

DAWN DISCUSSION PAPER #37

POLICY TRANSFORMATIONS

A photograph of a group of people, primarily women and children, wearing traditional hats and shawls. The image is framed by a white, torn-paper-like border at the top and bottom. The people are looking towards the camera with various expressions.

**PLURINATIONAL STATE OF BOLIVIA
CONDITIONAL CASH TRANSFER
PROGRAMMES IN THE COVID-19 CRISIS**

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DRAFT for discussion

POLICY
TRANSFORMATIONS

REGION:	POLICY AREA:
LATIN AMERICA	CARE AND SOCIAL PROTECTION
	MACROECONOMICS

Using a feminist intersectional and interlinkages approach, this project closely examines policy changes that have taken place during the period of exceptionality produced by the pandemic, exploring how they may impact the future in four policy areas: macroeconomics; labour policies and workers’ rights; migration and human mobilities, care and social protection.

DRAFT for discussion

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This case study was originally written in Spanish and was translated by Magdalena Padrón.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACP	Plurinational Constituent Assembly
CTPs	Conditional Cash Transfer Programmes
ECLAC	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IGAE	Global Index of Economic Activity
MAS	Movement for Socialism–Political Instrument for the Sovereignty of the Peoples (Spanish: Movimiento al Socialismo–Instrumento Político por la Soberanía de los Pueblos)
MESCP	Model of Productive Community Social Economy
UN	United Nations
VAT	Value Added Tax

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ABSTRACT

This article shows that the forms of capitalist accumulation inherited from the colony have continued during the republic, and have reached the Plurinational State of Bolivia under the discourse of the "right to development". The condition of coloniality and the racialised conformation of the class division in Bolivian society persist, conditions that organise the relations of interdependence, configure social life, always in conditions of classification and inequality, of scarcity, precariousness and conflict, where the plurinational ends up being a symbol of political power and a mirage of equality.

In the implementation of the four COVID-19 emergency Cash Transfer Programmes (CTPs), it can be seen that the population belonging to the middle and high income strata have benefited most from the CTPs due to typical economic behaviour, i.e. racialised class stratification and gender inequality. This mercantilist macroeconomic bias unfavourable to the poorest sectors and women, deepens the income gap by favouring its concentration in the middle and high income strata.

The criterion of "universality" in the coverage of vouchers serves to standardise and homogenise, to treat different social subjects as if they all had the same condition and the same needs. This is not only a weakness in the targeting of COVID-19 vouchers; it is a way of reproducing the concentration of capital through public financing.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Plurinational State of Boliviaⁱ is made up of thirty-six native indigenous nations, a large sector that defines itself as mestizoⁱⁱ and a part that recognises itself as "white". With more than twenty indigenous languages, the predominant language is Spanish. Plurinationality is recognised almost 200 years after the creation of the republic, with the new Political Constitution of the Plurinational State of Bolivia of 2009. Under the influence of emancipatory currents led by the original indigenous peoples, in 2007, peasants and popular sectors installed the Constituent Assembly. With a population around twelve million inhabitants, Bolivia is classified as "middle-income" as of 2011, but with a moderate poverty rate of thirty-seven per cent and an extreme poverty rate of twelve per cent.

It is a diverse society in terms of origin and outlookⁱⁱⁱ, but with the same capitalist and patriarchal colonial structure of subordination and discrimination (racial, class and gender). The colonial heritage persists, with an economic model based on extractivism, dependent on international prices for hydrocarbons, minerals and other *commodities*.

In the first year of COVID-19, the governing sectors implemented four emergency Conditional Cash Transfer Programmes (CTPs), each one granted only once during the COVID-19 crisis, but with similar characteristics and structures to the CTPs developed previously, which have proven to be perfectly functional in addressing "distributive market failures"; they correct the stability of consumption, but do not solve the inequality of income and access to sustainable livelihoods.

The different socio-economic impacts unleashed by the COVID-19 crisis reflect the matrix of social inequality in Latin America, whose structuring axes are belonging to different social classes, gender, age, ethno-racial status and territory, migratory status or street situation, etc. These inequalities accumulate, strengthen and interact with each other, causing multiple discriminations that lead to inequalities in the exercise of human rights (ECLAC 2020, Special Report No. 3).

DAWN's analytical framework entitled "The pandemic as a portal: policies transformations disputing the new normal" gives rise to this attempt to contribute to the discussion on the changes in Conditional Cash Transfer Programmes (CTPs) that may have been developed to

address the COVID-19 crisis. Following the definition of thematic areas established by the analytical framework, we work in the macroeconomic sphere; our working hypothesis is that governments^{iv} in Bolivia have developed "stagnant policies dependent on pre-existing trajectories" during the COVID-19 crisis.

Feminist economics analyses the functioning of the patriarchal order, the sexual division of labour, gender power relations in the economy, and the intersectionality of gender. Picchio (2009) points out that analysing the distribution of public resources in terms of their differentiated impact on people's lives serves to reveal the meaning, structure and tensions of the economic system as a whole.

II. THE PLACE OF ENUNCIATION: THE PLURINATIONAL STATE OF BOLIVIA.

The multidimensional crisis of COVID-19 has brought to the forefront of discussion, for those who wish to acknowledge it, the existence of the structural and irresolvable conflict between "life and capital" which, sharpened and deepened by extractivist neoliberalism, characterises this system of domination. Today more than ever we are facing an attack on life and the means that make life possible, forcing us to think and analyse, beyond the narrative of "development", the very nature of the capitalist system in its relation to patriarchal order and culture.

The dichotomies of modernity falsify reality by denying intersubjectivity and social totality, while at the same time denying the interdependence between human beings and nature. Thus, generating the validity of ethno-cultural, sexist and anthropocentric classificatory systems that structure gender, class and power relations. It is in the bodies of indigenous, cholas^v, peasant, middle-class and bourgeois women that the triangular fusion of patriarchy, capitalism and colonialism (Gutiérrez, 2018) manifests its particularities.

The capitalist and patriarchal colonial invasion is the mechanism for the internationalisation of capital and the establishment of capitalism as a world system since the 16th century. It generates a deep and painful rupture in the social structures of the invaded peoples; it is the disarticulation of the system of communal land use, of the systems of redistribution and reciprocity, as well as the imposition of modern capitalist culture, which confiscates lands, territories, bodies, mainly of indigenous and Afro-descendant women.

These structures of domination have required the introduction of modern rationality and the development of collaborative family structures, provided by patriarchy (also pre-existing in the original peoples), with the sexual division of labour, the sexual contract and the patriarchal family model. The dialectic of sex is the fundamental historical dialectic, and the material basis of patriarchy is the work done by women in reproducing the species (Firestone, 1976).

To refer to the continuity of the relations of domination inherited from the colony, is to acknowledge the racialised conformation of class division in Bolivian society: the starting assertion that reveals that social relations of domination and exploitation, reinforced by contemporary capitalism, are the way of organising the relations of interdependence that shape social life, always in conditions of classification and inequality, of scarcity, precariousness and conflict. Over the 500 years since colonisation, the presence of this order of domination could not have been possible without the powerful relationship between colonisation and globalisation.

Plurinational in Bolivia is not just a word in the Political Constitution of the State (CPE-2009) which, as a concept anchored in modern language, pigeonholes in a Cartesian binary logic, the conformation and representation of a juxtaposed, variegated society, as Zabaleta would say. Or rather, a Ch'ixi^{vi} society, which not only refers to the human, but also encloses in itself "antagonistic mandates" of a society of a "divided soul" not only between white, native and mestizo thought, but a mixture that encloses its opposites, as Silvia Rivera (2018) puts it. In this multicoloured fabric of Bolivian society, "plurinational" acquires a connotation of emancipation and reconstitution in the sense of generating the new; it is the resurgence of an alternative to development: Living Well^{vii}.

The condition of coloniality persists, now enhanced by new forms of extractivism, dispossession and privatisation of land, profound and violent commodification of nature, discrimination, oppression and violence against women. Forms of capitalist accumulation inherited from the colonial period that have passed through the republic arrive in the Plurinational State under the discourse of the "right to development", which legitimises the irrational exploitation of nature. Plurinationality ends up being a symbol of political power and a mirage of equality. However, it is imperative to recognise as a triumph for women that the Political Constitution incorporates the historical liberal agenda of women's rights, such as the right to education, to a life free of violence, gender parity and alternation in political

representation, etc.^{viii}, a conquest that was achieved outside the priorities of the dominant ideological current in the Plurinational Constituent Assembly (ACP).

Since the installation of the ACP (2007), the political participation of women, mainly indigenous and peasant women, in government, the Legislative Assembly and other national, departmental and municipal bodies of power has averaged more than forty per cent (Plurinational Electoral Body 2020); however, feminist claims are few, and the gains are even fewer. As Hernando (2012) argues, more women in power does not put an end to the patriarchal order. Women in political power tend to pact more easily and postpone feminist claims, siding with patriarchal power (Hernando, 2012), serving as intermediaries between visible legal patriarchal power and the demands of the feminist movement, as happened in the battle for the decriminalisation/ legalisation of abortion in 2017 - 2018 in Bolivia.

This experience showed that it is not about women's capacity to exercise power or whether they are located in spaces of real power. What it is about is whether or not these women in patriarchal power are willing to betray that power with feminist claims, and whether or not they are representatives of women, not of a political party.

MODEL OF PRODUCTIVE COMMUNITY SOCIAL ECONOMY (MESCP) 2006-2020.

Since 2006, an emancipatory impulse, which will later be encapsulated and co-opted by the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) government in the so-called "process of change", has generated changes in the following areas:

- The state assumes the role of producer, investor, entrepreneur and redistributor of wealth. It articulates pluralist principles with modernising actions to improve the living conditions of the population through the dynamisation and constant increase of internal demand, translated into the creation and/or strengthening of markets (Ministry of Economy, Economic Bulletin 2013 (a)).
- The four pillars of the MESCP: a) growth and development based on the exploitation of natural resources - extractivist policies; b) recovery of natural resources and redistribution of surpluses to sectors that generate income and employment; c) income redistribution: conditional transfers, public investment, wage increases, cross-subsidies

and others; d) reduction of social inequality and poverty (Ministry of Economy, Economic Bulletin 2013 (b)).

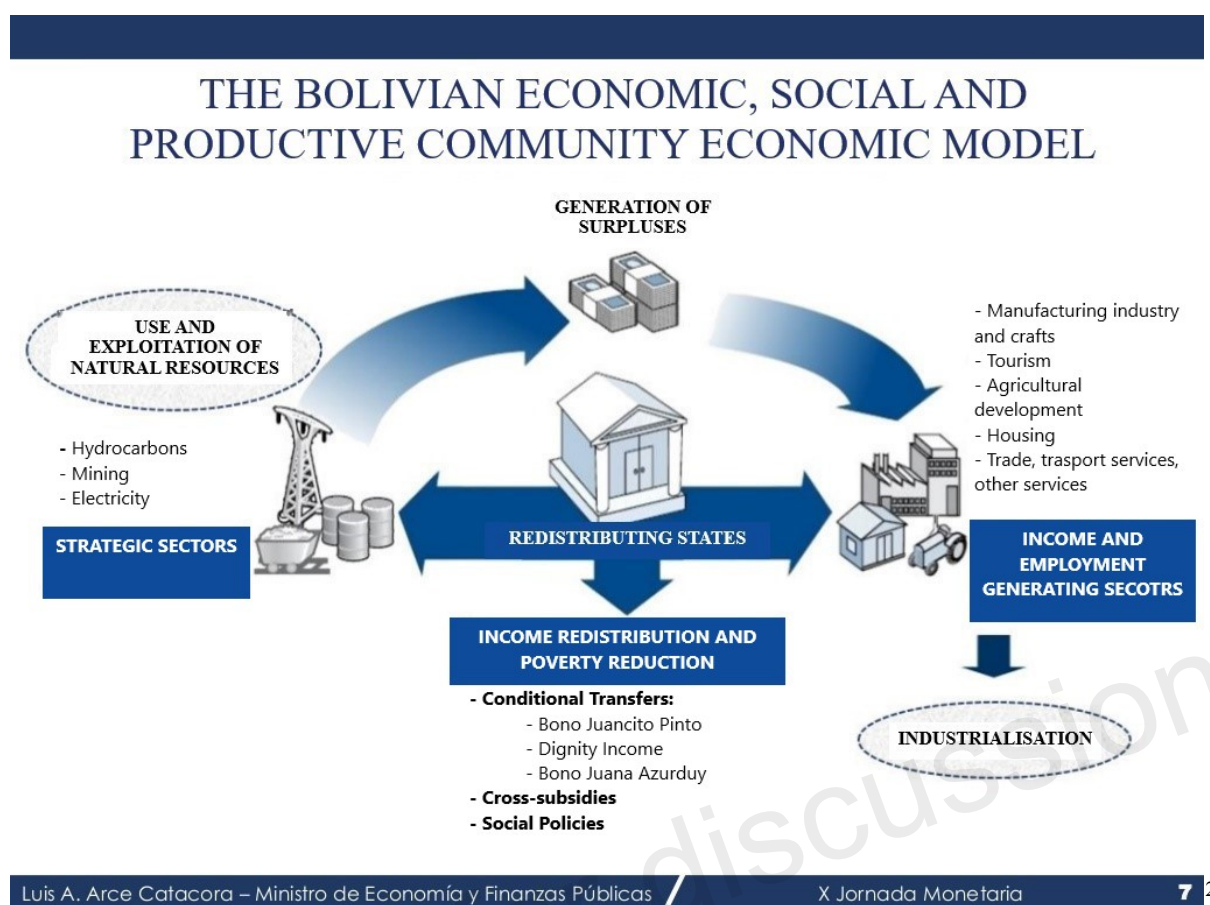
Under the parameters of the neoclassical paradigm of the economy, the criteria for success of the economic model, in the period 2006 to 2019, are: application of an expansionary fiscal policy, growth of domestic consumption, macroeconomic stability and GDP growth¹.

^{ix}According to data from the Global Index of Economic Activity (IGAE), for the period 2008 to 2018^x the average annual GDP growth is 4.3 per cent, due to the dynamisation of domestic demand with CTPs, price subsidies and the sustained growth of public investment. The effect of COVID-19 on the market-economy expressed in the IGAE 2020 is – 8.2 per cent of the cumulative GDP decline^{xi}.

The official philosophical underpinning of the MESCP is to strengthen the social community economy and move towards the achievement of Living Well^{xii}. Paradoxically, this discourse is being used to establish a highly predatory and extractivist neoliberal model. Graph 1 illustrates the characteristics of the MESCP, but does not reveal what makes the model work: on the one hand, the unpaid work of social regeneration and care for life carried out mainly by women and girls, and on the other, the extractivist and predatory nature of nature.

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Graph No. 1 Productive Community Social Economic Model MESC



In 2011, Bolivia entered the classification of Middle Income Countries. Since that year, the reduction of moderate poverty and extreme poverty has been constant. However, the national average that allows Bolivia to be classified as a middle-income country hides the great inequality between rural and urban areas (Annex 1: Table No 1).

More than fifty-five per cent of the population in rural areas who declare themselves indigenous are in moderate poverty, and 31.3 per cent in extreme poverty. In urban areas, indigenous status makes a difference: thirty-six per cent of the urban population self-identifying as indigenous is in moderate poverty compared to thirty per cent of the non-indigenous population. (Annex 1: Table No 2)

Ugarte and Bolívar (2015), based on the 2013 Household Survey, establish that the implementation of CTPs (Dignity Pension, Juancito Pinto voucher, Juana Azurduy voucher) have reduced the incidence of moderate poverty in Bolivia by 8.2 per cent and extreme poverty by 9.6 per cent in the group that received these transfers. Paz Arauco, Gray Molina, Jiménez Pozo and Yáñez Aguilar (2012), studying the Gini index, identify that this index is reduced by

2 per cent when Cash Transfers (CTs) are applied. However, when the effect of indirect taxes is added, this reduction is only 0.5 per cent.

Coello and Fernández (2014) highlight that the redistributive effect of CTs is diminished when confronted with flat rates of indirect taxes that differentially affect the lower-income population. In other words, part of the redistributive effect of CTs is lost through the regressive effect of indirect taxation, such as Value Added Tax, with flat and universal rates.

The highest gender gap in monthly income is USD 262.69 unfavourable to women in the activity of "information and telecommunications", a sector dominated by transnational communication corporations and state-owned enterprise. In "services and commerce" the unfavourable difference for women is minus USD 230.84. A similar gap is found in the activity "Wholesale and retail sale, repair of motor vehicles". Among "self-employed workers", who have the lowest income, the gender gap is minus USD 87.51 for women^{xiii}. Women in the health and social care sector in times of pandemic earn USD 223.52 less than men, with the gap increasing by 200 per cent. (Annex 1: Table No 3).

The mechanism through which these gender inequalities are created is to ignore women's contribution to the regeneration and care of life. They are the imprint of the processes of colonisation and patriarchal and capitalist modernisation that has devalued the work of regeneration and care for human life and nature, generating patterns of consumption that devalue household work as a socially necessary industry.

2.1. COVID-19 IN THE 2019-2020 POLITICAL CRISIS IN BOLIVIA.

COVID-19 finds the country in a deep political crisis with strong expressions of racism and religious fundamentalism. The social outburst of October and November 2019, encouraged by conservative forces, unilaterally declares the national elections null and void on the grounds of electoral fraud allegedly carried out by the election-winning Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS). The subsequent resignation of Evo Morales and the assembly members who were in line for constitutional succession created a power vacuum that was exploited by the conservative forces, who installed the transitional government with the support of the military and police.

Twenty-one days of mobilisation divided the country into two fronts: the indigenous peasant people and the subordinate classes^{xiv} against sectors of the capitalist oligarchy and the middle

class, with speeches of liberal democracy and a return to the republic^{xv}. In this context, the MAS developed the narrative of the "coup d'état", which to this day continues to divide on the political and social scene.

This conflict shows that racism and gender discrimination are thoughts and practices that are still rooted in the social and political fabric of the country, particularly in the cities of La Paz, El Alto, Cochabamba and Santa Cruz, where the greatest violations of the human rights of the internal migrant Aymara, Quechua, Guaraní, Guarayo, Chiquitano, etc., populations have been recorded, with a violent and misogynistic impact, especially against women wearing skirts or cholas.

In March 2020, in the midst of the strong repression imposed by the transitional government, the first cases of COVID-19 appeared, aggravating the country's deficient public health and social protection system. The pandemic becomes a justification for the restriction of democratic freedoms imposed by the "transitional" government, where meetings are banned, hours and days of movement are defined, the presence of the armed forces in the streets and the feeling of fear and misinformation become more frequent. The suspension of public and private services to support citizens and to deal with violence against women, the restriction of health care to COVID-19 only, all contribute to creating a climate of defencelessness and fear that is characteristic of the biopolitical control exercised over the population.

Supreme Decrees (SD) N 4289 of 15/7/20 and (SD) 4200 legalise repression, authorise additional budgetary allocations to the Ministry of Government to favour the police, oblige municipal and departmental governments to finance fuel, food and transport for the armed forces and the police; in this way, the government strengthens its power.

Forced by the need to generate income, indigenous and peasant women and migrant women who live in urban areas make their ancestral knowledge and skills in health care available to the population and set up natural medicine pharmacies with their herbs and ointments in the streets. They contribute to health care and reduce the devastating effects of the pandemic on the precarious public health system. However, they face increased discrimination in the exercise of their economic, social and cultural rights, with patriarchal violence and racism on the rise.

III. ANALYSIS OF CONDITIONAL CASH TRANSFER PROGRAMMES (CTPS) IN TIMES OF PANDEMIC.

In the 1990s, neoliberal reforms led to a fall in formal employment and the privatisation of public goods and services, drastically reducing the state's presence in social services. Social policies are governed by market dynamics and demand-side subsidies. This change prioritises a type of population that they call "vulnerable", including women, and also introduces new actors: multilateral financial organisations.

In this framework, the CTPs are developed under four central criteria that remain, showing the continuity of the neoliberal model in the Plurinational State: a) guaranteeing macroeconomic stability; b) having control over the management of social risk that means the presence of groups "vulnerable" to economic, social, political or environmental impacts, maintaining chronic impoverishment; c) strengthening "human capital" through education and health support programmes; and d) focusing and "conditioning" social spending on the poor in order to be more efficient. These four characteristics of CTPs have been widely studied from different perspectives, including evaluations by the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and UN agencies. Faced with the COVID-19 crisis, the main response of the transitional government follows the trend of Latin American governments with the issuing of CTPs, subsidies for basic consumption, tax relief and others.

"Emergency" tax measures, tax exemptions and benefits, loans and the refinancing of credits with public resources in favour of private companies have led to a loss of tax revenue. The Ministry of Finance (2021) estimates that the fiscal loss is USD 287 million, as a result of tax relief in favour of the private sector, further affecting collection and limiting redistributive policy.

For orthodox - neoclassical economics, CTPs are aimed at correcting "market failures" in the efficient redistribution of resources (WB, 2009). For UN Women (BRIEF v 1.1, 2020) the CTPs that respond to the COVID-19 crisis, "(...), in general, have aimed to create new transfers to compensate for the situation of vulnerability of sectors that, due to social isolation, have lost their income or suffered significant reductions"; it also points out that the gender dimension is not considered in them.

In this paper we will address, from a feminist economics perspective, the characteristics and gender biases in the CTPs developed in Bolivia between March 2020 and January 2021, a period characterised by the COVID-19 crisis.

Gender biases are the differential impact of the distribution of public resources on men and women due to different social devices and economic behaviours stemming from neoliberal rationality; they derive from two central elements: on the one hand, the process of capital valorisation that governs all social structures, all concepts, and on the other hand, the sexual division of labour and the division of public and private. According to Agenjo (2012), gender biases in the economy can be classified into four main groups:

- Mercantilist gender biases that equate the economic with the market and work only with paid work.
- An androcentric gender bias that excludes women's experiences and needs from the sphere of the economy and makes the work of regenerating life invisible.
- Class bias, which sets as the model for women and family that of the bourgeois class.
- Ethnocentric bias, of global and cultural hegemony, which imposes the ways of doing and thinking of industrialised countries as the norm.

Janet Stotsky (2005) identifies two types of gender bias in fiscal policy:

- **Explicit gender biases:** expresses different characterisations and treatment of men and women in laws, policies and administrative procedures that make explicit that different categorisation, and may also be reflected in informal practices.
- **Implicit gender biases:** are normative and public policy provisions that, due to social conventions and typical economic behaviour, have different consequences for men and women.

CONDITIONAL TRANSFER PROGRAMMES IN BOLIVIA, "COVID-19 EMERGENCY VOUCHERS", YEAR 2020.

According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) (Social Panorama, 2019), Bolivia is one of the countries with the greatest social inequality on the continent. The most notorious gaps are between urban and rural populations, between indigenous and non-indigenous people, and between men's and women's relationships and opportunities.

The national average monthly income is USD 340, the gender gap in average monthly income is at least USD 100 unfavourable for women (234.28 USD)^{xvi}. The effects of the COVID-19 crisis on the loss of income are 9.2 per cent in urban wage labour and 17.54 per cent in rural areas; in the self-employed sector in rural areas the loss of income reached 33.85 per cent for men and 10.53 per cent for women. The major impact is seen in the increase in the unemployment rate of 9.1 per cent for men and eight per cent for women in the second quarter of 2020. By the end of 2020, the average unemployment rate reached eleven per cent^{xvii}.

Informality and precariousness of employment is most prevalent among informal sector workers in the lowest income quintiles. According to the Ministry of Economy and Public Finance (2020), eighty per cent of workers in Bolivia work in the informal sector. The population employed in the informal sector has been most affected by the restrictions on isolation and movement, having to close their businesses or leave street vending, which is mostly carried out by women. Of the population employed in this sector, 77.8 per cent is highly precarious. Sixty-three per cent of employed women are in the informal sector. These segments of the population comprise poor and vulnerable households and a large part of the lower middle class^{xviii}.

In this framework of persistent ethnic and gender inequality, income and employment precariousness, the Bolivian state faces the COVID-19 crisis with "one-off and punctual" measures; four CTPs called COVID-19 emergency vouchers in 2020, apart from tax relief and benefits for the business sector, more complex measures.

With the Supreme Decree (SD) No 4200 of 25/3/20 called Bono Canasta Familiar (Family Basket Voucher), the government implemented four measures: (a) Family Basket Voucher aimed at low-income households; (b) payment of electricity consumption of less than USD twenty and fifty per cent of drinking water consumption by the State on a temporary basis; (c) the Bolivian Armed Forces and Police will apply coercive measures to ensure the maintenance of public order and social peace; d) the Autonomous Territorial Entities^{xix} with their own resources and transfers are exceptionally obliged to provide fuel, food, transport and other necessities for the members of the Armed Forces, the Bolivian Police and health services.

This SD presents a complexity that responds to the political situation the country was going through, emphasises military and police control of the population, establishing sanctions of deprivation of liberty for those who do not comply with the restriction measures, and includes measures to legalise the repression carried out by the army and the national police.

The amount allocated per family in this voucher is USD 57.38 (distributed both in cash and foodstuffs). This transfer is effective after more than fifty days of total quarantine, which prohibits the opening of food supply markets and shops, and only supermarket chains and businesses with home delivery systems are allowed to operate. The voucher represents 8.47 per cent of the national minimum wage and 9.38 per cent of the national average real income. The precariousness of this CT is evident, as it does not cover the basic food and health requirements during the pandemic period. Moreover, it has weaknesses in targeting, transparency and distribution. But it is clearly effective in injecting resources into the market for a total of USD 6,886,657.10.

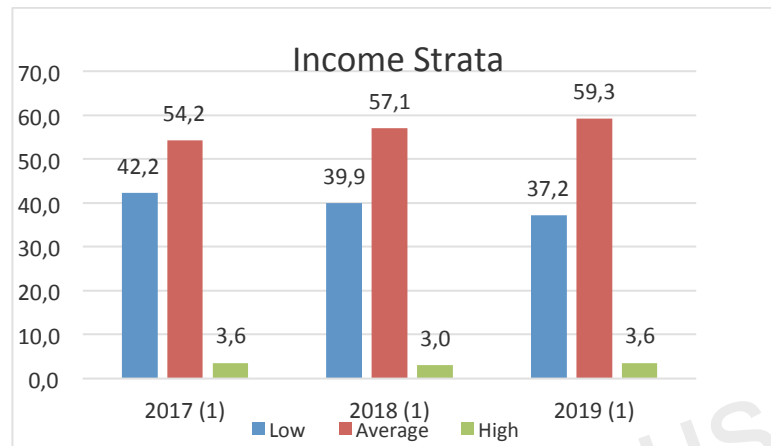
The SD N4197 of 18/3/20 creates the Bono Familia (Family Voucher) of USD 71.73 aimed at children and adolescents in elementary, primary and secondary education in Fiscal Educational Units. In addition, it establishes a temporary reduction of thirty per cent of electricity rates in the household category. The SD 4215 of 04/2020 extends the coverage of the Family Voucher to young and adult students of the Alternative and Special Education Subsystem and the Private System.

It integrates families from middle and high income strata into the benefit, generating a greater imbalance in access to income. For poor families with an average of three children per family who have received a total of USD 215.20, this represents about 100 per cent of their monthly income; for the high-income stratum, this amount represents up to eight per cent of their monthly income. Inequality in income distribution is legitimised by the criterion of "universality": everyone is entitled to CT in times of pandemic, but not everyone is in the same situation. For poor families the voucher meant covering food, for the middle-income stratum it may have supported access to medicines, for the high-income stratum the voucher is likely to increase superfluous consumption.

Considering that more than sixty-three percent of women are employed in the informal sector and in the low-income stratum, and taking into account that 31.3 per cent of the indigenous population lives in extreme poverty, this benefit is inequitable for these populations in relation

to men who have better employment and income situations and in relation to the non-indigenous population in the middle and upper strata of the population. The family that owns the cigarette factory received the same amount of Family Voucher as the woman who sells cigarettes on the street for ten or twelve hours and without social protection.

Graph No 2 - Distribution of the Population according to Income Strata



Source: UDAPE based on INE (Household Survey).

(1) Includes the new Basic Food Basket and the new Poverty Lines elaborated by INE.

Low income stratum: people with household income per capita below the national moderate poverty line.

Medium income vulnerable stratum: household income per capita between 1 and 5 times the moderate poverty line.

High income stratum: household income per capita greater than 6 times the moderate poverty line.

Contributing to this inequity in income redistribution is the "universality" criterion, which contains a mercantilist macroeconomic bias that is unfavourable to the poorest sectors and deepens the income gap due to typical economic behaviour, i.e. class stratification and gender inequality.

In the dynamics of injecting resources into the market and in order to reduce the impacts of the economic recession, the same SD that extends the scope of the Family Voucher creates the Bono Universal (Universal Voucher) SD No. 4215 14/4/20; the conditionalities for the voucher of USD 71.73 are: "it benefits Bolivians from eighteen years of age up to those under sixty years of age. Exempt from this benefit are the beneficiaries of the Family Basket and public servants, private sector workers; those who receive pensions or annuities (retirement, disability, widowhood, widower's pension, merit)". Apart from the sexist language characteristic of the SDs, they are implicitly and explicitly biased: they explicitly exclude from this benefit those who received the Family Basket Voucher. Although there is no data by sex, income and

ethnicity of the beneficiaries of the vouchers, the implicit gender and racist bias is present when we look at who the beneficiaries of the Family Basket were. They are: "the most vulnerable sectors of society, elderly people who receive their Renta Dignidad (Dignity Pension) and do not receive any other pension or retirement, mothers who receive the Juana Azurduy Voucher and people with moderate, severe and very severe disabilities in addition to the blind" ^{xx}; this population is excluded from the benefit of the Universal Voucher because they are poor and women.

The new government of the MASxxi issues the SD N 4293 of 13/11/20 Bono contra el Hambre (Hunger Voucher) for an amount of USD 143.77. Beneficiaries are Bolivian citizens residing in the country, over eighteen years of age as of 16 September 2020 and belonging to one of the following groups: a) Women currently receiving the Juana Azurduy Voucher; b) Visually impaired persons receiving the Indigence Voucher (Bono de Indigencia); c) Persons with severe or very severe registered disability; d) Persons who did not receive any type of salary remuneration from the public or private sector; e) Independently insured persons in the Integral Pension System. Unlike the Universal Voucher, which explicitly excluded more "vulnerable" sectors, the conditionalities of the Hunger Voucher integrate this population. However, it presents the same implicit macroeconomic, racist and gender biases by granting the same monetary benefit in a uniform manner to the population that complies with the conditionality regardless of income level, gender, employment status and whether or not they belong to indigenous peoples. Not considering these variables, which in our societies function as variables of discrimination and inequality, is to develop gender biases that reproduce inequalities in terms of race, gender and class.

The following table shows the percentages of estimated population coverage of each COVID-19 voucher, the individual amounts of the transfers and the total amounts in US dollars.

Table 1. Percentage coverage of the estimated beneficiary population of the programmes and amounts.

CTPs COVID 19 emergency vouchers	Potential beneficiary population (1), who meet the conditionality by 2020	Beneficiary population (2)	Individual amount In USD (2)	Total amount In million USD. (2)	Percentage of estimated population coverage
Family Basket Voucher	4,593,418	1.200.000*	57.38	68,866,571	26.12
Family Voucher	3,487,567	3,200,000	71.73	229,555,236.7	91.75
Universal Voucher	5,192,946	4,000,000	71.73	286,944,045.9	77.02
Hunger Voucher	5,192,946	4,015,364	143.47	576,084,273.0	77.33
			Total	1,161,450,126.6	

- (1) Source: own elaboration based on data from INE "population projections of both sexes according to age 2012-2022" and own estimates of population meeting the "conditionality" for access to the CTP.
- (2) Source: own elaboration: based on Ministry of Economy and Finance (2020) Cartilla Económica COVID-19 "Economic aid from the government for families and employment", "Economic measures COVID-19" 2020 and Initial public Accountability 26-3-2021.
- Preliminary data as of August 2020.

The Family Basket Voucher targeted at the low-income stratum of the population (4,593,418 people) reached only twenty-six per cent of this population. As a hypothesis, the low coverage could be due to weaknesses in public management. Government efforts are concentrated in cities with political conflict, little and unclear information on who is a beneficiary of the voucher, and the most likely cause is corruption and lack of transparency in the management of funds.

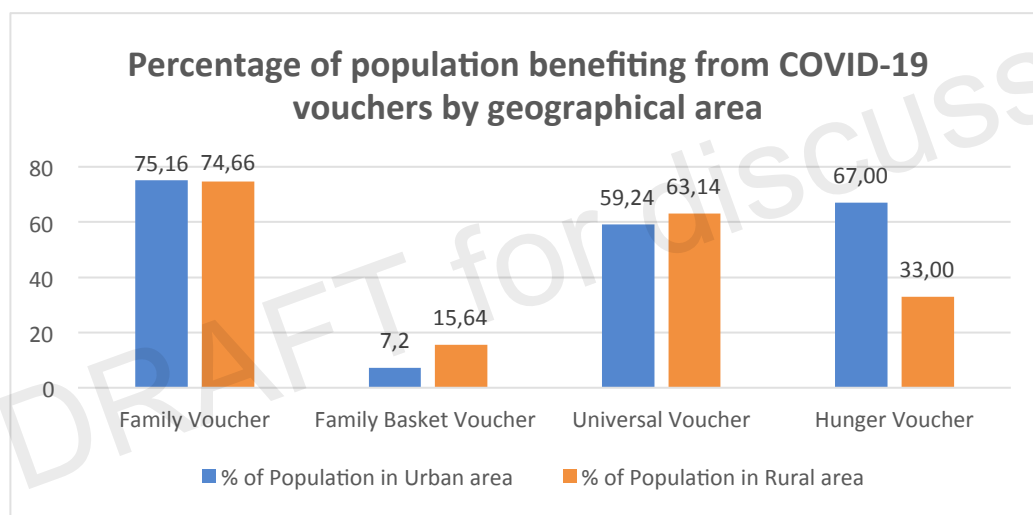
The Universal Voucher has 77.2 per cent coverage, and it is estimated that of the total number of beneficiaries, only 29.19 per cent (1,516,000 people) are low-income. The USD 71.73 voucher could have benefited 70.80 per cent of middle- and high-income earners.

The Hunger Voucher, with 77.33 per cent coverage, does not take into account differences in terms of income strata and reaches 4,015,364 people, of which we estimate that 2,499,364 people (62.24 per cent) belong to the middle and high income strata. This estimate provides

only a rough approximation of increasing inequalities via the inequitable distribution of CTPs in COVID-19 times.

Considering that 78.3 per cent of the rural population is poor and 37.7 percent of the urban population is poor, the transfers conditioned to COVID-19, by not considering the data on poverty differentiated by geographical area, have presented an implicit bias of a classist and racist nature due to the fact that the different situations of poverty and inequality of the urban and rural populations are not considered. The following graph illustrates these inequalities.

Graph 3: Percentage of the population benefiting from COVID-19 vouchers by geographical area.



Source: own elaboration based on special tabulations of the Household Survey 2020 and data from the Ministry of Finance, Accountability 3-2021.

The criterion of "universality" in the coverage of the vouchers does not serve to reach the entire population. It serves to standardise and homogenise different situations, to treat different social subjects as if they all had the same condition and the same need; it is not only a weakness of targeting, but also denotes the presence of a mercantilist macroeconomic bias, because the conditionalities of CTPs are generic. This means that it does not matter who and how it benefits or what effects it has on different sectors of the population. What seems to be prioritised is injecting large amounts of money into the market and boosting aggregate demand, which, together with tax exemptions and the transfer of resources to the financial system, protect the reproduction of capital. This orientation towards the reproduction of capital is only possible

because the unpaid social reproduction work carried out by women has not ceased for a minute in the COVID-19 crisis. The four COVID-19 CTPs put a total of USD 1,161,450,126.6 on the market; however, they failed to prevent the fall in income and employment. In 2020, the low-income population stratum increased by 1.77 per cent, the population in the middle-income stratum decreased by 2.2 per cent^{xxii}, and the overall unemployment rate was the highest in the last five years at 8.64 per cent.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The implementation of the four COVID-19 emergency CTPs shows that the population belonging to the middle and high income strata has benefited most from the CTPs due to typical economic behaviour, i.e. racialised class stratification and gender inequality. This mercantilist macroeconomic bias, unfavourable to the poorest sectors and women, deepens the income gap whilst favouring income concentration in the middle and upper income strata.

The differentiated impact of COVID-19 in Bolivia is linked to the existing matrix of inequality by class, race and gender, and especially to the characteristics of employment and the labour market. The precariousness of the social protection and health systems has become more evident during the first year of COVID-19.

To contain the risks of market disruption in people's lives in 2020, the State continues to implement counter-cyclical policies to compensate for temporary falls in private demand with higher public spending through the launch of CTPs to boost aggregate demand.

The analysis of the CTPs has revealed at least three characteristics that lead us to affirm that monetary transfers in Bolivia respond to "stagnant policies that depend on pre-existing trajectories". The first characteristic is that their aim is to guarantee macroeconomic stability by using the money saved and contracting debt to inject large amounts of money into the market; the second characteristic is that the CTPs are accompanied by significant tax relief, subsidies for basic services through public spending, moratoriums and loan payment flexibilities, which will mainly benefit big capital, reductions and/or deferrals of employers' social security contributions, and heavy subsidies to companies for the payment of salaries. These fiscal measures have cost more than USD 2 billion.

The COVID-19 crisis has also highlighted the strong influence of the private sector in defining fiscal and economic policies. In the 14 years of government of the MAS prior to the COVID-19 crisis, this influence was reflected in the extractivist economic model and in fiscal benefits. Under the transitional government, the authoritarian practices of the private sector and conservative sectors have been crudely reactivated.

The third characteristic is that CTPs have differential effects according to income brackets associated with sexism and the ethnification of the labour force as a labour policy. More than sixty-three per cent of women are employed in the informal sector, and the composition of the subordinate classes is of indigenous peasant origin. Tax relief has resulted in a fiscal loss of USD 287 million, benefiting mostly corporations, and indirect taxes such as VAT have remained unchanged. This means that the COVID-19 CTPs lose their limited redistributive outcome due to the regressive effects of indirect taxation.

The functioning of power relations, the sexual division of labour, as well as the organisation and functioning of regeneration and care work as a mechanism for capturing accumulated income have been further normalised by the measures adopted. The gender biases evident in CTPs and virtual education contribute to this. 44.3 per cent of the population has access to the Internet and only 27.4 per cent have a computer at home.

The CTPs, when developed under criteria of "universality", homogenise the subjects and do not consider social and gender inequalities, favouring the higher income sectors. The four vouchers analysed transfer similar amounts to all families regardless of their income level and poverty status, thus confirming that the intention behind these transfers is only to avoid further drops in consumption. This response is framed in the traditional economy, in the neoliberal model, which focuses on the preservation of capital and consumption levels, and is far removed from the care and sustainability of life.

While it is true that the COVID-19 crisis has unleashed a set of difficulties for governments, it is no less true that national governments, both the transitional 2019 -2020 government and the current MAS government, are making their utmost efforts in a single direction which is to rescue a system and an economic model that accelerates and deepens its inability to sustain the lives of people and the planet.

To avoid the reproduction of social and gender inequalities through CTPs, they must avoid the criterion of "universality" and have gender statistics and statistics that include variables referring to ethnic participation and that consider poverty reduction as a central criterion, not as a mechanism to increase consumption.

DRAFT for discussion

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ENDNOTES

ⁱ The Plurinational State has political, economic and democratic pluralism as its principle, recognises and respects the pre-existence of the native peasant indigenous nations and peoples, recognises the community economy and democracy, and all languages are official

ⁱⁱ The Spanish colonial invasion of Latin America gave rise to the use of this term. It is an expression of racial classification stemming from the condition of coloniality, which alludes to the descendants of the union of two or more races or ethnicities, in this case "white race and indigenous race". People classified as mestizos have a lower social status than "white" people and a higher status than indigenous people.

ⁱⁱⁱ 36 indigenous peoples with different languages, territories and life horizons.

^{iv} In the first year of the pandemic, Bolivia had two governments, one "transitional", emerging from the political conflict of 2019, and the other democratically elected in October 2020.

^v "cholas": Clothing worn by women of indigenous and peasant origin, mainly from the Aymara and Quechua peoples.

^{vi} According to Silvia Rivera's translation, the Aymara word "ch'ixi" refers to a mixture, two different and even antagonistic ones (2018).

^{vii} Living Well: harmony between human beings and nature without exploitation or inequalities, a philosophical category of Andean-Amazonian indigenous peoples, breaking the anchors of modernity, is inscribed in the Political Constitutions of Ecuador and Bolivia as an expression of emancipatory processes, a horizon of life opposed to the Western conception summarised in the term "Development".

^{viii} The new Political Constitution of the State recognises women's rights to equality in more than 50 articles, including the recognition of the economic value of household work.

^{ix} Ministry of Economy and Public Finance (2019) Bolivian Economy Report, 2016, 2018 and 2019.

^x *Idem*

^{xi} Ministry of Economy and Public Finance (2021) Bolivian Economy Report 2020.

^{xii} Economic Bulletin, Ministry of Economy and Finance, 2013 (a).

^{xiii} National Institute of Statistics (INE), Household Survey 2011-2020 *official exchange rate 1 USD = 6.97 Bs.

^{xiv} The transitional government installed in November 2019 confronted the popular mobilisations with strong repression and the violation of political rights, mainly of the migrant indigenous peoples settled in the cities of La Paz, El Alto, Cochabamba and Santa Cruz (the country's economic and political hub).

^{xv} The central intention of this reformist and conservative movement is to eliminate the few advances won by the indigenous nations and peoples in the 2009 Plurinational Constitution and return to the republic.

^{xvi} INE <https://www.ine.gob.bo/index.php/estadisticas-economicas/salarios-renumeraciones-y-empleo-de-los-asalariados-en-el-sector-privado-cuadros-estadisticos/>.

^{xvii} INE (Household Survey 2011-2020, between 2019 and 2020).

^{xviii} National Institute of Statistics (National Employment Survey, and Household Survey, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2013, 2014, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019).

^{xix} Municipal, Departmental and Indigenous Autonomous Governments.

^{xx} Ministry of Economy and Finance (2020) "Government financial support for families and employment" information booklet 2020.

^{xxi} After 11 months of transitional government, national elections are held (October 2020) and once again the Movimiento al Socialismo is in government.

^{xx} Ministry of Economy and Finance (2021), "Bolivian Economy Report 2020".

ANNEX 1 TABLES AND GRAPHS

Table No 1. Poverty and Inequality Indicators estimated by the Poverty Line Method by Geographic Area (2011 - 2019)

GEOGRAPHIC AREA AND INDICATORS	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Bolivia									
Incidence of moderate poverty (%)	45,1	43,3	38,9	39,1	38,6	39,5	36,4	34,6	37,2
Incidence of extreme poverty (%)	21,0	21,6	18,7	17,2	16,8	18,3	17,1	15,2	12,9
Gini Index (2)	0,47	0,47	0,48	0,48	0,47	0,46	0,46	0,43	0,42
built-up area									
Incidence of moderate poverty (%)	36,8	34,7	28,9	30,5	31,0	31,6	28,2	26,1	31,3
Incidence of extreme poverty (%)	10,8	12,2	9,1	8,3	9,3	10,0	9,3	7,2	6,4
Gini Index (2)	0,41	0,42	0,42	0,44	0,42	0,41	0,40	0,38	0,39
RURAL AREA									
Incidence of moderate poverty (%)	61,9	61,2	59,9	57,5	55,0	56,9	55,1	53,9	50,8
Incidence of extreme poverty (%)	41,8	41,1	38,8	36,1	33,3	36,6	34,6	33,4	27,8
Gini Index (2)	0,54	0,54	0,53	0,53	0,52	0,54	0,54	0,49	0,47

Source: Own elaboration with data from the National Institute of Statistics (Household Survey 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019).

Table No 2. Poverty Indicators by Ethnic-Linguistic Status³

GEOGRAPHIC AREA AND INDICATORS	2016	2017	2018	2019
Bolivia				
Incidence of moderate poverty (%)	43,0	42,2	39,9	37,2
indigenous	54,0	54,1	53,4	47,2
Non-Indigenous	35,1	34,7	32,5	32,1
Incidence of extreme poverty (%)	19,0	18,4	15,3	12,9
indigenous	28,6	29,4	26,5	21,1
Non-Indigenous	12,0	11,4	9,0	8,6
Gini Index	0,46	0,46	0,43	0,42
built-up area				
Incidence of moderate poverty (%)	35,6	34,4	31,4	31,3
indigenous	42,6	40,9	38,3	36,4
Non-Indigenous	32,7	32,2	29,6	30,0
Incidence of extreme poverty (%)	10,8	10,2	7,0	6,4
indigenous	13,9	12,9	9,5	8,1
Non-Indigenous	9,4	9,2	6,3	6,0
Gini Index	0,41	0,40	0,38	0,39
RURAL AREA				
Incidence of moderate poverty (%)	59,4	59,9	59,2	50,8
indigenous	65,0	65,0	65,8	55,6
Non-Indigenous	47,2	48,3	47,0	42,6
Incidence of extreme poverty (%)	37,1	37,0	34,3	27,8
indigenous	42,7	42,9	40,6	31,3
Non-Indigenous	24,9	23,6	22,1	21,9
Gini Index	0,54	0,54	0,49	0,47

Source: Own elaboration based on UDAPE Dossier social and economic statistics VOL 30, year 2020 Prepared with information from the INE (Household Survey 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019).

³ The classification criteria for the condition ethnic linguistics (Indigenous and Non-Indigenous) takes into account both belonging and language, either jointly or indirectly. It therefore includes those who declared that they belonged to an indigenous people and those who, without recognizing their membership of an indigenous people, fully fulfil the linguistic condition (p. 191; "Ethnic and linguistic range of the Bolivian population" Ramiro Molina B. and Xavier Albino 2006).

Table No. 3. BOLIVIA: AVERAGE MONTHLY INCOME IN THE MAIN OCCUPATION BY SEX, BY OCCUPATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS, 2018 - 2020 (in Bolivian pesos*).

OCCUPATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS	2018			2019			2020		
	man	woman	difference	man	woman	difference	man	woman	difference
TOTAL	3.009	2.428	-581	3.306	2.447	-859	3.204	2.648	-556,63
Occupational Group									
Public and private managers	6.200	5.409	-791	7.682	5.806	-1.876	7.914	6.780**	-1.134
Professional	5.138	4.538	-600	5.764	4.727	-1.037	5.741	4.890	-851
Technicians and support professionals	4.026	3.414	-612	3.999	3.566	-433	4.235	3.804	-431
Service and trade workers	3.193	2.212	-981	3.360	2.223	-1.137	4.071	2.462	-1.609
Workers in agriculture, livestock and fisheries	1.262	705	-557	1.637	977	-660	1.442	683	-760
Plant and machinery operators	3.611	2.489	-1.122	3.674	2.325	-1.349	3.312	2.333	-979
Unskilled workers	2.624	1.762	-862	2.489	1.810	-680	2.445	1.906	-538
Other occupations ⁽¹⁾	3.824	3.106	-718	4.371	3.282	-1.089	4.108	3.455	-654
Economic Activity									
Agriculture, Livestock, Hunting, Fishing and Forestry	1.348	713	-634	1.689	1.001	-687	1.498	709	-789
Manufacturing Industry	3.413	1.965	-1.448	3.587	2.041	-1.545	3.342	2.014	-1.328
construction	3.194	3.346	152	3.430	3.276	-154	3.226	2.747	-478
Wholesale and retail, automotive repair	3.406	2.280	-1.126	3.646	2.274	-1.372	4.071	2.553	-1.518
Transportation and Storage	3.430	2.539	-892	3.488	3.657	169	3.199	3.224	25
Accommodation and meal service activities	3.245	2.296	-949	3.148	2.356	-792	4.436	2.638	-1.798
Information and Communications	4.101	3.422	-678	4.300	3.665	-636	5.036	3.205	-1.831
Financial Intermediation and Insurance	4.978	4.703	-275	5.441	4.733	-708	6.330	5.344	-987
Professional and Technical Services	3.740	3.332	-408	3.939	3.241	-698	4.643	3.844	-799
Administrative and Support Services Activities	2.872	2.069	-802	2.651	2.304	-347	2.761	1.853	-908
Public, Defense and Social Security Adm.	4.512	4.101	-411	5.160	4.368	-792	4.731	5.073	342
Education Services	4.888	4.134	-754	5.595	4.545	-1.050	5.309	4.498	-811
Health and Social Care Services	4.816	3.991	-825	5.983	4.027	-1.956	5.839	4.281	-1.558
Artistic, entertainment and recreational activities	3.158	2.007	-1.151	3.093	2.110	-984	3.676	2.499**	-1.177
Other service activities	2.742	1.692	-1.050	2.695	1.830	-864	2.514	1.801	-713
Activities of Private Homes	2.015*	1.798	-217	2.518	1.666	-852	1.958	1.964	6
Other activities ⁽²⁾	4.807	4.727	-81	4.667	3.306	-1.361	4.997	4.892	-105
Occupational Category									
Worker/Employee	3.784	3.349	-435	4.003	3.387	-616	3.773	3.563	-210
Self-employed worker	2.261	1.753	-508	2.558	1.813	-745	2.587	1.977	-610
Unpaid employer or partner	4.726	4.309	-417	4.309	3.782	-527	5.761	6.450	689
Household employee	2.079	1.818	-261	2.578	1.667	-911	1.958	1.964	6
Other ⁽³⁾	4.787	6.566*	1.778	5.747	7.207	1.459	3.762	3.839	76

Source: own construction based on data Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE), Household Survey 2011-2020.

*Official exchange rate 1UDS = 6.97 Bs.

**Coefficient of variation above 20%, use it only in a referential way

(1) Includes Armed Forces and Office Employees.

(2) It includes mining and quarrying, electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supplies, water supplies, wastewater disposal and waste and pollution management, real estate activities and offshore agency services.

(3) Includes Paid Employer or Partner and Production Cooperative.

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