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ORIGINAL

Overcoming challenges: the solidarity economy as a response to women's unpaid work in Ecuador

Superando desafíos: la economía solidaria una respuesta al trabajo no remunerado de las mujeres en el Ecuador

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ABSTRACT

The sexual division of labor has historically relegated women to unpaid work in the home, perpetuating gender inequality and limiting their incorporation into the labor market under equal conditions. In Ecuador, this disparity is evident, as women devote significantly more time to unpaid work than men. This article analyzes the situation of women in relation to their hours of unpaid work and the income generated by these activities. It qualitatively explores the correlation between these variables and examines how the solidarity economy in Ecuador can contribute to the vindication of women in their productive role. In addition, Marxist and feminist theories were applied to examine the exploitation of women's unpaid work and its impact on socioeconomic welfare. The results show that women dedicate almost three times more time to unpaid work than men. The solidarity economy is presented as a viable alternative for women's flexible labor insertion, allowing them to generate income and financial autonomy through associative processes. The gender disparity in unpaid work in Ecuador is significant. The solidarity economy can be an alternative for empowering women, improving their participation in the labor market under more equitable conditions and promoting a fair distribution of the means of production and wealth.

Keywords: Economics of Care; Ecuador; Statistics on Unpaid Work in Ecuador; Unpaid Household Work; Use of Time.

RESUMEN

La división sexual del trabajo ha relegado históricamente a las mujeres a labores no remuneradas del hogar, perpetuando la desigualdad de género y limitando su incorporación al mercado laboral en condiciones de igualdad. En Ecuador, esta disparidad es evidente, ya que las mujeres dedican significativamente más tiempo al trabajo no remunerado que los hombres. Este artículo analiza la situación de las mujeres en relación con sus horas de trabajo no remunerado y los ingresos generados por estas actividades. Se explora cualitativamente la correlación entre estas variables y se examina cómo la economía solidaria en Ecuador puede contribuir a la reivindicación de las mujeres en su rol productivo. Además, se aplicaron teorías marxistas y feministas para examinar la explotación del trabajo no remunerado de las mujeres y su impacto en el bienestar socioeconómico. Los resultados muestran que las mujeres dedican casi tres veces más tiempo al trabajo no remunerado que los hombres. La economía solidaria se presenta como una alternativa viable para la inserción laboral flexible de las mujeres, permitiéndoles generar ingresos y autonomía financiera a través de procesos asociativos. La disparidad de género en el trabajo no remunerado en Ecuador es significativa.

La economía solidaria puede ser una alternativa para empoderar a las mujeres, mejorando su participación en el mercado laboral en condiciones más equitativas y promoviendo una distribución justa de los medios de producción y de la riqueza.

Palabras clave: Economía del Cuidado; Ecuador; Estadística de Trabajo no Remunerado en el Ecuador; Trabajo no Remunerado del Hogar; Uso de Tiempo.

INTRODUCTION

The sexual division of labor has been a historical characteristic that has relegated women to perform unpaid work in the home, such as caring for children and the elderly, housework, and caring for other households. This phenomenon is known as the “core economy” and has perpetuated gender inequality by limiting women’s full participation in the labor market on equal terms.⁽¹⁾

In Ecuador, the disparity in the division of unpaid work between men and women is evident according to the INEC Time Use Survey (2012) and the National Employment, Unemployment and Underemployment Survey.⁽²⁾ According to these surveys, women dedicated an average of 31,8 hours per week to unpaid work in 2012, while men dedicated only 9,2 hours per week. In the ENEMDU section on Time Use, it is observed that women dedicate an average of 26,7 hours per week to these tasks, with monthly income that ranges around \$117 for complementary activities other than the main economic ones. This work overload limits women’s well-being and autonomy,⁽³⁾ which highlights the need to address these inequalities in the workplace and in society.

Faced with this problem, this article maintains that the solidarity economy can empower women by recognizing and economically valuing their reproductive work, while generating income and opportunities in the labor market.⁽⁴⁾ Associative and solidarity practices such as production or care cooperatives are explored, which can significantly benefit women⁽⁵⁾, offering them a way to overcome the limitations imposed by the sexual division of labor.

From the perspective of Marxist Theory, the importance of recognizing and vindicating women’s unpaid domestic work within the capitalist context is argued, since this work is fundamental for the reproduction of the labor force.⁽⁶⁾ The invisibilization of this work implies a form of “exploitation” by both capitalists and women’s partners,⁽¹⁾ which underscores the need to make this kind of work visible and valued in today’s society.

Feminist and care economics carry out a critical analysis of the inequality in the distribution of domestic work between genders and its impact on women’s well-being.⁽⁷⁾ These currents advocate processes of redistribution and reduction of the workload at home as necessary measures to achieve greater gender equity in the labor and social sphere. This approach recognizes the importance of valuing the unpaid work performed by women, as well as promoting policies and practices that facilitate a more equitable distribution of domestic responsibilities.⁽⁸⁾

In this context, the Solidarity Economy emerges as an alternative to capitalism, based on principles of solidarity, cooperation and democratic management.⁽⁹⁾ Sometimes, this form of economy is presented as an option for women to generate income and acquire power from the perspective of reproductive rationality and care work.⁽⁴⁾ The Solidarity Economy is presented as a model that can contribute to the transformation of gender relations and the construction of a more equitable and fair society.

Care Work: A decent job?

Care work must be recognized as decent work, both in the paid and unpaid sphere, since it is intrinsically related to the reproduction of life.⁽¹⁰⁾ This work covers two main categories: direct care, such as feeding children or caring for a sick spouse; and indirect care, which includes activities such as cooking and cleaning.⁽¹¹⁾ These tasks are mostly carried out by women, which highlights the importance of valuing and making this work visible in society.

In this sense, Vásconez⁽¹²⁾ points out that women’s unpaid work in the home plays a crucial role in determining whether the activities they carry out can limit their access to the paid labor market. Given that the labor market is governed by an instrumental logic that includes aspects such as the temporal change of production and work specialization, among others, this can generate significant social gaps. Although unpaid work can sometimes be rewarding, by reducing economic opportunities, measured through income, this can have a negative impact on social well-being and trigger socioeconomic problems.⁽¹³⁾ It is crucial to recognize and value women’s unpaid work as a fundamental contribution to the economy and society as a whole.

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO) in 2019, globally women perform three quarters of unpaid care work. Furthermore, no country has achieved an equal distribution of this responsibility between men and women. This means that unpaid care work is especially intense for girls, as well as for women who live in middle-income countries, are married, have lower levels of education, reside in rural areas and have children who have not yet entered the school system.

Unpaid Household Work (TNRH) includes activities related to the reproduction of life through motherhood.

This implies that mothers often dedicate exclusive time to early childhood care.⁽¹⁴⁾ Max Neef approaches unpaid work from the perspective of human needs, suggesting that TNRH can be conceived as a need for participation and contribution to the community, which demands recognition and respect. This reinterpretation of reality leads women, who often have greater responsibility for care at home, to develop skills and abilities to generate income and contribute to the subsistence of the home, which implies participation in the economy.⁽¹⁵⁾

Magnitude of Paid Work

Resolution I of the 19th International Conference of Labor Statisticians (ICLS) establishes that the magnitude of Unpaid Household or care work can be evaluated in terms of the volume of working hours and the number of unpaid caregivers, considering the working-age population.⁽¹⁶⁾ The concept of time, as a multidimensional notion, has been the object of reflection from various disciplines, since its use and perception are related to power, economic, social, cultural structures, and the social relations of production and consumption. In economic terms, time is considered a scarce resource that reveals gender inequalities derived from the division and specialization of labor.

As mentioned, the 19th International Conference of Labor Statisticians (ICLS), unpaid care work can be an element that contributes to the well-being, health and maintenance of other people in the home, the community or in any territory, depending on its specific characteristics. This work plays a fundamental role in society by ensuring the care of people and contributing to the functioning of communities.

National Employment, Unemployment and Underemployment Survey (ENEMDUM)

In Ecuador, labor force surveys, such as household surveys, cover two dimensions of unpaid care work. The first dimension focuses on the magnitude and characteristics of the working-age population, measured by the number of people who participate directly and indirectly in this type of work. The second dimension focuses on the use of time dedicated to work, measured in terms of the volume of hours dedicated to these tasks.⁽¹⁷⁾

In accordance with this preamble, the National Employment, Unemployment and Underemployment Survey⁽¹⁸⁾ carried out by the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses of the Republic of Ecuador has been considered for the estimation of work hours. This is a probabilistic survey (simple random sampling) whose purpose is to measure indicators related to the monitoring of work activities, economic activities and sources of income of the population. For the year 2017, specifically in the month of September of that year, an analysis related to the “use of time” related to primary and secondary activities of the respondents was included.⁽²⁾

This survey covered a total of 16,044 homes throughout the national territory of Ecuador (excluding Galapagos), distributed in 322 population centers. Representative samples were obtained in both rural and urban areas, focusing on people over 5 years of age. In total, 57,329 people were surveyed, of which 28,176 were men and 29,153 were women.

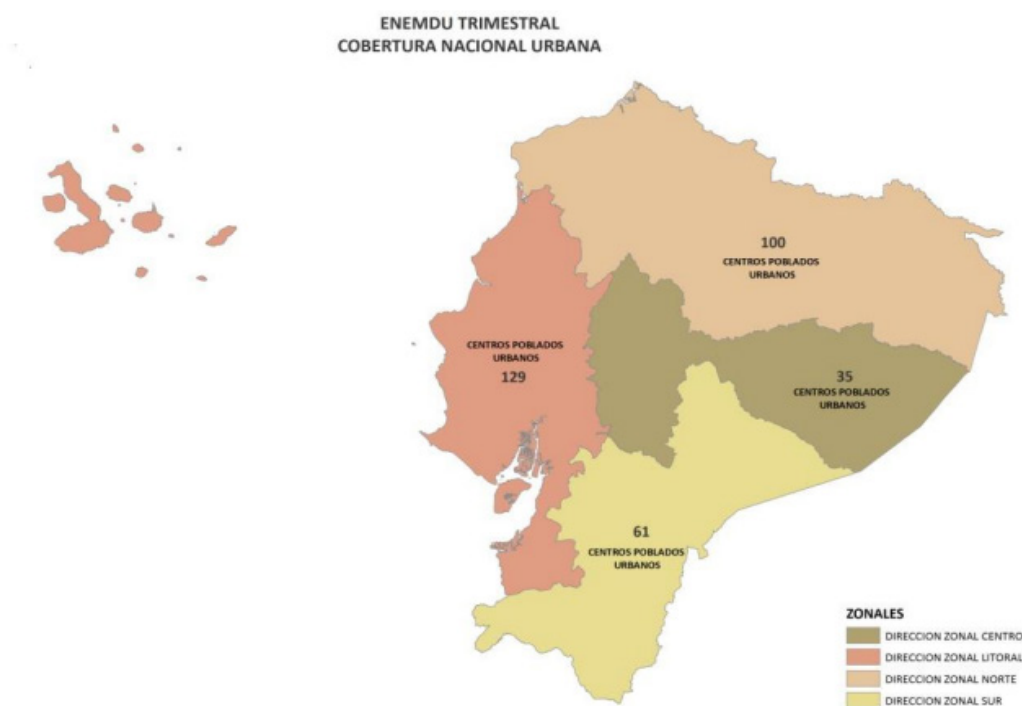


Figure 1. National Urban Coverage
Source: ENEMDU 2017 data

In the specific case of the women surveyed, the segmentation carried out corresponds to the housing area. Female respondents were categorized according to whether they lived in urban or rural areas, which could influence working conditions and the distribution of time spent on paid and unpaid work.

		Frequency	Percent	Percentage valid	Accumulated percentage
Valid	Urban	18711	64,2	64,2	64,2
	Rural	10442	35,8	35,8	100,0
	Total	29153	100,0	100,0	

Source: ENEMDU 2017 data.

As can be seen in table 1, there is a greater predominance in urban areas, with a total of 64,20 %, which means that the highest concentration is found in the urban area. This trend can be related to the set of social norms and perceptions that consider a natural division of domestic tasks, where women usually assume a predominant role in taking care of the home and family.

On the other hand, the surveys were carried out in 23 of the country's 24 provinces. In the specific case of women over 5 years of age, a greater representation is observed in the province of Guayas, followed by Pichincha and Tungurahua, as detailed in Table 2. However, it is important to highlight that the provinces of the Ecuadorian highlands they also have significant participation in the sample, which allows for a broader and more diverse representation of the socioeconomic and labor reality of women in Ecuador.

		Frequency	Percent	Percentage valid	Accumulated percentage
Valid	AZUAY	2216	7,6	7,6	7,6
	BOLIVAR	660	2,3	2,3	9,9
	CAÑAR	688	2,4	2,4	12,2
	CARCHI	776	2,7	2,7	14,9
	CHIMBORAZO	791	2,7	2,7	17,6
	COTOPAXI	1238	4,2	4,2	21,8
	EL ORO	2062	7,1	7,1	28,9
	ESMERALDAS	1371	4,7	4,7	33,6
	GUAYAS	3077	10,6	10,6	44,2
	IMBABURA	1440	4,9	4,9	49,1
	LOJA	685	2,3	2,3	51,5
	LOS RIOS	1201	4,1	4,1	55,6
	MANABI	1208	4,1	4,1	59,7
	MORONA SANTIAGO	638	2,2	2,2	61,9
	NAPO	946	3,2	3,2	65,2
	NO ESPECIFICA	99	,3	,3	65,5
	ORELLANA	993	3,4	3,4	68,9
	PASTAZA	872	3,0	3,0	71,9
	PICHINCHA	2613	9,0	9,0	80,9
	SANTA ELENA	918	3,1	3,1	84,0
	SANTO DOMINGO	726	2,5	2,5	86,5
	SUCUMBIOS	846	2,9	2,9	89,4
	TUNGURAHUA	2352	8,1	8,1	97,5
ZAMORA CHINCHIPE	737	2,5	2,5	100,0	
	Total	29153	100,0	100,0	

Source: ENEMDU 2017 data.

Based on the population of 29,153 women surveyed, a new segmentation of women has been established in "Working Age Population, PET", following the INEC methodology that considers women over 15 years of age as such. According to this criterion, a total of 21,239 women of working age (PET Women) were identified, as shown in figure 2.

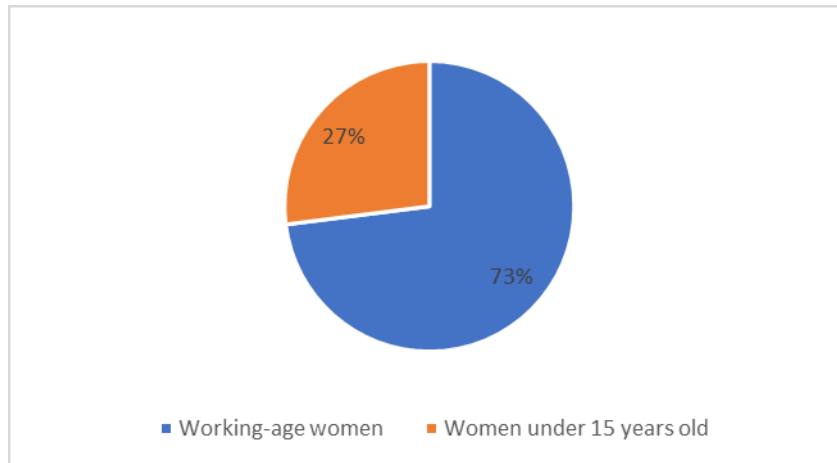


Figure 2. PET Segmentation (Women)
 Source: Elaboration through ENEMDU 2017 data development

In this regard, section 2 of the ENEMDU for September 2017 was taken into account, where “Income from secondary activities” is considered of the people surveyed, which amounts to a total of 21,239 PET and who have carried out household activities, for this section, only 516 women responded that they received income from other secondary activities carried out. The details of the variables analyzed in relation to “income from secondary activities” are detailed in ANNEX 1.

In the survey, a sum was made of all the hours of work carried out by the women surveyed in Ecuador who indicated that they received some economic income from household activities. The number of hours worked and the financial income received were averaged. As shown in figure 3, it is observed that women spend more time on secondary activities per week, and some receive income from these activities.

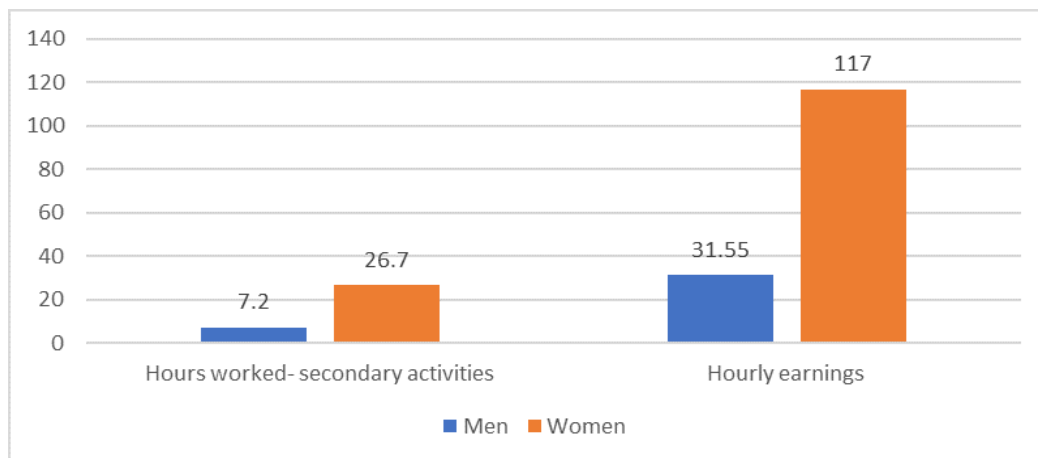


Figure 3. Comparison of hours worked and income generated by activities carried out at home
 Source: Elaboration through ENEMDU 2017 data development

Women’s earnings peaked at \$117 per week on average, while men’s earnings topped out at \$31,55. These data highlight a significant disparity in income between men and women, suggesting that women face greater difficulties in generating sufficient economic income from their unpaid work compared to men. This situation can have a negative impact on the economic well-being of women and on gender equality in general.⁽¹⁹⁾

Use of time

In section 5 of the ENEMDU surveys for September 2017, the “Time Use” of the people surveyed is addressed, focusing on establishing the number of hours that women dedicate to their secondary activities. This section provides detailed information on how women distribute their time between different activities, allowing a better understanding of the unpaid workload they face and its impact on their participation in the labor market and their general well-being.⁽²⁰⁾

The methodology used in section 5 is quantitative, since it focused on those women who indicated having carried out secondary activities, adding the number of hours dedicated to these activities. The details of the variables used in this calculation are specified in Annex 2, which allows a more precise understanding of how

this analysis was carried out and how the conclusions presented in the study were reached.

In section 5 of ENEMDU, a sample segmentation is carried out, since the variable ut corresponds to a closed question with a dichotomous answer: “Do you participate in the chores of your home, such as: preparing food, making the beds, cleaning the entire room? house, wash clothes, shop, etc.?” For this section, 19,618 women responded affirmatively and 1,521 women responded negatively. For this research, only those women who responded affirmatively are considered, since they are the ones who carry out unpaid care activities at home.

Likewise, secondary activities carried out both during the work week and on weekends were considered. In this section of ENEMDU 2017, this information was collected on a weekly basis. To carry out an adequate analysis, the average number of hours of work in secondary activities carried out by women on a monthly basis was calculated, in order to assess the monthly income generated from these activities. This monthly approach provides a more accurate view of the workload and income women can generate throughout the month.

METHOD

Information from the database of the National Employment, Unemployment and Underemployment Survey (ENEMDU) of 2017 was used, which covers the entire Ecuadorian territory. This document contains items related to the use of time and income from non-main activities, which allows identifying how many hours both men and women work weekly and whether they receive any type of remuneration for these activities. The analysis of this data provides a detailed view of the distribution of unpaid work and the income generated by these activities in the Ecuadorian population.

In addition, we sought to determine if there is any correlation between the income that women receive from their secondary activities. To do this, a multiple linear regression analysis was carried out, considering the dependent variable “income” and the independent variables “age”, “hours worked monthly in secondary activities” and “level of education”. Additionally, to investigate the existence of a relationship between the variables “level of education” and “monthly hours worked” in women, the Chi-square test was carried out to determine whether those with more education have higher or lower incomes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The survey was carried out in September 2017, covering 57,329 people in the 24 provinces of the country. Of this total, 29,153 correspond to women and 28,176 to men. After segmentation by gender, people of working age (PET) were considered for the first descriptive analysis. For Moreira-Intriago et al.⁽²⁰⁾ this approach allows for a more specific understanding of the distribution of unpaid work and income generated by secondary activities in the Ecuadorian population at that time.

	N	Media
Men’s hours	19763	7,2
Women’s hours	19619	26,7

Source: ENEMDU 2017 data.

Table 3 shows that, although there were more men who declared they carried out secondary activities, the average number of hours dedicated to these activities is greater in the women surveyed, with an average of 26,7 hours per week. This indicates that women not only participate in these activities in a greater proportion, but also dedicate more time to them compared to men.

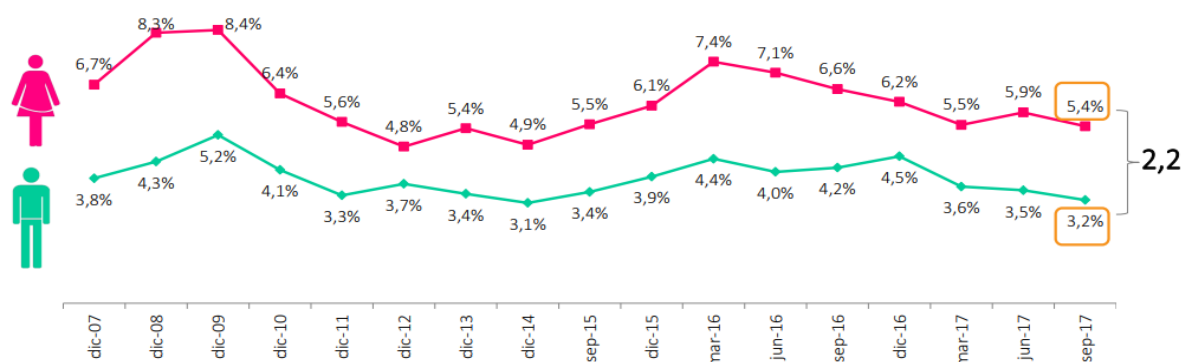


Figure 4. Unemployment by gender (evolution until September 2017)

Source: INEC, ENEMDU 2017 (general results)

In figure 4, it is observed that unemployment in women is 2,2 percentage points higher than in men, which means that, in percentage terms, women have fewer opportunities to obtain formal employment and, therefore, dedicate more time to secondary household activities.⁽¹⁷⁾ This indicates a clear unfavorable trend towards women in terms of access to formal employment throughout the years studied.

According to Andino⁽²¹⁾ the importance of attributing public policies and the production by subjects of collective identities to public policies is ratified, as well as the recognition that participation in collectives implies. Sandoval⁽⁶⁾ states that these processes of identity construction, considering economic or extra-economic factors, can contribute to participation in the popular and solidarity economy.

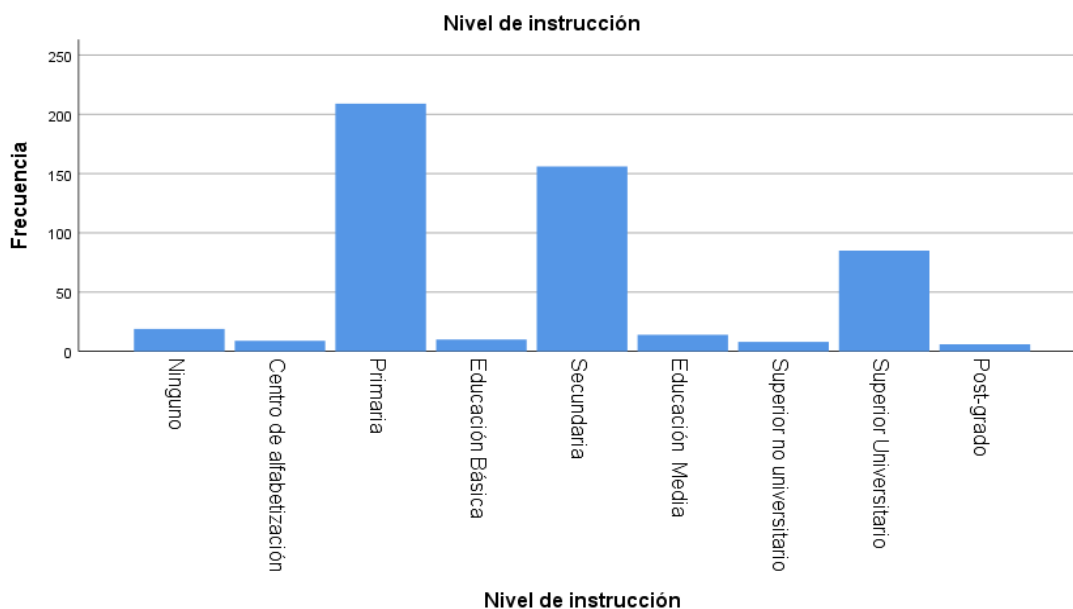


Figure 5. Educational level of the women surveyed
Source: INEC, ENEMDU 2017 (general results)

In figure 5, it is observed that the majority of women who carry out secondary activities have only achieved a primary educational level. This fact constitutes a reason for analysis, since it could be one of the factors that contribute to the persistent disparity in working hours between genders.⁽⁸⁾

Focusing the study on the female gender, we seek to determine if there is any correlation between the income that women receive from their secondary activities. To do this, a multiple linear regression is identified between the dependent variable “income” and the independent variables “age”, “monthly hours worked in secondary activities” and “level of education”. The analysis carried out in SPSS software yields the following results:

Pearson correlation		Income	Man-hours	Age	Educational level
Correlation Pearson		1,000	-,030	-,089	,302
Sig. (unilateral)	Man-hours	-,030	1,000	-,108	-,055
	Age	-,089	-,108	1,000	-,261
	Level of instruction	,302	-,055	-,261	1,000
Sig. (unilateral)	Income	.	,245	,021	,000
	Man-hours	,245	.	,007	,106
	Age	,021	,007	.	,000

Through the analysis of statistical significance, it is ruled out that the variables “level of education” and “age” have a correlation with monthly income in the multiple linear regression study, given that their significance value is less than 0,05. Only the variable “monthly hours worked” is considered influential in the correlational study. The resulting equation is the following:

Table 5. Simple linear correlation coefficients

Model	Coefficients non-standardized		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.	95,0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Dev. Mistake	Beta			Lower limit	Upper limit
1	(Constant)	126,401	14,834				
	Men-hours	-,087	,126	-,030	-,691	,490	- ,336 ,161

The simple linear regression equation corresponds to:

$$\text{Income} = 126,401 - (0,087 \text{ hours worked})$$

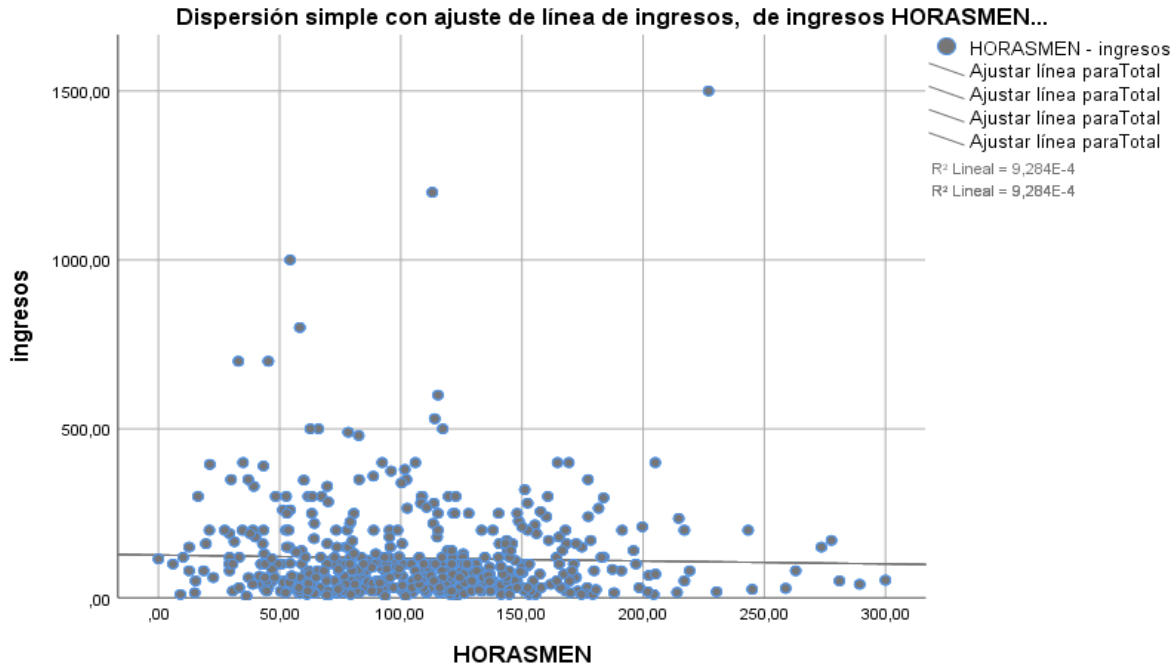


Figure 6. Data dispersion (correlation between monthly income variable and monthly hours worked)

Regarding whether there is an association between the variables “level of education” and “monthly hours worked” in women, the Chi-square test is carried out with the purpose of determining whether those with more education have higher or lower incomes.

Table 6. Chi-square test (association between variables)

	Value	Df	Significance asymptotic (bilateral)
Pearson chi-square	1149,892 ^a	912	,000
Likelihood ratio	526,727	912	1,000
Linear by linear association	46,912	1	,000
N. of valid cases	516		

The corresponding hypotheses are proposed:

H0: The variables level of education and monthly hours worked in secondary activities are independent.

H1: The variables level of education and monthly hours worked in secondary activities are dependent.

By performing the Chi-square test, a significance value of 0,00 is obtained, which is less than 0,05. Therefore, the null hypothesis H0 is rejected and the alternative hypothesis H1 is accepted. This indicates that there is a dependency between women’s income (related to the number of hours worked) and the level of education they have.

It has been verified through the 2017 National Employment, Unemployment and Underemployment Survey (ENEMDU) that one of the influential variables for women in Ecuador to have a greater number of hours of unpaid work is the low level of education. This situation is identified as especially relevant in Ecuador due to the scarcity of government policies related to the education of the population and the generation of adequate

employment.^(10,11)

The Popular and Solidarity Economy as a response to the problems detected

In response to the situation described above, the Popular and Solidarity Economy can be an alternative to overcome the challenges associated with unpaid work at home. Vásconez⁽¹²⁾ states that many times, this perception is marked by machismo, imposing on women the obligation to be a housewife, which perpetuates inequalities within the family and encourages continuous social class struggles.

It is important to highlight that the Social and Solidarity Economy has a close relationship with the feminist economy, with complementary characteristics. One of the main contributions of this relationship is having won the so-called “domestic work debate.” Initially, this debate focused on making domestic work visible, in dialogue with Marxist theory.⁽¹⁹⁾

Along these lines, Peña-Contreras et al.⁽¹³⁾ points out that it is crucial that unpaid work be recognized as a process of social claim. The Social and Solidarity System, as mentioned in article 283 of the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, establishes that “the economic system is social and supportive; it recognizes the human being as subject and end; it tends towards a dynamic and balanced relationship between society, State and market, in harmony with nature; and its objective is to guarantee the production and reproduction of the material and immaterial conditions that make good living possible”. In this context, considering the process of reproductive rationality, the popular and solidarity economy seeks to close the social gaps generated by market failures.^(15,14)

In this sense, the Popular and Solidarity Economy (EPS) in Ecuador has as its main objective to promote fair trade and social equality through the creation and strengthening of the actors that make it up: cooperatives, associations, communities and popular and supportive economic units.⁽¹⁶⁾ This seeks to generate opportunities for access to products and services, promoting a more supportive and sustainable economy. Within the framework of the institutional framework for the popular and solidarity economy, the process of accompaniment and strengthening carried out by the Institute of Popular and Solidarity Economy stands out, aimed at both entrepreneurs and working.⁽¹⁴⁾ This process includes training and promotion of products and services, supported by stewardship, regulation and control criteria, and focuses on the creation of new opportunities for these groups.

As Coraggio⁽²²⁾ mentions, work, according to social reality, is emancipatory, since its condition is the reproduction and development of human life. In this sense, the individual must have the possibility of voluntarily integrating into the systems of the social division of labor in conditions that allow the development of his or her capabilities. Coraggio also points out that the self-managed associative work, carried out in solidarity with autonomy, can lead to new processes of social imbrication.

The solidarity economy is a perspective on economic activity that prioritizes people, the environment, and sustainable and sustainable development with intergenerational justice.⁽¹⁵⁾ In its various manifestations, it is conceived as a lifestyle that covers all aspects of people’s lives, putting the economy at the service of society. In this approach, each individual and the communities formed through social initiatives are the main reference, defined not by the material benefits of an initiative, but by the quality of life and well-being of its members and society as a whole.⁽¹⁶⁾

In this sense, the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) can be a link to integrate people into the labor market through the incorporation of universal values in the management of economic activity, such as equity, equality, complementarity, justice, economic fraternity, solidarity, democracy and participation. Thus, the SSE obeys new forms of production, distribution, marketing and consumption with social, economic and cultural responsibility, becoming an instrument of social transformation.

The solidarity economy is rational and practical, driven by fully defined social sectors in which family, friendship and neighborhood relationships establish ties of mutual help, cooperation and solidarity. Therefore, associative processes are promoted through the Organic Law of Popular and Solidarity Economy.

Based on the analysis, where education plays an important role in the allocation of hours to unpaid work, it is necessary to reconsider that not only the processes of associativity and solidarity integrate forms of organization. In the Ecuadorian case, the Popular Economic Units (PEU) also come into play, which include sole proprietorships, family businesses, domestic businesses, retailers, artisan workshops, and people responsible for the care economy.⁽²⁰⁾ The articulation of the Popular and Solidarity economy thus becomes a crucial link in reducing social gaps.

Therefore, equality and the progressive eradication of poverty conditions, as well as the incorporation of unpaid household work, require the consolidation of intersectoral policies that complement the generation of capacities and opportunities based on rights and economic inclusion. This is based on the fair and equitable distribution of the means of production and wealth, through mechanisms that encourage the participation of those excluded from the market.⁽¹⁷⁾

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the variables related to the unpaid activities of women in Ecuador leads to the conclusion that, historically and until today, there is an absolute disparity between the genders. It is observed that women dedicate considerably more hours to secondary household chores compared to men. Although some women receive economic income from these activities, these amounts do not reach a sufficient level to be considered adequate employment in monetary terms.

The geographic information provided by ENEMDU (2017) leads to the conclusion that, on average, women in Ecuador work four times more hours and earn four times more income from secondary jobs compared to men. This suggests that in Ecuador the historical classist tradition that assigns specific roles in household activities according to gender still persists.

Within the analysis of the level of education, it is concluded that the majority of the women surveyed who carry out secondary activities have primary education, which may be one of the reasons why they cannot increase their job opportunities compared to men.

In the Ecuadorian context especially, the Popular and Solidarity Economy (EPS) is presented as an effective solution to address the challenges of unpaid work at home. The EPS promotes fair trade and social equality by strengthening cooperatives, associations and popular economic units, recognizing the importance of domestic work and its contribution to the economy. This not only makes working from home visible and appreciated, but also offers a more sustainable and inclusive economy.

The economic income obtained by women in secondary activities does not correspond to an adequate monetary value. However, it was detected that, with a convenient popular and solidarity economy plan, the effective time of women who carry out these activities could be used more efficiently to obtain extra income and thus contribute economically to their homes.

Based on the statistical information on unpaid household work, it can be concluded that education, income level and hours assigned to unpaid work activities of women in Ecuador affect their participation in the labor market. Instrumental way. The Social and Solidarity Economy (ESS) is presented as an alternative to participate in this market under a logic of expanded reproduction of life. This alternative is materialized through mechanisms such as production cooperatives, community or other associations, as well as through Popular Economy Units based on the work fund. In addition, current legal regulations are considered, such as the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador and the Organic Law of Popular and Solidarity Economy, whose powers encourage the participation of EPS actors at the national and subnational level.

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