

Effect of Resource Transfer Programs When the Head of the Household Is Female In Mexico

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Abstract.

The objective of this article is to examine the impact of the OPORTUNIDADES-PROSPERA conditional cash transfer program on women heads of household. The database was analyzed consisted of 3,762 families that profited between 2004 and 2017 settled in the 32 states of the Mexican Republic. It is analyzed by Amartya Sen's skills focus theory and by Martha Nussbaum's later contribution to this theory, focused on the capacities necessary for women to achieve the desired well-being and overcome inherited poverty status. A methodology with a quantitative-descriptive approach is used through two comparisons. The first focus would be on the beneficiary households of the OPORTUNIDADES-PROSPERA program, and the second would be on the total income of the beneficiary families of the program. The conclusion reached when conducting this study is that most of the households studied that entered the program have changed the composition of the head of household because the access of these women to income transfer has provided some benefits in terms of empowerment. The results obtained show us that the conditional cash transfer programs in households headed by women are not in all cases enough to overcome initial poverty. Also, governments have not been able to combat poverty that affects households headed by women.

Keywords: Conditional cash transfer, gender, poverty, women head house-hold, Mexico.

I. Introduction

The conditional cash transfer programs have the goal of eradicating generational poverty and generating competitive human capital in the poorest families (Bergmann & Tafolar, 2014). Conditional cash transfer programs have been implemented in various countries around the globe, and their objective is to achieve human development. This type of program has been carried out in 52 countries, of which 17 are located in Latin America (Mariano, 2020). In Latin America, those implemented in Brazil and Mexico stand out. Brazil stands out for having the most successful conditional cash transfer program in the world called Bolsa Familia. In Mexico, the OPORTUNIDADES-PROSPERA Program was one of the first conditional cash transfer programs in Latin America.

Throughout history, the Mexican government has sought different ways to combat poverty, which is why it implemented different social policies to achieve it. But it was until the 1970s that these efforts were more palpable that although they only focused mainly on strengthening human capital through access to education, they did not have a multidimensional vision of poverty. Realizing this lack of multidimensionality in the programs that were being implemented, the Mexican government decided to act and create a program that would encompass this vision of poverty. In 1997, the education, health and food program was implemented in Mexico, which is known by its acronym in Spanish, PROGRESA.

PROGRESA not only focuses on education, like the previous programs, also includes nutrition and health since its goal is to develop the human capital of the most vulnerable families on these three elements. The stipend is given directly to the mother of the family, whether who is the head of the household. The money transfers are bi-monthly and on the condition that they send their children to school, attend routine health check-ups, and receive workshops on preventive health care. In 2001, it changed its name to OPORTUNIDADES, which was maintained until 2014, where it was changed to PROSPERA. In 2004, the name was changed because the program was added to the linkage of the families benefited with productivity. So, they did not depend only on the subsidy received, it was feasible to increase their income, and more families could be able to exceed the poverty thresholds in which they were.

In this article, a thorough analysis will be conducted to understand how the OPORTUNIDADES-PROSPERA Program. The families will be analyzed since they joined the program, and until the last recorded follow-up, these households are distributed in all the states of the Mexican Republic. The 2030 millennium goals have made it relevant to study the gender perspective of households to find out if a great stipend is necessary for families headed by female heads of household (Nations, 2018). Because this program does not focus exclusively on female heads of the household, the purpose of this work is to find out if the households benefited by the OPORTUNIDADES-

PROSPERA Program have had an impact on the heads of household and if it has positively affected the income of benefited families. The null hypothesis that households benefiting from a monetary resource transfer program will have an impact on the sex of who heads them. Taking into consideration these hypotheses: H1: if the households benefited by a cash transfer program will have an impact on the sex of who heads them, H2: if the households headed by women are located in the most marginalized strata of poverty, and H3: if the households headed by women overcome initial poverty and achieve well-being when they are supported by conditional cash transfer programs.

The first section of this article will focus on the theoretical analysis of poverty and its effects on women. In the second section, you will focus on the method used to do the analysis. The third section presents the results, and I contrast them with the hypotheses raised. The fourth section is the conclusion that will be drawn from the previous sections.

II. Review of previous literature

The phenomenon of poverty is a complex problem that affects all the countries of the world to a greater or lesser extent. Mexico is not an exception because of its search to implement actions that will help fight poverty and after the economic crisis of 1982, which affected Latin America. Mexico's government had to rethink its economic policy that focused on import substitution industrialization (ISI), and it has fully entered Neoliberalism now. International organizations helped Mexico to make a faster transition. It retook the 3 pillars of neoliberalism: trade liberalization, financial deregulation, and privatization.

Neoliberalism arose in the post-war period and was originated from the thinking of the authors' Herbert Spencer, Jacques Rueff, and Friedrich A. Hayek. The latter was the chief promoter of the Neoliberal model that took up the principles of liberalism towards an exchange of goods in a free market, which would cause the development of (Hayek, 1945). According to the studies of Novelo (2004) in Latin America, structural reforms and the free market have only exacerbated capitalist relations of production, which has resulted in an increase in poverty and the marginalization of the social strata with less income.

Understanding what poverty is, it is necessary to remember the most prominent concepts, among them is that of Sen (1999), where he typifies poverty as the deprivation of the fundamental freedoms that the individual needs plenty develop. Which outlines the thoughts of poverty from a multidimensional point of view, since Sen considers that lack of income was only part of the problem of satisfying the basic needs of individuals. Alkire & Foster (2011) were the first researchers to have an approach to a multidimensional measurement of poverty they took up the ideas of Amartya Sen and made them concrete by developing a multidimensional measurement of poverty. In this work by Alkire and Foster, they mathematically show how the multidimensional poverty measurement is better than the traditional one-dimensional measurement of poverty through income.

Focusing on poverty as a multidimensional problem, G. Sen (1998) analyzed that poverty cannot be seen only through an individual but must be analyzed from a family point of view since the different roles of individuals within the family could support the situation of poverty of the same. Also, the study of Benería & Sen (2014) where they made a feminist analysis of third world households and realized that it is impossible to ignore what happens within the households of families in poverty since there is an intertwining of relationships gender and class. Returning to the vision of gender poverty was Nussbaum (1992), who take up Amartya Sen's theory of capacities developed in 1979, gave it a gender approach since she argues that women have capacities inferior to those of men. Nussbaum argued for the need for governments to implement actions aimed at minimum respect for the human dignity of women. She provides ten central functional human capacities to achieve the much-desired equality of capacities between men and women. Butler (2015) argues that there are no sexual roles or gender roles, significantly or biologically inscribed in human nature, each role is assigned by the culture or the environment where the individual develops. Regarding the heads of households, Rallu (2017) says that women heads of households, lonely with children, are the households that tend to fall into the most marginalized quartiles. Although, it is also true that households, where there is a female family headquarters, which have few resources, have very few opportunities, and this means that they do not have educational, health, and employment opportunities for themselves or their children.

III. Methods

The empirical study is based on the single socioeconomic information questionnaire (CUIS), which is the instrument by which the Social Development Secretariat (SEDESOL), which is to operate the OPORTUNIDADES-PROSPERA Program, collects information from households both to incorporate them into the program and to monitor their beneficiaries.

In 2004, 3,762 beneficiaries of the OPORTUNIDADES-PROSPERA program were incorporated and were followed up in 2007, 2011, and 2017. Four stages were proposed to address the study of the problem: 1) Compilation of the database, 2) Delimitation of the beneficiaries to study 3) Analysis of the information and getting results, and 4) Interpretation of results and conclusions.

1) Compilation of the database: The necessary steps were taken with SEDESOL so that through the PROSPERA National Coordination it will provide the newest database of the beneficiaries of the OPORTUNIDADES-PROSPERA Program for the period 2004-2018.

2) Delimitation of the beneficiaries to study: Due to the magnitude of the database provided, and that the follow-ups are not carried out with specific periodicity, it was determined to use those incorporated in 2004, and they would have had their follow-up

in the same years. Besides, these families were distributed in all the states of the Mexican Republic, which gave us the 3,762 beneficiary households analyzed.

3) Analysis of information and obtaining results: A quantitative-descriptive analysis of the characteristics of the beneficiary families was carried out, which focused more on studying the head of the household through their gender and the total income of the families, comparing them with the poverty lines of the years of study.

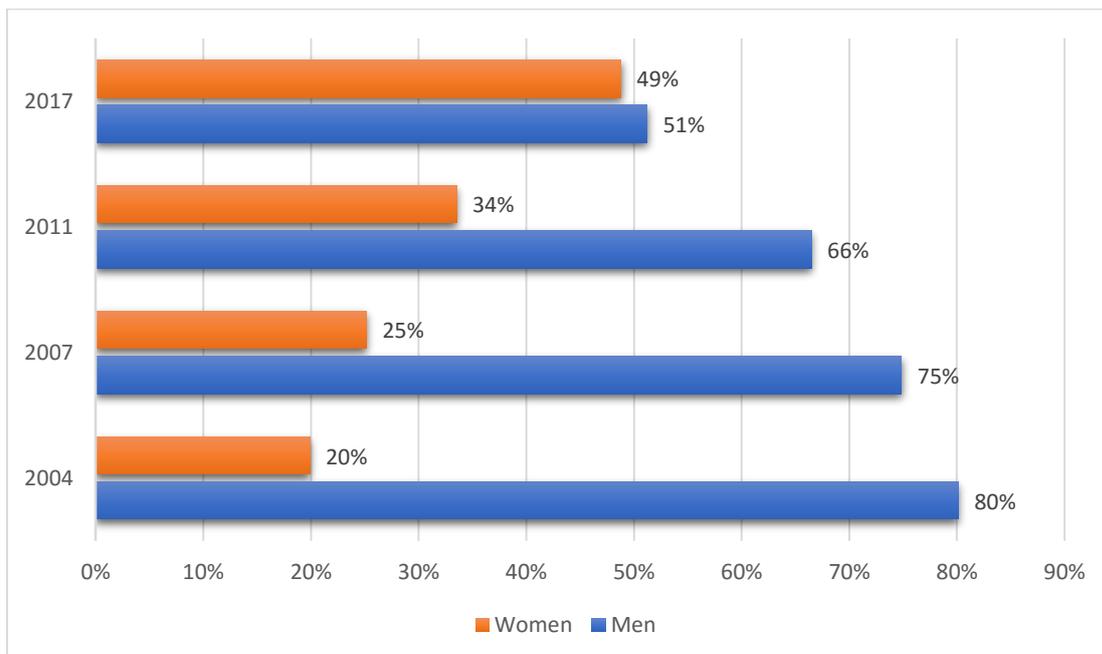
4) Interpretation of results and conclusions: the analysis of the information was contrasted with the previously exposed literature review to be able to interpret the results. Also, the general conclusion of the study of poverty, the benefit of the conditional cash transfer programs, and the particular results obtained from the OPORTUNIDADES-PROSPERA program.

IV. Results

4.1 Study of the OPORTUNIDADES-PROSPERA Program

4.1.1 Gender of the head of household

Figure 1: Gender of the head of household by year.



Source: Own elaboration.

Figure 1 shows that 3,762 families started in households headed by women with a proportion in 2004 of 20%, 2007 25%, 2011 34% and 2017 49%; while men their proportion was 2004 80%, 2007 75%, 2011 66% and 2017 51%. In other words, the difference in households headed by men decreased over time since it began with a difference in 2004 of 60%, 2007 50%, 2011 32% and 2017 only 2%. This data is relevant in that it means that 58% of the families when joining the OPORTUNIDADES-PROSPERA Program were headed by a male, in 2017, these households were already headed by a woman. Therefore, the null hypothesis is confirmed that households benefiting from a program of monetary transfer of resources will have an impact on the sex of who heads them. Which supports the studies carried out by Amanasio & Velérie (2010), Adato, de la Briere, Mindek & Quisumbing (2000) where they argue stipends that give this benefit to women and empower them since these take control of the resources, so there are changes in the behavior of the observed households.

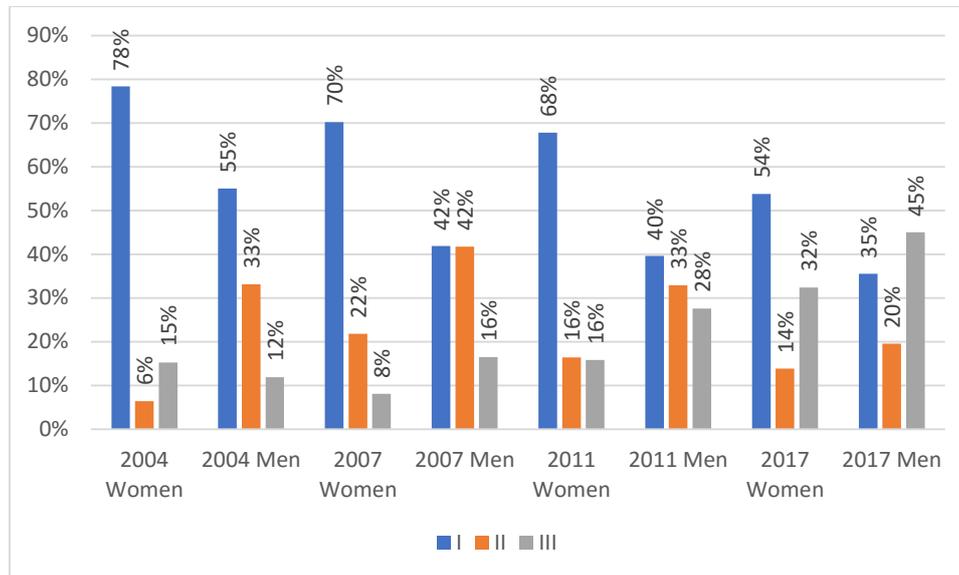
4.1.2 Total household income

Table 1: Stratification according to monthly household income.

Stratum	Income per household (Mexican pesos)	Year	Denomination by income
I	0 - 472.07	2004	Extreme poverty
	0 - 570.83	2007	
	0 - 712.77	2011	
	0 - 979.31	2017	
II	472.08 - 972.68	2004	Poverty
	570.84 - 1,132.23	2007	
	712.78 - 1,378.05	2011	
	979.32 - 1,784.93	2017	
III	> 972.68	2004	Not poor
	> 1,132.23	2007	
	> 1,378.05	2011	
	> 1,784.93	2017	

Source: Own elaboration with information Coneval (2019).

Figure 2. Household income by stratum and sex

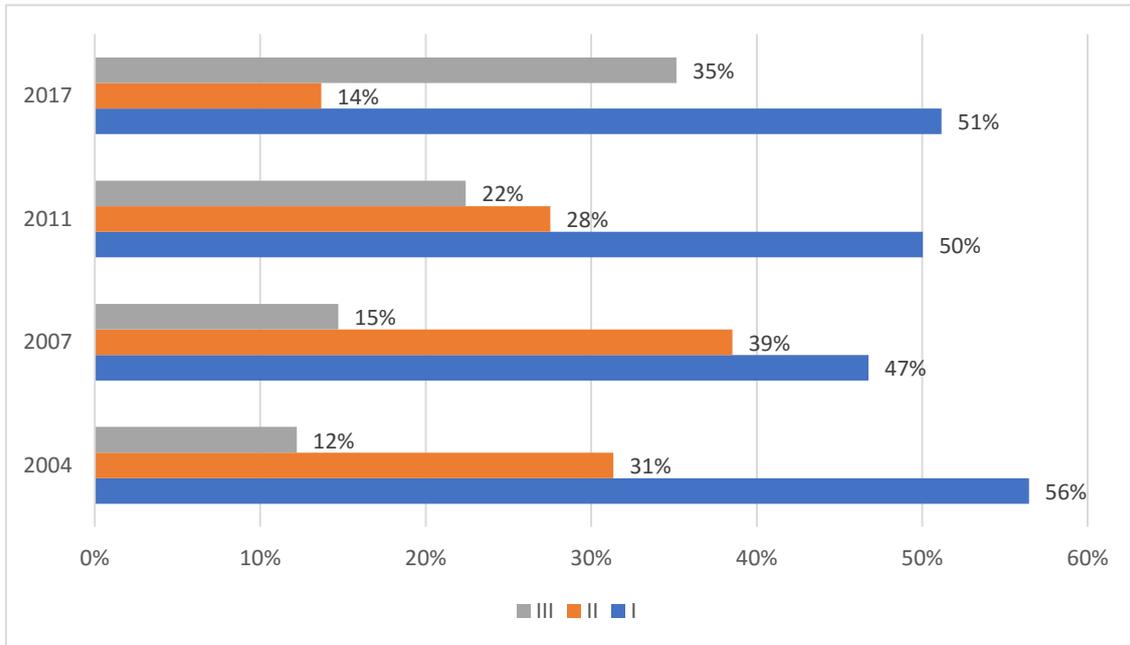


Source: Own elaboration.

According to figure 2, when the households headed by women joined the OPORTUNIDADES-PROSPERA program in 2004, 78% were in the first stratum (Table 1), for 2007 it decreased by 8%, 2011 by 10%, and in 2017 only 24% compared to the year of incorporation. On the other hand, households headed by men represented in the first stratum (Table 1) began in 2004 with 55%, decreasing by 13% in 2007, 15% in 2011, and 20% for 2017 compared to the first year. Stratum II (table 1) for female headship began in 2004 with 6%, 2007 increased by 16%, 2011 with 10%, and 2017 with 8% compared to the initial year. Concerning male headship in 2004, it was 33%, 2007 increased by 9%, 2011 remained at the same percentage as 2004, 2017 decreased by 13% compared to 2004. And stratum III (table 1) for female heads of the household started in 2004 with 15%, 2007 decreased by 7%, 2011 increased by 1%, and 2017 increased by 17%. On the other hand, the head of the male household in 2004 had 12%, 2007 increased to 9%, 2011 increased 16%, and 2017 increased by 33%. Therefore, H2 confirms: if households headed by women are located in the most marginalized strata of poverty. In addition to supporting the research by Rosenhouse, (1989), Buvinic, (1990), Buvinić & Rao Gupta, (1997), Chant, (1997), and Rallu (2017) where they refer to the vulnerability of households headed by women, as well as the susceptibility that this condition makes them so that they are conditions of greater poverty than the households headed by men.

4.1.2.1 Income of families that changed the sex of the head of the family from male to female

Figure 3. Income by stratum of households that changed the sex of their head of household from male to female



Source: Own elaboration.

Figure 3 represented 58% of families that changed their head household (men-women). It is observed in Figure 3 that the first stratum begins in 2004 with 56%, 2007 decreased by 9%, 2011 decreased by 6%, and 2017 decreased by 5% compared to the first year. Stratum II started at 31%, increased by 8% in 2007, decreased by 3% for 2011, and in 2017 decreased by 17%. And in stratum III in 2004 it had 12%, 2007 increased by 3%, 2011 increased by 10%, and 2017 increased by 23%. With these numbers it is identified that the households that started in stratum I and II, 23% went to stratum III, which means that they surpassed the initial poverty of income that they found when joining the program, being headed by men.

Although 23% is a good number, it is not enough to accept the null hypothesis. So, the null hypothesis is rejected that female-headed households overcome initial poverty and achieve well-being if they are supported by conditional cash transfer programs. This hypothesis rejection is affirmed in the studies carried out by Haman (2019), Mariano (2019) y Chant (2016) determined that the stipend of conditional cash transfer programs is not enough to get out of the initial poverty state. These families do not have actions aimed at the needs of women because this type of program is more focused on the development of the human capital of children.

V. Conclusion

Conditional cash transfer programs are the result of the struggle of neoliberalism to carry out social policies, which are landed by social programs to try to stop the impoverishment generated by the economic policies of neoliberalism. Mexico, being in this type of approach, was one of the pioneers in the development of monetary transfer programs of resources, it has also joined the ideas of female empowerment, but what was observed in the study, these programs are a great contribution for households in poverty, but they are not the answer to meet the needs of women, since they are focused on the human capital of the children of these households and have not developed the women or men heads of the family who head these households.

As could be seen in the research, by improving the income conditions of the families and that the resources are managed by women, this has allowed changes in the composition of the families, since it is unnecessary the contributions of men for the household support, but changing the gender of households benefiting from this program from male to female does not generate the conditions for these households to overcome initial poverty.

These programs are a great contribution to ease poverty since it is difficult without this aid. It is possible to achieve the capacities of the individual that Amartya Sen argued in 1979 and that he completed with integrating the family in 1998. Martha Nussbaum supplemented this theory in 1992, incorporating the capabilities of women. In the present-day, these capabilities have not been fully developed. As determined in the research, since it showed that although women are heads of household and receive the resources of the program, it does not need to be reflected in the overcoming of initial poverty since this did not happen in most cases.

To summarize, a positive effect in households headed by women, the fact is not entirely positive, as would be thought because it only causes a consequence on the composition of the household, it is not the overcoming of initial poverty. The results show many times that the family is headed by a woman, condemns it to be within the poorest stratum.

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