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9. ABSTRACT
Women who are heads of households in developing societies are presented here as a special group among the poor worthy of the full attention of policy makers concerned with improving the quality of life of the poorest of the poor. Census data, if and when it deals with family headship, generally fails to establish a viable criterion with respect to the definition of the term 'head of household' and one which could relfect the changing role of women in assuming de facto economic responsibliities for their own and their children's survival. The findings reported by microliterature suggest a typology of who these de facto women heads of household are and where they might be. These are women who because of marital dissolution, desertion, abandonment, absence of spouse or male marginality are structurally placed in a situation where they are economically responsible for themselves and their children. On the basis of the typology derived from micro data the phenomenon of female headed households is translated into aggregate data for 74 developing countries. This is done by quantifying for each country on the basis of census data, the total range of adult women who because of their current marital/family status carry the potential of being or eventually becoming family heads. The average percentage of potential household heads who are women is 22% for sub Saharan Africa, 20% for Central America and the Caribbean, 16% for North Africa and the Middle East and 15% for South America. This potential segment is not a de facto group but is meant to be taken as suggestive of trends and patterns. This report also includes a separate case study of female households in the Caribbean for the purposes of providing a model for the kind of data generated and presenting compelling evidence of the disadvantaged position of women heads of households. This study identifies one

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group of people who are among the poorest of the poor and suggests that policies geared to assist these women would be a significant weapon in the struggle against poverty.

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WOMEN-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS:
THE IGNORED FACTOR IN DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction. 1

The Informed-Policy Problem 2

The Methodological Problem. 7

Typology of Women-Headed Households 13

the widow 14

the divorced woman 19

women in consensual unions 23

the single mother 27

beyond the typology: family structures among marginal groups in Central America 34

Conceptualization and Analysis of Data. 37

findings 38

the qualitative dimension 48

Women Heads of Household in the Commonwealth Caribbean. . . 50

background 50

sources of data and problems of methodology 55

findings 57

an economic typology of women heads of household 61

summary 71

The Socioeconomics of Women-Headed Households 73

poverty and women-headed households 73

socioeconomic factors contributing to the rise of women-headed households 75

Footnotes

Tables

References

TABLES

Table

1 Percentage ranking of "potential" female heads of households to "potential" total heads of household in the developing world

2 Potential women heads of households in the developing world

3 Child/mother ratio for the female population according to specific marital categories

4 Child/mother ratio among single, widowed/divorced women by specific age groups: Guatemala, 1973

5 Marital-specific activity rates for female population 15+

6 Female heads of household in the Commonwealth Caribbean

7 Female heads of household in the Commonwealth Caribbean by union status: Adjusted figures

8 Female heads of household in the Commonwealth Caribbean by union status: Unadjusted figures

9 Heads of household in the Commonwealth Caribbean by sex and level of education

10 Heads of household in the Commonwealth Caribbean by sex and by main activity

11 Heads of household in the Commonwealth Caribbean by sex and by occupation

12 Heads of household in the Commonwealth Caribbean by sex and by income

13 Heads of household in the Commonwealth Caribbean by sex and by age

14 Jamaican women 15 years and over by union status and by education

15 Jamaican women 15 years and over by union status and by main activity

16 Jamaican women aged 15 to 64 by age and by union status

17 Jamaican women ages 14 to 64 by union status and by number of children ever had

Summary

The objective of this study is to present a portrayal of women who are heads of household in developing societies as a very special group among the poor worthy of the full attention of policy makers concerned with improving the quality of life of the poorest of the poor.

In the past few years micro-studies have provided growing, though scattered, evidence of the increase of female-headed households in developing societies. Unfortunately, the significance of this trend is obscured at the macro-data level, which typically is the only kind of data that reaches policy makers and development planners. Census data, if and when it deals with family headship, generally fails to establish a viable criterion with respect to the definition of the term 'head of household' and one which could reflect the changing role of women in assuming de facto economic responsibilities for their own and their children's survival.

Obviously there is no source to draw upon which identifies the magnitude of women in developing countries who are functioning as de facto household heads. The findings reported by microliterature suggest a typology of who these de facto women heads of household are and where they might be. These are the women who because of marital dissolution, desertion, abandonment, absence of spouse or male marginality are structurally placed in a situation in which they become economically responsible for themselves and their children.

On the basis of the typology derived from micro data the phenomenon of female headed households is 'translated' into aggregate data for 74 developing countries. This is done by 'quantifying' for each country on the basis of census data, the total range of adult women who because of their current marital/family status carry the "potential" of being or eventually becoming family heads.

The percentage of potential household heads who are women among total potential household heads (which also includes all adult men but the single) varies from a low ranking of 10 percent to 48 percent; the average for 74 countries is 18 percent. The average percentage of potential household heads who are women is 22 percent for sub Saharan Africa, 20 percent for Central America and the Caribbean, 16 percent for North Africa and the Middle East and 15 percent for South America. The potential segment identified is obviously not a de facto group. It is meant to be taken as suggestive of trends and patterns; the ultimate intention is to stimulate research that will generate reliable quantitative data on the incidence of female-headed households.

The separate case study of female households in the Caribbean included in this report serves two purposes: First, it provides a model for the kind of data that it is possible to generate on women heads of household by way of national censuses. Second, it presents compelling evidence of the disadvantaged position of women who are heads of household as compared both to the female population in general, and to the population of men who are household heads, in particular.

International data reviewed on the socioeconomics of women heads of household suggest a direct linkage between processes of modernization -- particularly those stemming from economic development and its policies -- and the rise of households headed by women. What is occurring in developing societies today with respect to this phenomenon are neither isolated instances nor traceable to specific ethnic/cultural heritages. Rather, most studies suggest that explanatory factors for female family headship should be sought in both internal and international migration; mechanization of agriculture; the development of agribusiness, urbanization; overpopulation; lower class marginality, and the emergence of a class system of wage labor -- all of which are integral parts/consequences of rapid economic transformation. Further research is needed to substantiate these preliminary suggestions. If the linkage is confirmed, planners must recognize and be able to deal with this unintended consequence of economic development and policies.

Assessment of the specific repercussions this 'unintended' consequence might have on women, in particular, needs critical evaluation of long sustained myths and stereotypes regarding family structure, particularly in the non-Western world.

One of these stereotypes superimposes upon societies the Western vision of women functioning in nuclear type family systems as homemakers and childbearers and sees the man as the sole economic provider and household head. Such a stereotype has only recently been debunked as an empirical reality of the Western world. The other is the mythology which continues to perceive non-Western family structures as a welfare system that provides psychological, legal and economic protection towards all its male and female members. This myth chooses to focus on the ideal and neglects to consider how changing economic conditions in developing societies have restructured the economic reality in which men and women function. Reference is made in this report to incidences which clearly demonstrate the extent to which this restructuring has increasingly circumvented the institutionalization of "ideal" family obligations -- particularly as they pertain to the protective function provided to widows, divorced and single mothers.

The international data is compelling in showing the linkage between female family headship and poverty. It is women among the poor, be it in Central and South America, in sub Saharan and North Africa, in Asia, who are increasingly becoming the sole or main economic provider of their families. In almost all these societies, this group of women are ill-prepared to assume such responsibility. The suddenness of this new role that women are called upon to fulfill is, in many instances, traumatic. This is particularly true in social settings which, up until recently, have staunchly upheld the tradition of stable family systems and male headed households. Paradoxically, it appears to be precisely in these societies where poverty with development operates to trigger the creation and rise of women-headed households.

Development planners are trying to target their aid directly to those most in need. Identifying who the poor are is necessary to implement these "new directions" in development assistance. This study has identified one group of people who might be amongst the poorest of the poor. It seems clear that specific economic policies geared to assist women who head poor households in Third World countries will prove to be a significant weapon in the struggle against poverty.

WOMEN-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS:

THE IGNORED FACTOR IN DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

This preliminary study was generated by the cleft between: (a) the growing, though scattered, evidence that the increase of female-headed households has become a significant trend in many societies; (b) the lack of a common definitional standard at both the macro and micro level for the precise meaning of the term 'head of household' particularly insofar as it applies to women; and (c) common assumptions made about female-based households that have the effect of dismissing the phenomenon as problematic in any way.

From a sample of available empirical evidence as well as from world census tables that had never before been compiled, this report provides an insight into women heading poor households in Third World countries. This portrayal is not comprehensive or rich in details. Not all of the existent micro studies were reviewed. Those reviewed, coupled with the macro data analyzed, yield only a sketch of these women. Though imperfect, this portrayal reveals that women heads of households might be a very special group among the poor worthy of the full attention of policy-makers concerned with improving the quality of life of the poorest of the poor. To inform those making decisions on programs and resources that will benefit the world's poorest people is, above all, an objective of this study.

This report first explores policy and methodology obstacles to recognizing the existence of women heads of household. Using micro information, it then outlines a typology of who these women are and, analyzing macro data, how many there are and where they might be. This latter macro analysis should be taken only as suggestive of trends and patterns. Precise quantitative data for most Third World countries has yet to be

generated.

There are, however, exceptions to this lack of quantitative information, most notably for the countries in the Commonwealth Caribbean. A substantial amount of micro studies have also been undertaken in these countries. A section of this report reviews the micro information and analyzes the macro data for the Commonwealth Caribbean. While still incomplete, it gives the most detailed picture of women heads of household now available for this group of countries.

The report ends with some hypotheses that might explain the rise in women headed households in the Third World. Hopefully, the areas of inquiry that this study raises will trigger research priorities that will bear directly upon action.

THE INFORMED-POLICY PROBLEM

For many years, international and bilateral agencies emphasized a capital intensive approach to development assistance. A change in priorities, away from building infrastructures and toward providing the poorest 40 percent of the world with better access to the socio-economic benefits of development, has been fairly recent. Robert McNamara's noted plea was delivered in Nairobi just four years ago. AID's "Implementation of New Directions in Development Assistance" was formalized only in 1975. A "basic needs strategy" against chronic poverty was outlined even more recently (ILO, 1976). The crux of these new directions is the targeting of development efforts directly to the poor. Expanding the income of the poorest people through increases in productivity and generation of new employment opportunities is one central objective (OECD, 1977, p.17). To do so, a necessary precondition is to identify who the poor are, where they concentrate, and what they

presently do to survive. This task is not an easy one.

The above agencies' concentration with the macro economics of development left them ill-prepared for the task of obtaining reliable information on poor people's socioeconomic situation. Such efforts are now underway and are meeting greater success with those measures that have a reasonable data base. Here women lose out. The existing data base for women's economic participation (e.g., censuses) misreports women's economic activities. Work that is not performed for wages in the formal sector of the economy is not counted as work. Women who work for wages but who also perform house care duties are categorized as "housewives," that is, non-working beings.

This inadequate economic data base for women is probably due to a deeply ingrained Western vision that places women inside the home and restricts their functions to those of homemakers and childbearers (Tinker, 1976, pg.5). The data base for women as reproducers (childbearers and childrearers) is infinitely more satisfactory than the data base for women as economic producers. Development policies have reflected these data inadequacies and imbalances: Women have been "targeted" as concerns to development planners because of their reproduction and childbearing, not because of their productive functions.

Since the productive economic activities of women have not been reflected in censuses and world tables, development policies whose goal is to raise the standard of living of the poor have not utilized women's economic resources. Policy-makers have not realized that women's inefficient and underremunerated economic activities add to the grim overall economic picture of underdevelopment. Nor have they become aware that increasing women's productivity is crucial to improving this economic picture (Broder, D., Washington Post, Feb. 8, 1978).

Development projects have been directed primarily to women of childbearing ages, providing family planning and nutrition information. When they have explored income raising opportunities for women, it has been in the context of providing alternative options to early marriage and motherhood, thereby reducing fertility. In an address to MIT last year, Robert McNamara called for enhancing the status of women, socially, economically and politically, as a way to reduce their fertility (1977, p. 36-38). The 1978 U.S. Foreign Assistance Bill, currently before Congress, makes reference to women strictly in terms of their reproductive role. Section 202, dealing with Agriculture, Food Production, Rural Development and Nutrition, is concerned with women "as mothers" and with "breastfeeding." Section 203, Population and Health, mentions women only in terms of pregnancy and is concerned with finding alternative roles to motherhood.

A corollary to the Western vision of women as homemakers and childbearers places women in a nuclear family structure where the man is the sole economic provider <u>and</u> the head of the household or in a non-Western family organization characterized by strong familism and male supremacy. The traditional family in the non-West (such as joint and extended families) is seen as a welfare system that provides psychological, legal and economic protection toward its kinsmen/women. It is assumed that women's rights are protected, and that women are extended economic support regardless of whether they are single, married, divorced, widowed or abandoned.[1]

Relying on the above assumptions and protected by the lack of almost any data, development practitioners have not even considered the possibility of targeting some of their aid to women-headed households in the Third World. But why should they? The assumption that men head all nuclear households and provide for the economic needs of these households as well as the assumption that the non-Western family protects its members are currently under strong questioning.

The long-sustained myth about the ideal western family structure was debunked in the United States when it became apparent that women were the sole heads of 34 percent (%)* of all minority households and 11% of all white families. In 1972, 52% of the former and 25% of the latter families were below the poverty level as compared to only 5% of families with an adult male head who were below this level (Ross and Sawhill, 1976; D. Broder, Washington Post, Feb. 8, 1978). Additional data have revealed that this is by no means a phenomenon restricted to the U.S. It is now estimated that between 25 and 33 percent of all households in the world are de facto headed by women, and that often the percentage is much higher in particular regions within a country because of death, desertion, migration and polygamy (Tinker, 1976, p. 37 ; Newland, n.d.; Germaine, 1976-77). It is also estimated that these families constitute a major section of the poor in all countries, and that they might be "the poorest of them all."

In the industrialized West, divorce is a major cause for the rise in women-headed households. In Turkey, Algeria, Morocco, Italy, it is the emigration of male and female labor to industrial centers of Europe. In sub-Saharan Africa, it is male emigration to towns and cities; in South Africa and Zambia, men migrate to work in the mines, leaving their families behind. In Central and South America, female headship is

* From here on, the percentage symbol (%) is used.

created by women migrating to the cities and by unstable serial unions in which reproduction takes place that leave mother and children often abandoned in poverty.

Female headed households in the Caribbean appear to be a function of nontraditional mating patterns prevalent among lower class West Indian blacks. Age at marriage among this population is high and marriage rates are low, nonlegal sexual relationships are unstable, and serial matings and illegitimacy are commonplace. Such mating patterns foster situations where the male is not regularly present in the home or is unwilling to provide economic support for his family. In parts of the Middle East, real conflicts are surfacing between increasing economic pressures and the continued existence of traditional obligations that inhibit kinship units from providing economic support to female members as it is 'ideally' and even legally prescribed. In many countries, male unemployment and male marginality have prevented men from keeping their economic obligations towards their kinswomen. This has contributed to the breakdown of the extended family.

The sustained stereotype of the non-Western family as a welfare system fails to consider changing economic conditions in developing societies and the actual economic reality in which male and female members of a traditional family unit function. This reality has become sufficiently powerful to circumvent the institutionalization of ideal family norms, particularly as these pertain to the protective functions offered to women.

The fact that an increasing number of women among the poor are becoming the sole or main economic provider for their families coupled with the fact that their productive activities, ignored by censuses and planners alike, are mostly marginal, inefficient, and underremunerated should make women-headed households one of the main targets of the new development directions. As later sections of this study reveal, poverty appears to be closely linked with

households headed by women. Concern has already been expressed that in implementing the "basic needs strategy" planners will fall into the trap of providing adequate -- i.e., more remunerative and productive -- employment to unemployed and underemployed men leaving the presently overworked and uncounted women with inadequate employment (Palmer, 1976). This concern becomes overriding when the classic argument that men's employment will benefit the family is no longer applicable. It clearly does so in the case of households that are headed by women. Efforts invested in assisting women heading poor households with dependents in developing countries, by providing these women above all with adequate training opportunities for employment, should have a positive impact on the economic development of these countries. Increasing the productive capacity of this group of women workers will help the country's economy in the short run. Enlarging/expanding the income potential of these women will have a marked effect upon the economy in the long run, by paving the way for the emergence of a future capable work force represented by the children of women who head households.

THE METHODOLOGICAL PROBLEM

Very few countries include in their national census data specific tabulations on household heads by sex. Even fewer cross-tabulate it by marital status, age and economic activity. Ghana and the Commonwealth Caribbean are notable exceptions. The latter publishes two volumes with relevant information; one is on the population by marital status and the other is on the population by union status.[2] The union status of the population is included in the Caribbean census to specify family typologies; it provides probably the best available census information on women who are de facto heads of households. Countries such as Costa Rica, Guatemala, Indonesia, Iran, Macau, the Philippines, Singapore, Turkey and Venezuela include a less ambitious, though informative, profile of household heads that allows for

considerable analysis. Similarly, there are demographic surveys on regional and national bases in some African countries where female and male headship is singled out.

Unfortunately neither at the census level nor in the macro survey type of studies is there a standard definition of the term head of household, particularly applied to women. The format of questions related to the 'Head of Household' reflects the definition usually adopted by the Statistical Offices of most countries. Head of household is whomever is designated as such by the members of the household. This broad generality lends itself to the introduction of cultural biases both on the part of the respondent and the census enumerator. [In a seminar last year, a member of the Census Bureau in Nicaragua stated that census takers, in the context of that culture, are predisposed to identify men rather than women as heads of household. The same reaction came from an official in the Guatemala Bureau of the Census.] Where male supremacy is the cultural ideal, a son of 12 will be cited or will cite himself as household head in the absence of a father. The same cultural principle is known to have inhibited male respondents from identifying their womenfolk as engaged in income earning activities outside the home. Even when the household head is defined, as by the Honduran census as "that person who provides the chief source of income for the household or who is regarded as such by its members," or as by the Philippino census as "a person who generally provides the chief source of income for the household unit; he is the eldest person, male or female who is responsible for the organization of the household or who is regarded as such by the members," chances are that women will be under enumerated.[3]

The definitional problem surrounding identification of the household head is not confined to the cult of 'machismo' as reflected in male responses.

More crucial is the self-perception of women who, though economically active, continue to 'declare' themselves as 'only housewives.' Even when performing the functions of major economic provider for their families, women might designate a male relative as actual household head. A recent micro survey of poor rural households in Honduras revealed that while 10 women interviewed in randomly chosen households declared themselves housewives, all 10 performed, in addition to their housewife's duties, the average of two additional economic activities for which they received remuneration. While these women worked for pay, the open question "Do you work" elicited the traditional response, "No, I'm a housewife."

We suspect that information available on household heads in some Sub-Saharan African countries has definitional problems as well. The data often identifies "chefs de ménages," "chefs de concession," "chefs de cellule familiale." Numerically, the number of women so designated is sometimes impressive. However it is not clear exactly what these terms 'mean' in the context of African culture. An opposite principle (as contrasted to the Middle Eastern and Latin American situation) may be operating here. In some African societies the status of female headship might be recognized solely by virtue of age. Hence an elderly widowed/divorced woman may be identified as household head though, in fact, she may not bear economic responsibilities towards household members. Such a definition can prove to be counter-productive to the issue that we are raising here, for it allows the perpetuation of generalized notions to the effect that women-headed households are concentrated mostly among older women who look to their children to support them instead of their husbands. The typical contention that female heads of household are older women who have adult children able to support them is not borne out by recent empirical findings (Blumberg, 1977; Shah, 1976; Caribbean Yearbook, 1970).

We are interested in identifying women who function as de facto heads of household: those women who, because of marital dissolution, desertion, abandonment, absence of spouse or male marginality in the home, are structurally placed in a situation in which they become economically responsible for providing for their own survival and that of their children.

This particular group of women is not identified by most current macro data sources published in developing countries.

A comparison between census data and findings obtained from recent micro studies suggests that national censuses might not be dealing adequately with this important segment. The 1973 Costa Rican census indicated that only 16.4% of all households were headed by women. Using the technique of autobiographies, a Costa Rican anthropologist recently conducted a study of 82 women of low socioeconomic status drawn from around the country. 62% of these women were de facto heads of household; they had been abandoned by their men. Further, 67% of these abandoned women functioned in the context of the matrifocal family structure where the economic responsibility of family survival is assumed by the mother. The census revealed that only 5.3% of the total economically active heads were women heads of household (the percentage of women in the total labor force was 19%). The jobs held by these economically active women heads of household were similar to those held by the total economically active female population (they predominated in the categories of personal services, professional and administrators, and office workers), but with one exception: in the year the census was collected, twice as many economically active women who were heads of household as compared to economically active women in general were seeking their first job. How did

these women survive? The micro study found that women and their children worked most often in marginal occupations that did not provide them with a fixed wage; therefore they did not get counted as "economically active" (López de Piza, 1977).

The Honduran census reported that in 1974 there were 100,089 women who were heading their household. Unpublished data from this census, however, shows for the same year that there were 142,580 women who were either single, separated, divorced or widowed with children. These women had a higher parity (5.1) than the average parity for all women (3.4). Given that this census includes both a category for married women and one for women in consensual unions, it can be assumed that women listed as single, separated, widowed and divorced women did not have a mate present in the household, and that they probably bore the major economic responsibility for those dependents.

There are, however, cases where census and micro data converge. A study conducted in 1971 in Caracas, Venezuela that compared barrio households according to employment categories and labor force status of the household-head showed that approximately one-fourth of Venezuelan households were female headed. This finding is in line with the 1961 census data and with a Venezuelan housing study of 1971 by the National Bank (Centro Venezolano de Estudios de Población y Familia, 1971). Another survey of a representative sample of 2,245 households in the metropolitan area of Belo Horizonte in Brazil, found, in accordance with the census for that region, that 19 percent of the households were headed by women (Merrick, 1977).

In most countries, however, the magnitude and overall economic profile of women who function as family heads cannot be assessed as long as the concept of household head continues to be defined in "cultural" terms.

Researchers are increasingly becoming aware of the growing incidence of female family headship in the Third World, but only through micro surveys, anthropological studies and small scale in-depth sociological inquiries. Almost all these studies are 'academic' in orientation. In and by themselves they do not get channelled to the attention of policy makers. The fact that most academics do not design their research to project planning often means that the results they obtain (even if and when they do 'reach' development planners) are dismissed by practitioners. Moreover, these micro studies are not coordinated nor have they motivated efforts to replicate and specify their findings. Without replication and specification, they cannot be properly 'translated' or 'extrapolated' to a macro-level data bank.

TYPOLOGY OF WOMEN-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS

A female-headed or/-based household is extended to cover a broad range of domestic situations. Typically, such a household is characterized by the absence of a resident male head. Visible examples are the widowed and divorced mothers; less obvious and more difficult to detect are the separated, abandoned and single mothers, and those households where men are drawn away as migrant labor for considerable periods of time. Female-based households can be extended to cover situations where there may be a resident male head of household who has lost his functions as the economic provider and consequently his status in the home. Whenever factors such as low wages, unemployment, and limited access to jobs prevail in settings where the man is dependent largely on his economic role to maintain his position in the household, male marginality is created and matrifocal families are likely to develop.

The extent to which women in any of the above statuses become de facto heads of household (that is, they come to assume functions of economic responsibility for themselves and their children) will depend upon the "situational" interaction between (a) the specific institutional position accorded to them by familial and social structures and (b) the "realistic" ability or willingness of the kin unit or society at large to acknowledge financial responsibility to its female members. It is often the case that even when institutional support for women prevails, it is not always translated into actual economic support. Furthermore, in societies where ambivalence exists regarding the position of women who are divorced, separated or abandoned, or who are single mothers, the chances are that such groups of women will receive little institutional or economic support unless they come from a privileged socioeconomic group.

The Widow

In most societies widowhood remains the structural position to which greatest institutional support is extended. In many societies specific provisions are made for the consequences of widowhood. For instance, some cultures ideally make provisions for the absorption of a widow into her own family unit or that of her deceased husband (India, the Middle East, North Africa). In other societies there are no explicit obligations incumbent upon family members to provide such support (e.g., Central and South America). The extent to which economic support is extended will often depend upon socioeconomic differences.

In assessing the status of widowed women it is crucial to distinguish between ideal system and actual behavior. Too many cultural myths continue to be sustained regarding the prevalence of traditional welfare and protective functions towards women whose spouses have deceased. True, the widow's fate is viewed as a metaphysical tragedy -- hence she elicits sympathy and compassion. These sentiments are not always translated into protection and support.

To cite only a few empirically derived findings:

Recent studies of rural households in India (Shah, 1976) provide new dimensions to the joint family household structure. Shah writes:

> "In cases studied in Radhvariaj, there is not a single household in which a widowed daughter-in-law lives with her parents-in-law or brothers-in-law, and I have not found any such household in other villages in Charotra. She either goes back to her parental home or sets up separate household with her children in a conjugal village, because with the loss of her husband she loses protection of in-laws in her husband's home." (p. 44)

Further, Shah continues:

> "When a man dies leaving behind a widow and young children, she has not only to earn her livelihood, like widows living

> in a single member household, but also to support her children until they marry ... Until the eldest son becomes the chief earning member, it is the mother who is responsible for the care of the young children and getting them married."

A recent study conducted by L'Institut de Recherches et D'Applications de Methodes de Developpement (1977) at the request of L'Association de Veuves et Orphelins de Haute Volta highlighted the precarious condition in which widows find themselves, particularly in urban areas, as a result of the increasing integration of family members into the monetized economy. Legally, a widow in Upper Volta becomes part of the property inherited by her husband's family upon his death. She is "distributed" among male kin and is completely dependent upon her inlaws, and their arbitrary power to either grant or withdraw privileges or rights.

The difficulties of urban living have made it impossible for most families (however well disposed they may be) to take care of one, two, three co-spouses, each with several children. The result has been that widowed women are left on their own to provide for their own livelihood and that of their children. The income earning activities they are allowed to pursue are tightly circumscribed, mostly because there is strong social resistance to grant widows opportunities through which they could gain some economic independence. The interviews quoted in the above study include examples of physically violent reactions on the part of male relatives towards widows who were beginning to set themselves up in a small entrepreneurial way.

In the Middle East the cultural ideal is to protect the widow through formal and explicit religious and legal prescriptions. A widow's right to return with her children to her <u>parental</u> home is undisputed. Social

pressures have in the past defined this as an unquestionable family duty and one which, in the eyes of many Muslim jurists, was the justification of the bridal gift paid by the husband at the time of the marriage contract.

Economic pressures are beginning to question how long the family can continue to fulfill its duty towards a widowed daughter or sister, particularly if she is young and able to work. In Morocco for example, among urban widows, almost one-fourth are economically active in the labor market. In traditional non-Islamic societies such as Nepal, one third of all widows are working; in the Philippines the corresponding proportion is 46%.

It is important to emphasize that widowhood in most societies represents a locked-in status. This is for both socially and demographically structured reasons. Compared to the destiny of divorcees, single mothers and abandoned women, whose status may be transitory or transitional, the fate of the widowed woman is, in most cases, sealed.

All over the world the remarriage rate of widowed women is low, in absolute terms and in comparison to women in other marital statuses. Both age and the presence of children lessen the chance of widow remarriage. The importance of both these variables in remarriage rates is striking in the rural areas of Northern India. Widow remarriage is a realistic possibility for women up to age 20. Ninety percent of widowed women below 15 and 80% among those between 15 and 19 years were found to remarry. After 20, however, their chances declined rapidly (Agarwala, 1967).

It is important to realize that not all widows are middle aged or old, and that not all widows have numerous children. The explanation for the low remarriage rate has to be sought in other factors.

One of these factors is the particular interaction that occurs in some societies between mortality levels and socially structured mating patterns. In societies where large age differences between spouses is the norm and where men die at an early age, a large pool of widowed women is created who are considered unmarriageable. One indicator of the magnitude of such a pool is the discrepancy one may find in a society between the percentage of widowed males and widowed females within each age group. For example, in the Cameroon among populations aged 45-54, the proportion who are widowed is 1% among males and 19% among women. This suggests that men not only marry considerably younger women <u>at first marriage</u> but continue to do so throughout subsequent remarriages as well. In many societies the prestige for the female associated with marrying a well-to-do older man, and for the male to marry a young virgin, applies throughout marital careers. Women past the prime age and those who have once been married lose out.

Where life expectancy among males is low and age differences between spouses is considerable, the chances for the existence of large pools of widowed women are high. In rural Nigeria it has been estimated that if a girl aged 15 marries a man 10 years her senior and if she survives till age 50, the chances are one in two (45%) that her husband will survive until the end of her reproductive period. If she marries a man 15 years her senior, the probability of his survival until she reaches age 50 is 30% (Mott, 1974).

Migration also has an impact upon the widow's chances for remarriage. In Latin America, the general interpretation has been that widowed women of all ages migrate to urban areas because village life offers few employment opportunities. Once a widowed woman arrives in an urban setting, the probability that she will remarry or become involved in a consensual relationship is very remote.

One immediate effect of the heavy migration of women into the city has been a considerable sex disparity in the ratio between unattached males and unattached females that is highly unfavorable for marital or union formation purposes for all women. In the 1960's in urban Chile, typical of many Latin American cities, there were 250 potentially marriageable females in the 35-55 age group for every 100 potentially marriageable males of the same ages. Under those circumstances the chances for a widow to contract a union will be scanty. One may want to question why Latin American widows do not return to rural areas where their chances for remarriage are often five times higher than they are in urban centers.

One other important facet of the "locked-in" status of widows is related to cultural superstitions in many societies that label these women as a bad omen, and associate them with death. The implications for remarriage are self-evident. Such superstitions are very strong in the Middle East and in parts of Asia and Africa. In Upper Volta, the following popular proverb places in perspective the marginal role of widowed women in that society: (CORREZE, 1977).

> "Chez nous, quand une femme meurt, on dit que c'est naturel; quand le mari meurt, on dit que c'est la femme qui l'a tue."

The Divorced Woman

There are several difficulties surrounding the incidence of divorce and separation, as well as the problem of defining the status of the divorced and separated woman in a given society. Statistically there are serious problems because the two categories divorced/separated, or the three divorced/separated/widowed categories are many times combined under one heading. True, all categories represent marital disruption; yet the consequences for women differ considerably in each case. Such differences are obviously obscured when the incidence of each status is not recorded separately.

Generally, the structural position of the divorcee and the separated woman is ambivalent in that the institutional support/social acceptance extended to these statuses is not well defined. The ambivalence is reflected from the extreme position of social ostracism and rejection of these women to the other extreme where divorced women are placed within a well-defined status in the community. Central and South America on the one hand, the Muslim Middle East and North Africa, on the other hand, illustrate these two extreme positions.

What is crucial, however, is the degree to which societies translate the differing ranges of institutional support into economic support, for only then can one predict the extent to which a divorced woman is expected, pressured or forced into assuming economic responsibilities for herself and her children. Where divorce might not be culturally accepted, in many cases divorced and separated women have assumed and continue to be expected to assume financial responsibilities. In those cases, family support for the divorcee is not an institutionalized obligation.

In recent years significant trends are emerging in those societies where male kin have traditionally provided full financial and social support to a divorced female relative -- an obligation which, at least in Islamic societies, was an unquestioned duty. With the intensification of economic pressures, it appears now that customary protection afforded to divorced women by family practices embedded in traditional religion is breaking down. Fragmented evidence suggests that in Muslim countries kin units define for themselves a much wider latitude insofar as acknowledging their obligations toward female divorced relatives (as opposed to single or widowed relatives). One may well speculate that in Middle Eastern society the current position of the divorced woman is one indication of the incipient disintegration of traditional family obligations. She becomes the most obvious target in the conflict between increasing economic pressures and the continued existence of traditional obligations.

The labor force statistics show clearly that in the Middle East divorced women have begun to support themselves economically. A comparison between the economic activity rates of widowed women and those who are divorced suggests that kinship units do not provide economic support for divorced female relatives to the same extent that they do for widowed relatives. In Egypt and Iran the propensity for divorced women to be employed in the urban economy is three times as high as it is for the widow; in Syria and Morocco it is twice as high, in Turkey it is five times as high. In these Muslim countries, one third of all the divorcees are in the formal labor market. In urban Morocco, one divorced woman in every two is counted as economically active. Divorcees, in fact, make up for over 50% of the entire female work force.

It should be noted that in Islamic societies any laxity on the part of family members to make provisions for the consequences of divorce has serious repercussions for women because of the high frequency of divorce and because the right to initiate such proceedings is generally a prerogative granted only to men.

Given the high expectations placed upon prompt remarriage, it is conceivable that family responsibilities have weakened towards female relatives who have failed to contract a new marriage and thus have fallen short of societal and familial expectations. The decision for them to work and be self-supporting is taken when hopes for eventual remarriage have been lost.

There are other plausible explanations for the changing role of the divorcee in the Middle East. The heavy concentration of divorcees in the urban centers reflects not only the predominance of divorced women in internal migration but also the high frequency of legal dissolutions in towns and cities. This means that many divorced women in the Middle East are far from their families when their decrees are granted. The willingness of families to meet their obligations may be inversely proportional to the physical distance involved. The divorcee has no alternative but to find work.

In all countries divorced and separated women emerge as the marital group who is in most need of work, judging from their heavy involvement in the labor force. In some areas of Latin America, for example, Costa Rica, and Argentina, the proportion of the divorced female population working in the formal sector is over 50%

One of course expects the least institutional support for divorce in Central and South America, despite the fact that divorce rates there are increasing. The social stigma of divorce and separation has undoubtedly prevented the crystallization of any explicit post divorce or post separation arrangements within the family structure that could provide support for divorced female relatives.

But even in countries where, for religious reasons, social stigmatization of divorce is expected to be less, divorced women still appear to be the group most highly pressured to assume financial responsibilities. In Singapore and in Nepal, approximately 50% of all divorced women are classified as economically active. The status of the divorced women is often dependent on differences in divorce practices; more particularly, it is dependent on how such differences have differential impacts on women and men.

In some societies where divorce is institutionalized, remarriage is easy for males and females alike. An example is the Islamic societies in the Middle East and North Africa where, up until recently, the high divorce rates have been balanced by high remarriage rates. Whether or not economic pressures in these societies will eventually have an impact upon remarriage patterns remains to be seen.

There are other societies where divorce is the "norm" but where remarriage is sex selective. Studies on family life in rural Nigeria, urban Ghana and Niger report considerable movement in and out of marriage (Poole, 1972). However, it is the man who continues to marry and divorce throughout his lifetime, not the woman. This sex selectivity in the divorce system creates an age class of women who are single and unmarriageable because they are the wrong age and a pool of divorcees who are no longer considered marriage material.

Traditionally social structures in high divorce societies created a distinct role for the divorced woman which gave her a well defined status in the community. The economics of urban life and heavy migration trends have unbalanced this tradition. Among the Kanuri in Nigeria for example, where close to 90% of all marriages end in divorce (almost universally during the first two years of marriage), a woman is considered young and marriageable only after her first divorce. After the second divorce, the woman's freedom increases. Traditionally this has meant social acceptance of her involvement in stable relationships outside of marriage that are similar to stable consensual unions in which the male partner functions as economic provider (Cohen, 1971).

Movement to urban areas and the economics of city life have redefined this traditional practice in such a way that divorced women have lost much of the security they enjoyed. In the urban setting, the divorcee (who is no longer marriageable) needs to make a living to pay for her food and rent. This she is able to do only through sexual liaisons with several partners. The traditionally well defined status she enjoyed in a stable relationship is no longer applicable in the modern setting. In the city, economic need pressures women to seek monetary returns in exchange for sexual services.

Women in Consensual Unions

In almost all parts of Central and South America and in the Caribbean Islands there are a number of family forms arising from varying patterns of mating and man-woman relationships. The typology identifies three basic types of unions, "visiting" (mostly in the Caribbean), consensual unions and legalized marriage. Childbearing takes place in all three

types of unions; only marriage carries a legal sanction. Furthermore, consensual living arrangements presume, unlike marriage, that economic responsibilities rest in both partners.

The increasing rate at which consensual type of unions are dissolved, particularly among couples residing in urban areas, has meant that a considerable portion of the family system is frought with instability. Low wages and high male unemployment are obvious contributors both to male preference for nonlegalized unions as opposed to marriage and to precipitating the breakup of such unions. A condition is thus created in which it is not possible for all women -- particularly among lower socioeconomic groups -- to be subsidized by the family unit.

The absence of legal sanction has made it easy for men to break away from relationships without assuming any economic responsibility. More often than not they are unable to do so, even if they want. The result has been that women are placed in a structural situation in which they are forced to assume family headship and make all necessary economic provisions for themselves and their children.

The "visiting" type union is more typical of the Caribbean. In many cases it is a prelude to the establishment of a consensual union (Blake, 1961). Visiting relationships are distinct from casual relationships in that the former, by census definition, means that at least one child is born to the couple - though no guaranteed support from the male partner is expected. The literature suggests that it is the lack of economic support intrinsic to "visiting" relationships that propels many women with children to opt for a consensual type of union, since this is perceived to be relatively more stable. A woman also makes the transition from a

"visiting" relationship to a consensual union type of relationship when her parents disown her or are unable to provide her and her children with economic support (Blake, 1961; R. Smith, 1956). The Commonwealth Caribbean census acknowledges the existence of "visiting" type relationships, which suggests that the problem is sufficiently institutionalized. The latest census identifies 36,553 Caribbean women in "visiting" relationships and 173,330 living in a consensual union type of relationship. If one compares women living in both legalized and nonlegalized unions, the proportion who are living in marital relationships that are not legally sanctioned approximate 30%. At the same time, the Census also identifies as many as 67,000 Caribbean women who had been previously in a consensual living arrangement that had been dissolved.

In Central and South America, as well as in the Caribbean, the dissolution of a consensual union places women in a position similar to that of the widow or divorcee; yet without any of the rights and reciprocities inherent in a legalized union. For civil and statistical purposes, dissolution of a nonlegalized union generally moves the woman from "in consensual union" status to "single" status. In most Central and South American countries childbearing in a nonlegalized relationship automatically places the offspring in an "illegitimate" category. This explains why illegitimacy rates in these countries are so high, e.g., Venezuela 53%, Peru 49%, Paraguay 43%, Ecuador 32%. Few countries, such as Chile, legitimize such offspring if the father recognizes them.

Among lower socioeconomic groups, particularly in urban areas, the availability of sexual/marital unions outside the legal structure offers women a narrow range of expectancy punctuated by a series of loosely binding relationships in all or most of which she will bear children. With the advance of years, the chances for women to count upon successive

serial mating decreases. Even when she can count upon her abilities to contract new unions, there are several intermittent periods in her life when the woman is left completely on her own to provide economically for herself and her children. The continued presence of children from previous unions makes it imperative for women, even when they contract new relationships, to continue assuming economic responsibilities.

Because most census schedules (excepting the Caribbean) exclude questions on (legalized and nonlegalized) marital history, it is impossible to estimate dissolution rates among consensual unions. The micro literature indicates an average of three unions for women before they reach the end of their reproductive period (Safa, 1965; Blake, 1961). Economic hardships are at the root of much union disruption; they are also the catalyst to push women into contracting successive relationships as the only option available to them for economic survival.

It has been suggested that the availability of nonbinding relationships acts favorably for women because it provides her with the freedom to leave one partner for another who is a better economic provider (Brown, n.d.). The consequences of serial and successive relationships in the lifetime of many women have cast upon them economic burdens which they must bear for their lifetime.

The prevalence of "mutual consent" unions is also reported for parts of urban West Africa. In countries such as Ghana and Upper Volta such unions appear to be part of the transitional phase accompanying changes in family life and sex roles. Some West African urban women perceive mutual consent unions as alternatives to current options available.

Women are caught in a situation where they wish to retain the same freedom that customary unions allowed, at the same time accepting the modern notion of freedom to choose their own partners away from family pressures. Above all, they do not want to be part of a polygamous household. The newly emergent arrangement seems to be the answer. (Poole, 1972).

Empirical assessment of the magnitude and consequences of consent unions in the West African setting are scarce. Poole's assessment for urban Ghana, Niger and Upper Volta is that such arrangements are vulnerable, unstable and situate the woman in an ambiguous position outside the status, respect and rights reserved for the legally married woman. Women who choose to become involved in mutual consent relationships tend to be educated, with economic resources of their own. According to Poole they must be prepared to support themselves and the children they have in these relationships because male partners may not feel obliged to do so. It may be that the urban, educated West African women can make such a choice when economic self-support is not problematic. For women who do not have such resources, economic survival will be difficult; their status would tend to resemble more closely that of the women in Central and South America.

The Single Mother

Quantitative and qualitative information on the incidence and consequences of reproduction for women outside legal unions are more readily available for Central and South American countries and for the Caribbean. Some national censuses cross classify marital status, by fertility and age of mother (Chile, Guatemala, Peru, Honduras,

Colombia and the Caribbean); others offer indirect indicators of the incidence through the illegitimacy ratios.

Earlier we mentioned that in the census classification many women revert to the status of "single" once they have experienced a breakup in consensual living arrangements. This implies that an important component of the single-mother population consists of women whose childbearing activities took place while they were living with partners in one or more consensual unions (now dissolved), as opposed to another group of women who bore children as an outcome of casual sexual relationships. Structurally, of course, the two groups are situated almost equally since in neither case can they count on guaranteed financial support from the father of their children.

The magnitude of the "single mother" phenomenon in Central and South America and in the Caribbean is illustrated by the data compiled from some national census materials, which provide a cross-classification of the female population by fertility and current marital status.

The 1970 Chilean census reports 421,397 single mothers (i.e., women who have never married and are currently <u>not</u> living in a consensual union). These "single mothers" make up about 43% of all single Chilean women 15 years and over. While 83% of single mothers have families ranging from one to three children, large families are not uncommon. About 22,931 single mothers have more than six children; about 8,000 have families of 10 or more children. The child/woman ratio for the Chilean single-mother is 2.2. 60% of all single mothers are economically inactive. This group has a higher fertility than those single mothers who do work. However, it must be noted that these figures are based on number of children born <u>alive and dead</u> to single women.

In Guatemala, there were 109,630 women with anywhere from one to 10 children at the time of the 1973 census, who were not living in consensual unions. These women represent 27% of the total "single" population. They had given birth to 344,033 children. The child/woman ratio for single mothers was 3.3. Childbearing among Guatemalan single women increases throughout the life cycle; for women 55 and over, the ratio of children to single mothers is 5.0 In-depth studies of unmarried mothers in Guatemala indicate that the majority have come from rural areas, are mostly illiterate, have sexual experiences at an early age, and typically, supply the bulk of domestic service labor.

The 1974 census for Honduras shows that among the 16,688 single women who were not in common law unions, the average child/woman ratio was 3.2. In this instance, fertility among all women is higher in urban areas than in the rural (4.6 vs. 2.8). Among single mothers, however, there is a slightly higher fertility in rural areas (3.3 vs. 3.0).

In Peru and Colombia, the incidence of single women with children needs to be examined carefully. In these two countries the census identifies a considerable number of single women for whom exact parity is not known. Conceivably some of the women whose parity is not specified do not have children; others, however, do, but the exact quantity of children born to them is not known. When we exclude the number of single women whose parity is unknown from the total count of single mothers, a conservative assessment is obtained with respect to the proportion who are mothers in the total adult single population.

For example, in the case of Peru, if we exclude from the single-mother category those women for whom exact parity is unknown, the number of single mothers totals 159,646. These women have anywhere from one

to 10 children or more. In this instance the ratio of children to single mothers for whom exact parity is known is 3.4. The proportion who are mothers among all Peruvian adult single women is slightly higher in rural areas (28.6%) than in urban localities (24.7%). For the country as a whole, single mothers comprise 25% of all adult single women.

However, if we consider the group of single women for whom the exact number of children born is not specified as de facto mothers and combine them with those single women for whom parity is known, then the single mother category in Peru rises to 770,747, or 66% of all adult single women.

In Colombia, the differentials between the two computations are also considerable. Excluding single women for whom specific parity is unknown from the count of single mothers, there are 365,950 single mothers in Colombia, or close to 25% of the adult single population. This conservative estimate yields a ratio of 2.8 children for each single mother. When single women with unknown parity are included in the count of mothers, a total of 1,080,436 single mothers is obtained. This represents 48% of the adult single female population in Colombia. Again, the proportion among single women who are mothers is slightly higher in rural than in urban areas.

In accordance with the 1970 Commonwealth Caribbean census, approximately 50% of all single women are mothers. This is clearly the trend in Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados. In absolute terms, the number of single women with children totals in Jamaica 169,777; in Trinidad and Tobago, 37,823 and in Barbados 12,866. In all cases single mothers are in large part generated by the disruption both in "visiting" relationships and in "consensual unions." In Barbados, for example, among women

who have experienced disruption in the consensual union type of relationships, the percentage who had children totals 95, as compared to women who had never married or lived with a common law partner, and among whom childbearing was typical of only 34%.

In both the Latin and South American situation as well as in the Caribbean islands, it is important to exercise considerable caution toward the cultural relativity argument presented by some social scientists. Essentially this argument proposes that consensual unions and reproduction outside of marriage in these societies are culturally accepted alternatives to formalized marriage and legitimate fertility. Also, the contention presented by other social scientists to the effect that nonlegal unions are coping mechanisms for women and men in lower income groups should not be viewed as implicitly meaning that such relationships and their consequences are socially approved of and accepted by society at large.

For example, in-depth interviewing among a group of 100 single mothers in a maternity ward in Guatemala City pointed to the great fear, and anxiety these young women expressed with respect to their parents' anger and rejection as a result of their pregnancy. Some of the young mothers suffered from acute depression and feelings of despair as to their future. None lived with their parents; only two among the 100 resided with the father of the child. The majority had been unemployed before delivery. They all knew they alone were economically responsible for providing for their children (Villalta, 1971).

In Mexico, a study of women working in the coffee plantation in a mountain village in Sierra de Juarez, Oaxaca, identified "single mothers" as experiencing the greatest difficulties. Quoting Kate Young's research, Ingrid Palmer writes:

> "They (single mothers) have usually been disinherited or abandoned by their families. Always beholden to landowners wives who employ them fully at harvest time to pay off "gifts" received during the years, their needs are the greatest, their means are the least" (Palmer, 1976).

The social context in which reproduction outside of marriage takes place in sub-Saharan Africa and the consequences this has for the unwed mother have not been clearly established. It is of course important to assess, if and when single mothers appear in the census data, whether the phenomenon stems from institutionalized traditional practices, or results from some arbitrary categorization decided upon by the census officials. If, in fact, childbearing outside of marriage has been institutionalized traditionally, then it is critical to assess the extent to which such a custom is being accepted and dealt with in the context of urbanization and rapid socioeconomic changes.

The national census of Mozambique lists 97,723 single mothers, from among a total of 485,366 adult single women. That is, 20% of all adult single women have children; the child/single-mother ratio is 2.6.

In Botswana, the census lists 35,072 single women with children ranging anywhere from one to 10 and more. Among these, the parity of 29,844 women is known. Taking the latter figure as base, we find that the proportion who have children among all single adult women in Botswana is 45%. If the group for whom specific parity is not known is considered as part of the single-mother population, then the proportion of single mothers is raised to 54%. The ratio of children to single mothers for whom parity is known is 2.9.

In South Cameroon, women can count on the father's financial support only if the bride compensation has been paid. Hence, out of wedlock fertility is expected to be lower than legitimate fertility. Yet in a study carried out by Weekes-Vagliani two fifths of "never married" women had at least one or two children; some even had three children (Weekes-Vagliani, 1976).

If the incidence of single mothers reported for Mozambique, Botswana and South Cameroon reflect childbearing taking place in the rather frail and unstable "mutual consent" type of unions reported by Poole (1972) to be occuring in urban Ghana and to a lesser extent in Niger and the Upper Volta, it is conceivable that economic responsibilities rest upon the mother alone. It is unlikely however, that all of the childbearing in the three African countries mentioned takes place within unstable unions. A more plausible explanation is that customary or contract marriages, in which either the dowry or the dot have not been paid, may be deprived of legal recognition by census personnel. If this is the case, women involved in such unions would be cited officially as "single," though, in fact, they may be living in de facto stable unions.

Beyond the Typology: Family Structures among Marginal Groups in Central America.

Three recent micro studies among poor families in Central America illustrate some of the dynamic forces behind any typology of households headed by women. In these studies, household structures were found to range from households composed and headed by women to those which included both men and women and where the headship became quite ambiguous. Most likely, the composition of such non-nuclear families, in Central America at least, varies across time. Such flexibility of household structures adds to the problem of measurement since it cannot be assumed that non-nuclear households will remain stable over time. However, a view of the reality in which women-headed households among the poor function would be only partial without including this dimension.

On the one extreme, López de Piza (1977) identifies two types of family structures in Costa Rica where the woman clearly is the head of household. The first is the matrifocal structure. In her sample of 82 women, she finds that 39% of these women belonged in matrifocal families. The matrifocal family is formed around the woman, generally the mother, and develops an organization in which the economic survival of the family group is assumed by the matriach. In order to survive however, all members of the family, that is, the woman and her children, work. It is a family enterprise where generally the goods produced by the mother are sold or distributed by her children. The second type is the "queen bee" family structure that is present in 12.2% of Lopez de Piza's sample. This family is composed of women united by kinship ties. The grandmother assumes the housewife role, administers the income, and takes care of her grandchildren. The daughters (alone or abandoned) leave their children in charge of the grandmother and pool their salaries to sustain the family group. Their income is generated by participating either in the formal labor market or the product market.

Household types that fall at the middle of this continuum emerge from the study by Nieves (1977). She interviewed a representative sample of 197 low income households in urban San Salvador. 77% of these households were formed by a couple with their children and 20.8% were formed by people united by kinship rather than affective (i.e., marital or consensual union) ties. At the time of the study, the household arrangement among this latter group was distributed as follows: 26.8% were formed by two or more women united by kinship ties with their children; 29.3% were formed by two or more women united by kinship ties with their children and with adult men united by kinship ties to the adult women; and 14.7% of these household groups were formed by women alone with their children and older parents. Moreover, the organization of these households was flexible and their composition could change rapidly over time. Household groups united by kinship rather than by affective ties appeared more receptive to adapt to changes in household composition. While 70% of the kinship-based households were composed only of the women and their children (plus in some cases older parents) and only 30% of them had added men relatives, Nieves also found that men frequently "visited" the women-only households and sporadically contributed to the family's income. In all these households, both men and women worked and had more than one occupation. The fact that household groups united by kinship ties allow for multiple occupations, according to Nieves, gives women the flexibility to combine their mother and worker roles, and such households are more functional in situations of high unemployment.

Nolasco's (1977) study of family structure among low income urban groups in four Mexican cities suggests family types that fall at the end of this continuum.

56% of the 1,417 families interviewed were intact nuclear families. In an additional 33%, families were incomplete or had outside members. 16% of all families had a woman as head of household. Incomplete families were directly related with those that had a woman as the head of household. They were formed mainly by abandoned wives or divorced and widowed women. In these families, the woman-mother had the role of being the economic, social and psychological provider of the household. More importantly, while in 80% of the families there was a male resident, in more than 40% of them the mother worked for wages, but only in 3.5% of the cases was she the sole earner. If the head of the household is defined as the main economic provider, this study of poor low income Mexican families in urban situations suggests that perhaps as many as 40% of the households could have a double head of household.

Although these are only three studies with small samples in three Central American countries, they appear to portray fluid family structures with varying composition, responsive to situations of unstable employment and high unemployment, thus, probably quite common among poor families in many developing nations. Households headed by women with other women relatives present as well as households composed of women and male relatives appear to mitigate conflicts of childrearing and augment the probability that, at any one point in time, at least one household member will be employed. Nuclear households where both parents work are a hedge against difficult economic conditions, and therefore might be more prevalent than it is currently thought.

CONCEPTUALIZATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

There are several problems intrinsic to the translation of any social phenomenon into aggregate data. This is particularly true in dealing with female-headed households in the developing world because of qualitative differences in the social definition of the situation across and within societies. Despite this, aggregate measures and quantitative data on this subject are needed to grasp the existence, prevalence and increasing spread of female-headed households in developing societies. Our primary concern in quantifying the magnitude of female-headed households has been to highlight the importance of this phenomenon as a "problem," and as an "issue" that should be of concern to policy-makers and planners. Obviously we are not able to identify the number of women who function as de facto household heads.

Our starting point has been to consider the total range of adult women who, because of their current marital situation, carry the "potential" of being or becoming family heads. This "potential" segment (as contrasted to a de facto group) consists of all widowed, divorced, separated and single mothers. It fails to capture women who may be de facto household/family heads because of abandonment, male marginality and male seasonal migration, because in such households the marital union is often considered intact (statistically); hence the woman is recorded as married - regardless of the actual residence of the male spouse and the economic responsibilities the woman assumes.

Taken in absolute numbers, the index construed to represent the 'potential' female segment could yield an inflated figure. Such a bias was circumvented by the fact that we applied an analogous criterion to

identify the range of potential male heads of household; i.e., all adult males who were ever married and those currently in consensual unions are considered household heads. The criterion established for Total Potential Household Heads therefore groups both the female and male populations so defined. The percentage of "potential" women household heads to "potential" total household heads gives an index of the magnitude of women who might conceivably be heads of household. Because this index is a relative measure the overestimation in the number of women heads is compensated by also overestimating the number of total heads.

Census data did not allow us to distinguish between "household" heads (i.e., widowed, divorced or separated women living alone) and "family" heads (women living with dependents). This distinction is crucial in the United States where the discrepancy between the two figures is caused by the large numbers of older women living alone. It is less central in developing societies whose female heads are much more likely to be family rather than mere household heads (Blumberg, 1977).

Separate analysis is done for the Commonwealth Caribbean islands since the data reported specifies actual heads of household (see pp. 50-72).

Findings

The findings described below are based on data obtained from U.N. Yearbooks and national censuses. In a majority of cases the latest published information was used. Unfortunately, not all of the most recent information was obtainable.

Table I ranks 73 developing countries into four groups, from countries with low (10 to 14) to those with high (25 and over) percentages of total potential household heads who are women.

The percentage of potential household heads who are women varies from a low ranking of 10% to a very high ranking of 48%. In the 7 countries for which United Nations and national census data are available, an average of 18% of the population of potential household heads are women (standard deviation (s) = 6.16).

The percentage ranking in Table I does not indicate systematic geographical/cultural clusterings. Asian, African, Central and Latin American countries are represented in almost all four ranks, with few exceptions. Sub-Saharan African and Central American countries are barely visible in the "low" ranking categories: in the "highest" rank category only sub Sahara Africa and Central America are represented.

The average percentage of potential households heads who are women is highest for sub-Saharan countries (22%) and lowest for South American countries (15%). But, as the ranking already reveals, sub-Saharan countries also show the greatest variance in the proportion of potential female heads (standard deviation = 8.18) and South American countries the smallest variance (standard deviation = 2.67). In contrast to South America, in sub-Sahara Africa there are countries with very high and very low proportions of potential women heads to potential total heads of household.

The average percentage of potential heads of household who are women is 20% for Central American and Caribbean countries, and 16% for North African and Middle Eastern ones.

Table II provides a detailed breakdown by region and country of the corporate variables from which the index of potential female headship was computed (Cols. 1, 2 & 3). It also specifies the marital status composition of the female headship group (Cols. 4 to 7). If one considers in any given country that the number of women identified as "potential heads of household" is equivalent to 100%, the marital status breakdown (Cols. 4 to 7) indicates the percentage among this group who are widowed, divorced, separated and single mothers.

Before proceeding to discuss in greater detail inter- and intra-regional differences, it is necessary to point out the areas in which there is a considerable lack of comparables among data sets. First of all, some of the regional and country differentials reflect more often than not different mating and separation options available to people (consensual unions, visiting relationships, divorce, separation). More importantly, they also reflect the particular official acknowledgement or recognition of such options on the part of the Census Bureau officials. Some South American countries in which common-law marriages are prevalent do not include this category in the marital status breakdown (i.e., women in nonlegalized unions are single); some include it within the legal marital status category; others recognize it as a separate status. Some countries in Central South America clarify as "separated" women who never married, but who are separated from a common law partner; others lump the separated together with the divorced. Still others do not recognize the term "separated" and treat these women as "currently married." Some countries collect data on fertility patterns only from women currently or previously married under the law. Countries such as Botswana and Panama who record single mothers yield a higher index of female headings; so do the few countries who acknowledge the "separated" status.

Contrasting widows with women in other statuses. As revealed in Table II widows predominate over other marital categories among potential women heads of household in all regions. Widows comprise, on the average, 91% of those women identified as potential heads of household in Asia. The lowest fraction of widows among women who are potential household heads appears in Central America. In the seven Central American countries, on the average only half of the population of potential women heads of household are widowed. A closer look at these figures reveals that Asain countries have such a large fraction of widows among this potential women heads of household population because separated women are registered only in two countries (Sri Lanka and Thailand) and unwed mothers are registered in none. (As it has been stated before, this does not necessarily imply that no separated or unwed mothers exist in these countries. A known consequence of some wars, such as the Vietnamese, is a rise in the number of women who bear children outside of marriage.)

On the other hand, Central American countries show a relatively low proportion of widows among the population of potential women heads because separated women are counted and, in comparison to other countries, they are many. This is so because women who have left consensual unions are registered as "separated" only in Central America.

Again, the greatest variation between countries in the percentage of potential women heads of household who are widows is found in the sub-Saharan region (s=19). South America follows (s=16). The least variation between countries is found in North Africa and the Middle East (s=6). The Asian region shows the next to least variation in the fraction of potential women heads of household who are widows (s=7).

In the sub-Saharan region this variation is probably caused by three countries, Botswana, Mozambique and Tanzania, who have low proportions of widows among potential women heads of household. The Botswana and Mozambique censuses count divorced and separated women as well as unwed mothers. These and all other countries who register unwed mothers have a high (when compared to others) percentage of potential household heads who are women. If this information was available for other countries as well, the Third World average of 18 potential women heads out of 100 potential total heads, both men and women, would rise considerably.

Divorced and separated women. With the exception of Central America, few countries in other regions record separated women. Cyprus is the only country in North Africa and the Middle East that registers separated women. On the average, 13 out of 100 North African and Middle Eastern women who are potential heads of household are divorced. The rest are widows. In Asia, only Thailand and Sri Lanka acknowledge a separated status. South American countries generally combine separated and divorced women in one category. Taking both separated and divorced statuses, in sub-Saharan Africa an average of 22% of potential women heads of household are divorced and separated. In South America the average percentage is 17% and in Asia 9.2%. On the average, 25 out of 100 women potential heads of household in Central America are separated and 9 out of 100 are divorced.

The unwed mother. Data for unwed mothers were obtainable for only two countries in Africa, three in Central America, and three in South America. In Mozambique and Honduras unwed mothers form less than 20%

of those potential women heads of household. For Columbia and Peru 38% and 29% (respectively) of the potential women heads of household are unwed mothers. These figures should be qualified by the fact that in both countries the census data left a large number of women with an "unspecified" or "ignored" number of children who were thus excluded from this analysis. The actual figures for the number of unwed mothers are probably larger than the conservative ones used here. Botswana, Chile and Panama show that almost half or more of those women who are potential heads of household are unwed mothers. If data for unwed mothers were available for other countries, the magnitude of the figures probably would be lower in regions other than Latin America. Still, their impact on the ratio of potential women to potential total heads of household would be significant.

Female Headship and Child Dependency. Two measures are available to highlight the extent to which women, in general, are burdened with child dependency. One measure is computed by dividing the number of children ever born to women (numerator) into the total number of adult women (the denominator). This is known as the Child/Woman ratio. The other measure takes as denominator only those women who have actually borne children and is referred to as the Child/Mother ratio. The former averages the number of children born to all adult women regardless of how many of these women are actually engaged in childbearing. For the purpose of this study, it is this second measure that is the more useful.

Few countries provide information on the number of children born to women within each marital-specific category. The data obtainable was limited to eight countries; Botswana, Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, Mozambique, Peru, and the Caribbean islands. In Table 3 we list for each one of these countries the ratio of children to single,widowed, divorced, and/or separated mothers.

Let us examine, first of all, the ratio of children to single mothers. In this respect, the data we present is a conservative estimate, (see footnote to Table 2), given that we have included in our count only the fertility of women whose parity is specified, excluding those women who conceivably have children, but for whom exact parity is unknown. On the average, the ratio of children to single mothers ranges between 2.2 and 3.4. It is highest for Peru and Guatemala and lowest for Chile.

Widowed, divorced, and separated mothers average a child burden ratio ranging from 4.1 to 6.8. The ratio is higher for widows in those countries where fertility is specified for widowed and divorced/separated women separately. This is undoubtedly due to age differentials between divorced and widowed mothers.

We should not infer from the above, however, that widowed women all have adult children to provide for their economic needs. Data on the ratio of children according to age of mother and marital category published by Guatemala, present compelling evidence to the effect that widowed and divorced mothers are already burdened with five children when they are 35 years old -- a stage in their life cycle at which they cannot possibly count upon steady economic support from adult children (Table 4).

Table 4 also illustrates the ratio of children to unmarried mothers within each age group. Such information shows that childbearing among single women continues throughout the fertile period of their lives. The single mother syndrome is not a problem confined to the younger woman, but continues to be pervasive throughout the woman's lifetime because of the numerous disruptions that occur in marital unions. (Table 4)

Economic Activity Rates for Women Heads of Household. The work participation rate of women may be taken as an indicator of the extent to which society at large and/or family organization in particular, extends economic support to its womenfolk. For almost all of the developing world, we can safely assume that the number of women (if any) who work for mere intellectual satisfaction or self-actualization is too minute to have an impact upon data at the aggregate level.

Our interest is to find out how economic activity rates might reflect differentials in the economic support that is extended to women in various marital categories: specifically among women who are divorced, separated, widowed or who are single mothers. Unfortunately very few sources of information at the macro level cross-classify women's economic participation by marital category. The information that was obtainable is listed in Table 5.

There is scarcity of data regarding the activity rate of single mothers and of women who are separated. On the former, the only data available to us were provided in the Chile census, which indicates an

employment activity rate of 40 percent for single mothers. It is evident however from the marital-specific activity rates broken down by age that the frailty of nonlegalized living arrangements in Central and South American societies push many single women, many of whom are mothers, into the work force. According to 1970 data, more than half of all single women in urban Chile and more than 40 percent in urban Ecuador and urban Guatemala were employed in urban activities. The employment rate of Central and South American urban single women is particularly high between ages 20 and 34, when major fertility is occurring; during that time span, close to 60 percent of all the single group in urban areas are employed.

Widowed and divorced women also display high employment rates in many countries; when the two marital categories are separated, it is evident that the divorcee displays the stronger tendencies to seek economic self-support. In comparing the employment rates among widowed and divorced women we find the following: Five times as many women among the divorced as compared to the number of women among the widows are working in Turkey; four times as many are working in Argentina and Costa Rica, three times as many in Singapore and Iran, and twice as many in Syria and Morocco.

To what extent are the high employment rates of divorced women the result of lack of kin support? To what degree do divorced women seek economic independency as a way of attaining greater structural freedom and autonomy from family control? More empirical research is needed to understand the dynamics of the divorced woman's role. In

Argentina, the Philippines, Costa Rica, Singapore and Nepal, one divorcee among every two is working; in Turkey, Morocco, and Iran, the corresponding proportion is one among every three. In Chile, where activity rates are combined for the two groups, it is expected that the employment rates of the divorcee will be higher than that of widowed women.

Ultimately, the economic behavior of women has to be placed in the perspective of the total population within a given country. This the Moroccan census allows us to do by providing sex differentials in employment and unemployment trends within each marital category. We have purposely selected to contrast the male-female differences in this respect among widowed and divorced males and females.

At the national level, among the total number of males and females who are widowed and who are currently working (87,940), 77 percent are women. In urban areas, the corresponding percentage is 83 (of a total of 50,097). Similarly among the divorced. In the total population, among the 92,896 divorced men and women who are working over 50% are women; among the urban divorced population currently employed (46,097), 66% are women. Sex differences among the unemployed are even more striking. In the total population of divorced men and women who are job seekers (15,415), 63 percent are women; in urban areas, 70 percent are women (of a total of 10,172). Among the 14,433 widowed who are job seekers in the country, 78.0 percent are women; in urban areas the proportion who are women is 80% (of a total of 8,827).

The Qualitative Dimension

The extent to which women designated as "potential" become *de facto* heads of household -- in the sense of assuming functions of economic responsibility for themselves and their children -- will depend on the interaction between the specific institutional position accorded to women by social and family structures and the "realistic" ability or willingness of the kin unit or society to acknowledge the financial responsibilities to its female members. In this respect one may consider the importance of several qualitative dimensions to the quantitative indicators just presented.

Marriage means different things in different societies -- a fact often overlooked by the stereotype of the Western nuclear family model. While in the former, a wife is not a household head, in other societies (such as the Caribbean) some married women may be considered household heads by virtue of the economic responsibilities they are "expected" culturally to assume.

Differences in support mechanisms in societies will also affect the status of a female head of household. The extent to which women can count upon their kin unit, the degree to which an institutionalized kin support ceases to be extended; the emphasis on individual self-reliance, all these mechanisms encourage or discourage the readiness with which women will assume economic responsibilities. It has been suggested, for example, that women in East and West Africa turn first to their own economic resources and abilities -- if this fails, they turn to their family as a support mechanism.

The position of women in the monetized economy of a society as well as the overall economic conditions in a country are crucial elements in the analysis of the status of female heads of household. These two factors combined have tremendous impact on family stability, on the one hand, and on the consequences of family disruption, on the other.

An interesting complement to the quantitative data hereby presented would be assessment of the extent to which women in a given society are "dependent" on men. This analysis would involve approaching the issue of female-headed households by turning the question around. Instead of asking, the way we have done here, to what degree are women functioning without a resident male in the household, one might study to what degree women in a given society are "dependent" on men.* To a large extent the extent of this "dependency" might influence what eventually happens to women with children upon divorce, separation, or widowhood.

Systematic assessment of the female "dependency" on males in a given society might indicate how well women could adapt and cope in a situation where the male is no longer present. This does not necessarily mean that in the actual situation women less dependent will cope better than women who have been more dependent on men.

At a structural level, however, such "generalized" information may "identify" types of societies or subsocieties in which women will most likely be vulnerable to economic hardships when marital disruption does occur.

* This idea was suggested by Dr. Peter Morris, UCLA.

WOMEN HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD IN THE COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN

Earlier sections of this paper have suggested that female heads of household are indeed a highly disadvantaged group. It is also likely that among these some are worse off than others. Using data from the 1970 Population Census of the Commonwealth Caribbean, this section will explore whether or not and the extent to which female heads of household in the Commonwealth Caribbean are a disadvantaged group, and identify those groups that are among the poorest female-headed households.

It has been argued that in the Caribbean many women choose to have relationships outside the legal structure and in so doing become heads of household because such types of arrangements allow for greater flexibility among families to cope with poverty. On the other hand, it appears that many women become heads of household because male marginality, death, desertion or divorce makes them so by default, not simply because such a family arrangement helps to ease their marginal existence. Do women heads of household in the Caribbean choose non-legalized unions and opt for family headship, or are they forced into a situation where they alone must fend for themselves and their children?

Background

Nontraditional family formations, including those that generate female-headed households, are prevalent among lower class blacks in the Caribbean region (Blake, 1961; Clarke, 1957). Ethnic theories such as

"African origins" (see Herskovits,1947) or "Plantation Slavery" (Simey,1946; Henriques,1953) have been cited as explanations for the absence of "western" male-dominated nuclear families among West Indian blacks. More recently environmental or structural pressures have been used to explain the unique behavior patterns regarding family formation in the Caribbean (Slater,1977; Blake,1961; Blumberg,1977). Specifically, poverty rather than race is seen to give rise to (1) "male marginality" and (2) nontraditional mating patterns -- both of which become major factors in creating households headed by women.

It is suggested in the literature that female headship is an "adaptive mechanism" that permits families to survive extreme social and environmental pressures (such as poverty) (Brown,n.d. ; Blumberg,1977; Nieves,1977). This type of living arrangement is viewed as an "adaptive strategy" because it is highly flexible, or as is stated by Blumberg, is "dynamic and loosely structured in response to fluctuating conditions." (p. 112)

In support of the adaptive argument, Nieves (1977) found from a sample of 197 household groups that kinship or consanguinal[4] groups are flexible enough to permit women to function in both working and motherhood roles. She states that such familial systems allow the mother to become integrated into the labor force while other members within the household assume child care responsibilities. Brown, in her study incorporating participant observation with in-depth interviews, found that "multiple mating patterns"[5] where women are heads of households are "adaptive" for several reasons. First, she argues that sexual

division of labor is feasible only in middle and upper classes. In subsistence economies, it is necessary that both the male and female work to supplement the family income.[6] Second, women in serial matings provide for themselves and their families more efficiently than do married women who tend to depend on their husbands. Married women, Brown adds, have the added burden that their husbands can spend their money, while women heads of household would not be likely to have this problem. Third, in such households, children can be "farmed out" to other families either to bring in a small income or to allow for the mother to move in order to find work. Finally, women who are not legally married can readily leave one partner for another, according to who proves to be a better economic provider.

In sum, adaptive arguments suggest that women "choose" to remain outside of legalized unions and opt for family headship because such arrangements offer greater mobility and flexibility to maximize available (albeit meager) resources in coping with poverty. Others, however, argue that structural factors force women into mating patterns in which they find themselves as household heads. (See Blake, 1961; M. Smith, 1957).For example, Judith Blake would challenge the notion that women "choose" to head their own household. Rather, she states that the interplay between cultural and economic factors, which leads to early entry into sexual unions, precipitates the emergence of conditions that compel young women to form successive nonlegal unions throughout their lives. Furthermore, Blake argues that women do not desire to be in such unions, that they are concerned about the illegitimacy status of their children, and aspire to normative middle class life styles. Economic constraints preclude them from doing so.

Family Typologies in the Caribbean. Among lower class blacks in the Caribbean, environmental and cultural pressures act to constrain early entry into marriage. According to Edith Clarke (1957), this restraint is primarily a result of the social and economic obligations attached to marriage, that prohibit the ceremony from being undertaken by the very poor. She states also that the expectation is that marriage cannot take place until the man proves his ability to support a wife and family, since a woman is not expected to work once married. A prospective groom should own his own home, preferably, land, and must finance the wedding, all of which entail obligations that the employment and wage-earning structure of lower income groups does not permit.

Before taking on the bonds associated with marriage, Caribbean couples in lower income groups usually become sexually involved in either "visiting" relationships or in common law unions. Unlike marriage, economic responsibilities in common-law or consensual unions rest with both partners. Many times it is necessary for the woman to work since she often has to assume both psychological and economic responsibility for her children. Women involved in "visiting" relationships get little or no support from their partners (Powell,1976; Sanders,1973). Often times such relationships are one-time affairs. This, coupled with the high mobility of young males who are most likely to enter into these types of relationships (Blake,1961) makes the possibility of economic support unlikely. Therefore, out of economic necessity, many young women with children have no recourse but to enter into a consensual union (Sanders,1973), particularly if

their families disown them or are themselves too poor to take care of them and their children (Blake,1961). While there is no assurance that either visiting or common-law unions will result in marriage, women continue to enter into these types of relationships in an effort to achieve some sort of economic stability.

Source of Data and Problems of Methodology

Unlike most developing countries, the Caribbean has a wealth of information on female heads of household. The 1970 Population Census for the Commonwealth Caribbean contains data for 15 countries[7] by union status, marital status, age, education, main activity, occupation and income of male and female household heads.[8] Moreover, cross-tabulations on union status (included in the census to specify family types) by size of household are available. It is possible then, to compare female with male heads of household, as well as to compare female heads of household who live alone with those who reside with others in a common household. It is important to distinguish between these two groups since presumably women with dependents to support live under greater financial constraints. This exercise then excludes single member households from the data in order to specify and focus upon the most destitute of women who are household heads. While the exclusion of single member household heads artificially diminishes the extent of female headship in the Caribbean,[9] these figures are apt to more precisely depict those heads of household who are most in need of the attention of policy-makers.

The merits of the census are noteworthy; however, problems also exist with these data. First, information is not directly comparable between female heads of households and the female population in general. This is primarily because tabulations on all women 15 years and older consistently exclude those attending primary and secondary levels of school at the time of the census. This exclusion

results in a bias, especially among younger women aged 15-19 and 20-24 who are most likely to be enrolled in school. Furthermore, there is an age bias since women are designated as no longer living with husband or with common-law partner by the age of 45, and not necessarily at the time of the census. This would serve to overinflate the number of women living without a male partner in these age categories. Differences in grouping persons within categories between populations also makes comparisons difficult. For example, tabulations for female heads of household by age include women from all age groups, while tabulations for women in general (by union status at least) include only those women between the ages of 15 and 64, making any direct comparisons impossible.

Respondent misreporting is also a problem. A large percentage (22%) of female heads of household choose not to state their union status. As a result, figures in the corresponding union status categories are artificially low. In an effort to compensate for this misreporting, the total number of women in the "not stated" category was deleted from the base, and adjustments were made accordingly. These adjustments result in a relative inflation of all union status categories, especially the "married" category, which was accurate prior to data manipulation.[10] The "overinflation" of this latter category causes the remaining categories to be still somewhat underrepresented, but to a lesser extent than if no adjustments were made at all (see Table 7).

While there are obvious difficulties in analyzing these data, they still provide an unique opportunity to examine not only the extent of female headship in the Caribbean, but their characteristics and family types as well.

For this analysis, classifications on marital status, and especially union status, were used for all countries. Cross-tabulations on union status by age, main activity and education were obtained for all women aged 15 and over in Jamaica only. These cross-tabulations were not available for female heads of households. Categories found within marital status and union status tables roughly correspond. Women classified as "never married" in the marital status table are designated under union status as the following: "never had a husband or common law partner," "visiting," "in common law unions," and "no longer in common law unions."[11] The union status category "not living with husband" includes women classified under marital status as "widowed," divorced" or "legally separated." Both marital and union status tables include married categories that directly correspond to each other. (Tables 6, 7, 8).

Findings

The extent to which female heads of household are disadvantaged relative to male heads and the general female population is revealed by differences in sociodemographic and economic characteristics.

Education. Level of education, as an indirect measure of economic well-being, would be anticipated to be lower among female heads of household than among male heads of household and women in general. The data for Jamaica indicate that this in fact is the case.

When we compare total female population to female head of household population we find that a slightly larger percentage of all women in Jamaica had secondary schooling (10%) as compared to only 5% who had such education among Jamaican women heads of household. When male and female heads of households are compared for all Caribbean countries, larger differentials are found. 76% of female heads of household had stopped at the primary education level, while only 68% of their male counterparts have done so. Of all male heads of households, 18% have had secondary education and 2.5% have attained higher levels, as opposed to only 13% and 0.4%, respectively, for female heads of households. In short, women heads of household are found to have somewhat lower levels of education than either of the other two groups studied (see Tables 9 and 14).

Work. The educational data suggest that women heads of household would plausibly have fewer market opportunities than men and greater difficulty in competing with men for higher paying jobs. These women generally need stable employment and a continuous income to support their families. However, some of the more secure jobs available to women offer very low wages. Many of them work in the service sector as maids or cleaning women, or in the agricultural sector as weeders and pickers -- jobs that men typically will not perform (Jayawardena, 1960). Men, instead, have access to the production sectors, where they can get jobs in construction and mining industries that have been shown to have far higher salaries.

The data also show that more female heads of households work than do women in general. In Jamaica, 40% of females who head households worked as compared to only 32% of all women (Tables 10 & 15). This is not surprising since women who head their own households do not usually have a male partner on whom to rely for economic support, but do have a family who must depend on them. Among all female heads of households (including those who work and do not work) 20% are in sales and services. Males are primarily located in the production/labor sector (36%); only 5% of all female heads are located in this sector. As anticipated, women heads of household are not represented in the more lucrative sectors of the economy but continue to find employment in marginal occupations. Only 6% of these women are found in the white collar sector, i.e. clerical and professional/administrative jobs, while twice as many men are found in these types of employment (see Table 11).

The data for all countries similarly indicate that female heads of household earn relatively less than do their male counterparts. While on the average over 12% of these women earn less than $500 annually, this is true for only 9% of the male heads of household. More striking, however, is the fact that while 54% of male heads of households earn more than $1000 a year, only 13% of women heads of households do so (see Table 12). It is frequently believed that the entrance of women into the labor force contributes to the unemployment of men who must support their families. Yet, there is a total of 238,781 women in the Caribbean who head families. These women and their dependents must subsist on wages provided to them by marginal tasks that men refuse to undertake.

Age. Some argue that women heads of household depend on their children for support. For example, R.T. Smith (1956) states that females who are heads of household are typically older and can look to their children rather than to their husbands for financial income. The data do not bear this out.

At first glance, female heads of household seem to be older than their male counterparts and than women in general. Of all female heads of household in the Caribbean, 56% are over the age of 44; only 50% of male heads of household are 45 years or older. Similarly, the Jamaican data indicate that female heads of household are "older" than the female population in general. Yet, it appears that women heads of household are "older" only when compared with the younger population of women below 25 years of age (see Table 13), who would not yet have had a chance to become household heads. For example, while 29% of all women in Jamaica are between the ages of 15 and 24, only 9% of the female heads of households are in this age group, probably because the former group of Jamaican women includes those single, celibate women who have not yet entered into sexual relationships or started their own families. In the 60 to 64 age category there is only a 3% differential between these two groups of women. A full 36% of female heads of household, compared with 42% for all women, are between the ages of 25 and 44. Since these women are in their reproductive years, it is likely that they still have children in their homes to care for, not children who would be capable of caring for them. The problem is even more pronounced for the 9% of female heads of household who are very young themselves (between the ages of 15 and 24) and who have the added responsibility of small children.

The Jamaican data suggest that it may be presumptuous to designate female heads of household as "old" and thus able to depend on their children (See Tables 13 and 16).

An Economic Typology of Women Heads of Household

The intent of this section is to examine who, among all female heads of household, may be relatively worse off economically. Female heads of households are categorized into four groups. The first group contains those women from middle and upper classes who are household heads because they are either widowed, divorced or separated. Women who fall into this category are not a focus of this study and therefore are not discussed here. In the three remaining groups, women are found in the lower socioeconomic strata, and poverty seems to be a major factor in determining their female headship. The first of these groups is composed of those women who have never had a husband or common-law partner or who are in visiting type unions. Women heads of household who currently are married or in common law unions form the second group. The last one is composed of women who no longer live with a husband or partner.

Women heads of household who have never had a husband or common-law partner or who are in "visiting" type unions. Women who have never had a husband or common-law partner appear to have the wherewithal to be self-sufficient. First, the Jamaican data reveal that these women have higher levels of education than do any other group of women except

those who are married. 17% of these women had at least some secondary education while this is true for only 10% of the Jamaican female population as a whole. Women with higher education are more likely to find adequate paying jobs (Table 14). It is also shown that women who never had a husband or common-law partner worked more (41%) than did women in any other group (Table 15). These women make up a total of one-third of all working women in Jamaica.

It is possible that women who have never had a husband or a common law partner have made a decision not to enter into a domiciliary union, finding that living without a male partner is a preferable living arrangement. These women's relatively higher educational levels and work participation rates suggest that economic alternatives are available to them. It is also likely that many women in this group would like to marry but have not for several reasons. First, they are quite young -- 71% of these Jamaican women are under the age of 30, and therefore probably continue to reside with their parents. Second, higher levels of education may have raised their expectations regarding potential husbands, this resulting in a lower pool of eligible males. Actually, the fertility rates for these women are very low. Jamaican data show that 62% of the women in this category have no children, and 26% have families including one to three children. The Child Woman ratio is also very low - only .89 as compared to 3.1 for all Jamaican women (Table 17).

The actual number of household heads in this group in the Caribbean is small -- 2,271 women in all 15 countries. Low levels of fertility, along with higher levels of education and work participation rates, make it very likely that these women heads of

household are relatively the best off, socially and economically. The fact that only 1% of female heads of households in the Caribbean are found in this union status suggests that such a living arrangement is not typical of the female head of household population.

While women who have never had a husband or common law partner may be relatively well situated, this is not necessarily true for women in "visiting" relationships. First, these women, by census definition, have had at least one child. The Jamaican data indicate that the average number of children per woman in visiting relationships is 2.7 and that almost 25% of these women have families exceeding four or more children (Table 17). Second, they are young, 86% of these Jamaican women are under 30 years, while a full one-third of them are between the ages of 15 and 19 (Table 16).

26% of all women in visiting relationships in the Caribbean region, or 10,142 women, are heads of households with dependents. These women probably are the worst off of all female heads of household -- or of any group for that matter. These women, while very young, have most likely been kicked out of their families' homes for moralistic reasons or because their parents could not afford to support both them and their children. Moreover, due to the ephemeral and unstable nature of the 'visiting' type of relationship (Roberts & Braithwaite, 1962), it is not very likely that the male visitor provides them with much economic support (Blake, 1961). As a result, these young women find themselves on their own, burdened with young children.

Unemployment rates for the Caribbean have been estimated to be highest among the 15-19 and 20-24 age groups (The West Indies and Caribbean Yearbook, 1973). The data show that only 28% of Jamaican women in "visiting" relationships worked. 12% of these women were unemployed (the highest unemployment rate found for all women), (Table 15). The level of education among these Jamaican women is not very high -- 90% have not had any secondary schooling, so if they do find work, it is undoubtedly in the marginal sectors of the economy, providing them with little remuneration (Table 14).

In short, cultural and structural factors evolving from poverty conditions appear not only to have initiated their precarious social and economic position, but also seem to prevent women in visiting relationships from either marrying or entering into a common-law union -- perhaps the only viable alternatives for gaining some economic support for themselves and their children.

Female heads of households who are married or in common-law unions. If one assumes that marriage in the Caribbean is generally a middle class phenomenon (Clarke, 1957), and that consensual unions are predominantly found among lower socioeconomic sectors (Blake, 1961; Stycos & Back, 1964), then women who are married would have higher social and economic standing than women in nonlegal relationships.[12] But, married women who are also heads of households may be not only worse off than women in general but also worse off than those female heads of households in common-law unions.

Jayawardena (1960), for example, suggests that female employment increases the relative position of married women within the family. He argues that, as a result of their economic independence, working women take over the responsibilities of the household and eventually assume the status of household head. Yet, married women in the Caribbean would normally seek employment only under severe duress since cultural norms dictate that they should remain in the home. Also, since married women normally do not participate in the labor force, they would be less inclined to have previous work experience which would not only reduce the probability of obtaining viable employment, but it might also serve to make the transition from dependent to breadwinner more difficult. Male marginality then, would be a major impetus to married women participation in the labor force.

Male marginality, and not female employment, is likely to be a major factor accounting for the relatively high proportion of married women who are heads of households in the Caribbean region. 64,000 or 13% of all women in the Commonwealth Caribbean who are married are heads of households. Married women comprise almost 28% of all female heads of households, the largest group of all Caribbean female household heads (Table 6). A consequence of male marginality is that husbands often abandon their wives and family since low social status, low occupational prestige and low wages result in males feeling inferior within the family (Smith, 1956). Many women are left alone to assume all responsibility for themselves and their children. This may prove to be a difficult burden for women who have previously been dependent on others.

Male migration, as a response to male marginality, would also affect female headship among married women. Types of migration might have a differential impact on the economic status of those women left behind to run the household. Wives of landless laborers who are forced to migrate due to seasonality of crops are probably more economically disadvantaged than others due to their husbands' employment

in marginal, low paying jobs (The West Indies and Caribbean Yearbook, 1973). On the other hand, women whose husbands emigrate to such developed countries as the United States, Canada and Great Britain (The West Indies; The Caribbean Yearbook, 1973), are more apt to be in better economic position (assuming that wages are higher in these countries). Men who have emigrated in seach for employment conceivably could send money to their families or save their earnings to eventually send for wives and children.

The data show that 16% of all married female heads of households in the Caribbean live alone, without their husbands or children in the home. This suggests that abandonment and male migration may be more common than thought. Probably too, the incidence is even higher than the data imply since this statistic does not include those families where the father left but the wife remains at home with her children.

Yet, most married women are designated heads of households despite the fact that their husbands are regularly present in the home. This might exacerbate problems encountered by female heads of household since, not only do they often have to support themselves and their children, they must also provide for their husbands who may very well gamble or drink away the woman's income (Brown, n.d.). Once again, it appears that male marginality affects female headship, but in this instance, the male does not necessarily leave. Matrifocality may also be determining female headship. In matrifocal societies where women have a prominent position, they may be designated as head of the

family because of their status. According to R.T. Smith (1956), males are marginal within lower class black families (in Jamaica) regardless of residency, and households are matrifocal in that they are controlled by the women in their roles as mothers and wives. (For a discussion on matrifocality in the Caribbean, see Kundstater, 1962; Slater, 1977; M.G. Smith, 1957; Solien, 1960.)

Throughout the Caribbean, more than 30,000 or one-fourth of all women living with common law partners are heads of households. Male marginality may not be the major impetus to female headship among women in common law unions as was discussed for married women. Women in consensual unions can readily leave their partners who no longer serve as economically viable resources. Perhaps female headship occurs among women in consensual unions in situations in which the male moves into the woman's home, and she continues in her role as household head. Also, children would be apt to consider their mothers as family heads in such instances since, upon dissolution of a consensual union, children almost always remain with their mothers and not their fathers (Smith, 1957; Solien, 1960).

An argument in favor of marriage when compared to consensual unions is that in the former males must prove their willingness and ability to support a wife and family whereas this is not so in the latter. Often women in common law unions must work because they are economically responsible for their own children (Smith, 1957). Yet, in Jamaica only slightly more women in common law unions worked (29%) than did married women (26%). Moreover, the proportion of women who perform home duties in that country is not much greater for married women (63%) than for women in consensual unions (57%). While unem-

ployment rates are negligible for married women, only five percent of women in consensual unions are seeking employment in Jamaica.

It appears then, that women in consensual unions and their children to a large extent are being provided for financially -- presumably by their mates. This is not surprising if one assumes that women initially enter into such relationships as a means for economic support for themselves and their dependents. Too, as mentioned, women in common law unions can more readily leave their partners if they are no longer able or willing to provide for these women.

It has been stated that married women spend more time "at risk" of pregnancy than do women in non-legal serial unions (Williams, et al., 1975; Nag, 1971; Onaka et al, 1977). In Jamaica, the average number of children per mother is 5.1 for married women while it is 4.2 for women in common law unions. Differentials in fertility between these groups of women, however, appear to be a function of age. Over 46% of married women in Jamaica are beyond their reproductive years while this is true for only 18% of women in common law unions.

Women heads of household in common law unions may well be in a better position to cope with poverty than married female heads of households. Women in consensual unions may fare better since males (who have been shown to earn higher wages) are present in the home and often do support them and their dependents. While males may also be present where married women are designated as household head, it is more likely that male marginality is the impetus of the married women's role as household head. Women in consensual unions whose

partners withdraw economic support can either leave them for better providers, or find work themselves. This is not necessarily true for married women. Female heads of households in consensual unions seem to have more 'flexibility' to cope with difficult economic situations than do their married counterparts.

Female heads of households who no longer live with husbands or common law partners. In order to run a household without a male partner, women must have an alternative source of income coming into the home. Specifically, this implies that either they live with relatives or the woman or her children must work for wages to support the family. In Jamaica, while 29% of the women in common law unions worked, a full 40% of women no longer in common law unions did so. Women who no longer live with a male provider appear to need to work to maintain their homes. As it was found for women in "visiting" relationships, women who no longer are in consensual unions typically have low levels of education. 95% of the Jamaican women no longer in common law unions have primary levels of education or less.[13] As a result, it is unlikely that these women are able to find adequate paying jobs. Family size among women no longer in common law unions is quite high -- averaging 3.5 children per woman, compared to 3.1 for all women in Jamaica. 55% of women no longer in common law unions are under 45 years old which implies that many have young children to look after. As it has been mentioned, young children in the home make employment difficult unless some form of child care facility is available -- be it older siblings or other relatives who are able to baby-sit while the mothers are at work.

57% of all women no longer living with a consensual partner in the Caribbean are heads of households; the other percentage presumably have found other living arrangements -- with their children or other relatives. It is conceivable that many heads must run their own households because they have no children who are capable or willing to support them.

In short, female heads of household no longer in common law unions seem to fare rather poorly because low levels of education and high levels of fertility make adequate employment unlikely. In spite of these constraints, these women typically must work out of need, since few other sources of income seem to be available to them. While some of these women might "choose" to leave common law unions in order to cope better with poverty, it is also likely that many others are forced out of union because of male marginality or male desertion.

Only 12% of the Caribbean women no longer living with their husbands are either divorced or separated; the majority are widowed. Death rather than choice appears to be a major determinant in the formation of these women-headed households. Few women no longer married seem to work. The Jamaican data show that only 28% of these women worked while 39% performed home duties and another 30% were either retired or disabled. This is not surprising given the groups' age -- 71% of them are 44 years or older. It is likely that a large majority of these older women have children who are capable of supporting them which might be evidenced by the fact that 43% of these women in the Commonwealth Caribbean do not head their own households. Yet, almost 48,000 of women no longer living with husbands are heads of households. Of these, 22% live alone. Other than inheritance -- for these relatively few middle and upper class women -- it is unclear how a majority of these women, who have no male or children

present to provide income and who do not work themselves, manage economically.

Summary

Female heads of households have lower levels of education than do either male heads of household or women in general. Female heads of households are likely to have to work out of need. It is not surprising then that these women work more than women in general. The need to work, coupled with low levels of education, serve as strong incentives for these women to take jobs in the marginal sectors. Income differentials between male and female heads of household are substantial -- far greater than differentials in either education or type of occupation would suggest. While it has been stated that female heads of households usually look to their children for economic support, 50% of these women are still in their child-bearing years. It is conceivable that these women continue to carry the economic burden of their children, not the other way around.

Female heads of households who have never had a husband or common law partner seem to have, in comparison to other female heads in the Caribbean, a more advantageous economic position. Many are heads of households because of the fact that they choose to live without male partners. Such a choice is available to them because high levels of education and levels of employment provide economic alternatives to domiciliary relationships. Probably, some of these women are from middle and upper socioeconomic groups. (A majority of women from socioeconomic groups that are "well off" are probably concentrated in the widowed, divorced and separated group.)

Women who head households where males are regularly present in the home and who help support the family also seem to be relatively well off. Included here would be those female heads of household in common law unions and married women who are designated heads because of their highly regarded status as wives and mothers. Married women who are heads of households because their husbands emigrated to work in a developed country would also be economically well situated assuming that their husbands send home portions of their earnings. Wives of migrant laborers who are heads of households probably do not fare so well, since their husbands' employment typically pays very poorly.

Married women who are heads of household due to male marginality or desertion are likely to have a difficult time, especially if they are unaccustomed to supporting themselves. In addition, those women heads of households who are no longer married or living with a common law partner, who belong to the lowest socioeconomic groups (and thus, have no inheritances or rents to fall back into), and who cannot look to their children for financial support would likely be in a relatively meager situation if adequate remunerative employment is not available to them. The female heads of households who appear to be in the worst economic situation are the women in 'visiting' relationships. These women generally have neither parents nor partners who are able or willing to support them and their young children. Work for these women is difficult not only because the care of young children is incompatible with employment, but also because the majority of these women are between the ages of 15 and 24 -- the group with the highest unemployment rates in the Commonwealth Caribbean.

THE SOCIOECONOMICS OF WOMEN-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS

Poverty and Women-Headed Households

Poverty appears to be more prevalent among families with female headship. In Santiago, Chile, a 1970 study revealed that the median monthly incomes among poor households with female heads were consistently lower than among other types of households (Elizaga, 1970). A more recent field inquiry in the same city carried out in marginal zones showed that 10% of the male family heads and 29% of the female fell into the lowest income bracket (CEPAL, 1973). In Guayaquil, Ecuador, a similar survey indicated that 17% of the male and 37.5% of the female family heads fell into this lowest income category (JNPCE, 1973). A representative sample survey in metropolitan Belo Horizonte (Brasil) revealed that one household in five was headed by a woman. The percentage of women-headed households at poverty level was 41%, as compared to households headed by men in which poverty levels were found in only 26% of the cases. Moreover, when households headed by prime-age divorced and separated women were singled out, the proportion at poverty levels reached 60% (Merrick, 1977).

Women who are family heads work much more frequently than women in general. In the Caribbean, metropolitan Brasil and Caracas, Venezuela, four female family heads in every 10 were found to be working (Blumberg, 1977; Merrick, 1977). The earning capacity of female heads seems to be considerably lower than that of males; yet male secondary workers are found to be less utilized in poor households headed by women (Merrick, 1977) thus making such households more dependent on female and, many times, children's earnings.

The role of children as economic supporters to households characterized by the absence of a resident male is borne out by the Venezuelan data: Women heads with an unmarried eldest child between ages 14 and 19 show a decline in the percentage employed (24.5%). When the eldest child is single but 20 years and older, the employment rate of the female head jumps up to 54% (competing,for first place, with the activity rate for female heads who have an eldest child aged 6 to 13). By contrast, married women with an eldest child aged 20 and over only work in 17% of all cases. The implication is that female family heads benefit from the earnings of those employed children between ages 14 and 19, who are more likely to remain at home than a child aged 20 and over. The latter may be employed but, if not living at home, will not be contributing enough (if at all) to free the mother from the work force (Blumberg, 1977).

In developing societies the absence of a welfare system suggests that a woman might well have to have both independent access to employment <u>and</u> the contribution of some of her children before making a go of a female-headed unit. Children and marginal occupations seem to be complementary economic solutions to the survival needs of households headed by women.

The relationship between a "marginal" female labor force and a woman's economic responsibilities towards her family is not accidental. Income-earning activities that can be combined with child care are of the marginal and low income type. Women, who are the most adversely affected by the consequences of marital/union disruption, are the least likely to be literate or trained vocationally to enter the labor force in a productive capacity. The earnings of female heads have been shown to come mostly from employment in the informal sector of the economy (Arizpe, 1977; CEPAL, 1973; JNPCE, 1973; Merrick, 1977). The informal sector obviously provide, poor female family

heads with some flexibility in combining motherhood and working roles; this is, however, at the cost of low erratic earnings that place these families in a situation of bare subsistence.

Socioeconomic factors contributing to the rise of women-headed households

The prevalence of female-headed households among the poor has been linked (though not exclusively) to lower class economic marginality and to the larger class system of wage labor society (R.T. Smith, 1956; Blumberg, 1976). The existence of an economically marginal lower class is obviously not unique to the developing world. There, however, the presence of a marginal class interacting with other socioeconomic and demographic factors can have disastrous consequences for mother-headed families.

In urban areas, a marginal class , a demographically uncontrollable surplus labor population, heavy migration to the cities, overurbanization and the absence of adequate welfare programs can combine to both foster the existence of and provide a dismal setting for women-headed families. In rural areas, the seasonality of crops, heavy migration to seek this seasonal work, a labor surplus in the agricultural sector, and progressive transformation of subsistence work into work for wages -- all directly affecting an overpopulated marginal class -- can encourage the rise of women heads and might have even more disheartening consequences on their families.

While still scant and unsatisfactory, data exist and hypotheses have been suggested for the often interrelated effects of migration and urbanization on the rise of women-headed households among the poor. The paragraphs below summarize this information.

Migration. One of the most prominent trends accompanying modernization in Third World countries has been migration triggered by (perceived) economic opportunities during the early stages of economic development. Sharp regional differences appear in the sexual composition of these migrants.

The industrial centers of Europe have attracted male and female migrants from Middle Eastern and North African countries. The oil producing countries are now "pulling" large numbers of international male migrants from neighboring Middle Eastern countries. In the "pull" from rural to urban areas within countries, males seem to predominate in Africa and females appear to predominate in South American countries.

Many Moroccan men have migrated to the industrial cities in Western Europe. This factor interacting with rural-urban migration, considerable male unemployment and high divorce rates, has forced uneducated and poorly trained Moroccan women to assume the primary economic responsibility for themselves and their children. Changes in household structures between 1960 and 1971 reflect this fact. A comparison of the two censuses reveals, first, that while the number of households headed by men has increased minimally the number of households headed by women has increased by 33%. Second, households headed by females are not restricted to divorced or widowed women, though these clearly form the majority; 14% of all female-headed households are headed by women who are married (though it is not clear whether the husband is actually present in the house); 83% are headed by women who are divorced or widowed. Lastly, female-headed households tend to be larger than those headed by men.

Amal Rassam, an anthropologist, demonstrates very effectively the emergence of a new type of household in Morocco -- one which is basically characterized

by the functional absence of the adult male. She refers to such structures as matrifocal households since it is the woman who provides the authority, sustenance, and continuity for the children. In these new household arrangements it appears that unmarried daughters are also called upon to take on economic roles, since the mother cannot earn enough on her own (n.d.).

It is estimated that up to two thirds of the male work force of the Yemen Arab Republic is migrating to find work in the Saudi Arabian oil fields (Olin, 1978). Frequently all the men between the ages of 15 and 40 will emigrate from a Yemeni village for periods of up to three years, leaving the women under the auspices of younger and older men. As a result, the women carry still greater workloads. When the man is present, the woman only sows seeds in the field. When he is absent, she carries out almost all agricultural tasks. Women's overwork diminishes the number of crops that can be planted and adversely affects infant feeding and care (Swanson, 1975). Similar trends are emerging in the southern parts of Afghanistan where the revenues contributed through migrant labor exportation to Iran are estimated to be between 100 to 300 million dollars (Dammarell, 1978).

Since 1960, there has been an accelerated entrance of women from developing countries with chronic unemployment into urban jobs located in highly industrialized centers of Western Europe. A case in point are Turkish women migrants to West Germany. Traditionally trained, nonmotivated Turkish women were strongly urged by their fathers, husbands and other relatives to take up industrial jobs in foreign countries, in order to eventually secure lucrative, higher income jobs for their male relatives. The Turkish experience has shown the deeply penetrating impact of migration on family fragmentation as the wife becomes the principal breadwinner, the de facto house-

hold head, and the husband becomes the primary child carer. By 1975, it was estimated that a total of nearly 150,000 Turkish women were working in West Germany alone (Abadan, 1977). West Germany has now put a halt to importation of female migrant labor from Mediterranean countries because of the impact the experience has had upon the marginal status of the migrants' children.

The discovery of minerals, the planting of cash crops and the demand for skilled labor have led to internal rural-rural and rural-urban migration of African men to mines, plantations and cities. The traditional family has disintegrated. Women are left with the double burden of being the house caretakers and the subsistence economic providers (Dobert and Shields, 1972). In Kenya, Hanger and Moris observe that one of the effects of an irrigated rice scheme is the migration of men who many times return home only to organize labor at peak work periods. Women are left alone to tend both the rice and traditional food plots (1973). The phenomenon of male outmigration in search of wage employment is illustrated in the case of Kenya's Kakamega district where male outmigration is among the highest in the country. A full 40% of the district sample studied by Staudt (1975-76) consisted of women farm managers This corresponds with figures in the 1969 Kenya census, which show that for that district, 36% of all households were headed by women. The common pattern in Kakamega, as elsewhere in Kenya, is for men to engage in wage employment away from the farm and return home upon retirement.

In Basutoland (Lesotho), the structure of households varies with size and season, but the basic picture shows a constant imbalance of the sexes. Even without the migration factor, there are significantly more women than men. Among tax paying households, 25% are women-headed households. Zulu men

in South Africa migrate to the cities. Zulu women are left behind with their children (Sibisi, 1976).

In Latin America, more women than men from rural areas and small towns migrate to the cities. Female migrants are consistently younger than male migrants and tend to migrate without spouses (Elton, 1974). One consequence is the formation of households headed by women. In the metropolitan regions of Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo (Brasil) there are almost half a million households headed by women. In the Rio region one in every six households and in Sao Paulo one in every eight households is headed by a woman (Vaz da Costa, n.d.). A study in Santiago, Chile, revealed that the highest percentage of women-based households with children were headed by migrant women. More importantly, the households' median monthly income indicated not only that women-headed households were poorer than men-headed households but also that households headed by migrant women were the poorest of them all. The median monthly incomes of households headed by native men was 109 escudos and by migrant men over 93 escudos. Native women-headed households had a median income of 84 escudos monthly, women migrants before 1952 of only 70 escudos and recent women migrants (between 1952 and 1962) of only 49 escudos monthly (Elizaga, 1970).

Sometimes (male) migration leaves women and children behind. Other times young women become the migrants. In either case, by choice or by default, women-headed households emerge.

Urbanization. The hypothesis that rapid urbanization might contribute to the rise of women-headed households has been suggested mainly for Latin America. This is not at all surprising since, as it was said above, it is in this region that women migrate into urban centers in greater numbers

than men. Census data for 13 Latin American countries reveal that the proportion of women-headed households is 60% higher in urban than in rural areas (average ratio: 1.60, variance: .30).

Since a majority of women migrants to urban centers are young and single, the higher incidence of women-headed households there might be caused by combination of factors acting in a chain-linked fashion. The concentration of industrial and commercial activities in a few urban locations and the traditional division of labor which gives women more income earning opportunities in towns (as domestic servants and petty traders) "pull" women. The change to a cash based economy which has lessened women's contribution (in comparison to men's) to the economic support of the family in rural areas "pushes" women (Elton, 1974).

The presence, because of migration, of more younger women than younger men in the cities might create a tight marriage market and a consequent rise in "visiting" type relationships and sporadic consensual unions. At the same time, the city offers the abandoned woman with dependents and women in "visiting" unions not only relatively higher economic security, but also the absence of social sanction. In her study, Nieves (1977) found out that women-headed households in San Salvador with a family to support preferred city to rural life while women married to working men preferred rural life. Men preferred city life more than their wives did but <u>less</u> than did women heads of household.

The advantages of urban living in Latin America might be a trap for women who are the main economic providers for their households. Greater perceived economic opportunities and perhaps more freedom are offered by city life. What is delivered, however, are marginal or barely subsistence earnings and no institutional supports for enacting motherhood and working

roles at the same time. It is not surprising that flexible family structures become the only adaptive mechanism for these women who, in the cities, appear to be the poorest of them all.

Land tenure. For the Commonwealth Caribbean, Slater hypothesized that the lack of land ownership encourages the rise of women-headed households. For her, landlessness is not conducive to adhering to middle class attitudes concerning legal marriages (Slater, 1977). Perhaps more simply, landlessness (and not only for the Caribbean countries) might drive men to find seasonal work for wages in the agricultural sector or jobs in the cities, leaving the women and children behind. It would be interesting to investigate the relationship (if any) between the proportion of landless laborers in a given setting and the proportion of women heads of households not only in the Caribbean countries, but in other societies where female family headship has not been traditionally institutionalized.

Several factors mentioned in this section, such as migration, mechanization of agriculture, agribusiness and urbanization are an integral part of the process of economic development. Does, then, economic development give rise to women-headed households?

It may well be that economic development interacts with sociocultural factors in shaping both the rise or fall of women-headed households.

Very tentative data suggest that in particular instances economic development might contribute to lessen the proportion of households headed by women. In the case of the Caribbean islands, for example, we obtained a negative and significant relationship between per capita income and the proportion of households headed by women ($r_{xy} = -.64$).

One may speculate that poverty without development may go hand in hand with women-headed households in the Caribbean countries that have a "history" of women-headed households and where an institutionalized structure has been reinforced by societal and cultural norms.

On the other hand, the history of most other developing parts of the world has been different. Social systems and their cultural adjuncts have not encouraged the emergence of female family headship. Could it not be that in those societies that have up until now upheld so staunchly the cultural tradition of stable family systems and male-headed households, poverty with development operates to trigger the rise and increase of women-headed households?

If the latter possibility carries any truth, planners must become aware of and recognize this possible "unintended" consequence of economic development policies. At any rate, it becomes increasingly clear that specific economic policies geared to assist women who head poor households will be a significant weapon in the struggle against poverty.

FOOTNOTES

1. An exception to these assumptions is found in the considerable literature on types of familism among the Caribbean blacks. Initially characterized by a racial-historical slavery-based approach, the Caribbean family has, in recent years, been viewed as 'pathological' and 'disorganized' since it deviates from the stable nuclear model.

2. The difference between marital and union status is analogous to de jure and de facto status.

3. Perhaps the most complete (all inclusive) definition is that adopted by the Rwanda census which defines as chefs de 'rugo' femmes the following categories: wives of military, civil servants who do not follow husbands to urban areas when the latter are transferred/assigned; women from polygamous marriages 'scindes'; and wives of Tutsis (males) who have abandoned their families.

4. Consanguinal household is defined by Solien de Gonzalez as "co-residential" kinship group which includes no regularly present male in the role of husband-father. Rather the effective and enduring relationships within the group are those existing between consanguinal kin." The head of household is not necessarily female in this instance -- female's kin may be head instead (Blumberg, 1977, p. 101).

5. Multiple mating pattern depicts the phenomenon where women have at least two mates and often more, sequentially. Characteristics of this pattern according to Brown are: (1) unstable marital unions; (2) high illegitimacy rates; (3) male marginality, and (4) high instances of women-headed households.

6. Middle and upper class married women typically do not work because it is considered demeaning to do so (Clarke, 1957).

7. The countries in the Commonwealth Caribbean include: Jamaica, Trinidad, Barbados, Guyana, Belize, St. Lucia, Grenada, St. Vincent, Dominica, Bermuda, St. Kitts, Montserrat, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, and Turks Islands.

8. The census definition "the person acknowledged by its members as head carries out the main responsibilities in the affairs of the household," is used for both males and females.

9. However, there is only a small differential of 1% in determining the extent of female headship when single member households are excluded. The discrepancy is slightly larger (5%) when determining the extent to which all women are household heads.

10. Apparently , women are less bashful in designating themselves in legal unions than in nonlegal ones.

11. "Visiting" describes those women who have had, or at the time of the census were having, a sexual relationship but were neither married nor in a common law union. This category is one element of the category "never had a husband or common law partner" but includes only those women to whom a child was born in the year preceding the census "Common law" includes persons who share a common household but whose union has not been sanctioned by law or religious rites.

12. The data support this to some extent. Married women have the highest levels of education, except for those women who have never had a husband or common law partner. Of all married women, 9% have had a secondary or higher level of education compared to only 2% for women in common law unions.

13. Levels of education for women no longer in common law unions are basically equivalent to women in common law unions.

TABLE 1

PERCENTAGE RANKING OF

"POTENTIAL" FEMALE HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS

TO "POTENTIAL" TOTAL HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD

IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD

Low (10-14%)	Low-Medium (15-19%)	High-Medium (20-24%)	High (25% and over)
Argentina	Bolivia	Guatemala	El Salvador
Ecuador	Brazil	Honduras	Panama
Mexico	Chile		
Paraguay	Colombia		
Peru	Uruguay	Guadaloupe	Virgin Islands
Surinam			
Venezuela	Nicaragua	Algeria	
		Morocco	Botswana
Costa Rica	Bahamas	Yemen	Lesotho
	Cuba		
St. Pierre and Miquelon	French Guayna	Chad	
	Martinique	Congo	
	Puerto Rico	Madagascar	
Cyprus		Mauritius	
Kuwait	Bahrein	Mozambique	
Turkey	Iran	Tanzania	
United Arab Emirates	Iraq	Togo	
	Jordan	Uganda	
	Lebanon		
Brunei	Libya	Indonesia	
Hong Kong	Syria	S. Korea	
Nepal	Tunisia	Vietnam	
Philippines			
Sri Lanka	Gabon		
Taiwan	Kenya		
	Liberia		
Rodriguez	Niger		
	Reunion		
	Rhodesia		
	Zambia		
	Cambodia		
	India		
	Macao		
	Singapore		
	Thailand		

TABLE 2

MARITAL ST IS OF

POTENTIAL WOMEN HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS

IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD

Region/ SOUTH AMERICA	Year	PHH[a] (1)	PWHH[b] (2)	% PWHH/PHH (2)/(1)	% Widows (2)	% Divorced (2)	% Separated (2)	% Single*** Mothers (2)
Argentina**	1970	8,101,600	1,027,400	13.0	84.0	16.0		-
Brazil**	1970	19,302,767	3,277,884	17.0	71.0	-	29.0	-
Bolivia**	1976	11,213	2,016	18.0	82.0	18.0		-
Chile**	1970	2,386,757	771,761	32.0	35.0	10.0		54.0
Colombia**	1975	3,874,307	956,107	25.0	47.0	15.0		38.0
Equador**	1974	1,287,553	185,269	14.0	65.0	6.0	29.0	-
Paraguay**	1972	392,370	45,120	11.0	77.0	23.0		-
Peru**	1972	2,894,522	554,567	19.0	57.0	2.0	12.0	29.0
Surinam**	1964	53,006	6,861	13.0	66.0	34.0		-
Uruguay**	1963	694,005	115,048	17.0	85.0	15.0		-
Venezuela**	1974	1,754,974	198,200	11.0	82.0	18.0		-

[a] PHH= Potential Heads-of-Households.

[b] PWHH= Potential Women-Heads-of-Households.

** Data obtained from National Censuses.

*** The single-mother category includes only those women for whom parity is specifically indicated. It excludes those single women for whom the exact number of children borne is unknown.

TABLE 2 (continued)

Potential Women Heads of Households
in the Developing World

Region/ Country	Year	PHH[a] (1)	PWHH[b] (2)	% PWHH/PHH (2)/(1)	% Widows (2)	% Divorced (2)	% Separated (2)	% Single Mothers (2)
CENTRAL AMERICA								
Costa Rica**	1973	322,707	44,282	14.0	64.0	8.0	28.0	-
El Salvador***	1974	120,309	35,105	29.0	41.0	11.0	48.0	-
Guatemala**	1973	1,141,442	232,655	20.0	53.0	-	-	47.0
Honduras**	1974	573,762	150,804	26.0	35.0	4.0	51.	11.0
Mexico**	1970	9,556,649	1,369,118	14.0	71.0	7.0	22.0	-
Nicaragua**	1971	334,113	57,515	17.0	71.0	29.0	-	-
Panama**	1970	420,228	167,847	40.0	15.0	2.0	24.0	59.0

[a] PHH= Potential Heads-of-Households.

[b] PWHH= Potential Women Heads-of-Households.

** Data obtained from National Censuses, National Statistical Yearbook.

*** Metropolitan Survey.

TABLE 2 (continued)

Potential Women Heads of Households
in the Developing World

Region/ Country	Year	PHH[a] (1)	PWHH[b] (2)	% PWHH/PHH (2)/(1)	% Widows (2)	% Divorced (2)	% Separated (2)	% Single Mothers (2)
CARIBBEAN								
Bahamas**	1970	35,127	6,735	19.0	65.0	5.0	29.0	-
Cuba**	1970	2,124,207	310,769	15.0	59.0	41.0	-	-
French Guyana**	1967	6,053	1,038	17.0	80.0	20.0	-	-
Guadeloupe*	1967	48,590	9,510	20.0	86.0	14.0	-	-
Martinique	1967	48,101	9,279	19.0	87.0	13.0	-	-
Puerto Rico*	1970	1,293,195	188,601	15.0	44.0	18.0	3.7	-
St. Pierre** & Miquelon	1974	2,220	311	14.0	93.0	7.0	-	-
Virgin Islands***	1970	6,773	2,502	37.0	49.0	32.0	19.0	-

[a] PHH= Potential Heads-of-Households.

[b] PWHH= Potential Women Heads-of-Households

*** 14-year-old and older.

* UN Demographic Yearbook, 1972. Table 26;
UN Demographic Yearbook, 1971. Table 12.

** Data obtained from National Censuses, National Statistical Yearbook.

TABLE 2 (continued)

Potential Women Heads of Households
in the Developing World

Region/ Country	Year	PHH[a] (1)	PWHH[b] (2)	% PWHH/PHH (2)/(1)	% Widows (2)	% Divorced (2)	% Separated (2)	% Single Mothers (2)
NORTH AFRICA MIDDLE EAST								
Algeria*	1966	2,911,600	656,300	22.5	85.9	14.1	-	-
Bahrein**	1971	49,772	7,839	15.7	83.1	16.9	-	-
Cyprus**	1973	171,486	23,433	13.6	88.5	5.8	5.7	-
Iran**	1966	5,989,954	936,704	15.6	91.9	8.1	-	-
Iraq*	1965	1,711,723	299,507	17.4	93.7	6.3	-	-
Jordan**	1961	359,283	62,291	17.3	93.5	6.5	-	-
Kuwait**	1970	180,562	18,839	10.1	84.3	15.7	-	-
Lebanon**	1970	427,500	66,435	15.5	91.9	8.1	-	-
Libya*	1964	380,963	66,165	17.3	78.6	21.4	-	-
Morocco*	1971	3,478,236	758,233	21.8	77.2	22.8	-	-
Syria*	1970	1,178,333	177,018	15.0	92.9	7.1	-	-

[a] PHH= Potential Heads-of-Households.

[b] PWHH= Potential Women-Heads-of-Households.

* UN Demographic Yearbook, 1972. Table 26;
UN Demographic Yearbook, 1971. Table 12.

** Data obtained from National Censuses, National Statistical Yearbook.

TABLE 2 (continued)
Potential Women Heads of Households
in the Develop ; World

Region/ Country	Year	PHH (1)	PWHH (2)	% PWHH / PHH (2)/(1)	% Widows (2)	% Divorced (2)	% Separated (2)	% Single Mothers (2)
NORTH AFRICA MIDDLE EAST								
Tunisia*	1966	979,971	165,428	16.8	88.8	11.2	-	-
Turkey**	1975	8,554,731	1,252,347	14.6	93.2	6.8	-	-
United Arab Emirates*	1968	55,943	7,778	13.9	81.6	18.4	-	-
Yemen (PDR)**	1976	947,198	195,287	20.6	85.6	14.4	-	-

TABLE 2 (continued)

Potential Women Heads of Households
in the Developing World

Region/ Country	Year	PHH[a] (1)	PWHH[b] (2)	% PWHH/WHH (2)/(1)	% Widows (2)	% Divorced (2)	% Separated (2)	% Single Mothers (2)
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA								
Botswana**	1971	136,381	62,603	45.9	32.3	18.0	2.1	47.6
Chad*	1964	627,510	151,440	24.1	-	-	-	-
Congo*	1961	146,300	31,200	21.3	-	-	-	-
Gabon**	1961	147,033	29,116	19.8	83.9	16.1	-	-
Kenya**	1969	2,118,417	396,922	18.7	76.2	23.8	-	-
Lesotho**	1966	189,886	70,553	37.1	90.0	10.0	-	-
Liberia*	1971	347,332	59,413	17.1	66.0	34.0	-	-
Magadascar*	1966	1,476,000	323,000	21.8	51.7	48.3	-	-
Mauritius*	1972	154,[illegible]76	34,249	22.2	81.2	2.1	16.7	-

[a] PHH= Potential Heads-of-Households.

[b] PWHH= Potential Women-Heads-of-Households.

* UN Demographic Yearbook, 1972. Table 26;
UN Demographic Yearbook, 1971. Table 12.

** Data obtained from National Consuses, National Statistical Yearbook.

TABLE 2 (continued)

Potential Women Heads of Households
in the Developing World

Region Country	Year	PHH[a] (1)	PWHH[b] (2)	% PWHH/PHH (2)/(1)	% Widows (2)	% Divorced (2)	% Separated (2)	% Single Mothers (2)
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA								
Mozambique**	1970	1,989,505	501,706	25.2	53.2	26.9	.4	19.4
Niger**	1960	659,970	105,550	15.9	86.5	13.5	-	-
Reunion**	1967	77,579	14,638	18.9	87.7	12.3	-	-
S. Rhodesia**	1969	73,781	12,095	16.5	71.2	19.6	9.2	-
Rodriguez*	1962	8,414	435	12.1	77.1	.2	22.7	-
Rwanda**	1970	-	124,140	-	79.5	20.5	-	-
Tanzania*	1967	101,351	24,954	24.7	34.0	66.0	-	-
Togo**	1970	366,888	74,246	20.2	83.2	16.8	-	-
Uganda**	1969	2,103,278	427,675	20.3	57.6	42.4	-	-
Zambia**	1969	920,300	181,228	19.6	43.6	56.4	-	-

TABLE 2 (continued)

Potential Women Heads of Households
in the Developing World

Region/ Country	Year	PHH[a] (1)	PWHH[b] (2)	PW% PWHH/PHH (2)/(1)	% Widows (2)	% Divorced (2)	% Separated (2)	% Single Mothers (2)
ASIA								
Brunei**	1971	27,979	2,950	10.5		100.0	-	-
Cambodia**	1962	1,335,211	219,661	16.4	85.8	14.2	-	-
Hong Kong**	1971	843,945	109,113	12.9	96.6	3.4	-	-
India**	1961	127,717,119	24,052,260	18.7	95.6	4.4	-	-
Indonesia**	1971	30,132,002	6,967,705	23.3	78.2	21.8	-	-
S. Korea**	1970	7,080,421	1,487,810	21.0	94.5	5.5	-	-
Macao*	1970	47,472	7,837	16.5	97.1	2.9	-	-
Nepal**	1971	3,092,849	318,432	10.3	96.5	3.5	-	-
Philippines**	1970	7,035,753	969,292	13.7	89.9	10.1	-	-
Singapore**	1970	439,867	75,540	17.0	94.3	5.7	-	-

[a] PHH= Potential Heads-of-Households.

[b] PWHH= Potential Women-Heads-of-Households.

* UN Demographic Yearbook, 1972. Table 26
UN Demographic Yearbook, 1971. Table 12

** Data obtained from National Censuses, National Statistical Yearbook.

TABLE 2 (con' ued)

Potential Women Heads of Households
in the Developing World

Region/ Country	Year	PHH[a] (1)	PWHH[b] (2)	% PWHH/PHH (2)/(1)	% Widows (2)	% Divorced (2)	% Separated (2)	% Single Mothers (2)
ASIA								
Sri-Lanka**	1971	2,620,933	358,424	13.6	93.4	3.4	3.2	-
Taiwan**	1970	3,094,541	360,328	11.6	91.9	8.1	-	-
Thailand*	1970	7,309,338	1,228,241	16.8	75.2	9.5	15.3	-
Vietnam**	1972	1,114,679	274,216	24.6	100.0		-	-

TABLE 3

CHILD/MOTHER RATIO FOR THE FEMALE POPULATION
ACCORDING TO SPECIFIC MARITAL CATEGORIES
FOR SELECTED COUNTRIES
(c. 1970)

COUNTRY/YEAR		All Mothers	Single** Mothers	Widowed Mothers	Divorced Mothers	Separated Mothers
BOTSWANA	1971	4.5	2.9	5.1		
CHILE	1970	4.1	2.2	5.0		
COLOMBIA	1973	4.3	2.8	5.1	4.1	
GUATEMALA	1973	5.7	3.3	6.0		
HONDURAS	1974	3.4	3.2	6.6		4.4
MOZAMBIQUE	1970	3.9	2.6	4.1		
PERU	1972	5.3	3.4	6.8	3.4	4.8
CARIBBEAN ISLANDS*	1970					
JAMAICA		4.2	2.9	4.6		
TRINIDAD		4.5	2.6	4.9		
GUYANA		5.0	2.9	5.1		
BELIZE		5.1	3.4	5.3		

* Caribbean data includes women 14-64 not attending primary/secondary school levels by Union status.

** Single Mothers in the Caribbean data include women (with children) in visiting relationships, those who "never had" a relationship and those "no longer with common-law partner.

TABLE 4

CHILD/MOTHER RATIO AMONG
SINGLE, WIDOWED/DIVORCED WOMEN
BY SPECIFIC AGE GROUPS
Guatemala, 1973

AGE GROUPS	SINGLE	WIDOWED/DIVORCED
All Women 15 +	3.3	6.0
15-19	1.1	1.1
20-24	1.6	1.9
25-29	2.1	2.9
30-34	2.9	4.0
35-39	3.2	4.9
40-44	4.2	5.7
45-49	4.7	6.1
50-54	3.8	6.3
55-59	5.0	6.5
60-64	5.0	6.4
65 +	5.1	6.8

Computed from 1973 Censo de Poblacion. Direccion de Estadistica, Guatemala, 1975.

TABLE 5

MARITAL-SPECIFIC ACTIVITY RATES FOR FEMALE POPULATION 15+

(c 1970)

COUNTRY	Year	Marital Specific Activity Rates				
		All Women	Widowed	Divorced	Separated	Single Mothers
Argentina	1970	24.0	15.0	57.0	-	
Chile	1970	22.0	22			40.0
Costa Rica	1973	21.0	12.0	50.0	34.0	
Iran	1966	12.4	11.0	30.0	-	-
Liberia	1971	31.0	21.0	26.0	-	-
Morocco	1971	8.0	17.0	32.6	-	-
Nepal	1971	41.0	34.0	49.0	-	-
Philippines	1970	34.0	47.0	53.0	-	-
Singapore	1970	30.0	15.0	48.0	-	-
Syria	1970	9.0	9.0	18.0	-	-
Turkey	1975	11.0	7.2	37.1	-	-

TABLE 6
PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF
FEMALE HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD*
IN THE COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN
BY MARITAL STATUS**

Country	Total Heads of Household	Female Heads of Household	% Heads Who are Female	% FHH* Never Married	% FHH Married	% FHH Widowed	% FHH Divorced	% FHH Separated
Jamaica	340,069	112,605	33	60	21	17	1	1
Trinidad and Tobago	165,633	41,814	25	33	35	29	2	1
Guyana	115,863	23,977	21	28	33	33	3	3
Barbados	47,097	19,486	41	53	27	18	1	1
Belize	20,089	4,883	24	44	36	20	-	-
St. Lucia	17,984	7,197	40	55	27	18	-	-
Grenada	16,284	7,497	46	58	21	19	-	2
St. Vincent	14,568	6,770	46	68	21	11	-	-
Dominica	12,417	5,370	43	55	27	18	-	-
Bermuda	12,702	2,408	19	27	24	28	13	8

Source of data: 1970 Population Census of the Commonwealth Caribbean

* FHH= Female Heads of Households

** Single member households are not included

TABLE 6 (continued)

Female Heads of Household

in the Commonwealth Caribbean

Country	Total Heads of Household	Female Heads of Household	% Heads Who are Female	% FHH Never Married	% FHH Married	% FHH Widowed	% FHH Divorced	% FHH Separated
St. Kitts	8,320	4,130	50	60	24	15	1	-
Montserrat	2,466	1.091	44	59	22	18	1	-
British Virgin Is.	1,926	472	24	47	28	21	3	1
Cayman Is.	2,100	683	33	29	42	23	5	1
Turks Is.	1,039	398	38	30	40	24	4	2
Average of all countries			35	47	28	21	2	1
Standard deviation			10	14	7	6	3	2

Table 7
PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF
FEMALE HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD*
BY UNION STATUS
(ADJUSTED FIGURES)**

Country	Total Heads of Household	Married	Common Law Union	Visiting	Not Living with Husband	Not Living with Common Law Partner	Never had Husband or C.L. Partner
Jamaica	87,720	30	18	7	19	24	1
Trinidad	35,965	40	13	2	33	11	1
Guyana	21,027	34	9	3	43	11	-
Barbados	14,545	39	18	3	20	17	2
Belize	4,155	38	16	4	23	18	-
St. Lucia	5,385	38	17	8	19	17	1
Grenada	5,792	29	21	5	23	20	2
St. Vincent	4,952	34	22	9	10	22	2
Dominica	4,161	32	12	11	23	22	-
Bermuda	1,852	34	4	2	56	3	-
St. Kitts	2,951	38	12	8	17	23	2
Montserrat	688	38	15	4	26	15	2
British Virgin Is.	398	42	11	7	18	21	1
Cayman Is.	567	61	10	1	23	3	1
Turks Is.	320	59	6	6	24	4	-
Average of all countries		39	14	5	25	15	1
Standard deviation		(9)	(5)	(3)	(11)	(7)	(1)

Source of data: 1970 Population Census of the Commonwealth Caribbean, Vol. 9
* Single member households are not included
** Excludes 'not stated' category

Table 8
THE PERCENT DI RIBUTION OF
FEMALE HEADS .F HOUSEHOLD*
IN THE COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN
BY UNION STATUS
(UNADJUSTED FIGURES)

Country	Total Heads of Household 100%	Married	Common Law Union	Visiting	Not Living with Husband	Not Living with Common Law Partner	Never had Husband or C.L. Partner	Not Stated
Jamaica	112,605	23	14	6	15	19	1	22
Trinidad	41,814	34	11	2	29	9	1	14
Guyana	23,977	31	8	2	37	9	-	12
Barbados	19,486	29	14	2	15	13	2	25
Belize	4,883	33	14	3	19	15	-	15
St. Lucia	7,197	29	13	6	14	12	-	25
Grenada	7,497	23	16	4	18	15	1	23
St. Vincent	6,770	25	16	7	7	16	2	27
Dominica	5,370	25	9	9	17	17	-	23
Bermuda	2,408	26	3	1	43	2	-	24
St. Kitts	4,130	27	9	6	12	16	1	29
Montserrat	1,091	24	10	3	16	9	1	37
British Virgin Is.	472	36	9	5	15	18	1	15
Cayman Is.	683	51	8	-	20	3	1	17
Turks Is.	398	43	5	10	14	2	-	26
Average of all countries		31	11	4	19	12		22
Standard deviation		(8)	(4)	(3)	(10)	(8)	(.7)	(.7)

Source of data: 1970 Population Census of the Commonwealth Caribbean, Vol. 9
* Single member households are not included

Table 9

PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF
HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD*
IN THE COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN
BY SEX AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Country	Sex	Total	None/ Infant	Prim.	Sec.	Higher	Level Unknown
Jamaica	M	227,464	5	82	6	1	6
	F	112,605	4	84	5	-	7
Trinidad	M	123,819	8	71	14	2	5
	F	41,814	14	72	8	-	6
Guyana	M	91,886	8	74	11	1	6
	F	23,977	13	72	9	-	6
Barbados	M	27,611	1	29	64	2	4
	F	19,486	1	39	56	-	4
Belize	M	15,206	12	68	16	1	3
	F	4,883	7	74	16	-	3
St. Lucia	M	10,787	29	57	8	1	5
	F	7,197	26	64	6	-	4
Grenada	M	8,787	2	84	8	1	5
	F	7,497	3	89	4	-	4
St.Vincent	M	7,798	5	82	8	1	4
	F	6,770	6	87	4	-	3
Dominica	M	7,047	8	78	10	1	3
	F	5,370	8	83	7	-	2
Bermuda	M	10,294	3	42	47	7	1
	F	2,408	2	55	40	2	1
St.Kitts	M	4,190	3	78	13	2	4
	F	4,130	2	85	8	-	5
Montserrat	M	1,375	4	73	15	5	3
	F	1,091	4	85	5	-	6
British Virgin Is.	M	1,454	2	61	25	5	7
	F	472	3	74	17	-	6
Cayman Is.	M	1,417	2	68	6	4	11
	F	683	3	85	5	-	7
Turks Is.	M	641	2	77	14	4	3
	F	398	2	87	9	-	2
Average of all countries	M		6.3	68.4	17.9	2.5	4.7
	F		6.6	75.9	12.8	.4	4.4
Standard deviation	M		7.0	15.5	16.2	1.9	2.3
	F		6.6	14.1	15.2	.8	1.9

Source of data : 1970 Population Census of the Commonwealth Caribbean, Vol. 9

* These data do not include single-person households.

TABLE 10
PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF
HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD*
IN THE COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN
BY SEX AND BY MAIN ACTIVITY

Country	Sex	Heads of Household	Worked	Seeking Work	Home Duties	Retired/ Disabled	Other Activities/ Not Stated
Jamaica	F	141,805	40	3	39	13	5
	M	278,203	82	4	-	9	5
Trinidad	F	52,054	30	2	54	12	2
	M	141,122	80	7	-	10	3
Guyana	F	29,017	31	1	55	11	2
	M	100,705	85	2	-	9	4
Barbados	F	25,154	45	-	34	19	1
	M	33,442	83	1	-	14	2
Belize	F	5,715	28	-	66	5	1
	M	17,350	91	-	-	5	4
St. Lucia	F	8,895	40	1	42	14	3
	M	12,858	85	2	-	9	4
Grenada	F	8,901	45	-	37	15	3
	M	10,741	87	1	-	9	3
St. Vincent	F	7,685	35	1	46	16	2
	M	9,255	84	1	1	11	3
Dominica	F	6,425	44	-	37	17	2
	M	8,723	87	-	-	11	2
Bermuda	F	3,634	69	-	21	8	2
	M	11,951	92	-	-	6	2

Source of data: 1970 Population Census of the Commonwealth Caribbean, Vol. 9

* Single member households are included.

TABLE 10 (continued)
PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF
Heads of Household
in the Commonwealth Caribbean
by Sex and Main Activity

Country	Sex	Heads of Household	Worked	Seeking Work	Home Duties	Retired/ Disabled	Other Activities/ Not Stated
St Kitts	F	5,240	40	-	38	19	3
	M	5,996	84	1	-	11	5
Montserrat	F	1,439	34	-	40	22	4
	M	1,852	80	1	-	14	5
British Virgin Is.	F	595	44	-	43	9	4
	M	1,850	91	-	-	7	2
Cayman Is.	F	876	34	-	57	7	2
	M	1,593	85	-	1	11	3
Turks Is.	F	517	35	-	51	12	2
	M	765	84	2	-	9	5
Average of all Countries	F		40	1	44	13	3
	M		85	2	-	10	3
Standard deviation	F		(10)	(1)	(11)	(5)	(1)
	M		(4)	(2)	(-)	(3)	(1)

TABLE 11
PERCENT DISTRI :ION OF
HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD
IN THE COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN
BY SEX AND BY OCCUPATION

Country	Sex	Heads of Household 100%	Profession/ Administrative	Clerical	Sales/ Service	Agricultural and Related	Prod/Labor and Related	Other Occupations/ Not Stated
Jamaica	F	112,605	3	3	20	6	8	60
	M	227,464	5	3	9	36	31	16
Trinidad	F	41,814	3	3	15	4	6	69
	M	123,819	8	5	13	15	40	19
Guyana	F	23,977	4	2	16	5	3	70
	M	91,886	7	4	11	32	32	14
Barbados	F	19,486	2	2	26	11	6	53
	M	27,611	11	4	14	15	38	19
Belize	F	4,883	4	2	16	2	5	71
	M	15,206	4	5	10	39	32	10
St. Lucia	F	7,197	2	2	13	17	6	60
	M	10,787	4	2	6	45	27	16
Grenada	F	7,497	2	2	13	22	7	54
	M	8,787	6	3	10	37	32	12
St. Vincent	F	6,770	2	1	13	12	13	59
	M	7,798	6	2	10	32	34	16
Dominica	F	5,370	3	2	15	19	8	53
	M	7,047	4	2	6	50	25	13
Bermuda	F	2,408	6	15	46	-	3	30
	M	10,294	23	5	22	3	41	6

Source of Data: 1970 Population Census of the Commonwealth Caribbean, Vol. 9

Table 1 (continued)
Percent Distribution of
Heads of Household
in the Commonwealth Caribbean
by Sex and by Occupation

Country	Sex	Heads of Household 100%	Profession/ Administrative	Clerical	Sales/ Service	Agricultural and Related	Prod/Labor and Related	Other Occupations/ Not Stated
St. Kitts	F	4,130	4	2	18	16	2	58
	M	4,190	7	3	11	34	30	15
Montserrat	F	1,091	3	1	17	13	2	64
	M	1,375	9	2	11	24	34	20
British Virgin Is.	F	472	4	3	34	1	2	56
	M	1,454	15	3	11	14	50	7
Cayman Is.	F	683	3	4	25	-	2	66
	M	1,417	17	3	13	7	46	13
Turks Is.	F	398	5	2	17	8	7	61
	M	641	13	4	16	12	41	14
Average of all countries	F		3	3	20	9	5	59
	M		9	3	12	26	36	19
Standard deviation	F		(1)	(3)	(9)	(7)	(3)	(10)
	M		(6)	(1)	(4)	(15)	(7)	(4)

TABL .2

PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD*
IN THE COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN
BY SEX AND BY INCOME

Country	Sex	Total	N/I, N/S**	less $500	$500 -999	$1,000 and +
Jamaica	M	227,464	32	31	18	19
	F	112,605	65	21	8	6
Trinidad	M	123,819	24	3	8	65
	F	41,814	70	7	8	15
Guyana	M	91,886	20	7	14	59
	F	23,977	70	11	9	10
Barbados	M	27,611	26	1	4	69
	F	9,486	56	4	19	21
Belize	M	15,206	9	11	16	64
	F	4,883	72	6	12	10
St.Lucia	M	10,787	15	12	29	44
	F	7,197	59	18	15	8
Grenada	M	8,787	23	7	27	43
	F	7,497	55	16	21	8
St.Vincent	M	7,798	21	16	30	33
	F	6,770	62	23	10	5
Dominica	M	7,047	14	12	29	45
	F	5,370	55	16	20	9
Bermuda	M	10,294	48	3	14	35
	F	2,408	42	5	22	31
St.Kitts	M	4,190	19	7	18	56
	F	4,130	60	16	15	7
Montserrat	M	1,375	14	11	11	64
	F	1,091	45	21	22	12
British Virgin Is.	M	1,454	10	3	4	83
	F	472	54	8	14	24
Cayman Is.	M	1,417	15	2	3	80
	F	683	67	5	13	15
Turks Is.	M	641	21	4	14	61
	F	398	62	10	15	13
Average of all countries	M		21	9	16	54
	F		59	12	15	13
Standard deviation	M		10	8	9	17
	F		9	7	5	7

Source of data : 1970 Population Census of the Commonwealth Caribbean, Vol. 9 ; * These data do not include single-member households; ** N/I = no income, N/S = income not stated

Table 13

PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF
HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD*
IN THE COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN
BY SEX AND AGE

Country	Sex	Total	15-24	25-44	45-59	60 +
Jamaica	M	227,464	5	43	31	21
	F	112,605	9	36	28	27
Trinidad	M	123,819	4	48	33	15
	F	41,814	4	35	34	27
Guyana	M	91,886	7	52	28	13
	F	23,977	5	37	34	24
Barbados	M	27,611	3	37	34	26
	F	19,486	4	31	30	33
Belize	M	15,206	9	49	26	16
	F	4,883	7	39	29	24
St.Lucia	M	10,787	5	42	34	19
	F	7,197	10	37	25	27
Grenada	M	8,787	5	41	31	23
	F	7,497	5	34	29	32
St. Vincent	M	7,798	4	41	33	22
	F	6,770	9	36	27	27
Dominica	M	7,047	6	39	33	22
	F	5,370	9	35	27	29
Bermuda	M	10,294	5	51	27	16
	F	2,408	4	41	28	27
St.Kitts	M	4,190	6	28	39	27
	F	4,130	10	29	29	31
Montserrat	M	1,375	6	30	31	32
	F	1,091	7	22	29	42
British Virgin Is.	M	1,454	11	48	24	17
	F	472	9	41	27	23
Cayman Is.	M	1,417	3	48	26	21
	F	683	8	37	26	29
Turks Is.	M	641	4	40	33	22
	F	398	8	43	27	22
Average of all countries	M		5	42	30	20
	F		7	35	28	28
Standard deviation	M		2	7	4	5
	F		2	5	2	5

Source of data : 1970 Population Census of the Commonwealth Caribbean, Vol. 9

* These data do not include single-member households.

Table 14

PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF
JAMAICAN WOMEN 15 YEARS AND OVER*
BY UNION STATUS AND EDUCATION

Union Status	Number of Women 15+	None/ Infant	Primary	Secondary	Higher	Other Levels/ Not Stated
Married	166,678 (100%)	4	79	11	1	5
Common Law	97,207 (100%)	4	91	2	-	3
Visiting	20,873 (100%)	1	89	7	-	3
Not Living with Husband	28,847 (100%)	6	82	7	-	5
Not Living with Common Law Partner	40,138 (100%)	6	89	2	-	3
Never had Husband or C.L. Partner	126,429 (100%)	3	72	17	-	8
Total all Jamaican Women 15+**	480,172 (100%)	4	81	10	-	5

ource of data: 1970 Population Census of the Commonwealth Caribbean, Vol. 8.

* Not including women attending primary or secondary levels of schooling.

Table 15

PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF
JAMAICAN WOMEN 15 YEARS AND OVER*
BY UNION STATUS AND MAIN ACTIVITY

Union Status	TOTAL Number of Women 15+	Worked	Seeking Work	Home Duties	Retired/ Disabled	Other Levels/ Not Stated
Married	166,678 (100%)	26	1	63	8	2
Common Law	97,207 (100%)	29	5	57	3	5
isiting	20,873 (100%)	28	12	45	-	15
Not Living with Husband	28,847 (100%)	28	-	39	30	3
Not Living with Common Law Partner	40,138 (100%)	40	4	33	18	5
Never had Husband or C.L. Partner	126,429 (100%)	41	10	25	7	16
Total all Jamaican Women 15+	480,172 (100%)	32	5	47	9	7

Source of data; 1970 Population Census of the Commonwealth Caribbean, Vol. 8

Not including women attending primary or secondary levels of schooling.

Table 16

PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF
JAMAICAN WOMEN AGED 15-64*
BY AGE AND BY UNION STATUS

Union Status	Number of Women 15+	AGE 15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64
Married	145,313 (100%)	1	5	9	11	14	14	13	13	11	9
Common Law	93,485 (100%)	66	20	20	14	12	9	6	5	4	3
Visiting	20,858 (100%)	33	36	17	8	4	2	-	-	-	-
Not Living with Husband	16,757 (100%)	-	1	3	5	8	12	14	18	18	21
Not Living with Common Law Partner	31,502 (100%)	3	10	11	9	10	12	11	12	11	11
Never had Husband or C.L. Partner	117,417 (100%)	37	24	10	6	5	4	4	4	3	3
Total all Jamaican Women 15+	425,332 (100%)	14	15	13	10	10	9	8	8	7	6

Source of data: 1970 Population Census of the Commonwealth Caribbean, Vol, 8.

* Not including women attending promary or secondary levels of schooling.

Table 17

PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF JAMAICAN WOMEN AGES 14-64 BY UNION STATUS AND BY NUMBER OF LIVE CHILDREN EVER HAD

Number of children ever had	Total number of women 14-64		Married		Common Law		Visiting		Not living w/husband		Not living w/common law partner		Never had husband or common law partner	
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%
0	105,213	25	16,390	11	9,985	11	3	0	2,346	14	1,838	6	74,058	62
1-3	158,243	37	49,110	34	39,104	42	15,556	74	6,297	38	16,314	52	30,826	26
4-	135,876	32	62,977	43	39,485	42	5,063	24	6,520	39	11,950	38	9,402	8
10 +	22,876	5	15,335	11	4,199	4	279	1	1,356	8	1,180	4	483	
NOT STATED	7,215	2	1,501	1	732	1	32	1	238	1	223	-	4,102	4
Total women	429,423	100%	145,313	100%	93,505	100%	20,933	100%	16,757	100%	31,505	100%	118,871	100%
Total children	1,349,409		657,723		350,981		56,543		66,883		111,094		106,185	
Child/ women	3.14		4.53		3.75		2.70		3.99		3.52		0.89	
Child/ mother	4.16		5.10		4.20		2.70		4.64		3.74		2.37	

Source of data : 1970 Population Census of the Commonwealth Caribbean, Vol. 8

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