

MAPPING GENDERED SYSTEMS OF SOCIAL PROTECTION AND SOCIAL SUPPORT ACROSS WELFARE, FAMILY AND DISABILITY DOMAINS

Flinders University, September 2020

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There is a vast array of policies and programmes across government, private and community sectors shaping the lives of socio-economically marginalised women.

Since the early 2000s, these programs have become more complex and expansive, simultaneously aiming to integrate compliance and reporting measures at the individual, household and service programming levels while often failing to address data gaps that emerge through the disjuncture between formal records and practice and through different policy aims and logics. Women are required to navigate programs individually and within a complex of policy systems. As one example: Single Parent Payments and Family Tax Benefit B payments are calculated with reference to often irregular child support payments (amongst other sources of income) which in turn can be shaped by court ordered care arrangements, which can sit in tension with post-separation domestic violence and child protection concerns.

This workshop will systematically map the points of intersection, alignment, gaps and tensions in the logic and implementation of policies, programs and infrastructure of implementation across welfare, family and disability domains. It will identify these relationships as they are evident in a complex set of policy systems, and between formal articulations of policy, their implementation through legislation and practice and the experiences of the women who navigate them.

This workshop will focus on:

- the suite of income transfers and activities required under welfare conditionality (e.g. Newstart, Parenting Payments and Family Tax Benefits, Carers' Allowance, ParentsNext, cashless debit cards/income management and employment services);
- the surveillance and governance of families (child support payments, child protection and domestic and family violence responses and supports); and
- the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and carer supports.

We refer to the above as social protection and social support systems, a term that encompasses policy, legislative and program elements across multiple domains and contexts of delivery. These social protection and social support systems are diverse but share in common their impact on women's access to resources, potentially punitive responses to perceived lack of compliance and often significant discrepancies between formal policy aims and logics and their implementation.

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Researchers have focused on specific programs with results typically highlighting the negative material and psychological impacts accruing from the surveillance and insecurity that are key elements of an array of programs. There are some few authors addressing the intersection of policies or programs (for example, the combined impacts of reforms to welfare payments and the child support formula [Summerfield et al. (2010)], Cook et al.'s (2015) work on Parenting Payments and child support, and research on domestic violence and child protection [e.g. Humphreys and Absler 2011]) but there has been no attempt to build a wider focus mapping the relationship of multiple social protection and social support systems and identifying their combined impacts.

The workshop will be guided by four principal questions:

1. Where are the points of alignment, tensions and dis/connection across these systems of social protection and social support?
2. What are the most effective methods for mapping alignment, tensions and dis/connection?
3. How do systems of social protection and social support impact on women's lives in interaction with each other?
4. What interventions or reforms will improve women's wellbeing under these systems of social protection and social support?

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This workshop aims to:

- generate a holistic account of social protection and social support systems that have, to date, been studied as separate and unrelated;
- identify the implications of these complex relationships for women and for the aims and implementation of these diverse systems; and
- recommend policy or program interventions to improve women's wellbeing.

"Exploring the joint impacts of programs offers the opportunity to develop more nuanced accounts of acknowledged impacts and sites for reform and intervention."

The workshop will begin to build an evidence base on the combined impacts of multiple policies and programs on the lives of socio-economically marginalised Australian women. It will generate a rigorous conceptual framework in which to identify, document and understand social protection and support systems for future research.

Current research highlights the ambiguous effects of specific policies and programs. Individually, they have the potential to connect women to employment and parenting supports, increase economic resources and provide pathways into paid labour; they may also erode women's physical and psychological wellbeing, economic security and capacity to manage their time, resources and relationships. Exploring the joint impacts of programs offers the opportunity to develop more nuanced accounts of acknowledged impacts and sites for reform and intervention.



The workshop will also, for the first time, generate a body of work that systematically builds insights into implications of interactions of Australia's complex social protection and social support systems within and across domains. It will articulate the impact of policies and programs beyond a singular domain and map complex systems of gendered social governance and their impact upon the lives of socio-economically marginalised women.

