

THE MEASUREMENT OF WOMEN'S  
ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION:  
REPORT OF A STUDY GROUP

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

A Study Group brings together research specialists to discuss a framework paper on a single topic. At the Study Group on the Measurement of Women's Economic Participation, Dr. Huda Zurayk's paper served in this central role. Additional notes were prepared by participants and collected by the editor following the meeting. Not all of these notes could be included in this report, but a fair sample is reproduced in the chapters that follow. Some points received less attention in the notes than others. They are mentioned in this introduction in order to give a more complete account of the Study Group's discussions.

#### The Conceptualization of Work

When work is defined as economic activity, the conventional international definitions are very restrictive so far as women's work is concerned. The definition of income is restricted in coverage to exactly the same extent as economic production by these statistical systems. Therefore, one question raised repeatedly was whether the categories of economic production could be expanded to include production that brings a return, whether money, goods, or services, even if it occurs outside the conventionally defined economy.

Alternative ways of increasing information about non-economic work were also discussed. Although powerful arguments for expanding the production boundary in statistical systems can be made, specific studies that do not confine themselves to this boundary can go forward all the same. This is how useful information on women's work can be gathered immediately.

The division of a person's time between activities, some of which the analyst wants to classify as work and some as leisure, intrinsically raises certain problems. For example, is the shopkeeper who spends long hours at his shop, but varies his day with coffee, games, and socializing, at work or not? Is a woman who prepares hand-made articles for sale while she talks with her friends at home at work or not?

#### Measurement of Work

Numerous measurement problems were discussed and dealt with in the following papers. One may be noted here.

For reasons of sex segregation, it frequently happens that male interviewers cannot interview female members of a household. Male relatives may lack needed information, or may mislead interviewers. Due to the sensitivities surrounding female employment, women may also under-report their work--being a lady of leisure credits one with higher status. One can think of improving the interviewing process to allow for better probing, and training female interviewers for such situations.

### Time Budgets

Special attention was given to the time-budget method of studying women's activities. This method is able to capture more fully how a woman's time is spent by detecting work activity where other methods fail. One problem, however, is that the concept of time differs from one culture to another, leading to difficulties in recording the amounts of time spent on various activities. One cannot always ask a woman what she was doing between two and three o'clock; rather, one may have to relate daily activities to socially defined time points such as prayer time. More information on the application of this method is given in the papers by Dr. Zurayk and Ms. Salti.

### The Role of Education

It has often been assumed that a better-educated female population produces a higher proportion of women entering the labor force. This assumption does not always hold true, especially where policies discourage female employment. In Saudi Arabia, the educational system is under the control of religious groups whose influence on curriculum planning results in training females for the housewife role. A conflict has arisen between those educated women who want to join the labor force and the attitudes of religious groups that attempt to confine them to their homes.

Education also affects the status of women. In Turkey it has been noted that poorly educated women marry poorly educated males without hope for a better status in society. In some communities, women are even educated in preference to their brothers in order to increase their chances of gaining higher status through marriage, and to assure a "clean" job. For males the vehicle of advancement is any work that brings money. Since education is not always the key, these Turkish families urge their sons to begin work early, but educate their daughters.

### Resource Allocation

The allocation of goods and cash income within the family was discussed in relation to the intra-familial decision-making process. In a study carried out by the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World and the F.A.O. in rural Lebanon, it proved to be relatively easy to quantify resources and their allocation at the household level. On the other hand, it was very difficult to ascertain the decision-making process.

In some rural and low-income urban areas in Turkey, it was observed that the allocation of goods has always been the woman's job. She was also responsible for ensuring that food supplies lasted from one harvest to the next. However, the allocation of cash income has been equally shared between the male head of family and his wife. The male typically uses his share for self-indulgence, such as outside meals and visiting the local coffeehouse, whereas the female uses her share mainly for household consumption, including the care of children. In recent years, and due to the increasing cost of living, females have felt the need for more spending money, both for themselves and for the household. Consequently, they have taken to setting up small side operations such as chicken raising as a private source of income. This points to family adjustments that result in more economic participation of women.

### The Mother-Child Relationship

Several comments were made concerning the psychological and physical effects on children of having working mothers. Some said that it could be harmful, while others disagreed, for two main reasons: First, children of working mothers may adjust better to later life than children of non-working mothers; and second, children are the responsibility of a group of relatives and not merely the parents. Even in nuclear upper class urban families, the child-care role is performed by a governess, maid, or others in the household. It may prove fruitful to examine the effect of women's work on the child at the different stages of the mother's career cycle.

### Policy Formulation and Implementation

Many countries have by now formulated policies in the interest of women, but few have carried out their promises and seen them implemented. It is essential that policies favoring female labor force participation be

developed consistently within developmental plans. On the one hand, women need assistance such as child care in order to work, but if given numerous benefits that are not conditional on working, they may not feel the need to work. In the notes of Paula Hollerbach on Cuba and Judith Bruce on forward planning, these needs for consistent policies are discussed. The Study Group recognized that women will face different needs at different stages of their life cycle, and that the so-called life-cycle approach to studies would be appropriate.

Notes prepared by  
Haifa Nabili

MEASURING WOMEN'S ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

by

Huda Zurayk

Women have always participated in the economy, but their participation has gone largely unmeasured because of its concentration in family and domestic production. The countries of the Middle East are now in particularly urgent need of increased and more productive work participation by women. However, it is important to stress that such participation is not an end in itself. Increased productivity should be accompanied by advancement of the status of women in society.

The achievement of these goals faces some problems. Patterns of social organization and value systems in the region strongly favor women's remaining in the home, thus restricting their activities and status in the wider society. Although it has been noted that the process of development eventually leads to increased measurable participation of women in the economy, there is evidence that the relationship may be reversed during the first stages and is not, therefore, uniformly positive or linear (Geele, 1977, p. 1).

Boserup (1970), for example, argues that development leads to more mechanization in agriculture, which in turn results in a gradual replacement of female labor by male labor. Moreover, with increased industrialization, home industries, which are traditionally the province of women, are driven out of business. Similarly, Collver and Langlois (1962, p. 371) have observed that

Women's work participation rates cannot be explained by level of economic development alone, but the historic relationships between the family and the economy must be taken into account. Whether women's participation in the metropolitan labor force rises or falls with economic progress will depend on the level of participation at the start and on the speed with which adjustments are made between family and work.

Youssef (1971, p. 42) believes that "economic development does not affect behaviour except in terms of social organization." She gives two reasons for the low participation rates of women in non-agricultural occupations in the Middle East: the "social stigma" attached

to the employment of women and the "assurance of economic support within the kinship structure" (1974, p. 101).

In India, a developing country in which there has been extensive study of the status of women, the report of the Advisory Committee on Women's Studies (1977, p. 1) makes the following important observation:

Government sponsored developmental activities have benefitted only a small section of women, mainly in the urban middle class. The large majority of women have not benefitted from development; on the other hand, there is now indisputable evidence of steady decline in the value of women in society.

In the face of such growing evidence, it seems clear that the consequences of development cannot be depended upon to be advantageous to women. Rather, special intervention is required on behalf of women, through government policy designed to protect and advance their interests at the same time as hastening development. Such positive intervention will require a commitment to positive change, a sensitivity to the needs of all women, to the needs of society, and to the interactions of these needs.

Intervention policies aimed at encouraging women's economic participation should, therefore, be based on valid information about the nature of women's economic participation and on the need for and implications of change. This paper is concerned with outlining what information is needed to guide policy on women's economic participation, but more importantly with how this information can be collected. There is presently a failure of proper conceptualization on women's economic participation and its implications, and it is to these issues that this paper is addressed.

### Indicators of the Status of Women in Society

An important starting point for a national policy to encourage the economic participation of women is the measurement of the status of women in order to delineate their needs and to provide baseline indicators against which the effectiveness of specific policies can be tested.

The status of women in society is a construct

which cannot be measured by the level of a single characteristic. Rather it is measured by the levels of a multitude of characteristics which gain special significance when compared with levels attained by the male population. A review of important indicators of the status of women, as well as a specification of sources of information and of measurement problems, is a first concern of this paper.

As a framework for the delineation of indicators of the status of women, Giele (1977, p. 4) uses the life options available to women in six major types of human activity performed in every society: political expression; work and mobility; family formation, duration and size; education; health and sexual control; and cultural expression. Dixon (1976, p. 20) suggests that evaluation of the life options of women should be through measures of the equality of the sexes in several spheres: freedom of sexual relations; reproductive autonomy; responsibility for homemaking and child care; education, economic production and political decision-making.

On the other hand, Ferris (1971), concerned with the changing status of American women, advances specific standard indicators of change: marital status, income, organizational membership, length of life, and causes of death. Although such indicators, based on the criteria of measurement and quantification, provide a valuable reflection of trends in the status of American women, they give an insufficient coverage and feel for such status. We would like to use the wider criteria of increasing life options, rising quality of life, and equality of the sexes to discuss possible indicators of the status of women, and the measurement problems involved, with particular reference to Middle Eastern and other developing countries.

Educational level qualifies as a primary indicator of status. Information on educational level by sex is present in all population censuses. Moreover, information on school enrollment and drop-out rates is usually available from special education studies and censuses. An important question, however, relates to the relevance and quality of the education being offered. Such a question can only be answered by a detailed examination of programs and curricula.

Marriage patterns are an important reflection of the life options of women in society. Information on marital status by age and on extent of marriage dissolution is available from population censuses and vital statistics registers. In addition, information should

be sought, using special studies wherever necessary, on mean age and male-female age differences at marriage, on extent of polygamy, on freedom of choice of spouse, on control over dissolution of marriage, and on sex differentials in the rate of remarriage.

Fertility levels influence the freedom of a woman to follow her own pursuits in life, as she bears the major responsibility for child bearing and rearing. The birth rate and other fertility rates can be derived from information provided by the registration system and, in some cases, from information gathered in the population census. Fertility surveys are another important source of information on levels and determinants of fertility. Such surveys usually follow a time period or cross-sectional approach to the study of fertility. However, marriage duration - specific fertility rates derived from reproductive histories of women provide a valuable description of the life-cycle fertility constraints on women.

Health condition governs a woman's ability to live and produce normally. There is no single construct, however, which can be taken to represent the level of health. It is usually studied by considering levels of mortality, morbidity, nutrition, and access to medical services, all of which suffer from measurement problems.

Economic activity rates reflect the extent and type of participation of women in income-generating activities. However, as discussed in the introduction, this factor does not always correlate positively with improved status. The measures of economic activity are discussed in detail in the following section.

Income level is an important variable reflecting status, particularly in comparison with income levels of the male population. However, it is a difficult characteristic to measure reliably and is relevant only to a small group of the female population, the wage-earning workers. Studies on control of person and family income are especially relevant.

Time allocation among activities and control of time are important indicators of the type and freedom of activity of women, especially in comparison to men. Time-budget studies are a valuable source of such information; their methodology, however, is still in the process of development.

Legal status of women in terms of their rights in such important life events as marriage and divorce,

custody of children, inheritance, mobility and labor force participation, is an important reflection of the control women have over their lives. A review of information on the rights of women in Middle Eastern countries contained in legal and religious documents is a vital necessity to indicate their status in this respect.

The participation of women in decision-making at the family level as well as in politics and community organizations is an indication of their influence over the lives of others. Whereas measures of women's participation in politics and community organizations can be developed through statistics on voting and the number of positions occupied in organizations (Dixon, 1976, p. 28), measuring the extent of female participation in decision-making within the family requires special sociological surveys and observational studies. Such surveys and studies are rare for Middle Eastern countries. Many such studies have been conducted in the United States, but have been subject to methodological problems of measurement and design (Sailios-Rothschild, 1970, pp. 541-547).

The images of women presented in textbooks and the mass media provide a reflection of the society's perceptions of the status of women. A valuable study by Ilham Kallab (1974), undertaken in Lebanon, has used an interesting methodological approach in compiling images of women in Arabic reading texts for children. The texts were found to reflect heavily the traditional role of women in society.

Finally, sexual behavior, although difficult to discuss in Middle Eastern countries, is a sensitive reflection of women's standing in marriage and in society. Dixon (1976, pp. 22-24) outlines three dimensions of sexual behavior which should be investigated, namely, initiating and engaging in sexual relations, achieving physical pleasure from them and refusing or withholding sexual favors. A revealing and pioneering study in this respect is that of Chamie (1977) on the sexuality of Lebanese couples.

### The Supply of Female Labor and its Determinants

#### The Population Census as a Source of Information

A policy to encourage the economic participation of women requires the analysis of information on the extent

and type of actual female participation, as well as on the factors influencing supply. In most countries the primary source of comprehensive data on labor force participation is the population census, although some countries have also developed census-type sampling surveys to yield current and supplementary information (U.N. Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 1968, p. 1). There are some problems with these data in terms of conceptualization, definitions and analyses of economic activity, particularly as these relate to women. We shall review these problems with special reference to population censuses in the Middle East.

Data Collection on Economic Activity: The U.N. recommendations (U.N. Statistical Office, 1948, pp. 4-5) for data collection specify the following classifications and definitions of economic activity for inclusion in population censuses:

1. Classification by Activity Status: The economically active population includes all persons engaged in economic activities on a full-time or part-time basis for a specified minimum time during a given reference period. It includes both the employed and the unemployed. The economically inactive population includes "home houseworkers not engaged in economic activities," as well as students, retired persons, persons deriving their incomes from sources other than work, and persons too young, too old or unable to work.

2. Classification by Occupation: Relates to the type of work an individual does.

3. Classification by Industry: Relates to the principal product of the enterprise in which the person is working.

4. Classification by Status: Relates to the employment relationship of the person to the enterprise, and includes a category of unpaid family workers, defined as "persons who do a specified minimum amount of work without pay in economic enterprises operated by other members of his (her) household."

5. Classification by Employment: Relates to the employed vs. the unemployed, including the never previously employed.

Table 1 shows the latest available information from population censuses of Middle Eastern countries in terms of the variables representing economic activity. We note that there is general use of the U.N. categories,

Table 1

Questions Asked and Tabulations Made on Activity Status (A), Occupation (O), Industry (I), and Employment Status (E). Censuses of Middle Eastern Countries.

Country	Latest Census	Census Used <sup>1</sup>	Questions in the Census	Tabulations Made for AOIE				
				Sex	Age and Sex	Geography and Sex	Education and Sex	Marital Status and Sex
Bahrain	1971	1971	AOIE	AOIE <sup>4</sup>	---E	----	----	----
Egypt	1976	1960	-OI-	-OIE	-OIE	-OIE	-OIE	-OIE
Iraq	1977	1965	-O-E	----	----	----	----	----
Jordan	1961	1961	-OIE	-OIE	-O-E <sup>5</sup>	-OIE	----	A--E
Kuwait <sup>2</sup>	1975	1975	AOIE	AOIE <sup>4</sup>	AOIE <sup>5</sup>	A--E <sup>5</sup>	-O--	AOIE
Lebanon <sup>2</sup>	1970	1970	-OIE	AOIE <sup>4</sup>	AOI-	AOIE <sup>5</sup>	----	----
P.D.R.Y.	1973	1973	AOIE	--IE	----	--IE	----	----
S.Arabia	1974	1974	AOIE	----	----	----	----	----
Syria	1970	1970	AOIE	AOIE	AOIE	AOIE	AOIE	AOIE
U.A.E.	1975	1975	AOIE	AOIE	AOIE	AOIE	AOI-	AOIE
Y.A.R.	1975	1975	AOIE	-OIE <sup>4</sup>	----	-OIE	--I-	----
Algeria	1966	1966	AOIE	AOIE <sup>4</sup>	AOI- <sup>5</sup>	AOIE	----	----
Libya	1973	1964	AOIE	-OIE <sup>4</sup>	-OIE	-OIE	----	----
Morocco	1971	1960	AOIE	AOIE <sup>4</sup>	AOIE	AOIE	----	----
Sudan	1973	1955-56	-O--	-O-E	-O-- <sup>5</sup>	-O--	----	----
Tunisia	1975	1966	AOIE	AOIE	AO-- <sup>5</sup>	AOIE	----	----
Turkey	1975	1965	AOIE	-OIE	-OIE	-OIE	-OIE	-OIE

<sup>1</sup>The source of information on population censuses was the library and staff of the ECWA Population Division, Beirut. Information from the most up-to-date census was not available for all countries.

<sup>2</sup>Sample census of the population.

<sup>3</sup>Preliminary results of the census.

<sup>4</sup>No breakdown on economically inactive under A.

<sup>5</sup>Only for economically active population under A.

although Sudan and Iraq omit some items, and Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon differentiate between active and inactive population but do not include a detailed classification for the inactive group (housewife, student, etc.).

A review of the specific questions in the census questionnaires indicates, moreover, that all countries have closed their questions on Activity and Employment Status with categorizations very close to those recommended by the U.N., and have left the questions on Occupation and Industry open. However, various periods of reference have been used, ranging from the past six days to the past two weeks, as well as various eligible age groups (7+, 10+ or 15+). Some countries do not even specify their reference periods or eligible age groups. Such discrepancies affect the comparability of the data.

Problems of Conceptualization and Definition of Economic Activity as Related to Women: The basic problem in the concept of activity as it is classified in population censuses is the narrowness of definition. The activities that are counted by a population census are production activities which generate income for an individual or a family. Home production for direct consumption by family members is considered to be non-economic, even though such products and services probably would have been bought through domestic service if a family member, usually the wife, did not provide them.

Working within the present conceptualization of economic activity we move next to a consideration of whether the present definitions of economic activity capture the production of women which is income-generating to the woman and/or the family. The answer, of course, is no, particularly for developing countries where agriculture is a primary sector and/or with large, informal urban sectors. The reasons are many. In reviewing the situation with respect to Middle Eastern countries, we have made use of valuable observations brought out by Stanislas D'souza in a 1978 report to the U.N. Statistical Office on "Sex Biases in National Data Systems."

For Middle Eastern countries we can say with a fair degree of certainty that the coverage of the activity of women employed full time outside the home and receiving money wages is quite complete, especially for non-agricultural workers. However, the nature of the work activity of a large proportion of women in the region does not fit the pattern of a full-time wage earner. Rather, it has at least one of the following qualities: it is part time, it is seasonal, it is family work, and it is not amenable to classification within the present occupation codes.

If we review the questionnaires of the latest population censuses of the countries of the Middle East, we find that most questionnaires begin the section on economic activity with a question on the activity status of the individual. The response categories are approximately as follows:

Active

- working
- unemployed

Inactive

- student
- housewife
- persons with incomes from sources other than work
- persons unable to work

Whereas some censuses differentiate between full-time students and working part-time students, "housewife" is always an undifferentiated category. Some censuses, such as those of Syria, Kuwait, U.A.E. and Tunis specify the housewife category as "full-time housewife," probably to focus on housewives who do not work outside the home. Moreover, all countries have included family workers as a category of employment status.

Despite these efforts to capture more fully the economic activity of women, the cultural setting in Middle Eastern countries, as well as the set-up and definitions underlying the questions in population censuses, are likely to lead to missing the part time, the seasonal, or the family workers with vaguely defined occupations--i.e., the majority of female workers. The cultural bias of the woman, shy to say that she is working, as well as that of the interviewer, ready too quickly to accept a married woman as a housewife without probing, will lead to the classification of a married woman with some economic activity as a housewife. Moreover, an interviewer, unable to fit the work activity of a woman into the occupation codes he or she knows, or to determine whether the woman's work fits the minimum time period required, may choose the easy way out by classifying the woman as a housewife.

Once a woman is classified as inactive on the first question on economic activity, the questions on occupation, industry and employment status are automatically skipped, and there is thus no chance to correct the misclassification. When a male 10 to 15 years of age or older who is not working is encountered, attempts are made to determine

whether he is a student, unable to work, living on an income from a source other than work, retired, unemployed but has worked in the past (including seasonal workers), or is seeking work for the first time. For a single female 10 or 15 years of age or older who is not working full time, there is a chance that the interviewer will probe to determine where she can best be fitted within the categories of economic activity available on the questionnaire. However, for a married woman not working full time outside the home, "housewife" presents itself as an automatic category.

It follows, therefore, that the economic activity of women, particularly married women, can be better captured in population censuses if more categories of activity status (such as full time vs. part time, seasonal worker, etc.) are introduced into the questionnaires, and if occupational classifications fitting the various types of work that women do are developed, and if interviewers are trained regarding the special characteristics of the activities of women. The interviewers will then be guided to probe for accurate answers, and will have the tools available for recording these answers. In fact, such changes in the census questionnaire will produce a better measure of the work contributions of all members of society.

Analysis of the Economic Activity of Women: Despite the problems in data collection in population censuses, the census is an important source of information for analyzing the characteristics and determinants of the supply of female labor. A more detailed multivariate analysis can be undertaken using the original raw data from the census. However, such data are not always readily available.

The first important item of information to be obtained from census reports is the size of the economically active female population, and its distribution by occupation, type of activity and employment status. The relationship of these economic variables to one another and to the social and demographic characteristics of age, geographical distribution, migratory patterns, marital status, education and family formation variables such as children ever born, or number of living children, to married women are very important. It is valuable to compare this information with corresponding data for the male population.

Tables 1 (p. 11) and 2 show economic variables individually and in relation to the social and demographic variables of interest which are available in the latest census reports of Middle Eastern countries. These tables show that whereas most countries provide information on the distribution of the population by each of the economic variables and sex, many do not introduce the social and demographic characteristics, particularly education, marital status, and family formation patterns, as a third variable in the analysis. Only Syria

Table 2  
 Cross-Tabulations between Occupation, Industry  
 and Employment Status by Sex<sup>1</sup>

Country	Industry and Employment Status by Sex	Occupation and Employ- ment Status by Sex	Industry and Occupation by Sex
Bahrain	+	+	+
Egypt	+	+	+
Iraq	-	-	-
Jordan	+	-	-
Kuwait	+	+	+
Lebanon	+	+	-
P.D.R.Y.	-	-	-
S. Arabia	-	-	-
Syria	+	+	+
U.A.E.	+	+	+
Y.A.R.	-	+	+
Algeria	+	+	+
Libya	+	-	-
Morocco	+	+	+
Sudan	-	-	-
Tunisia	-	-	-
Turkey	-	+	+

<sup>1</sup>Cross-tabulations are of data included in Table 1.

tabulates activity status by number of children ever born to ever-married women.

We note, thus, that the census reports of the countries of the Middle East are deficient in terms of the data published on economic activity, particularly in terms of cross-tabulations that allow analysis of the determinants of the supply of female labor. As Syria provides the most comprehensive coverage in terms of the information published on economic activity, we shall make an illustrative analysis, using the tabulations of the census report from Syria, to demonstrate what can be learned from the census report about the supply and

determinants of female economic activity. Of course, deficiencies in data collection must always be borne in mind in interpreting the data.

Female Economic Activity, the case of Syria: We look first at Table 3, which presents the percent distribution of urban residence within sex groups of the population 10 years of age and older by activity status. We note immediately the discrepancy in percentage of the active population between males and females. This is due in part to undercount of the activity of women in agriculture and in the informal urban sector, but is also a result of a lower labor force participation of women. The undercount of the activity of females will affect all subsequent analyses.

We note also that whereas the largest category of inactive population among the males is students, this is not true for the females. In fact, a very low percentage of females 10 years of age and over in rural areas are students. The largest category among the inactive females is the home worker. It would be interesting to analyze activity status by marital status, age and sex, but such a tabulation is not published.

We note finally that whereas Syria has introduced the concept of employment inside the home, a very low percentage of all groups are recorded in this category.

Table 4 presents the distribution of the active population by occupation. As expected, the overwhelming majority of female workers in rural areas are in agricultural occupations. However, this concentration in agricultural occupations of females as well as males who are residing in rural areas does not inform us adequately regarding the work activity of rural adults. There is a need for more detailed classification of occupations for adequate analysis of differential responsibilities.

In urban areas there is an impressive excess in the proportion of females in professional and related occupations as compared to males, which is probably a result of a strong association between labor force participation and education among females. The female workers have an equivalent concentration in the category of production and related workers, transport equipment operators and laborers.

Table 5, presenting the distribution of the active population by type of activity, indicates similar conclusions regarding the need for more detailed classifications, particularly in terms of the types of work performed by rural adults. In urban areas, we find similar proportions of active males

Table 3

Activity Status of Population Aged 10 and Over  
by Sex and Residence. Syria. 1970. Percents.

Activity Status	Males		Females	
	Urban <sup>1</sup>	Rural <sup>2</sup>	Urban <sup>3</sup>	Rural <sup>4</sup>
<u>Economically Active</u>				
Total Employed	59.81	66.84	5.40	10.08
Outside	59.55	66.64	4.62	9.66
Inside	.26	.20	.78	.42
Total Unemployed	4.48	4.32	.51	.42
Previously Employed	2.26	1.66	.12	.09
Seeking Work for First Time	2.32	2.66	.39	.33
Total Active	64.39	71.16	5.91	10.50
<u>Economically Inactive</u>				
Student	29.56	23.68	19.35	5.61
Homeworker	-	-	68.88	76.61
Retired	1.09	.15	.05	.01
Receives Support	1.65	1.35	1.81	1.80
Income Recipient	.59	.27	.58	.23
Unable to Work	2.70	3.37	3.41	5.24
Not Stated	.02	2.05	.01	.01
Total Inactive	35.61	28.84	94.09	89.50
Total All Categories	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

<sup>1</sup>N = 930,435

<sup>2</sup>N = 1,129,536

<sup>3</sup>N = 867,251

<sup>4</sup>N = 1,112,240

Table 4

Occupation of Active Population<sup>1</sup> Aged 10 and Over  
by Sex and Residence. Syria. 1970. Percents.

Occupation	Males		Females	
	Urban <sup>2</sup>	Rural <sup>3</sup>	Urban <sup>4</sup>	Rural <sup>5</sup>
Professional, technical, and related workers	6.55	2.29	30.85	1.42
Administrative and related workers	.89	.09	.24	.00
Clerical and related workers	8.36	1.11	12.60	0.15
Sales workers	14.80	3.07	1.00	0.22
Service workers	8.19	2.17	13.31	0.65
Agricultural, animal husbandry and forestry, hunters and fishermen	9.94	75.85	10.14	90.57
Production and related workers, transport equipment operators, and laborers	51.10	15.30	31.77	6.94
Not stated	.18	.13	.09	.04
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

<sup>1</sup>Excludes those seeking work for the first time.

<sup>2</sup>N = 577,552

<sup>3</sup>N = 773,721

<sup>4</sup>N = 47,803

<sup>5</sup>N = 113,047

Table 5

Industry by Active Population Aged 10 and Over<sup>1</sup>  
by Sex and Residence. Syria. 1970. Percents.

Industry	Males		Females	
	Urban <sup>2</sup>	Rural <sup>3</sup>	Urban <sup>4</sup>	Rural <sup>5</sup>
Agriculture, forestry hunting and fishing	9.89	76.00	10.14	90.57
Mining and quarrying	.59	.68	.28	.09
Manufacturing	23.96	4.07	28.08	6.22
Electricity, gas and water	1.03	.18	.44	.01
Construction and building	10.36	7.03	.58	.32
Wholesale and retail trade, restaurants and hotels	19.75	3.71	3.52	.33
Transport, storage and communication	8.18	2.05	1.73	.03
Financing, insurance, real estate and busi- ness services	1.42	.09	2.19	.02
Community, social and personal services	24.39	5.87	52.86	2.34
Not stated	.42	.32	.19	.08

<sup>1</sup>Excludes those seeking work for the first time.

<sup>2</sup>N=577,552

<sup>4</sup>N = 47,803

<sup>3</sup>N = 773,721

<sup>5</sup>N = 113,047

and females in manufacturing, but a concentration of females in the category of community, social and personal services. This category includes the occupations of teaching, nursing and domestic service, which are traditionally seen as suitable for women.

Looking at employment status in Table 6, we note that the largest categories for rural males, and both urban

Table 6

Employment Status of Active Population Aged 10 and Over<sup>1</sup>  
by Sex and Residence. Syria, 1970. Percents

Employment Status	Males		Females	
	Urban <sup>2</sup>	Rural <sup>3</sup>	Urban <sup>4</sup>	Rural <sup>5</sup>
Employer	4.20	.99	76	.39
Self-employed	27.30	49.84	14.88	20.94
Wage and salary	64.09	28.51	76.24	24.95
Wages in kind	.15	1.01	.16	.33
Unpaid family worker	3.85	19.51	5.67	53.17
Unpaid apprentice	.30	.06	2.22	.19
Not stated	.11	.07	.08	.04
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

<sup>1</sup>Excludes those seeking work for the first time.

<sup>2</sup>N = 577,552

<sup>4</sup>N = 47,803

<sup>3</sup>N = 773,721

<sup>5</sup>N = 113,047

males and females, are those of self-employed and wage and salary workers, with a reversal in importance of these two categories between rural and urban areas. For females, we ask ourselves: do wage and salary workers actually form the majority of working women in urban areas, and to what extent is this a bias in data collection? For rural females, the majority (53 percent) of working women are unpaid family workers, as compared to only 20 percent of active rural males. In fact, this proportion of family workers among active females is probably an underestimate, because of the problems in data collection. However, it is still important in indicating the failure in the region to remunerate women for their work.

Beginning with Table 7 we attempt to analyze the social and demographic determinants of the rate of economic activity. Table 7 presents activity rates by age. We note that male activity rates by age show similar patterns in rural and urban

Table 7

Labor Force Participation (Activity) Rates by Age Groups, Sex, and Residence. Syria. 1970. Percents.

Age Group	Males		Females	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
10 - 19	25.90	37.32	3.61	13.93
20 - 29	76.05	89.84	8.72	9.94
30 - 39	91.70	96.58	7.55	8.88
40 - 49	90.56	96.49	6.11	9.12
50 - 59	83.74	93.82	4.62	8.29
60 - 69	64.53	83.95	2.90	6.19
70 - 79	41.83	63.24	1.85	4.11
80 - 85+	21.77	34.90	.82	2.05
Total	61.06	70.08	7.25	10.39

areas, increasing to a peak of over 90 percent activity in the age group 30 to 50, and then dropping gradually. For all age groups, rural males show higher participation. The female participation rates as measured by the census, on the other hand, are very low in all age and urbanization groups, exceeding 10 percent only for rural females between the ages of 10 and 19. This, of course, is partly a result of the undercount of female activity.

An attempt to trace the relationship of education to economic activity for age groups failed because of the absence of tabulations of active population by education and age. Table 8 presents the activity rates by education. For males, the intervening effect of age produces a U-shaped pattern of activity rate by education. For females, there is a striking increase in activity rate in both rural and urban areas for women with secondary educations and above. The activity rate is particularly high for women with vocational training (probably teachers), reaching higher levels than for women with expensive doctorates.

Table 8

Labor Force Participation (Activity) Rates by Education,  
Sex and Residence for Population Aged 10 and over.  
Syria. 1970. Percents.

Education	Males		Females	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Illiterate	82.21	89.15	4.35	10.98
Literate	59.64	63.37	2.65	5.27
Primary certificate	51.47	43.23	3.78	4.43
Intermediate certificate	35.72	28.35	9.00	5.35
Secondary certificate	43.08	56.78	22.87	26.63
Vocational certificate	87.43	94.94	88.65	92.92
University graduate and M.A.	82.82	73.83	75.54	64.52
Doctorate	86.11	83.22	73.51	53.33
Total	61.71	70.09	5.57	10.39

Table 9 presents activity rates by age and marital status for urban and rural women. For urban females, all marital groups show an increase of activity with age, to a peak between the ages of 30 and 39. However, married women show the lowest activity rates at all ages. It is important to note that divorced and widowed women who have lost their primary sources of support show higher participation rates than do married women. However, these women show lower participation rates than never-married women, particularly the young women among them, who are probably kept busy with household activities. It is revealing that the divorced women show higher activity at every age level than the widowed women. In rural areas, married women also show the lowest activity rates at all age levels. However, widows show the highest rate of participation in the age groups between 20 and 49.

As for the effect of children on activity rates of females, we note in Table 10 that there is a slight decrease in activity with increasing number of children in urban areas.

Table 9

Activity Rates of Syrian Females 15 Years and Over by  
Marital Status, Urbanization and Age. Syria. 1970.  
Percents.

Age	Never Married	Married	Divorced	Widowed
<u>Urban</u>				
15 - 19	6.46	1.20	8.53	4.63
20 - 29	23.90	4.21	16.94	12.11
30 - 39	32.45	5.45	27.92	18.37
40 - 49	23.41	4.23	23.30	14.44
50 - 59	14.85	2.97	14.82	7.48
60 - 69	8.24	1.78	8.71	3.62
70 - 79	5.86	1.48	6.40	1.82
80 - 85+	2.83	.65	3.74	.78
Total	11.45	3.84	17.20	16.34
<u>Rural</u>				
15 - 19	19.86	7.21	17.91	13.70
20 - 29	21.87	7.25	16.28	23.35
30 - 39	19.98	7.89	21.09	37.44
40 - 49	18.83	7.37	22.73	28.43
50 - 59	14.32	5.97	18.57	17.39
60 - 69	13.66	3.95	12.34	9.42
70 - 79	6.33	2.61	7.00	5.01
80 - 85+	3.27	1.29	5.38	2.24
Total	19.83	6.87	16.34	11.85

Table 10

Activity Rates of Ever-Married Females  
by Residence and Number of Children  
Ever Born. Syria. 1970. Percents.

Number of Children	Urban	Rural
0	7.35	9.35
1	7.51	7.61
2	6.95	7.72
3	5.58	7.85
4	4.44	8.20
5	3.71	8.15
6	3.27	8.08
7	2.88	7.92
8	2.85	7.58
9	2.84	7.17
9+	2.60	6.35
Not Stated	5.64	7.26
Total	2.44	7.71

This may reflect the influence of variables such as age and education. The same pattern is not observed in rural areas, where residence is mostly in extended families.

The above analysis gives a sketchy view of the information on the economic activities of women that can be derived from the population census report in one country of the Middle East. It remains deficient in three ways. First, the activity of women is subject to underestimation due to problems in data collection. Second, the census data do not provide a sufficiently detailed classification by occupation and industry to allow thorough analysis of what women do. Third, findings based on census reports are subject to biases due to the simultaneous effect of many variables on economic activity. A multivariate analysis of the original census data set can serve to more accurately delineate the separate effects of social and demographic variables on the economic activity of women.

#### Other Sources of Information on the Activity of Women

Despite problems of collection and analysis, the population census is an important source of information on labor force participation because of its potential comprehensive coverage of the activities of all members of a population. It focuses, however, on single variables, and does not give detailed attention to groups of variables. We must therefore

Table 11

Additional Questions on Economic Activity in Latest Available Labor  
Survey in Middle Eastern Countries<sup>1</sup>

Country/Year	Type of Study	Hours Per Day	Days Per Week	Hours Per Week	Salary	Period of Pay	Annual Paid Leave	Allowances
Bahrain/1971	Based on '65 Census	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Egypt/1959-60	Labor Force Sample Survey	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
Iraq/1969	Study of Selected Industries	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Jordan/1975	Labor Force Census	+	+	-	-	+	+	+
Kuwait/1973	Labor Force Sample Survey	-	-	+	+	+	-	-
Lebanon/1970	Labor Force Sample Survey	-	+	-	-	+	-	-
Syria/1975	Labor Force Sample Survey	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

<sup>1</sup>There was no information available regarding labor force surveys in the following countries: P.D.R.Y., Saudi Arabia, U.A.E., Y.A.R., Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia, Turkey.

Table 12

Activity Rates by Age, Sex and Residence. Syria.  
Labor Force Survey, 1969<sub>1</sub> and Population Census, 1970<sub>2</sub>.

Age Group	Males				Females			
	Urban		Rural		Urban		Rural	
	Census	Survey	Census	Survey	Census	Survey	Census	Survey
19	25.90	32.87	37.32	51.20	3.61	4.13	13.93	63.60
20 - 29	76.05	72.34	89.84	90.53	8.72	10.01	9.94	64.20
30 - 39	91.70	98.36	96.58	97.97	7.55	5.29	8.88	62.24
40 - 49	90.56	95.59	96.49	97.59	6.11	5.21	9.12	66.48
50 - 59	83.74	88.21	93.82	96.96	4.62	2.92	8.29	57.85
60 - 65+	51.41	42.00	69.13	58.48	2.28	1.43	4.84	15.70

<sup>1</sup>Contains data on those age 12 and older.

<sup>2</sup>Contains data on those age 10 and older.

Table 13

Employment Status of Active Syrian Population by Sex and Residence.  
Labor Force Survey, 1969<sub>1</sub> and Population Census, 1970<sub>2</sub>.

Employment Status	Males				Females			
	Urban		Rural		Urban		Rural	
	Census	Survey	Census	Survey	Census	Survey	Census	Survey
Employer	4.05	8.09	0.96	44.94	.71	1.15	0.38	1.02
Self-Employed	26.34	28.86	48.01	7.91	13.91	14.05	20.29	0.99
Wage Earner <sup>3</sup>	61.99	50.10	28.44	12.92	71.42	54.15	24.49	4.85
Unpaid Family and Other Workers <sup>4</sup>	4.01	6.29	18.85	23.47	7.37	18.06	51.71	92.92
Unemployed <sup>5</sup>	3.61	6.67	3.74	5.80	6.59	12.62	3.31	.21
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	598,475	494,956	803,194	798,077	51,138	39,567	116,660	638,331

<sup>1</sup> Contains data on those age 12 and older.

<sup>2</sup> Contains data on those age 10 and over.

<sup>3</sup> For the census this category includes wage and salary workers and earners of wages in kind.

<sup>4</sup> For the census this category includes unpaid family workers and unpaid apprentices.

<sup>5</sup> For the survey this category includes those previously employed and those seeking work for the first time; for the census, only those seeking work for the first time, with the previously employed distributed among the various categories.

look to other important sources of information on the supply of female labor and its determinants.

1. Labor Force Studies: A national labor force survey can yield more detailed information than a population census on the extent and type of economic participation of women because of its focused objective and restricted size. Unfortunately, few Middle Eastern countries have undertaken labor force surveys recently, and those who have have used the same questions on economic activity as those included in the population census (see Table 11).

In Syria the labor force survey utilizes probing to catch the activity of women, particularly in agriculture. Tables 12 and 13 compare results regarding female labor force participation as reported by the census of 1970 and a 1969 labor force survey. The labor force survey reports a higher level of economic activity of rural women. Most of the extra activity of women comes from unpaid family work. It is not clear, however, to what extent this additional activity is a result of a different conceptualization and definition of productive work.

It is important that labor force surveys be better utilized in the region to learn about work activity of the population in general and of women in particular. In fact, pilot labor force surveys should form the instrument through which improved definitions, questions and analyses of productive activity are developed, tested and formalized. Only through such steps can countries arrive at better concepts and measures that describe levels of work in the context of their own socio-economic and cultural settings.

2. Time-Budget Studies: Time-budget studies provide the most accurate and most complete measurement of the labor force participation of women because they record the actual time dedicated to each activity performed during a specific period of time (Deere, 1979, p. 5). If time budgets are collected from other members of the household as well, their time allocations can be compared with those of the women being studied. Moreover, by also collecting information on the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of women and their families, time-budget studies allow an analysis of the differential extent and type of activity, all activity, of women by education, by family formation variables, by position in the family life cycle, by economic status and by cultural environment. Such information is very important to an understanding of the supply of female labor.

Valuable as they are, time-budget studies are subject

to methodological problems which must be taken into account in evaluating the validity of the information they yield. The requirements in terms of measuring the activity of women through time-budgets can be outlined as follows: (Statistical Commission of the United Nations, 1978):

- (a) The reference period needs to be fixed so as to reflect the seasonal, part-time and variable nature of the activity of women, as well as to minimize recall problems.
- (b) The procedures for data collection must ensure reliable recording of what women actually do.
- (c) A suitable classification of activities has to be designed to allow a meaningful summary of the information collected.
- (d) Because of the volume and complexity of the data collected, time-budget studies present an unusual challenge in the analysis and processing stages.

From reports of recent time-budget study experiences in countries around the world, one can derive some recommendations regarding these four methodological points. In terms of the reference period for recording activity, most reports suggest the use of short periods of around 24 hours to minimize recall and observational error, and recommend spacing these periods throughout the year to catch seasonal variation in activities.

As for data collection procedures, we make special reference to a report by Mead Cain (1977), in which he reviews the advantages and disadvantages of the four data collection procedures in time-budget studies (see Table 14), which he defines as follows:

Direct Observation: The subject is observed for the entire reference period, and his/her activities are recorded by the observer.

Random Visits: At randomly selected points, the observer visits a household and records the activity of the household member or members of interest just before they became aware of his presence.

Recall-Activity Specific: The respondent or respondents estimate the amounts of time spent in specific activities during some reference period, such as a day, week or month.

Table 14

Advantages and Disadvantages of Various Data Collection Procedures Used in Time-Budget Studies.  
From Mead Cain (1977, pp. 5-12).

Data Collection Procedure	Advantages	Disadvantages
Direct Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Most accurate with reservation regarding observer contamination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Expensive</li> <li>-Requires divided attention if more than one person is being observed</li> </ul>
Random Visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Reliable estimate of time allocation without: (a) expenditure of time; (b) observer contamination; (c) recall error</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Requires large number of observations</li> <li>-Does not relate to individuals but to classes of individuals</li> <li>-Expense in travel and waiting time to complete randomly selected visits</li> </ul>
Recall-Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Can vary reference time from activity to activity</li> <li>-Low cost relative to direct observation</li> <li>-Less recall effort</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Reliability of time estimates questionable</li> </ul>

Table 14, continued

Recall-Sequential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Low cost relative to direct observation</li><li>-Gives sequential picture of activities as compared to Random Visits and Recall-Activity</li><li>-Allows seasonal comparisons</li><li>-Less time sophistication and mental calculation compared to Recall-Activity</li></ul>	-Less reliable than direct observation
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Recall-Sequential: The respondent or respondents reconstruct the sequence of activities for some period prior to the interview, with durations of activities as they occurred being estimated by the respondent and/or the interviewer.

Cain's conclusion is that:

There is no "best" method for collecting time budgets. All the methods which are described have their advantages and disadvantages. The appropriate method has to be judged case by case on the basis of purpose of the research, budget constraints and the characteristics of the population being studied. The purpose of the research influences the degree of detail required, the necessary sample size and the necessary number of observations on sample points. In addition one must consider the importance of time-use data relative to other data being collected and the extent to which one method or another facilitates or impedes the collection of other data.

In terms of classification of activities, a detailed classification is needed if one follows the recall-activity data collection procedure in order to record activities. A shorter list can be used to summarize activities in analyzing data from studies using the other collection procedures. In either case, a good deal of effort is required to derive a meaningful classification. Prior field experience in the community being studied is a necessary condition for the adequate performance of this task. It is important to keep in mind the following observation from Sajogoyo et al. (1979, p. 4):

...large numbers of tables showing patterns of time-allocation...in a statistical way are of little use without the kinds of information to provide some understanding of why these patterns occur. This information must be derived from the so-called "qualitative" techniques...of extended interviews, case studies, observation, casual conversations and personal involvement in the community.

Finally, the analysis of the results into a complexity of tables can be achieved by proper design and by use of computer processing. An example of suggested indices of time use is shown in Table 15.

3. Studies of Related Variables: Information on factors influencing female activity can be derived from surveys and observational studies which investigate characteristics

Table 15  
Measures of Occurrence and Duration of Activities<sup>1</sup>

Denominator of Measure	Numerator of Measure		
	Total Time Spent on Activity	Total Occurrences of Activity	Total Persons Performing Activity
Total number of persons in tabulation	$\frac{\text{Duration}}{\text{All Persons}}$	$\frac{\text{Occurrences}}{\text{All Persons}}$	$\frac{\text{Performers}}{\text{All Persons}}$
Total number of persons performing activity	$\frac{\text{Duration}}{\text{Performers}}$	$\frac{\text{Occurrences}}{\text{Performers}}$	Not Applicable
Total number of occurrences of activity	$\frac{\text{Duration}}{\text{Occurrences}}$	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

Reproduced from: United Nations, 1979, p. 23.

related to the economic activity of women. An important example is fertility surveys which study work of women as a factor influencing fertility. At least two problems can be foreseen in this respect:

- (a) Although such studies will collect detailed information on their main variables of interest, their coverage of work characteristics will probably be sketchy.
- (b) In such studies, work will undoubtedly be defined as economic activity, and will be subject to the same measurement problems indicated in census-taking.

4. Studies of Attitudes, Costs and Benefits of Economic Participation of Women: In Middle Eastern countries, where a strong value system and family tradition restrict the activity of women outside the home, it is important to initiate studies that will investigate the attitudes of men and women toward female employment and economic activity, as well as the perceived costs and benefits of female work in various stages of the life cycle to the family unit and to its individual members. Such studies can provide an understanding of the cultural determinants of the supply of female labor, as well as an assessment of the agents of change. They can also provide information to guide alternate policies to encourage female labor force participation by evaluating the adjustments these policies entail in family life and in the lives of the women as individuals.

Such studies involve tremendous methodological problems of measurement and data collection. It is important first to develop objective measures of attitudes, of costs and benefits of the economic participation of women. Next it is important to determine what method, or combination of methods, can be used to collect information on such sensitive and subjective constructs. Interview schedules and questionnaires can provide more objective but less valid measurement, wider coverage but with less depth and insight. Observational studies, on the other hand, provide depth and insight, but are not sufficiently replicable, and may involve observer contamination and bias as well.

#### The Demand for Female Labor

A policy to encourage the labor force participation of women needs to be as well-informed about the characteristics and determinants of demand for the labor of women as about the

characteristics and determinants of supply.

In the traditional agricultural systems still functioning in the Middle East, there is a demand for the services of women, although these services go largely unmeasured and unremunerated. However, if agricultural development in the region follows Western patterns of modernization, the demand for the labor of women will certainly diminish, as the experience of the West suggests that men tend to monopolize the use of new equipment and modern agricultural methods (Boserup, 1970, p. 53).

Rather than follow out-moded development patterns, however, development planners should attempt to understand the activity of women in agriculture in order to design policies that capitalize on these patterns. Development planners acknowledge that the three strategies of increased agricultural production, greater income-producing activities and a reduction of post-harvest food losses are the solutions to meeting the world food crisis (Tinker, 1979, p. 2). However,

Nowhere in these prestigious works is there an acknowledgement that over half the agricultural labor in the developing countries is provided by women, that women do most of the post-harvest food processing and preservation, or that women cook most of the world's food.

Better understanding, through better measurement, can assist development planners in supporting markets that absorb the labor of women where it is most useful, and in properly remunerating them for their work.

In terms of the demand for the services of women in non-agricultural occupations, these are largely governed by "the cultural definitions within the society regarding the type of work deemed appropriate for women to pursue" (Youssef, 1971, p. 431). The cultural values of seclusion for women and strong family traditions in Middle Eastern countries can, therefore, explain the low labor force participation of women as well as the restriction of the work activities of women entering the labor force to employment sectors which do not involve public activity or contact with the opposite sex (Youssef, p. 132). It is important that cultural values regarding the work of women and their determinants be understood if action is to be taken to create a demand for the services of women where they are needed, and not only where they are found suitable by social traditions.

In this respect studies of societal values toward

the work of women, as well as studies of costs and benefits to the woman, the family and the economy of her entering various spheres of economic activity should be initiated. It is also very important to investigate the attitudes of employers, along with their perceptions of problems in the employment of women.

Unfortunately, as discussed from a supply point of view in the previous section, these studies of attitudes, values, costs and benefits are plagued with methodological problems of proper definitions, valid measures and reliable techniques of data collection. However, their importance in guiding policies aimed at increasing both the supply and demand of female labor, with studied implications for family living and on the market economy, makes them a priority area of interest to researchers concerned with women and development.

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SOME NOTES ON WOMEN'S ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION IN NORTH YEMEN

by

Carla Makhlouf Obermeyer

The following remarks are based on a study of women and social change in North Yemen, using the methods of participant observation and case studies, and focusing on a small sample. They are not necessarily useful for generalizing about Yemeni women as a whole, as they may reflect the conditions of women's economic roles in particular social strata or particular geographical areas. But they can suggest some hypotheses concerning women's economic participation and trends in this process, as well as possible conflicts resulting from modernization. Finally, they may point to ways in which data collection can be adapted to the particular situation of women in North Yemen.

Yemeni culture is sex-segregated. Male and female spheres are separate, and veiling is prevalent in urban centers. According to available statistics, women's participation in the economy is extremely low (about 3 percent of the work force or less).<sup>1</sup> Where women have a more apparent economic role is in the traditional areas of health (mainly nursing) and education (teaching at the primary level), followed by employment in municipal government<sup>2</sup> and at the Central Bank (Central Planning Organization, 1976). Such categories and figures do not reflect the true input of women to the economy.

Even in urban areas, some women do paid work, selling homemade bread or pottery in the streets of the sūq, sewing, or providing folk remedies; there is also the specifically female role of the shāri'a, the woman who dresses up the bride and her female relatives for the wedding and supervises the ceremony. These activities of women never appear in our statistical tables because our categories for measuring work in such a traditional society are too coarse to

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<sup>1</sup>The 1975 manpower survey indicates that 1156 of all government employees are female and 31,315 are male; the private sector employs 534 females and 16,793 males. Very few women appear in the "family unpaid" category, even when employment is broken down by status (Central Planning Organization, 1976).

<sup>2</sup>I suspect this category consists chiefly of women street sweepers who belong to the inferior social category of the Akhdām.

retain them. Similarly, in rural and tribal areas, although the contribution of women to the economy is substantial--and may at times be greater than that of the men, who are often distracted by quarrels, litigation and conflict settlement--it does not show up in the usual manpower surveys. For instance, in the Bani Murād tribe in the eastern tribal region south of the ancient city of Ma'reb, a typical list of the women's daily activities includes: washing, praying, feeding the sheep, preparing breakfast, cleaning the house, making fuel from dung, gathering wood, filling the waterskins from the well to let the water cool, dyeing animal skins, watching the sheep and chickens, milking the cows with the help of the children, making butter, spinning wool (weaving is the man's job), and sometimes visiting relatives and neighbors in the afternoon. Women are also responsible for repairing the mud walls of the houses, and tracing the beautiful patterns in the mud that are typical of the area.

Certainly, if we wish to have an appropriate measure of women's economic participation, the categories and questions that we use should be refined. The concept of work itself should be redefined to fit a traditional society where the division between work and leisure is not rigid and the woman's day is characterized by a constant and subtle alternation between the two. Here perhaps traditional categories of work as they appear in legal treatises can shed some light on local conceptions of work. For instance, one could look at the ways in which the imams of Yemen have traditionally interpreted shari'a and defined women's role. The old legal treatises considered that woman's only obligation was to allow for sexual intercourse (tamkin al wat'), but later imams redefined this role to include work around the house. An analysis of ideological statements such as these can provide clues as to women's changing roles, and in turn suggest new areas for investigation.

One factor which complicates the task of assessing women's participation in the labor force is the massive out-migration of men, especially from the rural areas of Yemen. An important part of the Gross National Product in Yemen in fact consists of remittances from abroad. It is estimated that over one million Yemenis live abroad, mainly in Saudi Arabia, but also in other Gulf states, Western countries (chiefly the United Kingdom and the United States, particularly California), returning to their villages only periodically. These population movements result in the abandonment of many terraces in a number of rural areas, and complicate measurement of women's work and of the labor force in general. During the absence of the men, women may take charge of their households, engage in new economic activities, and handle family finances. It would be interesting to consider the

correlation between household composition and employment status of the women in an effort to assess the impact on women of current migration patterns (see Myntti, 1979).

An examination of women's economic status in relation to traditional kinship structure also suggests another possible correlation between employment and marital status. As has been shown in other Middle Eastern countries (Youssef, 1974), there seems to be a high proportion of divorced women in the labor force, as in the case of the first Yemeni industry to employ women, the Chinese-built San'a textile factory. This pattern has been explained by the relative freedom of the divorcee from the constraints that limit unmarried or married women, and by the need of the divorced woman to support herself. But perhaps we need to qualify the classic explanation of this phenomenon, for in principle, according to the religious law of Yemen, the father of the divorcee has the duty to support her financially until she remarries, and her children until they reach the legally specified age at which they return to their father. Moreover, she does not have to give him any money that she earns by working outside the home, although there may be pressures on her to share in household expenses, particularly in the poorer strata. In the higher socio-economic strata, it appears that for some divorced women, taking a job is not a necessity imposed upon them but rather an option which they may choose, and that they are able to take advantage of their extended families and leave their children with female relatives while they work. Thus in a transitional situation, the traditional networks can be used to support changes in the social structure.

Women's involvement in economic activities outside the home entails a series of changes in social relations that I have referred to elsewhere as "the desertion of tradition." The emergence of new alternatives for women in both the educational and economic spheres undermines traditional groupings defined by kinship and neighborhood, and provides opportunities for social relations outside the kin group. Gradually, individuals will tend to "desert" the old networks, and become part of different universes with different symbolic structures.

Relations between the sexes also come to be redefined in the process, because here again opportunities for interaction outside the kinship sphere emerge, challenging traditional symbolic structures. The most dramatic expression of these changes is the erosion of patterns of veiling, and the emergence of a substitute for the traditional sharshaf or sitara, the bälto, which is a new type of outdoor garment acceptable to the ülama, and constitutes a transitional stage in veiling customs.

Understanding changes in women's economic roles also requires a closer examination of prevalent cultural statements about women as expressed in the mass media and the literature. The images of women presented through these media constitute legitimations of roles and relations, and may indicate areas of ambiguity and conflict, as well as dynamic potentialities for change. Through an analysis of the press, the radio, television, and modern Yemeni poetry, one can trace the evolution of models of women in society, from the traditional theme of the mother to the modern statement (which appeared in the weekly paper San'a in 1974) that "women are human beings, just like men," and see how traditional religious figures of Islamic history or the ideology of national development can be used to legitimate changes in the social definition of women's roles.

Only by taking into consideration the less tangible aspects of women's economic participation, which include cultural attitudes, perceptions and expressions, can we make sense of the whole process and of the human component in economic transformation.

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## CHAPTER 4

### PRELIMINARY FINDINGS OF A SURVEY OF THE ECONOMIC AND NON-ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES OF 300 JORDANIAN WOMEN LIVING IN AMMAN<sup>1</sup>

by

Rebecca Salti

This paper discusses the preliminary findings of a study now under way of the activities of Jordanian women. The survey instruments consist of a time budget form and questionnaire designed to gather background data on each woman's living conditions, fertility, and work history. The study seeks to answer a variety of questions about the ways in which working and non-working women organize their daily lives. These questions include the following:

1. What do these women do all day?
2. Are these women already engaged in paid activities or activities of mutual assistance?
3. Do those who are not working have free time during the day during which they could work to earn money? How much?
4. What is preventing women who wish or need to work from doing so?
5.
  - a. lack of employment opportunities
  - b. lack of education
  - c. lack of time
  - d. traditional attitudes and social customs
  - e. the structure or size of the family, or the ages of its members
5. What skills do these women possess?
6. What skills do they need?
7. What kinds of work would they like to do?

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<sup>1</sup>This survey, which will be completed by February, 1980, was made possible by a MEAWARDS grant from the Population Council and the Ford Foundation. It is being conducted in association with the Queen Alia Jordan Welfare Fund, headed by Her Highness Princess Basma. The fund is currently proposing the creation of a Bureau for Women's Studies in Amman.

8. What types of community action or self-help programs would relieve them of enough household responsibilities to enable them to work?

### The Sample

The sample consists of 300 Jordanian women between the ages of 18 and 50 who are not registered in a course and not ill. These women were selected from the following four social classes:

- 50 women in the upper socio-economic group
- 50 women in the middle socio-economic group
- 150 women in the lower socio-economic group
- 50 women in the lowest socio-economic group

The area from which the sample of upper-class women was drawn is made up of modern deluxe villas and apartments. The middle-class sample was drawn from an area inhabited by middle-level civil servants. The lower-class women are from a densely populated mountainside where living conditions deteriorate as one descends the hill, and an unofficial refugee camp. The lowest class women all live in two pockets of hard-core poverty, where the homes consist of tin shacks.

Households were selected at random from each neighborhood. One woman from each household was chosen, also at random, to be interviewed.

### Data Collection

#### Round One

Data are being collected in three rounds. During the first round, which took place in the summer of 1979, the sample was selected. Interviewers visited each area for a week, interviewing three women per day each, beginning at 2 p.m. Special care was taken not to miss the women of the households who were out working at the time of the visits.

For purposes of filling out the time budget, each woman was asked what she was doing when the interviewer arrived at her door, what she had been doing before that, and so on, working back through time 24 hours. The entire night was included in the budget, in order to account for women who got up for their children or to pray, and women who begin their days very early. The interviewers were

carefully trained to assist the women to recall as accurately as possible the time at which they began each activity and how much time they had spent on each.

The time budgets were filled out in as much detail as possible, and constitute approximate schedules of each woman's activities over a 24-hour period. The poorer and less-educated women are less time-conscious than the middle and upper-class women, but they have some fairly definite points of time around which they organize their lives, such as the calls to prayer, the time they get up each morning to get working and studying members of the family off on schedule, mealtimes for the family, and the hours of favorite radio and television programs.

The women often try to answer time-budget questions in terms of their usual activities, rather than stating exactly what they had done during the 24 hours prior to the interview. The interviewers have to coach them on what is wanted. Other members of the family sometimes help a woman remember what she has done on a particular day.

During the first round of interviews, there were problems with the large number of friends and relatives visiting from out of town. The people were upset by a real fear that Skylab would fall on their neighborhood, and the heat and dust made work tiring. The upper-class women were either busy or about to take afternoon naps, leaving orders that they not be disturbed. Poor women were generally either at home or just down the street.

### Round Two

The second round of interviews took place during the autumn of 1979. By that time all of the interviewers, many of whom had graduated from the University of Jordan just before the project began, had taken full-time jobs. Thus this round had to be stretched out over a much longer period of time than the first round. Some interviewers took on extra work; others did only a third the amount they had done in Round One. Matters were further complicated by the fact that the census numbers in one area had been changed since the first round. It was difficult to locate some of the respondents, but ultimately nearly all of them were found. Mothers, who made up the majority of the sample, couldn't be away from their homes for long.

During Round Two, the time-budget questions were asked again. At this point, therefore, the study has

detailed accounts of activities engaged in by respondents during two seasons of the year. Round Three, which is to take place in December, 1979, will complete the picture.

Activities are now being categorized. Initially the classifications being used are those drawn from several previous international time-budget studies, as follows:

1. paid activities
2. childcare
3. housework
4. personal needs (sleep, rest, eating)
5. free time or leisure (active or passive)

However, if Jordanian women's activities do not fit easily into these categories, the classifications will be reworked, despite the fact that this may decrease international comparability.

#### Results of the First Two Rounds

The following information has already been compiled from the questionnaires. Figures are not yet final, but are presented here to give a preliminary idea of the findings.

The average number of children for each married woman in the various social classes studied was:

- 5.8 in the poorest areas
- 6.5 in the poor areas
- 3.8 in the middle-class area
- 3.8 in the upper-class area

Fifty-eight percent of the poor married women wanted no more children. Of these, one third are currently using some form of contraception. Of the upper-class women, 84 percent want no more children, and nearly two thirds of this group are using birth control.

### Paid Activities

The data gathered from the questionnaire and the time budgets from each round provide a picture of the extent and nature of paid work in which respondents are engaged. The percent of the women in each area who are now, or have been in the past, engaged in paid work is shown in the following table.

Group	Currently Engaged in Paid Work	Previously Engaged in Paid Work
Poorest Area	26%	56%
Poor Area	17%	32%
Middle Class Area	45%	58%
Upper Class Area	34%	64%

#### The Poorest Women

Of the working women in the poorest group, the largest number worked full time in institutions outside their homes. Over half worked as office cleaners. The sample also included a teacher, a secretary, a factory seamstress, and a dental assistant. Less than half of the women work in or around their homes. Such jobs included sewing and/or embroidery, selling ice cream from the home refrigerator or sweets in the neighborhood, or getting up very early during the summer months to make a crispy, Indian-type bread for their children to sell. One woman earned \$6.50 per day, half of which was profit. Thus she could net \$100 a month if she worked every day. Another woman gives shots to neighbors.

#### The Poor Women

In the two poor areas, two thirds of the working women were active in some kind of sewing activity, such as making very simple long dresses for one Jordanian Dinar (\$3.20) the piece, or sewing and/or embroidering the Palestinian peasant dresses which are worn by a great number of the women in the poor and poorest areas. One of the women in the sample embroiders for a woman who comes to her area weekly to pick up the work and pay for it. The women are paid by the number of balls of yarn used, at rates ranging from 1.5 to 2 Dinars per ball. One woman completes a dress of 15 to 20 balls

of embroidery yarn in two months, thus earning between \$36 and \$64 per month. A few earn as much as \$200 per month, working more than 50 hours per week. Most, however, earn much less.

Sewing and embroidery are very popular in this group, and in good weather women can be seen on the footpaths, doing their handwork while visiting with neighbors. All but one of the women engaged in sewing for pay do their work at home, and their hours vary from less than 10 to over 50 per week. Customers are easy to find, and the women are able to adjust their hours to suit the demands of their households. Men and the women's in-laws tend to approve of this type of economic activity.

One woman does quilting for the neighborhood about 10 hours per week. When she has no orders for quilts, she turns to embroidering. One enterprising mother who earns her own income through embroidering prepares an Arab sweet, halbeh, which she sells to her children at cost. They retail the sweet and the profit is theirs to keep.

A fourth of the working women in the two poor areas worked in institutions outside their homes. These included secretaries, office cleaners, a shop saleswoman, a teacher, a factory seamstress, and a policewoman. One woman sold soda pop in her tiny illegal shop, opening late enough in the day to avoid any government inspector who might pass through the area. Another sold candies which were individually wrapped to conform with anti-cholera regulations to children at a nearby school. Just before the second round of interviews, one of the women began packaging baking powder with her aunt and her mother-in-law for a merchant downtown. They earned one Dinar for dividing one large sack into 3,000 individual packets. By wrapping two to three sacks a week, they earn between \$6.40 and \$9.60 to split among them. One single girl who was interviewed works very long hours in her father's household sewing shop. She is not paid, but expects her father to keep money for her for her marriage. A few women in the poorest and poor areas reported doing farm work for pay in the past. One still harvests in Sweileh, on the outskirts of Amman, each year. Another was discovered in the second round to be collecting straw on the mountainside to sell, although she had originally reported no work for pay.

Women engaged in the activities listed above, most of which produce little income and which often occupy less than 10 hours per week of a woman's time, consider themselves to be working. Most such occupations are not, however, reflected

in Jordan's labor force statistics, and it is doubtful that the husbands or fathers of these women will report them to be working on the upcoming census.

#### The Middle-Class Women

Middle-class women are more likely to work than women of the other socio-economic groups surveyed. Of the working women in this group, all but three worked outside their homes. The largest number, both at the time of the study and in the past, were teachers, followed by secretaries and nurses. The only doctor in the sample is from this group. Of the three women not working in establishments outside the home, two do embroidery or sewing by the piece at home, and the third sells items from her husband's new and still slow-moving nouveauté shop from door to door.

#### The Upper-Class Women

Like the middle-class women, upper-class women tend to work in education, where their positions tend to be higher than those of the middle-class women, and in secretarial jobs. A third group, nearly as large as the second, hold posts of an administrative nature. One manages a bookshop, another is an officer in a bank, a third works in the public relations department of a cooperative. There is a fourth and very tiny category of women who run their own commercial enterprises, including a beauty parlor, a pharmacy, and a clothing shop. All work activities reported so far have been in establishments outside the home.

#### Training Aspirations

Although the answers to questions concerning the types of training which the women are interested in have not yet been tabulated, it appears that the poorest women are greatly interested in a variety of types of training. By contrast, the women of the poor areas were chiefly interested in sewing, either because their interests lie in this area or because they do not think their families would approve of other forms of work. Several were interested in literacy courses. Learning to make sweets for sale, or to do machine knitting, were mentioned by them less often than by the poorest women. A few younger girls were interested in typing.

The middle-class women were interested in typing, along with other types of work outside the home. Training for running small daycare centers in one's home was also mentioned frequently. Nursing was mentioned by various

groups more frequently than had been anticipated. Upper-class women were interested in training in fields such as foreign languages, flower-arranging, and the like.

WOMEN IN LABOR FORCE DATA IN EGYPT

by

Sonia M. Ali

Labor force data from most developing countries show that women contribute much less than men in both agricultural and non-agricultural sectors. While this is not true in all countries, it does seem to be the case in Egypt.

Egyptian employment laws do not discriminate between the sexes in terms of wages, working hours, rewards, and other benefits. There is, furthermore, some special legislation for the protection of women workers (Law 80, 1933; Law 91, 1959). Thus limited job opportunities are due to sexual discrimination by the society itself in referral for jobs and appointment. Until today, there are occupations which are completely closed to women, including those of judge, mayor (omda), and others.

Several biological, psychological, economic and sociological factors affect female work participation. Male dominance in Egyptian society has led to limited freedom for women and limited opportunities for non-agricultural work. This phenomenon was reinforced in the past by the scarcity of educational opportunities for women, resulting in small cohorts of educated women of working age. The first public primary school for girls was opened in 1873, followed by the first secondary school in 1900. Thirty years later, women began studying in the universities.

Data on Women in the Labor Force

Labor force data in Egypt are published by the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS), and are obtained from the population census, which is conducted approximately every 10 years, or from sample population surveys. The collection of labor force data through sample surveys has been carried out every year since 1957, except the years in which censuses took place. The 1973 sample included 35,000 households, representing 1.1 percent of urban households and 0.28 percent of rural households.

For the year 1973, the total active labor force of Egypt was estimated by CAPMAS to be 9,267,000, only 500,000 of whom were women (see Table 1). The CAPMAS survey also showed that in rural areas women constituted only 4.99

Table 1

Estimated Total Population, Manpower, Labor Force in 1973 (Millions)

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Items	Available Manpower				Dependent and Disabled		Total Population	
	Active Labor Force		Not in Active Labor Force		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent				
Rural females	359	3.9	5,649	29.8	1,185	17.3	7,794	20.5
Urban females	179	1.9	7,807	41.1	2,208	32.3	10,795	29.1
Total females	539	5.8	13,456	70.9	3,393	49.6	17,388	49.6
Total males	8,728	94.2	5,528	29.1	3,448	50.4	17,704	50.4
Total females and males	9,267	100.0	18,984	100.0	6,847	100.0	35,092	100.0

Source: Based on data taken from 1973 CAPMAS labor survey.

percent of the labor force in both agricultural and non-agricultural sectors. Further, an inspection of CAPMAS survey results reveals a decrease in the number of women employed in agriculture across time.

### Data Problems

Rural women make up 20.5 percent of the total population of Egypt, and women's contribution to agriculture is significant. This contribution, however, is never estimated accurately. Women contribute their labor to agriculture, particularly in the areas of poultry production, milking cows, care of goats and sheep, and to the marketing of farm products, especially dairy products, eggs, vegetables and grains. On some farms they are even decision-makers, and play the role of farm operators. However, problems exist in measuring their contribution, chiefly due to cultural factors.

Farming is a low-status occupation for women, and they try to avoid mentioning it to survey interviewers. The census and sample surveys employ male enumerators, who are not even allowed to speak with women. Even if they were allowed to do so, they would not be likely to be sensitive to the roles that women play. Further, although women often cook and transport water for hired laborers, this work is defined as housework.

### Other Studies

A rural employment survey carried out in 1964-65, sponsored by the National Planning Institute, demonstrated that 45 percent of females and 72 percent of males over six years of age were working (see Hansen, 1969). Another study published by the Ministry of Agriculture estimated that 20 percent of all females of working age were farm workers (Goueli and Hindi, 1979). This contrasts sharply with the census figures, which show active female workers as 3.9 percent of all able-bodied females.

A 1976-77 farm management survey sponsored by the Ministry of Agriculture will show more complete data on farming activities by sex. This survey provides more detailed data on labor utilization by task for the agricultural, non-agricultural and domestic sectors. Once its findings have been released, a more accurate picture of women's role in agriculture should emerge.

Table 2

Total Population, Percentage of Workers in Agricultural Activities  
in Rural and Urban Sectors 1962-1974 (Millions)

Year	Sex	Total Population		Rural Population		Percent of Workers In Agricultural Activities to Population
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
1962	Males	12,468	49.5	7,644	49.3	28.2
	Females	12,706	50.5	7,861	50.7	1.8
	Total	25,164	100.0	15,505	100.0	14.9
1968	Males	15,092	49.7	9,015	49.5	26.2
	Females	15,280	50.3	9,189	50.5	1.6
	Total	30,372	100.0	18,204	100.0	13.8
1969	Males	15,871	49.6	9,453	49.4	25.7
	Females	16,125	50.4	9,666	50.6	0.8
	Total	31,996	100.0	19,119	100.0	13.1
1972	Males	17,314	50.4	10,070	50.1	25.9
	Females	17,009	49.6	10,037	49.9	1.0
	Total	34,323	100.0	20,107	100.0	13.6
1973	Males	17,704	50.5	10,228	50.1	24.2
	Females	17,388	49.5	10,194	49.9	0.6
	Total	35,092	100.0	20,422	100.0	12.5
1974	Males	18,102	50.5	10,390	50.1	22.6
	Females	17,777	49.5	10,356	49.9	0.6
	Total	35,879	100.0	20,746	100.0	11.7

Source: Based on data taken from CAPMAS labor surveys.

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CULTURAL AND STRUCTURAL OBSTACLES  
TO FEMALE EMPLOYMENT: CUBA

by

Paula Hollerbach

For those studying the determinants of female labor force participation, the trends and obstacles to increases of female labor force participation in post-Revolutionary Cuba suggest an instructive set of questions to ask in other cultural contexts. Answers will differ, but the issues are noteworthy. In a study currently under way by the author of this paper, data on female economic activity are taken from Cuban censuses of 1899-1970, labor force surveys during the 1970's, annual statistics on fertility, marriage, educational attainment, and child care facilities, and social surveys of students and male and female workers. In addition, information on government policies was obtained from legal statutes and publications of the Federation of Cuban Women.

The Cuban situation shares some cultural similarity to the Middle East in that both cultures place strong value on the family. Domestic tasks and child-rearing responsibilities are more exclusively the woman's domain, and female employment outside the home has been historically limited. The Cuban situation is instructive, however, for against this cultural background, concerted but non-coercive efforts have been undertaken by the post-Revolutionary government to incorporate more women into the labor force.

Educational attainment for women has been raised through literacy courses, vocational training, and adult education programs designed to encourage a minimum of six years of education for all adults and qualification for the labor force. Female employment opportunities have also been expanded through government investment in education and health care, and specific plans to incorporate 100,000 women per year into the labor force from 1969 to 1972. To facilitate this employment, the state has provided child care centers, widespread access to contraception and abortion, and legal statutes insuring equal pay scales and maternity leaves. Compulsory primary and secondary education for children, boarding schools, scholarships, and summer camps have also shifted some of the child care tasks from parents to the state.

The legal and social status of women in Cuba has been

enhanced since the Revolution, and their mobilization through volunteer work has been successful. However, the level of female labor force participation in Cuba remains similar to that of other Latin American nations, and is much lower than that found in other socialist states, due to high rates of attrition of women from the labor force. By 1970, only 18.3 percent of the economically active population age 15 and older was female (approximately 480,727), an increase from the 1953 figure of 13 percent (256,440). In order to achieve an increment of 196,903 workers in the period 1969-1975, it was necessary to incorporate nearly 714,000 women.

Results of various social surveys indicate that female employment and retention in the labor force is hindered by a pre-Revolutionary tradition of limited participation, and a cultural context which places high value on the family. Second, despite the provision of child care by the state, domestic responsibilities and child-rearing are still the responsibility of women. Inflexible work schedules (only full-time paid employment is available); a severe shortage of services which facilitate employment, such as home appliances, laundries, and prepared foods; elimination of domestic service as an occupation; and husbands' attitudes have created the burden of a "double day" for women who are employed. A study conducted in 1976 of 250 women workers indicated that they spent an average of 13 hours a day, Monday through Friday, in employment and domestic tasks, and 11½ hours per day on the weekend, owing to an accumulation of home responsibilities.

Finally, economic motivation for female employment has been reduced. State provision of education and health care, sliding-scale costs for housing and services, rationing of food and clothing, and highly restricted access to consumer goods have diminished the value of money within the society. An additional constraint may be discrimination. Although pay scales are equal, substantial proportions of women workers report that their work places do not promote women. Administrative opposition to promotion is cited, based on employers' beliefs that domestic tasks and child care will interfere with women's ability to perform in upper-level positions.

Reversals in some policies relating to promotion and the provision of goods and services are apparent in the 1970's. Recently, attempts have also been made to change cultural values and attitudes. Passage of the Family Code and political discussions in mass organizations have been aimed at promoting the acceptance of a more egalitarian view of husband-wife relationships, and encourage the sharing of domestic tasks and child-rearing responsibilities. Although current employment is low, it is likely that female participation in the labor

force will increase within the next two decades. However, it will be concentrated in higher-status, traditionally female occupations, which serve to enhance the family's socioeconomic status, and are selective of the most motivated women. Greater increases in female economic participation would probably require more stratification of Cuban society, greater access to consumer goods and services, induced inflation through higher prices for goods and services, and retention of women in lower-status occupations.

PART-TIME AND MULTIPLE JOBS

by

Frederic Shorter

In our original notes for the Study Group, and in the discussion, practical suggestions for incorporating measures of part-time and multiple jobs in censuses and surveys were made. Dr. Zurayk continues to experiment with census questions in field trials. The significance of this measurement problem is as follows.

Census definitions lead to the classification of each individual according to his principal job. Persons are classified as economically active (i.e. members of the labor force) only if the amount of labor they provide (or offer, in the case of those temporarily out of work) exceeds some threshold level which varies from census to census. These standard census definitions have the advantage of parsimony. A great deal of information is collected about the economy by asking only four questions, in the following format:

Question One: What is this person's principal activity?

If the answer to this question places the individual in the economically active category, the following questions are then asked:

Question Two: What occupation?

Question Three: What branch of industry?

Question Four: What remuneration status? (In census manuals this is called "employment status." The typical alternative answers are: employer, employee, own account worker, or unpaid family worker.)

When cross-tabulated by sex, age, education, geographic area, or other characteristics, valuable information on the labor force and the non-economic activities of the population is obtained. However, there are serious limitations to this single-activity counting system. When there are part-time and multiple activities, which are especially common among women, the information gathered by the census presents a distorted view. As a basis for discussing this problem and considering some potential solutions, a simplified situation is assumed in Table 1.

Our hypothetical situation is an urban population

Table 1  
Population and Percentage of Time Devoted to Each Activity  
(An Urban Population)

Population Groups by Sex	Total Persons	Non-Economic Activity Home Work	Economic Activity by Industrial Branch	
			Manufacturing	Services
<b>Males:</b>				
A	600	-	600 x 100%	-
B	400	-	-	400 x 100%
<b>Females:</b>				
A	200	200 x 100%	-	-
B	500	500 x 80%	-	500 x 20%
C	300	300 x 50%	300 x 40%	300 x 10%

where men work exactly according to the assumptions of standard census questions--they have one activity, and it is a job in the economy. The women fall into three groups: the first, A, fits the census simplifications by having only one activity, home work. We don't show all the possible non-economic activities, such as schooling, retirement, etc. The remaining women have one or two jobs, in addition to some home work.

When the standard census questions are asked of our hypothetical working-age population, the results are as shown in Table 2. We have restricted our information to only one of the three characteristics of jobs, branch of industry. Normally all three questions are asked and tabulated, but the principles involved are the same for each.

Table 2

## Standard Census

Sex	Total Persons	Non-Economic Activity Home Work	Economic Activity by Industrial Branch		
			Manufacturing	Services	Total
Male	1,000	-	600	400	1,000
Female	1,000	1,000	-	-	-
Total	2,000	1,000	600	400	1,000

## Summary measures:

Labor-force participation of women (%)	-	0
Size of labor force (person-years per year)	-	1,000
Share of manufacturing in urban area (%)	-	60

Our results are those typical of censuses in general: understatement of female labor force contribution, and a misleading picture of women as home workers only. The actual economy also has a larger service sector than these results indicate. While economic analysts are aware of the existence of such biases in the census data, no one knows their extent, so statistical adjustment is impossible.

An imaginative and simple remedy was attempted in a

Latin American census according to a participant in the Study Group, Paula Hollerbach. The definitions for classifying responses to the first question were changed. If the respondent did any work at all in economic jobs, that person was classified as economically active, and the interviewer followed up with the questions that apply to the economically active. This procedure entails a loss of information regarding principal activities that are not economic, but gains information concerning labor force participation. Applying this rule to our hypothetical situation would produce the results shown in Table 3.

Table 3

## "Latin American" Rule

Sex	Total Persons	Non-Economic Activity Home Work	Economic Activity by Industrial Branch		
			Manufacturing	Services	Total
Male	1,000	-	600	400	1,000
Female	1,000	200	300	500	800
Total	2,000	200	900	900	1,800

## Summary measures:

Labor-force participation of women (%)	-	80
Size of labor force (person-years per year)	-	1,800
Share of manufacturing in urban area (%)	-	50

Note that women's economic activities are exaggerated, and the total size of the labor force is overstated. The solution gives about as bad (or good) results as the standard census rules, biased in the opposite direction.

The reason for the failure of the Latin American Rule is that the nature of the problem is part-time and multiple jobs, but only one activity is being asked about. If whole time were split by weighting activities, both economic and non-economic, a correct picture would emerge. The quantification of whole time is itself a problem, but can be handled by using a quantity such as five or six days per week, based on local research and knowledge. The denominator (quantity of

whole time) is not the critical cause of misrepresentation. If all activities are included in the calculation and weighted by their shares in whole time, the results are as shown in Table 4.

Table 4

## Actual Situation: Using All Information

Sex	Total Persons	Non-Economic Activity Home Work	Economic Activity by Industrial Branch		
			Manufacturing	Services	Total
Males	1,000	-	600	400	1,000
Females	1,000	750 <sup>1</sup>	120	130	250
Total	2,000	750	720	530	1,250

## Summary measures:

Labor-force participation of women (%) - 25  
 Size of labor force (person-years per year) - 1,250  
 Share of manufacturing in urban area (%) - 58

<sup>1</sup>Arithmetic is as follows:  $(200 \times 1.00) + (500 \times .80) + (300 \times .50) = 750$ . Other weighted figures are calculated accordingly.

To ask about every activity is beyond the scope of a census or survey unless a very intensive questionnaire is used. If the need for better information is urgent, and we believe it is, then some price should be paid to increase the accuracy of the statistical picture. We propose that two questions be added to the standard ones, both relating to a second activity. By increasing information to this extent, a substantial improvement can be achieved at a modest cost. The proposal, in detail, is as follows:

First we would like to clear one point about Question One, which is the screening question. A special effort should be made to identify individuals who have enough economic activity (that is, who are above the minimum threshold) to qualify for classification as economically active and thus be asked Questions Two, Three and Four. Interviewers and

respondents both tend to place women in the non-economic category (see Dr. Zurayk's remarks on this phenomenon in her paper in this volume), and to place men in the economically active categories. This is due to stereotyping rather than to careful inquiry about actual individual activity patterns. Some of the undercounting of female labor force participation is due to poor implementation of Question One rather than to a basic definitional problem.

Second, two questions can be added, dealing with a second activity:

Question Five - Do you have any other activity? (Probe for jobs.) If so, what is it?

Responses can be classified according to the categories of occupation, industry, or remuneration status, as in Questions Two, Three or Four. For the sake of economy, we suggest only one classification, so that Question Five will be one, not three, questions. In our illustration we are using branch of industry. However, occupation may be the most useful for labor force analysis if the choice is limited to one. The response categories must not differ from those for the matching question (Question Two, Three or Four). Question Five need not be limited to economic activities. It could include non-economic activities by adding to the coding list the non-economic categories of Question One.

Question Six - How many days, or equivalent, did you devote to this other activity last week?

The importance of Question Six is that it establishes a quantitative basis for weighting not only the second activity but also the principal activity. A standard quantity of time available is used. Because this is the same for all persons (an assumption justified by local knowledge and averaging across persons during tabulation), no question needs to be asked about the quantity of full time--it enters the calculations on the computer. The weight for the principal activity is  $(1 - W_2)$  where  $W_2$  is the fractional weight assigned to the second activity, if any.

With these two additional questions on each person's data record, and a computer for the tabulations, the results will be in the form shown in Table 5. All the usual cross-tabulations, by sex, age, education and other characteristics can also be made. Each individual enters the tabulations with a total weight of 1.0. The total weight results from two entries of the individual record when there are two activities

Table 5  
Add Two Questions

Sex	Total Persons	Non-Economic Activity Home Work	Economic Activity by Industrial Branch		
			Manufacturing	Services	Total
Male	1,000	-	600	400	1,000
Female	1,000	780	120	100	220
Total	2,000	780	720	500	1,220

Summary measures:

Labor-force participation of women (%)	-	22
Size of labor force (person-years per year)	-	1,220
Share of manufacturing in urban area (%)	-	59

The results of adding the two questions to the standard four are certain to give a picture closer to the actual situation. A comparison of all the methods is shown in Table 6.

Table 6  
Comparison of Census Results Using Different Questions with Actual Situation

Indicator	Actual Situation	Standard Census	"Latin American" Rule	Add Two Questions
LF participation of women (%)	25	0	80	22
Size of LF (person years per year)	1250	1000	1800	1220
Share of manufacturing (%)	58	50	60	59

In favor of the two-question solution, we may mention that a number of censuses have been asking Question Five, or something similar, without unusual problems. How well the quantification aimed at in Question Six will be achieved is more problematic, but worth testing and development to reach a feasible question. A practical way to proceed is to tie the question to "yesterday," or "last week." The same time reference period can then be used as a denominator for calculation of proportions of time devoted to the second activity. Since we are interested in results for groups, not individuals, we can count on aggregation to produce representative measures from these samples of one day or one week.

The proposed solution could be utilized initially in surveys. If it proves its worth in terms of the additional information obtained, it could then be recommended for censuses. The objective is to create a statistical instrument that monitors adequately what is already a widespread phenomenon in developing countries and now affects the industrialized countries as well: labor organized by part-time and multiple jobs. Women's work is more at risk of being misreported than men's with current census questions. With this solution, planners would have a much better idea of what is happening to both sexes and to the economy.

THE UNACKNOWLEDGED WORK OF WOMEN<sup>1</sup>

by

Mary Chamie

Our findings on the labor force participation of women in Lebanon point to the need for careful reassessment of how women should be and are integrated into the labor force. It is not sufficient, for example, to limit governmental policies to such a broad objective as increased participation of women. The characteristics of women who work, the quality of work that women perform, the kinds of opportunities available to women workers for further specialization and promotion, the degree of respect and concern demonstrated by governments and professional associations for upgrading occupations, and the extent of diversification and career development offered to women are key factors in any assessment of their status.

Social researchers and policymakers who are concerned with women and labor force participation must develop more sensitive social indicators and measures of work. In many respects, researchers who study female employment have yet to address the most crucial questions: "What is work?" and "Who is a labor force participant?" Why is it assumed, for example, that "houseworkers" in transitional societies such as Lebanon are not participants in the labor force? A more realistic perspective would encourage researchers and policymakers to adopt a category called "The Household Sector," which would include houseworkers, or those persons who work primarily in their homes and produce goods and services which are of crucial importance to their countries.

Perhaps the most strategic move that governments can make in order to upgrade the status of women is to include household workers in their estimates of the labor force. The assumption that these workers are a productive part of the economy would in itself drastically change the image and status of millions of women. Their unacknowledged work would then be open to legislation in areas such as social

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<sup>1</sup>The study from which this essay was drawn is reported in full in a paper entitled "Employment, Underemployment, Unemployment and Unacknowledged Employment: A Case Study of Lebanese Women," which has been submitted to the I.L.O. and the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World for the proposed book, Arab Women in Population, Employment and Economic Development.

security, work benefits, sick leave, health care, fair wages, opportunities for further specialization, etc. Currently, the majority of women who work are outside the boundaries of work legislation.

Within the proposed Household Sector, numerous sub-categories of employment are relevant. Houseworkers who produce and store foods, who care for domestic animals, who make clothing, who collect fuel for heat and cooking, or who are responsible for the care of elderly and indigent persons are to be differentiated from houseworkers who prepare already-produced foods, who primarily entertain, or who are home receptionists. Certain houseworkers are essentially administrative and managerial in their orientations, while others are undoubtedly unemployed, underemployed, seasonal workers, retired, or are employed in more than one capacity. These variations in household occupations and specializations need to be assessed.

In addition to this larger question of who participates in the labor force, there is the important task of identifying women agricultural workers and those who work as family assistants. The most difficult problem is that these persons themselves may not consider their work to be economically important. Owing to the way in which housework is currently viewed in most societies, women often consider it to be "non-work" or peripheral to the economic well-being of the family. Women who help their fathers, brothers, and husbands in the fields are apt to see this work as an extension of their housework rather than agricultural work. When asked whether they work or not, women respond "no" because they subscribe to definitions of work similar to the ones currently used by most policymakers. They might as well be asked, "Are you a man?"

Questions and probes used in censuses and surveys need to be posed very carefully in order to ensure their validity and reliability in identifying family assistance workers (Blacker, 1978). Culturally and linguistically appropriate questions that improve our understanding of women workers must be designed. For example, during a recent survey of labor force participation in Syria, Syrian men were initially asked whether their wives worked. A large number said that they did not. However, when asked, "If your wife did not assist you in your work, would you be forced to hire a replacement for her?", the answer was overwhelmingly "Yes."<sup>1</sup>

It needs to be explained why women, even highly educated

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<sup>1</sup>As reported by Mr. Meheddine Mamish, Syrian demographer, Beirut, Lebanon.

women, are confined to lower echelon positions in the work force, and to a limited number of occupations. It must be determined why the occupational sector which is most readily open to women, the household sector, remains unacknowledged as an important part of the nation's economy.<sup>1</sup> Someone needs to explain the even more puzzling assumption that "houseworkers" in all societies are identical in power, productivity and specialization.<sup>2</sup> Finally, analyses of women and work must proceed beyond looking at broad social trends to more thorough and multivariate analyses of such factors as occupational diversity, status within occupational sectors, educational assessment of workers within occupations, and the role of part-time employment in the economic development of women.

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<sup>1</sup>For some years the idea that houseworkers are a productive part of the economy has been discussed (Boserup, 1971, 1973; Tabbarah, 1977). Actually acknowledging this fact, however, by including houseworkers as members of the work force would require a significant change in attitude on the part of economists, other social scientists, and policymakers.

<sup>2</sup>Occupational variations in household work become obvious through comparison of the wives of prime ministers, members of parliament, large farm owners, businessmen, or tobacco laborers. The requirements of household workers are substantially different for each of these family status categories.

WOMEN'S WORK PARTICIPATION AND ADVANCE PLANNING

by

Judith Bruce

A number of Middle Eastern countries are now determining their fundamental approaches to employment issues for the 1980's and 1990's. While women have a vital stake in policies in areas such as social security, health care and child care, it is unlikely that their interests will be fully taken into account unless it can be demonstrated to planners that they should be concerned with the work roles of women and with their contributions to economic development. This note points to ways in which data on women and work can be obtained and utilized to persuade planners to take the special needs of women into serious consideration in the formulation of development policy.

The Data Problem

Available descriptions of women's work tend to rely on cross-sectional data, thus confirming the superficial impression that women's roles constitute a social or cultural given, rather than being the outcome of national and economic policies. Better data on women's roles over time can demonstrate how policy decisions have affected them in the past to erode or enhance work opportunities, and can be used to project future effects. Such an approach would be attractive to planners because it highlights the active and dynamic roles of both planners and of women themselves in enhancing the contributions of women to the economy.

Within the Middle East there is substantial variation in the data available on women's work roles. In some instances there are national level data pertaining to women which remain unanalyzed. In addition, there are a number of micro-studies which could be used in combination with census data to make some preliminary projections.<sup>1</sup> In order

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<sup>1</sup>Nadim (1977) discusses the economic roles and patterns of expenditure of men and women in a neighborhood in Cairo. Myntti (1979) discusses the economic roles of women in North Yemen. Maher (1978) provides detailed accounts of how time and resources are allocated at the household level.

to be maximally useful, an analysis of women's roles would seek information along several lines:

What have been women's roles in the workforce in the past?

Using anthropological data and historical information, including national level data which may date from colonial times (as are available in parts of the region), one could construct a typology of women's roles in traditional economies. These roles could be further divided into those of rural women, town women, and city women.<sup>1</sup>

What are women doing now?

In order to establish an accurate picture of women's work today, it will probably be necessary to supplement and even aggressively question, national level data currently available. Such questioning will be based on (1) commonplace observations (e.g., 'all over the country women can be seen working in the fields'), (2) data from micro and household studies on women's education, skill levels and work, (3) adjustments in analyses based on national data systems to allow for acknowledged measurement problems regarding intermittent work, productive work carried out at home, and informal or third sector work, all of which women participate in heavily. In short, the concept of work itself needs reworking if it is to capture the roles played by women.

Convincing the Planners

A fuller picture of women's work roles may not be sufficient, in and of itself, to convince planners of the need to pay special attention to the needs of women workers. Some lines of argument to which planners may prove responsive are as follows:

This is a transitional period economically, and as such has different implications for men and women.

Work roles are changing. The role of the household production unit is affected, and the household itself is an open unit, particularly in light of the high rates of migration in the region. Modernization is creating economic dislocation and inefficiencies. Change is not unidirectional,

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<sup>1</sup>Kandiyoti (1977) has discussed traditional work roles of Turkish women today along these lines.

and there may be setbacks or even reversals.<sup>1</sup> There are examples of women's productive roles being undermined by development, and of development generating a decline in the status of women (Boserup, 1970).

It is the business of planners to anticipate, regulate and direct change, and they thus need to take into account the fact that women's roles may be particularly sensitive to economic change, and that they may be especially affected by unanticipated side-effects of national policy.

Labor markets are sex-segregated, and planning for women requires different measures than planning for men.

Data from most countries of the Middle East reveal considerable sex segregation, particularly in the sector of modern wage labor. An analysis of existing national level data, despite their defects, may reveal a shift in the relative positions of men and women over time. The inclusion of a time dimension in analyses may also serve to bring the erosion of women's status to the attention of planners. It is, for instance, more informative to know that in India 30 percent of the work force was female in 1901 but that this figure had dropped to 11 percent by 1971 than to simply lament the 1971 figure (Advisory Committee on Women's Studies, 1977). Further, a comparison of the extent and type of work participation by sex, and perhaps by age as well, could provide a general map of sex-segregated labor markets and of the directions of change.

Such a long-term perspective underlines the fact that women's work roles are fluid and responsive to policy, that they require intervention if they are to be enhanced, and that such intervention is in the national interest. Many countries of the Middle East are now making heavy investments in education for women as well as men, but due to patterns of female employment they are receiving relatively poor returns on their investments.

Women's patterns of spending and saving are unlike those of men, and have different consequences for household and national welfare.

While there are insufficient data from micro-studies

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<sup>1</sup>Dr. Mubeccel Kiray spoke at the Study Group of studies of Turkish workers which traced their movements back and forth between traditional and modern commercial sectors, emphasizing that persons employed in the modern sector may not simply progress to another modern sector job, but often "regress" to the traditional sector.

for the region as a whole to systematically describe women's roles in the household economies of all the societies of the area, data from Yemen (Myntti, 1979), Morocco (Maher, 1978), Turkey (Ozbay-Kardam, in preparation), Jordan (Salti, presentation to Study Group) and Egypt (Nadim, 1977; Ibrahim, in preparation) suggest that the incomes of women and their roles in resource allocation are closely linked with use of health services, levels of nutrition, housing, education of the children, and other variables. It is also reported from some countries that men have a greater tendency to spend their money on non-productive items, such as gat in Yemen (Myntti, 1979).

More micro-studies are clearly needed. Such studies could be used to answer critical questions such as:

- What services would have to be purchased if women did not provide them?
- Which of these services are likely to become public costs if women work outside their homes (e.g., water carrying, household maintenance)?
- What parts of the household economy are women responsible for? In addition to household studies of the roles of low-income women, such as those cited above, useful information could be easily gathered from systematic interviews of women involved in informal savings groups known as gamayas (Ibrahim, in preparation; Nadim, 1977). Women might be asked questions such as, "What do you save your money for?" and "What difference does the money you save make for your family?"
- How are increases in women's incomes likely to be spent? It would be useful to speculate about how increases either in income or in control of income might be used. Do we have any examples of change in the area? What happened in the cash-cropping areas of Turkey where women controlled income? Although this question is seldom taken into account by planners, women's propensity to save, minimize debt, make long-term investments in the household, children's education and health should suggest that support for income-generating opportunities for women is a good national investment.
- Women have a 'working life' cycle. The use of data for one point in time (e.g., a survey) to describe labor force participation misrepresents the lives of women in particular, as they frequently contribute income

for concentrated periods of their lives but not at other times. Just as pregnancy histories are collected in national fertility surveys, work histories and household role histories could also be gathered. These would make possible the creation of time lines which identify periods of (1) heavy work contribution, (2) income generation, and (3) household management and headship due to widowhood or migration of the spouse. If planners are shown the extent to which even women who are not working at any given time are likely to work in the future, they may begin to take the needs of women more seriously.

What will happen to women's work roles and their contributions to society within the coming 10 to 20 years?

This is the most creative and necessarily most speculative part of the analysis. Present information about women's traditional roles and current situations has to be fitted into a broad, forward-looking picture of the national economy. Projections must be made concerning the basic direction of the economy, taking into account the gross and often external factors likely to affect it. Areas of predicted change over which national planning bodies are able to exert control must be identified. Finally, a range of policy options must be suggested for such areas.

Within the areas of the economy which are susceptible to direction or control, what sectors and types of businesses are expanding? Who works in these sectors, and who else has suitable skills for such work? What sectors are contracting? Who works in these sectors now? What are the wage differentials? Are they increasing? Judging from current conditions of sex segregation in the labor market, what is the prospect for women's participation in terms of sectors, levels of remuneration, percentages and groups who will be eligible for social security benefits? What impact would a national child care policy have on women's work participation and family welfare? (Child care is likely to be regarded as a "cost," or welfare item, unless the way in which it facilitates women's work is made clear.)

These are the kinds of questions which need to be considered if future planning processes are adequately to take into account the needs and contributions of working women. Based on information derived from anthropological literature, household studies, and national level data, combined with careful projections of future trends and a commitment to enhancing the circumstances of women in the labor force, planners might be led to produce scenarios that take all of the relevant factors into account.

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