

## Who takes care of dependant population in the city?

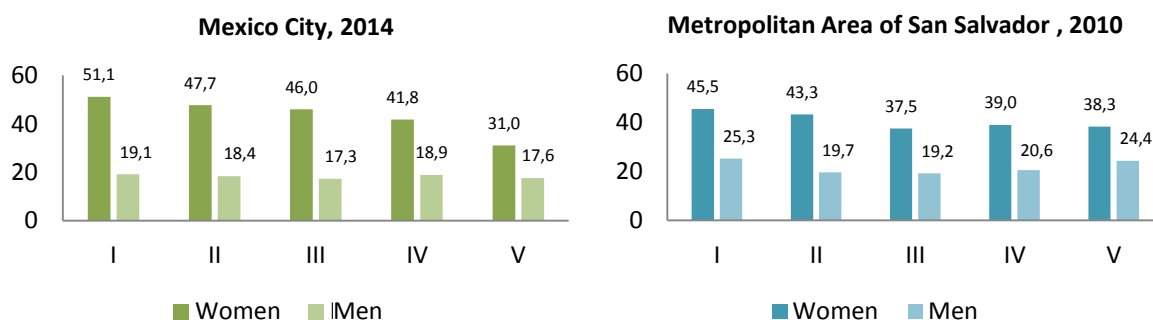
### Urban politics and women’s economic autonomy

In Latin America, cities play a central role in planning and developing policies to promote the progress of its people, improve their living conditions and guarantee their rights. In this context, women and men have different needs and aspirations in the urban space, as well as unequal opportunities to access the goods and resources of the city, particularly due to the current sexual division of labour.

An undeniable fact in the region is that demands for care have moved from the private sphere of families to the need to be addressed by the public sphere of policies. This step should be taken through the incorporation of a gender equality and rights-based approach in the territorial planning of care services.

The time-use surveys show that women do more unpaid work than men, especially in care tasks. In Mexico City, for example, women spend an average of 43.8 hours per week in unpaid work, 25.9 hours more than men. If analyzed by quintiles, in all of them women spend more time than men doing unpaid work, with the biggest gender gap in the first quintile, where women spend on average 32 hours per week more than men do. In turn, in the Metropolitan Area of San Salvador the trend of greater unpaid work among women is similar: on average, they do unpaid work 20 hours per week more than men. Montevideo also has large gaps, where the women’s weekly hours of unpaid work are 34.5 and those of men only 16.4.

Figure 1  
**Mexico City and the Metropolitan Area of San Salvador: Time spent on unpaid work by the population aged 15 years or over, by sex and household income quintile (Hours per week)**



**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), “La distribución del tiempo en el análisis de las desigualdades en las ciudades de América Latina”, *¿Quién cuida en la ciudad? Aportes para políticas urbanas de igualdad* (LC/PUB.2017/23-P), Santiago, 2017.

Distances between households and places of study and work, the access and quality of mobility and public transport, as well as schedules of public services affect the choices of women concerning paid work and the use and enjoyment of the city, affecting their autonomy.

The achievement of women's economic autonomy, their greater participation in the labor market, their access to incomes of their own and an equitable distribution of time use, is linked to an equal access to services and infrastructure of the cities. This, constitutes an important part of the physical and spatial support of the daily life of men and women. For women, the quality and the improvement in the frequencies and the costs of transport are particularly important in the choice of occupation, when they must make it compatible with their family obligations.

Furthermore, in Mexico City, for instance, 30.3% of women do not have incomes of their own compared to 9.4% of men and, for every 100 poor men in the 20-59 year age group, there is 125.6 women in the same situation. In Montevideo, 1 in every 5 women does not have incomes of their own compared to more than 1 in every 10 men, which is accentuated in the lowest income quintile. Reducing the number of women without their own income in Latin America is an imperative for promoting their economic autonomy.

The improvement of the offer and conditions of care in the city and favor the economic autonomy of women caregivers from a territorial perspective means that public policies must address the growing social and spatial segregation of cities in the region. It is fundamental to consider the need to conciliate family time and time of paid work. An inclusive and caring city is essential to achieve sustainable development and to face the challenges of societies in growing demographic, socioeconomic and technological transformation.

Recommendations for the planning and management of care policies in cities

- Articulation and coordination of care policies and urban policies that promote women's economic autonomy: employment, mobility, security in public spaces, among others.
- Development of gender statistics with territorial dimension as a basis for the production of geo-referenced information on the demand and supply of care services.
- Promotion of co-responsibility between the State, market, families, and community, as well as between women and men in regards to care policies
- Increasing financial and human resources for greater coverage and improvement of care services at the local level, considering the rights of women caregivers and the quality of employment of people working in care services.

*Without gender equality, sustainable development is neither development nor sustainable*

## **ECLAC Division for Gender Affairs**

[¿Quién cuida en la ciudad? Aportes para políticas urbanas de igualdad](#)

[El cuidado y la autonomía económica de las mujeres en las ciudades \(infographic\)](#)

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