

BIBLIOGRAPHIC DATA SHEET

1. CONTROL NUMBER

PN-AAH-910

2. SUBJECT CLASSIFICATION (698)

DA00-0000-0000

3. TITLE AND SUBTITLE (240)

The second sex in the Third World: is female poverty a development issue?

4. PERSONAL AUTHORS (100)

Birdsall, Nancy; McGreevey, W. P.

5. CORPORATE AUTHORS (101)

Int. Center for Research on Women

6. DOCUMENT DATE (110)

1978

7. NUMBER OF PAGES (120)

36p.

8. ARC NUMBER (170)

301.412.B618

9. REFERENCE ORGANIZATION (180)

ICRW

10. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES (500)

11. ABSTRACT (950)

12. DESCRIPTORS (920)

Women in development

Women

Policies

Household

Socioeconomic conditions

Development assistance

Development strategy

Project planning

Poverty

Productivity

Employment

13. PROJECT NUMBER (150)

930003000

14. CONTRACT NO.(140)

AID/otr-G-1592

15. CONTRACT TYPE (140)

16. TYPE OF DOCUMENT (160)

301.412
B618

PN-AAH-915

The Second Sex in the Third World: Is Female Poverty
a Development Issue?

Nancy Birdsall
Economic Growth Center
Yale University

and

William P. McGreevey
Human Affairs Research Centers
Battelle Memorial Institute

Paper prepared for the International Center for Research on Women Policy
Roundtable, June 21, 1978, Washington, D.C. The authors are grateful for
the help in preparing this paper of Mayra Buvinić and Thomas Merrick.

FOREWORD

The major thrust of the Agency for International Development's "new directions in development assistance" is the creation of development programs that will benefit the majority of the poor. This goal is shared by international and bilateral development agencies. Who are the poor, where are they, and what do they do to survive?

At least half of the poor are women and there is reason to believe that they may be the poorest of all. Little is known, however, about poor women's participation in socioeconomic development. Even less is known about their economic contribution to the family -- a major part of women's hidden productivity. The International Center for Research on Women, with the sponsorship of AID, organized a workshop to clarify some of these questions and identify policy initiatives that could help women among the poor in developing countries. The workshop explored existing knowledge and quantifiable indicators of poor women's production and consumption patterns in LDC households. (Annex A lists the participants and includes the agenda of this workshop, "Women in Poverty : What Do We Know?," held at Belmont Conference, Elkridge, Maryland, April 30 - May 2, 1978.)

The workshop focused on four major issues: 1) Women and Work -- women's productive roles within the household and the effects of women's market activities on their household production; 2) Women and Want -- consumption patterns within the household and the link between the productive ability of household workers, mainly women, and household welfare; 3) Women and Household Structures -- production and consumption patterns of households headed by women; and 4) Measurement Issues -- the adequacy of current socioeconomic indicators to grasp poor women's work patterns and wants.

The seventeen papers presented at the workshop addressed one or more of the above issues. This essay by Nancy Birdsall and William P. McGreevey highlights some of the main findings emerging from the workshop and tackles hard questions raised during the sessions.

Mayra Buvinić
Project Director

International Center for Research
on Women
2000 P Street, N.W. #403
Washington, D.C. 20036

June 1978

Women are indeed the second sex in the Third World -- the poor countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. They are less-educated, earn a lower return to what education and skills they have, and have fewer occupational options than men. Married women with young children work more hours per day than men. Unpartnered women are more obviously worse off than comparable men. They are much more likely to be poor in the first place, and shoulder alone both child care and financial responsibilities.

Women's work in agriculture, marketing and crafts is already amply documented. Women's special work, work for which men rarely substitute, is as the guarantors of the well-being of the next generation, supervisors of society's investment in its precious human capital and providers for children of what little the poor can provide of basic human needs, that catchall of nutrition, health and schooling that so captivates development debate.

But to development policymakers and planners, the link between such facts about Third World women and the larger problems of poverty, inequality, hunger and unemployment, is not at all clear. Is there, after all, a woman issue where development and poverty are concerned? The research findings below make clear the answer: emphatically yes. Both the needs and contribution of poor women are special: different from men's in ways which command qualitatively different solutions. Improvements in the lives of poor men will not necessarily trickle down to the benefit of the poor women whom we too often picture living in the shadow of some man. Have economic growth and rising middle-class incomes trickled down to the poor? Surely not. The New Directions in foreign aid mandated by the U.S. Congress in 1973 speaks

firmly to the need -- and the failure to date -- to confront directly the problems of the poor. Indeed, women constitute the last bastion for the trickle-down theorists; few still embrace this largely discredited approach to economic development -- except implicitly in assuming that solving the problems of poor men will redound automatically to the benefit of the second sex.

As we begin our exploration of what is exactly the woman issue where poverty and development are concerned, one point deserves special emphasis. Attention must go not only to the familiar question: How are women affected by development? -- the welfare issue. There is the converse: How do women affect development? -- the efficiency and growth issue. Most findings discussed below have bearing on both questions; indeed the distinction, though logically important, does no justice to the complicated reality. Women who do not benefit from economic growth, having limited resources, cannot contribute positively to further growth; and women who contribute little to overall growth are not likely to benefit much from what growth does occur. For those concerned with policy and program design, the efficiency/growth issue may have greater immediate appeal; yet as will become clear, women's plight at first glance no more than a welfare issue, itself affects efficiency and growth in the overall economy.

Women's poverty as a development issue is the theme which informs the organization below of some new and important facts about the real world of poverty among Third World women. First, women and work -- poor women's special contribution. Then, women and want -- women's peculiar needs.

Women and Work: Do Women Perpetuate Underdevelopment?

How is women's work different from men's?:

- * Women raise children and maintain homes.
- * Because they raise children, they have fewer occupational options than men.

Scholars and feminists, anxious to underline women's economic contribution in poor countries, have admirably documented women's work in the demonstrably productive sectors, such as agriculture and marketing.¹ But emphasis on women's market contribution has led to relative neglect of the value of work in childrearing and household maintenance, perhaps reflecting a tendency to underrate the real work content of "housewifery" in capital-scarce economies.

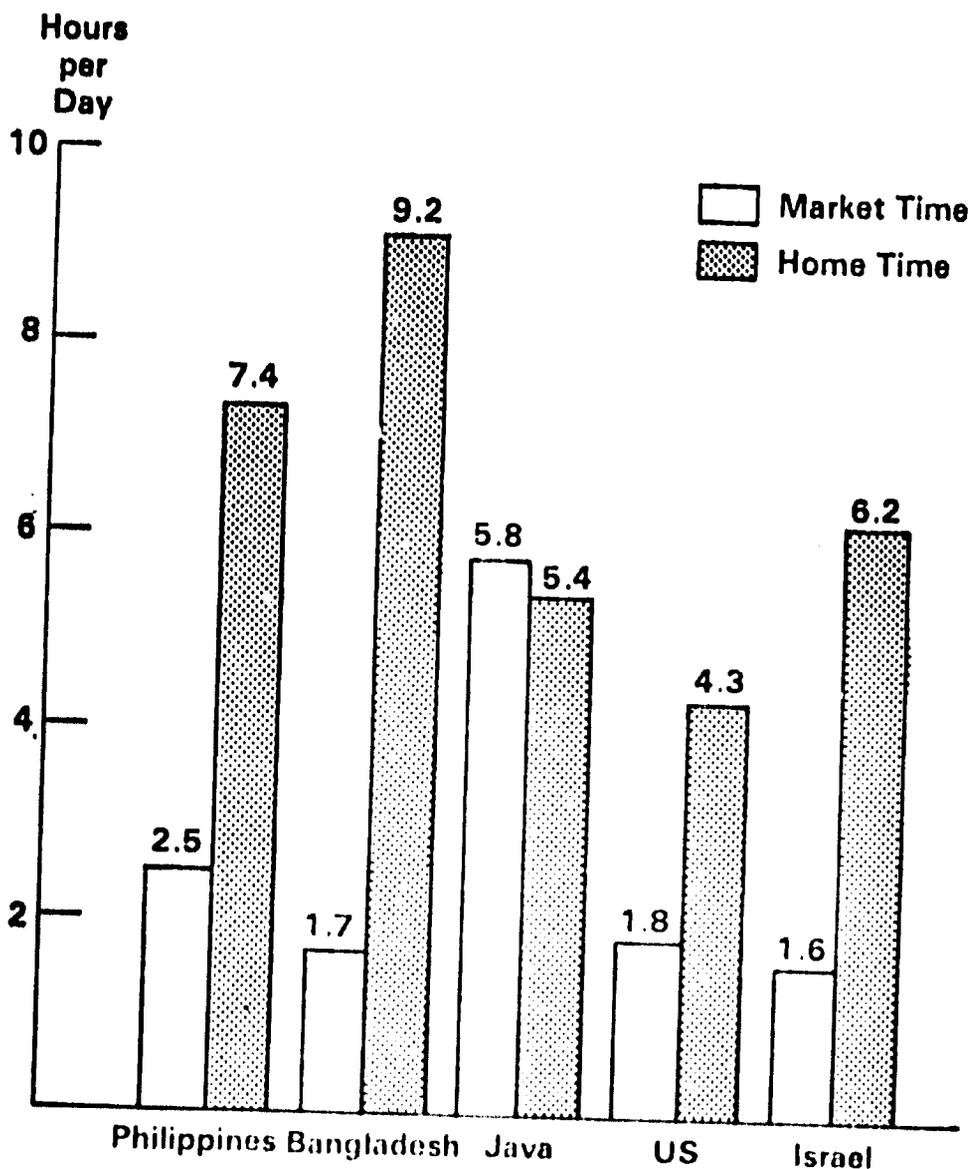
For poor women in poor countries, so-called housework involves physical labor in sowing and weeding, in fetching water, in grinding wheat and corn; it is also likely to require from some family members many more person-hours² of child care, simply because there are more children.

Much of this work of women is not subject to the marketplace of wages in which men place their services or the fruits of their labor. In censuses and employment surveys, where work has meant an activity producing cash income,³ women have been treated inconsistently or overlooked altogether. The unpaid family worker in a small shop or a farm was the first casualty of the misleading statistical categories "employed," "unemployed."

The answer to such false divisions is the time-use survey -- a careful check on how people in poor households use their time. Time is perhaps the most important -- in the poorest households, the only -- resource which the poor have available to them. U.S. women work at home and outside the home an average of 6 hours per day; women in Bangladesh work 11 hours (Figure 1). Poor families have little schooling, few tools, virtually no capital and often no land. In the way they use their time one finds the answer to who contributes

Figure 1

**Cross-Country Comparison
of Women's Use of Time
(in Hours per Day)**



SOURCE: Quizon, Elizabeth K. and Robert E. Evenson. "Time Allocation and Home Production in Philippine Rural Households." Paper presented at the International Center for Research on Women Workshop on "Women in Poverty: What Do We Know?," Belmont Conference Center, Elkridge, Md., April 30 - May 2, 1978 (Table 10).

to the household economy: Time budget surveys demonstrate indisputably what employment surveys previously barely implied: women make an enormous contribution to the real income and well-being of the poor.

For several poor countries, and among the poorest in those countries, we now have a rich mosaic of information on the allocation of time by all family members to various activities inside and outside the household.

From this rich mosaic emerges a simple if striking picture. Men devote almost all their work time to marketplace work, i.e., work which is done for wage income or income imputed from the value of agricultural production directly consumed. Men's work at home is invariant to the numbers, ages and activities of household members. Women, in contrast, devote their work time to a combination of marketplace work (generating cash income or income-in-kind) and home maintenance, food preparation and child care. Children share this latter work from about their fifth year onward. Children also do a considerable amount of marketplace work, usually only after their tenth year. Time allocation by women and children is flexible, changing with the number and ages of children and the annual cycle of agriculture and schooling (when children do go to school): As the demand for childrearing time and cash income increases over the household's life cycle, the burden falls primarily on the wife and to some extent on older children.

In rural Philippines, father's time in home production (child care, food preparation, marketing and other chores) is one to two hours daily, whether there is one child or seven.⁴ Filipino women spend about three hours per day in market production (wage employment, farming, fishing, income-earning home production), more if they are farmers; and seven to eight hours in home production, slightly less if they are farmers. Women with infants spend almost

nine hours in home production, and reduce their market time to about two hours; they reduce their leisure time more than market time. Women with seven or more children spend less time in child care and home production than those with fewer children, but increase proportionately their time in the market. In large families, older children take on some of the mother's home chores, including child care.

When a mother works outside the home, her child care time declines very little; it is leisure which declines, hour-for-hour. Rural Filipino women working for cash income give up nearly four hours per day of leisure (Figure 2). Older children substitute for mother in home chores and care of siblings (Figure 3). When there are seven or more children, men actually reduce their child-care time (to about 10 minutes a day!) and increase their leisure time:⁶ older children reduce the father's but not the mother's work load. When the family is large, women enjoy significantly less leisure than men; this is especially true if there is an infant present, and especially true for women who work more than six hours a day outside the home.

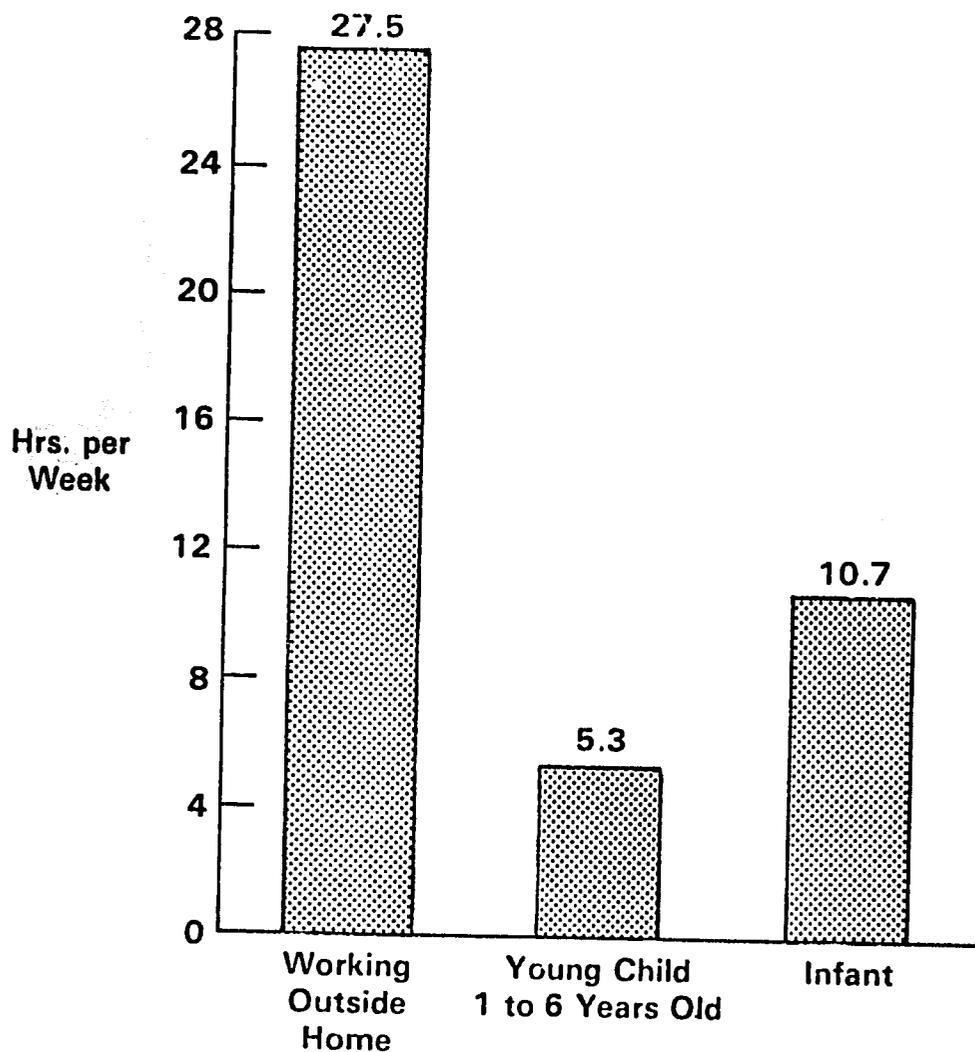
Market income (cash and subsistence crops consumed at home) is not a good measure of household well-being for several important reasons related to the role of women in the economy:

- * Market income fails to measure the contribution of at-home work, estimated to be at least 40 percent of GNP in the United States and probably more in less monetized economies;
- * Women increase a family's market income at the cost of reducing either their leisure or the attention they can give to child care; the latter is in considerable measure an investment in human capital.

The measurement of time use in rural households has for the first time made it possible to estimate full income, i.e., income measured by adding to market

Figure 2

**Hours of Leisure per Week Given Up by Rural Mothers,
according to Purpose,
Laguna, Philippines, 1975-76.**



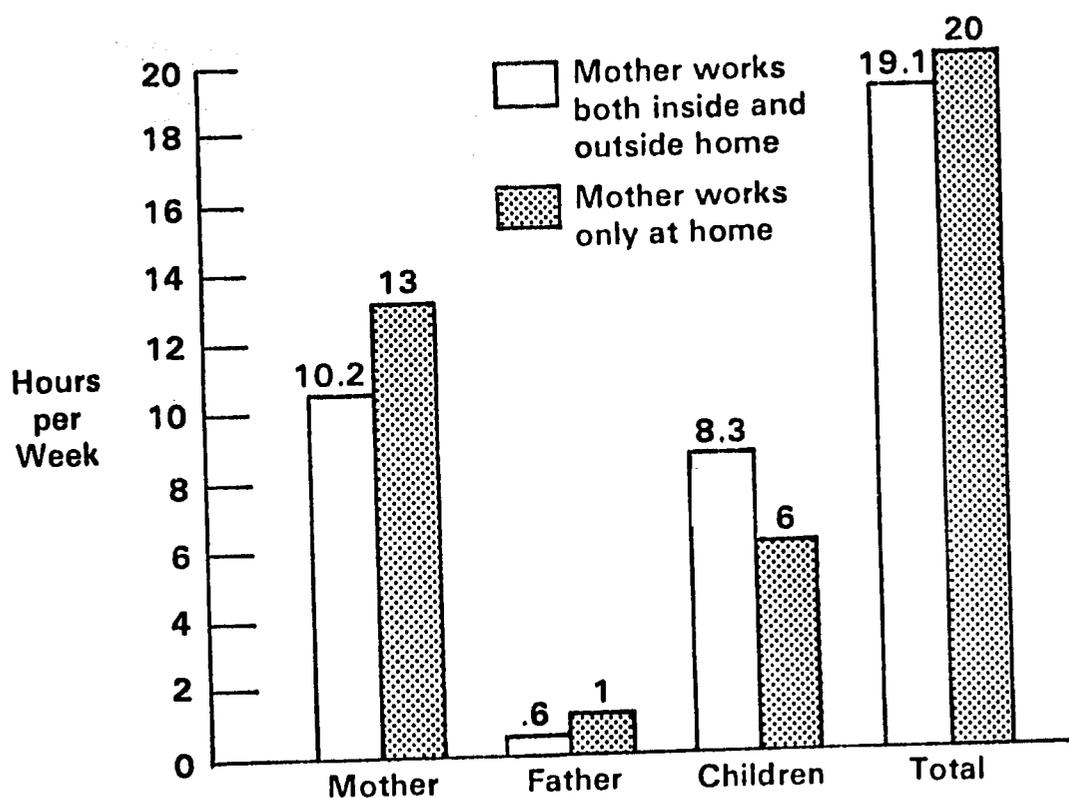
NOTES: Mothers who work outside the home give up nearly 28 hours a week of leisure or sleep, as compared to those who work only within the home. Each young child requires an additional 5.3 hours per week of child care; an infant, about 10.7 hours.

The data are based on a representative sample of 571 households in 34 "barrios" in the province of Laguna.

SOURCE: Popkin, Barry M. "Women, Work and Child Welfare," Paper presented at the International Center for Research on Women Workshop on "Women in Poverty: What Do We Know?," Belmont Conference Center, Elkridge, Md., April 30—May 2, 1978 (Table 2).

Figure 3

**Hours per Week Spent on Child Care by Family Members
according to Work Location of Mother,
Laguna, Philippines, 1975-76**



NOTES: When mother works away from the home, the number of hours she spends on child care falls by about three hours per week. That time is made up mostly by older children caring for their siblings. Time spent on child care by the father is less when the mother works.

The data are based on a representative sample of 571 households in 34 "barrios" in the province of Laguna.

SOURCE: Popkin, Barry M. "Women, Work and Child Welfare." Paper presented at the International Center for Research on Women Workshop on "Women in Poverty: What Do We Know?," Belmont Conference Center, Elkridge, Md., April 30–May 2, 1978 (Table 2).

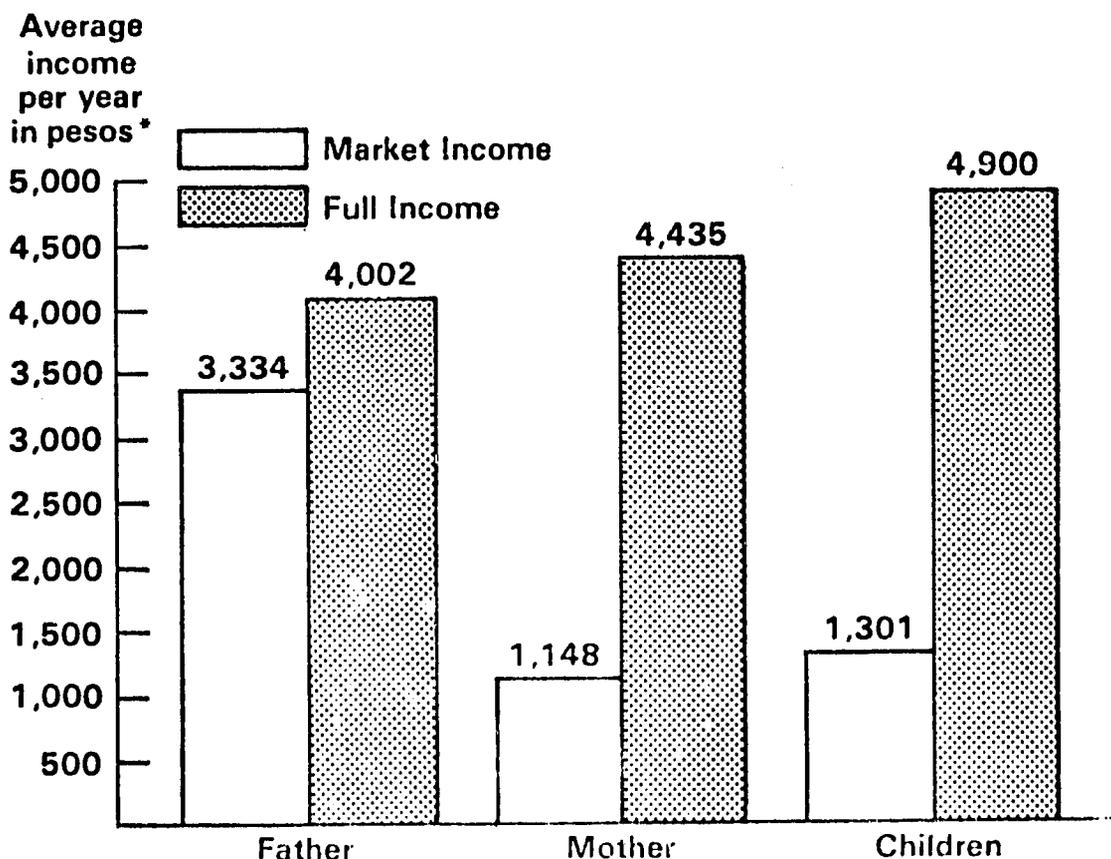
income payments family members would receive if child care, food preparation, breastfeeding, fetching water, chopping wood and other home production activities were valued and paid for explicitly. For rural households in the Philippines, what do we find?:

1. Father garners the largest proportion of average household market income, but women and children together bring in almost 50 percent of this market income (Figure 4);
2. When home production and school activities are included so that we are considering full income, mother contributes slightly more than father, and the average of four children per family, as a group contribute more than either parent (Figure 4);
3. Full income is higher, by about 16 percent, in households where mothers are employed;
4. Additional cash income from working mothers purchases, on the average, 145 calories and 3 grams of protein daily for each child;⁷
5. But since the time a mother spends with each child affects his or her height and weight, given age, positively, the gain to children from this additional food may be partially offset by the loss of mother's attention when she works away from home.

Time use data tells us that the tradeoff between mother's work for cash income and children's well-being is minimized when mothers choose occupations which allow flexible hours or permit them to bring children along. Poor women adjust the hours they work in a given occupation as their child care responsibilities change; they do not change occupations. Between Malaysian women with and without young children,⁸ there are virtually no differences in the proportions who work in agriculture, marketing, cottage crafts, the professions or management;⁹ the expectation of child care responsibility, or the fact of having once had such responsibility, governs the occupation of even those

Figure 4

Market Income and Full Income for Family Members, Laguna, Philippines, 1975-76



*In 1975 the rate of exchange was about 7.4 pesos to U.S. \$1.00.

NOTES: Market income is the value of market production. Full income is the total value of both market production and home production. Children's full income includes time spent in school. Excluding it, children's full income is equivalent to 3362 pesos per year.

The data are based on direct observations of a random sample of 99 rural households in Laguna in three separate 24-hour visits over an eight month period.

SOURCE: Quizon, Elizabeth K. and Robert E. Evenson. "Time Allocation and Home Production in Philippine Rural Households." Paper presented at the International Center for Research on Women Workshop on "Women in Poverty: What Do We Know?," Belmont Conference Center, Elkridge, Md., April 30--May 2, 1978 (Table 9).

women who do not currently have young children. Most Malaysian women do marketplace work in agriculture, sales or marketing, and cottage industries. Fifty percent of the women in sales (marketing) and cottage industry occupations (weavers, dressmakers, food and beverage processors) have children with them while working. Only one quarter of women in agriculture bring their children with them, but women in agriculture work only about half the total hours worked by women in marketing.¹⁰ The women in marketing with children under age 5 reduce their hours proportionately more than women in agriculture with such young children.

As in the Philippines, Malaysian women contribute about 2/3 of total family time to home activities -- child care, washing, shopping, meal preparation and cleaning house. Children contribute another 20 percent and husbands less than 10 percent. Husbands do even less in families with older children. Children do more when mother works for cash income.

Similarly in rural Peru,¹¹ mothers and children substitute for each other in cooking, hauling water and animal care. Daughters are much more likely than sons to help with cooking and washing, and above age 10, to substitute for the mother on a meal by meal basis. Daughters are also more likely to haul water and collect wood. Animal-raising is an important activity for women and children. Raising sheep, for example, is easier with a child at home, either to pasture full-time, or to replace the mother in cooking and cleaning. In 11 percent of households, a daughter raises sheep full-time; sons do in only 2 percent of households. Girls attend fewer years of school than boys.

In urban Peru (Lima), market women were pleased with their choice of occupation for the specific reason that it is appropriate for mothers.¹²

Children assist in important ways -- accompanying market mothers to the wholesale market, carrying goods to the stall, bringing lunch from home to their mother. Eight to twelve year olds are often able to sell, handle money and market food like an adult, temporarily replacing mothers who have to be home with a sick baby.¹³ But a quotation from one woman illustrates the tradeoff urban market mothers face between income-generating activities and the welfare of their children:

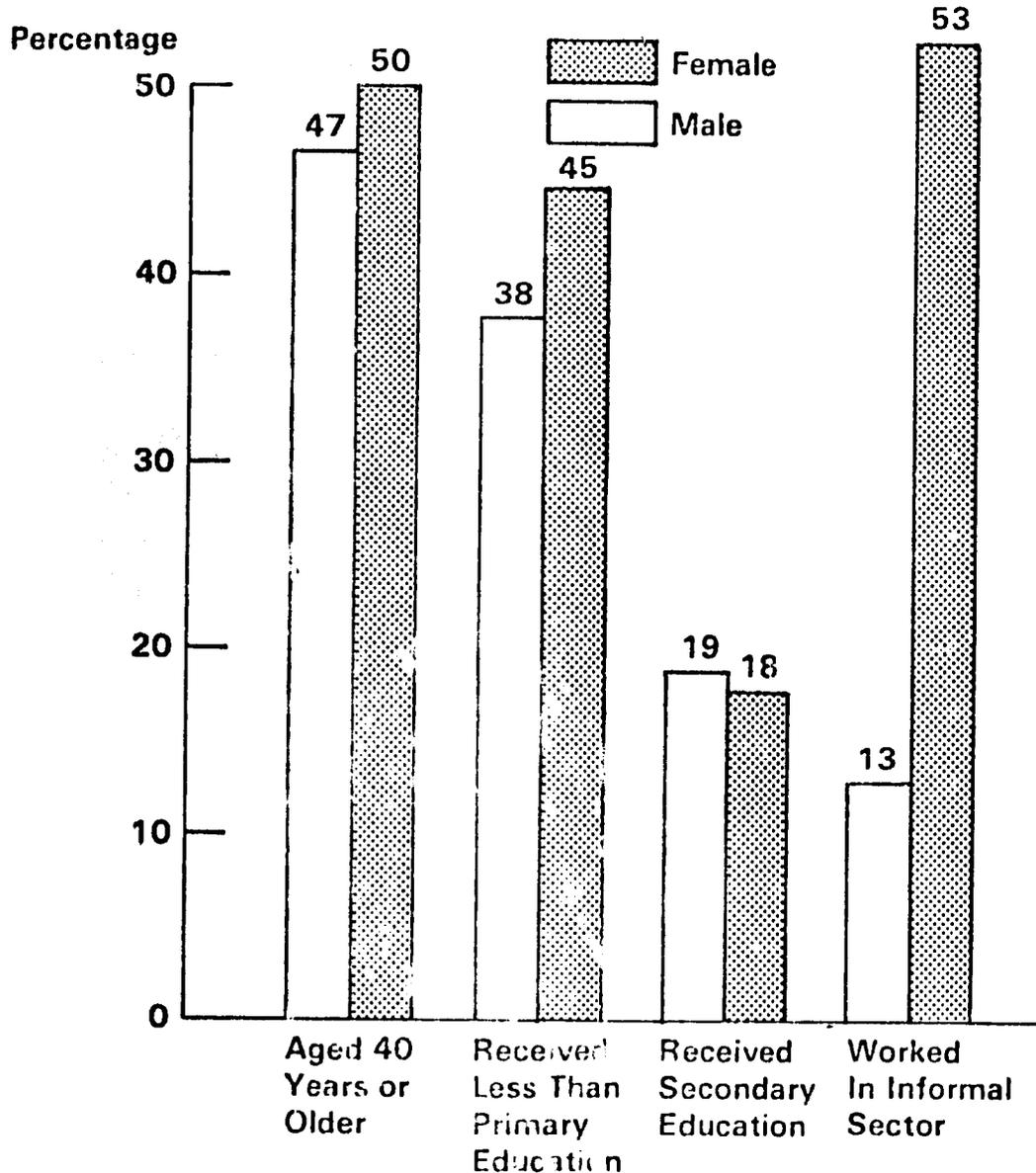
Sometimes everything is so hard! Shortages of certain products make it so tough for us. It is then my children practically don't go to school, they are exhausted and go to sleep in class, under the teacher's nose. The school year ends and my children are behind. I blame myself because I've had my children stay awake all night helping me out at the wholesale market. When I see them so tired it breaks my heart and I feel so guilty and powerless!

Mothers and children assist each other, in home and market, leaving any husband or mate unencumbered: Crises are resolved with the collaboration of children and the market worker's mother or sisters, and in rare cases, the husband or mate. Women interviewed preferred their work outside the home where they had a window to the world; but all complained about the difficulty of getting enough sleep due to their double roles as homemakers and market-sellers.

Why do women have such difficulty earning a living? The problem is only partly a somewhat lower level of education; more important is their choice of informal work with flexible hours. In another Latin American city, Belo Horizonte, Brazil, male and female heads of households do not differ markedly in age or education (Figure 5). But more than 50 percent of female heads work in the informal sector, compared to 12 percent of male heads.

Figure 5

**Percentage of Male and Female Headed Households
according to Age, Education and Employment Sector Categories,
Belo Horizonte, Brazil, 1972**



NOTES: This figure is based on responses from 1,420 men and 226 women drawn from a representative sample of 2445 households in the Belo Horizonte metropolitan area.

SOURCE: Merrick, Thomas W. and Marianne Schmink. "Female Headed Households and Urban Poverty in Brazil." Paper presented at the International Center for Research on Women Workshop on "Women in Poverty: What Do We Know?," Belmont Conference Center, Elkridge, Md., April 30–May 2, 1978 (Table 8.)

Working in the informal sector has a significant negative effect on male earnings, but the negative effect for females is twice as great.¹⁴

The earnings differential by sex may reflect differences in the number of hours worked over the period. However, if female heads of households work fewer hours in the market because of their household responsibilities, their lower monetary income, even not controlling properly for market hours, may be a reasonable reflection of their lower welfare.

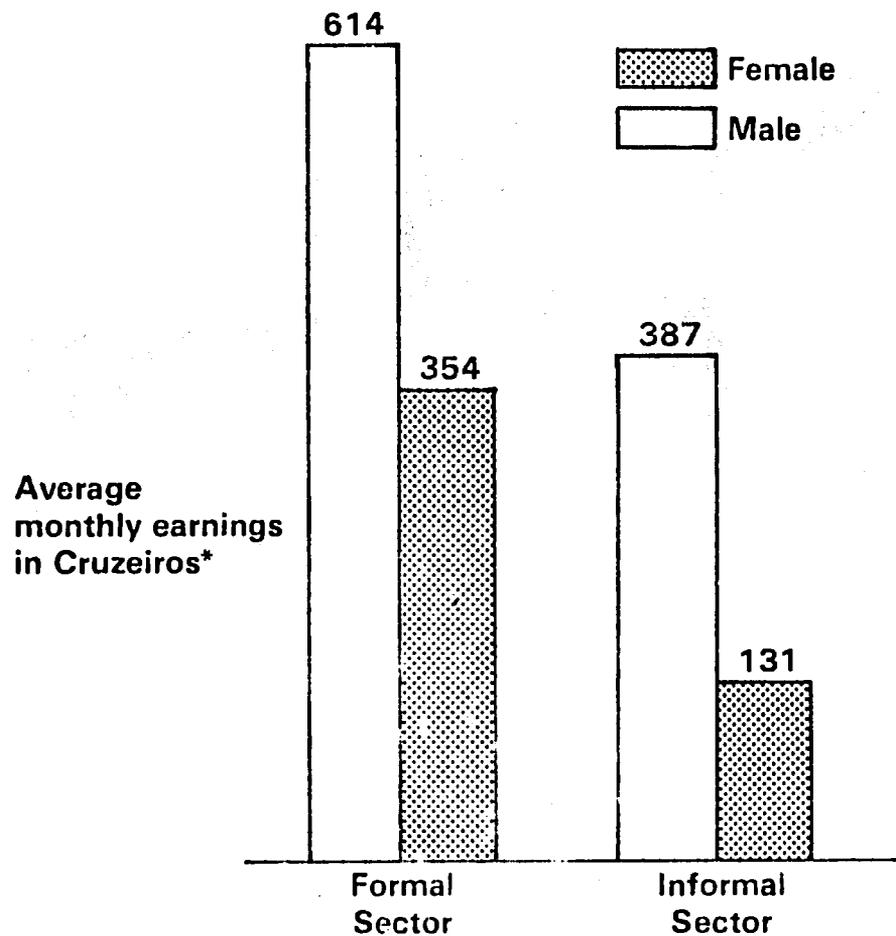
Furthermore, males earn more in the informal sector than females in the formal sector (Figure 5a); and they earn a higher return to what education they have.¹⁵ At least some of the earning power difference between men and women cannot be based on simple "economic" explanations.

As a result, female-headed households are much more likely to be poor than are male-headed households; an alarming 41 percent of all female-headed households in the Belo Horizonte sample had total income too low to satisfy the most fundamental needs, even by the government-established minimal standard.¹⁶ Twenty-seven percent of male-headed households were so classified.¹⁷ A very similar picture appears for the Commonwealth Caribbean. About one-fifth of male-headed households had no income or none stated; 59 percent of female-headed households were so classified. Over half the male-headed households were in the high income category (more than \$1,000), whereas only 13 percent of female-headed households had that high an income.¹⁷ Furthermore, we are comparing monetary income; most female-headed households are worse off in terms of full income, having less adult time for child care and household work.

Households with the most children have the lowest household income. For female-headed households in Belo Horizonte classified by income as poor, low and middle/high, the dependency ratios are respectively 2.6, 1.2, and 1. For all Colombian households, the number of children per woman is three times as high for the very poor as for the well-to-do. The poor have more children

Figure 5a

**Average Monthly Earnings
in Cruzeiros of Male and Female
Heads of Households
by Employment Sector,
Belo Horizonte, Brazil, 1972**



*In 1972, the rate of exchange was about 6.25 Cruzeiros to U.S. \$1.00.

NOTES: The data are based on responses from 1,420 men and 226 women drawn from a representative sample of 2445 households in the Belo Horizonte metropolitan area.

SOURCE: Merrick, Thomas W. and Marianne Schmink. "Female Headed Households and Urban Poverty in Brazil." Paper presented at the International Center for Research on Women Workshop on "Women in Poverty: What Do We Know?," Belmont Conference Center, Elkridge Md., April 30—May 2, 1978 (Table 9).

because they are poor; and they are poor because they have more children. This relationship holds for female-headed households as well as those with a male present.

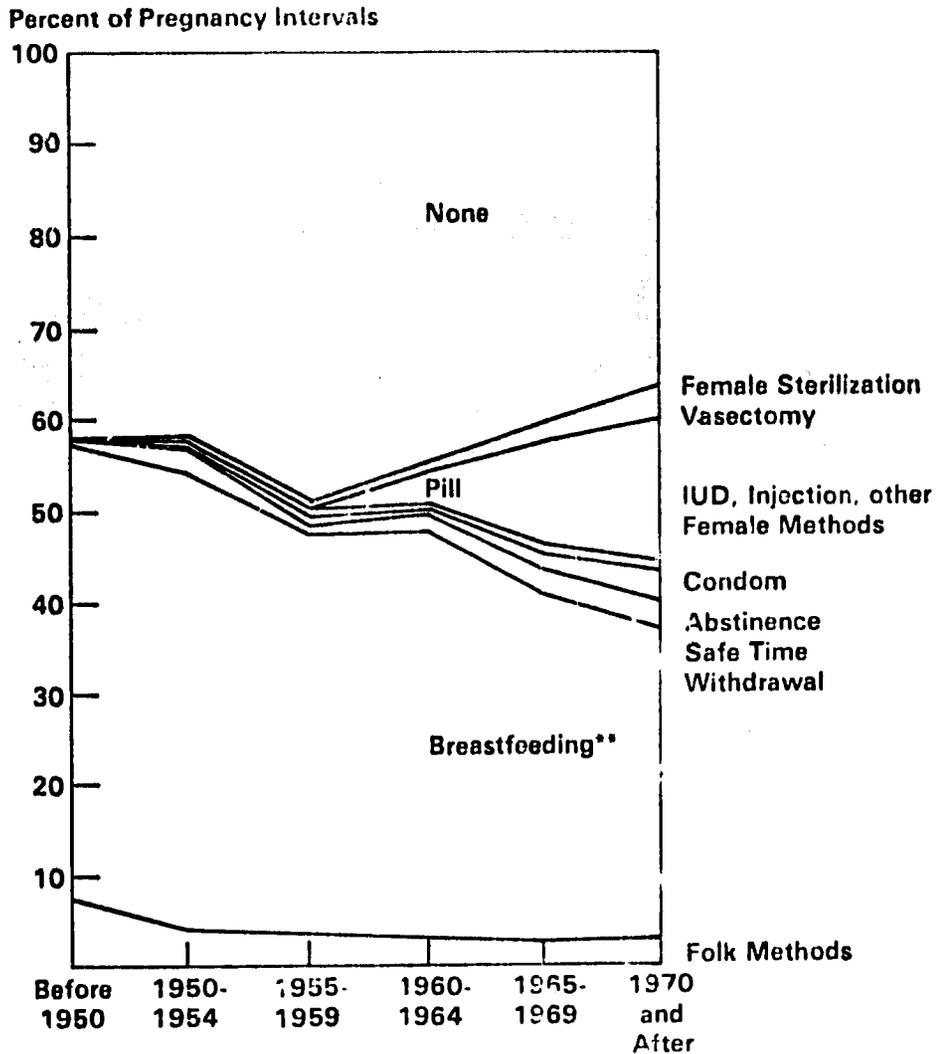
Girls raised to themselves raise children choose occupations compatible with childraising; they do not acquire either the general education or the specific training required to command a higher wage rate. If they then end up raising children without the benefit of an income-earning partner, they and their children are caught in a vicious cycle of poverty.

Any tradeoff between women's work outside the home and child welfare arises most obviously with breastfeeding. Breastfeeding increases a child's chances of survival. Malaysian women who have held a job in the two years prior to a child's birth are seven percentage points less likely to breastfeed their child than women who have not.¹⁸ Among women who do breastfeed, those who have been recently employed breastfeed an average of 4-1/3 months less, which is 1/3 less than the mean length of breastfeeding in the sample.

Nutritionists and those concerned with high infant mortality in poor countries unequivocally advocate breastfeeding. Those concerned with reducing fertility similarly encourage it because of its birth-spacing effect. Yet Malaysian women trade off -- more and more each year -- breastfeeding for other uses of their time. Figure 6 shows that in Malaysia breastfeeding has declined as a contraceptive method since 1950. Women have substituted the pill as a means of contraception.

Breastfeeding is not for every woman the preferred method of contraception or of infant nourishment. For example, educated Malaysian women breastfeed less apparently because of the jobs they hold (when job variables are included, education itself has no significant effect on the propensity to breastfeed)

Figure 6
Types of Contraceptives Used, By Year,
(Proportion of pregnancy intervals
in which a contraceptive method was used).
Malaysia 1976-77



*The sample for this figure includes vasectomies and hysterectomies.

**Breastfeeding is included in this figure only if the mother reported using it in the interval *in order to delay the next pregnancy*.

NOTE: Data were obtained in the first round of a three-round survey in 52 primary sampling units throughout the country with a sample of over 1200 households.

SOURCE: Butz, William P. and Julie Da Vanzo. "Contracepting, Breastfeeding and Birthspacing in Malaysia. A Model of Decision-making Subject to Economic and Biological Constraints." Paper presented at the International Center for Research on Women Workshop on "Women in Poverty: What Do We Know?," Belmont Conference Center, Elkridge, Md., April 30—May 2, 1978 (Table 9).

There is justifiable concern with multinational corporation sales practices which discourage Third World women from breastfeeding; but over the longer run such concern should not blind policymakers to women's work aspirations and the contributions marketplace work can make to women's status and family income. Advocacy of breastfeeding can be complemented by other policies to ease the multiple demands on women's time.

Women and Want: Why are Women Worse Off?

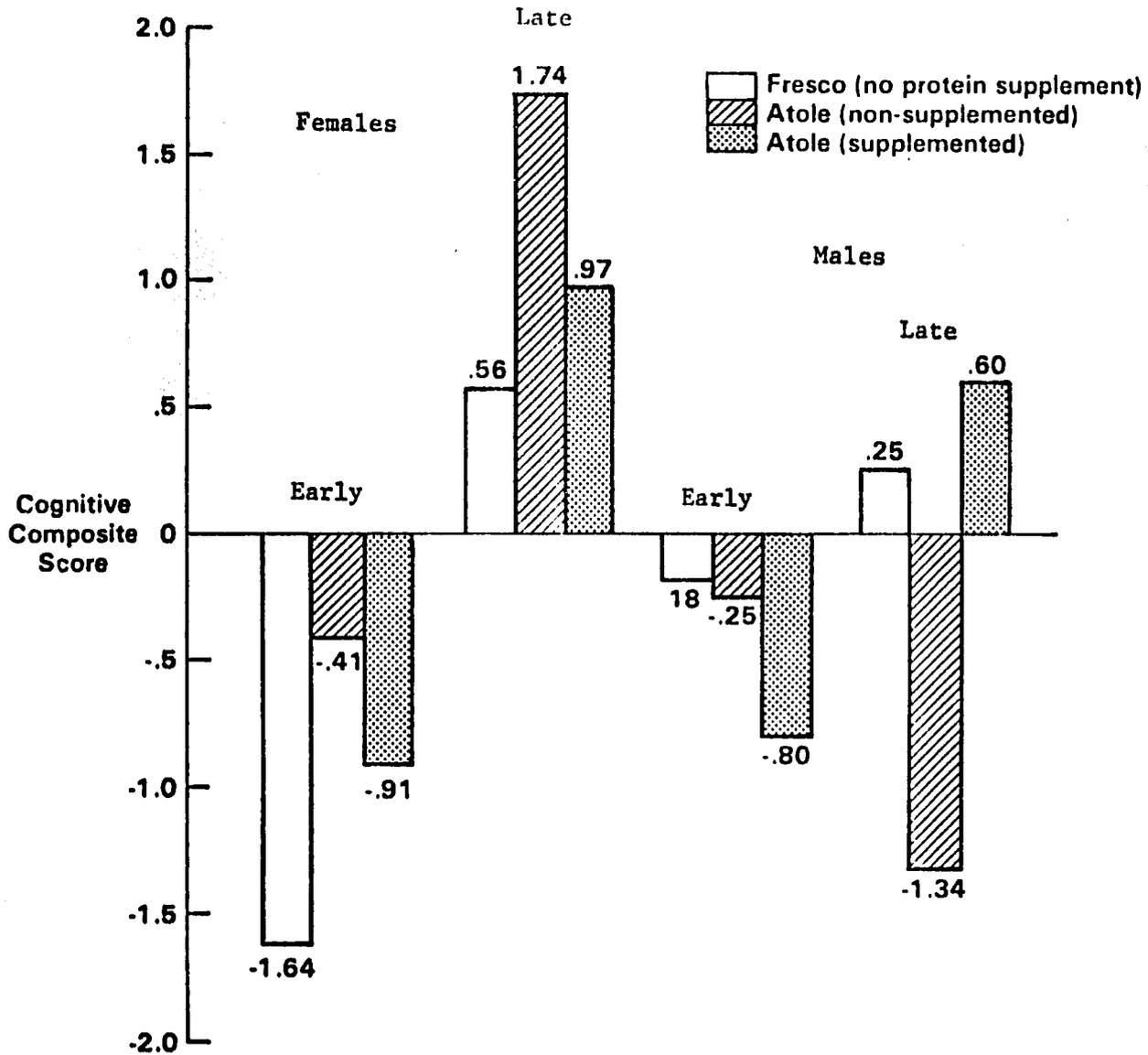
At what age do women start down the road of working-age poverty? Up to about age 10, parents favor boys only slightly with their time and goods, based on studies in the Philippines and Guatemala; but boys and girls are treated very differently from a social point of view. After the age of 10, girls are less likely than boys to continue in school, and more likely to spend time with younger siblings as mother-substitutes, in a role consistent with the earlier differences in social treatment.

Measures of the mental and physical development of all children in several Guatemalan villages were taken over a seven-year period as part of a study of effects of a nutritional supplementation program. No differences were found in the physical environment of boys and girls; reported home diets, prevalence of diarrhea, and length of lactation were similar for children of both sexes.

Despite the apparent similarity for boys and girls in diet, lactation, and morbidity, the mental development scores of girls, particularly those given a protein supplement, improved much more than the scores of boys receiving the supplements (Figure 7). Do the supplements themselves explain the differential in improvement between boys and girls? No. ²⁰ The nutritional program apparently affected the mental development of girls more than of boys by accidentally creating a new social environment for girls. The program involved a large number of female personnel, about six women present in villages each day. All homes were visited by a woman once every two weeks; a girl of about age 15 from each village was hired as an assistant. Children in the villages were observed 'playing INCAP' (the acronym for the organization conducting the program), pretending to be program personnel and making soft drinks in imitation of the supplementation.

Figure 7

Mean Cognitive Scores of Three Year Olds
by Cohort* and Supplement History,
Rural Guatemala, 1969-77.



* The first three years vs. the last three years.

NOTES: Data were obtained in a INCAP 7 year longitudinal study of malnutrition and mental development in Guatemala.

SOURCE: Engle, Patricia. "Sex Differences in Growth and Mental Development in Rural Guatemala." Paper presented at the International Center for Research on Women Workshop "Women in Poverty: What do We Know?" Belmont Conference Center, Elkridge, MD., April 30 - May 2, 1978.

Could the chance to observe the preponderantly female nurses, nutritionists and program assistants have changed girls' expectation for their own future? Prior to the program, girls had only their mothers to imitate. Of those women in the villages who earn any cash income, most are domestic servants or work at home in crafts or on the farm.²¹ These limited options for adult village women are mirrored by sex-typing of child play and chores. Boys are much more likely to play far away from home than girls, and for young children there is considerable variation in chores by sex.

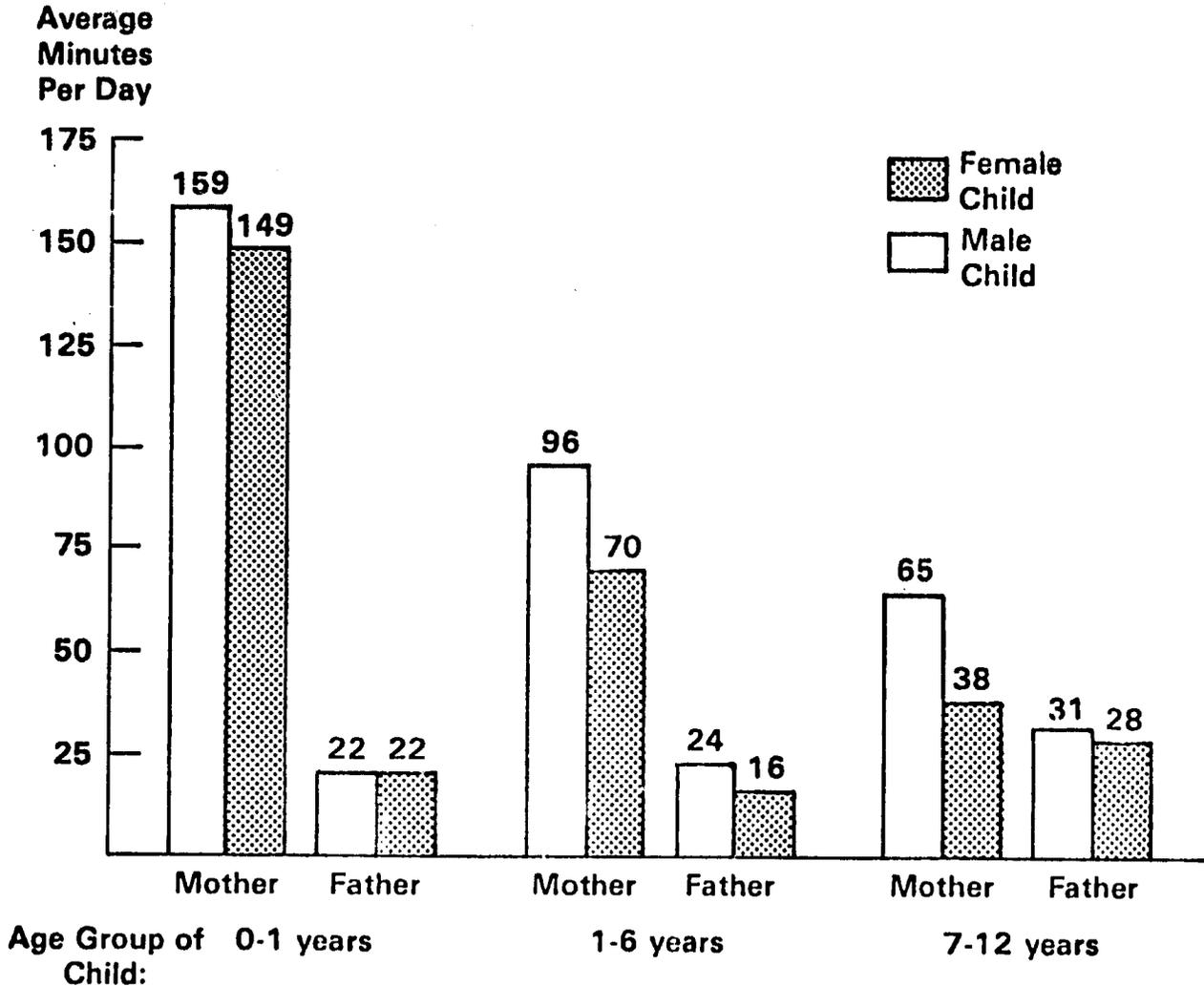
The implication: Better role models improve girls' test scores; improved test scores increase girls' success in school and the likelihood they will stay in school longer;²² education in turn influences girls' economic activities, their productivity, and what as mothers they transmit to their children in human capital.

A similar picture emerges in the Philippines. Families spend somewhat more on food for boys than for girls, especially in the one to six year old age group (400 and 287 pesos respectively), but this may reflect differential needs rather than any discrimination against girls. A more important difference is spending on schooling for teenage girls and boys. Parents spend 281 pesos annually for education of boys, but only 152 pesos annually for education of girls. Time inputs of parents also differ somewhat between girls and boys; mothers and fathers both spend somewhat more time with boys than with girls (Figure 8).

Throughout the Third World, there are many more boys than girls enrolled in school. The ratio of females to males enrolled in both secondary and higher education is less than 35 percent in almost all African countries at the secondary level and less than 20 percent in almost all African countries at the

Figure 8

**Time Spent on Child Care
(in Average Minutes per Day per Child)
by Rural Parents
according to Sex and Age of Child,
Laguna, Philippines, 1976-77**



NOTE: The data are based on a sample of 137 households.

SOURCE: Navera, Emeline. "Home Investment in Children in Rural Philippines." Paper presented at the International Center for Research on Women Workshop on "Women in Poverty: What Do We Know?," Belmont Conference Center, Elkridge, Md., April 30--May 2, 1978 (Table 3).

at the higher level. For Latin America, the same ratios are about 50 and 40 percent, and for Asia about 30 and 25 percent.²⁴ If ability is distributed similarly between males and females, there is a loss of the value added of the educational system; an economy's return to education is maximized when the most able people attend at all levels.

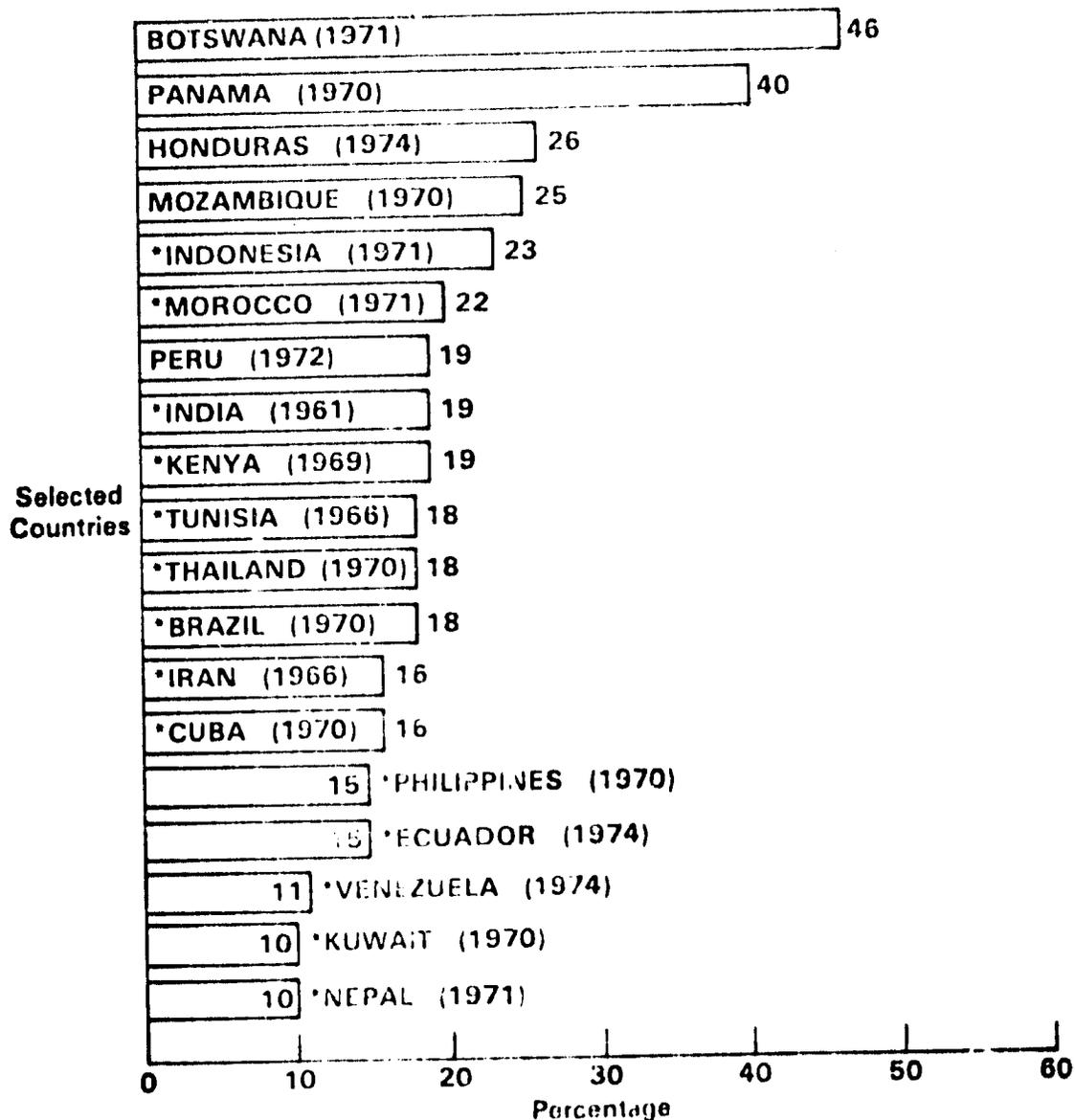
Low enrollment rates for girls reflect parental expectations with respect to their daughters' choices and chances in life. Limited schooling helps to confirm the daughters' subsequent bleak range of work opportunity. Poor girls are left to choose between hiring out as domestic help, working as unpaid family labor,²⁵ immediate marriage or some form of prostitution.

Few families foresee major income-earning responsibility for their daughters. Yet such may be the case, especially for women who, because of divorce, dissolution of an informal union, or the death of a husband, become single mothers. We saw above that female-headed households in Brazil are more likely to be poor than those headed by males. Female-headed households are not an unlikely aberrant phenomenon in the Third World;²⁶ they constitute (Figure 9) 35 percent of all households in many countries of the Caribbean; their proportion could be as high as 18 percent in India; 23 percent in Indonesia; 18 percent in Kenya; and 15 percent in Iran.

For most countries, we have no information on the growth in the number of female-headed households. Official definitions differ; interviewer and respondent attitudes change; comparing the incidence from one time or place to the next is problematical. The number of households headed by women nearly doubled between 1960 and 1970 in Brazil; this trend probably prevails elsewhere. Migration at differential rates by sex is one cause. Female-headed households increased by 33 percent in Morocco between 1960 and 1971 (the number of male-headed households increased minimally), as Moroccan men migrated to

Figure 9

**Percentage of "Potential" Heads of Household
who are Women in Selected Countries**



*Single mothers are not included as data were not available.

NOTES: The magnitude of households that might be headed by women was defined by the percentage of "potential" women heads to "potential" total household heads. "Potential" women heads of household include all women who are widowed, divorced, separated or single mothers. "Potential" total household heads include "potential" women heads of household plus men over the age of 20 who are not single.

Data were obtained from national censuses or U.N. Demographic Yearbooks. Dates for the different data analyzed are given in parentheses in the figure.

SOURCE: Buvimic' Mayra, and Nadia H. Youssef. "Women headed Households in Third World Countries - An Overview." Paper presented at the International Center for Research on Women Workshop "Women in Poverty: What Do We Know?" Belmont Conference Center, Elkridge, Md., April 30 - May 2, 1978 (Table 2)

Western Europe. In one district of Kenya, 40 percent of households samples were headed by female farm managers. Among tax-paying households in Lesotho, 25 percent are headed by females, reflecting male migration to the mines of South Africa.

In Latin America, more women than men migrate to cities; households in Santiago, Chile, headed by migrant women had median income of 49 escudos monthly in 1962; for native women the figure was 84, for migrant and native men 93 and 109 escudos respectively.

Only a few countries provide census tabulations indicating the number of children to women within categories of married, divorced, single; for the few which do, the child-woman ratio (including only women who are mothers) for divorced and widowed women ranges from 3.4 (Peruvian divorcees) to 5.1 (Botswana) to 6.6 (Honduras). Nor do widowed women necessarily have adult children to support them; in Guatemala, widowed and divorced women have five children at the age of 35, when support from adult children is still unlikely.

Single mothers must either work in the marketplace or count on some support system -- either private, as in help from relatives or friends, or public, as in social welfare programs. With development, private support systems have deteriorated; in poor countries there has been no concomitant growth of public welfare. Female household heads are only the starkest example of victims; all women, because of their childbearing responsibilities, their greater longevity, social restrictions on their labor force participation, and low wages if they do work, are more dependent on some support system than are men.

Economic development stimulates internal and international migration and weakens traditional support systems. It is having the unintended consequence of multiplying the number of female-headed households. That fact in itself may not be bad; women may choose to live apart from men and even choose to abandon traditional avenues of support -- thus to exercise greater control over their own lives. However, few women are prepared in their home training and schooling to add financial support to their child care responsibilities. A first step in providing such preparation is a wider awareness of the implications for women and for their children of these side-effects of development. Parents who realize that their daughters . . . as well as their sons . . . face a different world from the one they have known can prepare children not merely to cope with poverty but to rise from it.

Summary

Women's work outside the home is constrained by their near-total responsibility for raising children. In poor countries, and especially in poor households, women choose occupations which enable them to adjust hours between home and market work as the family grows; they rely on flexibility and, later, the help of older children to assure themselves access to some cash income.

Mothers work outside the home to increase household current income. Such work is probably an unmitigated necessity for female-headed households. But it may imply a cost to the children's well-being as adults, particularly if they leave school to help mothers.

Mothering time increases chances for survival (in the case of breastfeeding) and improves children's scores on measures of health and nutritional wellbeing. Mother's education influences children's schooling and later earnings more than father's education.²⁷ Mothers' investments in the nutrition, health and education of children are critical to the total stock of human resources which any economy can call on for future growth. In their mothering, poor women are the builders of tomorrow's generation -- or the progenitors of a new cycle of poverty.

Yet poor families are less likely to educate daughters. Throughout the world girls leave school before their brothers -- often to help their mothers. Poor families foresee for their daughters lives like those of their mothers, with limited opportunities to earn cash income.

The trickle-down approach applied to women calls for increasing the productivity of men, thus increasing household income, relieving wives of the burden of market work, and assuring more time for child care by mothers.

But this is a roundabout, expensive solution for society as a whole, and no solution at all for poor women.

Productivity gains have not spread to typically female work in agriculture, nor to the informal sector which attracts urban women by reason of its flexible hours. Trickle-down via higher husband earnings ignores altogether the growing numbers of women without partners. Poor women enter the workforce to enhance their control over resources and to have a "window on the world;" trickle-down cruelly ignores this human aspiration.

Poor families will not educate daughters if society limits women's opportunities. Unschooled, these daughters will be unproductive. Society loses.

To enhance women's range of choice by assuring equal schooling, more productive jobs and a change of role from motherhood-only -- this is development. It is not attained by increasing income of men -- even women's husbands.

Poor women work with limited capital and simple methods. Why not concentrate on human technologies to reduce the time women and children spend fetching wood and water and preparing meals? Why not concentrate on providing closer clean water for rural women, easier credit and better transportation to wholesale markets for urban market women? Saving time is development: Time saved from humdrum tasks is time to invest in human capital development.

To become less poor women must become more productive. As fertility falls around the developing world, women will have more time for work at home and work for cash income. The potential of that time for development is enormous . . . if women's time can be made more productive.

Now women have fewer tools, less capital, less schooling and less choice in how to use them than men. Unlocking the potential productivity of women is the challenge of development. The failure up to now to unlock that potential is the reason why poverty is a women's issue. It is further the reason that the poverty of women is a development issue.

FOOTNOTES

1. Ester Boserup set a high standard in this genre, with her book Woman's Role in Economic Development, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1970). See also the Vol. 3, No. 1, (Autumn 1977) issue of Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press) which includes papers given at the 1976 conference on women and development at Wellesley College.
2. In Colombia, low-income families have nearly three times as many children as high-income families (see Joseph E. Potter, "The Distributional Consequences of Different Fertility Decline", paper delivered at 1978 meeting of the Population Association of America, Atlanta, Georgia, Table 1. In Nigeria, 70 percent of a sample of urban Yoruba women in the 25 to 34 age group had spent more than half of their adult lives either pregnant or breastfeeding; see Harrington (ICRW Conference paper), Tables 3 and 4.
3. Boulding (ICRW Conference) suggests that the census category "economically inactive housewife," still utilized in 34 countries, be abolished altogether. Forty-one percent of women in North Africa/Middle East and 37 percent in Latin America fall into the census category "unaccounted for" (Boulding's Table 2).
4. Statements on time use of different family members in rural Philippines are based on findings reported in two ICRW Conference papers: Quizon and Evenson (see especially Tables 3 and 5), and Popkin (Table 3).
5. The non-farming man spends more time in household work than the farmer, but still less than one and one-half hours. Only the man who works for four hours or less a day increases his contribution to the household (Quizon and Evenson, Tables 3 and 4).
6. Leisure included personal care, recreation and church and festival activities. Some conference participants questioned whether the last category should be defined as leisure.
7. Popkin, Table 5 on food purchases, and Table 7 on effect of mother's time on children's height and weight.
8. Statements on time use of Malaysian family members and women's occupations in Malaysia are based on findings reported in DaVanzo and Lee (ICRW conference paper). See Tables 1, 2, 5 and 6.
9. Less than 5 percent of all women reported working in the professions, management or as clerical workers. Only for clerical workers was there a statistically significant difference between proportions of women with and without young children (DaVanzo and Lee, Table 1).
10. This is consistent with work in agriculture being physically more difficult, and work in marketing having a larger social, somewhat leisurely component.

11. Statements on family members' activities in rural Peru are based on findings reported in Deere (ICRW Conference paper).
12. Statements regarding Lima market women are based on Bunster (ICRW Conference paper).
13. Bunster reports that conditions in the Lima markets are not suitable for children; poor sanitation and garbage collection increases incidence of sickness, especially among children, forcing women to forsake income to stay home, or to have older children skip school to care for a sick child or stay in the market stall. The wholesale and retail markets could be organized to minimize the large amounts of time market women spend crossing the city. Market women are harassed by municipal inspectors for failing to conform to regulations which would prevent them from participating in the market at all.
14. Statements regarding female heads of households in Belo Horizonte are based on findings reported in Merrick and Schmink (ICRW Conference paper). The result regarding the returns to education and differences in earnings are from Tables 8 and 9.
15. Merrick and Schmink, Table 8.
16. See Thomas Merrick, "Household Structure and Poverty in Families Headed by Women: The Case of Belo Horizonte," paper presented at the 1977 meetings of the Latin American Studies Association, Houston, Texas.
17. See Mayra Buvinić and Nadia H. Youssef, "Women-Headed Households: The Ignored Factor in Development Planning," 1978, Table 12. Paper presented for the Office of Women in Development, AID, Washington, D.C.
18. Statements regarding breastfeeding effects and trends in Malaysia are based on findings reported in Butz and DaVanzo (ICRW Conference paper). See Tables 13 and 7.
19. Guatemala results are from Engle (ICRW Conference paper). She cites Sara Nerlove on children's play activities.
20. Supplementation appeared to help most girls from the poorest families, but boys from better-off families, perhaps because "when resources are scarce, boys are treated preferentially." (Engle, p. 14).
21. Interestingly, 64 percent of wives said they would like additional work for money, most preferring marketing or work at home for money (ironing, mending, washing). But to separate questions concerning possible conditions under which women might work outside the home (with young children, with older children, occasionally, full-time, or his own wife if she wanted to), 76 percent of the husbands said no to all five conditions.
22. Girls are sent to school or choose to stay only when they are smart enough; this is less true for boys in the same villages, for whom schooling is more a function of family income. Engle cites Irwin et. al., in press, p. 18.

23. Family inputs to children by sex in rural Philippines are reported in Navera (ICRW Conference paper).
24. Reported by Selowsky (ICRW Conference paper), who suggests the loss of value added.
25. See Elsa Chaney, "Agrupina: Domestic Service and its Implications for Development," paper presented at the Primer Simposio Mexicano-Centro Americano De Investigacion Sobre La Mujer, (Mexico: November 1977). Judith Harrington spoke at the ICRW Conference on the large number of Nigerian women who migrate to urban areas and support themselves as "girlfriends" of married men.
26. Information on female-headed households in the developing world is from Buvinic and Youssef (ICRW Conference paper), who review other literature and analyze what information there is in country censuses.
27. See, for example, Arleen Leibowitz, "Home Investments in Children", in Economics of the Family, editor Theodore Schultz, University of Chicago Press, 1974. She uses U.S. data; the result also holds in Colombia (Birdsall, "A Cost of Siblings: Child Schooling in Urban Colombia", paper presented at 1978 meeting of the Population Association of America, Atlanta, Georgia).

ANNEX A

WOMEN IN POVERTY: WHAT DO WE KNOW?

Organizing Committee:

Mayra Buvinić

William P. McGreevey

Nancy Birdsall

Thomas Merrick

MAY 1st

Women and Work: The intra-household allocation of production in poor households.

Chair: Anna Sant' Anna, World Bank.

Robert Evenson and Elizabeth K. Quizon, Yale U.

"Time Allocation and Home Production in Philippine Rural Households."
Ximena Bunster, U. of Texas."Market Women in Lima: Source of Cheap Labor and Social Alienation."
Dorothy Remy, U. of District of Columbia."Toward Economic Autonomy for Women: The Case of Urban Kenya and Nigeria."
Barry Popkin, U. of North Carolina.

"Women, Work and Child Welfare."

Women and Want: The intra-household allocation of consumption in poor households.

Chairs: Barbara Herz, AID and Coralie Turbitt, ICRW.

William Butz and Julie DaVanzo, Rand Corporation.

"Contracepting, Breastfeeding and Birthspacing in Malaysia:
A Model of Decisionmaking Subject to Economic and Biological Constraints."
Marcelo Selowsky, World Bank."Women's Access to Schooling and the Value Added of the Educational System."
Patricia Engle, INCAP."Sex Differences in Growth and Mental Development in Rural Guatemala."
Emeline Navera, Yale U."Home Investment in Children in Rural Philippines."
Judith Harrington, U. of Michigan.

"Some Micro-Socioeconomics of Female Status in Nigeria."

Women and Household Structures: Women within the context of family structures.

Chair: Elsa Chaney, AID.

Thomas Merrick, Georgetown U. and Marianne Schmink, U. of Texas.

"Female-headed Households and Urban Poverty in Brazil."

Mayra Buvinić and Nadia H. Youssef, ICRW.

"Women-headed Households in Third World Countries: An Overview."

Amyra Grossbard, Occidental College.

"A Theory of Marriage Formality - The Case of Guatemala."

Everett Rogers, Stanford U.

"Husband-Wife Decisionmaking within the Household."

Carmen Diana Deere, U. of Massachusetts.

"Intra-familial Labor Deployment and the Formation of Peasant Household
Income: A Case Study of the Peruvian Sierra."

Women in Poverty: What Do We Know? (cont'd)

MAY 2nd

Measurement Issues Affecting Women in Poverty:

Chair: James Brown, AID.

Eva Mueller, U. of Michigan.

"The Women's Issue in Measuring Household Economic Status and Behavior in Developing Countries."

Elise Boulding, U. of Colorado.

"Productivity and Poverty Problems in Measurement for Third World Women."

Hesung C. Koh and Terri L. Stangl, Human Relations Area Files.

"Interhousehold Cooperation as an Adaptive Strategy of Poor Women:

Issue on Analysis Unit and Time Dimension in Measuring Women's Participation."

Julie DaVanzo, Rand Corporation and Donald L.P. Lee, U. of Malaya.

"The Computability of Child Care with Labor Force Participation And Non-market Activities: Preliminary Evidence from Malaysian Time Budget Data."

Women and Development: Some Preliminary Conclusions:

Chair: Constance Freeman, Senate Foreign Assistance Subcommittee.