

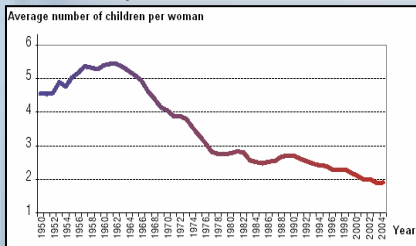
# Women and Work in Chile

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## SUMMARY

Despite Chile's outstanding economic performance, female participation in the workforce is low. I want to investigate the low female participation rate in the labour force **from a professional women's perspective**. I will explore the main factors affecting whether or not they seek paid work.

Fertility rates in Chile from 1950 to 2004



## CHILEAN FACTS

- During recent decades, Chile has enjoyed a stable political environment and outstanding economic performance.
- Chile lacks balance concerning working hours, female labour force participation rates, and social distribution of its prosperity.
- Women have more years of education than men.
- Despite 50% of professionals being women, **the female labour force participation rate is the lowest of the region: 38.5% compared to 52.4% in LA and worldwide in 2006.**
- Chile has a gender pay gap (33%). / Fertility rate: 1.9 (2004)
- Only 24% of managerial positions are held by women.

## AIM

This study seeks to explore the factors accounting for the low Chilean female participation rates in the workforce. It attempts to identify the main factors affecting professional women's participation rates in employment.

## METHODOLOGY

Both **quantitative and qualitative** methodology. The research methods involve: **i) analysis of existing data sources**, and **ii) carrying out 40 semi-structured interviews** with professional women having paid work (20) and professionals who do not (20). The study will have a feminist approach in as much as it considers gendered social realities. It attempts to understand gender relations and their impact on people's lives. The study results will be grounded in women's experience plus the analysis of statistics.

Average number of years of education for men and women according to occupation category (Oct - Dec 2006).

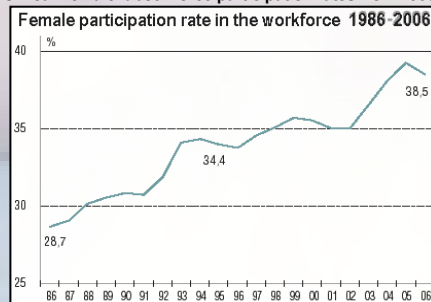


## I HYPOTHESIS THAT:

- Women consider the culture of long working hours and the gender salary gap as demotivating factors to having paid work in Chile.
- For women, paid work means working long hours for less remuneration than men. Therefore, they choose a housewife and child care role whilst men work.
- Although Chile is changing, it still has conservative cultural patterns. There is a male dominant model at work and home, which discourages women from pursuing paid work.
- When balancing the economic benefits of having a paid job and other female roles such as child care, women adhere to a traditional domestic division of labour.
- In the upper classes, women can opt to be idle if they wish, as one salary is enough to have a good standard of living. This is related to the unequal distribution of income in Chile.
- Professional women with paid work either like working, need it or are used to work.
- Professional women with paid work feel they have a more equal distribution of domestic tasks with their partners than women without paid work.
- Professional women who have paid work usually have paid domestic help.
- There is a lack of a policy framework, conditions and incentives to promote women's participation in the workforce.



Chilean female labour force participation rates from 1986 to 2006



## CONCLUSIONS

At this stage (1<sup>st</sup> year PhD) I have more questions than answers!

If you are interested in the study results, please do stay in contact.

Thanks!

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