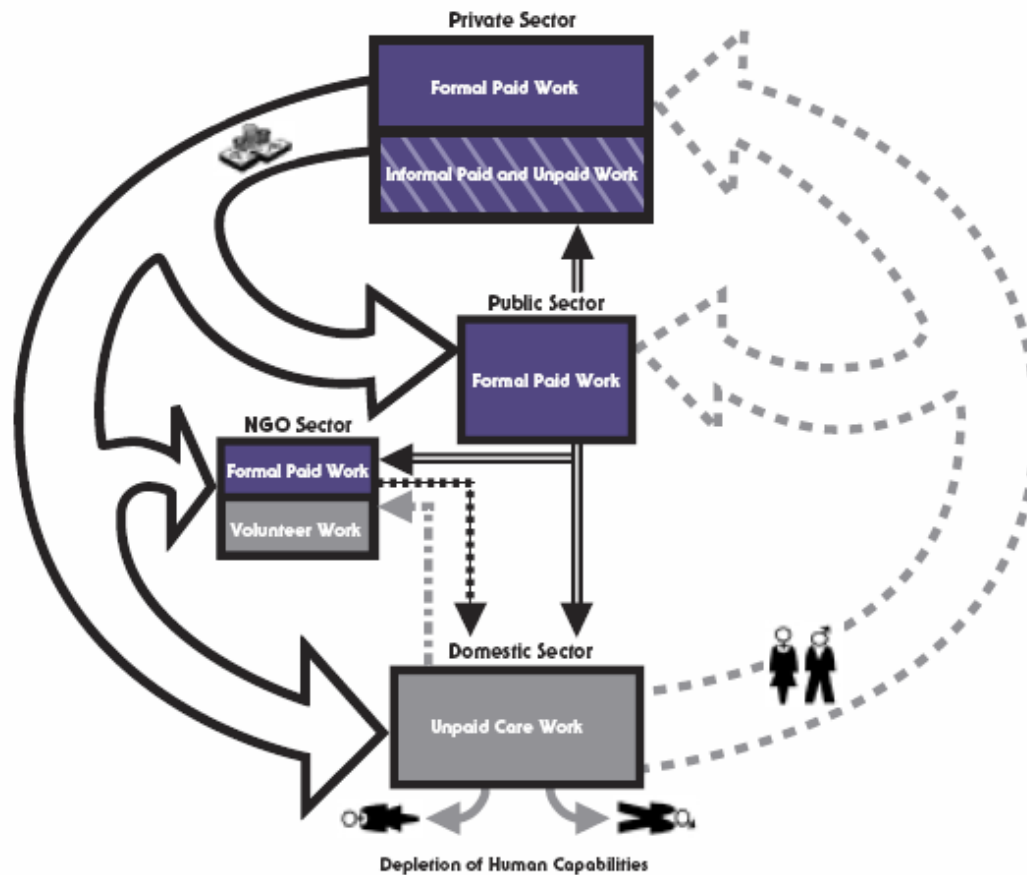
Producing for household consumption

- e.g. fuel, water, food crops (included in SNA but unpaid)
- e.g. care, cooking (not included in SNA, but included in production boundary, and thus part of Extended SNA))

Enabling people to feel like human beings in a system that treats them like commodities

Gender: much more of this work is done by women than by men; care and cooking is seen as 'women's work'

Tensions and contradictions: love and obligation, neglect and abuse, violence, family breakdown



- marketed goods and services and payments
- marketed and non-marketed goods and services, including information and advocacy
- inputs of paid labour
- inputs of paid labour and volunteer work
- public services, income transfers and payments, less taxes and user fees
- depletion of human capabilities

- formal work, included in GNP
- informal work, undercounted in GNP
- volunteer and unpaid care work, not included in GNP

Crisis as Rupture of Social Reproduction

Financial crisis: social reproduction of capitalist money put in jeopardy:
danger of large scale bank failures

Economic crisis: social reproduction of capitalist production put in jeopardy: danger of large number of bankruptcies

Livelihoods crisis: social reproduction of human beings put in jeopardy:
danger of depletion of human capabilities

Political crisis: protests, riots, strikes, occupations

Crisis as endemic: limits of markets as coordinators (incomplete contracts, asymmetry of information, uncertainty and risk); tension between minimization of labour costs and market for outputs

Possible safety features:

Responses of state, NGO/community sector, domestic sector

Women's Unpaid Domestic Work in Times of Crisis

What is its role?

- An invisible safety net?
- An intensifier of gender inequality?
- An intensifier of recession?

- All of the above?

Possible Domestic Sector Responses to Crisis

Increase informal paid work

longer hours, added workers, illegal and dangerous work

Increase unpaid domestic work

more production of some goods and services for consumption within domestic sector

But may reduce some kinds of domestic work: care work

Reduce consumption

Reduce use of public services like education and health (use has financial or opportunity costs)

Draw down savings; sell assets

Reduce leisure time, Reduce time for care for self

A squeeze on time

Likely to be differences by gender and age

Coping Strategies or Desperation Measures?

Can the invisible safety net absorb the effects of the crisis or is it weak and full of holes?

Risk of irrecoverable depletion of human capabilities:

- additional preventable deaths

- long term loss of health

- stunted and wasted children- long term impacts on child development

- children drop out of school

- fracturing of families and communities- stress and violence

Not just a downturn followed by an upturn: for some the upturn may never come.

Researching the Invisible Safety Net

Time Use Surveys

- comprehensive assessment of time use
- easy to disaggregate by sex and age of individuals
- conducted infrequently (eg every 5 years)

Additional Modules in Household Surveys

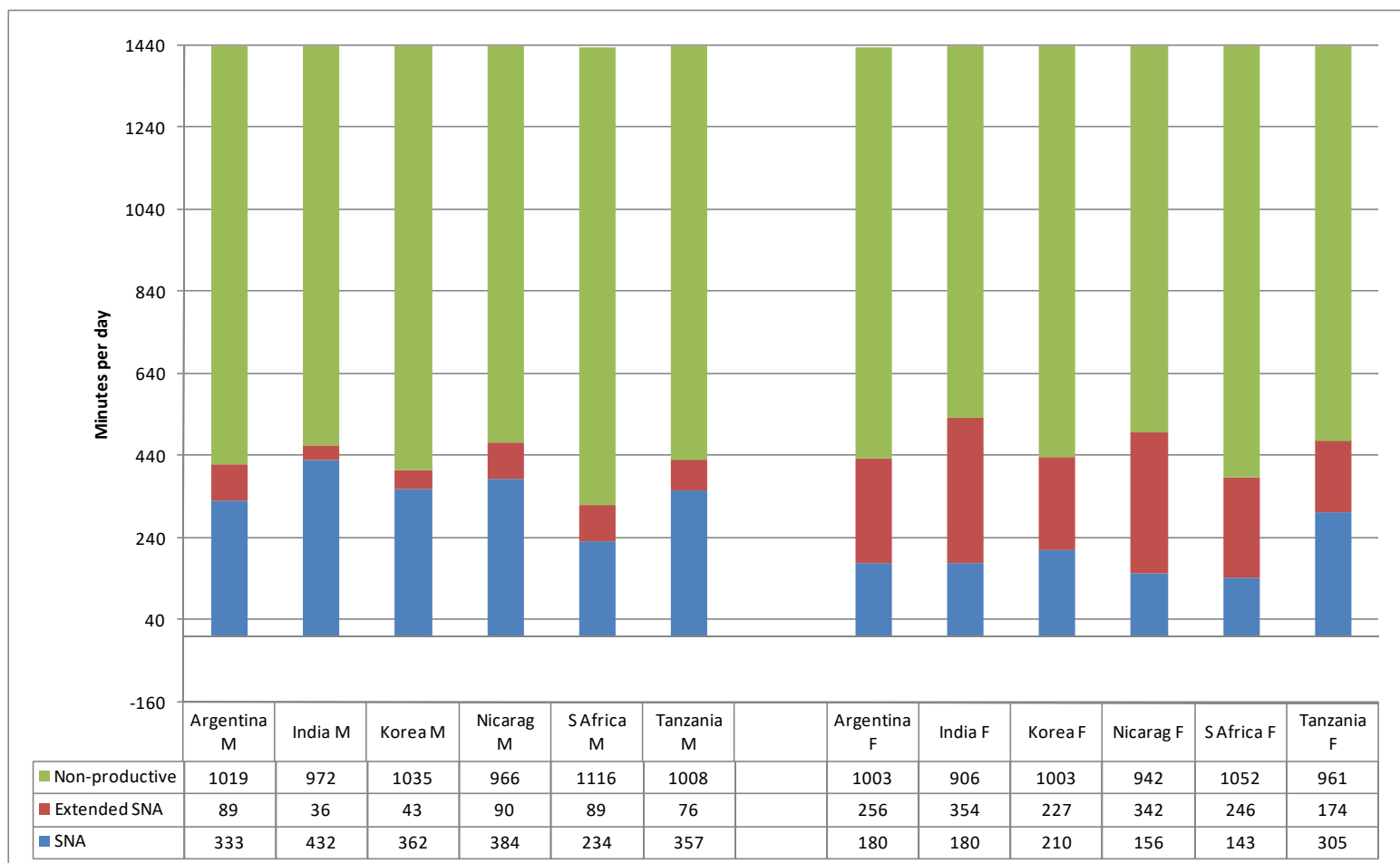
- conducted more frequently (eg every year)
- no comprehensive assessment of time use
- generally not disaggregated by sex and age of individuals

Case studies of particular at-risk groups in particular locations

- rapid -can be undertaken soon after onset of crisis
- not representative-small scale
- could be designed to have comprehensive assessment of time use, disaggregated by sex and age of individuals

Mean time spent per day on activities by SNA category, country and sex for full sample population

Source: Budlender 2008



Limitations of Aggregate SNA Framework for Examining Crises

Time spent in different components of SNA work likely to respond differently

- time in formal paid work likely to fall

- time in informal paid work likely to rise

- time in unpaid production of good for own consumption likely to rise

Time spent in different components of Extended SNA work likely to respond differently

- time in unpaid services like cooking may rise

- time in interpersonal care may fall

Time spent in non-SNA activities may rise or fall

- a rise may represent enforced idleness not more leisure

Average changes will not pin point those most at risk

Using Specially Conducted Nationally Representative Household Surveys: case of Argentina 2002

Respondents were asked if household had done any of the following since onset of crisis at end of 2001:

Reduced food consumption, Substituted to cheaper food,

Reduced non-food consumption, Substituted to cheaper non-food goods,

Had been unable to buy needed medicine,

Substituted to cheaper transportation,

Increased home production of consumption goods, Begun to make items at home for sale,

Migrated,

Sold or pawned belongings, drawn down savings,

Added more members to the labor force, worked more hours { i.e. in paid work},

Received support from friends and family,

Received assistance from government, churches or not for profits,

Participated in bartering, participated in communal activities (eg construction of communal facilities)

Unpaid Domestic Work in Argentine Crisis 2002

60% of households increased home food production

14.7% of households started producing good at home for sale

8.5% of households participated in the barter markets

6.3% of households participated in communal activities

Female headed households were found to be more likely than male headed households to increase home production both for own use and for sale

13.4% of households added new workers {in paid work}

14.8% of household worked longer hours {in paid work}

Source :Fiszbein et al 2003

Limitations of Argentina Study

Respondent was household head (though attempts were made to get information from other household members if head did not know answer to particular question)

Results not disaggregated by sex and age, but by household type

Did not investigate whether or not these responses allowed households to cope successfully:

no questions on education or health

no questions on tension or violence in the household

no questions on what happened to time for care, sleep, leisure

Case Studies: Study by WIEGO in 2009

Conducted with partners in 10 cities, Durban (South Africa), Blantyre (Malawi), Nakuru (Kenya), Lima (Peru), Bangkok (Thailand), Malang (Indonesia), Kasur (Pakistan), Pune (India), Bogata(Columbia), Santiago (Chile)

Interviewed 164 informal workers (79% of them women) in three occupations: Waste pickers, Home-based workers ,Street vendors

Almost all reported loss of earnings due to falling prices, falling sales, rising costs of inputs, more competition from new entrants who had lost jobs in formal employment

South African street vendor: “Lots of factories near here have closed, due to this recession. This has negatively impacted our business, as these factory workers are our main customers.”

Strategies of WIEGO Case Study Respondents

Spend longer hours in paid work

Travel to new and distant locations for paid work

Reduce consumption:

‘if one used to eat three potatoes, now you eat two...’ respondent in Chile

Reduce number of meals, from 3 meals to 2, and from 2 to 1

Cut out milk and meat, even for children

Produce more for home consumption

‘I try to economize by spending money only on necessary things. I take leftover cloth and make clothes for myself now.’ Home-based woman garment worker, Bangkok.

Another home-based worker reported no longer buying prepared meals for her family, but cooking meals herself.

Borrow from moneylenders

Disproportionate Burdens on Women

‘For certain, women are bearing the brunt of the of this recession. Many of the women, especially those who are widowed or single mothers, have no external support. They are caring for children alone, with dwindling incomes. Now many must support relatives who come to them after losing their jobs. The women who are married tell us that their husbands have given up. But these women cannot give up, for the sake of their children’.

Evalyne Wanyama, National Coordinator of National Association of Street Vendor's Kenya

Limitations of WIEGO Study

Sample very small

Not statistically representative

assembled by snowball method, via local NGOs

Did not investigate total time use

Challenge of timely monitoring of domestic sector

Opportunities in proposed new UN Global Impact and Vulnerability Alert system?

Sentinel site method used by Knowles et al 1999 to examine Asian Financial crisis- larger sample in 'typical' locations, household surveys, focus groups and key informants

Unpaid Domestic Work as an Intensifier of Gender Inequality

Studies of previous crises show that an extension of unpaid work may help to cushion the impact on men and boys, but jeopardize the capabilities of women and girls.

For example:

Knowles et al (1999) study of 1997 financial crisis in South Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand

Holmes et al (2009) investigation of 2008 food price crisis

Unpaid Domestic Work as Intensifier of Recession

Making clothes at home reduces demand for clothing workers

Making meals at home reduces demand for food vendors

What is a safety net for one household reduces the incomes of another household

The paradox of thrift: unpaid domestic work acts like savings and depresses aggregate demand

Modelled by Erturk and Cagatay 1995, who argue that net effect depends on whether depressive effect of more unpaid work is outweighed by a stimulus to investment through more women in labour market

Some Conclusions

- The more successful is an extension of unpaid domestic work in offsetting falls in consumption of one household, the more is the demand for labour from other households reduced.
- In a downturn, measures to replace lost household purchasing power are essential if recession is not to be deepened.
- The more successful is an extension of unpaid domestic work in sustaining the human capacities of men and boys, the more likely are the human capacities of women and girls to be at risk.
- It is important that at least some of the measures to replace lost purchasing power create purchasing power for women: multiplier and trickle down effects may be too slow to prevent an intensification of gender inequality

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