

# **The Economic, Democratic, and Social Status of Men and Women in Eurasia and Southeast Europe**

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## List Of Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ASSR	Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics
CAR	Central Asian Republics
CEDAW	UN Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CMEA	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
CPD	Congress of People's Deputies (the Soviet legislature created in 1989)
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DHS	Demographic and Health Surveys
E&E	Europe and Eurasia Bureau of USAID
EU	European Union
FALTA	Feminist Alternative (Russia)
FSU	Former Soviet Union
GDI	Gender Development Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICMA	International City/County Management Association
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPU	Inter Parliamentary Union
IUD	Intrauterine Device
IWF	Independent Women's Forum (Russia)
MOH	Ministry of Health
MONEE	The UNICEF Regional Monitoring Project
NIS	New Independent States
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
PAYG	Pay As You Go (type of pension system)
RLMS	Russia Longitudinal Monitoring Survey
RSFSR	Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic
SAFO	Free Association of Feminist Organizations (Russia)
SII	Social Insurance Institute (Albania)
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SSR	Soviet Socialist Republic
STD	Sexually Transmitted Disease
SWC	Soviet Women's Committee
TACIS	EU Program of Technical Assistance to the CIS
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Fund
URW	Union of Russian Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

USIA	United States Information Agency
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WHO	World Health Organization
WID	Center for Women in Development, Global Bureau of USAID
WWI	World War I

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## Regional Maps







## Executive Summary

The need for this assessment was highlighted by the Review of Program Assumptions, a stocktaking exercise carried out by USAID's Bureau for Europe and Eurasia (E&E). The Review examined the validity of the underlying assumptions of E&E programs since beginning work in the region. One of the seventeen areas reviewed was gender. The "Revised Assumption" stated that "...the post-communist transition is exacerbating gender-based disadvantages facing women. Women are neither fully participating in, nor fully benefiting from, the respective countries' economic and political life."

That assumption required further examination, leading to this assessment. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the New Independent States have been undergoing an unprecedented transition to market democracy since the collapse of communism a decade ago. Many assumptions about the positive and negative impacts on women and men of this transition were based on anecdotal, subjective, or limited information. More objective data, collected in a systematic fashion, is needed to identify the real targets of opportunity for, as well as the constraints to, men and women's full participation in the transition to democracy and market economies.

This study is designed to cast a spotlight on the many changes in the roles of men and women in the spheres of the economy, and civil society, and the social safety net that have taken place as these countries attempt to re-make themselves. Designed as a compendium, it provides information in a common format that follows the key questions developed for the study (see the following Box).

### The Key Questions for the Study

#### The Economic Transition

1. Have there been changes in labor force participation by women and men during the transition?
2. Has unemployment increased, whether official or hidden, and is there a gender dimension to unemployment?
3. Is there evidence for wage gap trends and wage differentials?
4. How has the growth of the informal economy reflected gender differentiation?
5. What is the impact of privatization of state enterprises on women's and men's employment?

#### The Democratic Transition

1. Is there differential participation by women and men in the public sphere?
  - What is the role of women in party politics?
  - What is the representation of women in elected government positions, locally and nationally?
  - What is the representation of women in appointed governmental positions?
2. How is gender reflected in the development of civil society, especially NGOs?
  - What is the role of women in different types of NGOs?
  - Have NGOs developed that advocate for gender issues?
3. How has the rule of law been institutionalized and what impact is there on gender?
  - Have there been de jure legal reforms with an impact on gender?
  - Do men and women have equal legal rights, de jure and de facto? (Is there sufficient information to be able to contrast between de jure and de facto?)
  - Have there been reforms related to family law: inheritance, ownership, marriage, and divorce that impact on gender?

### **The Social Transition and Gender**

1. With the shredding of the social safety net, how have women versus men fared in access to / support from social programs?
2. Do data show women's poverty rates to be greater than men's?
3. What are the health-related impacts of the transition?
4. What differential impacts has pension reform had on men and women's access to benefits?
5. What are salient changes in the state-funded education system (secondary and higher) since 1989/91?

The following broad conclusions can be drawn in each of the three theme areas reviewed. A supporting conclusion is that broad generalities fail to suggest how complex the socioeconomic situation can be for specific categories of women—the elderly, ethnic minorities, mothers of large families—throughout the region.

### **THE ECONOMIC TRANSITION**

- Labor force participation by women and men has not changed dramatically in most countries during the transition, although women's participation has declined marginally. However, as labor forces have shrunk in many countries, more women than men have proportionately left the labor force.
- The ratio of women's to men's average wages – the gender wage gap – has either remained unchanged or increased somewhat in most of the countries of the region in the course of the decade of transition.
- However, relative wage calculations—the mean (or median) position of women in the male wage distribution suggests that the wage gap may be wider than that suggested by average wages.
- The job market in the region has contracted dramatically during the transition, with as many as 26 million jobs lost in the formal labor market. Where sex-disaggregated data exist, studies (excluding Russia) show that women constitute approximately 58 to 70 percent of the unemployed.
- Women may have been affected more than men by layoffs. Due to considerable gender segregation in the labor force, the impact on men and women depends on the degree to which different sectors have experienced the greatest contraction in jobs. In most countries, women predominate in the public sector and in service positions such as medicine and education. More women than men are professional or technical workers.
- While women participated at high levels, a low percentage of women held high managerial and administrative positions in state enterprises prior to the transition. Women were therefore not well situated to move into high positions in privatized industries.
- Women create 25 percent of all new businesses, a rate consistent with that in developed market economies.

- Men are more likely than women in nearly all countries to be private sector employees, especially as entrepreneurs. In countries with large agricultural bases, women are frequently self-employed in small-scale or subsistence agriculture.
- Qualitative data indicate that women are more likely than men to participate in the informal economy.

## **THE DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION**

- Men and women do not participate in the same ways or at the same level in Europe and Eurasia as they did before the transition to democracy. Women hold a much smaller percentage of roles (generally under 10%) in the formal political structures than they did under communism.
- NGOs are developing throughout the region, though some countries have passed legislation that inhibits their growth. Every country has at least a few NGOs dedicated to promoting or addressing women's issues; few NGOs specifically focus on men's issues. Little information was available about the degree to which the NGO sector is feminized.
- With respect to the rule of law, all countries have confirmed gender equality in constitutions and subscribed to international conventions. However, men and women are often not treated equally under secondary laws, particularly with respect to marriage, divorce and labor laws. In respect to ownership and transfer of land, gender equality exists in law, but seldom in practice. Information is scarce on any gender differentiation in how laws are actually implemented and on de facto gender equality in any country.

## **THE SOCIAL TRANSITION**

- Social safety nets differentiate on the basis of gender: in all study countries, women receive preferential treatment in three or more benefit programs. For those social benefit programs that base benefits on wages (e.g., pensions and unemployment), men tend to receive higher benefits than women receive.
- Poverty rates have increased throughout the region. Gender seems to be significantly correlated with poverty, and women – in most study countries for which there are data – are poorer than men. However, more sex-disaggregated data are needed.
- Pension reform has begun in the region, and while not all countries have progressed at the same rate, countries are at least considering implementing the World Bank multi-pillar pension model. Research regarding the actual impact of pension reform on gender is lacking. However, because the World Bank model includes mandatory, defined contribution pensions, women will tend to receive lower pensions than men receive because their wages are lower and the number of years they spend in the workforce is lower.

- In three of the countries studied (Armenia, Georgia, and Bulgaria) as well as in other countries of the region not included in this study, governments have raised the retirement age for both men and women. This may signal a trend in other countries of the region.
- The health impacts of the transition include decreases in life expectancy, maternal mortality, infant mortality, and abortion, and an increase in sexually-transmitted diseases. Despite the improvements, the rates of maternal mortality, infant mortality, and abortion are still very high relative to other countries and should be a cause for concern regarding the well being of women and quality of life. More sex-disaggregated health data are needed.
- Education enrollments have fallen for kindergarten and primary levels in most countries in the region. In the Caucasus and Central Asia, enrollments have also fallen in secondary and tertiary enrollments. Despite these declines, quantitative data do not show a gender-bias in the enrollment rates with the exception of tertiary enrollments—women account for a majority of tertiary students in most study countries.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

### *The Economic Transition*

The transformations that began after 1989 brought with them a dramatic decline in the economic fortunes of nearly all the populations of the region. To help us better understand the implications of the economic transition on gender issues, more sex-disaggregated economic research is needed. Information about the Caucasus is particularly lacking; future research should focus on these countries.

For example, several factors must be examined to determine their explanatory power as sources of occupational segregation and the gender wage gap:

1. The role of open or hidden discrimination in a) hiring management or administrative workers and b) remunerating women at lower rates than men for the same work or work requiring the same skills and experience.<sup>1</sup>
2. The possibility that occupational segregation influences the wage scale.
3. The possibility that job preferences by gender influence occupations chosen and the wage scale.
4. Related to that, whether, in the newly privatizing economy, women may find it difficult to be hired in the private sector and are more likely to hold posts in the public sector, where wages have been retarded.
5. Whether difficulties faced by women in advancing to senior management positions are also tied to a differentiation in wages.

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<sup>1</sup>Men could also be discriminated against in wages in comparison with women, but this is rarely the case empirically. Discrimination against men usually occurs in subgroups, such as against older men or youth, in comparison to other men or “prime age” men and women.

Other opportunities for research include women in the workforce, analysis of household data, and analysis of women and microenterprise.

Women are leaving the workforce. Is this liberating—as a choice to stay home that women had been denied? Or are they forced out by discrimination? What are the perceptions of women themselves and what are labor force analyses?

Household survey data are currently available for several countries. Analyses of these data could provide further insights into economic, as well as other, issues.

Data on women in the micro- and small enterprise sector have become more available and should be analyzed. Micro- and small enterprise data were not a focus of this report. Researchers should consider the compilation of available data, including success stories and/or lessons learned from USAID Missions that have been focusing on this sector.

### ***The Democratic Transition***

Some of the holes in the data for democracy and governance questions may easily be answered by in-country sources. For example, we found no sex-disaggregated voter turnout rates, but these may be published in local newspapers with election results. We also had very little info on political party membership across the region, but this information is often not readily available in other countries.

The other data gaps in political participation were in civil service and local government data. Little current information is available about the composition of the civil service in any of these countries and almost no sex-disaggregated information on participation in local government. By the time those few dissertations and articles covering this topic are published, the data are old.

The composition of the judiciary was also generally unavailable, except perhaps the constitutional court, and merits further research. Each country has a bar or judges' association, so obtaining that information in-country may be relatively simple.

Some studies have examined the size of the NGO sector in terms of percentage of GDP and person-hours of work, we know almost nothing about the composition of the paid staff and volunteers in the NGO sector. It is impossible to state without reasonable doubt that the sector is feminized, in spite of supporting anecdotal evidence. There is also little information about effectiveness of women's organizations and others representing vulnerable populations in influencing government policy in those areas, or acting as a conduit to other types of political activity.

We know a good deal about the *de jure* status of men and women in the region. But while some reports have asserted that men and women experience *de facto* inequality in the region, we found no hard data to support it. There is also no information on the gender-differentiated effects, if any, of making minorities second-class citizens. These would be important areas for future research.

## ***The Social Transition***

### **Social Safety Net**

Little is known about the informal economy, its size, and the gender differentiation of work in the informal economy. Theoretically, we understand that workers in the informal economy do not pay taxes to support the social safety net and do not receive many social benefits because of their unemployed status. Our understanding could benefit from research on the impact of the informal economy on social benefits and the gender differences in receipt of benefits because of informal work.

### **Poverty**

As is evident in the section on poverty and gender above, more sex-disaggregated poverty data are needed. Data should be stratified by age and gender, region and gender, and head of household and gender, and individual and gender. These stratifications are necessary for researchers to understand the complexity of poverty in each country. As we saw in the example of Georgia, the overall poverty rates of men and women are similar; however, the overall rate masks gender differentiation by head of household and age. Further, most current data are not comparable across countries, limiting the analyses that can be conducted.

Analyze most recent data on gender aspects of poverty, including age and familial stats as important variables (e.g., male and female youth, female-headed households).

### **Pension Reform**

More research is needed on the impact of pension reform on gender in countries where pension reform is underway. Most countries in the E&E region are beginning pension reform, and information about the impact of pension reform would certainly inform their policy decisions.

### **Health Reform**

There is very little attention in the available health literature on the relationship of gender and other social variables to health status. Health problems by sex are delineated, but there is little specific information on or analysis of causal or associated factors, including reasons for high maternal and infant mortality rates.

Outside the area of reproductive health, very little sex-specific or sex-disaggregated information exists. Within reproductive health, there is very little attention to men's roles and health issues, or their influence on women's reproductive health. Most data on STDs and HIV/AIDS are not sex-disaggregated.

There are no data by sex on infectious diseases such as tuberculosis that would enable determination of any differences in impact by gender.

It will be important to carefully monitor the effects of health system reform on the health status of women and men in the region, with particular emphasis on access, cost, quality of care, and prevention. Most of the reforms undertaken are too new to have had much effect on the health data currently available.

What are the lessons learned or possibilities of using the health sector as an entry point into gender issues and a place to encourage political and economic activity of women?

### **Education and Gender**

More sex-disaggregated data on enrollments are needed, particularly in countries where enrollments are falling.

Research and monitoring in those countries – the Caucasus and Central Asia – in which enrollments are falling would help policymakers understand why enrollments are falling and what should be done to stop falling enrollments.

Build on these, and revised, social data as a part of the youth inquiry.

### ***Region-wide***

Additional research on the following issues would add to our knowledge of the social transition in the countries of this study.

- More sex-disaggregated data on poverty are needed. Research is needed on intra-familial poverty, rural poverty, single male poverty and quantitative poverty data on youth and gender.
- Research on the effects on pension reform of raising retirement ages would provide needed data on how this increase affects the pension system and pensioners; this would provide needed policy information and to help other countries to evaluate their pension systems.
- The decline in education enrollments at all levels should be monitored to note any gender gaps that might emerge.
- More sex-disaggregated health data are needed, especially data on sexually-transmitted diseases and AIDS.

### ***Country-Specific***

#### **Armenia**

- Research into the proxy-means-testing scheme is needed. Because Armenia's new proxy means-testing program is the first to be implemented in the E&E region, information about its successes and problems would help other countries considering implementing such schemes.



- The unregistered abortion rate and solutions should be investigated. While the official abortion rate is low in Armenia (compared to other countries in the region), surveys indicate that abortion is widely used as birth control, and that the average number of abortions (among those who had had an abortion) was more than four. Research could explore the most effective and inexpensive methods of contraception and information dissemination.
- Research on effective methods of social assistance, including food aid, to stop child stunting is needed. More than 12 percent of children in Armenia under age five are short for their age, a result of poor nutrition.

### **Georgia**

- The narrowing of the gender gap in infant mortality should be studied to determine whether this trend is continuing and why. Although females under five were still at lower risk of dying than males, the normal gap had narrowed, indicating that males were benefiting more than females from declines in children's mortality.

### **Kazakhstan**

- Research on Kazakhstan's social benefit programs targeted specifically to women should analyze the effects of the transition on these programs and their benefit levels. For example, have the benefit levels been maintained throughout the transition?
- Pension reform, and the creation of mandatory private pension accounts, should be monitored for its impact on gender.

### **Kyrgyzstan**

- More sex-disaggregated data on health are needed. Two areas warrant particular attention. First, tuberculosis incidence is among the highest in the entire region, second only to Romania.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, data are not sex-disaggregated, so it is not possible to tell if prevalence varies by sex. Second, data on sexually transmitted diseases are not sex or age disaggregated.

### **Uzbekistan**

- Participation in the mahallas by women should be explored. While anecdotal evidence indicates that women are not chosen to participate in the committees that disburse social assistance, more information is needed to assess the quantity and quality of women's participation in these decision-making bodies.
- The current incidence of illegal abortion should be investigated to determine its impact and causes. There are no recent data on illegal abortion in Uzbekistan, but information from

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<sup>2</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, 173.

1991 indicated that 27 percent of all abortions were illegal, and that 65 percent of all abortion-related deaths resulted from illegal abortions.

- The narrowing of the gender gap in infant mortality should be studied to determine whether this trend is continuing and why. Although females under five were still at lower risk of dying than males, the normal gap had narrowed, indicating that males were benefiting more than females from declines in children's mortality.

### **Russia**

- Pension reform, and the creation of mandatory private pension accounts, should be monitored for its impact on gender.
- The percentages of women who give birth before age 18 is low, five to seven percent, according to 1996 survey data, although teen births may be increasing, a trend which should be monitored because of its health implications for both mothers and children.

### **Bulgaria**

- Research on Bulgaria's institutionalized children is needed. Research is needed to investigate the increase in child institutionalization and abandonment since the transition. In addition, no sex-disaggregated data on the children living in orphanages are available.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### **BACKGROUND: ASSESSMENT OF GENDER IMPACTS OF THE E&E TRANSITION**

When the Berlin Wall came down in 1989, few would have predicted the breadth of transformations that would take place in the next decade. Since the relatively peaceful replacement of the communist governments in Eastern Europe (with the exception of Romania) and the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1992, the transformations have been enormous, even unprecedented. In the process, the nations of Eastern Europe and the New Independent States – the Former Soviet Union – have faced enormous obstacles and setbacks in realizing the reforms that would lead them towards establishing market economies and democratic governments. The road has been complex and full of disappointments, and many of the changes that have occurred have had unintended and unexpected consequences.

This study is designed to cast a spotlight on the many changes in the spheres of the economy, government and civil society, and the social safety net that have taken place as these countries attempt to re-make themselves. Our area of focus is the impact of these far-reaching changes on the status and the life situations of men and women. The purpose of the study is to examine the current state of research on men and women, to provide an assessment of the changes.

The need for this assessment was highlighted by the Review of Program Assumptions, one of a series of stocktaking exercises carried out by USAID's Bureau for Europe and Eurasia (E&E). The Review examined the validity of the underlying assumptions of E&E programs since beginning work in the region, analyzing seventeen areas, one of which was gender. The "Revised Assumption" stated that "...the post-communist transition is exacerbating gender-based disadvantages facing women. Women are neither fully participating in, nor fully benefiting from, the respective countries' economic and political life."

That assumption, it was thought, may well be accurate, but it required further examination. This became the underlying premise of this assessment. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the New Independent States have been undergoing an unprecedented transition to market democracy since the collapse of communism a decade ago. Many assumptions about the positive and negative impacts on women and men of this transition were based on anecdotal, subjective, or limited information. In turn, USAID has been making many policy and program decisions based on that limited information. More objective data collected in a systematic fashion, will identify the real targets of opportunity for, as well as the constraints to, men's and women's full participation in the transition to democracy and market economies. Box 1.1 provides the reader an excerpt from the scope of work.

#### ***Was There Relative Equity Before the Breakup?***

In the relations between men and women, many presumed that, with all its many faults and problems, socialism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union had led to greater equality between the sexes than existed in the West and, even more so, in the Third World. The degree to which this is true is not easy to characterize. As Rose, Mishler and Haerpfer note, "In Communist societies women had the same rights as men" and thus, in form, gender equality was the order of

the day.<sup>1</sup> The ideology itself supported the idea of equality among men and women. However, in reality, neither men nor women had fundamental political rights; and the leadership of the real decision making bodies of the era, the Politburo and the Central Committees, was disproportionately male.

### **Box 1.1. Statement of Work**

#### **OBJECTIVE**

The purpose of this assessment is to give the E&E Bureau, its Missions, and its partners objective data from reliable sources on the human capacity and other socio-economic impacts of the transition on women and men. It will specifically address the impact of the transition on gender differentials in investments in such issues as human capacity development, changes in workforce composition and characteristics, and women's access to education and training. The information will be used in a number of concrete ways, including:

- informing the planning for the new E&E Bureau Strategy and new Bureau sectoral strategies, such as Social Sector Reform and Small-Medium Enterprise Development, both of which have important HCD components;
- building on analysis of results to assist Missions in designing or revising policies, programs, and R-4 reporting associated with HCD and related activities; and
- providing a tool for work with USAID and its partners about effectively integrating gender issues into activities and for linkage with appropriate websites.

Assessment of the potential gender-differentiated barriers and opportunities of the current socio-economic setting will address key questions in the E&E Bureau's three primary Strategic Assistance Areas for the region: (1) Economic Transition, (2) Democratic Transition, and (3) Social Sector Reform.

In many of the social and economic indicators cited to assess equality – such as levels of literacy and education, admittance to the professions, access to medical care, parity in pay for similar work – men and women were typically more equal than in the West. In social benefits laws, it also appears that men and women were treated largely equally with respect to pensions (with women having to meet somewhat more lenient qualifying conditions), disability, and family allowances. (Unemployment insurance was not typically a benefit offered in these systems that guaranteed employment.)

Another factor was the creation of a network of social services and benefits that effectively kept families from poverty and which provided a series of mechanisms which made it possible for women to participate in education and the labor force. And a factor that did contribute substantially to the role that women could play in the economy was the existence of much more generous family support mechanisms than typically existed in the West. In Eastern Europe, for example, in-kind benefits included the provision (usually free) of crèche facilities, kindergartens, day care centers, and school meals. Cash benefits included such elements as family allowances, paid until the child reached a certain age; maternity leave, often on full pay and usually for three

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Rose, William Mishler, and Christian Haerpfer, *Democracy and Its Alternatives: understanding post-communist societies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 132.

to six months; parental or child care benefits, a monthly payment for which the mother was eligible; paid leave for the care of a sick child; and others.<sup>2</sup>

These benefits allowed women to enter the labor force, to stay at home with continued income and consumer choices, or even to choose part-time work. The existence of early childcare facilities and the parallel direct benefits ensured that female participation in the workforce was as high as any region in the world, and the gap between men and women the least (though the gaps were least in the Baltics and in the western countries of the NIS, while they were greater in Eastern Europe and in the less industrialized areas of the Caucasus and Central Asia).<sup>3</sup> Women also took a leading role in many professions that only recently have seen an increase in women in the West – medicine is often mentioned in this regard. However, some researchers have argued that these professions were often “ghettoized” for women.

It could truthfully be argued that both sexes suffered equally the shortcomings of the communist model; but it also is clear that women had attained, under communism, some degree of relative equality in the workplace if not in the control of state institutions. One cost of the transition has been that in many countries, it has been impossible to maintain the elaborate network of social services that formerly lightened the burden of childcare and supported the participation of women in the formal work force. All these issues are dealt with in much further detail for the Soviet Union in Chapter 6.

### ***Human Development in the Region***

With the transition, many of these features have changed dramatically. The special benefits that existed to support women’s participation in the workforce have often been curtailed or have disappeared. Both men and women have faced unemployment, rapid social change, poorer levels of public health, and an uncertain future.

The UNDP, in an effort to expand its ability to discuss quality of life issues related to international development created, some years ago, the Human Development Index (HDI). This index has been a useful to provide a broad, easily understood measure that looks beyond solely economic measures. The HDI combines three indicators: longevity (life expectancy at birth); educational attainment, combining adult literacy and combined gross school enrollment; and standard of living, using a real GDP per capita in purchasing power parity as a measure.

Adjustments are made that discount high income, recognizing that beyond a certain threshold income adds little to the basic requirements for human development. More recently, the UNDP developed the Gender-related Development Index (GDI), which uses the same indicators as the HDI but which adjusts them according to the disparity between men and women. The GDI adjusts longevity to recognize that women typically live longer than men; and makes a complex calculation of real per capita GDP (PPP\$) based on the gender’s share of earned income and

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<sup>2</sup> Sándor Sipos, “Income Transfers: Family Support and Poverty Relief,” in N. Barr (ed.), *Labor Markets and Social Policy in Central and Eastern Europe: the transition and beyond* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 227-228.

<sup>3</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, (New York: UNICEF International Child Development Centre, 1999), 24.

participation in the economically active population.<sup>4</sup> These figures are provided for the region in Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1. Development Indicators for the E&E Region and Comparison Countries**

HDI Rank	Country	Gender-related development index (GDI), Rank, 1997	Gender-related development index (GDI), Value, 1997	Human development index (HDI) value, 1985	Human development index (HDI) value, 1990	Human development index (HDI) value, 1997
3	United States	3	0.926	0.897	0.911	0.926994
33	Slovenia	31	0.842	..	..	0.844520
36	Czech Republic	34	0.83	..	..	0.832598
42	Slovakia	39	0.811	0.798	0.803	0.812638
44	Poland	40	0.8	0.778	0.780	0.802139
47	Hungary	43	0.792	..	..	0.794918
54	Estonia	49	0.772	0.798	0.790	0.773440
55	Croatia	50	0.769	..	..	0.772995
60	Belarus	54	0.761	..	0.793	0.763211
62	Lithuania	55	0.759	..	0.780	0.760942
63	Bulgaria	56	0.757	0.776	0.777	0.757590
68	Romania	59	0.75	0.762	0.745	0.751921
71	Russian Federation	61	0.745	0.769	0.786	0.747039
73	Macedonia, TFYR	63	0.742	..	..	0.746348
74	Latvia	62	0.743	0.780	0.778	0.744478
76	Kazakhstan	64	0.738	..	..	0.740260
85	Georgia	..	..	..	..	0.729339
86	Turkey	73	0.722	..	..	0.727806
87	Armenia	72	0.726	..	..	0.727775
91	Ukraine	..	..	..	..	0.720682
92	Uzbekistan	..	..	..	..	0.720448
96	Turkmenistan	..	..	..	..	0.711619
97	Kyrgyzstan	..	..	..	..	0.702486
100	Albania	80	0.696	0.706	0.702	0.699264
103	Azerbaijan	82	0.691	..	0.755	0.694650
104	Moldova, Rep. of	86	0.681	..	..	0.682809
108	Tajikistan	92	0.662	..	..	0.665206

Source: UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*

Many conclusions could be drawn from this data; it shows that, of the 174 countries ranked worldwide by the UNDP, the region largely escapes placement in the bottom half. Further, the Northern Tier countries of Eastern Europe all rank in the top 50, while the Central Asian countries (except for Kazakhstan) and Albania fare the worst. European NIS countries,

<sup>4</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, 159-161.

including the Caucasus, are in between. Unfortunately, even in these very broad index measures, information is incomplete for many countries, especially gender-related information. This table sets the context for our review of the situation of men and women in the E&E region. The chapters of this study attempt to assess how the changes have varied from country to country, and what the overall change looks like.

## **HOW THE STUDY IS ORGANIZED**

This study is designed as a compendium, providing the assembled information in a common format that follows the key questions developed for the study (presented in Chapter Two and at each relevant point thereafter). We expect that most readers will seek the information of greatest interest and relevance to them, and so we have attempted to ensure that the information will be easily located within that format across the three assistance areas and in each of the ten country chapters. We expect the document to be used and disseminated in a variety of ways, in paper form as well as electronically, and we would be surprised if most readers set out to read the entire compendium as presented. Here, we describe the organization of the study to guide readers in locating what they need.

After the discussion of sources used in the study that is presented in Chapter Two, we present summary chapters, providing an overview of the region, on each of the three broad areas of interest: the gender dimensions of the socioeconomic changes of the past decade, especially relating to labor market issues (Chapter Three); issues surrounding men and women in the transformation of the public sphere and civil society (Chapter Four); and the changes related to poverty, social insurance, health, and other social sector issues (Chapter Five).

Chapter Six provides an introduction to the New Independent States and includes information that is common to all or most of the countries of that region. The next seven chapters provide the results country by country, in the following order:

- Chapter Seven: Armenia
- Chapter Eight: Georgia
- Chapter Nine: Kazakhstan
- Chapter Ten: Kyrgyzstan
- Chapter Eleven: Uzbekistan
- Chapter Twelve: Russia
- Chapter Thirteen: Ukraine

We then turn to Southeastern Europe, and present the following country studies:

- Chapter Fourteen: Albania
- Chapter Fifteen: Bulgaria
- Chapter Sixteen: Romania

These ten countries were chosen in consultation with the E&E Bureau, reflecting program emphases, and taking into account that these all have USAID Missions that are not slated for closure in the near future. We jointly decided to remove the former Yugoslavia from the country

list, given the dearth of good studies and the special circumstances of war that distort what might be considered the more “normal” consequences of transition.

Chapter Seventeen is a compiled bibliography of sources and references, organized by region and assistance area. Finally, many data sets were assembled to provide an at-a-glance overview for each country. The resulting data tables are included in the Appendix.



## Chapter 2: Methodology

This study, as a wide-ranging compendium on the impact of the transition in the Europe & Eurasia region on the status and life circumstances of women and men, was not designed to be original research. Its goal was to combine, synthesize, and analyze information that we gathered from a range of primary and secondary sources.

We began by developing a series of key questions, based on the areas sketched out in the scope of work that were described in the Introduction; the questions that guided us appear in each of the country chapters and in Box 2.1. We then discussed a review of the sources. Given the fact that the level of effort available did not permit substantial original research or data analysis, we determined that our working sources were the following:

- academic papers from recognized, peer reviewed journals;
- academic books, especially collections of articles;
- other recent reliable sourcebooks on international issues (such as, for example, the information compiled in the CIA Factbook or the World Bank Country Profiles);
- reports from international donors, especially the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme; and
- data from surveys and from reliable international statistics compilations (such as the International Labor Organization, the *World Development Indicators* of the World Bank; the *Human Development Indicators* of the UNDP, and other similar sources).

The sources used were selected based on credibility and comparability, since a major goal of the study is to present accurate and consistent information across the study countries. We did not subject to further analysis any original datasets that might be available.

These secondary information sources were reviewed to determine the principal issues and variables, the type and extent of data available, and the degree of concordance or differences among the data sources. Certain types of data are dependent on accurate individual reporting and may therefore be unreliable, i.e., unemployment, wage levels, public opinion data, and poverty data.

It should also be noted that no single source covered all the variables for any given country, requiring weighing and blending information from a variety of sources to give as complete a picture as possible. The final sections in the following chapters, on opportunities for future research, indicate some of the areas where information is lacking or inadequate.

Another important constraint is the lack of data analyzed for statistical significance. We have cited many sets of statistics showing differences by gender, for example, income level or successful candidacies for political office, but the original researchers often did not test the significance of gender holding all other variables constant. Since we generally do not have access to the raw data sets, we have no way to determine if the variability of those data is great or small. If the original researchers did not test for statistical significance, it is impossible for us to know whether gender is a statistically significant variable in several of the data tables presented.

### **Box. 2.1. The Key Questions for the Study**

#### **The Economic Transition**

1. Have there been changes in labor force participation by women and men during the transition?
2. Has unemployment increased, whether official or hidden, and is there a gender dimension to unemployment?
3. Is there evidence for wage gap trends and wage differentials?
4. How has the growth of the informal economy reflected gender differentiation?
5. What is the impact of privatization of state enterprises on women's and men's employment?

#### **The Democratic Transition**

1. Is there differential participation by women and men in the public sphere?
  - What is the role of women in party politics?
  - What is the representation of women in elected government positions, locally and nationally?
  - What is the representation of women in appointed governmental positions?
2. How is gender reflected in the development of civil society, especially NGOs?
  - What is the role of women in different types of NGOs?
  - Have NGOs developed that advocate for gender issues?
3. How has the rule of law been institutionalized and what impact is there on gender?
  - Have there been *de jure* legal reforms with an impact on gender?
  - Do men and women have equal legal rights, *de jure* and *de facto*? (Is there sufficient information to be able to contrast between *de jure* and *de facto*?)
  - Have there been reforms related to family law: inheritance, ownership, marriage, and divorce that impact on gender?

#### **The Social Transition and Gender**

1. With the shredding of the social safety net, how have women versus men fared in access to / support from social programs?
2. Do data show women's poverty rates to be greater than men's?
3. What are the health-related impacts of the transition?
4. What differential impacts has pension reform had on men's and women's access to benefits?
5. What are salient changes in the state-funded education system (secondary and higher) since 1989/91?

## **ECONOMIC TRANSITION SECTIONS**

The "Economic Impact of Transition" chapter and the "Economic Transition" sections of each of the country chapters compile data from the principal sources that were available to answer the study questions listed above. Secondary information sources were reviewed to determine the principal issues and variables, the type and extent of data available, and the degree of concordance or differences among the data sources. The sources used were selected based on credibility and comparability, since a major goal of the study is to present accurate and consistent information across the study countries.

Labor market information is generally weak in the ten countries studied in detail. Thanks to the excellent analysis and synthesis completed by UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre in the 1999 UNICEF MONEE Project report, *Women in Transition, Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, information on certain labor market variables were available for many – but not all – of the countries, including data on the gender gap in labor participation, measures of the "crude activity rate" for women as a proxy for economically active population, and assessments of wage differentials. As good as their information was, however, it was also sparse in some areas, outdated, and sometimes based on incomparable premises.

The International Labour Organization maintains an on-line database for labor market information that provided useful and, often, more current data for several countries (though never more current than 1997). An advantage of the ILO data is that it strives for uniformity in definition, such that there is some hope that, for instance, “unemployment” is being defined by a standard approach (and any variations will be noted). The information is provided by national Statistics Offices and is therefore only as complete and credible as the provider countries own approaches and methods. Since many countries are not yet undertaking regular labor force surveys, the data remain very incomplete for the region and are often not provided in gender-disaggregated form. Russia has the best recent data available, on-line at the GOSKOMSTAT website.

Both the World Bank and the UNDP have provided useful compendia of quantitative information in their annual *World Development Report* and *Human Development Report*, respectively. These were the source of a number of indicators reported on throughout the study, including the assessment of GDP per capita and real GDP per capita by gender based on purchasing power parities, the estimates for employment by sector by male and female, and several others. The Human Development Index numbers for the region appeared in the first chapter.

In several countries, in-country labor market surveys have been done at some point in the recent past. Most useful to this study were the studies conducted in Central Asia and reported in the Falkingham volume.<sup>1</sup>

We also drew on articles, books, and other sources, these sources are footnoted in the chapter discussions. We found that in many cases the information was contradictory, that numbers cited for the same year were often variable, and that great gaps of information and conceptualization exist in most of the areas we studied.

## DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION SECTIONS

### *Political Activity Data*

To gather information on political activity in each of the countries in this study, we relied on books, articles, and several electronic data sources. Information on levels of interest in politics came from public opinion polls or focus groups conducted by USIA. Strict methodologies were employed and we believe these data to be fairly reliable. Political party membership figures were difficult to find and were generally only available in academic journals, so we only have these data for a few countries.

The Inter Parliamentary Union’s Women in Parliament database was the primary source for information on women in sitting legislatures. We cross-referenced the CIA’s Chiefs of State and Cabinet Members web page with the Women in Governments website to determine the current number of women in ministry positions. We also used the Women in Governments website for

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<sup>1</sup> Jane Falkingham, Jeni Klugman, Sheila Marnie, and John Micklewright, *Household Welfare in Central Asia* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997).

historical data on the number of women included in past cabinets. UNICEF's MONEE Project report provided information from 1996, which we used for sub-ministerial level data.

Data on local governments were scarce. Researchers examined articles, websites, election bulletins, and raw data sets available from ICMA, but found that few data were available, generally in academic journals. In these cases, the data are generally old by the time they go to print, so we included very little on local government in this report. This is an area for future research.

Information on the judiciaries was scattered. We relied on Karatnycky, Motyl and Graybow's *Nations in Transit 1998* for information on the structure of the judiciary. We used the University of Würzburg's International Constitutional Law website and the websites of the governments of the Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, and Slovenia. We also used the website of the Embassy of Armenia, as well as various articles to provide current information on men and women in the judiciary, particularly the Constitutional Court. Many of the countries had no information available on the Constitutional Court, much less lower levels of the judiciary. This is an area for future research.

### ***Civil Society Data***

The data sources for civil society were less consistent. None of the reports defined NGOs in the same way and therefore came to very different conclusions regarding the number and strength of NGOs in each country. Only a few articles and conference presentations provided anecdotal evidence about the development of NGOs and its gender-related effects.

We used the *Civic Atlas* by Liza W. Poinier as a data source for Albania, Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russia and Ukraine. These data, however, were not sex-disaggregated. No academic publications have examined the NGO sector across Europe and Eurasia, except Romania, which was included in *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector* by Lester Salamon et al. Even these data, however, were not gender-disaggregated. A recent USAID study discussed the status of NGOs in the regions a whole, but provided little data by individual country and almost no gender-disaggregated data.

One major source for information on Central Asia was M. Holt Ruffin and Daniel Waugh's *Civil Society in Central Asia*. Although it did not provide a complete analysis of the development of civil society across the region, several of the authors provided insights to the obstacles to its development. Ula Ikramova and Kathryn McConnell's chapter on women's NGOs in the region cited specific examples of how women's NGOs could respond to effects of the transition, but again no analysis of trends across the region.

### ***Rule of Law Data***

Data on Rule of Law was less readily available than the other topics under the Democratic Transition. We used *Nations in Transit 1998* and the University of Würzburg's International Constitutional Law website as sources for the *de jure* rights of citizens. These sources provide a translation of the Constitution and some secondary laws, as well as some interpretive

information. Kim Scheppele’s article, “The History of Normalcy: Rethinking Legal Autonomy and the Relative Dependence of Law at the End of the Soviet Empire,” was also particularly insightful for this section. Very few sources discussed citizens’ *de facto* rights and whether there is gender discrimination in the exercise of *de facto* rights vis-à-vis *de jure* rights. Marfua Tokhtakhodzhaeva’s articles addressed these issues for Central Asia in general and Uzbekistan in particular. The MONEE report also addressed some of the discrepancies, particularly in marriage laws.

## **SOCIAL TRANSITION SECTIONS**

The Social Transition sections of each country chapter and Chapter 5, The Social Transition, each discussed social safety nets, poverty, pension reform, health issues, and education. The following data were used.

### ***Social Safety Nets***

The U.S. Social Security Administration (SSA) compiles and maintains a database of information on social safety net programs around the world. We relied on this database for primary information about social programs because, for all study countries and most of the social safety net programs in these countries, comparable and reliable data were available. We supplemented information from the SSA database with other sources where available. For example, UNICEF researchers wrote about a unique social assistance program in Uzbekistan using the local mahallas. Information from this report was incorporated into the discussion.

### ***Poverty***

Poverty data were generally taken from the most recent World Bank poverty assessment for each country. However, gender-disaggregated data were unavailable for many countries, and the data that were available were often incomplete.

Poverty data are typically not comparable across countries because of differences in local standards of living and poverty lines. One report by the World Bank, *Poverty Correlates and Indicator-Based Targeting in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*, provided reliable gender-disaggregated data for six countries, and we used this report where applicable.

### ***Pension Reform***

Information on the status of pension reform was gathered from several sources, including World Bank reports and the *USAID Guidebook to Pension Reform*, prepared by Barents Group, LLC, for the Center for Economic Growth & Agricultural Development in 1999. This Guidebook is not yet available to the public. There is little information available on the effects of pension reform on gender.

### ***Health***

The sources used were selected based on credibility and comparability, since a major goal of the study is to present accurate and consistent information across the study countries. Among the major sources used were Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) reports and reproductive health surveys (RHS), when available. However, DHS survey preliminary or final reports were only available for three countries (Kazakhstan, 1995; Kyrgyzstan, 1997 and Uzbekistan, 1996), and RHS reports in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) were only available for Romania (1993 and 1996) and Russia (3 sites, 1996). Data from the Russia Longitudinal Monitoring Survey (1992-98) were also used. In addition, national reproductive health and nutrition survey data and a survey-based report on the health of women and children were available for Armenia and Ukraine, respectively. Thus, fairly recent survey-based data, principally on reproductive or maternal/child health, were available for half of the study countries.

The two major sources for comparable demographic and health data across all the study countries, since DHS/RHS data were not available for all, were the UNICEF Child Development Centre's database from the MONEE Project, and data tables from the 1999 UNDP Human Development Report. These sources were complemented by data and reports from the World Bank, World Health Organization (WHO), U.S. Bureau of the Census, and other international and national sources. The notes for the accompanying table of comparative demographic and health indicators explains why particular sources for individual variables were selected. Within each country report, all sources are indicated in footnotes.

### ***Education***

We used data from two primary sources: the World Bank's World Development Indicators and the UNICEF MONEE Project's report, *Women in Transition*. The World Development Indicators provided gender-disaggregated data on primary, secondary, and tertiary enrollments. The MONEE Project provided data on overall enrollments at the kindergarten, primary, secondary, and tertiary levels, as well as information on public expenditures on education. These two sources were supplemented with academic reports, as available. For example, in the chapter on Bulgaria, we reported findings from a Ph.D. dissertation on higher education reform.

## Chapter 3: The Economic Transition

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Labor force participation by women and men has not changed dramatically during the transition, although women's participation has declined marginally.
- The ratio of women's to men's average wages – the gender wage gap – has decreased in most of the countries of the region in the course of the decade of transition.
- However, relative wage calculations suggest that the wage gap may be wider than that suggested by average wages.
- The job market in the region has contracted dramatically during the transition, with as many as 26 million jobs lost.
- Women may have been affected more than men by layoffs. Due to considerable gender segregation in the labor force, the impact on men and women depends on the degree to which different sectors have experienced the greatest contraction in jobs.
- Men are more likely than women to be private sector employees, either self-employed or entrepreneurs.
- Women create 25 percent of all new businesses, a rate consistent with that in developed market economies.
- More men than women are administrators or managers.
- More women than men are professional or technical workers.
- Qualitative data indicate that women are more likely than men to participate in the informal economy.

### INTRODUCTION

#### *Key Questions*

This chapter will summarize the current state of knowledge, with the latest data available, regarding six key questions relating to the situation of women and men in the Europe and Eurasia region. We find that the picture to be drawn of the economic impact of the transition of the 1990s is not always clear and sometimes contradictory. The striking contraction and reorganization of the economies that has taken place affected a region that was already characterized by significant contrasts in economic development, history and culture. Further, the subsequent market reform experiences in Eastern Europe and the New Independent States have been diverse. Within those constraints, these are the key questions that guided the review:

1. Have there been changes in labor force participation by women and men during the transition?
2. Is there evidence for wage gap trends and wage differentials?
3. Has unemployment increased, whether official or hidden, and is there a gender dimension to unemployment?
4. How has the growth of the informal economy reflected gender differentiation?

5. What is the impact of privatization of state enterprises on women's and men's employment?
6. What are the gender dimensions of new managerial positions and in leaders of business formation in the growing private sector?

Following the introduction and a discussion of the economic context, this chapter is divided into two sections: Findings and Opportunities for Future Research. The Findings section is further divided into six sub-sections, which seek to answer the six key questions posed above.

### ***Background***

**The transformations that began after 1989 brought with them a dramatic decline in the economic fortunes of nearly all the populations of the region.** Not since the Great Depression has there been an equivalent decline in a major world region's overall economic output. While recognizing that GDP calculations prior to the breakup of the Soviet Union are not fully reliable, it has been estimated that the region's GDP dropped more than 25 percent overall, from a 1989 figure of about \$1.2 trillion dollars – an economy about the size of the Federal Republic of Germany's – to just \$880 billion in 1996 (see Table 3.1).

The average annual GDP per capita in the region dropped from about \$3,000 to \$2,000 in this period, bringing with it far-reaching changes in productive relationships, the structure of labor, and people's expectations and experiences in the workplace.<sup>1</sup> For the first time since the communist regimes were instituted, significant proportions of the population experienced unemployment. This contraction, while substantial in the Central European countries, was less profound and far-reaching than in Eurasia. By 1998 several countries had regained most of the ground lost, and a number of the European countries (Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, and Hungary) have nearly recovered or even exceeded their 1989 GDP. Most of the Eurasian countries continue to suffer very significant losses. As the table shows, Russia remains on a downward slope through 1998, and Ukraine, Moldova, Turkmenistan, and the Caucasus now have economies that have shrunk by half to two-thirds. (The size of the informal economy adds a factor of uncertainty even to that conclusion.)

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<sup>1</sup> Branko Milanovic, *Income, Inequality and Poverty During the Transition from Planned to Market Economy*, (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1998), 7.



Table 3.1. Change in Real GDP, 1989-1998 (1989=100)

Country	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
<b>Eurasia</b>										
<i>Caucasus</i>										
Armenia	100.0	94.5	78.3	37.1	31.6	33.3	35.6	37.7	38.9	41.2
Azerbaijan	100.0	100.0	99.3	76.9	59.1	47.5	41.9	42.4	44.9	47.9
Georgia	100.0	84.9	67.4	37.2	27.8	24.6	25.2	27.8	30.9	33.7
<i>Central Asian Republics</i>										
Kazakhstan	100.0	99.6	86.7	84.1	76.4	66.8	61.3	61.6	62.8	63.5
Kyrgyzstan	100.0	103.0	97.9	79.3	66.6	53.3	50.4	54.0	57.5	59.8
Tajikistan	100.0	98.4	91.4	64.9	57.8	46.8	41.0	39.2	39.9	41.0
Turkmenistan	100.0	102.0	97.2	92.1	82.8	67.3	61.8	56.8	42.0	44.1
Uzbekistan	100.0	101.6	101.1	89.9	87.8	84.1	83.4	84.7	86.7	88.5
<i>West NIS</i>										
Belarus	100.0	97.0	95.8	86.6	80.1	70.0	62.7	64.4	71.1	74.7
Moldova	100.0	97.6	80.5	57.1	56.4	38.8	37.6	34.6	35.1	34.4
Russia	100.0	97.0	92.2	78.8	71.9	62.8	60.2	58.1	58.6	55.7
Ukraine	100.0	96.6	85.4	73.7	63.2	48.7	42.7	38.5	37.2	37.2
<b>Europe</b>										
<i>Southern Tier</i>										
Albania	100.0	90.0	65.1	60.4	66.2	72.4	78.8	86.0	80.0	87.2
Bulgaria	100.0	90.9	80.3	74.4	73.3	74.6	76.2	67.9	63.2	65.7
Croatia	100.0	92.9	73.3	64.7	59.5	63.1	67.3	71.4	76.0	79.2
Macedonia, FYR	100.0	90.1	79.2	62.5	56.8	55.8	55.1	55.5	56.4	59.2
Romania	100.0	94.4	82.2	75.0	76.1	79.1	84.7	88.0	82.2	78.1
Slovenia	100.0	95.3	86.8	82.0	84.3	88.8	92.5	95.3	98.9	102.9
Yugoslavia, FR	100.0	92.1	81.4	58.7	40.6	41.7	44.2	46.8	50.3	
<i>Northern Tier</i>										
Czech Republic	100.0	98.8	87.5	84.6	85.1	87.8	93.4	97.0	98.0	97.0
Estonia	100.0	91.9	79.4	68.1	62.0	60.8	63.4	65.9	73.4	77.1
Hungary	100.0	96.5	85.0	82.4	81.9	84.3	85.5	86.6	90.4	94.6
Latvia	100.0	102.9	92.2	60.0	51.1	51.5	51.0	52.7	56.2	58.4
Lithuania	100.0	95.0	89.6	70.5	59.1	53.3	55.1	57.6	60.9	62.8
Poland	100.0	88.4	82.2	84.3	87.6	92.1	98.6	104.6	111.8	117.6
Slovak Republic	100.0	97.5	83.3	77.9	75.0	78.6	84.1	89.6	95.4	100.2

Source: TransMONEE 3.0 Database, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Florence, <http://www.unicef-icdc.org/information/databases>. This database is a standard reference for the decade-long series of socioeconomic studies of the transition, "Monitoring Public Policy and Social Conditions in the CEE/CIS/Baltics Region," conducted by UNICEF at the Innocenti Research Centre.

**The post-communist inequalities between men and women are, to a significant extent, legacies of imbalances that existed prior to economic reforms.** A study of the gender dimensions of pre-1989 socialist social structures and organization would be a valuable addition to our understanding of the region. Research done in that era does indicate that, in spite of the ideological commitment to equality, there were broad inequalities between men and women in the communist societies of the 1980s.<sup>2</sup>

That is, women's work shared many of the characteristics that women experienced as workers in other industrial economies – lower income for similar work; less decision-making authority and reduced likelihood of advancement to senior executive positions; and occupational segregation. The relatively generous state-provided benefits did not make for labor market equality for women. Women were often perceived as less committed workers, due to absences caused by their domestic responsibilities. The limitations put on women's work for health reasons as well as their rights to early retirement, according to Fong, reinforced the perception of women as a secondary labor force.<sup>3</sup>

Within these broad generalities, however, differences existed among the various European countries and Soviet republics in women's economic position and roles, even within the umbrella of the Soviet Union. This chapter will provide overall views of the economic elements of the transition, but we direct the reader to the individual country reports for a more detailed analysis of the situations in each country.

## PRIMARY FINDINGS

### *Labor Force Participation*

The labor forces of socialist Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union had very high levels of female participation by international standards.<sup>4</sup> Jobs expanded for women due to the vast industrialization that took place after World War II. Socialist planning recognized that a rapid shift to an industrial economy was the best way to stimulate the broad economic growth required to move away from a dependence on agriculture. A large labor force was needed, which encouraged (along with the official ideology of sexual equality) women to move into the work force.<sup>5</sup> In most of the region, the high labor participation of women was accompanied by generous maternity leave and child care facilities, so that women were able to continue careers and have families. At the same time, their labor participation probably lowered birth rates. In the last decade of communist rule, labor market participation for women in most of Eastern Europe and the U.S.S.R was very high in worldwide terms.

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<sup>2</sup> Susan Bridger, *Women in the Soviet Countryside: Women's Role in Rural Development in the U.S.S.R.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

<sup>3</sup> Monica S. Fong, *Gender Barriers in the Transition to a Market Economy*, Poverty and Social Policy Discussion Paper Series No. 87 (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1996), 8-10.

<sup>4</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, (New York: UNICEF–International Child Development Centre, 1999), 24.

<sup>5</sup> Christine Allison and Dena Ringold, *Labor Markets in Transition in Central and Eastern Europe, 1989-1995*, World Bank Technical Paper No. 352 (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1996), 17.; Jane Falkingham, et al., "Household Welfare in Central Asia: An Introduction to the Issues," in Jane Falkingham (ed.), *Household Welfare in Central Asia*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 6-7.

**Labor force participation by women and men has not changed dramatically during the transition, although women's participation has declined marginally.** Table 3.2 compares labor force participation in 1990 and 1997. These data, phrased as ratios of working age women to men, confirm the high participation rates from the communist era and show that changes have not been great. In Northern and Southern Tier countries, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Croatia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia show increases in female labor force participation during the transition. Decreases were few and small, in Lithuania (which had parity of men and women in 1990), Moldova (which had more women than men in the labor force that year), and Ukraine. The rest of the countries changed little.

**That said, it is important to note that female participation rates across the region, while generally high, varied significantly from country to country.** At the beginning of the transition period, the highest female labor force activity was found in the Baltic States and in the countries that now form the Western part of the Commonwealth of Independent States — Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine. For example in Belarus and Ukraine, the gender gap in labor force participation was less than two percent. This is an impressively small gap, even taking into consideration that Soviet methodology counted women on maternity leave as active in the labor force and used a lower retirement age. Perhaps not surprisingly, female participation in the labor force was lower in the less industrialized, less urbanized countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia. Here, the difference between male and female labor force participation in 1989 was somewhat larger than in the western NIS. For example, in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan, the gender gap in labor force participation was nearly 9 percent.<sup>6</sup> Even so, in Soviet Central Asia, the rates were higher than in the more urbanized countries of Central Europe such as Hungary, Poland and Romania, where the gender gap in participation was greater.

Table 3.3 presents the relative percentages of labor force participation by men and women for selected countries from 1980 to 1997. This shows that men's labor force participation has declined in fragmented Yugoslavia as well as Bulgaria. Women's participation has declined slightly in the Central Asian Republics and Georgia and Azerbaijan (but not Armenia). No clear patterns emerge beyond these observations beyond a confirmation that women's participation has not changed fundamentally.

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<sup>6</sup> ILO, *Yearbook of Labour Statistics* (Geneva: International Labour Organization, 1992).

**Table 3.2. Labor Force Participation (F/M ratio)**

Country	Labor Force Participation (ratio f/m)		Country	Labor Force Participation (ratio f/m)	
	1990	1997		1990	1997
<b>Eurasia</b>			<b>Europe</b>		
<i>Caucasus</i>			<i>Southern Tier</i>		
Armenia	0.9	0.9	Albania	0.7	0.7
Azerbaijan	0.8	0.8	Bosnia-Herzegovina	0.6	0.6
Georgia	0.9	0.9	Bulgaria	0.8	0.9
<i>Central Asian Republics</i>			Croatia	0.6	0.8
Kazakhstan	0.9	0.9	Macedonia, FYR	0.4	0.7
Kyrgyzstan	0.9	0.9	Romania	0.8	0.8
Tajikistan	0.8	0.8	Slovenia	0.6	0.9
Turkmenistan	0.8	0.8	Yugoslavia, FR	0.6	0.7
Uzbekistan	0.9	0.9			
<i>West NIS</i>			<i>Northern Tier</i>		
Belarus	1.0	1.0	Czech Republic	0.8	0.9
Moldova	1.1	0.9	Estonia	1.0	1.0
Russian Federation	1.0	1.0	Hungary	0.7	0.8
Ukraine	1.0	0.9	Latvia	1.0	1.0
			Lithuania	1.0	0.9
<b>Comparison Countries</b>			Poland	0.8	0.9
Turkey	0.6	0.6	Slovak Republic	0.7	0.9
United States	0.6	0.8			

Source: World Bank, 1999 World Development Indicators.

**Conclusions about labor force participation must contend with difficult statistical inconsistencies.** Several factors contribute to those difficulties. The statistics collected in the socialist era are largely invalid at present, due to changes in statistical methods and survey techniques. Basic concepts have been redefined (for instance, women on maternity leave or retired were considered active, whereas they are not counted as active in the West). Labor force participation was equated with employment, while, in market economies, participation includes both the employed and the unemployed (at least those unemployed seeking work). For that reason, the MONEE Report adopts “crude activity levels” as a measure of participation. Crude activity levels compare the total workforce (employed and unemployed) to the total population. These typically do include as active those women on unpaid or maternity leave. These show a lower ratio than the working-age rates just cited, since they include women both older and younger than those typically in the workforce (i.e., 15 to 64). They also show greater variation among countries, since, for instance, a higher percentage of pensioners in the population will lower the average.

**Table 3.3. Labor Force Structure<sup>7</sup>**

	1980		1997		% Change, 1987 - 96	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Albania <sup>8</sup>	57	39	58	41	1	2
Armenia	52	48	52	48	--	--
Azerbaijan	52	48	56	44	4	- 4
Bosnia-Herzegovina	66	33	62	38	-4	5
Bulgaria	55	45	52	48	- 3	3
Georgia	51	49	53	47	2	-2
Kazakhstan	52	48	53	47	1	-1
Kyrgyzstan	52	48	53	47	1	-1
Macedonia, FYR	63	36	59	41	-4	5
Romania	54	46	56	44	2	-2
Russian Federation	51	49	51	49	--	--
Ukraine	50	50	51	49	1	- 1
Uzbekistan	52	48	54	46	2	- 2
Yugoslavia, FR	61	39	57	43	-4	4

Source: World Bank, *World Development Indicator Series* (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1999).

**As seen in Table 3.4, ten of the fourteen countries with data show a decline in women's crude economic activity.** This decline has been largest in the Baltics, Russia, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, where, assuming the validity of the post-transition data, 15 to 20 percent of active women have been replaced by inactive. How much these figures would be revised if better data were available on the informal economy is unclear. Men's participation has also decreased, but less in proportion. In several countries, men's registered economic activity (employed and unemployed) has dropped more than women's, as in Poland, Hungary, and Tajikistan. In terms of the gender gap, it appears that it has closed somewhat between men and women in several European countries (Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia), in which the gap was rather larger than in the NIS. In several countries, the gap has grown larger by this measure, most notably in Bulgaria, the Baltics, and Romania.<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, women's employment situation in Bulgaria has probably improved relative to men.

<sup>7</sup> Figures are taken from the 1999 World Development Indicators and refer to the population aged 15 to 64.

<sup>8</sup> The numbers for Albania do not add up to 100% because child labor accounts for 4% and 1% of the labor force in 1980 and 1997, respectively. Child labor also constituted a small portion (approximately 1%) of the labor force in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia in 1980. Unfortunately for the purposes of this study, these World Development Indicators for child labor are not disaggregated by sex.

<sup>9</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition, Regional Monitoring Report No. 6* (New York: UNICEF International Child Development Centre, 1999), 26-27.

**Table 3.4. Crude Activity Rates and the Gender Gap, 1989-1997**

Country	Crude Female Activity Rate		Rise or fall in CFAR	Gender gap in rate (male minus female)		Change in gender gap, % points
	1989	1997	1989-97	1989	1997	1989-97
<b>Eurasia</b>						
<i>Caucasus</i>						
Azerbaijan	33.3	35.1	1.8	15.3	6.8	-8.5
<i>Central Asian Republics</i>						
Tajikistan	34.8	28.2	-6.6	7.4	4.3	-3.1
Turkmenistan	34.7	29.0	-5.7	14.2	15.2	1.0
Uzbekistan	36.9			6.9		
<i>West NIS</i>						
Belarus	48.3	46.0	-2.3	8.9	-0.2	-9.1
Russia	47.9	40.6	-7.3	10.0	12.0	2.0
Ukraine	46.4	46.8	0.4	9.6	6.9	-2.7
<b>Europe</b>						
<i>Southern Tier</i>						
Bulgaria	42.4	39.3	-3.1	1.9	7.3	5.4
Macedonia, FYR		31.3			17.3	
Romania	42.6	46.9	4.3	8.4	10.9	2.5
Slovenia		44.0		13.0	10.3	-2.7
<i>Northern Tier</i>						
Estonia	51.3	43.4	-7.9	7.2	10.7	3.5
Hungary	37.4	33.2	-4.2	13.0	10.3	-1.3
Latvia	51.5	42.9	-8.6	7.8	10.7	2.9
Lithuania	48.6	44.0	-4.6	8.0	10.8	2.8
Poland	43.2	39.4	-3.8	11.3	10.0	-1.3
Slovak Republic	40.4	40.5	0.1	11.8	11.1	-0.7

*Note:* These data are from the International Labour Organization and the MONEE database. The crude female activity rate shows the active population as a percent of the total population (all ages). These data are estimates based on available and published official statistics. Persons with unpaid wage or maternity or other leave tend to be included among those who are active.

*Source:* UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition, Regional Monitoring Report No. 6* (New York: UNICEF International Child Development Centre, 1999), 25.

As for the total burden of work, including paid and unpaid labor, time-use studies done prior to the transition show that women's unpaid domestic labor in shopping, childcare, cleaning, and cooking, is equal to or exceeds their Western European counterparts. Given the much greater percentage of women who work full-time in Eastern Europe and Eurasia, the total average hours worked exceed substantially the average for Western Europe, where the percentage of part-time jobs and at-home mothers is higher. Women in the region spend, on average, 15 hours a week more working than in Western Europe.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Michael Bittman and Robert Goodin, *An Equivalence Scale for Time*, Discussion Papers No. 85, Social Policy Research Center, University of New South Wales, <http://www.sprc.unsw.edu.au/>.

### Box 3.1. The Importance of Employment

A woman in Tashkent province, Uzbekistan, speaks:

“At the beginning our life was good, but someone put the evil eye on us and everything started to go wrong. My father-in-law even threatened me with an axe, saying that my husband was a weakling, and my husband beat me after that. Just like that, with no reason. Times were hard for me then. In the morning I was supposed to bring my father-in-law warm water for his lavabo – neither too hot, nor too cold, and exactly at the right time. But I also had five children. So, I adjusted their feeding times so that it wouldn’t interfere with my father-in-law’s schedule. The poor kids cried, waiting for me to feed them. But at five in the morning I was expected to bring the warm water to my father-in-law. The chairman of the selsoviet (rural citizen assembly) failed to understand my problem and did not support me. Now everything has quieted down because of the financial problems at home. It’s me who is making money, and my husband cannot order me around.” From World Bank, *Uzbekistan: Consultations with the Poor* (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1999), 40.

**Women and men have clustered in particular kinds of jobs in the region, as is the case worldwide.** Women have predominated in the health sector, education, service work (such as in the hospitality industry), and in certain semi-skilled professional positions. Wages were often lower in these sectors, but the jobs provided flexibility and shorter hours than other types of work, valuable in a context where part-time employment was rare.<sup>11</sup> This also reflects gender stereotypes, in which women face barriers in gaining access to certain jobs or senior positions. Studies show that women’s predominance in a sector is associated with an overall lower wage scale. Whether this is due to jobs paying less because women are in them, or to women choosing lower-paying jobs due to their own career choices and commitment to family, is not clear.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, there was considerable segregation by sex throughout the socialist economies.

In Russia, women predominate in the fields of health and social security (84 percent), commerce, the hospitality industry (82 percent), education (80 percent), and the arts and culture (73 percent). These areas depend on state funding and subsidies; the decline in government social spending is likely to affect both wages and employment levels in these fields.<sup>13</sup> Table 3.5 provides information on the distribution of employment by sector and by gender.

In general, this review of participation reveals that:

- women’s participation in the economy remains high in international terms;
- overall, women and men have both withdrawn partially from the labor market, at least from the official labor market tracked in statistics; and
- the gender gap in labor force participation does not appear to have shifted very much with the emergence of a labor market in the region, and women’s share has grown in some countries while decreasing in others

<sup>11</sup> Elizabeth Brainerd, *Women in Transition: Changes in Gender Wage Differentials in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*, paper prepared for publication (Williamstown, MA: Williams College, Department of Economics, 1997), 6.

<sup>12</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 37.

<sup>13</sup> L. V. Korel, “Women and the Market,” *Russian Social Science Review*, Vol. 37, No. 5, 25, 27.

**Table 3.5. Labor Force By Sector and Gender, Percent Male and Female, 1990**

	Agriculture		Industry		Services	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>Eurasia</b>						
<i>Caucasus</i>						
Armenia	24	11	47	39	29	51
Azerbaijan	27	36	35	21	38	43
Georgia	27	24	38	23	34	52
<i>Central Asian Republics</i>						
Kazakhstan	28	15	37	25	35	60
Kyrgyzstan	36	28	30	23	34	50
Tajikistan	37	46	28	17	35	37
Turkmenistan	34	41	30	14	36	44
Uzbekistan	35	36	30	19	35	45
<i>West-NIS</i>						
Belarus	26	13	45	36	30	31
Moldova	38	28	34	26	28	47
Russian Federation	17	10	48	35	34	56
Ukraine	24	16	46	34	31	50
<b>Europe</b>						
<i>Northern Tier</i>						
Czech Republic	13	9	54	36	33	55
Estonia	18	11	48	34	34	55
Hungary	19	11	42	32	39	57
Latvia	19	12	47	33	34	55
Lithuania	23	13	47	34	30	53
Poland	27	28	45	25	28	48
Slovak Republic	14	9	36	31	50	60
<i>Southern Tier</i>						
Albania	51	60	26	19	24	21
Bosnia-Herzegovina	9	16	54	37	37	48
Bulgaria	--	--	--	--	--	--
Croatia	17	15	38	28	45	57
Macedonia	21	23	40	41	39	36
Romania	21	28	53	40	26	32
Slovenia	5	6	52	39	43	54
Yugoslavia, FR	28	32	38	26	34	41
<i>Comparison Countries</i>						
Turkey	38	83	24	7	38	11
United States	4	1	35	13	56	79

Note: -- indicates data are not available.

Source: World Bank Gender Stats database, <http://genderstats.worldbank.org>.



The lack of dramatic changes is not surprising, if we take into account the drop in average real wages and the need to retain income sources to maintain the family under severe economic pressures.

Greater changes appear when comparing age groups. A large part of the fall in female participation is concentrated among young and late middle-age women. In Russia, labor force participation of women aged 20 to 24 dropped 12 percent from 1989 to 1996, twice the decline among men of the same age. A quarter of that dropped is due to increased university enrollment; the rest must be explained by decreased childcare opportunities and fewer jobs. Women over age 50, many of whom would have been eligible for retirement before the reforms, are also reported to be taking a greater role in childcare.<sup>14</sup>

### *Unemployment*

**The job market in the region has contracted dramatically during the transition, with as many as 26 million jobs lost.**<sup>15</sup> In 1930, the Soviet Union officially abolished unemployment by guaranteeing all workers a job.<sup>16</sup> The transformations after 1989 have thus confronted millions of men and women with a novel experience that they may never have expected to confront, unemployment and the need to locate a new job in the growing labor market. Further, the dramatic loss of employment that has occurred has been somewhat tempered, in many of the NIS countries, because of the slowness of reforms and the reluctance (as in Central Europe) to precipitate large layoffs. Many NIS countries have accepted a significant drop in real wages rather than forcing mass unemployment, permitting workers to maintain access to social benefits, if not to cash income.

**Job loss for both men and women was worse in Central Europe earlier in the transition; more recently, unemployment has increased steeply in the NIS.** In fact, two main patterns have been observed in the region, in which the tradeoffs are made between wages and unemployment. In most of Central Europe, reforms led to the decision to lay off thousands; but GDP dipped only slightly and has nearly recovered in most of the countries. Wages and jobs have not recovered so well. In Hungary, for instance, in 1997 there were only 71 percent of the jobs that existed in 1989, and these paid a real wage that had decreased by 23 percent. However, in the NIS countries, the drop in national production and in GDP were so profound that a proportionate cut in employment could not politically be proposed. GDP and wages are a fraction of what they were in 1989; but employment has remained largely steady.<sup>17</sup>

Given the incomplete data available, the dimensions of unemployment are only partially understood, and it is not easy to document gender-differentiated trends. Full employment guarantees meant that unemployment, as defined in Western economies, was not measured in the public statistics collected in the Soviet era. Data from the early period of the transition were also limited by the disparate development of unemployment programs and continue to be

<sup>14</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 26.

<sup>15</sup> Brainerd, *Women in Transition*, 27.

<sup>16</sup> Jeni Klugman and Kinnon Scott, "Measuring Labour Market Status in Kazakhstan," in Jane Falkingham (ed.), *Household Welfare in Central Asia*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 123.

<sup>17</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 7.

characterized by varying definitions. Nor are current or recent figures for unemployment widely available, especially by gender. Such sources as the UNDP *Human Development Report 1999* or the World Bank “Gender Stats” database<sup>18</sup> do not provide information on current unemployment by sex for the region. Our best source is the ILO Database, from which Table 3.5 is taken.

Even these data are partial, since they refer to those who are officially registered with the state employment agency, and exclude those who are not working but did not register.<sup>19</sup> In some cases, especially in rural areas of the CAR, the costs of registering (in travel to regional capitals, food and lodging) may be greater than the minimal benefits received, giving the unemployed little incentive to register.<sup>20</sup> Further, in spite of the precipitous drop in real wages that millions experienced, many workers, both men and women, made efforts to retain their jobs due to the non-monetary benefits provided at the enterprise level, such as housing, health, and child care, which have become an increasingly important aspect of remuneration in spite of little money income.<sup>21</sup> “Hidden” unemployment, for both men and women, has grown greatly, in the form of workers still on the books for non-operational or closed enterprises; workers on forced leaves; and workers directly facing layoff in the immediate future.<sup>22</sup> Further, many who were displaced or laid off simply left the labor force.

**Women may have been affected more than men by layoffs.** Figure 3.1 shows that female unemployment has, in selected countries, dropped more than labor force participation. Thus, as many people lost their jobs, about half of the displaced have withdrawn themselves from the labor force while the other half have joined the ranks of the unemployed. Of the estimated 26 million jobs that disappeared in the region, some 14 million – slightly more than half – were held by women. Because of the shorter work life and the lower labor force activity rates of women before the transition, this actually means that they have borne a greater share, proportionately, than men. While labor force participation levels have changed little in percentage terms, the actual number of men and women employed shifted significantly. Table 3.5 provides a partial view of the rise and fall of unemployment

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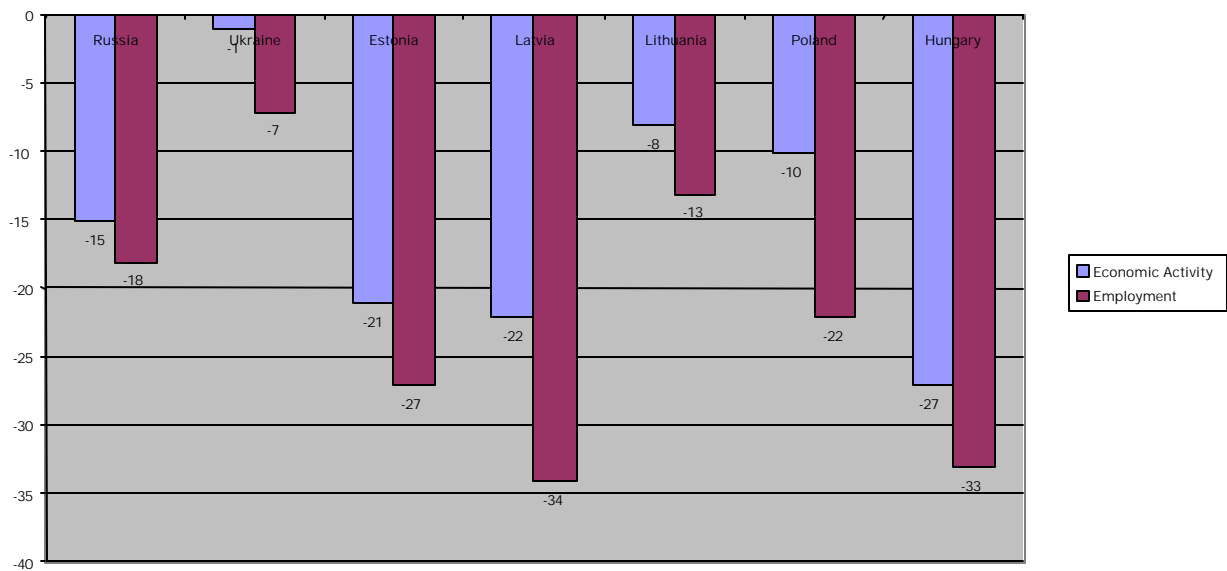
<sup>18</sup> World Bank Gender Stats Database, <http://genderstats.worldbank.org>.

<sup>19</sup> Falkingham, et al., “Household Welfare in Central Asia: an Introduction to the Issues,” 9.

<sup>20</sup> Klugman and Scott, “Measuring Labour Market Status in Kazakhstan,” 137.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

**Figure 3.1. Change in Female Economic Activity and Employment, 1989-1997**

Source: UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6* (New York: UNICEF– International Child Development Centre, 1999), 27.

**Unemployment varies by sector.** Due to considerable gender segregation in the labor force, the impact on men and women depends on the degree to which different sectors have experienced the greatest contraction in jobs. The percentages of male and female employment may stay about the same, disguising the severity of layoffs in varying sectors. For example, in Bulgaria, before and after the transition, a larger percentage of working age women than men were employed. But, by 1996, although women represented a larger percentage of total unemployed, men's unemployment had risen more sharply than women's. This reflects the fact that industries with a higher percentage of well-paid male positions, as in machining and metallurgy, have suffered most in the transition.<sup>23</sup> Total employment dropped about 15 percent in Romania from 1989 to 1996. In that period, women's employment dipped from 43 percent to 41 percent of the total in industry and rose from 73 percent to 76 percent in health care and social services, leaving women's total share of employment fairly steady at 44 percent in 1997.<sup>24</sup> Russia may be more extreme in this regard; between 1990 and 1995, women lost 7 million jobs, while men lost only one to two million.<sup>25</sup> Over 80 percent of working women held jobs in industries, particularly in the light and defense industries.<sup>26</sup> These were among the first to restructure, resulting in widespread unemployment among women at an early stage. By 1997, however, as seen in Table 3.6, 55 percent of the registered unemployed in Russia were men. In Kazakhstan, up through 1994, the number of jobs occupied by women fell by 22.7 percent, while the number for men fell 10.2 percent.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Lisa Giddings, *Changes in Gender and Ethnic Earnings Differentials in Bulgaria's Transition from Plan to Market*, Ph.D. Dissertation (Washington, DC: American University, 1999).

<sup>24</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 7.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 26-27.

<sup>26</sup> Anders Aslund, *How Russia Became a Market Economy* (Washington, DC: the Brookings Institution, 1995), 48-49.

<sup>27</sup> Armin Bauer, Nina Boschmann, and David Green, *Women and Gender Relations in Kazakhstan: The Social Cost* (Manila: Asian Development Bank, 1997), 21.

**Table 3.6. Unemployment**

Country	Unemployment (% of total labor force)		Unemployment (% of total)			
	1990	1997	Male		Female	
			1990	1997	1990	1997
<b>Eurasia</b>						
<i>Caucasus</i>						
Armenia	--	9.3	--	--	--	--
Azerbaijan	-0.1	1.1	--	--	--	--
Georgia	-0.2	2.8	--	--	--	--
<i>Central Asian Republics</i>						
Kazakhstan	--	3.6	--	--	--	--
Kyrgyzstan	0.0	4.4	--	--	--	--
Tajikistan	--	2.1	--	--	--	--
Turkmenistan	2.0	--	--	--	--	--
Uzbekistan	--	-0.3	--	--	--	--
<i>West NIS</i>						
Belarus	-0.1	3.9	--	--	--	--
Moldova	--	1.6	--	--	--	--
Russian Federation	-0.1	3.4	--	55	--	45
Ukraine	-0.3	1.5	--	52	--	48
<b>Europe</b>						
<i>Southern Tier</i>						
Albania	10.0	--	--	--	--	--
Bosnia-Herzegovina	--	--	--	--	--	--
Bulgaria	11.5	11.1	--	53	--	47
Croatia	9.3	15.9	--	--	--	--
Macedonia, FYR	23.0	38.8	--	--	--	--
Romania	3.0	6.3	--	52	--	48
Slovenia	4.7	13.9	--	52	--	46
Yugoslavia, FR	19.7	25.7	--	--	--	--
<i>Northern Tier</i>						
Czech Republic	0.3	3.1	--	46	--	54
Estonia	--	2.1	47	56	53	44
Hungary	0.8	10.5	--	61	--	39
Latvia	--	7.0	--	51	--	49
Lithuania	-0.3	7.1	--	53	--	47
Poland	6.1	13.6	--	46	--	54
Slovak Republic	0.6	12.6	--	51	--	49
<b>Comparison Countries</b>						
Turkey	7.5	6.6	68	64	32	36
United States	5.6	5.0	55	53	45	47

Source: World Bank, Gender Stats Database, <http://genderstats.worldbank.org>. These are typically official unemployment figures; actual unemployment may have been higher.

While unemployment data by sector are difficult to obtain by gender, it is widely accepted that women have had a significant portion of their jobs in health care, education, and social services. These are the sectors that are least likely to be privatized, so that women are more likely at

present to be working, across the region, in public sector positions. In many countries of the region, the state sector, while imposing severe real wage cuts, has not reduced employment significantly. An exception was Kyrgyzstan; in a national sample of 600 women in 1993, 77 percent of those unemployed had lost their jobs as a result of layoffs from the social support services where women predominated, pregnancy, and/or health problems.<sup>28</sup>

**While information is incomplete, data from Hungary suggest that family structure affects employment status.** Regardless of age, between 70 and 82 percent of women with no children are likely to be employed. One child reduces employment of younger women (26-29) to 52 percent; and with each succeeding child the percentage working drops, so that only 11 percent of younger women with three or more children are working; and even only about 40 percent of women aged 36 to 49 with 3 or more children are employed.<sup>29</sup> This suggests that the loss of childcare facilities may be encouraging mothers with young children to remain at home, a pattern similar to the United States.

### *Wage Gaps and Wage Differentials*

#### **GDP by Gender**

**GDP per capita, one measure of income and economic activity, shows significant gender differences.** The UNDP *Human Development Report* calculates “real GDP per capita” by male and female, figures based on the female share and male share of earned income. These shares are estimated from the ratio of the female wage to the male wage and the percentage shares of women and men in the economically active population. While not reflecting actual wages or accumulated wealth, the GDP per capita by gender provides an approximation of the relative economic situation of men and women. As the data in Table 3.7 show, female per capita GDP is less than male GDP in every country, ranging from 55 percent of male GDP in Albania to a high of 71 percent in Latvia.

**Table 3.7. GDP Per Capita by Gender**

Country	Female real GDP per capita (PPP\$ 1997)	Male real GDP per capita (PPP\$ 1997)
<b>Eurasia</b>		
<i>Caucasus</i>		
Armenia	1,928	2,816
Azerbaijan	1,164	1,952
Georgia	1,521	2,440
<i>Central Asian Republics</i>		
Kazakhstan	2,804	4,358
Kyrgyzstan	1,798	2,720
Tajikistan	850	1,404
Turkmenistan	1,642	2,586
Uzbekistan	2,019	3,047

<sup>28</sup> Marnia Lazreg, *Gender and Agricultural Privatization in ECA*, draft report, (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1998).

<sup>29</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*.

<b>West NIS</b>		
Belarus	--	--
Moldova	1,221	1,805
Russian Federation	3,503	5,356
Ukraine	1,691	2,763
<b>Europe</b>		
<b>Southern Tier</b>		
Albania	1,501	2,711
Bosnia-Herzegovina	--	--
Bulgaria	3,256	4,801
Croatia	3,557	6,325
Macedonia, FYR	2,257	4,163
Romania	3,221	5,435
Slovenia	9,137	14,619
Yugoslavia, FR	--	--
<b>Northern Tier</b>		
Czech Republic	7,952	13,205
Estonia	4,236	6,372
Hungary	5,372	9,194
Latvia	3,330	4,664
Lithuania	3,323	5,221
Poland	5,061	8,060
Slovak Republic	6,366	9,532
<b>Comparison Countries</b>		
Turkey	4,681	7,982
United States	23,540	34,639

Note: -- indicates that data are not available.

Source: UNDP, Human Development Indicators, 1999

### Income and Inequality

**Except for the Czech Republic, real wage rates have fallen significantly for both men and women throughout the region since the transition began.** As Table 3.8 shows, real wages have mirrored the shrinkage of the transition economies. A notable contrast exists between the European and Eurasian countries in this regard, however. For the most part, the Northern Tier European countries have suffered smaller (though still significant) decreases in real wages over the decade. Southeastern European workers have been harder hit; on average, for example, Romanian workers are earning only 40 percent in real terms of their 1989 wages. And while wages turned around in Russia in 1996, the collapse of 1998 has endangered those small gains.

**Table 3.8. Overall Wage Trends 1989-1997**

Country	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
<b>Eurasia</b>									
<i>Caucasus</i>									
Armenia								100	96.1
Azerbaijan	100	101.1	80.0	95.0	62.4	24.8	19.8	22.5	34.4
Georgia	100	111.2	76.5	50.5	24.1	33.5	28.3	42.2	57.0
<i>Central Asian Republics</i>									
Kazakhstan			100	64.8	49.1	32.9	33.4	34.4	36.6
Kyrgyzstan		100	70.7	59.4	49.6	42.0	43.5	44.5	49.1
Tajikistan									
Turkmenistan					100	52.9	24.8	20.2	30.9
<i>West NIS</i>									
Belarus					100.0	60.6	57.6	60.5	69.1
Moldova	100	113.7	105.2	64.4	42.0	33.8	34.3	36.3	38.2
Russia	100	109.1	102.4	68.9	69.1	63.7	45.9	52.0	54.5
<b>Europe</b>									
<i>Southern Tier</i>									
Bulgaria	100	111.5	68.0	76.7	77.6	63.7	60.2	49.6	40.1
Romania	100	105.2	88.9	77.3	64.4	64.6	72.7	79.8	62.3
Croatia							100	108.0	117.9
Yugoslavia, FR	100	78.1	74.0	38.0					
Slovenia	100	73.8	61.8	61.3	70.4	75.4	79.4	83.1	85.4
<i>Northern Tier</i>									
Czech Republic	100	93.6	68.9	76.0	78.8	84.9	92.2	100.4	102.3
Estonia	100	102.5	68.2	45.2	46.3	50.9	54.0	55.2	59.5
Hungary	100	94.3	87.7	86.5	83.1	89.1	78.2	74.3	77.1
Latvia	100	105.0	71.9	49.0	51.8	57.9	57.7	54.1	60.7
Lithuania	100	108.8	75.3	46.6	28.4	32.5	33.5	34.8	39.7
Poland	100	75.6	75.4	73.3	71.2	71.6	73.7	77.9	82.4
Slovak Republic	100	94.2	67.3	72.6	69.2	71.4	75.3	81.9	87.4

Source: TransMONEE 3.0 Database, UNICEF International Child Development Centre, Florence, <http://www.unicef-icdc.org/information/databases>; data not available for Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Albania, and Macedonia.

These sobering figures provide the context for a discussion of the gender gap in wages in the region. The socialist countries of Europe and Eurasia were long committed — at least nominally — to equality in the labor market for men and women. In the state-socialist economies during the 1980s, the ratio of average female to male wages was quite high compared to most other countries. For instance, in 1987 this ratio was 65 percent in the United States and 69 percent in the Russian republic. By 1996, the ratio in Russia was 69.5 compared to >75.0 for the United States (see Table 3.10).

**In general, the overall distribution of income in the region is substantially more unequal than it was prior to the transition.** One of the best measures of the change in the distribution of earnings is the Gini Coefficient; as the distribution becomes more uneven, the coefficient rises. As Table 3.9 shows, the trend in nearly all the countries is upward, meaning that, in the context of a drop in real wages, the distribution is becoming more skewed. Northern Tier European countries remain near the mean for Western European countries; while several of the NIS countries, especially Russia and Kyrgyzstan, are in the range of those countries with substantially greater inequality. Prior to the transition, all countries but those of Central Asia fell in the range of 19 to 24. Figures from 1996-97 now range from a low of 25.9 for the Czech Republic and Macedonia to 48 and 49 for Georgia and the Russian Federation. Milanovic's analysis of income by population quintiles divides the changes into three groups. In Hungary, Slovakia, and Slovenia, very little change has occurred in income distribution. For the second group, the Baltics and the Czech Republic, the lowest quintile lost about 1 to 2 percent, down to 9 to 10 percent of total income, and the top quintile grew to 35 percent of income, still less inequality than exists in the United Kingdom. The third group, which includes Russia, Ukraine, the Central Asian Republics, and the Caucasus, showed a much greater growth in inequality. In Russia, for instance, substantial resources were transferred from the bottom 80 percent to the top 20 percent.<sup>30</sup>

### **Wage Differentials**

**The gender wage gap, in relative terms, has decreased in most of the countries of the region in the course of the decade of transition.** In spite of (or perhaps because of) the drop in real wages, the gap between men's and women's average wages is either less, or only slightly more, than it was in 1990. As seen in Table 3.10, in the case of the Czech Republic, Slovenia, and Latvia, the ratio of women's wages to men's has reached 80 percent. Even where the ratio has declined, it has been, in most countries throughout the 1990's, as high as exists in the United States. The figure for many countries (FRY, Romania, Russia, Ukraine) has remained relatively stable. This stability is a striking outcome in the context of changing labor markets and the significant growth in wage inequality.

These differing labor market experiences do not appear to be significantly related to differing macro-economic performances across countries, but rather to differing changes in the wage structure (rising inequality and increasing prices of measured and unmeasured skills) and changes in gender-specific factors such as discrimination across countries. As decentralization of the post-communist economies increases, so too should wage dispersion.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Milanovic, *Income, Inequality and Poverty During the Transition from Planned to Market Economy*, 40-45.

<sup>31</sup> Brainerd, *Women in Transition*, 15.



**Table 3.9. Gini Coefficient by Country, 1990-1997**

Country	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
<b>Eurasia</b>								
<i>Caucasus</i>								
Armenia	--	29.6	35.5	36.6	32.1	38.1	--	--
Azerbaijan	--	--	--	--	--	--	45.8	--
Georgia	--	--	36.9	40.0	--	--	--	49.8
<i>Central Asian Republics</i>								
Kazakhstan	--	--	--	--	33.0	--	--	--
Kyrgyzstan	--	--	30.0	44.5	44.3	39.5	42.8	43.1
<i>West NIS</i>								
Belarus	--	--	34.1	39.9	--	--	--	--
Moldova	--	--	41.1	43.7	37.9	39.0	--	--
Russia	26.9	32.5	37.1	46.1	44.6	47.1	48.3	--
Ukraine	--	--	25.1	36.4	--	--	41.3	--
<i>Europe</i>								
<i>Southern Tier</i>								
Bulgaria	21.2	26.2	--	25.1	--	--	29.1	--
Romania	--	20.4	--	22.6	27.6	27.8	30.3	42.2
Macedonia, FYR	22.3	26.7	23.5	27.2	25.3	27.0	25.0	25.9
Slovenia	23.2	27.3	26.0	27.6	27.5	35.8	29.8	30.7
<i>Northern Tier</i>								
Czech Republic	--	21.2	21.4	25.9	26.0	28.2	25.4	25.9
Hungary	--	--	30.5	32.0	32.4	--	--	34.8
Latvia	--	24.7	33.3	28.3	32.5	34.6	34.9	33.6
Lithuania	--	--	37.2	--	34.9	34.1	35.0	34.5
Poland	--	23.9	24.7	25.6	28.1	29.0	30.2	30.0

Note: -- indicates data not available.

Source: European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, *Transition Report 1999: Ten Years of Transition* (London: EBRD, 1999). Data not available for Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Estonia, Slovakia, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, and Yugoslavia.

These ratios do not tell the whole story. For example, they do not reflect the increase in secondary work and work in the informal economy. They also do not take into account the issue of wage arrears which, in Russia and Ukraine at least, affect sectors and enterprises that are feminized. On the other hand, one study in Ukraine suggests that the sex of the worker is not a major factor affecting wage arrears; ethnicity and age were more likely to be predictive variables.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 34.

**Table 3.10. Comparison of Pay by Gender,  
Selected Countries And Years (percentage f/m)**

Country	Percentage	Year	Country	Percentage	Year
<b>Eurasia</b>			<b>Europe</b>		
<i>Caucasus</i>			<i>Southern Tier</i>		
Armenia	--	--	Albania	--	--
Azerbaijan	52.6	1995	Bulgaria	74.0 69.1	1990 1997
Georgia	--	--	Croatia	--	--
<b>Central Asian Republics</b>			Macedonia, FYR	--	--
Kazakhstan	72.3	1996	Romania	78.6 76.2	1994 1997
Kyrgyzstan	73.3 71.5	1995 1997	Slovenia	87.0 88.6 85.4	1987 1991 1996
Tajikistan	--	--	Yugoslavia, FR	89.9 88.8 88.4	1995 1996 1997
Turkmenistan	--	--	<b>Northern Tier</b>		
Uzbekistan	80.5	1995	Czech Republic	66.1 73.0 81.3	1987 1992 1996
<b>West NIS</b>			Estonia	79.8 72.6	1992 1996
Belarus	--	--	Hungary	74.3 80.8 78.1	1986 1992 1997
Moldova	--	--	Latvia	79.9	1998
Russia	70.9 68.5 69.5	1989 1992 1996	Lithuania*	65.0 71.0	1997 1997
Ukraine	77.7	1996	Poland	73.7 79.0 79.0	1985 1992 1996
<b>Comparison Countries</b>			Slovak Republic	66.1 73.3 78.2	1987 1992 1996
Turkey	--	--			
United States	>75.0	1997			

Notes: -- indicates data are not available.

\* For Lithuania, the first figure is for manual workers and the second for non-manual workers.

Sources: UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 33; data for the United States from: Council of Economic Advisors, Explaining Trends in the Gender Wage Gap, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/WH/EOP/CEA/html/gendergap.html>, June 1998.

**Relative wage calculations suggest that the wage gap may be wider than that suggested by average wages.** One characteristic of the centralized wage structures fashioned during the communist period was a more compressed wage distribution than generally exists in the West. This benefits workers with below-average wages and has implications in examining gender gaps in wages. Drawing on the work of Blau and Kahn,<sup>33</sup> Brainerd shows that a better measure of women's wage situation than the average wage ratio presented in Table 3.10 is given by *relative wage*, that is, the mean (or median) position of women in the male wage distribution.<sup>34</sup> By this measure, the overall wage structure has widened somewhat in East European countries, while it has increased substantially in the countries of the former Soviet Union – though now reaching the levels of wage inequality of the United States, which is the most unequal of the developed countries. Ukraine, in turn, has now reached a wage distribution with extremes of wealth and poverty much like that of developing countries.<sup>35</sup>

In sum, Brainerd argues that women in some countries, such as Russia and Ukraine, are now faring substantially worse in terms of wages relative to men than they did under socialism, while women in other countries — such as Poland, Hungary and Slovenia — have gained significantly relative to men since the late 1980's. In the medium term, the changes that have taken place in the region may put women at a disadvantage to men, since before the reforms women had a disproportionate percentage of lower-paying jobs in the compressed wage scale. On the other hand, the evolving labor market will value and reward certain skills more highly – such as education – that may favor women.

### *Private Enterprise*

#### **Small Businesses as Engines of Economic Growth and Gender Implications**

Small businesses are an essential element of economic growth. In fact, small businesses are equal to large corporations in generating both new jobs and economic growth in many areas of the world.<sup>36</sup> Not only are small businesses generally providing the majority of jobs and close to 50 percent of the GDP, but businesses owned by women are also a major—though often unrecognized—component of this economic engine.

#### **Women's Success as Entrepreneurs**

**Women create 25 percent of all new businesses, a percentage that is very close to that of western economies.** As Figure 3.2 shows, the share of women entrepreneurs, at least in the countries cited, ranges between 20 and 30 percent, covering a wide range of activities, from

<sup>33</sup> Francine D. Blau and L. M. Kahn, "Wage Structure and Gender Earnings Differentials: An International Comparison," *Economica*, May 1996, S29-S62.

<sup>34</sup> Brainerd, *Women in Transition*. Relative wage is calculated by assigning each woman a percentile ranking in the wage male distribution, and finding the mean (or median) of these rankings.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

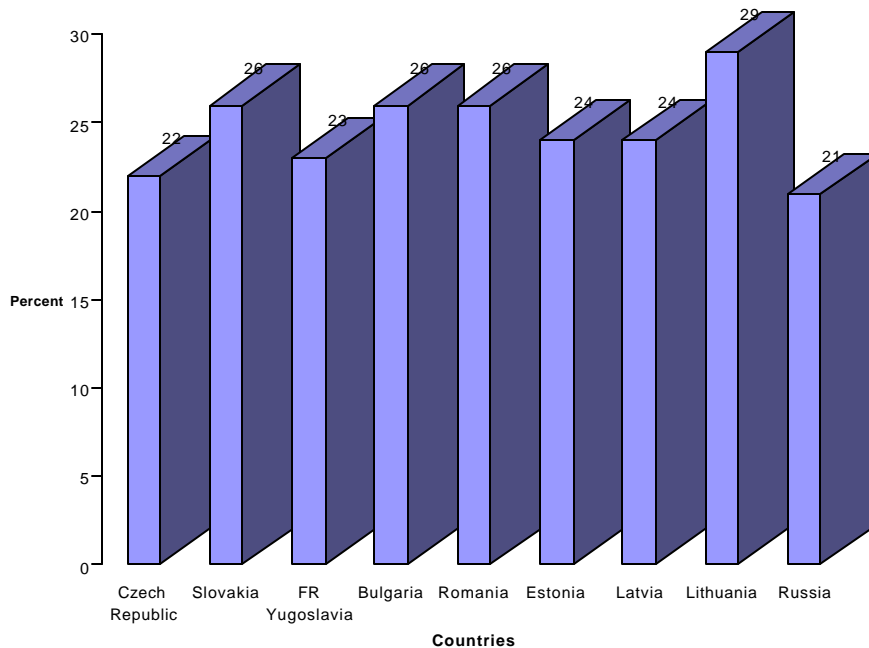
<sup>36</sup> For example, in the U.S., small businesses (firms with fewer than 500 employees) employ 53 percent of the private non-farm work force, contribute 47 percent of all sales in the country, and are responsible for 51 percent of the private gross domestic product. Small-business-dominated industries produced an estimated 64 percent of the 2.5 million new jobs created during 1996. (U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Department of Commerce, September 1997.)

small family ventures to larger firms.<sup>37</sup> These numbers are consistent with the share in many developed market economies; in Western Europe, for instance, women entrepreneurs head 20 to 30 percent of small and medium enterprises. In the U.S., women own 38 percent of all small businesses.

In advanced market economies, women own more than 25 percent of all businesses:

- In the U.S., women own 38 percent of all businesses, which employ 27.5 million people—one in every five workers—and generate over \$3.6 trillion in annual sales.<sup>38</sup>
- In France and the UK, 25 percent of firms are headed by women. In Germany, women have created one-third of all new firms since 1990, representing more than one million jobs.<sup>39</sup>
- In Japan, 23 percent of private firms are set up by women.<sup>40</sup>

**Figure 3.2. Share Of Women Among Entrepreneurs, 1997**



Source: UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition, Regional Monitoring Report No. 6* (New York: UNICEF International Child Development Centre, 1999).

### *Recent Research*

A new survey of business in Ukraine shows that women are a very important part of the labor

<sup>37</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 103.

<sup>38</sup> National Foundation for Women Business Owners, *Research Notes*, May 11, 1999.

<sup>39</sup> OECD Conference on Women Entrepreneurs in Small and Medium Enterprises, *Issues for Discussion*, Paris, April 1997.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

force in general and in the development of private enterprise in particular. In addition, women-owned businesses are more likely to hire women workers, thus creating more economic opportunities for women.<sup>41</sup>

Compared to Western economies, women own and control a larger percentage of medium-sized and large firms. In addition, they make up 30 percent of business owners of “small” firms,<sup>42</sup> and 23 percent of all business owners.<sup>43</sup> Women also comprise 35 percent of the entrepreneurs buying newly privatized land parcels in one privatization project.<sup>44</sup>

A 1996 study of women business owners in Russia showed that women-owned firms provided even more employment per firm than do women-owned firms in the U.S.: 64 percent of Russian firms employ 10 or more people, in contrast to the 29 percent of U.S. firms which employ 10 or more.<sup>45</sup> In Romania, by the end of 1998, 36 percent of private enterprises had women partners, and 30 percent were managed by women.<sup>46</sup> And, in Hungary, women started more than 40 percent of the businesses created since 1990.<sup>47</sup>

### *Reasons for the Growth*

The data are not clear on why women have become active enough as entrepreneurs that their numbers are close to those of their Western counterparts, but several hypotheses are suggested. Becoming an entrepreneur implies a greater willingness to take risks. The origin of that willingness is not always simple; risk-taking can as easily result from desperation as from an optimistic interpretation of the future. Women’s role in maintaining the household in times of

#### **Box 3.2. Women-Owned Businesses in Poland**

Although Poland is not a part of this compendium, recent surveys on women in business provide a basis for comparison from an economy that represents an intermediate stage between advanced market economies and the transition economies of the region.

- 38% of all businesses are women-owned.
- Contrary to stereotypes that women entrepreneurs engage primarily in small retail trade, 34% provide intangible services such as data collection and processing and 30% are in manufacturing.
- 66% of women-owned firms employ more than 10 persons, and 61% are conducting business with foreign firms.

- Ewa Lisowska, *Research Among Polish Businesswomen*, Firma 2000, Warsaw, Poland, 1998.

More recent survey research on Polish women managers states that:

- Women make up 30% of all senior officials and managers (including entrepreneurs and chief accounting officers).
- For all Polish women working fulltime, 25% are the primary wage earner in the family. For women managers, 45% are the primary wage earner (70% are married, and 80% have children).
- 50% of managers work for companies with less than 50 employees, and 25% have only other women reporting to them.

- Ewa Lisowska, Richard Bliss, Lidija Polutnik, and June Lavelle, *Polish Women Managers 2000: Survey Report*. International Women’s Forum, Warsaw, Poland, 2000.

<sup>41</sup> Management Systems International and Kiev International Institute of Sociology for USAID/West NIS, *A Survey of Business in Ukraine* (Kiev, Ukraine: USAID, October 1999), xv.

<sup>42</sup> “Small” is defined as 0-50 employees; “medium” as 51-250 employees; “large” as 251 or more employees.

<sup>43</sup> Management Systems International and Kiev International Institute of Sociology for USAID/West NIS, *A Survey of Business in Ukraine*, 21.

<sup>44</sup> UKReIs (Ukraine Enterprise Non-Agricultural Land Privatization Project), A joint project of the US Government and the Government of Ukraine, September 1999.

<sup>45</sup> National Foundation for Women Business Owners, *Survey of Women Business Owners in Russia*, (Silver Spring, MD: National Foundation for Women Business Owners, 1996).

<sup>46</sup> National Trade Registry, Bucharest, Romania, 1999.

<sup>47</sup> Center for International Private Enterprise, *Success Story in Hungary* (Washington, DC: CIPE, 1997).

economic dislocation may lead them to develop new coping strategies that direct them into new economic activities. This has been referred to as women's "third burden." That is, in addition of the double burden of a full-time job and the unpaid household labor required for maintaining a home, women have assumed a "third burden" of taking on primary responsibility for household economic survival activities.

### **Enterprise Privatization**

**Occupations are gender-segregated.** In the section on labor force participation above, we discussed the issue of occupational segregation by sector with respect to wages. In most countries, women have continued to concentrate in the state-run social service area, despite the growth of the private sector. The preponderance of women in the public sector affects general advancement to positions of leadership and taking on business. The same kind of occupational segregation that we see in the United States and in Western Europe has also existed in the NIS and Central and Eastern Europe. Women have therefore most often predominated in public sector jobs, in health care, education, and social services, the areas that are least likely to be privatized. While the percentage of women occupying positions in state sector entities varies from country to country (for example, from 80 percent in education in Latvia to 67 percent in Romania to slightly more than 50 percent in Macedonia), certain service positions are in the area of the economies that are rapidly privatizing or in which new businesses are being created.<sup>48</sup>

#### **Box 3.3. Privatization in Kazakhstan**

In the wake of privatization in Kazakhstan, social services supporting women's employment are frequently the first to be cut; in these services (child care, clinics, workplace schools), women predominate in employment and management. Depending on the region, between 30 to 70 percent of support services were cut after privatization. Bauer, Boschmann, and Green, *Women and Gender Relations in Kazakhstan*, 25.

### **Land Privatization**

Because most property was state-owned under communism, neither men nor women had property ownership or inheritance rights on a large scale. Most countries did allow for the ownership of small garden plots for subsistence farming. Legally, men and women have gained equally from the transition in terms of property rights and, at least formally, have equal rights to land ownership and inheritance of land. In the few countries in which land is still owned by the state, men and women can lease land from the state.

In practice, however, the property rights of men and women are different. In many cases, often in rural areas, women's names have not been included on property titles during the privatization process. Some countries account for this omission by declaring that all property acquired during a marriage is the joint property of the spouses, regardless of the name on the title. Others have not addressed the issue of how this will affect women, particularly in a divorce.

Another area in which men and women, and sometimes different men in the same family, do not have equal property rights is family-owned land. Privatization laws may require privatization of

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<sup>48</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 36-37.

land to families, but they do not define what a family is. The head of household becomes the titlebearer and the other family members, male and female, may be reliant upon him to act responsibly with that asset. In addition, the titlebearer cannot will the property to whomever s/he chooses. Because family land cannot be divided, family members are hindered from disposing of their portion of the asset.

### ***Managerial Positions***

In the communist period women's low representation in key economic positions reflected their lack of influence in decision-making processes. Women directors and upper-level managers at large state enterprises were rare. Women managers tended to be situated in feminized sectors of the economy that were of lower strategic importance such as retail trade, hotels, restaurants and the textile industry. Available evidence suggests that men have preserved their dominance in key economic decision-making positions during the transition.

**More men than women are administrators or managers.** Table 3.11 presents data from UNDP on managerial and professional workers. While data are unavailable for many countries, the table shows that women make up from 18 percent of managers in Georgia to 38 percent in Latvia.

**Table 3.11. Female Managers and Professionals**

Country	Female administrators and managers (percent of total)	Female prof. and technical workers (percent of total)
<b>Eurasia</b>		
<i>Caucasus</i>		
Armenia	--	--
Azerbaijan	--	--
Georgia	18.3	41.8
<i>Central Asian Republics</i>		
Kazakhstan	--	--
Kyrgyzstan	--	--
Tajikistan	--	--
Turkmenistan	--	--
Uzbekistan	--	--
<i>West NIS</i>		
Belarus	--	--
Moldova	--	--
Russian Federation	--	--
Ukraine	--	--
<b>Europe</b>		
<i>Southern Tier</i>		
Albania	--	--
Bosnia-Herzegovina	--	--
Bulgaria	28.9	57.0
Croatia	--	--
Macedonia, FYR	--	--
Romania	28.1	56.4
Slovenia	28.3	53.1
Yugoslavia, FR	--	--
<i>Northern Tier</i>		
Czech Republic	23.2	54.1
Estonia	36.5	66.8
Hungary	32.8	60.9
Latvia	37.5	66.4
Lithuania	35.2	67.5
Poland	33.5	61.2
Slovak Republic	30.7	59.7
<b>Comparison Countries</b>		
Turkey	8.6	33.0
United States	44.3	53.1

Note: -- indicates data are not available

Source: UNDP, Human Development Indicators, 1999.

**More women than men are professional or technical workers.** As shown in Table 3.11, in most countries for which there are data, women outnumber men in most countries in professional and technical positions, from a low of 42 percent in Georgia to 68 percent in Lithuania. Two additional documents – a dissertation and a World Bank report – provide supplementary information. A dissertation on Ukrainian women indicated that only five percent of women held positions as managers, directors, or heads of departments.<sup>49</sup> According to a World Bank study of gender and agricultural privatization, in the rural economy of Central Asia, women made up 75 percent of the field workers, but constituted only 37 percent of middle management of state agriculture and very few top managers.<sup>50</sup>

**Gender discrimination may arise in privatized firms.** Brainerd suggests that the breakdown of state control over enterprises may make it possible for managers to discriminate more easily against women. In a competitive market context, managers may do so, if they see women as high-cost labor due to the associated maternity and childcare costs. On the other hand, as the economy grows, discrimination may be too costly itself; as in the United States, employers accommodate to workers' needs in order to keep the skilled labor to compete.

Laws against discrimination exist in all countries of the region, although, in certain cases (such as Bulgaria, the Baltics, and other NIS countries) legislation does restrict women from working at certain jobs that are considered either dangerous, particularly arduous, require working at night, or demand travel while raising small children. Nor do most countries have in place enforceable regulations that provide women with legal

<sup>49</sup> Anne Margaret Zollner, *Ukrainian Women in Transition: A Critical Ethnography of Odessitkas*, Ph.D. dissertation (Austin: University of Texas at Austin, 1997), 68.

<sup>50</sup> Marnia Lazreg, *Gender and Agricultural Privatization in ECA*, 7.



recourse if they experience discrimination in hiring or harassment on the job. Further, women voluntarily restrict their job aspirations (as is the case in Western countries as well) due to community tradition and to shared cultural concepts of appropriate activities.

### ***The Informal Economy***

The term informal economy, in the context of this report, refers to work and trade undertaken by individuals that is outside government regulation and taxation. Buying and selling goods in markets is a typical form of informal economic activity. Criminal activity such as prostitution or smuggling is considered by some researchers to be part of the informal economy. Box 3.4 provides a more formal definition.

#### **Box 3.4. Definition of Informal Economy and Types of Economic Activity Included in the Gray Economy**

Dr. Vadim Radaev, in a paper funded by the U.S. Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), defines the informal economy as the set of economic activities which are not displayed in official reporting and formal contracting. The parts of the informal economy involved in contracting include:

*Shadow economy*: invisible part of activities beyond formal contract including implicit contracts, secret dealings, and agreements. Example: bribery.

*Unofficial or relational contract economy*: open economy activities which are not covered by formal agreements. Example: extra services to business partners.

*Fictitious economy*: reflected in business reporting but with systematic biases (intended and unintended). Example: understating or overstating sales.

And those activities considered informal because of legal codes include:

*Legal (rule of law) activities*: carried out in accordance with the existing law and do not infringe the interests of other economic agents. Example: household economy and employment of family members.

*Out-of-law activities (referred to as “rosy market”)*: not subject to legal regulation but may infringe the interests of other economic agents. Example: monopolization of markets in the absence of anti-trust legislation. (These are not necessarily informal economic activities.)

*Semi-legal activities (“gray market”)*: normally carried out within the law but violate the law occasionally. It also includes legal activities provided without official licensing. Example: concealing profits or non-licensed retailing.

*Non-legal, criminal economic activities (“black market”)*: banned by the law and systematically violate the existing legal norms. Example: smuggling or drug production.

Vadim Radaev, “Informal Economy in Russia: Main Evidence and Policy Lessons,”  
[http://www.oecd.org/daf/psd/feed/informal\\_ec.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/daf/psd/feed/informal_ec.pdf).

Because of its nature, the informal economy is difficult to track and to quantify. The MONEE Project compiled a range of estimates of the proportion of the informal economy to the overall GDP in selected countries, presented in Table 3.12. As the data indicate, the informal economy grew throughout the region, with its most sizeable increases in countries of the former Soviet

Union. Uzbekistan and Poland saw drops in the size of their informal economies, and Hungary experienced only a one percent increase.

**Cross-country comparable and sex-disaggregated data on the informal economy are difficult to obtain.** Good estimates are available for only two countries, Poland and Serbia. These only report the proportions of economic activity in the informal economy by gender; they do not tell us which activities men or women are more likely to engage in.

*Poland:* Women made up 36 percent of all informal workers in 1994. Most informal workers in Poland had low educational levels.<sup>51</sup>

*Serbia:* Thirty percent of all workers reported in a survey that they held second jobs in the informal economy. Forty percent of these workers were women. Analysis of the survey data found that women were 17 percent less likely than men to work in the informal economy.<sup>52</sup>

**Qualitative data indicate that women are more likely than men to participate in the informal economies of Central Asia.** Data from the World Bank's *Consultations with the Poor* in Kyrgyzstan, for example, indicate that women are typically the buyers and sellers in the markets (Box 3.4).

**Table 3.12. The Informal Economy**

	1990 percent of GDP	1995 percent of GDP
<b>Eurasia</b>		
<i>Caucasus</i>		
Azerbaijan	22	61
<i>Central Asian Republics</i>		
Kazakhstan	17	34
Uzbekistan	11	7
<i>West NIS</i>		
Russia	15	42
Ukraine	16	49
<b>Europe</b>		
<i>Southern Tier</i>		
Slovenia	14	19
Yugoslavia, FR	24	30
<i>Northern Tier</i>		
Czech Republic	6	11
Hungary	28	29
Latvia	13	35
Lithuania	11	22
Poland	20	13

*Source:* UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition, Regional Monitoring Report No. 6* (New York: UNICEF International Child Development Centre, 1999), 6.

<sup>51</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 32.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

**Box 3.5. Working in the Bazaar: Kyrgyzstan**

“In the past, women were responsible for the home, and men provided for the family, and everything was clear. Now women trade at the market no matter what the weather is like, because they need to provide for the family, and men stay at home, take care of children and do other female work. It’s not right, it’s no good.”  
 – An older man from Kenesh village, Talas region, Kyrgyzstan. World Bank, *Kyrgyz Republic: Consultations with the Poor* (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1999), 111.

In Kazakhstan, it is reported that women register at employment and training centers soon after they lose their jobs. But with few opportunities present, many women turn to the informal “shuttle” economy or the bazaar. The latter has been created by a new entrepreneurial class who travel to neighboring republics as well as China and Korea to obtain goods for resale in domestic markets. This is said to enable the merchants to earn from \$500 to \$3,000 per trip.<sup>53</sup> While men participate in the shuttle economy, it is generally recognized that women predominate. A similar “shuttle economy” has sprung up in Uzbekistan as well (Box 3.6).

In addition to the shuttle economy, women also predominate in the bazaar economy in Kazakhstan. In Almaty, some 80 percent of the 20,000 people involved in urban trade are women. The percentage is higher when accounting for food markets alone. Urban trade provides women with a flexible source of income, and earns these workers slightly more than the average wage. However, they are cut off from social benefits and retirement, and many try to maintain some minimal formal employment in addition to their trade in the bazaar to retain access to those benefits.<sup>54</sup>

**Box 3.6. Shuttle Economy in Uzbekistan**

“Risks of conflicts with police are higher for men than for women. This is the reason why in the “shuttle” trade women are in a more advantageous position than are men. This was particularly evident in Andijan province. In recent years, Uzbek men prefer not to go to Osh province in neighboring Kyrgyzstan to sell agricultural products in the local large markets. The reason is that when they cross the Kyrgyz border, many of them are detained by the local police and customs officers who surreptitiously toss drugs into their belongings. In order to avoid prosecution, Uzbek men have to pay off their captors by leaving some portion of their goods or proceeds at the border station. As a result, only women travel to the Osh market. While they are away the men look after the households, thus reversing gender roles.” World Bank, *Uzbekistan: Consultations with the Poor* (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1999), 16.

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

The transformations that began after 1989 brought with them a dramatic decline in the economic fortunes of nearly all the populations of the region. To help us better understand the implications of the economic transition on gender issues, more sex-disaggregated economic research is needed. Information about the Caucasus is particularly lacking; future research should focus on these countries.

For example, several factors must be examined to determine their explanatory power as sources of occupational segregation and the gender wage gap:

<sup>53</sup> Bauer, Boschmann, and Green, *Women and Gender Relations in Kazakhstan*, 35.

<sup>54</sup> Bauer, Boschmann, and Green, *Women and Gender Relations in Kazakhstan*, 41.

1. The role of open or hidden discrimination in a) hiring management or administrative workers and b) remunerating women at lower rates than men for the same work or work requiring the same skills and experience.<sup>55</sup>
2. The possibility that occupational segregation influences the wage scale.
3. The possibility that job preferences by gender influence occupations chosen and the wage scale.
4. Related to that, whether, in the newly privatizing economy, women may find it difficult to be hired in the private sector and are more likely to hold posts in the public sector, where wages have been retarded.
5. Whether difficulties faced by women in advancing to senior management positions are also tied to a differentiation in wages.

Other opportunities for research include women in the workforce, analysis of household data, and analysis of women and microenterprise.

Women are leaving the workforce. Is this liberating—as a choice to stay home that women had been denied? Or are they forced out by discrimination? What are the perceptions of women themselves and what are labor force analyses?

Household survey data are currently available for several countries. Analyses of these data could provide further insights into economic, as well as other, issues.

Data on women in the micro- and small enterprise sector have become more available and should be analyzed. Micro- and small enterprise data were not a focus of this report. Researchers should consider the compilation of available data, including success stories and/or lessons learned from USAID Missions that have been focusing on this sector.

## CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The central issue that arises around the socioeconomic dimensions of the transitions, as they impact at the “people” level of gender roles, relates to employment in the new market economy. Broad conclusions are not easily drawn at the beginning of 2000: in many countries, women have indeed suffered a disproportionate loss of jobs, but that trend has moderated in the past few years. Women have probably also dropped out of the economy in greater numbers than men, especially if they are close to retirement or are able to remain as students. Even after the transition, many of the labor force indicators related to gender, such as participation rates and even the gender wage gap, are high in comparison to world norms. But unemployment continues to affect both men and women at high levels, and the area in which policy attention should be paid is in supporting the transition governments, through shared expertise and through pilot project funding, in developing effective, widespread, labor-market determined programs for employment and reintegration into the work force.

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<sup>55</sup>Men could also be discriminated against in wages in comparison with women, but this is rarely the case empirically. Discrimination against men usually occurs in subgroups, such as against older men or youth, in comparison to other men or “prime age” men and women.

The approaches that are needed are multiple. “Rapid response” programs to keep people working or help them shift quickly to new kinds of work are valuable. Support of small business and entrepreneurial efforts – through business incubators, training and mentorship in business start-up and management, and targeted information dissemination on opportunities – can also all help both women and men adapt to the new economy. Programs need also to be shaped by an understanding of the cultural context. Overcoming the premises of guaranteed employment and the reticence to take business risks require support that can demonstrate the effectiveness of the market model.



## Chapter 4: The Democratic Transition

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Men and women do not participate in the public sphere in the same ways or at the same level in Europe and Eurasia as they did before the transition to democracy. Men generally now hold a greater percentage of roles in the formal political structures all levels.
- NGOs are developing throughout the region, though some countries have passed legislation that inhibits their growth. Every country has at least a few NGOs dedicated to promoting or addressing women's issues; none have NGOs that specifically focus on men's issues. Little information was available about the degree to which the NGO sector is feminized.
- With respect to the rule of law, all countries have confirmed gender equality in constitutions and subscribed to international conventions. However, men and women are often not treated equally under secondary laws, particularly with respect to family and labor laws. Information is scarce on any gender differentiation in how laws are actually implemented and on *de facto* vis-à-vis *de jure* gender equality in any country.

### INTRODUCTION

#### *Key Questions*

The primary study questions answered in this chapter are:

1. Is there differential participation by women and men in the public sphere?
  - a) What is the role of women in party politics?
  - b) What is the representation of women in elected government positions, locally and nationally?
  - c) What is the representation of women in appointed governmental positions?
2. How is gender reflected in the development of civil society, especially NGOs?
  - a) What is the role of women in different types of NGOs?
  - b) Have NGOs developed that advocate for gender issues?
3. How has the rule of law been institutionalized and what impact is there on gender?
  - a) Have there been *de jure* legal reforms with an impact on gender?
  - b) Do men and women have equal legal rights, *de jure* and *de facto*? (Is there sufficient information to be able to contrast between *de jure* and *de facto*?)
  - c) Have there been reforms related to family law: inheritance, ownership, marriage, and divorce that impact on gender?

These questions are addressed below beginning with a brief discussion of how men and women participated in politics and civil society during the Soviet era and how the patterns of that participation has changed since independence and how they are now affected by rule of law.

## **Background**

Democratization of formerly communist states has been a goal of Western policy toward Europe and Eurasia since 1989. Support for democratic change has been a principal component of foreign assistance to the region. Though definitions of democracy can vary, the following features represent a common set of indicators that is now generally accepted in principle, if not in practice, throughout the region.

1. The government is based on the consent of the governed;
2. Consent is formalized in a constitution which specifies the powers (and its divisions) of various government branches and the rights of the citizenry;
3. Consent is expressed in frequent competitive elections;
4. Suffrage is universal and votes are secret and not coerced;
5. Citizens and leaders enjoy the basic freedoms of speech, press, assembly, and organization; and
6. Binding rules are adopted that make officials accountable to the citizenry.<sup>1</sup>

Two processes underlie democratization, liberalization and increasing participation.<sup>2</sup> Liberalization is the “deconcentration” of power from one body to multiple independent branches of government, intermediary organizations and institutions, and individuals. To make a liberalized system of government accountable, citizens must participate in their governance through voting, dialog with elected officials, or by standing for election.

Countries may be considered consolidated democracies when power shifts peacefully from one party to another in accordance with the law and electoral outcomes. Of the ten countries reviewed in succeeding chapters in this study, Albania, Armenia, Bulgaria, Kyrgyzstan, Romania, and Russia can be considered consolidated democracies. Georgia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan have not yet experienced a shift in power from one party to another.

Thus, it is no longer a problem of creating democratic governments in Europe and Eurasia, but one of governance and making the governments work for the people. Governance can have important gender implications. Rule of law and the enforcement of those laws determines, to a large extent, the rights, opportunities, and protections citizens experience. When those rules are inequitable or are inequitably enforced, men and women cannot be equal participants in the political, economic or social life of a country.

The countries in Europe and Eurasia share certain characteristics as post-communist democracies. To protect themselves, their religion, and their culture, many people adopted a dual identity, for example, Soviet (or communist) in public, and their local or ethnic identity in private. “One behavior was used exclusively in the public space and another in the private realm, including distinct vocabularies and ways of thinking created as a defense mechanism.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen Comisso, “Is the Glass Half Full or Half Empty?” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 1, Winter 1997, 3.

<sup>2</sup> Jorgen Elklit, “Is the Degree of Electoral Democracy Measurable?” in D. Beetham (ed.), *Defining and Measuring Democracy*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 1994).

<sup>3</sup> Irina Liczek, “The Masquerade of Equality: Woman and Politics in Romania,” in B. Wejnert and M. Spencer (eds),



This dual identity was particularly common among women. Although it was never achieved, the countries of the region adopted gender equality as an official goal of the state. In doing so, however, "... the state ... preempted much of the work of self-definition of goals and change by men and women themselves ... [which], in some cases, led to the rejection of the goal of equality itself."<sup>4</sup> Another common opinion, however, is that as a result of communist policies, almost all women in the region have greater expectations of equal rights and full participation in the country's political life.

*The more authoritarian the state, the more confined and auxiliary becomes the role of the state-oriented women's apparatus and the wider the gap between formal emancipation and real equality. When the originally desirable goals of women's emancipation are perceived as too closely associated with a repressive state, they eventually lose their credibility and appeal, especially among nationalists.*

Tohidi, "Guardians of the Nation," 145.

Building a democracy that meets the requirements listed above has taken decades in other parts of the world, and indeed, more than a century in our own. One author argues that "reality has disproved the assumption that people coming from a long period of privations will become 'more Catholic than the Pope' – that is, more democratic than their counterparts living in countries with long histories of democracy."<sup>5</sup> But it is too early to make such a pronouncement. While their political systems still need attention and improvement, most of these countries have made tremendous progress over the past decade.

## PRIMARY FINDINGS

### *Access to Participation in the Public Sphere*

As in the past, men and women presently have equal rights to provide input to the political system, but (particularly now) not necessarily equal opportunity to do so. While the citizens of Eastern Europe were legally bound to participate in elections in the past, the new political systems have made that participation significantly more meaningful. Voters now have some confidence that they can cast their votes in privacy and that the votes will be counted equally. Citizens also now have the opportunity to provide input to governments, particularly local governments in other ways as well, such as letter writing, participation in demonstrations, and organizing political pressure groups.

A more profound change may be the right to run for office, the other dimension of participation. In systems in which individuals run either with political party support or as independents (majority systems), all citizens above a minimum age may run for an elected office. In systems that elect officials from party lists (proportional representation systems), multiple parties exist and compete for seats. The introduction of multiple parties with truly different political agendas (as opposed to the few "opposition" parties that were permitted by the communist parties, i.e.,

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*Women in Post-Communism: research on Russia and Eastern Europe*, (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press Inc., 1996), 94-95.

<sup>4</sup> Sharon Wolchik, *Women and the State in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union*, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989), 45.

<sup>5</sup> Liczek, "The Masquerade of Equality: Woman and Politics in Romania," 95.

the Bulgarian Agrarian Union) qualitatively changes the nature of participation in the system. This system, however, still allows for the almost exclusive advancement of party elites, few of whom are generally women.

### **Voter Turnout**

**Voter turnout data are not sex-disaggregated.** Although voting was not required in communist systems, voter turnout was often reported at 99.9 percent, ostensibly with equal participation by men and women.<sup>6</sup> Sex-disaggregated turnout rates have not been available for most elections since the transition.<sup>7</sup> Voter turnout has dropped across the region, but is generally still above American and some Western European averages.

### **Political Party Membership**

**Political party membership was not gender neutral prior to the transition.** While women were well represented within the communist parties in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union prior to the transition, there appears to have been little attempt to create gender equality in the distribution of power. Women were approximately one third of the total membership in communist parties. Men generally held the positions of decision-making and power in the high levels of the communist party, particularly the political committee. In the Soviet Union, for example, women comprised 30 percent of the Communist Party membership, but only seven percent of the Party Secretaries.<sup>8</sup> The first women were appointed to the politburos of the communist parties fairly early: Albania 1948, Bulgaria 1937, Romania 1973, the Soviet Union 1957.<sup>9</sup> In 1989, there were no women in the politburos or central committees of the Soviet Union, Albania, or Bulgaria and two (of 21 members) in Romania.<sup>10</sup> In fact, only five women were appointed to the Soviet Politburo from 1919 to 1990 (2.6% of appointees).<sup>11</sup>

**Few sex-disaggregated data are available on current party membership.** Very little demographic information is available on current political party membership in the region. In those countries where information is available, men outnumber the women. Not surprisingly, the majority of political party leaders in the region are men. In most countries, even in Scandinavia, where women comprise a significant proportion of members of parliament, women are poorly represented at the higher ranks of the political parties,<sup>12</sup> comprising less than 11 percent of the world's political party leaders.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> John N. Hazard, *The Soviet System of Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 60.

<sup>7</sup> Aguirre International researchers examined articles, websites, and bulletins published by the central election committees when available, and none of these sources provided data by gender.

<sup>8</sup> Janet Hunt-McCool, *The Consequences of NIS Legal Reform on Women's Work and Welfare*, (Washington, DC: USAID, 1993), 15.

<sup>9</sup> Women in Governments website, <http://hjem.get2net.dk/Womeningovernments/>.

<sup>10</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, (New York: UNICEF International Child Development Centre, 1999), 94. The Soviet Union had one female Politburo member from 1990-1991. Women in Governments website, <http://hjem.get2net.dk/Womeningovernments/USSR.htm>

<sup>11</sup> Penny Morvant, "Bearing the 'Double Burden' in Russia," *Transition*, Vol. 1, No. 16, September 8, 1995, 8.

<sup>12</sup> Fatos Tarifa, "Disappearing from Politics: Social Change and Women in Albania," in M. Rueschemeyer (ed.), *Women in Politics of Postcommunist Eastern Europe*, (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1998), 281.

<sup>13</sup> Nadezdha Shvedova, "Obstacles to Women's Participation in Parliament," in A. Karam (ed.), *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers*, (Stockholm: International IDEA, 1998), 24.

## Parliamentary Representation

**Quotas prior to the transition raised women's parliamentary representation.** Although they were never equally represented, quotas ensured that women had consistent representation in parliaments and other bodies, hovering around 30 percent under the communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.<sup>14</sup> These quotas did not translate to access to power, however, as elected bodies had little power.<sup>15</sup> In the Soviet Union, prior to *glasnost*, women comprised 30 percent of deputies in the Soviets. In 1989, the Congress of People's Deputies was established with 2,250 seats (local, republic, and associations' seats). Women comprised 16.6 percent of the candidates and 15.7 percent of the elected deputies.<sup>16</sup>

**Participation in parliament by women dropped during the transition.** In Table 2.1 below, one can see that the percentage of women in parliament in this region has dropped substantially. Participation in high levels of elected government has decreased, although it is difficult to assess to what degree real access to power may have declined. A UNDP report states that though the percentage of seats filled by women is lower, they may be more effective and credible than in the past.<sup>17</sup>

**Table 2.1. Women in Parliament in April 2000**

Country	Number of Women	Percentage of Women	Date of Last Election	Term
<b>Eurasia</b>				
<b>Caucasus</b>				
Armenia	4 (131)	3.1 %	5/99	4 years
Azerbaijan	15 (125)	12.0 %	11/95	5 years
Georgia	17 (235)	7.2 %	11/99	4 years
<b>Central Asian Republics</b>				
Kazakhstan-lower chamber	8 (77)	10.4 %	9/99	5 years
Kazakhstan-upper chamber	5 (39)	12.8 %	9/99	5 years
Kyrgyzstan-lower chamber	1 (70)	1.4 %	2/95	5 years
Kyrgyzstan-upper chamber	4 (35)	11.4 %	2/95	5 years
Tajikistan	5 (181)	2.8 %	3/95	5 years
Turkmenistan	9 (50)	18.0 %	12/99	5 years
Uzbekistan	17 (250)	6.8 %	12/99	5 years
<b>West NIS</b>				
Belarus-lower chamber	5 (110)	4.5 %	11/96	4 years
Belarus-upper chamber	19 (63)	30.2 %	2/97	4 years
Moldova	9 (101)	8.9 %	3/98	4 years
Russia-lower chamber	34 (441)	7.7 %	12/99	4 years
Russia-upper chamber	1 (178)	0.6 %	β	β
Ukraine	35 (450)	7.8 %	3/98	4 years

<sup>14</sup> USIA, *A World View of Women*, (Washington, DC: US Information Agency, 1995), 18, 24.

<sup>15</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 93.

<sup>16</sup> Hunt-McCool, *The Consequences of NIS Legal Reform on Women's Work and Welfare*, 16.

<sup>17</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 94.

Country	Number of Women	Percentage of Women	Date of Last Election	Term
<b>Europe</b>				
<b>Southern Tier</b>				
Albania	8 (155)	5.2 %	7/97	4 years
Bosnia-Herzegovina-lower chamber	12 (42)	28.6 %	9/98	2 years
Bosnia-Herzegovina-upper chamber*	0 (15)	0.0 %	9/98	2 years
Bulgaria	26 (240)	10.8 %	4/97	4 years
Croatia-lower chamber	51(131)	20.5 %	1/00	4 years
Croatia-upper chamber*	4 (68)	5.9 %	4/97	4 years
Macedonia, FYR	9 (120)	7.5 %	11/98	4 years
Romania-lower chamber	25 (343)	7.3 %	11/96	4 years
Romania-upper chamber	2 (143)	1.4 %	11/96	4 years
Slovenia	7 (90)	7.8 %	11/96	4 years
Yugoslavia, FR-lower chamber**	7 (138)	5.1 %	11/96	4 years
Yugoslavia, FR-upper chamber*	4 (40)	10.0 %	3/98	4 years
<b>Northern Tier</b>				
Czech Republic-lower house	30 (200)	15.0 %	6/98	4 years
Czech Republic-upper house <sup>α</sup>	9 (81)	11.1 %	6/98	6 years
Estonia	18 (101)	17.8 %	3/99	4 years
Hungary	32 (386)	8.3 %	5/98	4 years
Latvia	17 (100)	17.0 %	10/98	4 years
Lithuania	24 (137)	17.5 %	11/96	4 years
Poland-lower house	60 (460)	13.0 %	9/97	4 years
Poland-upper house	11 (100)	11.0 %	9/97	4 years
Slovak Republic	19 (150)	12.7 %	9/98	4 years
<b>Comparison Countries</b>				
Turkey	23 (550)	4.2 %	4/99	5 years
United States-lower chamber	58 (435)	13.3 %	11/98	2 years
United States-upper chamber <sup>α</sup>	9 (100)	9.0 %	11/98	6 years

Notes: Data are from February 2000.

\* Starred chambers are appointed. Bosnia-Herzegovina: 15 members, 10 from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and five from Republika Srpska. Yugoslavia: 40 members, 20 from each Serbia and Montenegro.

\*\* Of the 138 members of the Yugoslav lower house, 108 are elected from Serbia and 30 from Montenegro.

<sup>α</sup> Both the Czech and US upper chambers renew one third of their members every two years.

<sup>β</sup> The Russian upper house is comprised of appointed regional authorities and their term depends on the region which they represent.

Source: Inter Parliamentary Union website <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

It is easier to ensure equal representation in a single party system by placing quotas on positions and giving preferential treatment in party power structures. In multiparty systems, the electoral system may influence either sex's representation.<sup>18</sup> In a proportional representation system, parties can give preferential treatment to the minority gender on the party lists. In a majority system, voter preferences, including gender biases, will determine the electoral outcomes. In both cases, the political culture in a country is important. If voters believe that women are less able to govern than men, women will find it harder to earn higher places on the party lists as well as win a majority seat.

<sup>18</sup> Dobrinka Kostova, "Similar or Different?: Women in Postcommunist Bulgaria," in M. Rueschemeyer (ed.), *Women in Politics of Postcommunist Eastern Europe*, (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1998), 255.

Women have generally experienced less success than men have in running for office. But the examples cited in the literature reviewed did not provide an analysis of whether the differing results by gender (generally 2 to 3 percent difference between women as a percentage of candidates in an election and women as a percentage of officials elected)<sup>19</sup> was statistically significant, holding all other variables equal. In spite of their lower overall success rates, researchers found a few cases in which women have had greater success with reelection than men, for example, the last parliamentary election in Georgia in which the women's retention rate was almost half compared to just over a third overall.

Studies have shown that there must be a critical mass of women for them to effectively represent women's unique priorities,<sup>20</sup> and one might argue the same for men. In most of the countries in the region, there are simply too few women in parliament to focus on women's issues while men have ample representation. In Western countries, women have formed parliamentary coalitions to further women's issues, but the only country in the region in which a women's parliamentary coalition has developed is Poland. Even when there does seem to be a critical mass of women in parliament, elected representatives are often beholden to their parties and do not want to risk the sanctions that come from breaking party discipline.

### **Ministerial Representation**

**Gender equality in ministerial representation did not exist prior to the transition.** Under the communists, women were promoted in the executive branch, but rarely held powerful posts. In spite of egalitarian rhetoric, only four women served as ministers of the USSR in seventy years: Polina Zemcuzina, Minister of Fishery Economy, 1930-1940; Maria Kourigina, Minister of Health, 1954-1959; Yekatarina Furucova, Minister of Culture, 1957-1974; and Aleksandra Birjkova, Minister of Social Affairs, 1988-1989.<sup>21</sup> Albania, Bulgaria, and Romania all promoted more women to top ministerial posts, though there was rarely more than one female minister at any given time.

**Gender equality in ministerial representation remains elusive.** Since the transition, women have not been well represented in the executive branches of most of the countries of the region, though one could reasonably argue they are no less represented than they were under communism. As Table 2.2 illustrates, women have generally comprised less than 10 percent of appointed ministers and in several of those where they comprise more, i.e., Albania and Bulgaria, they have only recently been appointed. The region's most visible exception is the recent election of a female president, Vaira Vike-Freiberga, in Latvia. Women have also been underrepresented at the sub-ministerial level, as Table 2.3 shows.

### **Local Governments**

**Sex-disaggregated data on local government do not yet exist.** There is a dearth of information about the composition of local governments in Europe and Eurasia. Some election results are

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<sup>19</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 96.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>21</sup> Women in Governments website, <http://hjem.get2net.dk/Womeningovernments/USSR.htm>

available from the OSCE for Bosnia-Herzegovina, but no other country published sex-disaggregated data. The election bulletins published by central election committees do not breakdown election data by gender, nor do the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, the International City/County Management Association, or other NGOs have such data. National government websites had no information on the composition of local governments and local government websites are generally not available in English. The Open Society Institute is currently sponsoring a project to collect sex-disaggregated data on local governments in the region, but local NGOs are still compiling the data and no completion date has been set.

**Table 4.2. Women in Ministerial Positions in February 2000**

Country	Number of Women	Women as a Percentage of Appointees at Ministerial Level
<b>Eurasia</b>		
<i>Caucasus</i>		
Armenia	0 (22)	0.0 %
Azerbaijan	1 (15)	6.7 %
Georgia	2 (21)	9.5 %
<i>Central Asian Republics</i>		
Kazakhstan	1 (15)	6.7 %
Kyrgyzstan	2 (17)	11.8 %
Tajikistan	0 (18)	0.0 %
Turkmenistan	1 (15)	6.7 %
Uzbekistan	0 (18)	0.0 %
<i>West NIS</i>		
Belarus	1 (26)	3.8 %
Moldova	1 (18)	5.6 %
Russia	0 (28)	0.0 %
Ukraine	1 (15)	6.7 %
<b>Europe</b>		
<i>Southern Tier</i>		
Albania	3 (17)	17.6 %
Bosnia-Herzegovina	0 (37)*	0.0 %
Bulgaria	3 (16)	18.8 %
Croatia	2 (20)	10.0 %
Macedonia, FYR	2 (24)	8.3 %
Romania	1 (18)	5.6 %
Slovenia	1 (18)	5.6 %
Yugoslavia, FR	5 (69)**	7.2 %
<i>Northern Tier</i>		
Czech Republic	0 (15)	0.0 %
Estonia	3 (14)	21.4 %
Hungary	1 (18)	5.6 %
Latvia	1 (14)	7.1 %
Lithuania	1 (14)	7.1 %
Poland	2 (18)	11.1 %
Slovak Republic	2 (15)	13.3 %
<b>Comparison Countries</b>		
Turkey	0 (35)	0.0 %
United States	4 (14)	28.6 %

Notes: \*Thirty-seven represents all the ministers from the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Federation of

Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Republika Srpska.

\*\*Sixty-nine represents all the ministers from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the Republic of Serbia, and the Republic of Montenegro.

Source: Women in Governments website, <http://hjem.get2net.dk/Womeningovernments/> and CIA Chiefs of State and Cabinet Members web page, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/chiefs/index.html>.

**Table 4.3. Women in Sub-Ministerial Positions in 1996**

Country	Women as a Percentage of Appointees at Sub-Ministerial Level	Country	Women as a Percentage of Appointees at Sub-Ministerial Level
<b>Eurasia</b>		<b>Europe</b>	
<i>Caucasus</i>		<i>Southern Tier</i>	
Armenia	2.9 %	Albania	14.0 %
Azerbaijan	6.9 %	Bosnia-Herzegovina	NA
Georgia	4.7 %	Bulgaria	16.2 %
<i>Central Asian Republics</i>		Croatia	21.1 %
Kazakhstan	1.7 %	Macedonia, FYR	25.0 %
Kyrgyzstan	12.0 %	Romania	4.1 %
Tajikistan	3.9 %	Slovenia	19.7 %
Turkmenistan	0.0 %	Yugoslavia, FR	NA
Uzbekistan	0.0 %	<i>Northern Tier</i>	
<i>West NIS</i>		Czech Republic	12.6 %
Belarus	7.0 %	Estonia	16.8 %
Moldova	7.0 %	Hungary	7.1 %
Russia	2.6 %	Latvia	19.0 %
Ukraine	2.2 %	Lithuania	6.8 %
<b>Comparison Countries</b>		Poland	10.1 %
Turkey	5.6 %	Slovak Republic	15.7 %
United States	34.5 %		

Source: UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 238-241.

### Judicial Appointments

**Sex-disaggregated data on judicial appointments are limited.** Very little information is available about the composition of the judiciary prior to and after the transition in each of these countries. As such, it is impossible to draw any conclusions about how the transition affected men and women in the judiciary. Table 4.4 shows the number of women appointed to the country's highest court, where that information is available. Further research with local bar associations or judges' associations may provide such data in the future. Anecdotal evidence shows that many judges, mostly men, resigned and opened private practices, which were deemed to be more lucrative.

**Table 4.4. Women in the Judiciary in February 2000**

Country	Number of Women	Women as a Percentage of Constitutional Court Justices
<b>Eurasia</b>		
<i>Caucasus</i>		
Armenia	1 (9)	11.1 %
Azerbaijan	? (9)	NA
Georgia	1 (9)	11.1 %
<i>Central Asian Republics</i>		
Kazakhstan	? (7)	NA
Kyrgyzstan	1 (9)	11.1 %
Tajikistan	? (7)	NA
Turkmenistan	NA	NA
Uzbekistan	NA	NA
<i>West NIS</i>		
Belarus	? (11)	NA
Moldova	NA	NA
Russia	3 (19)	15.8 %
Ukraine	? (18)	NA
<b>Europe</b>		
<i>Southern Tier</i>		
Albania	? (9)	NA
Bosnia-Herzegovina	? (9)	NA
Bulgaria	? (12)	NA
Croatia	? (11)	NA
Macedonia, FYR	? (9)	NA
Romania	? (9)	NA
Slovenia	4 (9)	44.4 %
Yugoslavia, FR	NA	NA
<i>Northern Tier</i>		
Czech Republic	3 (15)	20.0 %
Estonia	4 (17)	23.5 %
Hungary	? (11)	NA
Latvia	NA	NA
Lithuania	? (9)	NA
Poland	? (15)	NA
Slovak Republic	? (10)	NA
<b>Comparison Countries</b>		
Turkey	? (10)	NA
United States	2 (9)	22.2 %

Sources: Karatnycky, Motyl, and Graybow (eds), *Nations in Transit 1998*; University of Wuerzburg International Constitutional Law website, <http://www.uni-wuerzburg.de/law/>; Website of the Constitutional Court of the Czech Republic, <http://www.concourt.cz/justis/justis.html>; Nechemias, "Women and Politics in Post-Soviet Russia;" Estonian State Web Center, <http://www.riik.ee/engno/riigikohus.html>; Embassy of Armenia website, <http://www.armeniaemb.org/geninfo/constitution.htm#CHAPTER6>; Hagopian, "Armenian Women in a Changing World;" Website of the Constitutional Court of Georgia, <http://www.constcourt.gov.ge/court.html>; the Government of Slovenia website, <http://www.sigov.si/us/eus-bibl.html>; Bauer, Green and Kuehnast, *Women and Gender Relations*, 19; Government of Kyrgyzstan website, <http://www.gov.kg/english/law-e.htm>; and the Government of Turkey website, <http://www.byegm.gov.tr/constitution.htm>



### *Participation in Civil Society*

**Data on gender-related participation in NGOs prior to the transition are unavailable.** Civil society was extremely limited under communist governments. A handful of international organizations, such as the Red Cross and Red Crescent societies and other state-approved organizations were the core of civil society. No region-wide information is available about the number of men or women involved with these NGOs prior to the transition. NGOs have grown exponentially since the transition in Southern Europe and slightly more slowly in the NIS. The Central Asian countries, with the exception of Kyrgyzstan, have laws and regulations that inhibit the growth of the NGO sector.

**Current quantitative data on the feminization of NGO sector are unavailable.** We found no data to demonstrate that the NGO sector is feminized, although anecdotal evidence suggests that it is. The literature reviewed (articles, books, NGO reports, and conference papers) do not indicate that women lose leadership positions to men as NGOs grow and gain in prominence.

In our review of the region's NGO activities, we found several NGOs focused on women's issues in each country and no NGOs working specifically on men's issues. In each country in this study, women's advocacy groups are attempting to draw attention to women's concerns, some with greater success than others. In Albania, Georgia, Russia, and Ukraine, women's advocacy groups have worked to change in the labor code to address women's concerns, with some success in Albania.

Men falling into vulnerable categories, such as internally displaced persons (IDPs), those belonging to categories with health-related risks, the unemployed, etc., are represented by NGOs working on those substantive issues. And in some regions, notably the Caucasus, those NGOs representing the vulnerable focus on women and children and may be ignoring the needs of vulnerable men.

### **Shared Characteristics**

**Some characteristics of the NGO sector are known and generalizable.** In many of the countries in the region, the communist women's committees were best positioned to act on behalf of women in the early years of the transition, largely by distributing humanitarian aid.<sup>22</sup> Many of the women's groups, particularly those established early in the transition, were built on the communist women's committees. Most of the women involved in NGO leadership in the region are well educated. NGOs still tend to be concentrated in urban areas, although rural NGOs are slowly developing and are beginning to represent a significant proportion of the NGO sector.

Finding resources and becoming self-sustainable is one of the greatest challenges for NGOs in Europe and Eurasia. Some observers have asserted that NGOs in this region may have a more difficult time developing a national donor base because of a lack of tradition in this area; the Orthodox Church, according to this view, does not foster a culture of significant giving and has

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<sup>22</sup> Ula Ikramova and Kathryn McConnell, "Women's NGOs in Central Asia's Evolving Societies," in M. Holt Ruffin and Daniel Waugh (eds), *Civil Society in Central Asia*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 199.

not encouraged individuals to take on active social advocacy roles,<sup>23</sup> as one finds in western Christian denominations and Islam.

### Regional Variations

**Data on regional variations in the NGO sector are limited.** Hundreds of NGOs have developed in Russia and Ukraine since the transition. There are many active women's NGOs in Russia, though little information is available about membership. As a result of the pyramid schemes common across the region several years ago, the Ukrainian government looks skeptically upon any organization claiming to be an NGO. It does recognize the NGOs participating in USAID-sponsored programs, but there are many more unregistered groups working to meet specific needs that the government is not currently addressing.

*"No references to NGOs were made except in Muynak, where people mentioned the aid provided by the national aid organization ECOSAN and the International Foundation for Saving the Aral Sea." World Bank, Uzbekistan: Consultations with the Poor (Washington: World Bank, 1999), 8.*

The NGO community in the Caucasus is growing, due to the need for services that the government cannot or will not provide, the establishment of local foundations that provide funding to NGOs and, in Armenia, monetary assistance from ethnic Armenian communities in the US and Western Europe. Many NGOs focus on health care and conflict resolution, fallout from the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan and Georgia's civil war. Armenia is the one country for which information about gender bias in participation in civil society was available. The majority of staff and volunteers in Armenia's NGO sector are women.<sup>24</sup>

In Central Asia, a small NGO community has developed. Though many of these NGOs were established to take advantage of funding opportunities offered by western donors, they are becoming more self-sustaining and professional with time.<sup>25</sup> Organizations that are led by women or which serve primarily women and families are the strongest.<sup>26</sup> The governments of Central Asia are more restrictive of NGO activities than other countries in the region and some activists fear that the governments have too much supervisory authority and can misuse it.<sup>27</sup>

Central Asia also has another system of what might be called civil society, the social networks that existed in Central Asia prior to the transition. Some scholars believe that the traditional social fabric will prove to be a stronger basis for civil society than foreign rules and traditions created by Western experience and imposed by the West.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Lester Salamon et al., *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector*, (Baltimore, MD: the Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies, 1999), 342.

<sup>24</sup> Armine Ishkanian, *Women at the Crossroads: Armenian Women in Public Life in the Post-Soviet Period*, paper presented at April 15, 1998 Columbia Conference, 7.

<sup>25</sup> Scott Horton and Alla Kazakina, "The Legal Regulation of NGOs: Central Asia at a Crossroads," in M. Holt Ruffin and Daniel Waugh (eds), *Civil Society in Central Asia*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 35.

<sup>26</sup> Ikramova and McConnell, "Women's NGOs in Central Asia's Evolving Societies," 198.

<sup>27</sup> Horton and Kazakina, "The Legal Regulation of NGOs: Central Asia at a Crossroads," 45.

<sup>28</sup> Olivier Roy, "Kolkhoz and Civil Society in the Independent States of Central Asia," in M. Holt Ruffin and Daniel Waugh (eds), *Civil Society in Central Asia*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 110.

NGOs have grown quickly in Southern Europe and are working to become sustainable. They cover a broad array of interests and issues and have become a political force. No information about the composition of their staff or volunteers was available.

### **Rule of Law**

Most people distrusted the communist legal systems in Europe and Eurasia. At various times the courts were used to harass and persecute people considered politically dangerous or undesirable.<sup>29</sup> Judges did not see themselves as independent actors in the communist systems in Eastern Europe. Indeed, they were members of the *nomenklatura*<sup>30</sup> and the government's structure prevented them from being objective arbiters. However, in non-political cases, judges often acted as mediators to find a solution that adequately addressed the needs of both parties, so they felt that the issue was truly resolved.<sup>31</sup> This feeling of resolution is particularly important due to the mistrust of the judicial system. In many cases, it could be argued that judges were able to maintain some degree of independence. Family law, civil law, and even labor law cases were generally of no interest to the authorities and judges decided the cases according to rules and based on evidence.<sup>32</sup>

**The foundations for rule of law have been established.** The countries of Europe and Eurasia have met most of the internationally recognized requirements for cementing rule of law.<sup>33</sup> In the past, constitutions in Eastern Europe existed largely to give legitimacy to the existing regime. During the Transition, new constitutions have been drafted in all the countries in this study; and amendments and new constitutions have been drafted in accordance with recognized rules. Each of the ten countries highlighted in this study has established three independent branches of government (although the legislature and the judiciary in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are effectively subservient to the executive). Constitutional Courts have been established in most of these countries and provide a legal mechanism to adjudicate inter-governmental conflicts and protect the rights of individuals and groups.<sup>34</sup>

Since the transition, the legal basis for independence of the courts has been more strongly established. In most of the countries in the region, many of the communist judges have remained in place, leading some scholars to suspect that the countries inherited a politicized judicial system. It is important to recognize that all judicial systems are political, but the level at which the politics occurs differs, for example, in the appointment of judges rather than in the decision of cases.<sup>35</sup> This shift has occurred, and although there is anecdotal evidence of judges in some

<sup>29</sup> Marfua Tokhtakhodzhaeva, *Between the Slogans of Communism and the Laws of Islam*, (Lahore, Pakistan: Shirkat Gah Women's Resource Centre, 1995), 11.

<sup>30</sup> Albert P. Melone, "The Struggle for Judicial Independence and Transition Toward Democracy in Bulgaria," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 2, Spring 1996, 234.

<sup>31</sup> Kim Lane Scheppele, "The History of Normalcy: Rethinking Legal Autonomy and the Relative Dependence of Law at the End of the Soviet Empire," *Law & Society Review*, Vol. 30, No. 3, 1996, 630.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 644.

<sup>33</sup> According to Comisso, "Is the Glass Half Full or Half Empty," 6, these include the adoption of laws by a constitutionally recognized body, laws are public and transparent, applying equally to all, and prescribed for classes of actors rather than individuals. They are also subject to change through recognized procedures and are enforced by a neutral third party.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>35</sup> Scheppele, "The History of Normalcy," 645.

countries asking for bribes, there have been no reports or even a well-publicized trend of judges acting outside the law. In fact, some have argued that Eastern Europe's judges may have a better understanding of rule of law and human rights than those who have always had them and take them for granted.<sup>36</sup>

**Most countries are signatories to CEDAW and other protective treaties.** In addition to the protections gained in new constitutions and laws, most of the countries in the region have signed the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and other international treaties for the advancement of women, children, and minority groups while still under communist rule. These treaties were largely unenforced by the previous communist governments, and there are still few mechanisms to prosecute those who discriminate against men or women.<sup>37</sup>

**Rule of law has gender implications.** Rule of law has important gender impacts because to a large extent, laws and their enforcement or lack thereof determine the real equality afforded to men and women in any country. Women experience *de jure* inequality vis-à-vis men in most countries in the region.<sup>38</sup>

### Marriage Law

**Gender biases in marriage laws vary.** The gender biases found in marriage laws in Europe and Eurasia vary from slight differences in legal age for marriage to allowing polygamy. Most men and women marry at an early age in the region. Many of the countries in the study have signed the Convention on Giving Agreement on Marriage, Minimum Marriage Age and Registration of Marriage, so a person cannot be forced to marry and must meet a minimum age. Armenia, Bulgaria, and Ukraine, however, set a lower legal age for women to marry than men.<sup>39</sup> Although individuals legally have the right to marry the individual of their choosing, it is not uncommon for parents to approve the choice of or even select their children's spouses, especially in Central Asia.

Polygamy is rarely found in the region, but it is legal in Albania and Turkmenistan. In Albania, men may marry up to four wives, though polygamy is uncommon unless the first wife has been unable to produce children.

### Divorce Law

**Divorce laws vary throughout the region.** There is some variation in divorce law around the region. In most communist countries, obtaining a divorce was fairly simple, particularly when both spouses wanted one. Under the Soviet Family Code, two restrictions were designed to protect women, a divorce would not be granted if the woman was pregnant or if the couple had a child less than a year old.<sup>40</sup> In Albania, however, women did not have equal rights to divorce,

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 648.

<sup>37</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 17.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>40</sup> Tokhtakhodzhaeva, *Between the Slogans of Communism and the Laws of Islam*, 17.

even under the communists. The discrepancy has continued in Albania, but there are few grounds on which men can divorce their wives. In Central Asia, divorce rates are lower than the European successors to the Soviet Union, in part due to societal pressure, although they are legally obtainable.

The Soviet Family Code governed family law in the Soviet Union until its dissolution in 1991. The property law decreed that both spouses had equal claim to marital property.<sup>41</sup> Most of the divorce laws in the NIS still include this provision, though women in Uzbekistan and Georgia were not aware that they had equal rights to property under the divorce law.<sup>42</sup> In most of Southern Europe, even Albania, a woman also has equal rights to property in the event of a divorce. This has in some cases become a liability, however, as some women and men have spouses who own unlimited liability corporations and joint marital assets can be seized for nonpayment of debts, even after a divorce.

Women often have sole custody of the children after a divorce. In some countries, like Ukraine, it is extremely difficult for the father to gain custody of the children. Although most laws allow and for spousal and child support payments and mechanisms exist to transfer the funds, many women do not receive the payments. In some countries, judges can decide on a less than equal division of marital property to provide additional support to the custodial parent, but it is not clear how often that provision is exercised.

### **Labor Laws**

**Labor laws do not include equal opportunity legislation.** Many countries in Eastern Europe passed new labor laws after the transition, but none have gone so far as to pass equal opportunity legislation. The new laws seek to protect workers and their rights, and many of them provide special protections for women. Women are generally prohibited from work that involves heavy physical labor, and in some countries from working night shifts if they have young children. Men do not face the same restrictions and are therefore more competitive in some sectors of the labor market than women are.

**Maternity leave may lead to discrimination against women.** Another provision in the labor laws that encourages de facto discrimination against women is that firms are required to pay for several months of maternity leave (usually six) and sometimes for child-rearing leave of up to three years. Having a position open for three years is generally not feasible and the firm must then pay salaries and taxes for the mother on leave and the person filling that position. The region's labor laws also discriminate against men by providing differential social benefits to men and women (see discussion in Chapter 5).

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<sup>41</sup> Futures Group, *The Legal Status of Women in the New Independent States of the Former Soviet Union*, (Washington, DC: USAID, 1994), 3.

<sup>42</sup> Marfua Tokhtakhodzaeva, "Women and the Law in Uzbekistan," in *Assertions of Self: the Nascent Women's Movement in Central Asia*, (Lahore, Pakistan: Shirkat Gah, 1995), 17; and Gender Development Association, *Conditions of Women in Georgia*, (Tbilisi: Gender Development Association, 1999), 74.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Some of the holes in the data for democracy and governance questions may easily be answered by in-country sources. For example, we found no sex-disaggregated voter turnout rates, but these may be published in local newspapers with election results. We also had very little info on political party membership across the region, but this information is often not readily available in other countries.

The other data gaps in political participation were in civil service and local government data. Little current information is available about the composition of the civil service in any of these countries and almost no sex-disaggregated information on participation in local government. By the time those few dissertations and articles covering this topic are published, the data are old.

The composition of the judiciary was also generally unavailable, except perhaps the constitutional court, and merits further research. Each country has a bar or judges' association, so obtaining that information in-country may be relatively simple.

Some studies have examined the size of the NGO sector in terms of percentage of GDP and person-hours of work, we know almost nothing about the composition of the paid staff and volunteers in the NGO sector. It is impossible to state without reasonable doubt that the sector is feminized, in spite of supporting anecdotal evidence. There is also little information about effectiveness of women's organizations and others representing vulnerable populations in influencing government policy in those areas, or acting as a conduit to other types of political activity.

We know a good deal about the *de jure* status of men and women in the region. But while some reports have asserted that men and women experience *de facto* inequality in the region, we found no hard data to support it. There is also no information on the gender-differentiated effects, if any, of making minorities second-class citizens. These would be important areas for future research.

## CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

As under the communists, in the political sphere, men and women in Southern Europe and Eurasia are formally equal but realistically unequal. Some of the countries appear to be moving toward greater equality of the sexes, while others appear to be moving to more patriarchal social structures. Women's NGOs are working to advance the status of women in each of the countries in the study, but women's issues are often viewed as secondary to stability and economic development.

Kathleen Kuehnast discusses the idea of a liminal period in the history of a nation, in which people and things are not what they were nor are they what they will be.<sup>43</sup> Much of the last decade has been a liminal period for the countries in this study. Some of them are emerging, such as Bulgaria and Romania, and others, like the Central Asian and Caucasian countries, may

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<sup>43</sup> Kathleen Kuehnast, *Let the Stone Lie Where It Has Fallen: Dilemmas of Gender and Generation in Post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN, 1997, 88.

continue to evolve for several more years. The question remains then, what can be done to improve the equality of the sexes for the remainder of the transition period.

## Chapter 5: The Social Transition

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Social safety nets differentiate between men and women, sometimes to the benefit of women, and sometimes to the benefit of men.
- Poverty rates have increased throughout the region. Gender seems to be significantly correlated with poverty; however, more data are needed.
- Pension reform has begun in the region, but research regarding the impact of pension reform on gender is lacking.
- Health has worsened for both men and women. More sex-disaggregated health data are needed.
- Education enrollments have fallen for kindergarten and primary levels, and quantitative data do not show a gender-bias in the enrollment rates. The Caucasus and Central Asia in particular are experiencing enrollment issues.

### INTRODUCTION

“The need for action is urgent, as the human costs of the transition have been high.”

UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition, Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, UNICEF International Child Development Centre, 1999, 10.

According to UNICEF, social issues in the Europe and Eurasia region have received less attention than economic issues during the transition.<sup>1</sup> The social transition, though, has been troubled. Social safety nets are strained, poverty has increased, health has worsened, and educational enrollments have fallen. Countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia have been hardest hit.

#### *Key Questions*

The gender implications of the social transition are difficult to assess, however, because of a lack of sex-disaggregated data. Using the available data, this chapter seeks to answer these primary study questions:

- 1. With the shredding of the social safety net, how have women versus men fared in access to / support from social programs?** Which components of the social safety net/welfare state have been cut and maintained in the region (e.g., have unemployment benefits been maintained better than pension or maternity benefits)? Do women or men benefit more or less from certain types of safety net components? If yes, has the social safety net program favored men over women or vice-versa? Are unemployment benefits differentiated between men and women?

<sup>1</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition, Regional Monitoring Report No. 6* (New York: UNICEF International Child Development Centre, 1999), 10.



2. **Do data show women's poverty rates to be greater than men's?**
3. **What differential impacts has pension reform had on men's and women's access to benefits?**
4. **What are the health-related impacts of the transition?** What are important health-related problems, by sex (alcoholism, AIDS, heart disease, breast cancer, reproductive health, lung cancer)? How do these or other key health problems affect women and men? What are the principal health system issues (access, quality, resources), and is there impact related to men and women?
5. **What are salient changes in the state-funded education system since 1989/91?** Have these changes differentially impacted women and men? Are there male/female differences in access, participation, completion? What are secondary school completion rates (boys/girls)? What are higher education completion rates (men/women)?

## PRIMARY FINDINGS

### *Social Transition Indicators*

We begin by examining several key social transition indicators for each country. Table 5.1 presents these major indicators, and through the table, we can get a snapshot of each country's social situation in relation to gender issues and each other. In the sections following, we discuss findings in the order of our key questions: Social Safety Net, Poverty, Pension Reform, Health, and Education.

As the data show, in every country, men have lower life expectancy than women, consistent with data for the two comparison countries, Turkey and the United States. Europe and Eurasia countries have high literacy rates (Albania has the lowest at 85 percent), and literacy is generally comparable for men and women. In a few countries, women have slightly lower literacy rates than men. By comparison, women in Turkey have literacy rates 18.5 percent lower than men.

Poverty, as is discussed in more detail below, has not been sex-disaggregated in the major, cross-country databases used in this report. Nevertheless, the table indicates that poverty is higher in the countries of Central Asia and West-NIS and lower in the European countries.

**Table 5.1. Key Social Transition Indicators**

Country	Life Expectancy, in Years, 1997		Literacy, %, 1997		Poverty, % <sup>2</sup>
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
<b>Eurasia</b>					
<b>Caucasus</b>					
Armenia	70.3	77.3	98.8	98.8	--
Azerbaijan	67.4	74.6	96.3	96.3	--
Georgia <sup>3</sup>	--	--	100	98	--
<b>Central Asian Republics</b>					
Kazakhstan	59.0	70.2	99.0	99.0	65.0
Kyrgyzstan <sup>3</sup>	62.6	71.4	99	96	88.0
Tajikistan	--	--	98.3	99.0	--
Turkmenistan <sup>3</sup>	62.1	67.5	99	97	61.0
Uzbekistan <sup>3</sup>	--	--	99	99	63.0
<b>West NIS</b>					
Belarus	62.9	74.3	98.5	99.0	22.0
Moldova	62.9	70.3	97.4	99.0	66.0
Russian Federation	60.9	72.8	98.8	99.0	50.0
Ukraine <sup>3</sup>	62.0	73.0	100	97	63.0
<b>Europe</b>					
<b>Southern Tier</b>					
Albania	--	--	85.0	85.0	--
Bosnia-Herzegovina	--	--	--	--	--
Bulgaria	67.2	74.4	97.6	98.8	15.0
Croatia	--	--	96.4	99.0	--
Macedonia, FYR	--	--	94.0	94.0	--
Romania	65.2	73.0	96.7	98.9	59.0
Slovenia	71.0	78.6	99.0	99.0	<1.0
Yugoslavia, FR	--	--	--	--	--
<b>Northern Tier</b>					
Czech Republic	70.5	77.5	99.0	99.0	<1.0
Estonia	64.5	76.0	99.0	99.0	37.0
Hungary	66.4	75.1	99.0	99.0	4.0
Latvia	64.1	74.9	99.0	99.0	22.0
Lithuania	65.9	76.8	99.0	99.0	30.0
Poland	68.5	77.0	99.0	99.0	20.0
Slovak Republic	68.9	76.7	99.0	99.0	<1.0
<b>Comparison Countries</b>					
Turkey	70.8 <sup>4</sup>	75.9	73.9	92.4	--
United States	73.0 <sup>4</sup>	79.7	99.0	99.0	14.1 <sup>5</sup>

Note: -- indicates data are not available.

Sources: Life expectancy – UNICEF MONEE; Literacy – UNDP Human Development Indicators; Poverty – UNDP Human Development Indicators.

<sup>2</sup> Data are percent of population below \$4.00 (1990 purchasing power parity) per day per person, for the most recent year available.

<sup>3</sup> Literacy data from the CIA World Factbook.

<sup>4</sup> Life expectancy data for men and women from the CIA World Factbook.

<sup>5</sup> Data for United States are for percent of population with incomes below \$14.40 (1985 PPP) per person per day.

## Social Safety Net

**Social safety net programs in transition countries have been maintained.** Countries of Europe and Eurasia began the transition with comprehensive social safety nets inherited from the Communist system. These social safety nets typically include three types of benefits: universal benefits, social insurance, and social assistance. Table 5.2 compares these benefit types.

**Table 5.2. Social Benefit Types**

Benefit Type	Coverage	Conditions for Receipt
<b>Universal Benefits</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family allowances</li> <li>• Health services</li> </ul>	All residents	Event of contingency (need of health services, children)
<b>Social Insurance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unemployment benefits</li> <li>• Pensions</li> <li>• Sickness and maternity cash benefits</li> <li>• Work injury benefits</li> </ul>	People with direct or indirect affiliation to the labor market	Event of contingency (old age, invalidity, sickness, maternity, death of breadwinner, unemployment)
<b>Social Assistance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefits in kind</li> <li>• Income support (cash benefits)</li> </ul>	All residents	Event of contingency plus means-test (inability of self-support)

Source: Michael Cichon, Krzysztof Hagemeyer, and Markus Ruck, *Social Protection and Pension Systems in Central and Eastern Europe*, ILO-CEET Report No. 21 (Budapest: International Labour Office, Central and Eastern Europe Team, 1997), 11.

While Table 5.2 above shows basic differences in the types of programs offered by countries of Europe and Eurasia, each country has a benefit system with individualized eligibility requirements and benefit payments. Table 5.3 indicates which countries have which social safety net programs. More detailed information on each country included in this study and their benefit programs can be found in Chapters 8 through 12.

**Social safety net programs expanded in some countries.** Contrary to our hypothesis, social safety nets have not been “shredded” during the transition. In some countries, the safety nets have even expanded. Unemployment insurance is a major example: because unemployment did not officially exist under Communism, neither did unemployment insurance. Each of the ten study countries now has unemployment insurance. Five of those countries established unemployment benefits after 1991. Five countries – Armenia, Bulgaria, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Ukraine – had unemployment insurance programs prior to World War II. These programs were inactive during the Communist years and were re-established after 1990.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Social Security Administration, *Social Security Programs Throughout the World – 1999*, <http://www.ssa.gov/statistics/ssptw99.html>. Information on unemployment is not available for Kazakhstan.

**Table 5.3. Social Safety Net Programs in Study Countries**

Country	Old-Age Pensions	Sickness and Maternity	Work Injury	Unemployment	Family Allowances
<b>Eurasia</b>					
<i>Caucasus</i>					
Armenia	U	U	U	U	U
Azerbaijan	U	--	U	U	--
Georgia	U	U	U	U	--
<i>Central Asian Republics</i>					
Kazakhstan	U	--	U	--	--
Kyrgyzstan	U	U	U	U	U
Uzbekistan	U	U	U	U	--
<i>West NIS</i>					
Russian Federation	U	U	U	U	U
Ukraine	U	U	U	U	U
<b>Europe</b>					
<i>Southern Tier</i>					
Albania	U	U	U	U	U
Bulgaria	U	U	U	U	U
Romania	U	U	U	U	U
<b>Comparison Countries</b>					
Turkey <sup>7</sup>	U	U	U		
United States <sup>8</sup>	U	U	U	U	U

Note: -- indicates data are not available.

Source: U.S. Social Security Programs Throughout the World – 1999, <http://www.ssa.gov/statistics/ssptw99.html>.

**Government expenditures on social programs appear to have decreased in Central Asia and the Caucasus, while increasing in West-NIS and the Northern Tier countries.**

Generalizations beyond this initial statement cannot be made for two primary reasons. First, data are unavailable for many countries, particularly the countries of the Southern Tier. Second, these data are based on percentage of GDP. Because the region faced high inflation during the transition, an increase in expenditures as a percentage of GDP may not reflect an actual increase. It may only reflect the increase in inflation. Nevertheless, Table 5.4 presents the available data on government social expenditures and shows that of the 15 countries for which there are data, eight increased spending, five decreased spending, and in two, spending remained about the same. The only source of cross-country comparable expenditure data, the EBRD, reports only health and education expenditures. Expenditures for other social safety net programs (pensions, unemployment, and family allowances, for example) are not included in these totals.

<sup>7</sup> In Turkey, employers pay a dismissal indemnity, but no other unemployment assistance exists.

<sup>8</sup> Sickness benefits paid to the elderly and disabled; maternity benefits available through a few states only. Family allowances are not universal but are paid to some poor families.

**Table 5.4. Government Expenditures on Health and Education, as a Percentage of GDP**

Country	Baseline Year	Comparison Year
<b>Eurasia</b>		
<i>Caucasus</i>		
Armenia	9.7 (1990)	3.1 (1998)
Azerbaijan	1.0 (1991)	5.0 (1997)
Georgia	9.0 (1990)	1.1 (1997)
<i>Central Asian Republics</i>		
Kazakhstan	6.1 (1992)	5.4 (1998)
Kyrgyzstan	0.1 (1990)	7.4 (1998)
Tajikistan	20.3 (1990)	3.3 (1998)
Turkmenistan	9.5 (1990)	9.2 (1997)
Uzbekistan	--	--
<i>West NIS</i>		
Belarus	1.1 (1993)	11.7 (1998)
Moldova	9.4 (1990)	14.3 (1997)
Russian Federation	6.0 (1992)	6.0 (1998)
Ukraine	7.0 (1990)	9.6 (1997)
<b>Europe</b>		
<i>Southern Tier</i>		
Albania	--	--
Bosnia-Herzegovina	--	--
Bulgaria	10.8 (1990)	--
Croatia	19.0 (1991)	--
Macedonia, FYR	15.0 (1992)	--
Romania	--	--
Slovenia	--	--
Yugoslavia, FR	--	--
<i>Northern Tier</i>		
Czech Republic	10.1 (1992)	12.6 (1996)
Estonia	--	--
Hungary	12.2 (1990)	11.4 (1996)
Latvia	8.0 (1990)	10.5 (1998)
Lithuania	--	--
Poland	10.5 (1991)	--
Slovak Republic	9.6 (1993)	10.7 (1998)
<b>Comparison Countries</b>		
Turkey	--	--
United States	--	--

Note: -- indicates data are not available.

Source: European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, *Transition Report 1999: Ten Years of Transition* (London: EBRD, 1999).

**Social benefits are gender-differentiated.** In most countries, a gender difference does exist in eligibility and/or benefits of some programs. These programs include maternity benefits, pensions, unemployment, work injury, and sickness. Pension reform and its effects on gender are discussed in detail below. Detailed tables of each country's benefits and any gender differentials are presented in Chapters 7 through 16.

*Programs in which gender differentials benefit women:* Maternity Benefits: Women receive the benefit of maternity leave which is paid to men in only one country, Bulgaria, and then only with the permission of the mother. Pensions: Women in most countries can retire earlier than men with a full pension. In most countries, women can retire at age 55 with 20 years of employment, compared to men who can retire at age 60 with 25 years. Pension reform, as it spreads across the region, is raising the retirement age for both sexes and equalizing the ages.

*Programs in which gender differentials benefit men:* Many benefits – notably pensions, unemployment, sickness, and work injury – are calculated based on the recipients' wages. In all E&E countries, women's wages are lower than men's (please see the discussion of wage differentials in Chapter 3). Their pensions and unemployment benefits, therefore, would also be lower. In only one country, Georgia, are both pensions and unemployment benefits fixed and not based on wages or number of years worked. In two countries, Albania and Armenia, pension benefits are calculated on a fixed rate plus an additional payment based on number of years worked. In both Albania and Armenia, unemployment benefits are a fixed amount and not based on wages or years worked. In most countries, minimum and maximum benefit levels help equalize payments for all recipients.

Because women are more likely than men to care for children and elderly relatives and, consequently, spend time out of the labor force, any benefit based on wages or number of years worked may accrue higher benefits to men than women. Women's "double burden" of housework and caring for children and the elderly was mentioned by UNDP, World Bank, and MONEE researchers, and is not considered to be in dispute.

### ***Poverty and Gender***

**Few gender disaggregated data on poverty exist.** For the most part, the major sources of statistical data that might allow us to compare poverty rates between countries do not disaggregate poverty rates by gender. These sources include the World Bank Gender Stats database, the UNICEF MONEE statistical annexes, and the UNDP Human Development Indicators.

Because none of the major databases used in this report disaggregate poverty by gender, disaggregated data for individual countries were found in country-specific reports, primarily poverty assessments by the World Bank. Data from these reports are generally based on household income and expenditure surveys. In some cases, these surveys were conducted by World Bank researchers, but in others, the surveys were conducted by the country statistical office. Therefore, methodologies, reliability, and validity vary. In addition, poverty rates for each country are not entirely comparable because the rates are not based on absolute numbers. Instead, each country's poverty rate is based on the relative income and expenditure for that

country. For example, a World Bank poverty assessment may determine the number of poor people in Country X, not based on an international poverty rate of \$4.00 per day, but based on the amount of income needed to buy basic food and other household necessities within Country X.

While we present some of these poverty rates in Table 5.5, readers should note that the data are not comparable and have many caveats. The footnotes accompanying the table attempt to explain some of the data. For example, in the most recent poverty assessment for Georgia, the World Bank provides poverty rates for male and female working age adults of 8.5 and 8.0, respectively, indicating, on the surface, that there is no gender differentiation in poverty. However, the text accompanying the data states explicitly that “Female-headed households are more likely to be poor than male-headed households. And when we consider jointly marital status, gender and poverty of individuals, the underprivileged position of women becomes more evident. Single women and women in unregistered wedlock have much higher risks of poverty than men in similar situations; and especially, single female pensioners (widows) are particularly vulnerable to poverty.”<sup>9</sup> No “data” on the worse situation of women are given. Therefore, while the table appears to state that men and women have equal poverty rates in Georgia, the reality is much more complicated and difficult to quantify.

**Poverty does appear to be gender-differentiated.** One study by the World Bank, *Poverty Correlates and Indicator-Based Targeting in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*, does analyze poverty by gender for six countries. This research, which includes analyses of three of our study countries, concludes that gender is a “significant dimension of poverty” in the countries of the former Soviet Union.<sup>10</sup> However, in countries of Eastern Europe, the age effect outweighs the gender effect.<sup>11</sup>

**Table 5.5. Poverty Rates by Gender, in Study Countries**

Country	Female	Male
<b>Eurasia</b>		
<b>Caucasus</b>		
Armenia <sup>12</sup>	27.1	27.0
Azerbaijan <sup>13</sup>	NA	NA
Georgia <sup>14</sup>	8.0	8.5

<sup>9</sup> World Bank, *Georgia: Poverty and Income Distribution*, Report No. 19348-GE, Volume I: Main Report (Washington: World Bank, 1999), 7.

<sup>10</sup> Christiaan Grootaert and Jeanine Braithwaite, *Poverty Correlates and Indicator-Based Targeting in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*, Policy Research Working Paper 1942 (Washington: World Bank, 1998), 54.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>12</sup> The overall rate masks gender differentiation for the elderly: female single elderly pensioners are twice as likely as single male pensioners to be poor. Data from World Bank, *Improving Social Assistance in Armenia*, Annex 1, 7.

<sup>13</sup> The overall poverty rate is 60 percent. The only sex-disaggregated statistics available in the World Bank’s most recent poverty assessment are wage data – which can help us understand the situation of female-headed households. According to the World Bank, women earn only 40 percent of men’s wages, on average.

<sup>14</sup> The most recent World Bank poverty assessment for Georgia gives quantitative data only for working age men and women (shown in the table above). The report, however, states “Female-headed households are more likely to be poor than male-headed households. And when we consider jointly marital status, gender and poverty of individuals, the underprivileged position of women become more evident. Single women and women in unregistered

Country	Female	Male
<b>Central Asian Republics</b>		
Kazakhstan <sup>15</sup>	34.6	34.6
Kyrgyzstan <sup>16</sup>	50.5	41.6
Uzbekistan <sup>17</sup>	NA	NA
<b>West NIS</b>		
Russia <sup>6</sup>	46.0	37.8
Ukraine <sup>18</sup>	32.0	29.0
<b>Europe</b>		
<b>Southern Tier</b>		
Albania <sup>19</sup>	74.1	66.7
Bulgaria <sup>6</sup>	40.5	24.0
Romania <sup>20</sup>	24.0	21.0
<b>Northern Tier</b>		
Estonia <sup>6</sup>	39.1	27.9
Hungary <sup>6</sup>	25.6	19.1
Poland <sup>6</sup>	23.7	22.7
<b>Comparison Countries</b>		
United States <sup>21</sup>	14.3	11.1

Sources: As indicated in the footnotes.

wedlock have much higher risks of poverty than men in similar situation; and especially, single female pensioners (widows) are particularly vulnerable to poverty.” From World Bank, *Georgia: Poverty and Income Distribution*, Report No. 19348-GE, Volume I: Main Report (Washington: World Bank, 1999), 7.

<sup>15</sup> Gender-differentiation of poverty in Kazakhstan is disputed. The figures shown in the table are the overall poverty rate for all households. The Asian Development Bank (Armin Bauer, Nina Boschmann, and David Green, *Women and Gender Relations in Kazakhstan: The Social Cost* (Manila: Asian Development Bank, 1997), 68) suggests that this poverty is gender-differentiated, with elderly women and single women with many children comprising the majority of the poor. However, the World Bank (Mamta Murthi, *Kazakhstan: Living Standards During the Transition*, Report No. 17520-KZ (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1998), 18), using household surveys of consumption, shows that while female-headed households are 40 percent of all households, they are under-represented among the poor.

<sup>16</sup> Data are for heads of household from Christiaan Grootaert and Jeanine Braithwaite, *Poverty Correlates and Indicator-Based Targeting in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*, Policy Research Working Paper 1942 (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1998), 37. Another study (in Falkingham, et al, *Household Welfare in Central Asia* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997, 90), reporting 1993 data, shows that 45.2 percent of male-headed households were poor compared to 43.6 percent of female-headed households. These overall data, however, hide the differences between urban and rural households. In urban families, 38.4 percent of female-headed households are poor compared to 29.2 percent of male-headed households. Grootaert and Braithwaite’s data are used in the table because these data have been cleaned, according to the World Bank, and are for six countries in the region.

<sup>17</sup> The World Bank’s latest poverty assessment does not give sex-disaggregated data on poverty. The report states that “reliable information on living standards is not available.” A 1995 household survey by the European University Institute found a poverty rate in Tashkent of 10 percent, in Karakalpakstan 50 percent in urban areas and 70 percent in rural areas, and in the Fergana Valley 28 percent in urban areas and 47 percent in rural areas.

<sup>18</sup> Data from World Bank, *Poverty in Ukraine*, Report No. 15602-UA (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1996), 19. Based on household surveys of consumption.

<sup>19</sup> Data from World Bank, *Albania: Growing Out of Poverty*, Report No. 15698-ALB (Washington: World Bank, 1997), 41. Refers to extended families in urban areas only. These are the only households for which gender disaggregated data were available.

<sup>20</sup> Data from World Bank, *Romania: Poverty and Social Policy*, Volume I: Main Report (Washington: World Bank, 1997), 19. Data for female versus male headed households.

<sup>21</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1998 Current Population Survey*, [http://ferret.bls.census.gov/macro/031999/pov/new1\\_001.htm](http://ferret.bls.census.gov/macro/031999/pov/new1_001.htm). Data show the poverty rate for female-headed households as 33.1 percent.



### **Former Soviet Union**

The World Bank researchers found that in the former Soviet Union, the poverty rate was “sharply higher” in female-headed households than in male-headed households. In addition, these female-headed households were poorer than comparable male-headed households. Women also account for an increasing share of the poor as age increases. While girls are half or even less than half of all poor children, women aged 65 and older are between 70 and 75 percent of the poor.<sup>22</sup>

### **Eastern Europe**

In Eastern Europe, World Bank data also show that female-headed households are poorer than male-headed households. This finding holds even after controlling for other characteristics of female-headed households, such as low education, that are associated with poverty.<sup>23</sup> This poverty differential, however, is related to the poverty of older women. World Bank data reveal that poverty rates among the elderly are higher for women. The gender gap is less prominent at lower ages. In fact, for some age groups, poverty is lower among women than men. The World Bank concludes, then, that gender is a relevant correlate of poverty for elderly women and female-headed households.<sup>24</sup>

Two tables below illustrate these findings. Tables 5.6 and 5.7 show poverty rates by gender and age.

### **Poverty and Age**

Data from the World Bank indicate that young children and the elderly are more likely to be poor. Table 5.7 and Figure 5.1 (a graphical representation of the data in the table) present poverty rates by age for several countries (data are available from the World Bank for these countries only). Some qualitative data indicate that youth may be “at-risk.” Examples of these data are presented in Box 5.1.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 39.

**Table 5.6. Poverty Rates by Gender**

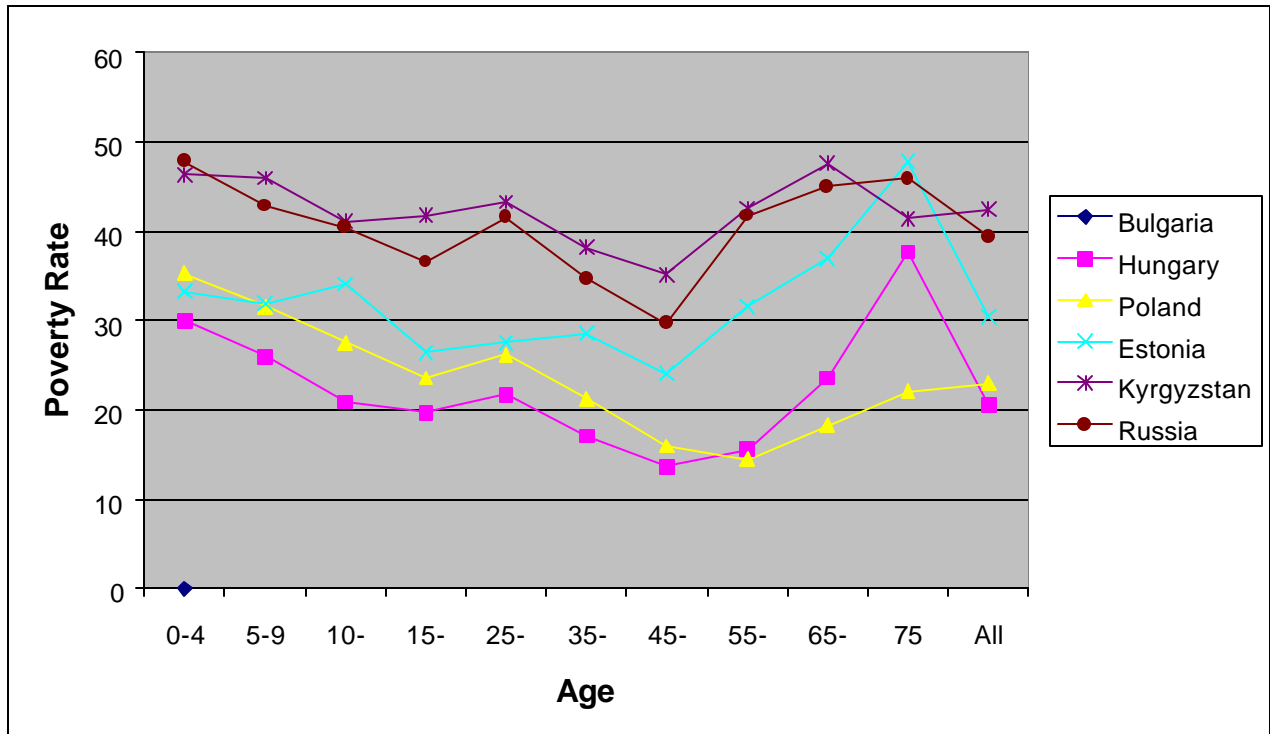
	<b>Bulgaria</b>	<b>Hungary</b>	<b>Poland</b>	<b>Estonia</b>	<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>	<b>Russia</b>
<b>Male, Head of Household</b>	24.0	19.1	22.7	27.9	41.6	37.8
<b>Male, Single</b>	33.1	24.2	15.6	32.5	40.0	52.5
<b>Female Head of Household</b>	40.5	25.6	23.7	39.1	50.5	46.0
<b>Female, Single</b>	45.0	27.8	13.5	37.0	51.8	47.8
<b>Total</b>	26.1	20.6	23.0	30.5	42.5	39.4

Source: Christiaan Grootaert and Jeanine Braithwaite, *Poverty Correlates and Indicator-Based Targeting in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*, Policy Research Working Paper 1942 (Washington: World Bank, 1998), 27, 37.

**Table 5.7. Poverty and Age, Percent of Population under the Poverty Line**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Bulgaria</b>	<b>Hungary</b>	<b>Poland</b>	<b>Estonia</b>	<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>	<b>Russia</b>
<b>0-4</b>	29.0	30.0	35.3	33.3	46.4	47.9
<b>5-9</b>	28.2	26.0	31.6	32.0	46.0	42.9
<b>10-14</b>	24.2	20.9	27.6	34.1	41.1	40.5
<b>15-24</b>	24.1	19.7	23.6	26.4	41.8	36.6
<b>25-34</b>	23.5	21.7	26.2	27.6	43.3	41.6
<b>35-44</b>	18.8	17.1	21.3	28.6	38.2	34.7
<b>45-54</b>	20.2	13.7	16.0	24.1	35.2	29.7
<b>55-64</b>	27.6	15.6	14.5	31.6	42.6	41.7
<b>65-74</b>	35.0	23.6	18.3	37.0	47.6	45.0
<b>75+</b>	47.5	37.7	22.1	47.9	41.4	45.9
<b>Overall Rate</b>	<b>26.1</b>	<b>20.6</b>	<b>23.0</b>	<b>30.5</b>	<b>42.5</b>	<b>39.4</b>

Source: Christiaan Grootaert and Jeanine Braithwaite, *Poverty Correlates and Indicator-Based Targeting in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union* (Washington: World Bank, 1998), 38.

**Figure 5.1. Poverty and Age**

Source: Christiaan Grootaert and Jeanine Braithwaite, *Poverty Correlates and Indicator-Based Targeting in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union* (Washington: World Bank, 1998), 38.

### Box 5.1. Qualitative Evidence of Youth At-Risk

Some researchers, using qualitative research methods, have found that youth in the Europe and Eurasia region are “at-risk.” For the most part, these findings are not sex-disaggregated or based on quantitative data. These researchers note that the population in some countries, particularly Central Asia, is very young. And, these researchers conclude, since poverty rates are high, access to education is decreasing, and health is deteriorating, youth are at risk from these effects.

*“The problems of going to town, combined with lack of social activities in villages is compounded by the fact that schools often close in winter, that families can no longer afford to pay for their children to join after-school music, chess, and other clubs, and that there are no jobs for school leavers. As a result, young men and women find themselves completely idle.”*

Hermine G. De Soto and Nora Dudwick, *Poverty in Moldova: The Social Dimensions of Transition*, June 1996 – May 1997 (Washington: World Bank), 73.

*“Many rural respondents described the number of children are quitting school by age 14 (sic).... A common concern among rural women is the increase in drinking and crime among the male youth. There is little entertainment available since many of the youth clubs have shut down and most movie theaters cannot afford showing films.”*

Kathleen Kuehnast, *Women and Economic Changes in Kyrgyzstan: Coping Mechanisms and Attitudes Toward Social Policies*, (Washington: World Bank, 1993), 22.

“Particularly for young men who can expect severe difficulties in securing gainful employment after the mines close, joining criminal organizations provides an alternative to the old work collective. Criminal organizations and gangs offer an income, contacts, protection, and some kind of hope that the future will be more comfortable than the present.”

Catherine Wanner and Nora Dudwick, *Ethnographic Study of Poverty in Ukraine October 1995-March 1996* (Washington: World Bank, 1996), 79.

## ***Pension Reform***

### **Introduction to Pension Reform**

**Pensions – benefits paid to workers following retirement – have become the object of reform efforts in countries throughout CEE and the NIS.** These countries typically had extensive pension systems that were mandatory, pay-as-you-go (PAYG) systems, much like the Social Security program in the United States. Under PAYG systems, current workers pay pension taxes that are used to pay the pensions of current retirees. These pensions are based on "defined benefits" – pensioners are promised a certain benefit regardless of how much or how little they paid in pension taxes, and current workers pay taxes to fund these benefits.

### **Gender-Related Effects of Pension Reform**

Pension reform typically includes the following four reforms: 1) sharply reducing eligibility for early retirement, 2) gradually raising and bringing closer together the minimum retirement age for men and women, 3) harmonizing the contribution rates paid by employees and the self-employed, and 4) introducing a closer link between benefits and lifetime contributions.

**Several of these reforms will have a disproportionate impact on women.** Women currently receive preferential treatment for retirement eligibility in most E&E countries, and mothers of several children or of disabled children can generally retire even earlier. Pension reform usually includes a proposal to reduce eligibility for early retirement and bring women’s retirement age more closely in line with men’s. In effect, women will lose some preferential treatment.

The most important gender-related impacts of pension reform will result from efforts to reduce the role of the public “defined benefit” pension system and increase the use of a private “defined contribution” system. This move from defined benefit to defined contribution pensions will impact gender in two primary ways.

First, women throughout the region earn less than men. In addition to wage differentials, women may spend fewer years in the labor force. For example, in Bulgaria, women are more likely than men to work as “unpaid family workers” in family businesses. As unpaid workers, they do not accumulate credit for pensions, unemployment, or work injury protection. Women also spend more time doing housework than men (and so have fewer hours available for wage-earning work) and are responsible for child care. Women and men share housework in fewer than 10 percent of Bulgarian households.<sup>25</sup> Childbirth and child care can result in time away from work.

<sup>25</sup> UNDP, *Bulgaria: Women in Poverty*, <http://www.online.bg/undp/publications/index.html>, Chapter 3, 5.

Because women's wages are lower and they spend less time in the labor force, their contributions (and, therefore, the resulting pensions) would be lower than those of men.

Second, women throughout the region live longer than men. Table 5.1 above contains life expectancy data. Women's pension savings would, therefore, have to be stretched over more years.

### **Current State of Pension Benefits in Europe and Eurasia**

**Research into current pension benefits in the region by the U.S. Social Security Administration shows that in most countries, women may still retire earlier than men and in some countries receive credit for raising children.** In most countries both workers and employers contribute to the state pension system (workers contribute very little — generally about one percent of their wages) while employers pay very high payroll taxes that cover pensions, unemployment benefits, and other welfare subsidies. Table 5.8 presents an overview of pension benefits in the region.

### **Current Pension Reforms in Europe and Eurasia**

Several countries are undergoing pension reform. Reforms generally focus on stabilizing the public pension system to insure its solvency and creating a private pension system. Private pension systems include the creation of private pension funds. Workers and their employers can contribute into the funds, and pension benefits are based on the contributions (and any investment return) rather than a guaranteed benefit from the government.

In other words, private pensions transfer responsibility for saving and investing for retirement from the government to the individual worker.

### ***Health Reform***

The purpose of the health section is to synthesize the best available information on the health status of women and men in each of the study countries; to show how the health of both sexes has been affected by the transition process; and to highlight health system issues which affect services provided to, and health status of women and/or men. Whenever possible, issues affecting males and females of different age groups are identified, e.g., adolescents, reproductive age and older adults; when available and significant, information by ethnicity and urban/rural residence is also included. This focus on health status and impacts by gender, age group and other variables will help in identifying problems, interventions and target groups in health assistance programming, as well as needs for further information.

Gender and health information is presented for each country in a stand-alone format which can be extracted and used on its own; however, because the information for all countries is based on a common set of variables, the health section as a whole facilitates comparisons among countries and sub-regions within the Europe and Eurasia region, in order to promote information exchange and synergies among country programs on issues of common concern.

**Table 5.8. Pension Benefits in Europe and Eurasia**

Country	Retirement Age for Men/Years of Contributions	Retirement Age for Women/Years of Contributions	Benefits
Albania	60/35 years	55/35 years or 50/30 years if have 6 or more children over age 8	Basic pension plus earnings-related increment at 1% for each year of coverage multiplied by average assessed wage
Armenia	62/25 years, or 57/20 years for arduous or hazardous work, or 52/15 for very arduous or hazardous work	57/25 years, or 52/20 years for arduous or hazardous work, or 47/15 for very arduous or hazardous work	100% of base pension (2,860 dram) plus a bonus pension of 35-60 dram per year depending on years of work
Bulgaria	60/25 years. Reduced for hazardous or arduous work	55/20 years. Reduced for hazardous or arduous work, for mothers of 5 or more children	55% of average earnings during highest 3 consecutive years in last 15 years. Limited to 3 times social pension.
Georgia	65/25 years.	60/20 years.	14 lari per month, regardless of years worked
Kazakhstan	60.5/25 years. Reduced for hazardous or arduous work	55.5/20 years. Reduced for hazardous or arduous work, for mothers of 5 or more children or disabled children	60% of earnings plus 1% of earnings for each year in excess of 25 (men) or 20 (women)
Kyrgyzstan	60/25 years. Reduced for hazardous or arduous work	55/20 years. Reduced for hazardous or arduous work, for mothers of 5 or more children or disabled children	55% of average monthly wage, plus 1% of wage for each year in excess of 25 (men) or 20 (women)
Romania	60/30 years. Reduced for hazardous or arduous work	55/25 years. Reduced for hazardous or arduous work, for mothers of 3 or more children	54-85% of average wages during best 5 years, plus 1% of earnings per year of employment beyond qualifying period.
Russia	60/25 years. Reduced for hazardous or arduous work	55/20 years. Reduced for hazardous or arduous work, for mothers of 5 or more children or disabled children	55% of wage base, plus 1% of wage for each year in excess of 25 (men) and 20 (women)
Ukraine	60/25 years. Reduced for hazardous or arduous work	55/20 years. Reduced for hazardous or arduous work, for mothers of 5 or more children or disabled children	55% of wage base, plus 1% of wage for each year in excess of 25 (men) and 20 (women)
Uzbekistan	60/25 years	55/20 years	First Tier: 55% of average earnings. Second Tier: 1% of average earnings for each year of service, or special pension for war veterans and others

Source: U.S. Social Security Administration, *Social Security Programs Throughout the World—1999*.

## Overview Of Major Issues And Implications

The variables used in this study are those which stand out in the survey data and literature as problems particularly affecting women or men, and for which sex-specific or sex-disaggregated information is available. The preponderance of information concerns women's health, particularly reproductive health, and this is a major focus for each of the country reports. However, other gender-differentiated health issues are also included, commensurate with the information available.

The following sections introduce the major variables and issues, and indicate why they are important in improving women's or men's health and contributing to development. Please note, however, that the health literature available rarely discusses the effects of gender on health in terms of imbalances in power or decision-making, income, and access to resources. Therefore, the information presented in the country reports is mainly in terms of specific health problems or issues affecting women or men, although such larger gender issues will be pointed out in this overview when possible. The country reports, then, should be read and interpreted in the context of this brief discussion of issues, and, especially, in the context of the larger report, taking into account gender differences in the economic and educational spheres and in access to resources, and gender roles in public and private decision-making, in order to fully understand the gender dynamics which affect health as well as every other aspect of personal and national well-being and development.

### Demographic and Health Indicators

Table 5.9 summarizes data on basic demographic and health indicators for each of the study countries, grouped by sub-region to facilitate comparisons. Each of these indicators was selected because it relates to one or more of the health status issues discussed below, and because it is important in providing a snapshot of comparative health status and the effectiveness of health services in the region. Each of the individual country sections examines changes in these variables between 1989/90 and 1997, when data permit, to illustrate trends over the transition period to date.

### Reproductive Health

**The transition period has seen a deterioration in health care and an inability to adequately improve serious health problems such as high maternal and infant death rates, high abortion rates and increased prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases.** Overall, however, women in the region began the transition with relatively good health status and adequate access to basic health services. Women's reproductive health is crucial to development, because the health of future generations depends upon it. Although access to adequate health care and nutrition is essential in ensuring adequate maternal health, overall social and economic conditions, and the problems and limitations women face in society, are the ultimate factors affecting their health.

Table 5.9. Comparative Demographic and Health Indicators<sup>26</sup>

Countries	Maternal Mortality (per 100,000 live births), 1997 <sup>27</sup>	Infant Mortality (per 1000 live births), 1997 <sup>28</sup>	Abortion Rate (per 100 live births), 1997 <sup>29</sup>	Contraceptive Prevalence, latest available year (source indicated)	Total Fertility Rate (births per woman), 1997 <sup>30</sup>	STD Incidence (new cases of syphilis/gonorrhea per 100,000 population), 1997 <sup>31</sup>	Life Expectancy at Birth, 1997 <sup>32</sup>		Percent of Population 65 & older, 1997 <sup>33</sup>
							Male	Female	
<b>Eurasia</b>									
<i>Caucasus</i>									
Armenia	38.7	25	48.8	57% (RHS 1998)	1.7	44	70.3	77.3	7.9
Azerbaijan	31.0	34	19.1	17% (PRB)	2.0	22	67.4	74.6	6.3
Georgia	19.2	23	45.0	---	1.9	64	---	---	12.0
<i>Central Asian Republics</i>									
Kazakhstan	59.0	37	67.5	59% (DHS 1995)	2.3	360	59.0	70.2	7.0
Kyrgyzstan	62.7	38	31.0	59.5%	3.2	---	62.6	71.4	5.9

<sup>26</sup> General note on sources: The major sources used for purposes of cross-country comparisons are from the MONEE and UNDP reports cited below, because they have data for most countries. MONEE is preferred for maternal mortality data because it is the most up-to-date comparable source of data. For infant mortality, UNDP is the preferred source for two reasons: a) UNDP data concords most closely with DHS data, for the three countries for which DHS surveys have been done; and b) data for six of the study countries cited in the MONEE database are based on Soviet rather than WHO definitions of infant death, impairing comparability. In some cases MONEE figures are significantly different (usually lower) than UNDP figures. Only the MONEE database provides reasonably complete and comparable data on abortion rates, STD incidence and life expectancy by sex. UNDP is the preferred source for total fertility rates because it concords most closely with DHS data in the cases in which it is available. Contraceptive prevalence sources identified are: Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), reproductive health surveys (RHS), UNDP Human Development Report (UNDP), Population Reference Bureau (PRB), Russia Longitudinal Monitoring Survey (RLMS). The year is specified when known.

<sup>27</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition, Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 119.

<sup>28</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 169.

<sup>29</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 118.

<sup>30</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, 198.

<sup>31</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 131.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 123-124.

<sup>33</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, 198.



Countries	Maternal Mortality (per 100,000 live births), 1997 <sup>27</sup>	Infant Mortality (per 1000 live births), 1997 <sup>28</sup>	Abortion Rate (per 100 live births), 1997 <sup>29</sup>	Contraceptive Prevalence, latest available year (source indicated)	Total Fertility Rate (births per woman), 1997 <sup>30</sup>	STD Incidence (new cases of syphilis/gonorrhea per 100,000 population), 1997 <sup>31</sup>	Life Expectancy at Birth, 1997 <sup>32</sup>		Percent of Population 65 & older, 1997 <sup>33</sup>
							Male	Female	
				(DHS 1997)					
Uzbekistan	12.0	46	23.7 (1992)	56% (DHS 1996)	3.4	---	---	---	4.5%
<b>West NIS</b>									
Russian Federation	50.2	20	198.3	63% (RLMS 1995)	1.3	390	60.9	72.8	12.2
Ukraine	25.1	18	134.8	---	1.3	208	62.0	73.0	14.0
<b>Europe</b>									
<b>Southern Tier</b>									
Albania	27.8	34	40.6 (1996)	---	2.5	---	68.5 (1995)	74.3 (1995)	5.7
Bosnia-Herzegovina	---	14	---	---	1.4	---	69.5 (1995)	75.1 (1995)	---
Bulgaria	18.7	16	135.4	76% (UNDP)	1.2	46	67.2	74.4	15.1
Macedonia, FYR	3.4	20	40.9	---	2.1	1	69.6 (1994)	74.0 (1994)	9.3
Romania	41.4	22	146.5	57% (RHS 1993)	1.2	32 (1996)	65.2	73.0	12.4
Yugoslavia, FR	13.7	18	61.1 (1996)	---	1.8	5	69.9 (1996)	74.6 (1996)	--

Sources: As indicated in footnotes.

The major indicators relating to reproductive health include maternal mortality, the prevalence of abortion and contraception, fertility and the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases. As well as an indicator of overall health status, infant mortality is also used as a reproductive health indicator, since infant survival and health depend heavily on the health status of mothers and the adequacy of prenatal, delivery and postnatal health services. Infant mortality is also highly sensitive to poverty and poor living conditions.

**While maternal mortality has decreased or stayed the same over the transition period in the Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) countries, it has increased in five of the eight countries comprising the former Soviet Union (FSU).** Maternal mortality in most of the countries included in the study is higher, often substantially so, than the target level for Europe established by the WHO of a maximum of 15 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births. Maternal mortality is generally lower in Central and Eastern Europe (except Romania) than in the states of the former Soviet Union, with the highest levels found in Central Asia (except Uzbekistan). However, maternal mortality ratios often fluctuate widely for individual countries due to the relatively small numbers of maternal deaths in most countries, making comparisons among countries and over time precarious.

**The prevalence of anemia and of births complicated by anemia has increased substantially and rapidly as conditions have deteriorated.** In addition to maternal mortality, the increased incidence of complications during birth indicates worsening maternal health, most likely due to the economic hardships suffered during the transition period, including poorer nutrition. The number of stillbirths, low birthweights, congenital anomalies and perinatal problems has increased among newborns, reflective of poor maternal health and a general deterioration in living conditions. A decline in the quality of maternity care – though coverage is still high – also contributes to the relatively high levels of maternal and infant mortality and morbidity in the region, compared with other industrialized countries.

**Abortion rates remain high.** The average for the study countries was 76 abortions per 100 live births, using data from 1997 or the latest available year, compared with an average of 20 per 100 for the European Union (1994). The average for the transition region as a whole was 100 abortions per 100 live births in 1996. Rates vary considerably among the countries, however, from a high of 198.3 for the Russian Federation to a low of 19.1 for Azerbaijan. Nonetheless, except for Azerbaijan, all the study countries have abortion rates above--mainly well above--the EU average, and four are well above the average for the transition region. The high prevalence of abortion in the region may be partly explained by two inherited conditions: 1) the relative lack of family planning services until very recently, due to pro-natalist policies, lack of contraceptives of adequate quality (which contributed to the continuing high level of concern about the side-effects of modern contraceptives, particularly hormonal methods), and cost and supply issues; and 2) the guarantee of legal abortion, usually free, as part of basic women's health services, and its social acceptability. Access to abortion has been the primary means allowing women to control their fertility and avoid unwanted births. However, abortion is also a major factor contributing to maternal mortality and morbidity and, together with sexually transmitted diseases, is a leading cause of infertility, which is relatively high throughout the transition region.

**Choice of contraception method choice is usually limited, with IUDs and condoms the most commonly used modern methods.**

Information on contraceptive use is mainly limited to those countries which have DHS or RHS data; though figures are cited in other sources for contraceptive prevalence in Bulgaria and Azerbaijan, there is little or no detail available on contraceptive use in those countries. As noted above, there is still a high level of concern among both health providers and users about the safety and reliability of oral contraceptives. As late as the mid-1980s, the Soviet Ministry of Public Health explicitly warned against the use of oral contraceptives. The negative attitudes of providers are a factor limiting modern contraceptive use, along with the generally high price of modern methods relative to income levels, and still-limited availability. In some countries, there are still economic incentives to choose abortion over modern contraception, since abortion is free or subsidized, and contraceptives must be purchased. The high prevalence of relatively unreliable traditional methods of contraception in some countries also increases reliance on abortion due to contraceptive failure. Long-term (e.g., implants) or permanent methods, such as female sterilization, are used by very few; vasectomy is practically non-existent.

**Fertility is below replacement level in most of the study countries.** While birthrates were already declining, the economic and social changes during the transition have precipitated birthrate decreases across the region. Marriage rates are also down. The drop in fertility reflects the heavy price women and families have paid as they try to support their children in the face of growing economic hardship. If the trend continues, however, it will have significant social and economic repercussions. Some countries are already losing population, and the dependency ratio is increasing as the population ages. There is also a danger that extremely low fertility levels will provoke pro-natalist policies and undermine women's control over their own fertility and access to family planning, to the detriment of women's social and economic independence as well as their health. Another threat to women's health and well-being is the continued high level of adolescent births. Even though teenage birth rates have declined somewhat, they are still well above rates for Western Europe. Teen parents and their children are at an even higher risk of poverty than the general population. Early childbearing limits the opportunities of young women to pursue education and careers, and also poses sharp risks to their health.

**Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are posing increased health risks, and are also a major contributor to infertility.** Syphilis had been practically eradicated in the region by the early 1990s, but is fast re-emerging, in part due to the collapse of STD management systems, which involved tracing, notifying and treating all infected persons and their partners; and in part to the general upheaval and social stress resulting from the transition, which has fostered risky behavior. Syphilis incidence is particularly high in Russia and Ukraine, but is increasing in most countries in the region. The growth in HIV infections is staggering. The number of cases recorded in the region jumped from about 30,000 in 1994 to about 270,000 by the end of 1998, with an estimated 80,000 new infections in 1998 alone.<sup>34</sup> Currently, Ukraine is the country most affected. Not only has incidence increased, but there has been a shift in transmission patterns in the region, including an increase in the proportion of women diagnosed with AIDS from 11% in 1986 to 20% in 1995; 46% of these women, predominantly young, were infected through

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<sup>34</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 70.

intravenous drug use, and 40% were heterosexually infected, often by a sex partner who used intravenous drugs.<sup>35</sup>

STDs pose a particular risk to women, especially adolescent women, who are both socially and physiologically more vulnerable to infection. Physically, female reproductive systems expose a greater area of sensitive tissues to pathogens during intercourse; male-to-female transmission is two to four times as efficient as female-to-male transmission. Also, the consequences of STDs are broader for women than for men, including pregnancy-related complications and implications for children borne by an infected mother; and STDs are less likely to produce symptoms in women, and are thus harder to diagnose before serious problems arise.

### Other Health Issues

**Life expectancy at birth has decreased in many countries in the region over the transition period.** Of the eleven study countries with life expectancy data over time, life expectancy decreased for both sexes (though more for men than for women) in seven countries (Albania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan), while in one (Romania) it fell for men but rose slightly for women. Three countries showed increased life expectancy for both sexes (Yugoslavia, Armenia and Azerbaijan). Deterioration in life expectancy, especially among men, was an unanticipated outcome of the transition. In some countries, like Russia, the drop has been substantial. Increases in mortality have hit young and middle-aged men the hardest, with most of the "excess" deaths due to cardiovascular and circulatory disease, accidents and violence. This adverse trend also affects women and children, who lose husbands, fathers and breadwinners.

**Chronic diseases have increased as the population has aged and as a result of lifestyle changes.** Although causes of death in the region are generally consistent with global trends of higher death rates due to chronic diseases in wealthier countries, age-standardized death rates for chronic diseases, particularly circulatory diseases, ischemic heart disease and cerebrovascular disease, are very high when compared with wealthier established market economies, and are especially high for males. The high number of premature deaths from chronic disease are associated with unhealthy lifestyles and unclean environments, as well as inadequate preventive services. Although comparable data are lacking for most countries, the incidence of breast cancer appears to have increased during the transition in most of the region. Declines in breast and cervical cancer in some countries are likely to be due to reduced detection rather than reduced incidence.<sup>36</sup>

**Alcohol and smoking are important contributors to high male mortality from cancer and other causes.** While women have been less affected to date, increased smoking prevalence among women is a growing concern in many countries. Tobacco use appears to have increased during the transition, influenced by the arrival of the international tobacco industry and increased advertising.

<sup>35</sup> XI International Conference on AIDS, *The Status and Trends of the Global HIV/AIDS Pandemic: Final Report*, July 1996, <http://www.fhi.org/en/aids/aidschap/aidspubs/special/statustrends/vanpan.html>.

<sup>36</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 67.

**Infectious diseases had declined significantly as causes of mortality and morbidity as the region underwent epidemiological transformation together with other industrialized countries.** However, in addition to the previously discussed increase in STDs, there has been an increase in other infectious disease recently, particularly tuberculosis and, in the Caucasus, malaria. However, there is absolutely no information with regard to impact by gender, so these diseases are not dealt with in the country descriptions. This is an area that merits attention, beginning with disaggregating case data by sex and other variables to determine impact patterns.

**Nutrition is a growing concern, especially for women.** Nutritional problems are linked to various factors, including a drop in food consumption in some countries, a deterioration in nutrient quality, and the disruption of nutrition programs during the transition. Malnutrition has important impacts on birth complications and outcomes, as well as increased morbidity and mortality and reduced productivity. Women are particularly vulnerable to anemia, and the percentage of births complicated by anemia has risen sharply in some countries. Children born of anemic mothers are also much more likely to be anemic themselves.

### **Health System Issues**

**Severe reductions in incomes in the region, together with changes in health systems requiring increased payments from users, have reduced access to services to some degree.** Inability to afford to buy prescribed medicines is an important factor affecting health in some countries. In some, the necessity to pay medical providers under the table for supposedly free services, due to health system problems, is a disincentive to use of services. Such access issues are likely to affect women even more than men, since they have been more adversely affected economically during the transition.

**Other important health system issues revolve around quality and efficiency.** With regard to reproductive health, the issue in most countries is one of quality of service rather than access, since prenatal coverage and professionally assisted delivery are the rule rather than the exception. The relatively high levels of maternal and infant mortality, in spite of high service coverage, indicate that quality of care is sub-optimal. Health professionals are often poorly trained in maternal health, especially in family planning and health promotion. Drugs, supplies and equipment are often lacking, and infrastructure is dilapidated and outdated. The focus of most health systems in the region remains curative rather than preventive, and highly paternalistic, out of step with newer concepts of health that rely to a much greater extent on disease prevention and health promotion, rather than seeing the health system as solely responsible for health status. The economic distress prevalent in the region has made it impossible for governments to maintain Soviet-model health systems in any case. For example, the old Soviet policy of maintaining separate facilities for gynecological and obstetric services has created a parallel service delivery system which is very expensive and very difficult to maintain with reduced public resources. Shrinking and often delayed salaries have impaired recruitment and retention of needed staff. Care standards tend to emphasize quantity over quality. In most countries reforms are beginning to address these issues, but the obstacles and problems health systems face are very difficult to resolve in the midst of the larger economic crisis and continuing political instability in much of the region.

## **Education and Gender**

Table 5.10 presents sex-disaggregated data from the World Bank on enrollments, and unfortunately, data for 1980 are not available for most countries for primary and secondary enrollments. More complete data on school enrollments during the transition for kindergarten through tertiary levels are presented in Table 5.11. However, these data are not sex-disaggregated.

**Gender-differentials are not substantial at the primary and secondary levels.** As is evident in the Table 5.10, girls and boys each make up about half of primary and secondary enrollments. Education enrollments have fallen at the kindergarten and primary levels. While enrollment rates show equitable access for girls and boys, qualitative research suggests that girls and boys are differentially affected at different educational levels.

**Men have a disadvantage in tertiary enrollments.** In all but two of the E&E countries for which there are data (Turkmenistan and the Czech Republic are the exceptions), men account for less than half of tertiary enrollments. The differences in some countries are substantial. For example, in Bulgaria, men make up only 39 percent of enrollment, in Latvia 40 percent, and in Lithuania 41 percent.

**Qualitative data indicate gender differentials may be increasing in some countries.** Qualitative research in Kyrgyzstan seems to indicate that gender is at issue at both the pre-school and primary school levels. Research by the Asian Development Bank indicates that girls are more likely than boys to be kept out of kindergarten, but boys are more likely than girls to drop out of grades 5 through 9 to work.

**Kindergarten enrollments decreased in 17 countries.** All the countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia experienced a decline in kindergarten enrollments. Of the West-NIS countries, only Belarus did not show a decline. The declines in enrollment are also the most substantial of the four levels of schooling presented in Table 5.11. Kindergarten closures have contributed to the reduction in enrollments in some countries. In Kyrgyzstan, for example, about half of the nation's kindergartens have been closed since the transition. According to the Asian Development Bank, girls make up 70 percent of the 130,000 preschool-age children not attending kindergarten.<sup>37</sup>

**Primary enrollments decreased in 18 countries.** Of the 27 countries listed in the table, two-thirds experienced a decline in primary enrollments. The percentage declines, however, were less severe than those for kindergarten. Again, the Caucasus, Central Asian, and West-NIS countries experienced the majority of these declines.

**Secondary enrollments increased in 14 countries.** Enrollments increased primarily in the European countries, in both the Northern and Southern Tiers, plus Russia and Ukraine. The Caucasus and Central Asia, with the exception of Azerbaijan, saw secondary enrollments fall.

<sup>37</sup> Armin Bauer, David Green, and Kathleen Kuenhast, *Women and Gender Relations: the Kyrgyz Republic in Transition* (Manila: Asian Development Bank, 1997), 41.

**Table 5.10. Gender and Education, Female Enrollment as Percent of Total**

Country	Primary		Secondary		Tertiary	
	1980	1996	1980	1996	1980	1996
<b>Eurasia</b>						
<i>Caucasus</i>						
Armenia	--	51	--	52	--	56
Azerbaijan	--	48	--	48	42	50
Georgia	--	48	--	49	47	51
<i>Central Asian Republics</i>						
Kazakhstan	--	49	--	--	--	55
Kyrgyzstan	--	49	--	51	--	52
Tajikistan	--	49	--	--	--	33
Turkmenistan	--	--	--	--	--	--
Uzbekistan	--	49	--	--	--	--
<i>West NIS</i>						
Belarus	--	48	--	--	--	55
Moldova	--	49	--	52	--	55
Russia	--	49	--	--	56	56
Ukraine	--	49	--	--	--	56
<b>Europe</b>						
<i>Southern Tier</i>						
Albania	47	48	--	49	50	57
Bosnia-Herzegovina	--	--	--	--	--	--
Bulgaria	49	48	48	50	56	61
Croatia	--	49	--	51	--	51
Macedonia, FYR	--	48	--	48	--	54
Romania	--	49	--	49	43	53
Slovenia	--	49	--	49	54	56
Yugoslavia, FR	--	49	--	--	--	54
<i>Northern Tier</i>						
Czech Republic	--	48	--	50	40	47
Estonia	--	48	--	52	55	53
Hungary	49	48	--	50	50	53
Latvia	--	48	--	51	57	60
Lithuania	--	48	--	50	55	59
Poland	--	48	50	49	56	57
Slovak Republic	--	49	--	50	--	50
<b>Comparison Countries</b>						
Turkey	45	47	--	39	26	38
United States	49	49	--	49	51	56

Note: -- indicates no data are available.

Source: World Bank, 1999 World Development Indicators.

**Table 5.11. School Enrollments During the Transition,  
as a Percent of the Relevant Population**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Kindergarten</b>		<b>Primary</b>		<b>Secondary</b>		<b>Tertiary</b>	
<b>Eurasia</b>								
<i>Caucasus</i>								
Armenia	<b>1989</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1996</b>
	65.2	32.4	95.5	82.9	35.9	30.4	16.5	11.5
Azerbaijan	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>
	20.8	13.1	89.5	96.6	33.3	32.2	8.1	12.3
Georgia	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>
	43.8	20.4	95.2	80.7	40.2	24.0	14.3	14.4
<i>Central Asian Republics</i>								
Kazakhstan	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>
	52.2	11.7	93.9	89.2	30.4	26.5	12.9	13.4
Kyrgyzstan	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>
	31.3	7.0	92.5	89.2	36.6	32.4	10.9	15.2
Tajikistan	<b>1989</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>
	16.7	7.7	94.1	85.5	41.5	22.5	9.0	8.9
Turkmenistan	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1995</b>
	36.0	21.0	94.3	83.1	39.0	34.4	8.1	7.3
Uzbekistan	<b>1989</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>
	38.5	22.7	92.2	89.7	37.5	28.6	9.1	5.0
<i>West NIS</i>								
Belarus	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>
	63.1	66.9	95.8	94.1	27.5	28.3	16.5	19.5
Moldova	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>
	62.8	31.5	95.8	78.8	29.0	18.9	11.6	13.5
Russia	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>
	69.3	56.0	93.0	90.8	23.6	28.7	16.6	18.7
Ukraine	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>
	65.1	41.6	92.8	90.7	25.8	27.4	15.3	20.1
<b>Europe</b>								
<i>Southern Tier</i>								
Albania	<b>1989</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1994</b>
	43.1	26.5	90.8	87.6	20.0	30.5	4.8	4.6
Bosnia and Herzegovina	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>
	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Bulgaria	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>
	63.9	58.8	98.4	94.0	30.7	30.6	16.4	27.1
Croatia	<b>1989</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>1996</b>
	29.4	30.9	96.0	89.0	8.8	18.7	13.9	17.2
Macedonia	<b>1990</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>1994</b>
	26.2	28.0	89.4	86.9	15.9	18.7	14.4	11.3
Romania	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>
	63.3	52.8	93.6	95.0	3.8	20.6	8.8	18.7
Slovenia	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1996</b>
	56.3	66.2	96.1	99.8	19.5	21.4	18.2	25.7
Yugoslavia, FR	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1996</b>
	24.1	29.2	95.3	71.8	12.4	13.5	17.1	16.5
<i>Northern Tier</i>								
Czech Republic	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>



Country	Kindergarten		Primary		Secondary		Tertiary	
	1989	1997	1989	1997	1989	1997	1989	1997
	89.8	83.0	97.6	99.1	15.9	18.8	12.7	17.3
Estonia	62.2	70.4	96.2	93.7	37.3	44.6	14.2	21.3
Hungary	85.7	86.1	99.0	99.2	19.7	23.6	13.9	23.8
Latvia	52.8	52.1	95.8	90.7	22.1	32.4	15.2	24.6
Lithuania	63.9	41.6	94.0	95.8	34.7	39.5	17.7	18.2
Poland	48.7	47.9	97.9	98.0	21.0	31.9	11.6	20.6
Slovak Republic	91.5	75.2	96.8	96.3	15.6	21.5	13.2	17.6
<b>Comparison Countries</b>								
Turkey								
United States								

Note: -- indicates data are not available.

Source: UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 133-134.

**Tertiary enrollments increased in 16 countries.** Tertiary enrollments increased primarily in countries of West-NIS and Europe. Of the Caucasus and Central Asia, only Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan experienced increased tertiary enrollments.

**The Caucasus and Central Asia experienced the most declining enrollments.** Armenia and Uzbekistan saw their enrollments fall in each of the four educational levels. All the other countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia – except Azerbaijan – experienced decreases in three of the four levels.

**The poor may have less access to education since the transition.** In some countries, new tuition schemes have made higher education less affordable for poor families (in Bulgaria, for example). In addition, access is limited for educational levels not technically charging tuition. The example of Armenia in Box 5.3 provides a case study.

### Box 5.2: Education in Armenia

*“A pattern is emerging of excluding the poor from access to quality secondary and tertiary education, even where education is formally free.”* World Bank, *Improving Social Assistance in Armenia*, 18.

In Armenia, access to higher education and even secondary schools has become dependent on wealth. The shortage of education funds means that secondary schools often rely on parents to pay fees to make up for the loss. Richer neighborhoods and communities, therefore, have better schools. For secondary students wishing to enter university, there is another barrier: private tutoring is considered necessary because of the inadequacy of the secondary school curriculum. Very poor families are unable to afford the costs of these private lessons, however. The government has begun reforming education spending, and as part of its social sector reforms, the government reallocated spending to favor basic education, instituted per capita funding for schools, and increased the availability of textbooks through a school-based targeting system. This system waived textbook rental fees for very poor students. World Bank, *Improving Social Assistance in Armenia*, ii, 1, 18, 29.

## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

### ***Social Safety Net***

Little is known about the informal economy, its size, and the gender differentiation of work in the informal economy. Theoretically, we understand that workers in the informal economy do not pay taxes to support the social safety net and do not receive many social benefits because of their unemployed status. Our understanding could benefit from research on the impact of the informal economy on social benefits and the gender differences in receipt of benefits because of informal work.

### ***Poverty***

As is evident in the section on poverty and gender above, more sex-disaggregated poverty data are needed. Data should be stratified by age and gender, region and gender, and head of household and gender, and individual and gender. These stratifications are necessary for researchers to understand the complexity of poverty in each country. As we saw in the example of Georgia, the overall poverty rates of men and women are similar; however, the overall rate masks gender differentiation by head of household and age. Further, most current data are not comparable across countries, limiting the analyses that can be conducted.

Analyze most recent data on gender aspects of poverty, including age and familial stats as important variables (e.g., male and female youth, female-headed households).

### ***Pension Reform***

More research is needed on the impact of pension reform on gender in countries where pension reform is underway. Most countries in the E&E region are beginning pension reform, and information about the impact of pension reform would certainly inform their policy decisions.

### ***Health Reform***

There is very little attention in the available health literature on the relationship of gender and other social variables to health status. Health problems by sex are delineated, but there is little specific information on or analysis of causal or associated factors, including reasons for high maternal and infant mortality rates.

Outside the area of reproductive health, very little sex-specific or sex-disaggregated information exists. Within reproductive health, there is very little attention to men's roles and health issues, or their influence on women's reproductive health. Most data on STDs and HIV/AIDS are not sex-disaggregated.

There are no data by sex on infectious diseases such as tuberculosis that would enable determination of any differences in impact by gender.

It will be important to carefully monitor the effects of health system reform on the health status of women and men in the region, with particular emphasis on access, cost, quality of care, and prevention. Most of the reforms undertaken are too new to have had much effect on the health data currently available.

What are the lessons learned or possibilities of using the health sector as an entry point into gender issues and a place to encourage political and economic activity of women?

### ***Education and Gender***

More sex-disaggregated data on enrollments are needed, particularly in countries where enrollments are falling.

Research and monitoring in those countries – the Caucasus and Central Asia – in which enrollments are falling would help policymakers understand why enrollments are falling and what should be done to stop falling enrollments.

Build on these, and revised, social data as a part of the youth inquiry.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

Gender does appear to be a significant factor in the social transition in Europe and Eurasia. However, data are sketchy and often not sex-disaggregated. We do know that social benefits are gender-differentiated, and preferences accrue to both men and women. Poverty, because of the lack of sex-disaggregated data, is difficult to assess. It is clear, however, that gender is a significant dimension of poverty, and that women, particularly older women, are at greater risk than the remainder of the population. Pension reform may have disproportionately negative effects on women, but research remains to be done. The transition period has seen a deterioration in health care and an inability to adequately improve serious health problems such as high maternal and infant death rates, high abortion rates and increased prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases. Education enrollments are falling although quantitative data do not suggest that gender is a significant factor in the decline.

Policy implications for USAID include areas in which countries of Europe and Eurasia could benefit from assistance. For example, assistance to national statistical institutes in collecting poverty data should lead to better, more comparable poverty data. Pension reform efforts which are taking place with USAID assistance should include discussions of the possible effects on women of pension reform policy proposals. And, while quantitative data do not show a gender differentiation in the falling education enrollments, qualitative data do. These findings should be monitored.

It is clear from the data presented here that the countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia have faced social situations worse than that of their European and West-NIS neighbors. Policymakers should consider whether foreign assistance for the region should focus on these countries.

## **Chapter 6: Economy, Politics, Social Benefits, and Gender in the Soviet Union Background Information for Eurasia**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

#### *Economic Transition*

- Labor force participation was generally high and equal among men and women. While unemployment was not recognized as a legitimate phenomenon in the Soviet Union, in some areas, especially in the Caucasus and Central Asia, “surplus labor” was a problem at about four percent of the labor force.
- Women earned on average 65 percent of what men did in the Soviet Union.
- Women were less likely to hold managerial positions, in part because of their domestic and child-rearing duties that often meant higher turnover and absentee rates among women.

#### *Democratic Transition*

- Men and women did not participate equally in the public sphere under communism. Both sexes reportedly voted at approximately equal rates (at least in part since it was required by law), but women generally comprised only one third of the Communist Party, any legislative body, or the judiciary. Women were rarely represented in the highest levels of the Communist Party or the executive branch of government.
- A few civil society organizations existed under communism, but they did not provide a political voice for their constituents. There has been no research on the gender impacts of those organizations.
- Rule of law was frequently violated in the Soviet Union, leaving a legacy of distrust of the legal system.

#### *Social Transition*

- Women generally benefited more from Soviet social insurance than men.

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section is to provide background information on gender-differentiated participation in the economic and political structures of the Soviet Union that has bearing for all the Soviet successor states. The Soviet Union had a diversity of ethnicities, language groups, and religions, as Table 6.1 below illustrates, and while these differences are not much cited in the literature about the economy, politics, or social benefits, they may have played an important role.

**Table 6.1. Major Soviet Nationalities**

Nationality	1989 Census population (in millions)	% of total population	Linguistic Group	Traditional Religion
<i>The Slavs</i>				
Russians	145.1	50.8	East Slavic	Russian Orthodox
Ukrainians	44.1	15.5	East Slavic	Russian Orthodox
Belorussians	10.0	3.5	East Slavic	Russian Orthodox
<i>The Balts</i>				
Latvians	1.5	0.5	Baltic	Protestant
Lithuanians	3.1	1.1	Baltic	Roman Catholic
Estonians	1.0	0.4	Finno-Ugrian	Protestant
<i>The Caucasians</i>				
Georgians	4.0	1.4	Kartvelian	Georgian Orthodox
Armenians	4.6	1.6	Indo-European	Armenian Orthodox
Azerbaijanis	6.8	2.4	Turkic	Shi'a Muslim
<i>The Central Asians</i>				
Uzbeks	16.7	5.8	Turkic	Sunni Muslim
Kazakhs	8.1	2.9	Turkic	Sunni Muslim
Tajiks	4.2	1.5	Iranian	Sunni Muslim
Turkmen	2.7	1.0	Turkic	Sunni Muslim
Kyrgyz	2.5	0.9	Turkic	Sunni Muslim
<i>Other</i>				
Moldavians	3.4	1.2	Romance	Romanian Orthodox

Source: White, *Gorbachev and After*, 141.

## SOVIET ECONOMY

This section seeks to answer the following questions as they relate to the Soviet Union:

1. What was labor force participation by women and men?
2. What role did women play in new managerial positions?
3. Was there unemployment, whether official or hidden, and was there a gender dimension to unemployment?
4. Was there evidence for wage gap trends and wage differentials?
5. How did the informal economy reflect gender differentiation?

### *Contextual Information about the Economy*

The Soviet economic model had deep and pervasive problems that prevented it from fulfilling the Bolshevik promise of plenty. While the Soviet economy grew and output increased exponentially, making the Soviet Union the world's second largest economy under Khrushchev, it was never an efficient economy. Steel production was greater than that in the US, but the output of finished products was much less.<sup>1</sup> The same was true of Central Asian cotton. Its low quality and poor packaging bought little demand from international markets.<sup>2</sup> Most Soviet products were "imitative, archaic, crude, or outright defective."<sup>3</sup> A closed economy assured an internal market for inferior goods.

When Gorbachev took office in March 1985, he was clear about his intentions to carry out the policies of *perestroika* ("restructuring" of economic management), democratization, and *glasnost* ("openness"). He supported greater social justice, a more important role for local soviets, and more participation by workers at the workplace. Gorbachev's goal was to make the Soviet system more efficient and to reverse the economic stagnation of the late Brezhnev era that was caused by the exhaustion raw materials and other resources and an inefficient incentive system.

Gorbachev began his term by continuing Andropov's reforms, meaning accelerating economic growth and perfecting the Soviet economic system. Machines and other heavy equipment were given preference, and light industry and consumer goods took second place. The reforms also claimed to promote technical innovation and worker discipline, but the incentive system was not adapted to reflect these policy goals.

*Perestroika* initially concentrated on reforming enterprises to become self-financing, allowing groups of people to establish cooperatives as businesses, and leasing farmland to allow family farming. Many of the bureaucrats administering the economy disagreed with these reforms and taxed the reformed enterprises and cooperatives heavily. Further, since the Soviet economic system rested on procuring supplies rather than meeting consumer demand, entrepreneurs found supplies difficult to procure.

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Malia, "To the Stalin Mausoleum," in A. Dallin and G. Lapidus (eds), *The Soviet System in Crisis* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), 666.

<sup>2</sup> Yuriy Kulchik, Andrey Fadin, and Victor Sergeev, *Central Asia after the Empire* (Chicago: Pluto Press, 1996), 12.

<sup>3</sup> Malia, "To the Stalin Mausoleum," 666.

Gorbachev's government spending increased the budget deficit from its traditional level of 2 or 3 percent of GNP to 6 percent of GNP in 1986 and 10 percent of GNP in 1988. In order to achieve faster economic growth, *Gosplan* was instructed to raise targets for production for the 12th Five-Year Plan (1986-90). In 1988 Gorbachev announced that, since 1975, Soviet economic growth had been limited to an annual rate of two to three percent. Moreover, this modest rate was achieved almost entirely due to the high world oil prices and the regime's increases in the retail price of liquor.<sup>4</sup> In reality, the actual growth rate of the Soviet economy from 1971 to 1985 was much less than this, reaching the low rate of 0.6 percent annual growth from 1981 to 1985.<sup>5</sup> Further, by 1989, the cumulative budget deficits and decrease in revenues had increased the Soviet domestic debt to 45 percent of its GNP.<sup>6</sup>

Between 1985 and 1987, the Soviet Union increased investment and defense expenditure, but at the same time, state revenue was declining due to lower alcohol sales and decreasing prices for export goods. By 1991 the economy was facing total collapse. The government found it increasingly difficult to intervene decisively. The Law on State Enterprise restricted the regulatory power of ministries and simultaneously the government reduced its workforce. Lack of effective control from Moscow, nationalism, ethnic conflict, and regionalism fragmented the Soviet economy into several smaller economies. Many republics declared independence, and they all pursued policies of economic autarky.<sup>7</sup>

The Soviet economy had moved from stagnation to crisis. The measures taken under *perestroika* were inappropriate given the depth of the economic crisis. One of the factors in this misstep was that *Gosplan* had no model of how the economy functioned. It became apparent that the economic crisis was not temporary, but rather the result of systemic failure. Shortages, which are endemic to all planned economies, became serious from the mid-1980s. By mid-1990 more than 1,000 basic consumer goods were very seldom available, with people queuing for hours to obtain simple goods. Rationing also became common, with most goods being sold at the workplace.<sup>8</sup>

Two paths were proposed to solve the USSR's economic crisis, the socialist solution and the market solution. Moderate reformers favored continued state ownership of the means of production, central planning, more efficient administration, and greater decision-making powers for enterprises and farms. The radicals wanted to move toward a market economy, including private ownership of enterprises, land, services, and price liberalization. The radicals almost convinced Gorbachev to introduce a 500-day program that would have implemented a market economy in the autumn of 1990, but he changed his mind and sided with the conservatives.<sup>9</sup>

### ***Labor Force Participation***

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<sup>4</sup> Donald W. Treadgold, *Twentieth Century Russia*, 8<sup>th</sup> ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 437.

<sup>5</sup> Anders Aslund, *How Russia Became a Market Economy*, (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1995), 43.

<sup>6</sup> Gertrude E. Schroeder, "The Soviet Economy on a Treadmill," in A. Dallin and G. Lapidus (eds), *The Soviet System in Crisis* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), 381.

<sup>7</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica, "USSR," <http://www.britannica.com>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ed A. Hewett, "The New Soviet Plan," in A. Dallin and G. Lapidus (eds), *The Soviet System in Crisis* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), 384.

Working was both a right and a privilege in the Soviet Union. Those who could not prove they were employed could be subjected to prosecution for social parasitism. The labor force was only somewhat controlled by the Soviet government. Central planners determined the number of laborers required by each enterprise, farm or other production units based on the planned output. Enterprise managers legally had no right to hire or fire staff. The government controlled the labor supply through the use of labor books and the *propiska*. Labor books held records of all employment or service exemptions (i.e., maternity or parental leave, incarceration, etc.). The *propiska* was a residence permit, which, when combined with the chronic housing shortage, effectively limited citizens to working where the government would allow. This system also often resulted in a mismatch between the skills required and the skills employees had.<sup>10</sup>

In spite of its inherent weaknesses, most men and women participated in the Soviet labor force. Prior to the collapse of state socialism in 1991, the Soviet Union claimed to be the most egalitarian society in the world, committed to full social, legal and economic equality. The Bolshevik Party waged the Great October Revolution with the promise to Russia's women that socialism would bring both economic plenty and full equality between the sexes. It promised to do so through a socialist economic system and socialist ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange. From its beginning the Soviet state employed large numbers of women in industry and political institutions (though almost entirely at lower levels of responsibility and influence than men) and proclaimed that an important social goal was the emancipation of women from an exclusive focus on burdensome domestic duties. By 1970, the Soviets had achieved gender parity in the labor force.<sup>11</sup>

The ideological commitments of Communism, the significant demographic imbalance between men and women after World War II, and the Soviet reliance on a large labor pool all resulted in keeping women employed outside of the home throughout the Soviet period. In response to the decline in ethnic Russian birthrates, State officials in the 1970s and 1980s maintained their compulsory policy toward women in the workforce, but stressed the importance of not neglecting their domestic responsibilities.<sup>12</sup>

The irony of this effort is that Soviet women were already bearing a high price for their commitment to the family. The vast majority of Soviet women were faced with what came to be known as a "double burden" of domestic tasks as well as a full work schedule. Soviet men (and women) generally accepted a gendered division of labor which regarded housework as "women's work" that resulted in women working full time outside of the home and *additionally* engaging in up to 30 hours of domestic work, for a total of 70 hours of work per week (15 hours more than in Western Europe).<sup>13</sup>

This double burden was exacerbated by the lack of labor saving household appliances such as washing machines or dryers, which, when available, often proved to be extremely unreliable.<sup>14</sup> In

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<sup>10</sup> Jeanne Braithwaite, *From Second Economy to Informal Sector: the Russian Labor market in Transition*, ESP Discussion Paper Series No. 58 (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1995), 2-4.

<sup>11</sup> World Bank, World Development Indicators, [http://www.worldbank.org/data/wdi/pdfs/tab1\\_3.pdf](http://www.worldbank.org/data/wdi/pdfs/tab1_3.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> Lynne Attwood, "The Post-Soviet Woman in the Move to the Market: a Return to Domesticity and Dependence?" in Rosalind Marsh, ed., *Women in Russia and Ukraine*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 255-256.

<sup>13</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, viii.

<sup>14</sup> Zollner, *Ukrainian Women in Transition*, 23.



spite of the Soviet Union's ostensible commitment to women's equality, the regime actually reinforced gender stereotypes. This was especially evident during the 1970s and 1980s, when concern over the relative decline of the Slavic birthrate prompted an official campaign encouraging women to devote their primary energies to the domestic sphere.<sup>15</sup>

Furthermore, women's acceptance of this double burden often put them at a disadvantage at work. Efforts to juggle domestic chores and work responsibilities often resulted in higher rates of absenteeism and lower levels of career advancement than for men.<sup>16</sup> Women comprised 51 percent of the workforce, but only a very small percentage of management personnel.<sup>17</sup>

Men worked predominantly in industry and women were in both industry and service positions until 1980. By 1990, there had been a slight decrease among both men and women in agriculture and industry, and an increase in the service industry.<sup>18</sup> A majority of women (56 percent) worked in service jobs and a plurality of men (48 percent) worked in industry.

### ***Unemployment***

Unemployment was not recognized as a legitimate phenomenon in the Soviet Union. Workers were supposed to be guaranteed employment, but in some areas "surplus labor" was a problem. About four percent of the labor force was considered surplus labor, mostly in Central Asia and the Caucasus.<sup>19</sup>

A more pervasive problem in the Soviet economic model was underemployment. Being able to sell products to customers was not nearly as important as being able to obtain the means of production from the system. Managers hoarded labor the same way they did other supplies. Therefore, many people, often women, held "make work" positions offering little remuneration and even less satisfaction. Predictably, these jobs were among the first lost at the start of each republic's economic transition.<sup>20</sup>

### ***Wage Gaps and Wage Differentials***

In the Soviet Union, wages<sup>21</sup> and the standard of living were uniformly low. Although wage differentials were low, there was a significant wage gap in the Soviet Union. The standard rule of thumb was that women earned approximately 65 percent of what men did.<sup>22</sup> Sectors with high participation from women tended to pay less than predominantly male sectors. For example, the

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<sup>15</sup> Attwood, "The Post-Soviet Woman in the Move to the Market," 256-257.

<sup>16</sup> Eva Busza and Jeffrey Hahn, "Women and Politics in Russia: The Yaroslavl' Study," *Women & Politics*, Vol. 16, No. 3, 1996, 58.

<sup>17</sup> Carol Nechemias, "Women and Politics," in M. Rueschmeyer (ed.), *Women in Politics of Postcommunist Eastern Europe*, (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1998), 9-10.

<sup>18</sup> World Bank Genderstats, <http://genderstats.worldbank.org/SummaryGender.asp?WhichRpt=labor&Ctrty=RUS,Russian%20Federation>.

<sup>19</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica, "The USSR," <http://www.britannica.com>

<sup>20</sup> Horst Herlemann (ed.), *Quality of Life in the Soviet Union*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), 46.

<sup>21</sup> During the period of Stalin's rapid industrialization from 1928-1933 real wages fell by 49 percent. See Zollner, *Ukrainian Women in Transition*, 19.

<sup>22</sup> Hosking, *The First Socialist Society*, 398.

medical field, teaching, and skilled office work were dominated by women, but paid less than a skilled manual worker would earn.<sup>23</sup>

Wage differentials, on the other hand were quite low. Indeed, wage scale compression was such that in the late 1970s the wages in the highest-ranked occupations were only about two times that of the lowest occupation.<sup>24</sup> While artificially low wage differentials may decrease class conflict, they can cause several other economic dislocations, such as discouraging worker initiative and encouraging risk-avoidance by managers and workers.<sup>25</sup> At a macroeconomic level, wages did not reflect labor productivity. In 1989, wages were increased 9.5 percent, but labor productivity increased only 2.3 percent.<sup>26</sup> One of the results of this increase was that the State Bank lost control of monetary growth, which was supposed to have been 10 billion rubles in 1990 and became 28 billion rubles.<sup>27</sup>

### ***Informal Economy***

Official estimates valued the informal economy at 1.5 billion rubles annually by 1988.<sup>28</sup> The informal economy bolstered the official economy in the Soviet Union, which would have collapsed sooner with its unplanned counterpart.<sup>29</sup> Barter and trading on the side were integral to meeting production quotas as supplies rarely arrived on time and as specified.

Working in the informal economy often paid better than the official state sector. The most common activity in the informal economy was construction. Crews often built private housing for cooperatives off-hours using state-owned supplies. Other activities included agriculture, piece-work, repairs, tutoring, and medicine.<sup>30</sup> No data are available on the composition of the workforce engaged in the informal economy, but researchers found that few demographic variables were predictors of activity in the informal economy. Sex, occupational type, and level of earnings in the official sector were largely irrelevant in determining informal economy activity.<sup>31</sup>

### ***Findings***

**What was labor force participation by women and men, by sector?** Men and women officially participated in the labor force at the same rate in the Soviet Union. Unemployment in the 1980s was around four percent, concentrated in Central Asia and the Caucasus.

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<sup>23</sup> Hosking, *The First Socialist Society*, 398.

<sup>24</sup> Brainerd, *Distributional Consequences*, 151.

<sup>25</sup> George W. Breslauer, "Thinking about the Soviet Future," in A. Dallin and G. Lapidus (eds), *The Soviet System in Crisis* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), 638.

<sup>26</sup> White, *Gorbachev and After*, 126.

<sup>27</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica, "The USSR," <http://www.britannica.com>

<sup>28</sup> White, *Gorbachev and After*, 106.

<sup>29</sup> Braithwaite, *From Second Economy to Informal Sector*, 2.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>31</sup> Clifford G. Gaddy, *Uncovering the "Hidden Wage: Public Perceptions of Opportunities for Side Income in Various Occupations in the USSR*, Berkeley-Duke Occasional Papers Series on the Second Economy in the USSR No. 30 (Durham, NC: Duke University, 1991), 15.

**What role did women play in managerial positions?** In part because their responsibilities and benefits were so costly in terms of time, women were rarely promoted to managerial posts in state-owned enterprises. Women received extensive maternity leave and had higher rates of absenteeism to take care of children after maternity leave.

**Was there unemployment, whether official or hidden, and was there a gender dimension to unemployment?** Unemployment was not officially acknowledged, but surplus labor was a problem in the Caucasus and Central Asia. No data on the demographics of surplus labor are available. Underemployment was a much more pervasive problem.

**Was there evidence for wage gap trends and wage differentials?** Women generally earned 70 percent of what men did in the Soviet Union.

**How did the informal economy reflect gender differentiation?** No data were available on the participation of men and women in the informal economy, but sex was not a predictor for involvement in the informal economy.

## SOVIET POLITICS

The purpose of this section is to discuss the differential experience of Soviet men and women in the political sphere under communism. The primary questions to be answered are:

1. Was there differential participation by women and men in the public sphere?
  - a) What was the role of women in party politics?
  - b) What was the representation of women in elected government positions, locally and nationally?
  - c) What was the representation of women in appointed governmental positions?
2. Did civil society exist and what were the gender impacts?
3. Did rule of law exist and what were the gender impacts?

### *The Public Sphere in the USSR*

The Soviet Socialist Republics (SSRs) nominally were sovereign socialist states that derived their power from the workers and peasants. The Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets created a Soviet republic out of the former Russian Empire. The Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets (January 1918) announced the creation of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR), and the republic's first constitution was promulgated in July 1918. During and after the Civil War (1918-20) the RSFSR was organized to include autonomous soviet socialist republics (ASSRs). On December 30, 1922, the republics entered the formal federation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), whose first constitution was ratified in 1924.

The 1936 constitution, adopted by the Extraordinary 17th All-Russian Congress of Soviets in January 1937, established a federal structure that lasted for about 50 years, despite changes introduced in 1978. The republics were politically divided into ASSRs, autonomous oblasti (provinces), and okruga (districts), as well as provinces and kraya (regions), the latter division including the autonomous provinces and districts. All these divisions were represented in the legislative branch: the Supreme Soviets of the USSR and of each republic, all of which were bicameral (a Soviet of the Federation and a Soviet of Nationalities). The autonomous republics enjoyed a measure of political independence, each having its own constitution, higher organs of state power, legislature, and judiciary; each sent deputies to the Supreme Soviets of both the USSR and the republic. Autonomous provinces and districts also sent deputies to these bodies, but their autonomy was limited. Some republics retained these types of political units and their representation in central government after independence.

Prior to the events that brought about the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the 15 union republics were subject to a series of Soviet constitutions (1918, 1924, 1936, 1977). Until the late 1980s the whole structure of Soviet government was dominated at all levels by the Communist Party, which was all-powerful and whose head was the country's de facto leader.

Under this system the highest organ of state power in the republic was the republic's Supreme Soviet, which appointed the Council of Ministers as its highest executive and administrative organ. Each autonomous republic also had its Supreme Soviet and Council of Ministers, while local soviets were responsible for the affairs of their provinces, districts, regions, *rayony*

(sectors), cities, and other localities. All these bodies were subject to decisions made at the center by the Supreme Soviet and Council of Ministers of the USSR.

Until 1988, elections at all levels were from a single slate of candidates, the great majority of whom were in effect chosen by the Communist Party. The Supreme Soviet chose the members (for five-year terms) of and supervised the activities of all other judicial bodies--the Supreme Courts of the SSRs and the courts of other territories.<sup>32</sup>

### ***The Public Sphere in Transitional Period***

From the late 1980s through 1991--the period of Mikhail Gorbachev's *perestroika* ("restructuring"), *glasnost* ("openness"), and *demokratizatsiya* ("democratization") reform policies--fundamental changes took place in the political system and government structures of the USSR that altered both the nature of the Soviet federal state and the status and powers of the individual republics. The first major change consisted of legislation passed by the old Supreme Soviet in 1988 that created a new body, the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR, together with a Congress of People's Deputies in each republic. Elections to these bodies were held in 1989. For the first time, voters were presented with a choice of candidates, including non-Communists, although the system was such that party members remained a strong element: one-third of the deputies came from territorial constituencies, another third were from national territorial constituencies, and the remaining third from organizations such as the Communist Party, trade unions, and professional bodies.

Thereafter, the pace of change accelerated, culminating in 1991. An abortive coup in August by hard-liners opposed to Gorbachev's reforms led to the collapse of most USSR government organizations, the abolition of the Communist Party's leading role in government, and the dissolution of the party itself. Republic after republic declared its "sovereignty," and in December the USSR was formally dissolved. Concurrently, the Russian Federation and 10 other former Soviet republics established the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), which was to replace the Soviet Union with a more loosely structured federation.

### ***Equality in Theory and Practice Under Communism***

Gender equity was long featured in Soviet political rhetoric. Beginning shortly after the Bolshevik Revolution in November 1917, the new regime of declared the emancipation of women one of its central objectives. It proclaimed that the key to women's liberation was the inclusion of wives and mothers into the national work force in order to break their dependence on domineering husbands or fathers. Through the efforts of women such as Alexandra Kollontai, the only female member of the new Bolshevik government, additional measures followed this early commitment to full employment. Increasingly liberal divorce laws came into force, access to childcare and abortion services became a State guarantee, and the ruling Communist Party openly advocated the destruction of the nuclear family unit as a vestige of bourgeois mentality. Alexandra Kollontai went as far as promoting the Free Love movement, reasoning that if paternity were unclear, children would be cared for collectively by the entire community. The

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<sup>32</sup> Encyclopedia Britannica, <http://www.britannica.com>, 2/15/2000.

new Soviet family unit would thus engender loyalty to the Communist State rather than to outmoded patrimonial hierarchies.

It was not long before this kind of extremism elicited considerable criticism, both from the top leadership, and from society itself. Lenin considered Kollontai's Free Love ideas to be petit bourgeois and decadent. Meanwhile, many of the women for whom divorce laws had been simplified soon found themselves and their children abandoned by husbands in search of younger, prettier second wives. The chaos that this created in a society with inadequate alimony enforcement prompted Communist officialdom to move in a more conservative direction regarding gender issues.

In 1930, Stalin dissolved the Women's Department in the Party Central Committee (*Zhenotdel*), declaring that the emancipation of women had been completed.<sup>33</sup> A new family code, introduced in 1936, made it much more difficult to obtain a divorce, and outlawed abortion. It was not until 1941, with the formation of the Soviet Women's Committee (SWC), that women in the USSR received a new official advocate. However, this new organization functioned more as a Party mouthpiece than as a genuine advocacy group. Focused mainly on foreign affairs, it served to trumpet the achievements of Soviet gender policy to international audiences. Domestically, its regional women's councils (*zhensoveti*) organized social gatherings, coordinated the purchase of groceries for working mothers, and facilitated the exchange of children's clothes within local communities.

When it came to real political power, neither the SWC nor individual women in general had much influence. Because the Soviets set quotas for women's involvement in politics, women were represented at all levels and in all branches of government, but there was a widespread pattern of gender bias and they often held less prominent positions and experienced higher turnover rates than men.<sup>34</sup>

For decades prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union, the proportion of women on the Party's Central Committee hovered around 3 percent. Women comprised only 7 percent of Party secretaries.<sup>35</sup> The situation within the Central Committee's Politburo, the nation's real decision-making body, was even worse. Throughout the entire history of the USSR, from 1919 to 1990, only five women were appointed to the Soviet Politburo (2.6 percent of appointees), two of whom served on Gorbachev's Politburo.<sup>36</sup>

The State administration reflected much the same story. Only four women were appointed as Ministers of the USSR: Polina Zemczuzina, Minister of Fishery Economy, 1930-1940; Maria Kourigina, Minister of Health, 1954-1959; Yekatarina Furucova, Minister of Culture, 1957-1974; and Aleksandra Birjkova, Minister of Social Affairs, 1988-1989.<sup>37</sup> Women held republic-

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<sup>33</sup> Valerie Jeanne Sperling, *Engendering Transition: The Women's Movement in Contemporary Russia*. Doctoral Dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 1997, 42n.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 144, 143.

<sup>35</sup> Janet Hunt-McCool, *The Consequences of NIS Legal Reform on Women's Work and Welfare*, (Washington, DC: USAID, 1993), 15.

<sup>36</sup> Nechemias, "Women and Politics," 14; and Penny Morvant, "Bearing the 'Double Burden' in Russia," *Transition*, Vol. 1, No. 16, September 8, 1995, 8.

<sup>37</sup> Women in Governments website. <http://hjem.get2net.dk/Womeningovernments/USSR.htm>, 1/28/2000.

level ministerial posts as well, but there was rarely more than one woman appointed in any given time frame.

The single exception to this pattern of marginalization was the State legislature, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, where women consistently held as much as 33 percent of the seats throughout the Soviet period. However, inasmuch as this body was largely a rubber stamp for decisions made by top Party and State leaders, it afforded few real political opportunities to its sizeable female contingent.<sup>38</sup>

### ***Reforming Gender Policy Under Gorbachev***

In the realm of officialdom, the Gorbachev period witnessed an effort to revitalize local women's soviets under the Soviet Women's Committee. Owing to the Committee's established position in Soviet society, this push resulted in a growth spurt similar to that underway among independent organizations. Between 1986 and 1987 the number of women's soviets in the Moscow region alone grew from 15 to 600.<sup>39</sup>

From its earlier focus on foreign affairs, the SWC now turned the bulk of its attention to domestic issues, including participation in the new State legislature, the Congress of People's Deputies (CPD). When new electoral laws were drafted for the CPD in 1989, the SWC received 75 uncontested seats by virtue of its status as an official "social organization." This State-imposed quota was insufficient to prevent a distinct decline in the proportion of women serving in the legislature from 33 percent in the former USSR Supreme Soviet to 16.6 percent of candidates<sup>40</sup> and 15.7 percent of the new CPD.<sup>41</sup> However, for the first time in Soviet history, legislators in the new assembly were empowered to speak out against societal ills, including the need to move women out of heavy physical labor, to end night-shift work for women, to improve maternal and infant health, and to better the conditions faced by pregnant women.<sup>42</sup> Although women had reduced their numerical presence in government, they had gained a greater political voice in society.

Elections painted an analogous portrait of reduced representation, compounded by more stringent republican policies on quotas. Following the elections to the national CPD, popular indignation swelled against the practice of allotting "social organizations" such as the Communist Party and the SWC blocs of uncontested seats. Consequently, 13 of the 15 Union republics abandoned the use of quotas in the elections of 1990. Discussions of women's issues in the CPD focused on women's working conditions and reproductive health. Within this circumscribed sphere, female representatives chose to focus on women as mothers and wives, rather than as liberated individuals. "We have already experienced equal rights to swing the hammer," one legislator explained, "Nothing good came of it."<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Sperling, *Engendering Transition*, 42.

<sup>39</sup> Nechemias, "Women and Politics," 14.

<sup>40</sup> Hunt-McCool, *The Consequences of NIS Legal Reform on Women's Work and Welfare*, 16.

<sup>41</sup> Nechemias, "Women and Politics," 13.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>43</sup> Nechemias, "Women and Politics," 13.

Despite over seventy years of propaganda extolling their liberation, women continued to face the conflict of holding down a full-time job while attending to virtually all of her family's household responsibilities. By the end of the Gorbachev era in 1991, the gender imbalance that had characterized Soviet society for most of its history continued virtually unabated in the nation's political life.

### ***Civil Society in the Soviet Period***

Under the Soviet system, civil society comprised only a few international groups such as the Peace Fund, the Children's Fund, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Society and the Nature Protection Society.<sup>44</sup> Since their presence was limited, few people were active members in civil society organizations, meaning they did more than buy stamps or pay dues to support the organization. Volunteer opportunities were found mostly in Communist Party organizations rather than civil society.

### ***Rule of Law***

Soviet constitutions and Soviet law repeatedly asserted the full equality of women, and the Soviet government provided an impressive array of legal protections and social services for women. In the past, the ideals of constitutional justice (the equality of all citizens before the law and in exact accordance with the law; judges are independent and subordinate only to the law; trials are to be open, and the accused are guaranteed a defense) were violated on many occasions. Millions suffered from illegal actions during the Stalin period, leading Khrushchev to introduce a campaign for "socialist legality." Law and custom began functioning as guarantors of social cohesion in the 1960s.<sup>45</sup>

### ***Family Law***

The Soviet Family Code governed family law in the Soviet Union until its split in 1991. The property law decreed that both spouses had equal claim to marital property.<sup>46</sup> It was fairly easy to obtain a divorce, particularly when both parties consented. Two restrictions on divorce, designed to protect women, existed: a divorce would not be granted if the wife was pregnant or if the couple had a child less than a year old.<sup>47</sup> The most common grounds for divorce were the husband's drunkenness (in almost half of divorce cases), adultery, violence, and "incompatibility."<sup>48</sup>

### ***Findings***

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<sup>44</sup> Erkinbek Kasybekov, "Government and Nonprofit Sector Relations in the Kyrgyz Republic," in M. Holt Ruffin and Daniel Waugh (eds), *Civil Society in Central Asia* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 71.

<sup>45</sup> Hosking, *The First Socialist Society*, 353.

<sup>46</sup> Futures Group, *The Legal Status of Women in the New Independent States of the Former Soviet Union*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Agency for International Development, 1994), 3.

<sup>47</sup> Marfua Tokhtakhodzhaeva, *Between the Slogans of Communism and the Laws of Islam*, (Lahore, Pakistan: Shirkat Gah Women's Resource Centre, 1995), 17.

<sup>48</sup> Hosking, *The First Socialist Society*, 397.



**Was there differential participation by women and men in the public sphere?** Men and women did not participate equally in the public sphere under communism. They reportedly voted at approximately equal rates (at least in part since it was required by law), but women generally comprised only one third of the Communist Party, any legislative body, or the judiciary. And women were rarely represented in the highest levels of the Communist Party or the executive branch of government.

**Did civil society exist and what were the gender impacts?** A few civil society organizations existed under communism, but they did not provide a political voice for their constituents. We are unaware of any gender impacts of those organizations.

**Did rule of law exist and what were the gender impacts?** Rule of law was frequently violated in the Soviet Union, leaving a legacy of distrust of the legal system. The Soviet Family Code treated spouses equally in the case of a divorce.

## SOVIET SOCIAL BENEFITS

This section reports findings from major sources regarding social benefits, poverty, health, and education in the Soviet Union and explores the question:

1. How did women versus men fare in access to / support from social programs?

### *Social Safety Net*

The Soviet Union attempted to provide financial security to its citizens through a complex system of employment and social insurance benefits. These included price subsidies, rent for state apartments, utility subsidies, and several types of cash benefits.<sup>49</sup> The entitlements were intended to mitigate the financial risk to families and individuals. Socialist countries were known for having “womb to tomb” care. Between 1950 and 1980, state spending on welfare increased fivefold after adjusting for inflation (see Table 6.2). The benefits that were most improved were pensions, family allowances, and housing subsidies.

**Table 6.2. Social Welfare Expenditures in the Soviet Union**

	1940	1950	1955	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980	1986
Total of all benefits (in billions of rubles)	4.6	13.0	16.4	27.3	41.9	63.9	90.1	117	155
Per capita	24.0	72.8	84.4	128.5	182.5	264.4	354.0	441.0	554.0
Welfare and social insurance (in billions of rubles)	0.9	5.8	7.2	13.5	14.4	22.8	34.6	45.6	65.8
Education (in billions of rubles)	2.0	4.4	5.2	7.3	13.2	18.7	25.1	31.6	39.4
Health care (in billions of rubles)	1.0	2.2	3.1	5.0	6.9	10.0	12.9	17.2	20.9
Housing subsidies (in billions of rubles)	0.1	0.5	0.7	1.2	2.3	3.4	4.9	6.9	9.8

Source: Hosking, *The First Socialist Society*, 510.

Some sources state that the Soviet Union’s social benefits were modest by international standards. The World Bank, however, states that the benefits were fairly generous. Either way, the benefits were untargeted and uncoordinated and the social insurance system was not fiscally sustainable in the long run.<sup>50</sup> In 1990 benefits increased by 21 percent when the Congress of People's Deputies voted to increase benefit levels, particularly pensions.<sup>51</sup> It was in part the political commitment to maintaining and even increasing social services and full employment at economically prohibitive levels that exacerbated the crisis facing the Soviets by the late 1980s.

<sup>49</sup> George W. Breslauer, “Thinking about the Soviet Future,” in A. Dallin and G. Lapidus (eds), *The Soviet System in Crisis* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), 638.

<sup>50</sup> Emily S. Andrews and Dena Ringold, *Safety Nets in Transition Economies: Toward a Reform Strategy*, Social Protection Discussion Paper No. 9914 (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1999), 15.

<sup>51</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica, “The USSR,” <http://www.britannica.com>

At that time, consumer and producer subsidies amounted to ten percent of GNP.<sup>52</sup> The Soviet government was able to offer its extensive social safety net by ruinous deficit spending.<sup>53</sup>

The Soviet state provided the following benefits to citizens:

- monthly family allowance (adjusted for families with many children, single mothers, divorced mothers without alimony, and children of military personnel<sup>54</sup>);
- one-time lump sum birth grants;
- maternity leave for insured and uninsured women;
- parental and childcare benefits;
- paid leave for care of a sick child;
- old-age, disability, and survivors' pensions;
- wide-ranging veterans' benefits; and
- funeral benefits.<sup>55</sup>

In addition, state-owned enterprises often provided housing, hospitals, and nursery schools for employees and their families.<sup>56</sup>

Soviet efforts to “protect” the family and increase the ethnic Russian birth rate beginning in the 1960s and 1970s also set the stage for the collapse in women’s employment during the post-Communist transition. Legislation passed at this time encouraged women to have more children by extending maternity leave. However, this reached a point where it was burdensome for many enterprises, prompting difficulties in women’s career development. Once again, when economic restructuring began under Gorbachev, the maternity issue often came into play as enterprises laid off women to circumvent the mounting costs of these benefits.<sup>57</sup>

### ***Gender Aspects of the Safety Net***

The Soviet system of social benefits generally favored women. If gender roles in the family were less traditional, women might not have benefited more than men, but as mothers, women were eligible for more cash benefits than men. Women worked fewer years than men to earn pensions in addition to receiving in-service credit while on maternity and parental leave. Women were more likely to use paid leave to care for sick children. Women were also the primary consumers of childcare and healthcare services provided by enterprises.

Even these seemingly positive aspects of the Soviet benefits system upon closer scrutiny reveal the high costs of this system for Soviet citizens before and after the transition. The relative advantages that women enjoyed from the wider availability of social services under the Soviet

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<sup>52</sup> Andrews and Ringold, *Safety Nets in Transition Economies*, 19.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 48-49. Social service spending (and consumer subsidies) under Gorbachev increased by almost 1 percent GDP a year from 1987 to 1987. In 1990 the sudden increase in social benefits by 25 percent led to a massive increase in the budget deficit, which in tandem with the Soviet Union’s foreign debt crisis (the Soviet Union’s gross debt expanded from \$31.4 billion in 1985 to \$65.3 billion in 1991) played a key role in the economic collapse of the Soviet Union.

<sup>54</sup> Andrews and Ringold, *Safety Nets in Transition Economies*, 16.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>57</sup> “The feministki are coming,” *The Economist* (August 12<sup>th</sup>, 1995), 45.

regime were conditioned by the shockingly low quality of many of these services.<sup>58</sup> Decreasing government investment left many project, such as schools, daycare centers, hospitals and clinics unfinished.<sup>59</sup>

### **Poverty**

By 1989, poverty had emerged as a social problem in the Soviet Union, one that even the media could not ignore. Several groups were particularly hard hit and living below the poverty line: pensioners, large families, and the handicapped. Officially, these poorer families comprised about 43 million people.<sup>60</sup> Although social insurance was intended to mitigate financial risk to families, Soviet policy makers assumed households would not fall into poverty and therefore provided no risk-coping mechanisms.<sup>61</sup> In 1974, the Soviet Union adopted one means-tested social assistance benefit, but it was unrelated to minimum consumption and was largely discretionary.<sup>62</sup> In this environment of substandard social support, families relied on informal support structures, such as extended families or the *mahalla* in Uzbekistan (see Chapter 11 for a fuller discussion of the role of the *mahalla*).

### **Health**

Soviet health care was but the most notorious example of the gap between the official rhetoric and distressing reality of social services in the USSR. Soviet spending on health care declined from a 1950 high of 5 percent of GNP to 2.1 percent GNP by 1977. At the end of the Soviet era, government spending on health care was only three to four percent of national income.<sup>63</sup> During the 1970s, infant mortality increased by more than 25 percent while men's and women's life expectancy decreased. By the late 1980s, Soviet publications were even claiming that the main source of HIV infection was sloppy medical procedures in Soviet clinics.<sup>64</sup>

### **Education**

While the Soviets achieved many remarkable goals in education over seventy years, by 1989, spending on education comprised only five to six percent of budgetary expenditures, compared to double that in other developed countries.<sup>65</sup> Prior to the early 1990s, education in the USSR was highly centralized. *Perestroika* and particularly the demise of the Communist Party led to major revisions of the syllabi in many subjects and the removal of compulsory indoctrination in Marxist-Leninist theory.

As the transition got underway after 1989, declining economic conditions only aggravated this situation, prompting calls to defend social benefits such as generous maternity leave and access

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<sup>58</sup> Herlemann, *Quality of Life in the Soviet Union*, 68-9, 74.

<sup>59</sup> "Beyond Perestroika," in Dallin and Lapidus (eds), *The Soviet System in Crisis*, 403.

<sup>60</sup> White, *Gorbachev and After*, 125.

<sup>61</sup> Andrews and Ringold, *Safety Nets in Transition Economies*, 15.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>63</sup> White, *Gorbachev and After*, 136.

<sup>64</sup> Hedrick Smith, *The New Russians*, (New York: Random House, 1990), 168.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

to preschools. For many, the cause of liberation assumed a lower priority compared to the more immediate cause of survival in an increasingly unstable world.

### ***Findings***

**How did women versus men fare in access to / support from social programs?** In spite of claims to equality, there were significant gender biases in the social benefits provided in the Soviet Union. Unlike the gender biases in the economic and political sphere, social benefits treated women preferentially. Men had to work longer than women to retire and received no parental leave packages equivalent to women's maternity leave.

## Chapter 7: Armenia



### Basic Indicators

For additional information, please see Country Data Table in the Appendix.

<i>Demographics</i>			
Population <sup>1</sup> (1998)	3,792,000; 1,954,000 female (51.5%)		
Rural / Urban <sup>2</sup>	Urban 69%		
Ethnic composition <sup>3</sup> (1988)	Armenian 93%, Azeri 3%, Russian 2%, other (mostly Yezidi Kurds) 2% (note: by 1993, most Azeris had emigrated).		
<i>Economic Growth and Development</i>			
GDP per capita (all in 1987\$) <sup>4</sup>	<b>1985</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1997</b>
	\$890	\$848	\$NA
GDP per capita (PPP for 1997) <sup>4</sup>	<b>Female</b>		<b>Male</b>
	\$1,928		\$2,816
Registered Unemployment Rate <sup>1</sup>	<b>1992</b>		<b>1997</b>
	1.6%		10.6%
<i>Democracy and Governance</i>			
Women in Parliament <sup>5</sup>	3.1%		
Women in Ministerial Positions <sup>6</sup>	0.0%		
<i>Social Transition</i>			
Life Expectancy by Sex(1999 est.) <sup>3</sup>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Average</b>
	71.13	62.21	66.56
Combined first, second, and third level gross school enrollment ratio (1997) <sup>4</sup>	<b>Female</b>		<b>Male</b>
	68%		75%
Population below poverty line <sup>2</sup>	NA		

Sources: 1) UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*.

2) World Bank Country Data (<http://wbln0018.worldbank.org/eca/eca.nsf>).

3) CIA World Factbook 1999 (<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>).

4) UNDP Human Development Indicators 1999.

5) Inter Parliamentary Union website, <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

- 6) CIA Chiefs of State and Cabinet Members website, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/chiefs/index.html> and Women in Governments website, <http://hjem.get2net.dk/Womeningovernments/>.
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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### ***The Economic Transition***

- Massive outmigration, economic decline, war, and the shift to a competitive labor market from guaranteed employment has led a shrinking of the overall economy and labor market since 1989. Even in 1998, the GDP in real terms was barely 40 percent of its 1989 level.
- According to World Bank data, women retain a high level of participation in the labor force in Armenia.
- While sex-disaggregated data are scarce, a 1998 UNDP study states that women constitute approximately 70 percent of the unemployed.
- Wages rates have collapsed in Armenia, and the average wage is, according to experts, half of the minimum subsistence level. Gender-related wage data are not available for Armenia.
- The informal economy has grown as large enterprises have closed and the economy contracted. While both men and women are involved in the informal economy, women comprise the majority of individuals working in what has become known as the bazaar economy.

### ***The Democratic Transition***

- Women have continually lost seats in parliament, appointed positions in the national government and elected positions in local governments since independence. Men have experienced an increase in political influence since independence.
- Women appear to use the NGO sector as an alternative outlet for their political energies.
- Rule of law has been institutionalized. The sexes are treated equally under the law and both have gained with new rights and freedoms, but little information is available on the actual exercise of them.

### ***The Social Transition***

- In three of 10 social safety net programs, women receive preferential treatment in eligibility, benefits, or both. Women receive fewer preferences, however, in Armenia than in many other E&E countries.
- There is no significant gender difference in poverty rates overall; however, female single pensioners are twice as likely as single male pensioners to be poor.
- Health impacts include: life expectancy increased for both men and women, maternal mortality decreased, and the incidence of STDs increased.
- The retirement age has been raised for both women and men, but women continue to be able to retire earlier than men.
- Education enrollment is sex-disaggregated with girls accounting for a little more than half of primary and secondary enrollments and 56 percent of tertiary enrollments.

## Country Overview

**Introduction:** Armenia is a country of Transcaucasia, lying just south of the great mountain range of the Caucasus and fronting the northwestern extremity of Asia. It covers an area of 11,500 square miles (29,800 square kilometres). To the north and east Armenia is bounded by Georgia and Azerbaijan, while its neighbours to the southeast and west are, respectively, Iran and Turkey. Naxçvan, an exclave of Azerbaijan, borders Armenia to the southwest. The capital is Yerevan (Erevan).

**People:** Armenians constitute nearly all of the country's population; they speak Armenian, a distinct branch of the Indo-European language family. The remainder include Kurds, Russians, and small numbers of Ukrainians, Assyrians, and other groups. Most of Armenia's Azerbaijani population fled or was expelled after the escalation of the conflict between the two countries. More than 3 million Armenians live abroad, including about 1.5 million in the states of the former Soviet Union and about 1 million in the United States.

**Cultural life:** Armenian written literature began in the 5th century AD, and monasteries became the principal centres of intellectual life. The earliest works were historical, such as Moses of Khoren's *History of Armenia*. The masterpiece of classical Armenian is Eznik Koghbatsi's *Eghts aghandots* (*Refutation of the Sects*). The first great Armenian poet (10th century) was St. Gregory Narekatzi, renowned for his mystical poems and hymns. During the 16th to 18th century, popular bards, or troubadours, called *ashugh*, arose; outstanding among them were Nahapet Kuchak and, especially, Aruthin Sayadian, called *Sayat-Nova* (d. 1795), whose love songs are still popular. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Hakob Paronian and Ervand Otian were notable satirical novelists, and Grigor Zohrab wrote realist short stories. Paronian was also a comic playwright, whose plays still entertain Armenian audiences. The most celebrated novelist was Hakob Meliq-Hakobian, called *Raffi*, and perhaps the best dramatist of recent times was Gabriel Sundukian (d. 1912). The country boasts a State Academic Theatre of Opera and Ballet, several drama theatres, theatres for children, orchestras, a national dance company, and the Yerevan film studios, which produce feature, documentary, and science films. The traditional folk arts, especially singing, dancing, and artistic crafts, are popular. The 20th-century Armenian composer Aram Khachaturian achieved worldwide renown.

**Government:** In 1995 Armenia adopted a new constitution, replacing the Soviet-era constitution that had been in force from 1978. The 1995 document establishes legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government and provides for a strong executive. A number of basic rights and freedoms of citizens are enumerated. Legislative authority is vested in a 131-member legislature, the National Assembly. Members are elected to four-year terms. The legislature has the authority to approve the budget, ratify treaties, and declare war. The president is the head of state and is elected directly to a maximum of two consecutive five-year terms. The president appoints the cabinet and members of the high courts (subject to approval by the legislature), serves as commander in chief of the armed forces, and has broad authority to issue decrees. The judiciary consists of trial courts, appellate courts, a Court of Cassation (the highest appellate court), and a nine-member Constitutional Court, which determines the constitutionality of legislation and executive decrees.

**Education:** Countrywide eight-year schooling has become the standard. There are trade schools, secondary specialized educational establishments, and institutes and colleges. Establishments of higher learning include Yerevan State University; polytechnical, medical, agricultural, pedagogical, and theatrical institutes; and a conservatory.

**Health and Welfare:** Medical treatment in hospitals and clinics is free of charge for all citizens, being supported, like education, by taxation. The government provides modest benefits to the elderly, the unemployed, and parents of young children.

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## INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the economic, democratic, and social transitions in Armenia. Each section seeks to answer a set of research questions which are set out at the beginning of the sections. In addition to subsections addressing each of the research questions, each section includes a subsection on findings and opportunities for future research.

### *Background Information*

Following one of the greatest disasters in Armenian history, the 1915 elimination of approximately one million Armenians and the displacement of many more, Armenia was independent for only two years before it was incorporated into the USSR in 1920. Armenia's participation in the Soviet command economy fostered enormous industrial growth, both through the direct supply of production equipment, and through profitable trade relationships with neighboring Soviet republics. Under communist rule, the Armenian economy developed defense electronics and optics, textiles and other manufactured goods.<sup>1</sup> However, the growth enjoyed under Soviet rule turned to loss and poverty in 1988. That year one of the worst earthquakes in Armenia's history devastated the nation, breaking fuel lines, ruining industrial plants, and leveling towns. The disaster left about 25,000 people dead, and more than 500,000 homeless.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time, Soviet leadership was declining, and a conflict in neighboring Azerbaijan was rising. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict aggravated Armenia's economic woes and the difficulty of transition from a command to a market economy, especially when Azerbaijan and Turkey imposed a blockade to external trade along those borders.<sup>3</sup> Since 1991, the post-Communist transition has periodically wrought severe suffering on all members of the population. This has especially been the case at the outset of the transition, from 1991 to 1995, and then again after Russia's financial crisis of 1998. Yet differential trends in education, job status, unemployment and alternative economic opportunities have meant that women and men have experienced this process quite differently.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Armenian Economic Policy and Trade Practices*. Submitted to the Senate Committees on Foreign Relations and on Finance; May 1996, 2. [http://www.state.gov/www/issues/economic/trade\\_reports](http://www.state.gov/www/issues/economic/trade_reports).

<sup>2</sup> World Bank Country Brief: Armenia, <http://wbln0018.worldbank.org>, 1.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

## THE ECONOMIC TRANSITION

This section seeks to answer the following questions as they relate to Armenia:

1. Have there been changes in labor force participation by women and men during the transition?
2. Has unemployment increased, whether official or hidden, and is there a gender dimension to unemployment?
3. Is there evidence for wage gap trends and wage differentials?
4. How has the growth of the informal economy reflected gender differentiation?
5. What is the impact of privatization of state enterprises on women's and men's employment?
6. What role do women play in new managerial positions or business formation in the growing private sector?

In the subsections below we discuss GDP, labor force participation, unemployment, the informal economy, and privatization and present data on each of these issues as they relate to gender. Our findings on the impact of the economic transition on gender are presented in the concluding subsection.

### *Contextual Information about the Economy*

The organization and output of Armenia's economy was almost entirely a product of Soviet design. Focused on engineering, metal fabrication, light industries like textiles, apparel and footwear, and the food industry,<sup>4</sup> Armenia's command system was characterized by high levels of state sector employment<sup>5</sup> and large inter-republic appropriations of raw materials, fuel, and semi-finished goods.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, political ideals like gender egalitarianism and full labor force participation clashed with more traditional patriarchal power structures and built-in employment biases. For example, while Soviet propagandists boasted that over two-thirds of doctors and more than half of teachers were women, few of these women ever achieved the positions of top management.<sup>7</sup>

The residual characteristics of its Soviet-era development became an enormous handicap when Armenia began its transition to a market economy, compromising its capacity to deal with further external problems. Many of the industrial plants and fuel pipelines across the country that were destroyed in the earthquake of 1988 still remain out of operation.<sup>8</sup> The country also suffers from massive emigration,

<sup>4</sup> United Nations, *CEDAW Initial Country Report: Armenia*, [gopher://gopher.un.org:70/00/ga/cedaw/17/country/Armenia](http://gopher.un.org:70/00/ga/cedaw/17/country/Armenia), 6.

<sup>5</sup> World Bank, *The Armenian Labor Market in Transition*, 1996, 5, <http://www-wds.worldbank.org>.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations, *CEDAW Initial Country Report: Armenia*, [gopher://gopher.un.org:70/00/ga/cedaw/17/country/Armenia](http://gopher.un.org:70/00/ga/cedaw/17/country/Armenia), 6.

<sup>7</sup> Sona Zeitlian, "Nationalism and Development of the Armenian Women's Rights Movement," in Barbara J. Merguerian and Doris D. Jafferian, eds., *Armenian Women in a Changing World* (Belmont, Ma.: AIWA Press, September 1994), 90.

<sup>8</sup> Narine Sahakian. "Entrepreneurship and Joint Ventures: The Role of International Organizations," in Merguerian and Jafferian, *Armenian Women in the Changing World*, 46-47.

mostly toward Russia, of people seeking greater economic opportunities. This is especially true of active businessmen and qualified technical specialists. Such outflows tend to drain the most productive potential workers from the economy, leaving dependent family members vulnerable to poverty at home.<sup>9</sup>

Probably the most difficult strain on Armenia's economy, however, has been the on-going blockade imposed by its neighbors, Turkey and Azerbaijan, over the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Soviet resource allocations had made individual republics so economically dependent on their neighbors that this blockade has caused a huge decline in Armenia's industrial output.<sup>10</sup> It has also driven up transportation costs and increased investment risks, compromising the nation's economic recovery.

Even in 1998, the GDP in real terms was barely 40 percent of its 1989 level. The World Bank estimates that Armenia's GDP declined about 60 percent between 1991 and 1993 as a result of the blockade and the closure of several large industrial enterprises<sup>11</sup> (Table 7.1). The majority of Armenian enterprises are either idle or operating at a fraction of their capacity, unemployment has soared, and the majority of the population lives below the officially recognized poverty level. The standard of living has deteriorated everywhere, and the onslaught of winter is always a serious national concern. Electricity has been rationed. Centralized heating is provided to only a small portion of the population, and the urban natural gas-operated heating systems collapsed in many areas from 1992 to 1995.<sup>12</sup> While the economy has begun to grow again, it still barely reaches 40 percent of the productivity it had at the beginning of the transition.

**Table 7.1. Change in Real GDP, 1989-1998 (1989=100)**

1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
100.0	94.5	78.3	37.1	31.6	33.3	35.6	37.7	38.9	41.2

Source: UNDP, Human Development Indicators, 1999.

The Armenian government has achieved a degree of macroeconomic stabilization since mid-1994. This is due in part to the cease-fire declared in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The cease-fire brought some stability to the area, allowing international financial organizations and donor countries to assist the Armenian macroeconomic program, and reducing constraints to external trade and transportation. The permission to trade again also reduced energy costs sharply, allowing greater access to fuel and natural gas heating in Armenia.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>10</sup> United Nations, *CEDAW Initial Country Report: Armenia*, [gopher://gopher.un.org:70/00/ga/cedaw/17/country/Armenia](http://gopher.un.org:70/00/ga/cedaw/17/country/Armenia), 6.

<sup>11</sup> World Bank Country Brief: Armenia, <http://wbln0018.worldbank.org>, 1.

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Armenia Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1998, 1999*, [http://www.state.gov/www/global/human\\_rights/1998](http://www.state.gov/www/global/human_rights/1998), 14.

<sup>13</sup> World Bank Country Brief: Armenia, <http://wbln0018.worldbank.org>, 1.

Further, since November 1993 the Armenian government has applied monetary and fiscal reforms, slowing monetary growth, reducing inflation, and tightening the government deficit. These measures took hold in 1994, when GDP increased by about 5 percent, and continued to grow at an annual rate of approximately 5.5 percent afterward. Observers predict that continued GDP growth will be contingent on private sector development and a rise in capacity utilization. However, it is also likely to depend on the level of export demand among former Soviet markets and the success that Armenia finds in new markets like the Middle East and Europe.<sup>14</sup>

### ***Labor Force Participation***

Massive outmigration, economic decline, war, and the shift to a competitive labor market from guaranteed employment has led a shrinking of the overall labor market since 1989. Due to emigration, the percentage of males in the population has declined from 48.6 percent in 1988 to 44.6 percent in 1997.<sup>15</sup> In spite of this demographic loss, it is estimated that the overall participation levels in the economy – that is, those between ages 15 and 64 who are employed or seeking employment compared to the population in that age group – has decreased from 46 percent in 1986 to 36 percent in 1997, low by international standards.<sup>16</sup> Further, it is difficult to assess participation in the context of high job mobility, underemployment, “artificial employment” (that is, listed as employed to receive benefits, but without working and without compensation) and the expansion of unregistered employment. For example, nearly 58 percent of the employed changed jobs in 1997.<sup>17</sup>

Unfortunately, a scarcity of sex-disaggregated statistical information as well as recent labor market research limits the analysis of the current role of men and women in the labor market. The body of official data generally does not treat men and women separately, and official codes regarding women’s workforce participation often provide a misleading picture of actual labor circumstances.

According to World Bank data, women retain a high level of participation in the labor force in Armenia. Recent figures suggest that women remain involved in the labor market at the high levels of Soviet times. This is not surprising, given the difficulties of the Armenian economy in which households are struggling to maintain income from many sources. However, since the concept of “participation” includes all labor statuses (including unemployment), these figures provide providing little insight into economic conditions.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report Armenia 1998*, <http://www.undp.org/hdro/nhdr.htm>, 5.4.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 4.4.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., Box 4.4.

**Table 7.2. Labor Force Participation**

Labor Force Participation (ratio of female to male)		Labor Force Participation (% of total labor force)			
1990	1997	1980		1997	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
.9	.9	52	48	52	48

Source: World Bank, 1999 World Development Indicators.

At the beginning of 1998, a study of the urban informal sector found that only about 54 percent of the population above 16 years of age was involved in economic activity; and nearly half that number (25 percent) were unemployed.<sup>18</sup>

### **“The Dual Burden” in Armenia**

Despite official efforts toward gender equality, cultural norms continue to assign Armenian women to duties at home and discourage their assuming active leadership roles.<sup>19</sup> The labor codes themselves reinforce the protected status that limits women’s opportunities on the job. The 1992 amendments to the Marriage and Family Code prohibit female work in hazardous jobs, in heavy manual labor, and in night-time labor. It guarantees maternity leave for at least 140 days, for one year at partial pay, with the right to a further unpaid year. Firms are also forbidden to dismiss pregnant women or mothers with children under 18 months.<sup>20</sup>

### ***Unemployment***

Armenia may have suffered the region’s worst rise in unemployment.<sup>21</sup> Although official statistics estimate unemployment near 7 percent, other sources place it much higher. Nor do unemployment figures do not count the “artificially” or the partially employed. (“Artificial” employment refers to the status of being on an enterprise’s records as employed, but not working and not receiving compensation.) About 82 percent of the unemployed were not registered with the State Employment Services. Benefits were minimal, usually unpaid, and reports existed of the state agency discouraging registration to keep official unemployment figures low.<sup>22</sup>

A 1998 UNDP study states that women constitute approximately 70 percent of the unemployed.<sup>23</sup> No available figures track unemployment by gender over time. However, several sources point to the difficulties of the unemployment situation. The U.S. Department of State Human Rights Report placed

<sup>18</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report Armenia 1998*, <http://www.undp.org/hdro/nhdr.htm>, 4.4.

<sup>19</sup> United Nations, *CEDAW Initial Country Report: Armenia*, [gopher://gopher.un.org:70/00/ga/cedaw/17/country/Armenia](http://gopher.un.org:70/00/ga/cedaw/17/country/Armenia), 8.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 11-12.

<sup>21</sup> World Bank Country Brief: Armenia, <http://wbln0018.worldbank.org>, 1.

<sup>22</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report Armenia 1998*, <http://www.undp.org/hdro/nhdr.htm>, 4.4.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

the unemployment/underemployment figure close to 50 percent in 1998 (underemployment includes involuntary part-time, overqualified, or inadequate income).<sup>24</sup> A 1997 study shows that unemployment varies significantly by region, from 25 percent in the earthquake zone to 11 percent in Yerevan.<sup>25</sup> Further, this study reports on a survey done with ILO participation that showed some 32 percent of employees in surveyed enterprises were engaged in “artificial employment.”<sup>26</sup> Additional workers, both men and women, have been placed on short-time working schedules or on forced leaves. The fact that even official Armenian state statistics record this group as 12 percent of the labor force suggests that the number may be very large indeed.<sup>27</sup>

## **Wages**

Wages rates have collapsed in Armenia, and the average wage is, according to experts, half of the minimum subsistence level.<sup>28</sup> The collapse of wages in Armenia has been another consequence of the blockade and the transition to a market-based economy. In an effort to avoid firing workers at the start of the transition, firms cut labor hours severely and give minimal partial compensation. As a result, many laborers maintain multiple jobs to earn a living wage. From 1992 to 1994, this became even more difficult, as the price level rose eleven times, while real incomes drastically declined.<sup>29</sup>

In June, 1998, the average salary was US\$34 per month, rising from only \$7 a month in 1994; such a low wage does not ensure even minimal living conditions.<sup>30</sup> The situation of wages reflects the egalitarian pay principle of the Soviet era in which women often hold redundant jobs. With relatively high labor turnover rate, declining productivity, and declining real income, the state sector is collapsing, and the private sector not growing quickly enough to absorb the displaced workers.<sup>31</sup> In fact, the surplus of state sector labor and insufficiency of budget resources drove state sector wages down to about \$2 per month in 1994, less than half of the national average.<sup>32</sup> Only slight improvements were realized in 1995, as a government decree lifted the minimum wage to \$10 per month.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, rising price levels absorbed much of this increase, and wages – even assuming full-time employment – hardly provided for individual subsistence.

Gender-related wage data are not available for Armenia. However, 1998 data shows that wages vary by sector: employees in industry exceeded the national average by 43 percent, while in education,

<sup>24</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Armenian Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1998*, 16.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report Armenia 1998*, <http://www.undp.org/hdro/nhdr.htm>, 4.4.

<sup>27</sup> Sahakian, “Entrepreneurship and Joint Ventures,” 48.

<sup>28</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report Armenia 1998*, <http://www.undp.org/hdro/nhdr.htm>, 5.1.

<sup>29</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Armenian Economic Trade Policies and Practices*, 2.

<sup>30</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report Armenia 1998*, <http://www.undp.org/hdro/nhdr.htm>, 4.4; Hranush Hagopian, “Gaining Power and Influence: Women and Politics in Armenia,” in Merguerian and Jafferian, *Armenian Women in a Changing World*, 45.

<sup>31</sup> World Bank, *The Armenian Labor Market in Transition*, 5.

<sup>32</sup> Sahakian, “Entrepreneurship and Joint Ventures,” 48.

<sup>33</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Armenian Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1998*, 14.

health, and culture sectors wages averaged only 50-55 percent of the national average.<sup>34</sup> This suggests that sectors with a preponderance of women workers are doing substantially worse than sectors in which men predominate (Table 7.3).

**Table 7.3. Labor Force By Sector and Gender,  
Percent Of Male Or Female Labor Force**

	Male		Female	
	1980	1990	1980	1990
<b>Agriculture</b>	21	24	21	11
<b>Industry</b>	48	47	38	39
<b>Services</b>	31	29	41	51
<b>Administrators and Managers</b>	--	--	--	--
<b>Professional and technical workers</b>	--	--	--	--

*Note:* -- indicates data are not available.

*Sources:* For employment by sector, World Bank Gender Stats database (latest available data are for 1990). For managerial/professional workers, UNDP, Human Development Indicators, 1999.

Further indications may be drawn from the “real GDP per capita” by male and female for Armenia, calculated in the UNDP *Human Development Report*. These figures are based estimates of the ratio of the average female wage to male wage and the percentage shares of women and men in the economically active population. While not reflecting actual wages or accumulated wealth, the GDP per capita by gender provides an approximation of the relative economic situation of men and women. As Table 7.4 shows, female per capita GDP is calculated at about 68 percent of male per capita, in parity purchasing power.

**Table 7.4. Per Capita GDP**

Per Capita GDP (1987 US\$)			Female real GDP per capita (1997 PPP\$)	Male real GDP per capita (1997 PPP\$)
1985	1990	1997	1997	1997
890	848	--	1,928	2,816

*Note:* -- indicates data are not available.

*Source:* UNDP, Human Development Indicators, 1999.

### ***The Informal Economy***

No figures were available that estimate the proportion of the informal economy in the economy at large. However, the desperate economic straits of the population have led people to adopt multiple and varied economic strategies for subsistence, as people move from employment, self-employment and unemployment. The informal economy – if defined as nonregistered employment and nonregistered

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

enterprises, on which taxes are not paid – has clearly expanded dramatically. A survey of 2,500 small enterprises in November 1997 showed that nearly 70 percent of entrepreneurs were hiding up to half their income from taxation. Further, the workforce has adopted secondary employment – that is, casual and temporary employment that supplements income and, as well, may ease the transition to new forms of employment. As little as 3 percent of this may be registered in the tax records.<sup>35</sup> However, such data is not reported by gender. While the high levels of labor market participation by women suggest the obvious conclusion that substantial informal employment is taken on by women, no reliable information on the current dimensions of the situation were available.

Armenian women comprise the majority of individuals working in what has become known as the bazaar economy, as in a number of other former Soviet republics.<sup>36</sup> After the fall of communism, women took to the streets in what has become for many the business of survival: selling handcrafts, produce and other food products. The bazaar economy provides subsistence to the population of formally unemployed women. However, women are forced to forgo the many privileges accompanying work in the formal sector. They forfeit pension plans, healthcare, and childcare, but even more constraining, they do not develop any of the modern sector skills needed to participate in Armenian business in the future. Moreover, once they enter the informal sector, women effectively close the door to formal sector employment, because they lack the tools to compete for such work.

### ***Privatization***

Armenia assumed a surprisingly forward approach toward privatization, considering the unusual crises that have faced it over the last decade. By 1992, over 80 percent of land had been privatized. Three years later the same was true of most dwellings. To date, over 75 percent of medium- and large-scale industries and more than 85 percent of small businesses have been transferred from the public to the private sector.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, although the dismantling of the Soviet state and collective farm system saw an initial rise of unemployment in agriculture, the majority of workers (over 38,000) were later assimilated into private sector farming.<sup>38</sup> It is estimated that 75 percent of the GDP is now generated by private enterprise.<sup>39</sup>

The Armenian government has made some effort to acknowledge the rights of women in the marketplace, although many would criticize what seems to be purely a nominal recognition in international treaties calling for greater gender equality. The turmoil resulting from natural and manmade disasters, coupled with the difficulties of the post-Communist transition have led the government to adopt a utilitarian reform path. It has accordingly emphasized broad economic policy at the expense of many related issues including gender equality and increased female participation in the economy. However, understanding the need for a highly skilled workforce to meet the demands of privatization and market economics, the Armenian Ministry of the Economy established several programs helping to

<sup>35</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report Armenia 1998*, <http://www.undp.org/hdro/nhdr.htm>, Box 4.3.

<sup>36</sup> Sahakian, "Entrepreneurship and Joint Ventures," 48.

<sup>37</sup> World Bank Country Brief, 2.

<sup>38</sup> World Bank, *The Armenian Labor Market in Transition*, 16.

<sup>39</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report Armenia 1998*, <http://www.undp.org/hdro/nhdr.htm>, 4.2.



re-educate and re-train many specialists from different branches of the economy. Of the applicant pool, 40 percent of those selected into the program are women.<sup>40</sup> The Ministry's program represents an important initial step in alleviating the incongruity between the government's official stance on gender equality and actual practice.

### ***Women in Managerial Positions and in Private Business***

Women have not yet advanced into managerial positions in substantial numbers. The transition has also involved some very difficult socioeconomic consequences that are not evident from these official statistics. Similar to most former Soviet republics, women face a double-edged sword in Armenia as the safety net, which once employed them and permitted them to be employed, dissolves. While there is little collected statistical data on the fate of Armenian women in the transitional period, limited data on the transferal of women into lower paid, less prestigious, and budget-based work suggests that privatization has had a differential impact. As noted above, women comprise the majority of workers in education, health, and service jobs while remaining a distinct minority in the higher-paid industrial sector. This phenomenon follows from a legacy of Soviet gender segregation.

Workforce opportunities in Armenia rest on the laws and practices adopted by the government and the business community. In terms of gender equity, this has meant that the Armenian government recognizes women and men to enjoy the same rights and equality before the law. Yet data suggest that women, whether because of traditional maternal ideals or because of decreased opportunity, are not participating equally in business. Under Article 3 of the Family and Marriage Code, husband and wife possess equivalent personal and property rights. Women also have the right to conclude contracts and administer property.<sup>41</sup> However, women remain a minority of citizens acquiring credit and loans to start-up or maintain businesses. Both state and commercial banks claim to approach loan requests by men and women on equal terms. In practice a disproportionate number of the transactions take place in men's names. According to a United Nations report on the status of the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the disparity between men and women in this field is not due to discriminatory practices by the banks. Rather, women's under-representation in credit acquisition exists, because they are not participating in the creation of new businesses.<sup>42</sup>

### **Legislation for Gender Equality**

The Declaration of Armenian Women's Rights asserts that men and women have equal rights to choose a career and underscores that Armenia has adopted the United Nations Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).<sup>43</sup> The government has also created the 1992 Law on Employment, prohibiting discrimination in the workforce. A variety of factors stand between official ideals and common practice. One problem has been the lack of budget resources to

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<sup>40</sup> Sahakian, "Entrepreneurship and Joint Ventures," 52.

<sup>41</sup> United Nations, *CEDAW Initial Country Report: Armenia*, [gopher://gopher.un.org:70/00/ga/cedaw/17/country/Armenia](http://gopher://gopher.un.org:70/00/ga/cedaw/17/country/Armenia), 21.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Sona Zeitlian, "Nationalism and Development of the Armenian Women's Rights Movement," 86.

disseminate, or even translate, these conventions and agreements. Also, the energy crisis and general lack of televisions, radios, or printed material in rural areas prevent the government from spreading such information nationwide.

### *Findings*

#### **Have there been changes in labor force participation by women and men during the transition?**

Overall participation levels (of working age adults) decreased from 46 percent to 36 percent. Male and female participation as a percentage of the labor force did not change (52 percent male and 48 percent female).

**Has unemployment increased, whether official or hidden, and is there a gender dimension to unemployment?** Reliable data are not available about the true size of unemployment. This is an area for future research.

**Is there evidence for wage gap trends and wage differentials?** Gender-related wage data are not available; however, the average wage has fallen to half of the minimum subsistence level.

**How has the growth of the informal economy reflected gender differentiation?** No data on the size of the informal economy in Armenia exist.

#### **What is the impact of privatization of state enterprises on women's and men's employment?**

About 75 percent of GDP is generated by private enterprise, but no data are available on the impact on employment.

**What role do women play in new managerial positions or business formation in the growing private sector?** Few data are available.

### *Opportunities for Future Research*

**Labor market information is essentially nonexistent in Armenia.** Sex-disaggregated information is unavailable on such basic issues as wages, unemployment rates, labor market composition, and on changing characteristics of workers and the self-employed.

**Little information is available on the advancement of women into business, both as high-level managers of enterprises as well as entrepreneurs.** Research needs to be conducted on this aspect of the transition.

**The role of the informal economy in contributing to men's and women's relative economic position remains largely undocumented.**

**Little research has been done on the changing nature of work for men and women.**

**The nature of impact on women of the contraction of jobs in the economy is still unclear.**

## THE DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION

The purpose of this section is to discuss the differential experience of Armenian men and women in the political sphere since the transition to democracy. The primary questions to be answered are:

1. Is there differential participation by women and men in the public sphere?
  - a) What is the role of women in party politics?
  - b) What is the representation of women in elected government positions, locally and nationally?
  - c) What is the representation of women in appointed governmental positions?
2. How is gender reflected in the development of civil society, especially NGOs?
  - a) What is the role of women in different types of NGOs?
  - b) Have NGOs developed that advocate for gender issues?
3. How has the rule of law been institutionalized and what impact is there on gender?
  - a) Have there been *de jure* legal reforms with an impact on gender?
  - b) Do men and women have equal legal rights, *de jure* and *de facto*? (Is there sufficient information to be able to contrast between *de jure* and *de facto*?)
  - c) Have there been reforms related to family law: inheritance, ownership, marriage, and divorce that impact on gender?

These questions are addressed below beginning with a brief discussion of how men and women participated in politics and civil society during the Soviet era and how the patterns of that participation has changed since independence and how they are now affected by rule of law.

### *Political Activity in the Pre-Soviet and Soviet Periods*

Geographic location between the great empires of Europe and Asia has defined the course of Armenian history in all of its manifestations, including gender relations. Turkish rule under the Ottoman Empire allowed Armenian men exclusive privileges such as access to higher education and the right to marry multiple wives. However, as early as the late 1800s, an Armenian women's rights movement began to challenge existing practices. Upper and middle class women from the nationalist intelligentsia wrote articles and treatises demanding more rights for women in Turkish society. Their demands included equality with men, the right to work, the discontinuation of unfair marriage practices like polygyny and dowery payment, and the right to higher education.<sup>44</sup>

The movement for women's rights received a greater outlet in the public sphere during the last years of the nineteenth century. Following a massacre of Armenians in 1895, Armenian nationalism intensified its resistance to Turkish oppression. Although men dominated the nationalist movement, women played a big role in mobilizing peasants and organizing coordinated action throughout Armenia. Like female revolutionaries in Russia during the same period, Armenian women participated in a variety of activities, from propaganda campaigns to terrorism and open conflict.<sup>45</sup> They also launched economic

<sup>44</sup> Zeitlian, "Nationalism and the Development of the Armenian Women's Rights Movement," 86.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 89.

development initiatives to help women become self-sufficient along with initiatives that supported equal rights for all citizens.<sup>46</sup>

The dissolution of the Ottoman Empire in World War I allowed for creation of the first independent Republic of Armenia, which lasted from 1918 to 1920. During this brief period of independence, both men and women had equal suffrage, and women comprised eight percent of the parliament.<sup>47</sup> In 1920, however, the Russian Bolsheviks conquered Armenia and transformed it into the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic.

The Bolsheviks promised equality of the sexes, but it never fully materialized.<sup>48</sup> Women rarely occupied top posts in the Armenian government or in the Communist Party. As in other republics, women became the protectors of indigenous culture and traditions that had moved from the public sphere to the private sphere.<sup>49</sup>

### ***Political Activity since Independence***

According to some studies, Armenian women tend to be politically more conservative than men. When asked whether the idea of being a woman and the idea of being a political leader were compatible, researchers found that half the population said no. And more women (40%) than men (34%) were adamantly opposed to women being leaders.<sup>50</sup> Further, a poll conducted in the early 1990s by the Department of Sociology at Yerevan State University revealed that 54 percent of men and 40 percent of women believe men and women were created unequal and therefore cannot be equal in society. However, another 37 percent of men and 43 percent of women believe that although the sexes are inherently unequal, society must create equality.<sup>51</sup> The prevalence of these attitudes may explain why women's participation in politics has decreased at all levels.

A large number of Armenians still belong to political parties, but there is a significant difference between the sexes in political activity. A 1994 poll found that 42 percent of women belong to political parties, but that only 18 percent of women are politically active, compared to 35.5 percent of men.<sup>52</sup> Among those few female activists, one motivating factor for women to get involved in politics seems to be the same today as it was under the Turks, namely national pride.<sup>53</sup>

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**Table 7.5. Political Positions Held by Men and Women in Armenia**

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>47</sup> Hranush Hagopian, "Armenian Women in a Changing World," in B. Merguerian and D. Jafferian (eds), *Armenian Women in a Changing World* (Boston, Armenian International Women's Association, 1995), 42.

<sup>48</sup> Zeitlian, "Nationalism and the Development of the Armenian Women's Rights Movement," 90.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>50</sup> Harutunian, "The Armenian Women and Social/Political Innovations," 197, 196.

<sup>51</sup> Harutunian, "The Armenian Women and Social/Political Innovations," 195.

<sup>52</sup> Hagopian, "Armenian Women in a Changing World," 43.

<sup>53</sup> Armine Ishkanian, *Women at the Crossroads: Armenian Women in Public Life in the Post-Soviet Period*, paper presented at April 15, 1998 Columbia Conference, 4.

Position	Total Number	Held by Women		Held by Men	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Members of Parliament	131	4	3.1 %	127	96.9 %
Cabinet Ministers	22	0	0.0 %	22	100.0 %
Pres. Admin. Employees	282*	119	42.2 %	163	57.8 %
Regional Administrators	NA				
Members of Judiciary	NA				
High Court	9	1	11.1 %	8	88.9 %
Appeals Courts	NA				
Local Courts	136	23	16.9 %	113	83.1 %
Political Party Leaders	NA				

Notes: Data are from 2000 unless otherwise noted.

\* Data are from 1995.

Sources: Inter Parliamentary Union website, <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>; Women in Governments website, <http://hjem.get2net.dk/Womeningovernments/>; CIA Chiefs of State and Cabinet Members web page, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/chiefs/index.html>; Embassy of Armenia website, <http://www.armeniaemb.org/geninfo/constitution.htm#CHAPTER6>; Hagopian, "Armenian Women in a Changing World;" USAID/Armenia.

### The Legislative Branch

Since the start of the post-Communist transition, the greatest change to patterns of gender participation in Armenian governance has taken place in the legislative branch. In 1985, women held 55.3 percent of seats (121 of 219) in the Armenian Supreme Soviet. That number plummeted with the elimination of quotas in 1991, when women won only eight of 190 seats (4.2%).<sup>54</sup> In each successive election, they have won fewer and fewer seats as a percentage of the total. In the first post-independence parliamentary elections in 1995, women won only nine of 248 seats (3.6%).<sup>55</sup> They now comprise only 3.1 percent (four of 131 members) of parliament. Obviously this contingent is too small to create a parliamentary coalition working on women's issues.

### The Executive Branch

The executive branch has witnessed a different pattern of gender participation. Prior to independence, only one woman ever reached the top levels of Armenian government, Deputy Premier Minister Rema Svetlova, who was vice-chairman of the Armenian Supreme Soviet from 1975 to 1989. Since independence, four more women have occupied top-level appointed positions: Nina Asmayan, Minister of Trade (1991-1992); Karine Kanielyan, Minister of Social Protection (1991-1993); Nina Ogonesoca, Deputy Minister of Finance (1993-1995); and Hasmik Petrosyan, presidential spokesperson (1999-present).<sup>56</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 2-3.

<sup>55</sup> Hagopian, "Armenian Women in a Changing World," 41.

<sup>56</sup> Women in Governments website, <http://www.hjem.get2net.dk/Womeningovernments/Armenia.htm>

Women have also been unsuccessful in climbing the political ladder in civil service positions. As of 1995, of the 282 employees in Armenian government, 119 were women, but only four headed offices and one was in the diplomatic service.<sup>57</sup> So while women comprised 42 percent of staff, only 4 percent of them had obtained upper management positions. These proportions may have changed, as the Armenian government now employs over 300 people.

### **The Judicial Branch**

The Armenian judiciary is effectively created by and responsible to the nation's Judicial Council. Upon the recommendation of the Minister of Justice and the Prosecutor General, respectively, the Council drafts and submits an annual list of judges and prosecutors for presidential approval. It reviews the candidates for Deputy Prosecutor and proposes candidates for the presidency of each level of the courts. The Council also takes disciplinary action against judges and makes recommendations regarding the removal of a judge from office and any related administrative or criminal proceedings.

The President is supposed to guarantee the independence of the judiciary and presides over the Judicial Council. The Minister of Justice and the Prosecutor General are vice presidents of the Council. The Council includes fourteen members appointed by the President for a period of five years, including two legal scholars, nine judges and three prosecutors. Three judges are appointed from each level of courts, the general courts, the courts of review and the court of appeals. The general assembly of judges submits three candidates by secret ballot for each seat allocated to judges. The Prosecutor General submits the names of candidates for the prosecutors' seats in the Council.

The Constitutional Court is the highest court in Armenia's judiciary. Constitutional Court justices are appointed for life. A judge may hold office until the age of 65, but a member of the Constitutional Court may do so until the age of 70. Justices are prohibited by the Constitution from holding any other public office or paid occupation, except scientific, educational and creative work. They are also prohibited from joining political parties or engaging in political activity. The Constitutional Court is composed of nine members, five appointed by the National Assembly and four by the President.<sup>58</sup> Currently, there is one woman in the Constitutional Court, who is also the president of the judges' association. According to USAID/Armenia, there are 126 judges in the lower courts, 23 of whom are women.

### ***Civil Society since Independence***

There are over 1,000 NGOs in Armenia. Most are not yet well developed, but the NGO Training and Resource Center, established by Armenian Assembly of America, provides resources, Internet access, training and other services to assist in their development. Currently, about 30 NGOs are devoted to women's issues.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Hagopian, "Armenian Women in a Changing World," 43.

<sup>58</sup> Embassy of Armenia website, <http://www.armeniaemb.org/geninfo/constitution.htm#CHAPTER6>.

<sup>59</sup> Ishkanian, *Women at the Crossroads*, 1.

For example, the All-Armenian Women's Union has branches in each province and coordinates events to promote better health practices, education, and culture.<sup>60</sup> The Association of Women with University Education held an international conference in 1998 entitled *Woman and Society, Gender Equality in the Perspective of Democratic Developments*. It followed that up with a book in Armenian, *Woman and Society*, which includes chapters on social transformation and value orientations in a transitional society, gender equality in the perspective of democratic development, health and family in transition, and women's participation in the political sphere.

Another group, the Women's Rights Center, has provided training for women's groups from Yerevan, Gyumri, and Gavar on sexual violence and reproductive rights. The Center has published and disseminated brochures and booklets on similar topics in Armenian, Russian and English. It has also established a hotline to provide free legal, psychological and medical assistance to victims.

At the local level, the Republic of Armenia Maternity Fund has organized meetings with women from 46 Yerevan neighborhoods to raise their awareness of civil society and democracy. As a result, several community assistance groups have formed to distribute information to more women within each neighborhood.

NGOs in Armenia are attempting to address the most pressing issues facing both men and women: health, refugee relief, and the spread of democracy. Women's issues are better represented in the work of NGOs, probably because it is currently the main outlet for women's political initiatives. Working through NGOs has allowed women to continue to participate in the political sphere, but via a non-threatening avenue. They can be viewed as protectors of nation, family and tradition in this role.<sup>61</sup>

### ***Rule of Law***

Officially, women and men enjoy equal rights under the Constitution of Armenia. According to Article 15, "Citizens, regardless of national origin, race, sex, language, creed, political or other persuasion, social origin, wealth or other status, are entitled to all the rights and freedoms, and subject to the duties determined by the Constitution and the laws."<sup>62</sup> Articles 22 through 27 protect the rights of all citizens to freedom of movement, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, and the right to vote. Moreover, most Armenians seem to regard these rights as firmly set in practice. In a recent survey, for instance, 61 percent of respondents thought it would be impermissible to cancel scheduled elections, while 69 percent considered it impermissible to ban meetings, demonstrations or opposition political parties.<sup>63</sup>

A variety of factors stand between official ideals of equality and common practice. One problem has been the lack of budget resources to disseminate, or even translate, these conventions and agreements.

<sup>60</sup> Ishkanian, *Women at the Crossroads*, 5.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>62</sup> Embassy of Armenia website, <http://www.armeniaemb.org/geninfo/constitution.htm#CHAPTER2>.

<sup>63</sup> USIA, *The People Have Spoken: Global Views of Democracy, Vol. II* (Washington, DC: USIA Office of Research and Media Reaction, 1998), 31.



Despite official efforts toward gender equality, cultural norms continue to assign Armenian women to duties at home, discourage their assuming active leadership roles.<sup>64</sup>

### **Family Law**

The first Armenian family law was written centuries ago by Mekhitar Gosh, a monk, and stated that men and women had equal rights and were equally responsible for the family. The preservation of the family was of utmost concern and so divorce was not allowed.<sup>65</sup> Later, under Ottoman rule, polygyny became permissible and women had no legal recourse against spousal abuse.<sup>66</sup> Current law, by contrast, is based on the Soviet Family Code, which again treats spouses equally. No data exist to illustrate the *de facto* practice of family law vis-à-vis legal rights. A survey conducted in the mid-1990s, however, shows that many married couples did not perceive themselves as equals in spite of their legal equality. Half of Armenian men thought of themselves as “lord of the manor,” but only 19 percent of women viewed men as such. Most women (54%) thought men and women are equal in the household, as did 43 percent of men. Indeed, more than a quarter of women (26%) saw themselves as the dominant spouse in the home, while only 7 percent of men saw them as such.<sup>67</sup> Clearly, the perception of gender equity in Armenia differs rather notably from legal aspirations.

### **Labor Laws**

Official codes regarding women’s workforce participation often provide a misleading picture of actual labor circumstances. The government created the 1992 Law on Employment, prohibiting discrimination in the workforce.<sup>68</sup>

The labor codes emphasize the protected status that limits women’s opportunities on the job. The 1992 Employment Law prohibits female work in hazardous jobs, in heavy manual labor, and in nighttime labor. It further bars women with children under the age of two from taking business trips, from working overtime, and from working on holidays. At the same time, maternity leaves are guaranteed for 140 days, for one year at partial pay, with the right to a further unpaid year. Firms are also forbidden to dismiss pregnant women or mothers with children less than 18 months old.<sup>69</sup>

### **Findings**

**Is there differential participation by women and men in the public sphere?** Because of the elimination of quotas, women in Armenia have experienced losses in their access to power through government since independence. Women have continually lost seats in parliament, appointed positions

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<sup>64</sup> United Nations, *CEDAW Initial Country Report: Armenia*, [gopher://gopher.un.org:70/00/ga/cedaw/17/country/Armenia](http://gopher://gopher.un.org:70/00/ga/cedaw/17/country/Armenia), 8.

<sup>65</sup> Zeitlian, “Nationalism and the Development of the Armenian Women’s Rights Movement,” 82.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>67</sup> Harutunian, “The Armenian Women and Social/Political Innovations: Opportunities and Reality,” 195.

<sup>68</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Armenian Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1998*, 16.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 11-12.

in the national government and elected positions in local governments. Men have experienced an increase in political influence since independence.

**How is gender reflected in the development of civil society, especially NGOs?** Women have used the NGO sector as an alternative outlet for their political energies. This is the only country for which data confirm that the sector is feminized.

**How has the rule of law been institutionalized and what impact is there on gender?** The sexes are treated equally under the law and both have gained with new rights and freedoms, but little information is available on the actual exercise of them.

### *Opportunities for Future Research*

**More information on the composition of the judiciary** would be useful to confirm the trend that women are dropping out of the public sphere.

**Research that measures the impact of NGOs and their usefulness as a political outlet** for women would also help complete the picture of the public sphere and who has access to it in Armenia.

**More information on the *de facto* exercise of rights and freedoms** is needed to determine to what extent rule of law has impacted the lives of men and women.

## THE SOCIAL TRANSITION

This section reports findings from major sources regarding the effects of the transition in Armenia on social benefits, poverty, pension reform, health, and education and explores these primary questions:

1. With the shredding of the social safety net, how have women versus men fared in access to / support from social programs?
2. Do data show women's poverty rates to be greater than men's?
3. What are the health-related impacts of the transition?
4. What differential impacts has pension reform had on men's and women's access to benefits?
5. What are salient changes in the state-funded education system since 1989/91?

This chapter reviews World Bank, UNDP, UNICEF, and other sources, and major findings are presented in the five sections that follow: Social Safety Net, Poverty, Pension Reform, Health Reform, and Education.

Armenia's living standards since the transition have eroded due to the steep decline in GDP during the early reform period, and the destruction of 40 percent of Armenia's industrial capacity in the earthquake of 1988 (these changes are discussed in detail in the Economic Transition section of this chapter).<sup>70</sup> However, government reforms have begun to take hold, and living standards have gradually begun to improve in Armenia. While poverty remains a serious problem, improvements have included an increase in wages, electricity in 99 percent of homes, and running water in 88 percent.<sup>71</sup>

### *Social Safety Net*

Although Armenia has continued providing pensions, sickness and maternity assistance, family allowances, and unemployment throughout the transition, benefits have periodically been cut due to budget shortfalls. A number of factors have been responsible for this. The earthquake of 1988 left approximately 800,000 Armenians (24 percent of the population) still homeless in 1991.<sup>72</sup> According to USAID/Armenia, approximately 31,000 households were living in temporary housing (approximately 26,000 of these as a result of the earthquake) in early 2000. Large portions of the nation's social benefit expenditures went to earthquake victims in the years following 1988. The war in Nagorno-Karabakh then sent numerous refugees flooding into the country, creating a need for humanitarian and other assistance. Add to this the decline in GDP in the first four years of the transition and little was left to fund existing benefit programs.

Table 7.6 lists Armenia's current social safety net programs and points out major gender differences in the programs.

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<sup>70</sup> Jeanine Braithwaite, *Armenia: A Poverty Profile*, PSP Discussion Paper Series (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1995), 19.

<sup>71</sup> World Bank, *Improving Social Assistance in Armenia*, Report No. 19385-AM, <http://www-wds.worldbank.org>, 5.

<sup>72</sup> Library of Congress, *Armenia Country Handbook* (<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/amtoc.html#am0049>).

Table 7.6. Social Safety Net Program Eligibility and Benefits in Armenia

Program	Value		Eligibility	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
<b>Universal Benefits</b>				
Family Allowances	450-650 dram per month, depending on number of children. Birth grant of 3,000 dram. 700 dram supplement for unwed or single mother.	450-650 dram per month, depending on number of children. Birth grant of 3,000 dram.	Families with children.	Same.
Health Benefits	Medical care.	Same.	All residents.	Same.
<b>Social Insurance</b>				
Pension, Old-age	100% of base pension (2,860 as of April 1, 1999) plus a bonus of 35 dram per year for insured 15 years of less and 60 dram per year for insured 16 years or more. Social pension available for disabled or single pensioners with limited means.	Same.	Age 57 and 25 years of covered employment; or age 52 and 20 years covered employment in arduous or hazardous work; or age 47 and 15 years covered employment in very arduous and hazardous work. Covered employment includes higher education, military service, carding for disabled persons or children under age 3, and periods receiving unemployment.	Age 62 and 25 years of covered employment; or age 57 and 20 years covered employment in arduous or hazardous work; or age 52 and 15 years covered employment in very arduous and hazardous work. Covered employment includes higher education, military service, carding for disabled persons or children under age 3, and periods receiving unemployment.
Pension, Disability	80-120% of base pension plus a bonus pension for each year of employment.	Same.	5 years of covered employment and partial to total disability.	
Pension, Survivorship	100-120% of base	Same.	Insured had up to 15	Same.

Program	Value		Eligibility	
	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>
	pension plus 50% of bonus pension per year of insurance of the deceased.		years covered employment, payable to surviving children.	
Maternity	<i>100% of earnings for 70 days before and 70 days after confinement. 2,340 dram monthly until child is 2.</i>	None.	<i>All employees, self-employed, collective farmers, scientists, artists. No minimum qualifying period.</i>	None.
Sickness (cash benefits)	50-100% of earnings, depending on length of employment. Payable in case of illness or to care for sick child.	Same.	All employees, self-employed, collective farmers, scientists, artists. No minimum qualifying period.	Same.
Unemployment	60-100% of basic benefit (3,900 dram per month) depending on reason for unemployment.	Same.	Dismissed or resigned employment. Minimum of 12 weeks covered employment in previous 12 month period. Seeking to rejoin labor force after lengthy period of interruption or first-time job seeker.	Same.
Work Injury	100% of average monthly earnings.	Same.	No minimum qualifying period.	Same.
<b><i>Social Assistance</i></b>				
Family Allowances, low-income supplement	10% of minimum wage per month per child; maximum of 60% of minimum wage.	Same.	Urban families with children, income lower than 60% of minimum wage.	Same.

*Notes:* The data in this table were current as of January 1, 1999 (the latest version of the Social Security Administration's report). Italicized text indicates a gender difference in eligibility or benefits.

*Source:* U.S. Social Security Administration, *Social Security Programs Throughout the World – 1999*, 14-16.

As shown in the table, women receive preferential treatment in benefits, eligibility, or both in three of the 10 social benefit programs in Armenia. A unique feature of Armenia's social safety net is that benefit amounts for retirement pensions and unemployment benefits are fixed, not based on a percentage of earnings. Ordinarily, pension schemes based on earnings result in lower benefits for women, as their wages tend to lag behind those of men. Retirement benefits in Armenia include a base pension which is the same for all recipients, plus a bonus pension based on years of work. In April, 1999, this base pension was 2,860 dram – a little more than \$5. Unemployment benefits are also fixed at 3,900 dram per month (about \$8) if the worker was laid off involuntarily (and less if the worker was fired or resigned).

Effectively targeting social benefits remains a problem in Armenia. The new family allowances program, begun in January 1999, replaces child allowances and some cash transfers and is the first proxy means-testing scheme to be implemented in the Europe and Eurasia region. Because wage income is a poor indicator of true income, the proxy test includes factors such as housing quality, location, and household size to determine eligibility for benefits.<sup>73</sup>

### ***Poverty and Gender***

Poverty in Armenia is severe. More than half (54.7 percent) of the population lives below the official poverty line. Table 7.7 presents the available data on poverty in Armenia, and Boxes 7.1 and 7.2 discuss some of the consequences and conditions of poverty.

Poverty does not appear to be significantly differentiated by gender with one exception: single elderly pensioners. Female single elderly pensioners are twice as likely as single male pensioners to be poor.<sup>74</sup> Women may be no more poor than men in Armenia because marriage and family ties help equalize income. Traditionally, extended families provide food, cash, and other assistance to family members.

#### **Box 7.1. The Consequences of Poverty in Armenia**

Families have coped with poverty by reducing consumption, living on savings, selling their assets, and finding other sources of household income. Specifically, families have limited meat and milk consumption in their diets, relying more heavily on grains and potatoes. Some have already depleted their savings, and have taken to selling their jewelry, their daughters' dowries, their cars, and cattle. Others have relied on remittances from relatives living abroad. Consequences have included everything from an increase in vitamin-deficiency sicknesses to unemployment (due to the high costs of transportation to work.) Moreover, most families can no longer afford to provide traditional hospitality to visitors, creating a decline in Armenia's social relations.

Nora Dudwick, *A Qualitative Assessment of the Living Standards of the Armenia Population, October 1994-March 1995*, Armenia Poverty Assessment Working Paper No. 1 (Washington: World Bank, 1995), pages unnumbered.

<sup>73</sup> World Bank, *Improving Social Assistance in Armenia*, 49.

<sup>74</sup> World Bank, *Improving Social Assistance in Armenia*, Annex 1, 7.

**Table 7.7. Poverty Rates by Gender in Armenia**

	Poor	Very Poor
<b>Overall</b>	54.7	27.7
<b>Urban</b>	58.8	29.6
<b>Rural</b>	48.0	24.4
<b>Male</b>	27.0	--
<b>Female</b>	27.1	--

Notes: -- indicates data are not available.

Source: World Bank, *Improving Social Assistance in Armenia*, Report No. 19385-AM, <http://www-wds.worldbank.org>), Annex 1, p. 7.

### Other Correlates of Poverty

One aspect of poverty in Armenia is that while unemployment is correlated with poverty, most poor households are working poor. Although average wages have increased, they are still too low to support a family.<sup>75</sup> This is especially true of Armenia's large families. Large households with children, disabled pensioners, and invalids to support are more likely to be poor than other households.<sup>76</sup> Most of the employed continue to work for state-owned firms, and these, because of the need for restructuring, are unable to pay higher wages. Because wages are inadequate, Armenian families rely on unofficial, non-wage income that accounted for as much as 70 percent of household income in 1996. This non-wage income included private remittances from relatives abroad and humanitarian aid.<sup>77</sup>

#### Box 7.2. Conditions of the Poor

Poor households in Armenia are "unable to meet their most basic needs," as evidenced by:

- Spells of malnutrition, especially of seasonal hunger
- Problems paying electricity bills and heating homes
- Living in poorly maintained and overcrowded housing
- Having less access to quality secondary education and to higher education
- Having less access to health services and little public health awareness

World Bank, *Improving Social Assistance in Armenia*, Report No. 19385-AM, <http://www-wds.worldbank.org>, 16.

### Pension Reform

Armenia's pension reforms to date have been limited. In 1995, the Law on Pension Reform set forth a gradual increase in the retirement age to 63 for women and 65 for men and changed the benefits formula from earnings-based to length of work tenure (readers should note that by January 1999, according to the U.S. Social Security Administration, retirement ages had not yet been raised to these levels. See

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 15.

Table 7.6). The government also plans to implement a three-pillar system on the World Bank pension reform model, and is currently working to establish a series of identification numbers and individual accounts. Meanwhile, TACIS is creating a database of existing pensioner information.<sup>78</sup>

The need to complete these reforms is great. Armenia's pension system is pay-as-you-go, meaning that current workers pay taxes that fund the benefits for current retirees. However, in 1997, only 570,000 workers contributed to the system because of problems with tax collection on wages.<sup>79</sup> That same year, 600,000 persons received retirement pensions, though only 480,000 were over age 60.<sup>80</sup> Moreover, the value of pensions is so low that, according to the World Bank, pensioners living on only their pensions could not survive.<sup>81</sup>

Once implemented, the three-pillar system will add to the pay-as-you-go system a mandatory individual retirement account system, and a voluntary system for additional contributions by individuals. The effects of implementation of the three pillar system on gender are similar in all E&E countries, and these effects are described in detail in Chapter 5.

### **Health Reform**

The information coming out of Armenia on the nation's health has been inconsistent. UNDP data from 1997 on basic health indicators show an infant mortality rate of 25 (per 1000 live births) and overall life expectancy at birth of 70.5 years, both of which reflect a deterioration since 1970.<sup>82</sup> However, 1997 MONEE data are more positive, showing average life expectancy among men and women of 73.8 years and an infant mortality rate of 15.4. Table 7.8 presents data on basic health indicators for Armenia, and these and other findings are discussed below.

#### **Life Expectancy**

Unlike most countries in the region, life expectancy has increased for both men and women since 1989, according to MONEE data. Female life expectancy at birth increased by more than three years, to 77.3 in 1997, and male life expectancy increased by over a year, to 70.3.<sup>83</sup> The proportion of the population aged 65 or over is 7.9 percent.<sup>84</sup>

#### **Maternal Mortality**

<sup>78</sup> Babken Babajanian, *Social Protection in Armenia* (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1998), 14.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>80</sup> World Bank, *Improving Social Assistance in Armenia*, Report No. 19385-AM, <http://www-wds.worldbank.org>, 30.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>82</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999* (Oxford University Press, 1999), 169.

<sup>83</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 123-124.

<sup>84</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, 198.



Maternal mortality has fluctuated, probably due to a relatively small number of maternal deaths per year. The 1997 level was 38.7 (per 100,000 live births). The lowest level was registered in 1992, 14.2; the highest was 40.1, in 1990.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 119.

**Table 7.8. Demographic and Health Indicators for Armenia<sup>86</sup>**

Maternal mortality (per 100,000 live births) <sup>87</sup>	<b>1990</b>		<b>1997</b>	
	40.1		38.7	
Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births) <sup>88</sup>	25			
Abortion rate (per 100 live births) <sup>89</sup>	<b>1990</b>		<b>1997</b>	
	31.6		48.8	
Contraceptive prevalence (RHS 1998)	57%			
Total fertility rate (births per woman) <sup>90</sup>	1.7			
STD incidence (new cases of syphilis/gonorrhea per 100,000 population) <sup>91</sup>	<b>1990</b>		<b>1997</b>	
	33		44	
Life expectancy at birth <sup>92</sup>	<b>Female</b>		<b>Male</b>	
	<b>1990</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1997</b>
	75.2	77.3	68.4	70.3
Percent of population 65 and older in 1997 <sup>93</sup>	7.9			

Sources: As indicated in the footnotes.

### Abortion

The abortion rate in Armenia in 1997 was among the lower rates in the region, although it had increased over the 1990 rate (see Table 7.8). Reproductive health surveys in 1997 and 1998 indicated that induced abortion was widely used all over the country as a method of birth control, and that self-induced abortion is fairly common. About 13 percent of respondents had attempted to induce abortions, and such abortions, if successful, are not officially registered.<sup>94</sup> Respondent information indicated that as many as 51 percent of conceptions are aborted. Indeed, the abortion/live birth ratio

<sup>86</sup> General note on sources: The major sources used for purposes of cross-country comparisons are from the MONEE and UNDP reports cited below, because they have data for most countries. MONEE is preferred for maternal mortality data because it is the most up-to-date comparable source of data. For infant mortality, UNDP is the preferred source for two reasons: a) UNDP data concords most closely with DHS data, for the three countries for which DHS surveys have been done; and b) data for six of the study countries cited in the MONEE database are based on Soviet rather than WHO definitions of infant death, impairing comparability. In some cases MONEE figures are significantly different (usually lower) than UNDP figures. Only the MONEE database provides reasonably complete and comparable data on abortion rates, STD incidence and life expectancy by sex. UNDP is the preferred source for total fertility rates because it concords most closely with DHS data in the cases in which it is available. Contraceptive prevalence sources identified are: Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), reproductive health surveys (RHS), UNDP Human Development Report (UNDP), Population Reference Bureau (PRB), Russia Longitudinal Monitoring Survey (RLMS). The year is specified when known.

<sup>87</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition, Regional Monitoring Report No. 6* (New York: UNICEF International Child Development Centre, 1999), 119.

<sup>88</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 169.

<sup>89</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 118.

<sup>90</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, 198.

<sup>91</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 131.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 123-124.

<sup>93</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, 198.

<sup>94</sup> Armenian National Program on Reproductive Health, 25-26.

stands at around 1.3, with the average number of abortions among respondents who had ever had an abortion at 4.2.<sup>95</sup>

### Contraception

According to the 1998 survey (which included men as well as women), 77 percent of women respondents had at some time used contraception and 57 percent were current users. The most popular method by far was withdrawal (68 percent have tried it and 57 percent currently use it), followed by IUDs (22.5 percent and 16.7 percent, respectively) and condoms (21.3 percent and 14.7 percent). Among male respondents, 79 percent had at some time used a contraceptive method and 68 percent were current users. They indicated that withdrawal was most often used (61 percent have tried it and 51 percent currently using it), followed by condoms (52 percent and 40 percent) and IUDs (25 percent and 23 percent).<sup>96</sup> According to the 1997 survey, probably in part because of cost, more than 70 percent of women at risk used methods which do not require payment. Most of the remainder either paid for their contraceptives or presented "gifts" to health care providers. Only 15 percent obtained contraceptives free of charge.<sup>97</sup>

Ineffective contraception is a major factor contributing to the nation's high abortion rate. Approximately 58 percent of women having their first abortion had tried to prevent pregnancy, but the method they used had failed. The remaining 42 percent did not use any contraceptive method. Among women who had more than one abortion, 65 percent had used some method of birth control. Among failed contraceptive methods, withdrawal accounted for about 69 percent among both first and continuing abortion cases.<sup>98</sup>

### Fertility

Total fertility rate (births per woman) estimates also vary somewhat, but are well below replacement level. UNDP figures put the 1997 rate at 1.7,<sup>99</sup> while the UNICEF MONEE Project shows it at 1.45.<sup>100</sup> The 1997 reproductive health survey shows a national average for Armenian families (based on survey responses) of 2.0 children.<sup>101</sup> Adolescent fertility rate (live births per 1000 women aged 15-19) estimates also vary from 43.4 (MONEE)<sup>102</sup>, to 47 (World Bank figures),<sup>103</sup> and even 61 (1997 reproductive health survey.)<sup>104</sup> According to the latter, the high teenage fertility rate may be influenced

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<sup>95</sup> Mary Khachikyan and Abrahamyan Razmik, *Reproductive Health in Armenia* (Armenian Family Health Association and Ministry of Health, 1998), 100.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid. (page numbers not visible on many pages of available copy).

<sup>97</sup> Armenian National Program on Reproductive Health, 48.

<sup>98</sup> Khachikyan and Razmik, *Reproductive Health in Armenia*, 101-102.

<sup>99</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, 198.

<sup>100</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 116.

<sup>101</sup> Armenian National Program on Reproductive Health, ix.

<sup>102</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 114.

<sup>103</sup> World Bank, Gender Stats Database, <http://genderstats.worldbank.org/menu.asp>.

<sup>104</sup> Armenian National Program on Reproductive Health, ix.

by several factors, including the lack of sexual health education, limited access to reproductive health services, and strong parental pressure on young couples to have a child immediately after marriage.

### **Prenatal Care**

Only 82 percent of the participants in the 1997 reproductive health survey had at least one prenatal visit during their last pregnancy. The mean gestational age for the first antenatal visit was 14.6 weeks, and on average there were about 8 visits per woman during the pregnancy. About a third of women who came for prenatal care denied being informed by their health care provider that they needed to return for follow-up visits. All survey respondents delivered at maternity hospitals, although 8 percent would prefer in future to deliver at home. About 30 percent of women were unsatisfied or only partially satisfied with medical care for their last delivery. According to law, labor and delivery services are free, but only 11 percent of respondents reported receiving delivery services without "under the table" payment.<sup>105</sup>

### **Sexually-Transmitted Diseases**

The incidence of sexually-transmitted diseases (STDs) has increased in Armenia over the last decade. In 1996 there were 30.7 cases of acute gonorrhea and 17.4 cases of syphilis per 100,000 people. The 1998 reproductive health survey found that the most frequently reported STDs among Armenian men were trichomoniasis (10 percent) and gonorrhea (8 percent). Among women, the most frequent was fungal infection (15 percent) and trichomoniasis (6 percent). Admitted clinical symptoms indicate that the actual rates of STDs in both women and men might be higher than reported.<sup>106</sup> Fortunately, AIDS incidence remains low at 0.2 cases per 100,000 people, according to the latest available information.<sup>107</sup>

### **Mortality**

Among men in the early 1990s, age-standardized annual death rates (by cause) were 475.2 due to ischemic heart disease, 192.9 due to all cancers, and 162.6 for cerebrovascular disease. For females, the rates were 319.3 for ischemic heart disease, 149.1 for cerebrovascular disease, and 113.1 for all cancers.<sup>108</sup> The registered incidence of breast and cervical cancer declined in Armenia (no figures available), probably linked to reduced detection.<sup>109</sup>

Lung cancer, on the other hand, could well be on the rise due to the increasing consumption of cigarettes in Armenia. In the mid-1990s there was easy availability of western cigarette brands, even in remote villages, and cigarette smuggling appears to be increasing. There is little data on smoking

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., xvi, xvii.

<sup>106</sup> Khachikyan and Razmik, *Reproductive Health in Armenia*, 44 and Part 3: Summary (no page numbers visible on copy).

<sup>107</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, 173.

<sup>108</sup> World Health Organization, Tobacco or Health Programme, *Tobacco or Health: A Global Status Report, Country Profiles by Region, 1997*, <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/who/whofirst.htm>

<sup>109</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 67.

prevalence, however. It has been reported that smoking is about 50 percent or greater among males, low among middle-aged women, and starting to increase among young women.<sup>110</sup> Among respondents to the 1998 reproductive health survey, 68 percent of men and 4.5 percent of women were smokers.<sup>111</sup> In 1995 (the latest available data), it was estimated that tobacco was the cause of about 4,400 deaths, 90 percent of them male. This represents about 16 percent of all deaths (26 percent of male deaths, three percent of female deaths). In comparison, in 1985, the percentage of deaths attributable to tobacco was estimated at 10 percent (19 percent for males, one percent for females).<sup>112</sup>

### **Nutrition**

Daily per capita calorie supply was the second lowest, after Azerbaijan, among the study countries, at 2,147 (1996).<sup>113</sup> Data from a 1998 health and nutrition survey indicate that 12.2 percent of the sampled children under five are short for their age, with higher proportions in rural areas and large regional differences. Another four percent showed low weight for their height, with little difference among survey strata. Mild and moderate anemia was observed in 16 percent of children aged 6-59 months, with a greater prevalence among rural residents (23 percent) and rural refugees (20 percent). Among women, mild and moderate anemia was observed in 15 percent, again particularly among rural refugees (18 percent). Anemia was more frequent in pregnant women, with rates increasing as pregnancy advanced.<sup>114</sup> About 11 percent of live births were complicated by anemia in 1997, a substantial increase over the 1 percent level in 1989.<sup>115</sup>

### **Education and Gender**

“A pattern is emerging of excluding the poor from access to quality secondary and tertiary education, even where education is formally free.”

World Bank, *Improving Social Assistance in Armenia*, 18.

Education enrollment in Armenia is sex-disaggregated at the tertiary level: female students make up 56 percent of total enrollment. At the primary and secondary levels, female students account for a little more than half of enrollment. Table 7.9 provides sex-disaggregated enrollments. Overall enrollments have decreased at each educational level, kindergarten through tertiary. Kindergarten and primary enrollments showed the greatest decline. Overall enrollments are shown in 7.10.

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<sup>110</sup> World Health Organization, *Tobacco or Health*, <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/who/whofirst.htm>.

<sup>111</sup> Khachikyan and Razmik, *Reproductive Health in Armenia*, (no page number).

<sup>112</sup> World Health Organization, *Tobacco or Health*, <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/who/whofirst.htm>.

<sup>113</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report*, 212.

<sup>114</sup> F. Branca, A. Napoletano, D. Coclite, and L. Rossi, *The Health and Nutritional Status of Children and Women in Armenia* (Italy: National Institute of Nutrition, 1998), 6.

<sup>115</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 116, 68.

**Table 7.9. Female School Enrollments in Armenia, As a Percent of Total**

Primary		Secondary		Tertiary	
1980	1996	1980	1996	1980	1996
--	51	--	52	--	56

Note: -- indicates data are not available.

Source: World Bank, 1999 *World Development Indicators*.

**Table 7.10. School Enrollment in Armenia, Percent of Relevant Population**

Kindergarten		Primary		Secondary		Tertiary	
1989	1996	1989	1997	1990	1997	1989	1996
65.2	32.4	95.5	82.9	35.9	30.4	16.5	11.5

Source: UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition, Regional Monitoring Report No. 6* (New York: UNICEF International Child Development Centre, 1999), 133-134.

Fewer resources have been targeted to state-funded education since independence, as shown in Table 7.11. According to the World Bank, access to higher education and even secondary schools appears to have become more dependent on wealth than on any other factor. The shortage of education funds means that secondary schools often rely on parents to pay fees to make up for the loss. Richer neighborhoods and communities, therefore, have better schools.<sup>116</sup> For secondary students wishing to enter university, there is another barrier: private tutoring is considered necessary because of the inadequacy of the secondary school curriculum.<sup>117</sup> Very poor families are unable to afford the costs of these private lessons, however.

The government has begun reforming education spending, and as part of its social sector reforms, the government reallocated spending to favor basic education, instituted per capita funding for schools, and increased the availability of textbooks through a school-based targeting system. This system waived textbook rental fees for very poor students.<sup>118</sup>

**Table 7.11. Public Expenditures on Education in Armenia, As a Percent of GDP**

1990	1991	1994	1997
--	7.5	2.5	1.7

Source: UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition, Regional Monitoring Report No. 6* (New York: UNICEF International Child Development Centre, 1999), 135.

<sup>116</sup> World Bank, *Improving Social Assistance in Armenia*, 29.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, ii, 1.

## *Findings*

**With the shredding of the social safety net, how have women versus men fared in access to / support from social programs?** In three of 10 social safety net programs, women receive preferential treatment in eligibility, benefits, or both. Women receive fewer preferences, however, in Armenia than in other E&E countries.

**Do data show women's poverty rates to be greater than men's?** There is no significant gender difference in poverty rates overall; however, female single pensioners are twice as likely as single male pensioners to be poor.

**What are the health-related impacts of the transition?** Impacts include: life expectancy increased for both men and women, maternal mortality decreased, and the incidence of STDs increased.

**What differential impacts has pension reform had on men's and women's access to benefits?** The retirement age has been raised for both women and men, but women continue to be able to retire earlier than men. A three pillar system on the World Bank model is planned.

**What are salient changes in the state-funded education system since 1989/91?** Education enrollment is sex-disaggregated with girls accounting for a little more than half of primary and secondary enrollments and 56 percent of tertiary enrollments. Overall, enrollments have declined at each educational level, and the poor have less access to education.

## *Opportunities for Future Research*

**Research into the proxy-means testing scheme is needed.** Because Armenia's new proxy means-testing program is the first to be implemented in the E&E region, information about its successes and problems would help other countries considering implementing such schemes.

**The unregistered abortion rate and solutions should be investigated.** While the official abortion rate is low in Armenia (compared to other countries in the region), surveys indicate that abortion is widely used as birth control, and that the average number of abortions (among those who had had an abortion) was more than four. Research could explore the most effective and inexpensive methods of contraception and information dissemination.

**Research on effective methods of social assistance, including food aid, to stop child stunting is needed.** More than 12 percent of children in Armenia under age five are short for their age, a result of poor nutrition.





## Chapter 8: Georgia



### Basic Indicators

For additional information, please see Country Data Table in the Appendix.

<i>Demographics</i>			
Population <sup>1</sup> (1998)	5,395,000; female 2,818,000 (52%)		
Rural / Urban <sup>2</sup>	Urban 60%		
Ethnic composition <sup>3</sup>	Georgian 70.1%, Armenian 8.1%, Russian 6.3%, Azeri 5.7%, Ossetian 3%, Abkhaz 1.8%, other 5%		
<i>Economic Growth and Development</i>			
GDP per capita (all in 1987\$) <sup>4</sup>	<b>1985</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1997</b>
	--	--	--
GDP per capita (PPP for 1997) <sup>4</sup>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	
	\$1,521	\$2,440	
Registered Unemployment Rate <sup>1</sup>	<b>1991</b>	<b>1997</b>	
	0.2	5.0	
<i>Democracy and Governance</i>			
Women in Parliament <sup>5</sup>	7.2%		
Women in Ministerial Positions <sup>6</sup>	9.5%		
<i>Social Transition</i>			
Life Expectancy by Sex(1999 est.) <sup>3</sup>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Average</b>
	68.32	61.13	64.63
Combined first, second, and third level gross school enrollment ratio (1997) <sup>4</sup>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	
	71%	70%	
Population below poverty line <sup>2</sup>	11%		

Note: -- indicates data are unavailable.

Sources: 1) UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*.

2) World Bank Country Data, <http://wbln0018.worldbank.org/eca/eca.nsf>.

3) CIA World Factbook 1999, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>.

4) UNDP Human Development Indicators 1999.

5) Inter Parliamentary Union website, <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

- 6) CIA Chiefs of State and Cabinets Members website, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/chiefs/index.html> and Women in Governments website, <http://hjem.get2net.dk/Womeningovernments/>.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### ***The Economic Transition***

- War and internal ethnic strife have gravely affected all aspects of the Georgian economy. Georgia has had a precipitous loss of economic productivity, as reflected in GDP figures.
- Women have continued to participate in economic activities at very high levels.
- Unemployment rates for Georgia have soared. Data are not available by gender.
- Real wage rates have fallen significantly for both men and women in Georgia since the transition began. The overall distribution of income in Georgia is substantially more unequal today than it was prior to the transition
- Georgian women are more likely to be self-employed or in the private sector than in other former Soviet countries.
- Little reliable information is available on the nature of the informal economy at the end of the 1990's.

### ***The Democratic Transition***

- Georgia's problems of democratization probably stem mostly from executive dominance of local government and the judiciary and the aftermath of civil war.
- Georgia's NGOs are working to promote the interests of the nation's most vulnerable groups, especially among women, children, and refugees. By providing necessary services to those who fall through the government's safety net, and working toward reconciliation among ethnic groups, these NGOs are integrating themselves into Georgia's political sphere.
- Most of the country's laws treat men and women equally, if women do not receive preferential treatment.

### ***The Social Transition***

- The Georgian social security system is more gender-blind than those in most other E&E countries, and women receive preferential treatment for only two of six social benefits.
- The data are not clear. Of working-age men and women, women have slightly lower rates of poverty. However, the World Bank states that female-headed households are more likely to be poor, particularly single female pensioners.
- The health impacts of the transition have been mixed: life expectancy decreased and hunger increased, while maternal mortality, abortion, and sexually transmitted diseases all decreased. Sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, are more likely to affect men.
- Pension reform to date has largely been limited to raising the retirement age for both men and women. Therefore, there has been little impact to date on either men or women.
- Overall enrollments have decreased during the transition. Female students account for slightly less than half of primary and secondary enrollments, and 51 percent of tertiary enrollments.

## Country Overview

**Introduction:** Georgia is a country of Transcaucasia located at the eastern end of the Black Sea on the southern flanks of the main crest of the Greater Caucasus Mountains. It covers an area of about 26,900 square miles (69,700 square kilometres) and is bounded on the north and northeast by Russia, on the east and southeast by Azerbaijan, on the south by Armenia and Turkey, and on the west by the Black Sea. Georgia includes three ethnic enclaves: Abkhazia, in the northwest (principal city Sokhumi); Ajaria, in the southwest (principal city Bat'umi); and South Ossetia, in the north (principal city Ts'khinvali). The capital of Georgia is T'bilisi (Tiflis).

**People:** The likelihood is great that the Georgians (whose name for themselves is Kartveli; "Georgian" derived from the Persian name for them, Gorj) have always lived in this region, known to them as Sakartvelo. Ethnically, contemporary Georgia is not homogeneous but reflects the intermixtures and successions of the Caucasus region. About seven-tenths of the people are Georgians; the rest consists of Armenians, Russians, Azerbaijanis, and smaller numbers of Ossetes, Greeks, Abkhazians, and other minor groups.

**Cultural life:** Georgia is a land of ancient culture, with a literary tradition that dates to the 5th century AD. Kolkhida (Colchis) early housed a school of higher rhetoric in which Greeks as well as Georgians studied. By the 12th century, academies in Ikalto and Gelati, the first medieval higher-education centres, disseminated a wide range of knowledge. The national genius was demonstrated most clearly in Vepkhis-tqarsani (The Knight in the Panther's Skin), the epic masterpiece of the 12th-century poet Shota Rustaveli. Major figures in later Georgian literary history include a famed 18th-century writer, Sulikhan-Saba Orbeliani, and the novelist, poet, and dramatist Ilia Chavchavadze. The 19th-century playwright Giorgi Eristavi is regarded as the founder of the modern Georgian theatre. Among other prominent prerevolutionary authors were the lyric poet Akaki Tsereteli; Alexander Qazbegi, novelist of the Caucasus; and the nature poet Vazha Pshavela. The novelist Mikhail Javakhishvili and the poet Titsian Tabidze were executed during the Stalin era, and the poet Paolo Iashvili was censured by the government and committed suicide. Giorgi Leonidze and Galaktion Tabidze were well-known poets, and Konstantin Gamsakhurdia was celebrated for his historical novels. Georgia has a long tradition of fine metalwork. Bronze, gold, and silver objects of a high technical and aesthetic standard have been recovered from tombs of the 1st and 2nd millennia BC. Between the 10th and 13th centuries AD, Georgian goldsmiths produced masterpieces of cloisonné enamel and repoussé work, notably icons, crosses, and jewelry.

**Government:** In 1992 Georgia--which had been operating under a Soviet-era constitution from 1978--reinstated its 1921 pre-Soviet constitution. A constitutional commission was formed in 1992 to draft a new constitution, and after a protracted dispute over the extent of the authority to be accorded the executive a new document was adopted in 1995. The head of state is the president, who is given extensive authority. A prime minister and cabinet are appointed by the president. The legislature is a 235-member Supreme Council. The judicial system includes district and city courts and a Supreme Court.

**Education:** The level of education is relatively high. T'bilisi University was founded in 1918; the Academy of Sciences (founded 1941) is made up of several scientific institutions, which conduct research throughout the republic. Georgia has an extensive library system.

**Health and Welfare:** Payments from public funds provide free education, medical services, pension grants, and stipend payments and free or reduced-cost accommodation in rest homes and sanatoriums, as well as holiday pay and the maintenance of kindergartens and day nurseries. Georgia ranks high in the level of medical services, and relative to other former Soviet republics its population has low incidences of tuberculosis and cancer. The republic is famed as a health centre, a reputation stemming from the numerous therapeutic mineral springs, the sunny climate of the Black Sea coast, the pure air of the mountain regions, and a wide range of resorts. The Tsqaltubo baths, with warm radon water treatment for arthritis sufferers, are especially noted.

From *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (<http://www.britannica.com>)

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the economic, democratic, and social transitions in Georgia. Each section seeks to answer a set of research questions which are set out at the beginning of the sections. In addition to subsections addressing each of the research questions, each section includes a subsection on findings and opportunities for future research.

### *Background*

Independent Georgia has undergone a stormy political transition that has hampered the country's economic development. A short, bitter civil war against the democratically elected but dictatorial Zviad Gamsakhurdia, combined with hostilities with Abkhazia and South Ossetia, reduced hundreds of thousands of Georgians to refugee status and taken their toll on the economy. Though the hostilities with the ethnic regions ended in the mid-1990s, over 300,000 people were still registered as displaced by 1997. More than 270,000 ethnic Georgians fled Abkhazia, while an additional 60,000 Georgians and Ossets have left South Ossetia.<sup>1</sup> Children under the age of 16 accounted for one-third of these, while mostly working age women made up 53 percent of the total. A survey of the capital, Tbilisi, found that one-third of the displaced families had no regular income.<sup>2</sup>

Women have suffered heavily, both as refugees and as unemployed workers in a Georgian economy that has until recently been locked in a near economic free-fall. Only in the last two to three years has there been any sign that Georgia's political leadership would be able to extricate the country from its domestic conflicts and launch an economic policy that would lead to Georgia's development.

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<sup>1</sup> Buck, *Women, War, and Displacement in Georgia*, 4.

<sup>2</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, (New York: UNICEF International Child Development Centre, 1999), 11.

## THE ECONOMIC TRANSITION

This section seeks to answer the following questions as they relate to Georgia:

1. Have there been changes in labor force participation by women and men during the transition?
2. Has unemployment increased, whether official or hidden, and is there a gender dimension to unemployment?
3. Is there evidence for wage gap trends and wage differentials?
4. How has the growth of the informal economy reflected gender differentiation?
5. What is the impact of privatization of state enterprises on women's and men's employment?
6. What role do women play in new managerial positions or business formation in the growing private sector?

In the subsections below we review the information available on GDP, labor force participation, unemployment, the informal economy, and privatization and present data on each of these issues as they relate to gender. We find that, in the case of Georgia, information is very incomplete and disparate. What findings we can draw are summarized in the concluding subsection.

### *Contextual Information about the Economy*

During the Soviet period, the Georgian economy underwent a rapid and uneven program of heavy industrialization. From 1940 to 1958 industrial output in Georgia rose 240 percent. By 1979, 53 percent of the population was employed in industry, compared to 16 percent working as collective farmers.<sup>3</sup> However, even before Soviet economic growth stagnated in the late 1970s, Georgia had begun to face its own problems. From 1960 to 1971, its industrial output was the third lowest of any union republic.<sup>4</sup> As head of the Georgian Communist Party (1972-1985), Edward Shevardnadze sought to address the downturn with economic experimentation and greater cultural freedoms, but to little avail.<sup>5</sup>

Georgia has had a precipitous loss of economic productivity, as reflected in the GDP figures. From 1990 to 1997, Georgia experienced an annual fall in its GDP of 10.6 percent, one of the highest of all the post-Soviet republics. By 1997, this left its GDP at only 34 percent of that recorded in 1989, despite the fact that the Russian government was heavily subsidizing the Georgian economy (Table 8.1).<sup>6</sup> In 1992 alone, these subsidies exceeded 69 billion rubles, a sum worth more than half (51.5 percent) of

<sup>3</sup> Stephen Jones and Robert Parsons, "Georgia and the Georgians," in Graham Smith (ed.), *The Nationalities Question in the Post-Soviet States* (London: Longman, 1996), 297.

<sup>4</sup> Jones and Parsons, "Georgia and the Georgians," 297.

<sup>5</sup> Hedrick Smith, *The New Russians* (New York: Random House, 1990), 29; and Jones and Parsons, "Georgia and the Georgians," 297.

<sup>6</sup> Valerie Bunce, "The Political Economy of Postsocialism," *Slavic Review* 58:4, 764.

the country's total GDP.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, the exigencies of war continued to absorb most of Georgia's resources at that time, leaving little with which to reform the economy. The result was that Georgia experienced both hyperinflation (over 9,000 percent) and a massive decline in living standards.<sup>8</sup>

**Table 8.1. Change in Real GDP, 1989-1998 (1989=100)**

1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
100.0	84.9	67.4	37.2	27.8	24.6	25.2	27.8	30.9	33.7

Source: UNDP, Human Development Indicators, 1999.

This was, however, the low point of Georgia's post-Soviet economic development. In 1996 and 1997 the Georgian economy began to expand with growth rates of 14 percent and 10 percent respectively.<sup>9</sup> While the Georgian economy performed less impressively (4 percent GDP growth) in 1998 because of the impact of Russia's economic crisis,<sup>10</sup> there are current signs (including the development of a Caspian oil pipeline) that Georgia is on the path to greater prosperity.<sup>11</sup> The legacies of the war, however, continue to haunt Georgians long after the end of hostilities and are likely to create a drain on Georgia's economy for years to come.

### **Labor Force Participation**

In a context of such a significant drop in the economic fortunes of Georgia, **women have continued to participate in economic activities at the very high levels of the Soviet era.** Figures show that the male/female ratio has remained largely unchanged; in 1998, women made up 47 percent of the total labor force (Table 8.2).

**Table 8.2. Labor Force Participation**

Labor Force Participation (ratio f/m)		Labor Force Participation (% of total labor force)			
1970	1997	1980		1998	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
0.9	0.9	51	49	52	47

Source: World Bank, 1999 World Development Indicators

A figure of "crude economic activity," including all age groups, shows a relatively high figure for women's economic role in the economy, reinforcing the evidence of high labor force participation (Table 8.3).

<sup>7</sup> Anders Åslund, *How Russia Became a Market Economy* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1995), 123.

<sup>8</sup> Jones and Parsons, "Georgia and the Georgians," 307.

<sup>9</sup> Stuart Parrott, "Georgia: EBRD Sees Stability and Economic Growth," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, April 16, 1997, <http://www.rferl.org/nca/features/1997/04/F.RU.970416150455.html>.

<sup>10</sup> *CIA World Factbook 1999*.

<sup>11</sup> *CIA World Factbook 1999*.

**Table 8.3. Gender Gaps in Economic Activity**

Female Economic Activity Rate		
Rate (%) 1997	(Index 1985=100) 1997	As % of Male Rate 1997
43.6	93.2	79.8

Source: UNDP Human Development Report, 1999

### **Unemployment**

Unemployment rates for Georgia have soared. The economic deterioration brought on by the war resulted in a rapid increase in Georgian unemployment, especially among women. From 1989 to 1994, female employment fell to 750,000, with women making up more than half (54-57 percent) of all unemployed.<sup>12</sup> Whereas prior to 1989 women made up more than half the labor force, between 1989 and 1994, their share decreased 1.7 times. Although official rates place unemployment at very low rates, independent data on employment from 1996 shows the percentage of the working-age population actually employed has dropped by 25 percent (Table 8.7). This does suggest that unemployment rates must be considerably higher than the 1 percent figure reported in official sources. No sex-disaggregated data is available over time.

**Table 8.7. Employment Rate (as % of working-age population)**

1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
84.7	87.0	79.7	63.2	62.8	--	61.8

Source: UNDP, Georgia Human Development Report 1996, Annex 4

### **Wage Gaps and Wage Differentials**

Real wage rates have fallen significantly for both men and women in Georgia since the transition began. As Table 8.4 shows, all workers have suffered a dramatic decline in average wages. Indeed, average wages in 1997 were slightly above half of what they were in 1989.

**Table 8.4. Wage Trends in Georgia, 1989-1997**

1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
100	111.2	76.5	50.5	24.1	33.5	28.3	42.2	57.0

Source: TransMONEE 3.0 Database

### **Income and Inequality**

<sup>12</sup> Gender Development Association, *Conditions of Women in Georgia*, 25.

The overall distribution of income in Georgia is substantially more unequal today than it was prior to the transition, measured by the Gini Coefficient, which assesses the distribution of income (Table 8.5).<sup>13</sup> Georgia now has one of the highest levels of income inequality among the countries of the former Soviet Union, as high as occurs in many Third World countries where wealth is extremely skewed.

**Table 8.5. Gini Coefficient for Georgia**

1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
---	---	36.9	40.0	---	---	---	49.8

Source: EBRD Transition Report 1999.

Among those who remain in the workplace, women are less likely to be found in the management ranks of industry, and so their average wages are lower than those of men. Little data is available for assessing the gender wage gap, although it appears not to be significantly different from other countries in the region. For example, in the chemical industry, women earn 73.5 percent of men's wages. In machine building, the figure is 79 percent, and in electric energy, 82 percent.<sup>14</sup>

The "real GDP per capita" by male and female for Georgia, calculated in the UNDP *Human Development Report*, are figures based on estimates of the ratio of the average female wage to male wage and the percentage shares of women and men in the economically active population. The GDP per capita by gender provides an approximation of the relative economic situation of men and women. As Table 8.6 shows, female per capita GDP is calculated at about 62 percent of male per capita, in parity purchasing power.

**Table 8.6. Per Capita GDP**

Per Capita GDP	Female real GDP per capita (1997 PPP\$)	Male real GDP per capita (1997 PPP\$)
1997	1997	1997
1,960	1,521	2,440

Source: UNDP, Human Development Indicators, 1999.

### ***Sectoral Issues: Privatization and the Informal Economy***

Georgian women are more likely (70 percent of all women registered as employed) than men (66 percent of all men) to be self-employed or in the private sector, in contrast to the case in many other former Soviet republics.<sup>15</sup> However, most women employed in the private sector (79 percent) are

<sup>13</sup> Branko Milanovic, *Income, Inequality and Poverty During the Transition from Planned to Market Economy* (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1998), 45.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Gender Development Association, *Conditions of Women in Georgia*, 25, 26.



employees, while 20 percent are self-employed but work alone without any hired help. The majority of these (85 percent) are employed in agriculture.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, there are a large number of elderly female pensioners engaged in labor-intensive agriculture and trying to survive on very small pensions (10 lari/month in 1999 with 1 lari = 1.82 US\$ in December 1998) and earnings from farms (37.6 lari/month on average).<sup>17</sup> This is particularly important because Georgian agriculture has helped spur economic renewal. Agriculture accounted for 28 percent of Georgia's GDP in 1997, compared to 15 percent for industry and construction and 22 percent for trade.<sup>18</sup>

In contrast to women, men in Georgia are more likely to engage in trade (15 percent as opposed to 11 percent of women.) Additionally, there are more than twice many men as women engaged in industry, construction and transport (7 percent as opposed to 3-4 percent of women).<sup>19</sup> Men still dominate heavy industry (69 percent of the machine industry and over 76 percent in metallurgy), while women compose more than to-thirds of those engaged in light industry.<sup>20</sup> As seen in Table 8.8, women predominate in the service fields, while men predominate in industry (38 percent).

**Table 8.8. Labor Force By Sector and Gender, 1990**  
Percent Of Male Or Female Labor Force

	Male (%)	Female (%)
Agriculture	27	24
Industry	38	23
Services	34	52
Administrators and Managers*	82	18
Professional and technical workers*	58	42

Note: \* Data are from 1999.

Sources: World Bank Gender Stats database for sectoral breakdown (latest available data are for 1990). UNDP, Human Development Indicators, 1999 for management and professional workers data.

Women are a minority in higher-level administrative position, as is the case throughout the region. Men predominate in administration and management (82 percent), and professional and technical fields (58 percent).

### Informal Economy

The internal war and unsettled conditions of Georgia have led, according to many observers, to an expansion of the informal economy. Unfortunately, no good study has been available to provide reliable information on the nature of the informal economy at the end of the 1990's.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> *Conditions of Women in Georgia*, 15, 26.

<sup>18</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 6.

<sup>19</sup> Gender Development Association, *Conditions of Women in Georgia*, 27

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 28.

### *Findings*

**Have there been changes in labor force participation by women and men during the transition?**

Women and men still engage in economic activity at very high levels.

**Has unemployment increased, whether official or hidden, and is there a gender dimension to unemployment?** Unemployment has increased dramatically since independence in Georgia. Sex-disaggregated data are not available.

**Is there evidence for wage gap trends and wage differentials?** Real wages have fallen significantly and wage differentials have increased since independence. Female GDP per capita is approximately 62 percent of male GDP per capita.

**How has the growth of the informal economy reflected gender differentiation?** No reliable data are available about the informal economy in Georgia.

**What is the impact of privatization of state enterprises on women's and men's employment?** Georgian women are more likely to be employed in the private sector or self-employed than in other former Soviet countries.

**What role do women play in new managerial positions or business formation in the growing private sector?** Women comprise only 18 percent of administrators and managers, but are playing a more active role as entrepreneurs than women in other countries.

### *Opportunities for Future Research*

**Labor market information is essentially nonexistent in Georgia.** Sex-disaggregated information is unavailable on such basic issues as wages, unemployment rates, labor market composition, and on changing characteristics of workers and the self-employed.

**Little information is available on the advancement of women into business, both as high-level managers of enterprises as well as entrepreneurs.** Research needs to be conducted on this aspect of the transition.

**The role of the informal economy in contributing to men's and women's relative economic position remains largely undocumented.**

**Little research has been done on the changing nature of work for men and women.**

**The nature of impact on women of the contraction of jobs in the economy is still unclear.**

## THE DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION

The purpose of this section is to discuss the differential experience of Georgian men and women in the political sphere since the transition to democracy. The primary questions to be answered are:

1. Is there differential participation by women and men in the public sphere?
  - a) What is the role of women in party politics?
  - b) What is the representation of women in elected government positions, locally and nationally?
  - c) What is the representation of women in appointed governmental positions?
2. How is gender reflected in the development of civil society, especially NGOs?
  - a) What is the role of women in different types of NGOs?
  - b) Have NGOs developed that advocate for gender issues?
3. How has the rule of law been institutionalized and what impact is there on gender?
  - a) Have there been *de jure* legal reforms with an impact on gender?
  - b) Do men and women have equal legal rights, *de jure* and *de facto*? (Is there sufficient information to be able to contrast between *de jure* and *de facto*?)
  - c) Have there been reforms related to family law: inheritance, ownership, marriage, and divorce that impact on gender?

These questions are addressed below beginning with a brief discussion of how men and women participated in politics and civil society during the Soviet era and how the patterns of that participation has changed since independence and how they are now affected by rule of law.

### *Political Activity in the Soviet Period*

Georgia occupies a strategic geographical position linking the historic trade routes of Asia, Europe and the Middle East. As such, many different ethnic groups have invaded and settled there over the centuries. In the early 1800s, Russia that asserted control over Georgia, and Georgia remained part of the Russian Empire until it declared independence during the 1917 Revolution. Georgia's brief period of self-rule came to a sudden end in 1921 when the Red Army invaded and established Bolshevik control over the entire Caucasian area. South Ossetia was declared an autonomous region, and Abkhazia enjoyed full republican status until 1931, when Stalin incorporated it into Georgia as an autonomous republic. Shortly thereafter, the Soviet government pursued a campaign of "Georgianization" in Abkhazia making Georgian the official language of the republic and requiring Abkhaz children to attend Georgian schools. However, like the Ossets, most Abkhaz looked to Moscow rather than Tbilisi, and did not identify with Georgian heritage.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, autonomy allowed the leadership of South Ossetia and Abkhazia to develop their political capacity and resources during the Soviet era.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Buck, *Women, War, and Displacement in Georgia*, 5-6.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

The long-standing tensions between Tbilisi and its autonomous regions snapped in 1990 when Zviad Gamsakhurdia, a former dissident and fiery nationalist, was elected Georgia's president and attempted to assert Georgian control over both areas. When the Georgian parliament, controlled by an anticommunist coalition, effectively declared independence from the Soviet Union, the Ossetian leadership responded by declaring South Ossetia a Soviet Democratic Republic, independent from Georgia. Gamsakhurdia then abolished South Ossetia's autonomous status and the republic's first civil war began.<sup>23</sup>

Former Soviet foreign minister Edvard Shevardnadze ousted Gamsakhurdia in 1992, and the erstwhile president retreated with his supporters to Mingrelia and parts of eastern Abkhazia. Here they continued to battle government forces loyal to Shevardnadze. Ultimately, Georgia sent troops into Abkhazia, to regain control of the territory and to respond to the Gamsakhurdian insurrection. This incursion began a civil war between Abkhazia and Georgia in which Russian forces allegedly extended covert support to Abkhazian separatists. The Russian government and UNHCR eventually brokered a cease fire agreement that brought the open fighting to a close.<sup>24</sup>

Much of the violence in these wars was directed toward civilians. Of the 5,000 dead in Abkhazia, 2,000 were women and children. Rape was used as an instrument of genocide by both sides in the Abkhazia conflict. Most of the rape survivors have not received treatment because of the social stigma attached to rape.<sup>25</sup>

### ***Political Activity since Independence***

The recent civil conflicts in Georgia make politics tense, and contribute to widespread cynicism toward national leaders. Indeed, one study suggests that 89 percent of Georgians believe that elections are rigged.<sup>26</sup> When asked whether Georgia has a democratic form of government, only 29 percent said it does, with only three percent saying it is heading toward democracy.<sup>27</sup> Over the past few years, the value of voting has decreased in the public's perception. When polled at the end of 1998, only 35 percent felt their vote could influence government policy, compared to 53 percent in 1996.<sup>28</sup> This lack of confidence reflected in popular attitudes toward political parties.

There are two fairly large, and five smaller, active political parties in Georgia. The two major parties are Shevardnadze's left-centrist Citizens' Union of Georgia, and the rightist National Democratic Party.<sup>29</sup> The others are the All-Georgia Union of Democratic Revival, the Socialist Party, the Union of Traditionalists, Industry Will Save Georgia, and the XXIst Century Party. Over the past three years,

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 6-7.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 7-8.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>26</sup> USIA, "Hardships, Corruption, and Unresolved Conflicts Fuel Georgians' Discontent," *Opinion Analysis*, December 11, 1998, 21, 3.

<sup>27</sup> USIA, *The People Have Spoken: Global Views of Democracy, Vol. II*, (Washington DC: USIA Office of Research and Media Reaction, September 1999), 29.

<sup>28</sup> USIA, "Hardships, Corruption, and Unresolved Conflicts Fuel Georgians' Discontent," 21.

<sup>29</sup> Gender Development Association, *Conditions of Women in Georgia*, 37.

popular support for the Citizens' Union of Georgia and the National Democratic Party has eroded somewhat and has been redirected to the minor parties. There has also been an increase in the number of people who do not know which party is closest to their political views.<sup>30</sup>

Only 4.7 percent of Georgia's 5.4 million citizens belong to political parties. The total number of female members across all parties is 86,410 (32 percent) and men number 169,910 (68 percent). Women comprise 28 percent of the membership of the Citizens' Union of Georgia, the nation's most popular political party, but the Socialist Party has the highest percentage of female members at 36 percent. At 12 percent, the National Democratic Party has the lowest percentage of female members. The other parties claim to have on average approximately 25 percent women members.<sup>31</sup> Ironically, the only female party leader is Irina Sarishvili-Chanturia, leader of the National Democratic Party.<sup>32</sup>

**Table 8.9: Political Positions Held by Men and Women in Georgia**

Position	Total Number	Held by Women		Held by Men	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Members of Parliament	235	17	7.2 %	218	92.8 %
Cabinet Ministers	21	2	9.5 %	19	90.5 %
Pres. Admin. Employees	NA	NA		NA	
Regional Administrators	NA	NA		NA	
Members of Judiciary	NA	NA		NA	
High Court	9	1	11.1 %	8	88.9 %
Appeals Courts	NA	NA		NA	
Local Courts	NA	NA		NA	
Political Party Leaders	9	1	11.1 %	8	88.9 %

Note: Data are from January 2000.

Sources: Inter Parliamentary Union website, <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>; Women in Governments website, <http://hjem.get2net.dk/Womeningovernments/>; CIA Chiefs of State and Cabinet Members web page, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/chiefs/index.html>; Parliament of Georgia website, <http://www.parliament.ge/GOVERNANCE/Legalsys.html>; USIA, "Hardships, Corruption, and Unresolved Conflicts Fuel Georgians' Discontent."

## The Legislative Branch

Their low representation in parties means that women are less likely to be chosen by their parties as candidates for parliament. That may or may not be to women's future political advantage, as only 24 percent of Georgians say they have confidence in the parliament.<sup>33</sup> In 1995, women constituted 7.2 percent (17 of 235) of the Georgian parliament. Of the fourteen parliamentary committees, a woman headed only one. In the elections of October and November 1999, women's success rate in retaining

<sup>30</sup> USIA, "Hardships, Corruption, and Unresolved Conflicts Fuel Georgians' Discontent," 20.

<sup>31</sup> Gender Development Association, *Conditions of Women in Georgia*, 37.

<sup>32</sup> USIA, "Hardships, Corruption, and Unresolved Conflicts Fuel Georgians' Discontent," 4.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

seats was 47 percent (eight of 17), well above the 30.6 percent average (71 of 232). In spite of the turnover, women retained their 17 seats and comprise 7.2 percent of members (17 of 235).<sup>34</sup>

### **The Executive Branch**

Georgian women have had slightly more success reaching the highest ranks of the nation's executive branch. Two of Georgia's 21 Ministers (9.5 percent) are women, the Minister of Environmental and Natural Resources Protection and the Minister of Trade and Foreign Economic Relations.<sup>35</sup> However, despite their success at the ministerial level, none of the fourteen sub-ministerial department heads are women.

The executive branch appears currently to be the most powerful branch of government in Georgia with the president's office enjoying an unsurpassed public confidence rating of 39 percent.<sup>36</sup> In part this is due to Shevardnadze's attention to a number of important issues facing women and families. The president has focused some attention on women's issues. Georgia has established a State Commission to Elaborate a State Policy for the Improvement of the Conditions of Women and Children. It has also developed and implemented an Action Plan for the Improvement of the Conditions of Women for 1998 to 2000.<sup>37</sup>

### **Local Government**

At the local level, Georgian government has a unitary structure with four tiers. The first tier includes village councils and district towns. The second tier is district-level administration. The third tier is regional administration, and the top tier is the administration of the autonomous republics. Seven towns have district-level status: Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Rustavi, Batumi, Sukhumi, Poti, and Tskhinvali. In these cities, the people elect the council and the president appoints the executive.<sup>38</sup> The executives at all levels are appointed, most by the attorneys of the president for each region and the more powerful posts being appointed directly by the president. Therefore, executives are accountable to the office that appointed them rather than their constituents. When polled, 83 percent of people said they would prefer that these posts be elected rather than appointed.<sup>39</sup>

In accordance with popular opinion, the government has set the stage to reform local government. In August 1997, the Parliament of Georgia passed the law on local self government. This law sets the basis for the election of a representative body or council in villages and principal towns. Legally, the local council is supposed to elect an executive in village. In reality, the President of Georgia appoints these

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<sup>34</sup> Parliament of Georgia website, [http://server.parliament.ge/GOVERNANCE/parl/L\\_A/S\\_P/mp/sia.htm](http://server.parliament.ge/GOVERNANCE/parl/L_A/S_P/mp/sia.htm), 11/22/1999, and [http://www.parliament.ge/PARL\\_99/MP\\_e/parlist\\_e.htm](http://www.parliament.ge/PARL_99/MP_e/parlist_e.htm), 1/19/2000.

<sup>35</sup> Government of Georgia website, [http://www.georgiaemb.org/ag\\_government\\_structure.htm](http://www.georgiaemb.org/ag_government_structure.htm), 12/1/1999, and Women in Governments website, <http://hjem.get2net.dk/Womeningovernments/Georgia.htm>, 1/10/2000.

<sup>36</sup> USIA, "Hardships, Corruption, and Unresolved Conflicts Fuel Georgians' Discontent," 2.

<sup>37</sup> Gender Development Association, *Conditions of Women in Georgia*, 73.

<sup>38</sup> Parliament of Georgia website, <http://www.parliament.ge/TERRITORY/admin.htm>, 1/21/2000.

<sup>39</sup> USIA, "Hardships, Corruption, and Unresolved Conflicts Fuel Georgians' Discontent," 5.

officials. The law was expected to be in force after the local elections planned for summer 1998, but has yet to take effect.<sup>40</sup>

Women have fared poorly in local politics since independence. They currently comprise only 7 percent of representatives in large city councils, their 32 percent share of the nation's political party membership notwithstanding. There are seven women (of 55) in Tbilisi's council. Of the 30 members on the other local councils, women constitute two in Kutaisi, and one each in Batumi, Poti, and Rustavi.<sup>41</sup>

### The Judicial Branch

The Georgian president wields an unusually strong influence over the judiciary branch of government. Regional and city courts comprise the first level of the Georgian legal system. They are created by the president, who determines the activities of the courts and the number of judges (state law requires at least two per court.) The Council of Justice, a body appointed by both the president and parliament, in turn appoints the individual judges. If a local court consists of just two judges, one hears criminal cases and the other hears civil cases. In courts with more than two judges, they will specialize further. The President of Georgia appoints a chairman of each court for a five-year term. He also creates the circuit courts and appoints their chairmen and deputy chairmen to five-year terms. In the autonomous republics, the highest representative body of the republic appoints the judges or circuit court chairmen - with written permission from the President.<sup>42</sup>

The four courts of appeal represent the second level the judicial system. The president created two of them, one in Tbilisi and the other in Kutaisi, and he is responsible for appointing their chairmen. Meanwhile, the Supreme Courts of Ajaria and Abkhazia act as courts of appeals in those republics. There the autonomous republic's highest representative body appoints the Supreme Court chairmen, again with the President's written permission.<sup>43</sup>

The Supreme Court and Constitutional Court are the highest courts in Georgia. The Supreme Court of Georgia supervises general courts. The Council of Justice proposes staff and structural changes for the Court and the president approves them. The Supreme Court also acts as the highest cassation court. Cassation functions are carrying out by the chambers of the Supreme Court. The president nominates the chairman of the Supreme Court and the parliament approves the nomination by a majority of votes.<sup>44</sup> The Constitutional Court reviews legislation and government regulations to ensure that they do not impinge on the rights granted in the constitution. The president nominates the chairman of the Constitutional Court for parliamentary confirmation. Of the justices serving in the Constitutional Court, the Chairman and seven justices are men and one justice is a woman.<sup>45</sup> Information on the appointments of men and women to other courts is not currently available.

<sup>40</sup> Parliament of Georgia website, <http://www.parliament.ge/TERRITORY/admin.htm>, 1/21/2000.

<sup>41</sup> Gender Development Association, *Conditions of Women in Georgia*, 39, 33-36.

<sup>42</sup> Parliament of Georgia website, <http://www.parliament.ge/GOVERNANCE/Legalsys.html>, 1/21/2000.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

Georgia's judiciary is not well respected. In spite of the constitution prohibiting judges from joining political parties or taking part in political activities, only 11 percent have confidence in the ability of the judiciary to do its job. Further, only seven percent of people believe the judicial system treats everyone equally.<sup>46</sup> This is largely due to anecdotal evidence of judges accepting bribes, making politically motivated decisions and denying defendants appropriate materials to prepare their defense.<sup>47</sup>

### ***Civil Society since Independence***

As of 1998, more than 4,000 NGOs had registered with the Georgian government, only about 600 of which are active. Of these 600, approximately 60 organizations are devoted to women's issues.<sup>48</sup> NGOs are also filling societal needs by providing social services to vulnerable populations, collecting information about the conditions of vulnerable populations, and working to overcome the distrust and hatred of the country's ethnic groups toward each other.

Many Georgian NGOs were formed to address the needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs). Women's IDP groups are "quite vocal in drawing attention to the need for social and economic support for the IDP community."<sup>49</sup> These groups are also active in finding solutions to their problems. The most prominent are: the IDP Women's Group, the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association, the Women's Center of Abkhazia, the Association Moselni, and the Abkhazian Women's Council for Peace.<sup>50</sup>

One specific area that these groups focus on is health care. The IDP Women's Association, for example, has conducted a number of national surveys on the health conditions of displaced women and children.<sup>51</sup> Men are not mentioned in these studies, suggesting that their special needs may be excluded from consideration. Even if men are excluded, however, these NGOs are filling a gap in service provision to the most vulnerable populations.<sup>52</sup>

Conflict resolution is another abiding interest among Georgia's NGO community. Several groups have established multicultural peace camps for children, both in Georgia and abroad. Other efforts in small business development and computer skills attempt to improve the economic prospects of the most disadvantaged, including women.<sup>53</sup> These programs are intended to rebuild trust among the next generation of Georgians, as well as improve the population's opportunities for economic advancement.

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<sup>46</sup> USIA, "Hardships, Corruption, and Unresolved Conflicts Fuel Georgians' Discontent," 2, 3.

<sup>47</sup> Adrian Karatnycky, Alexander Motyl, and Charles Graybow, (eds.), *Nations in Transit 1998: Civil Society, Democracy and Markets in East Central Europe and the Newly Independent States*, (Washington, DC: Freedom House, 1999), 266.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>49</sup> Liza W. Poinier, *The New Civic Atlas: profiles of civil society in 60 countries*, (Washington, DC: CIVICUS, 1997), 56.

<sup>50</sup> Buck, *Women, War, and Displacement in Georgia*, 15.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>53</sup> Buck, *Women, War, and Displacement in Georgia*, 16.



## **Rule of Law**

Under Article 38 of the Georgian Constitution, “citizens of Georgia are equal in social, economic, cultural, and political aspects of life irrespective of their national, ethnic, religious, or linguistic affiliation.”<sup>54</sup> Article 21 of the Constitution guarantees the right of all citizens to own and inherit property. Although women and men enjoy equal rights under the Constitution of Georgia, there are several secondary laws that benefit women especially. The new Civil Code adopted on June 27, 1997 specifically addresses the rights of pregnant women, convicted women, juveniles, women against whom crimes have been committed, and mothers and children.<sup>55</sup>

Most people feel that at least some of their rights are protected by the new system of government. For example, 93 percent say they can practice religion freely, 91 percent say they can own private businesses, 87 percent say they are free to participate in multiparty elections, and 63 percent say they can openly criticize the government. They also believe that the government provides adequate protection for the rights of minorities, but that it has done a poor job safeguarding citizens’ political rights.<sup>56</sup>

In other areas, however, the government has not met citizens’ expectations. Only 43 percent of people think the media is free to report news without censorship. More importantly, most Georgians believe that police will act outside the law (95 percent) and that paying bribes is necessary to run businesses (90 percent). Only 17 percent of people believe that the law is enforced fairly all or most of the time, 51 percent feel it is enforced fairly sometimes, and 18 percent feel the law is never fairly enforced.<sup>57</sup>

## **Family Law**

Family law in Georgia purports to treat men and women equally. Georgia is party to the Convention on Giving Agreement on Marriage, Minimum Marriage Age and Registration of Marriage, so a person cannot be forced to marry and must meet a minimum age. If a couple wishes to divorce, they may do so, splitting all property acquired during their marriage. However, many women do not know they have equal rights under the new civil code and have been placed at economic disadvantage when a husband owns an unlimited liability corporation or decides to liquidate family property.<sup>58</sup> In spite of the equality afforded to them, the divorce rate dropped in the early 1990s since people could not afford to register for their divorces, so unofficial divorces became common.<sup>59</sup>

## **Labor Law**

<sup>54</sup> Gender Development Association, *Conditions of Women in Georgia*, 39.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>56</sup> USIA, “Hardships, Corruption, and Unresolved Conflicts Fuel Georgians’ Discontent,” 3, 2.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 1, 3.

<sup>58</sup> Gender Development Association, *Conditions of Women in Georgia*, 74.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

Georgian labor law also embraces the ideal of gender equality in principle. Georgia has acceded to several conventions that protect the rights of women in the workplace, including the Convention on Eradication of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the 1958 Convention Against Discrimination in the Spheres of Labor and Employment, and the Convention on Equal Remuneration for the Equal Amount of Work Performed by Men and Women.<sup>60</sup> If enforced, these should promote economic equality between men and women. There are, however, no equal opportunity regulations in force. In practice, this allows age and other forms of discrimination to be utilized against both men and women in hiring practices. Violence against women in the workplace is also a problem in Georgia, but often goes unreported because women do not wish to risk unemployment.<sup>61</sup>

### **Rights of IDPs**

Protecting the rights of IDPs has become another important legal issue in Georgia. IDPs do not have the same rights as Georgian citizens and therefore neither men nor women can expect adequate support if they are numbered among the IDP population. For instance, there is no mechanism for holding perpetrators of rape, torture, and other crimes against female IDPs responsible for their actions.<sup>62</sup>

### **Findings**

**Is there differential participation by women and men in the public sphere?** Women's representation in government bodies decreased with the elimination of quotas, down from approximately one third in legislative to 7.2 percent. The problems of democratization in Georgia probably stem more from executive dominance over both local government and the judiciary, not to mention coping with the aftermath of a brutal civil war. By comparison, issues of discrimination have assumed relatively little importance in Georgia in recent years.

In spite of low levels of confidence in the various branches of government, Georgians have a more optimistic outlook than most of their former compatriots. Forty-four percent say that things are going in the right direction, compared to 34 percent who say that they are not. There is also an important generation gap in Georgia. Among people under 30, 53 percent believe that the country is moving in the right direction. Only 37 percent of those over 60 share this optimism.<sup>63</sup>

**How is gender reflected in the development of civil society, especially NGOs?** In the civil sector, Georgia's NGOs are working to promote the interests of the nation's most vulnerable groups, especially among women, children, and refugees. By providing necessary services to those who fall through the government's safety net, and working toward reconciliation among ethnic groups, these NGOs are enjoying rather more success than their colleagues in other former Soviet republics. To some degree, further progress depends on the constituencies of these NGOs asserting their rights more vigorously.

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<sup>60</sup> Gender Development Association, *Conditions of Women in Georgia*, 72.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>63</sup> USIA, "Hardships, Corruption, and Unresolved Conflict Fuel Georgians' Discontent," 2-3.

**How has the rule of law been institutionalized and what impact is there on gender?** Both men and women in Georgia appear to be somewhat better off legally than they were under the Soviets. In spite of the Gender Development Association's statement that "women's rights are violated on every level and in every sphere,"<sup>64</sup> if women will not use the courts to fight violations, there is little more that the government can do. Most of the country's legislation treats men and women equally, if women do not receive preferential treatment. Labor laws could be strengthened to discourage discrimination (against both men and women) in the hiring process and to better protect women from violence in the workplace, but overall, the situation looks relatively hopeful for men and women in Georgia.

### ***Opportunities for Future Research***

**More information on the composition of local governments and the judiciary is needed.**

**More information on the services provided by NGOs and the composition of their staff and volunteers is needed.** This information would provide a more complete picture of political activity in Georgia and may provide helpful information to the government on how communities are solving their own problems.

**Information on the de facto exercise of rights is needed.** This information would enable the government and donors to target education program and stop gap measures to ensure equal treatment under the law.

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<sup>64</sup> Gender Development Association, *Conditions of Women in Georgia*, 5.

## THE SOCIAL TRANSITION

This section reports findings from major sources regarding the effects of the transition in Georgia on social benefits, poverty, pension reform, health, and education and explores these primary questions:

1. With the shredding of the social safety net, how have women versus men fared in access to / support from social programs?
2. Do data show women's poverty rates to be greater than men's?
3. What are the health-related impacts of the transition?
4. What differential impacts has pension reform had on men's and women's access to benefits?
5. What are salient changes in the state-funded education system since 1989/91?

This chapter reviews World Bank, UNDP, UNICEF, and other sources, and major findings are presented in the five sections that follow: Social Safety Net, Poverty, Pension Reform, Health Reform, and Education.

### *Social Safety Net*

As described in Chapter 5, The Social Transition, social safety net programs are of three general types: universal benefits, social insurance, and social assistance. Georgia's social safety net includes programs that fall into each of these three categories. Table 8.x lists Georgia's social safety net programs and briefly describes their eligibility requirements and benefits and points out the major gender differences.

Georgia's social safety net differs from those of most other E&E countries in three significant ways. First, Georgia retained old-age pensions but eliminated disability and survivorship pensions. Instead, social pensions are provided to individuals and families without other support. Second, retirement ages for men and women were raised by five years in 1997.<sup>65</sup> Men now can receive a pension at age 65, while women are eligible at age 60. Pensioners who continue working may be eligible for a means-tested pension. Third, cash sickness benefits have also been eliminated. While employers may voluntarily pay sickness benefits if a physician's certification of illness is received, they are under no obligation to do so.<sup>66</sup>

The social safety net in Georgia is gender-differentiated. Women receive preferential treatment in eligibility or benefits in two of six social safety net programs. Women are eligible for old-age pensions at an earlier age than men, and women receive maternity benefits. For unemployment benefits, women are eligible through age 60 and men through age 65, but this difference is a consequence of the age at which each becomes eligible for old-age pensions. On the whole, the Georgian social security system is more gender-blind than those in most other E&E countries. For instance, while women are eligible for pensions earlier than men, the pensions themselves are of equal value. Set at 14 lari per month, the

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<sup>65</sup> World Bank, *Georgia: Structural Reform Support Project*, Report No: 19373-GE (Washington: World Bank, 1999), 33.

<sup>66</sup> U.S. Social Security Administration, *Social Security Programs Throughout the World – 1999*, 138.

equivalent of about \$10, pensions in Georgia do not discriminate against lower-paid women by paying benefits as a percentage of previous wages. Similarly, unemployment benefits are set at a fixed rate and paid for only six months.<sup>67</sup>

Although not part of the standard social safety net, and presumably a temporary measure, a pension is paid to internally displaced persons (IDPs) of about \$8 per family member per month. Sixty percent of IDPs are unemployed and survive on these pensions in addition to income from the sale of possessions.<sup>68</sup> Because more than half of all IDPs are female, this special pension accrues primarily to women.

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 139.

<sup>68</sup> Tom Buck, *Women, War, and Displacement in Georgia*, Document Number PN-ACF-180 (Washington, DC: USAID, Research and Reference Services, 1999), 10-11, 15.

Table 8.10. Social Safety Net Program Eligibility and Benefits in Georgia

Program	Value		Eligibility	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
<i>Universal Benefits</i>				
<i>Social Insurance</i>				
Pension, Old-age	14 lari per month, regardless of length of employment.	Same.	Age 60. Earnings test for working pensioners.	Age 65. Earnings test for working pensioners.
Pension, Disability	None. Social pensions available.	Same.	Eliminated.	Same.
Pension, Survivorship	None. Social pensions available.	Same.	Eliminated.	Same.
Maternity	100% of wages. Payable for 4 months before confinement. Leave without pay for up to 8 weeks after confinement, and up to 3 years' leave without pay to care for newborn.	None.	Employees. No minimum qualifying period.	None.
Sickness (cash benefits)	None.	Same.	Eliminated.	Same.
Unemployment	11-14 lari per month, maximum of 6 months.	Same.	Aged 16-60. Registered at employment office; ability and willingness to work. Reduced benefits if worker discharged for violating discipline, quit work without good cause, violated conditions for job placement or training, or filed fraudulent claims.	Aged 16-65. Registered at employment office; ability and willingness to work. Reduced benefits if worker discharged for violating discipline, quit work without good cause, violated conditions for job placement or training, or filed fraudulent claims.

Program	Value		Eligibility	
	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>
Work Injury	No value given.	No value given.	Employed persons, no minimum qualifying period.	Same.
<b><i>Social Assistance</i></b>				
Family Allowances	Information not available from this source.			
Health Benefits	Medical care provided by government health providers.	Same.	Needy residents.	Same.
Social pension.	18 lari per month if single; 29 lari if family of 2 or more.	Same.	Needy aged, disabled and survivors. Need determined by local government authorities.	Same.

*Notes:* The data in this table were current as of January 1, 1999 (the latest version of the Social Security Administration's report). Italicized text indicates a gender difference in eligibility or benefits.

*Source:* U.S. Social Security Administration, *Social Security Programs Throughout the World – 1999*, 138-139.

## Poverty and Gender

### Overall Poverty

Using a World Bank-established poverty line based on household consumption levels, about 11 percent of Georgia's population is poor, and nine percent is very poor. The Georgian government's official poverty line, considered unrealistically generous by the World Bank, recognizes about a third of all Georgians as poor.<sup>69</sup>

A 1998 opinion poll conducted among Georgian adults found that 86 percent believe that the standard of living has worsened since 1988. A further 51 percent describe the current economic situation as fairly bad, while 38 percent see it as very bad.<sup>70</sup> These are the perceptions of a population beleaguered by war and dislocation. By 1998, 200,000, or four percent of Georgia's population, were still displaced by the nation's civil wars and living in temporary housing.<sup>71</sup> This fact has contributed considerably to popular perceptions of poverty. In reality, though, with only about 11 percent of Georgians living in poverty, the Georgian situation is not nearly as severe as that currently confronting many of the other former Soviet republics.

### Poverty and Gender

The most recent World Bank poverty assessment for Georgia provides quantitative data only for working age men and women (shown in Table 8.x). These data indicate that women are slightly less likely than men to be poor. The report, however, states, "Female-headed households are more likely to be poor than male-headed households. And when we consider jointly marital status, gender and poverty of individuals, the underprivileged position of women become more evident. Single women and women in unregistered wedlock have much higher risks of poverty than men in similar situations; and especially, single female pensioners (widows) are particularly vulnerable to poverty."<sup>72</sup>

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**Table 8.11. Poverty Rates for Working Age Adults in Georgia**

Female	Male
8.0	8.5

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Source: World Bank, *Georgia: Poverty and Income Distribution*, Report No. 19348-GE, Volume I: Main Report (Washington: World Bank, 1999), 6.

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### Other Correlates of Poverty

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<sup>69</sup> World Bank, *Georgia: Poverty and Income Distribution*, Report No. 19348-GE, Volume I: Main Report (Washington: World Bank, 1999), 1.

<sup>70</sup> Richard Dobson, *Hardships, Corruption, and Unresolved Conflicts Fuel Georgians' Discontent*, Opinion Analysis, M-188-98 (Washington, DC: USIA Office of Research and Media Reaction, 1998), 7.

<sup>71</sup> Buck, *Women, War, and Displacement in Georgia*, 9.

<sup>72</sup> World Bank, *Georgia: Poverty and Income Distribution*, 7.



In addition to gender, poverty correlates include displacement status, geography, education, and employment. IDP families are one of the poorest segments of society, with 75 percent of these families subsisting on less than half the government established minimum subsistence level.<sup>73</sup> More than half (53.5 percent) of IDPs are women,<sup>74</sup> and in more than 70 percent of IDP families women were the main sources of income.<sup>75</sup> Urban poverty is more pervasive and more severe than rural poverty, largely because rural dwellers have access to land that they can farm for income and consumption.<sup>76</sup> Education is inversely correlated with poverty, meaning that those with less education are more likely to be poor. However, this correlation is strong only for higher education. For the poor, there is little positive benefit to getting a secondary education.<sup>77</sup> Single pensioners are more likely to be poor: about 17 percent of urban single pensioners are poor, and more than 80 percent of these are also extremely poor.<sup>78</sup>

### ***Pension Reform***

In spite of low benefits and a high retirement age, the pension system in Georgia risks collapse.<sup>79</sup> With 900,000 pensioners, more than 16 percent of the population, and low contributions to the pension fund due to increased unemployment, decreasing wages, and tax evasion, the pension system is facing growing arrears.<sup>80</sup>

A 1999 Structural Adjustment Credit from the World Bank includes funding for pension reform. It is slated to support development of a pension strategy, technical assistance and training, development of an information management system, technical assistance to develop actuarial models, introduction of international accounting standards, evaluation of disability certification practices, and assistance in drafting pension legislation.<sup>81</sup> The work of pension reform is in the beginning stages, and, therefore, there has been little impact to date on either men or women. However, one conclusion appears clear already: that increases in permitted retirement ages are necessary to maintain the solvency of the pension system for all workers.

### ***Health Reform***

The impact of the transition on the health of Georgians has been mixed. Some basic health indicators for which we have time-series information show that health in Georgia has somewhat improved. Maternal mortality decreased, abortion rates decreased, and the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases decreased. Table 8.12 presents some basic health data, and these and other findings are discussed below.

<sup>73</sup> Buck, *Women, War, and Displacement in Georgia*, 15.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>76</sup> World Bank, *Georgia: Poverty and Income Distribution*, 2.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>79</sup> World Bank, *Georgia: Structural Reform Support Project*, 4.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 34-35.

**Table 8.12. Demographic and Health Indicators for Georgia<sup>82</sup>**

Maternal mortality (per 100,000 live births) <sup>83</sup>	<b>1990</b>		<b>1997</b>	
	20.5		19.2	
Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births) <sup>84</sup>	23			
Abortion rate (per 100 live births) <sup>85</sup>	<b>1990</b>		<b>1997</b>	
	65.9		45.0	
Contraceptive prevalence (RHS 1998)	--			
Total fertility rate (births per woman) <sup>86</sup>	1.9			
STD incidence (new cases of syphilis/gonorrhea per 100,000 population) <sup>87</sup>	<b>1989</b>		<b>1997</b>	
	76		64	
Life expectancy at birth <sup>88</sup>	<b>Female</b>		<b>Male</b>	
	<b>1990</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1997</b>
	76.1	--	68.7	--
Percent of population 65 and older in 1997 <sup>89</sup>	12.0%			

Sources: As indicated in the footnotes.

### Life Expectancy

According to the most recent information available, life expectancy in Georgia has declined from 76 years in 1989 to about 68 years, as reported by the Gender Development Association.<sup>90</sup> It is not clear, however, whether this figure reflects an average of all Georgians, or simply all Georgian women. UNDP figures for average life expectancy at birth in 1997 come in at 72.7, while the MONEE database has no data on life expectancy beyond 1990. Despite these declining numbers, the proportion of

<sup>82</sup> General note on sources: The major sources used for purposes of cross-country comparisons are from the MONEE and UNDP reports cited below, because they have data for most countries. MONEE is preferred for maternal mortality data because it is the most up-to-date comparable source of data. For infant mortality, UNDP is the preferred source for two reasons: a) UNDP data concords most closely with DHS data, for the three countries for which DHS surveys have been done; and b) data for six of the study countries cited in the MONEE database are based on Soviet rather than WHO definitions of infant death, impairing comparability. In some cases MONEE figures are significantly different (usually lower) than UNDP figures. Only the MONEE database provides reasonably complete and comparable data on abortion rates, STD incidence and life expectancy by sex. UNDP is the preferred source for total fertility rates because it concords most closely with DHS data in the cases in which it is available. Contraceptive prevalence sources identified are: Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), reproductive health surveys (RHS), UNDP Human Development Report (UNDP), Population Reference Bureau (PRB), Russia Longitudinal Monitoring Survey (RLMS). The year is specified when known.

<sup>83</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 119.

<sup>84</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, 169.

<sup>85</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 118.

<sup>86</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, 198.

<sup>87</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 131.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 123-124.

<sup>89</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, 198.

<sup>90</sup> Gender Development Association, *Conditions of Women in Georgia* (Tbilisi, Georgia: Gender Development Association, 1999).

population aged 65 or older in Georgia is quite high at 12 percent.<sup>91</sup> Among the population aged 60 and over in 1993, there were 1.6 times more women than men. In some regions, a tenth of residents are old people alone, the majority of whom are women.<sup>92</sup>

### **Maternal Mortality**

Information on maternal mortality varies. According to MONEE data, which may be understated, maternal mortality has fluctuated over the transition period, from 10.1 in 1991 to a high of 33.7 in 1995. The 1997 ratio (deaths per 100,000 live births) is 19.2.<sup>93</sup> Figures mentioned in a recent Georgian report are substantially higher, 38 for 1990 and 70 for 1997, but the calculation basis is not clear.<sup>94</sup> A 1994 World Bank draft report indicates an average 1990-93 maternal mortality ratio of 39.<sup>95</sup> It is common for rates based on less than 50 deaths per year to fluctuate (in 1997, 37 deaths were recorded). The leading causes of maternal death were hemorrhage and thrombo-embolia. Less than 10 percent (3 women in 1997) died as a result of legal abortion.<sup>96</sup>

### **Abortion**

The abortion rate (per 100 live births) increased over the earlier part of the transition period to a high of 85.4 in 1994, then began to decline to a level of 45.0 in 1997.<sup>97</sup> However, these statistics only include legal abortions. There are no recent data on illegal abortion in Georgia, but in the 1980s it was estimated that illegal abortions may have outnumbered legal ones by more than 300 percent.<sup>98</sup> The risk of death is much higher for illegal abortion, and such deaths are unlikely to be accurately registered.

### **Contraception**

There is no recent, comparable information on contraceptive prevalence. In 1992, 25 percent of women used modern contraception. Of these, 18.2 percent used the IUD and only 0.52 percent used hormonal methods. In 1993, among women referred to the Institute of Human Reproduction for contraception, about 85 percent used some modern method (IUDs, oral contraceptives, spermicides and condoms) while the remaining 15 percent used traditional methods (withdrawal, rhythm, vaginal douches). Compared to five years earlier, this represents a 19 percent decrease in use of traditional methods.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>91</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999* (Oxford University Press, 1999), 198.

<sup>92</sup> Gender Development Association, *Conditions of Women in Georgia*.

<sup>93</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 119.

<sup>94</sup> Gender Development Association, *Conditions of Women in Georgia*.

<sup>95</sup> Joana Godinho, *Reproductive Health in Transition Economies: A Four-Country Study* (draft) (Washington: World Bank, 1994), i.

<sup>96</sup> Gender Development Association, *Conditions of Women in Georgia*.

<sup>97</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 118.

<sup>98</sup> Godinho, *Reproductive Health in Transition Economies: A Four-Country Study*, 39.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

The generally low use of contraception is associated, among other factors, with lack of access to modern methods because of their high cost and resistance among physicians. At the same time, one must consider the absence of consumer pressure in Georgia that is linked to a lack of knowledge and negative opinions about modern contraception. Further, while abortion is usually free, consumers must pay for contraceptives and are not reimbursed. In 1993, when the average monthly salary was US\$0.66, a box of 10 condoms cost between 20 and 40 cents, a one-month supply of oral contraceptives cost 35 to 83 cents, and an IUD insertion cost about \$10.<sup>100</sup>

### **Fertility**

The Georgian birth rate dropped during the 1990s to well below replacement level. The 1997 crude birth rate is 9.7 births per 1000 population, a steep decline from the 1990 rate of 17.1. The adolescent fertility rate also declined, from 60.2 (births per 1000 women aged 15-19) in 1990 to 46.6 in 1997.<sup>101</sup> The total fertility rate (births per woman) is 1.9 according to UNDP data.<sup>102</sup> The decline in births has varied by region, dropping most markedly in the areas affected by political and military conflicts. A sharp decline in the marriage rate has also affected births. While in 1990, 8.8 (per 1000 population) were married; by 1997, the marriage rate had declined to 3.2.<sup>103</sup> The basic reason for this decline was the unprecedented reduction in economic resources needed to establish families during the crisis period. Emigration has also affected the birth rate. On the one hand, many men are emigrating to find work abroad. On the other hand, an increasing number of single women have left the country, also for economic reasons, thus diminishing the potential marriage and reproduction pool. For this reason there is currently a deficit of 20-30 year old women in Georgia, compared to the corresponding cohort of young adult men.<sup>104</sup>

### **Infant Mortality**

Infant health is an indicator of the nation's overall health status, since the condition of children is strongly tied to the adequacy of their care and nutrition. The infant mortality rate for 1997 was higher than the rate in 1990: according to MONEE data, 17.3 (per 1000 live births), compared to 15.8.<sup>105</sup> UNDP data puts the 1997 rate even higher at 23.<sup>106</sup> In 1997 the stillbirth rate (per 1000 births) was 20.4, the highest in the region.<sup>107</sup>

### **Child Mortality**

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 44, 47.

<sup>101</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 114.

<sup>102</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, 198.

<sup>103</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 127.

<sup>104</sup> Gender Development Association, *Conditions of Women in Georgia*.

<sup>105</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 119.

<sup>106</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, 169.

<sup>107</sup> Gender Development Association, *Conditions of Women in Georgia*.

Another factor working to alter the gender balance seems to be linked to parents favoring boys over girls. While females under age five are at a lower risk of death than males, and the survival of girls is generally better than that of boys, the gap has been narrowing. This suggests that males are benefiting more than females from a decline in child mortality.<sup>108</sup> There is also evidence of a change in the birth ratio of males to females. During the transition, the ratio gradually changed to the advantage of boys. While the normal ratio was about 105-106 boys for every 100 girls, by 1996 the ratio had reached 112.5 boys for every 100 girls. It is likely that the cause of this phenomenon is the use of early gender diagnostic procedures during pregnancy, leading to greater abortion of female fetuses.<sup>109</sup>

### Nutrition

Georgia's economic transition has created numerous health problems, beginning with a decline in average nutrition. According to UNDP, the average daily calorie supply in 1996 was 2,184.<sup>110</sup> A Georgian study put calorie consumption at 1,700. By WHO standards, consumption below 2,400 calories implies hunger.<sup>111</sup>

One result of lower nutritional intake has been an increase in anemia among Georgians of all ages. The general prevalence of anemia in 1993, two years after the start of the transition, was said to be about 30 percent.<sup>112</sup> The percentage of live births complicated by anemia increased to four percent in 1997, twice the two percent rate registered in 1989. The incidence of low-weight births has also increased, from 4.9 percent of total births in 1990 to 7.0 percent in 1997.<sup>113</sup>

### Mortality

Among adult men circulatory diseases are by far the largest cause of death, followed by neoplasms, traumas, and digestive diseases.<sup>114</sup> For women, the major causes are circulatory diseases, neoplasms and respiratory diseases.<sup>115</sup>

Cancer incidence is on the rise. Compared with 1996, the number of patients registered at first diagnosis in 1997 increased by 48 percent, and the proportion of women among them was 18.6 percent higher. The gender difference is mainly due to a high percentage of breast cancer (34 percent of cancer patients) and reproductive tract cancers (23.5 percent). On the other hand, the lung/trachea/bronchi cancer rate for males in 1997, 19.8 (per 100,000), was much higher than for females, 2.9.<sup>116</sup> Smoking patterns have changed, however, which is likely to result in higher female respiratory system cancer rates in the future.

<sup>108</sup> Godinho, *Reproductive Health in Transition Economies: A Four-Country Study*, 37.

<sup>109</sup> Gender Development Association, *Conditions of Women in Georgia*.

<sup>110</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, 212.

<sup>111</sup> Gender Development Association, *Conditions of Women in Georgia*.

<sup>112</sup> Godinho, *Reproductive Health in Transition Economies: A Four-Country Study*, 29.

<sup>113</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 68.

<sup>114</sup> Gender Development Association, *Conditions of Women in Georgia*.

<sup>115</sup> Godinho, *Reproductive Health in Transition Economies*, 53.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, Table 9, annex.

### **Lifestyle-Related Issues**

According to a study carried out among 17-30 year olds in the mid-1990s by the Institute on Addiction, it was estimated that smoking prevalence was around 40 percent for females and between 40-50 percent for males. In 1995 smoking was estimated to have been the cause of seven percent of deaths, almost all among males. Cancer from tobacco use is believed to cause 1 in 5 male deaths in middle age (35 to 69) and about 1 in 3 female deaths.<sup>117</sup>

Drug addiction is becoming an increasing problem, mainly for men. About two percent of registered addicts are women. However, women appear to be increasingly involved in drug distribution: while 54 women were found to be engaged in illegal drug distribution in 1996, by 1997 the number increased to 111.

### **Sexually Transmitted Diseases**

The incidence of sexually transmitted disease has decreased, according to UNICEF MONEE data. In 1997, of the 2,172 registered cases of all forms of syphilis, 35 percent of the patients were women. Of 1,245 cases of gonorrhea, about 16 percent were women. Partial data for 1998 indicate that 48 HIV/AIDS cases were registered, including four women, about eight percent. However, experts believe that AIDS incidence is understated in Georgia. Most HIV carriers and AIDS patients belong to high-risk groups of drug addicts, people having random sexual relations, and blood recipients.<sup>118</sup> According to UNDP data, there were 0.4 AIDS cases per 100,000 population in 1997. No sex-disaggregated data are available.

### **Health Care**

Health services tend to be over-staffed, but with poorly paid health professionals who need training in modern public health and clinical care. Essential drugs and other supplies are missing, as well as basic equipment. Buildings are badly deteriorated. Required co-payments and transportation problems are barriers to access, since much of the population is unable to pay for medical services.<sup>119</sup>

Recognizing these problems, attempts have been made to reform the health care system, particularly with regard to prenatal and infant health care. A "safe motherhood" program was initiated, to allow every pregnant woman four free consultations, including necessary tests. Delivery is supposed to be free of charge, with expenses covered by state medical insurance. According to official statistics from 1993, more than 97 percent of pregnant women received prenatal care. However, other sources

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<sup>117</sup> World Health Organization, Tobacco or Health Programme, *Tobacco or Health: A Global Status Report, Country Profiles by Region, 1997* (<http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/who/whofirst.htm>).

<sup>118</sup> Gender Development Association, *Conditions of Women in Georgia*.

<sup>119</sup> Godinho, *Reproductive Health in Transition Economies*, 67-68.

suggested a drop in coverage to 64 percent in 1992.<sup>120</sup> Statistics indicate that 95 percent of births are attended by trained staff.<sup>121</sup>

However, since medical salaries often go unpaid, and insurance payments are delayed, providers are often forced to demand compensation under the table. Even when women know about the free services they are entitled to – and many do not know or do not register in time to qualify for insurance coverage – they do not use them because they do not have the resources to pay informally. Consequently, many people go without care or seek out traditional forms of treatment.<sup>122</sup>

## ***Education and Gender***

### **Access**

Access to education, according to the World Bank, is now unequal for the rich and the poor. While education through the ninth grade is free and mandatory, informal fees for school repairs, heating, books, students' breakfasts, and transportation make school less affordable for poor families. Moreover, government expenditures on education fell from 6.1 percent of GDP in 1990 to 1.3 percent (see Table 8.13). As a result, formal tuition fees have been instituted for grades ten and eleven. At 10 lari per month, the fees make attendance by poor children almost impossible since average income for poor families is 20 lari per month. Currently, only about 20 percent of children aged 16 and 17 from poor families are students, compared to 78 percent of those from non-poor families. Only six percent of higher education students come from poor families.<sup>123</sup> Indeed, internally-displaced children, one of the poorest groups in Georgia, rarely attend school at all, especially in the winter, because of the lack of adequate clothing.<sup>124</sup>

**Table 8.13. Public Expenditures on Education in Georgia,  
As a Percent of GDP**

1990	1991	1994	1997
6.1	6.4	0.5	1.3

*Source:* UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition, Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 135.

### **Enrollment**

Data from the UNICEF MONEE Project show that enrollments decreased at the kindergarten, primary, and secondary levels during the transition. At the tertiary level, enrollment stayed about the

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>121</sup> World Bank, 1999 World Development Indicators, <http://genderstats.worldbank.org/menu.asp>.

<sup>122</sup> Gender Development Association, *Conditions of Women in Georgia*.

<sup>123</sup> World Bank, *Georgia: Poverty and Income Distribution*, 10.

<sup>124</sup> Buck, *Women, War, and Displacement in Georgia*, 14.

same. These data are shown in Table 8.14 for 1989 and the latest available year (note that for secondary enrollments, 1995 is the latest year).

**Table 8.14. School Enrollment in Georgia, Percent of Relevant Population**

Kindergarten		Primary		Secondary		Tertiary	
1989	1997	1989	1996	1989	1995	1989	1997
43.8	20.4	95.2	80.7	40.2	24.0	14.3	14.4

Source: UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition, Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 133-134.

Sex-disaggregated data from the World Bank indicate that female students made up slightly less than half of primary and secondary enrollments in 1996. Male students' enrollment at the tertiary level decreased between 1980 and 1996 from 53 to 49 percent. Table 8.15 presents these data.

**Table 8.15. Female School Enrollments in Georgia, As a Percent of Total**

Primary		Secondary		Tertiary	
1980	1996	1980	1996	1980	1996
--	48	--	49	47	51

Note: -- indicates data are not available.

Source: World Bank, *1999 World Development Indicators*.

## Findings

**With the shredding of the social safety net, how have women versus men fared in access to / support from social programs?** On the whole, the Georgian social security system is more gender-blind than those in most other E&E countries. Women receive preferential treatment in only two of six social benefit programs.

**Do data show women's poverty rates to be greater than men's?** The data are not clear. The World Bank, in its most recent poverty assessment, provides quantitative data for working-age men and women that show slightly lower rates of poverty for women than men. However, in the text, the writers state that female-headed households are more likely than male-headed households to be poor, as are single women and single female pensioners, in particular.

**What are the health-related impacts of the transition?** The health impacts of the transition have been mixed: life expectancy decreased and hunger increased, while maternal mortality, abortion, and sexually transmitted diseases all decreased. Sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, are more likely to affect men.

**What differential impacts has pension reform had on men's and women's access to benefits?** To date, Georgia has raised the retirement age for both men and women, but women maintain the right



to earlier retirement than men. With the exception of raising the retirement age, the work of pension reform is in the beginning stages, and, therefore, there has been little impact to date on either men or women.

**What are salient changes in the state-funded education system since 1989/91?** Formal and informal education fees have made education more difficult for poor families. Enrollments at the kindergarten, primary, and secondary levels have decreased during the transition while tertiary enrollments stayed about the same. Female students account for slightly less than half of primary and secondary enrollments, and 51 percent of tertiary enrollments.

### *Opportunities for Future Research*

**Research on raising the retirement age in Georgia would provide needed information for other countries implementing pension reform.** Georgia has one of the highest retirement age in the region after raising the age five years for men and women in 1997. Data on how this increase affected the pension system and pensioners would provide needed policy information and help other countries evaluate their pension systems.

**The narrowing of the gender gap in infant mortality should be studied to determine whether this trend is continuing and why.** Although females under five were still at lower risk of dying than males, the normal gap had narrowed, indicating that males were benefiting more than females from declines in children's mortality.



## Chapter 9: Kazakhstan



### Basic Indicators

For additional information, please see Country Data Table in the Appendix.

<i>Demographics</i>			
Population <sup>1</sup> (1998)	15,642,000; 8,039,000 female (51.4%)		
Rural / Urban <sup>2</sup>	Urban 61%		
Ethnic composition <sup>3</sup>	Kazakh (Qazaq) 46%, Russian 34.7%, Ukrainian 4.9%, German 3.1%, Uzbek 2.3%, Tatar 1.9%, other 7.1% (1996)		
<i>Economic Growth and Development</i>			
GDP per capita (all in 1987\$) <sup>4</sup>	<b>1985</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1997</b>
	\$NA	\$1,782	\$1,015
GDP per capita (PPP for 1997) <sup>4</sup>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	
	\$2,804	\$4,358	
Registered Unemployment Rate <sup>1</sup>	<b>1992</b>	<b>1997</b>	
	0.4%	3.9%	
<i>Democracy and Governance</i>			
Women in Parliament <sup>5</sup>	11.6%		
Women in Ministerial Positions <sup>6</sup>	6.7%		
<i>Social Transition</i>			
Life Expectancy by Sex(1999 est.) <sup>3</sup>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Average</b>
	69.13 years	57.92 years	63.39 years
Combined first, second, and third level gross school enrollment ratio (1997) <sup>4</sup>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	
	79%	74%	
Population below poverty line <sup>2</sup>	35%		

Sources: 1) UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*.

2) World Bank Country Data (<http://wbi0018.worldbank.org/eca/eca.nsf>).

3) CIA World Factbook 1999 (<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>).

4) UNDP Human Development Indicators 1999.

5) Inter Parliamentary Union website, <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

- 6) CIA Chiefs of State and Cabinet Members website, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/chiefs/index.html> and Women in Governments website, <http://hjem.get2net.dk/Womeningovernments/>.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### ***The Economic Transition***

- Participation rates of women have fallen from 47-49 percent to about 45 percent of the total labor force. Jobs occupied by women during the transition fell by 22.7 percent.
- Women earn 75.5 percent of men's wages, and female employment is clustered in lower-paying jobs.
- Unemployment is 8-12 percent when under-employment and hidden unemployment are taken into account. In 1996, women made up 63 percent of the officially unemployed.
- No quantitative sex-disaggregated data are available on the informal economy. Qualitative data suggest women comprise a large portion of the informal economy.
- In 1994, 79.7 percent of all working women were public employees compared to 59.7 percent of all working men. Privatization of public enterprises, therefore, disproportionately affected women.
- Few sex-disaggregated data on management and entrepreneurialism exist. One statistic from the Asian Development Bank indicates that men make up 85 percent of directors of new private businesses.

### ***The Democratic Transition***

- Although women have lost seats in parliament since independence, their numbers have rebounded somewhat and women have consistently improved their representation in legislative bodies. Political power, however, is increasingly concentrated in the executive branch.
- NGOs are strictly regulated in Kazakhstan, and these regulations may prevent NGOs from engaging in activities that could benefit their constituents.
- Rule of law has not been firmly established in Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan's Constitution does not effectively safeguard individual rights.

### ***The Social Transition***

- Six social benefit programs in Kazakhstan specifically target women.
- Female-headed households are less likely to be poor than male-headed households.
- Life expectancy declined for both men and women.
- Women continue to receive favorable retirement eligibility under pension reform.
- Enrollments in kindergarten, primary, and secondary schools declined, but there does not seem to be a gender dimension to this decline.

## Country Overview

**Introduction:** Kazakhstan, formerly a constituent (union) republic of the U.S.S.R., declared independence on December 16, 1991. While Kazakhstan was not considered by authorities in the former Soviet Union to be a part of Central Asia, it does have physical and cultural geographic characteristics similar to those of the other Central Asian countries. It is bounded on the northwest and north by Russia, on the east by China, and on the south by Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and the Aral Sea; the Caspian Sea bounds Kazakhstan to the southwest. Kazakhstan's 1,052,100 square miles (2,724,900 square kilometres) make it by far the largest state in Central Asia and the ninth largest in the world. The capital is Astana.

**People:** The Kazaks are a nominally Muslim people who speak a Turkic language of the Northwest or Kipchak (Qipchaq) group. Fewer than one-fifth of the more than eight million ethnic Kazaks live outside Kazakhstan, mainly in Uzbekistan and Russia. During the 19th century about 400,000 Russians flooded into Kazakhstan, and these were supplemented by about 1,000,000 Slavs, Germans, Jews, and others who immigrated to the region during the first third of the 20th century. The immigrants crowded Kazaks off the best pastures and watered lands, rendering many tribes destitute. Another large influx of Slavs occurred from 1954 to 1956 as a result of the Virgin and Idle Lands project, initiated by the Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev, himself a Slav. This project drew thousands of Russians and Ukrainians into the rich agricultural lands of northern Kazakhstan. By 1989, however, Kazaks slightly outnumbered Russians.

**Government:** Kazakhstan's first postindependence constitution was adopted in 1993, replacing the Soviet-era constitution that had been in force since 1978; a new constitution was approved in 1995. The 1995 constitution provided for legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government dominated by a strong executive. The constitution specifies a number of rights to the citizens of Kazakhstan, including freedom of speech, religion, and movement. Citizens have the right to work, to own property, and to form trade unions. Despite the democratic language in both the constitutions of 1993 and 1995, in the early years of independence Kazakhstan became increasingly authoritarian. The country's first parliamentary elections (1994) were declared illegal by what was then the Constitutional Court. This precipitated the drafting of the 1995 constitution, which expanded the already substantial powers granted to the president by the 1993 constitution.

**Education:** Kazakhstan moved to influence profoundly the future course of education in 1989 when it declared Kazakh the official language of the republic, though in the 1995 constitution Russian was also officially acknowledged. Prior to independence, Russian generally served as the language of government and of education in the Kazakh S.S.R. Many younger Kazaks, educated entirely in Russian, scarcely know the traditional language of their people. A major reorganization of the curricula and redesign of textbooks began in the years after 1989. The study of Kazakh history, literature, and culture, long slighted in general education, now receives appropriate attention in school curricula. The institutes in the Kazakhstan Academy of Sciences (founded 1946) focus their research on subjects important to Kazakhstan, in science as well as in the humanities.

**Health and Welfare:** Housing, medical care, and other services are inadequate, despite large outlays by municipalities and the republic to keep up with the expanding population. Housing and other shortages exacerbate ethnic tension between Kazaks, Russians, Uighurs, and other city dwellers, tensions that equitable distribution can partly alleviate. Rates of infant and maternal morbidity and mortality, though lower than in other Central Asian republics, are far higher in Kazakhstan than in Western countries because of an unbalanced diet, environmental pollution, and inadequate prenatal care. Life expectancy is low compared with the West. Although sanatoriums and hospitals exist in many locations, they dispense a level of medical care far below that considered standard in the West. Public health suffers greatly in heavily industrialized areas, such as Qaraghandy province, owing to the fact that Soviet authorities never seriously made environmental protection a high priority.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter explores the economic, democratic, and social transitions in Kazakhstan. Each section seeks to answer a set of research questions which are set out at the beginning of the sections. In addition to subsections addressing each of the research questions, each section includes a subsection on findings and opportunities for future research.

## THE ECONOMIC TRANSITION

This section seeks to answer the following questions as they relate to Kazakhstan:

1. Have there been changes in labor force participation by women and men during the transition?
2. Is there evidence for wage gap trends and wage differentials?
3. Has unemployment increased, whether official or hidden, and is there a gender dimension to unemployment?
4. How has the growth of the informal economy reflected gender differentiation?
5. What is the impact of privatization of state enterprises on women's and men's employment?
6. What role do women play in new managerial positions or business formation in the growing private sector?

In the subsections below we discuss GDP, labor force participation, unemployment, the informal economy, and privatization and present data on each of these issues as they relate to gender. Our findings on the impact of the economic transition on gender are presented in the concluding subsection.

Since the transition away from a centrally planned socialist economy, Kazakhstan has experienced a substantial loss in employment and an increase in poverty. However, the economic outcomes have not affected all parties equally, and a gender-differentiated treatment of the evidence is particularly useful. Observers have already witnessed rising tensions for women in the workforce and at home, displayed in increasing cases of female suicide, prostitution, drug abuse, alcoholism, and criminality.<sup>1</sup> Teenage pregnancy has also risen, against the general decline in birthrates, by 150 percent between 1991 and 1994, and births to single mothers makes up a large portion of this group.<sup>2</sup> These indicators suggest that women may have been selectively disfavored by changes in the country's economy, social, and political structure. Observers from the Asian Development Bank have linked gender inequalities in society and in the economy with constraints on labor mobility, inappropriate information about the labor market, and the effects of intra-household labor allocations.<sup>3</sup> We aim to assess these potential inequities, and to form a more complete story of the post-communist transition process.

### *Contextual Information about the Economy*

Despite recent gains, the Kazakh economy has suffered tremendous output losses linked to inflation, unemployment, emigration, and privatization since its declaration of independence on December 16, 1991. Market-oriented reforms began in 1993; but the state sector continued to dominate the economy, leading to a ballooning government debt and mounting inflation which didn't slow down until

<sup>1</sup> Guisara Tlenchieva, "Discrimination Against Women Increasing in Kazakhstan," *Surviving Together*, Spring 1996, 14.

<sup>2</sup> Armin Bauer, Nina Boschmann, and David Green, *Women and Gender Relations in Kazakhstan: the Social Cost* (Manila: Asian Development Bank, 1997), 10.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

1996.<sup>4</sup> In addition, observers estimate that economic shocks have been slow-growing and will continue to worsen as the state sheds more and more of its industrial affiliations.

Nevertheless, the country has suffered severe losses already. The period 1990 to 1992 witnessed serious stagflation as real output fell by 30 percent and inflation rose 20-30 percent. Investments and real wages declined while unemployment and absolute poverty increased dramatically.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, the Asian Development Bank calculated that average wages were halved between 1990 and 1995.<sup>6</sup> As a result, the World Bank has estimated the 35 percent of the country's residents currently live below the poverty line.<sup>7</sup> Not surprisingly, the United Nations Development Program's Human Development Index recalibrated Kazakhstan's position, falling from .873 in 1990 to .681 in 1995<sup>8</sup> (it stood at .740 in 1997, the most recent figure available).<sup>9</sup>

**Table 9.1. Per Capita GDP**

Per Capita GDP (1987 US\$)*			Female real GDP per capita (1997 PPP\$)*	Male real GDP per capita (1997 PPP\$)*
1975	1988	1997	1997	1997
1,880	1,922	1,015	2,804	4,358

*Source:* UNDP, Human Development Indicators, 1999. Note that the per capita GDP (the first three columns) are calculated in constant 1987 dollars for cross-year comparability, while the real GDP per capita by sex for 1997 is presented in purchasing power parities, as measured by the World Bank in surveys by the International Comparison Programme.

**The collapse of state socialism in Kazakhstan has precipitated a dramatic economic downturn.** Figures show the decline to have been more debilitating than that experienced by Western industrialized states during the Great Depression.<sup>10</sup> Over the last decade Kazakhstan has experienced an annual economic decline averaging 7.7 percent, resulting in a projected GDP in 1998 that is only 64 percent of that achieved in 1989 (Table 10.2).<sup>11</sup> By 1994 minimum wage stood at 15 percent of its January 1992 level, and by 1995, real GDP had fallen to 46 percent of its 1990 value.<sup>12</sup> The output loss has also been aggravated by emigration (see below). Women have borne much of the brunt of this economic crisis owing to widespread discrimination in the workplace, professional and marital status, age and work status, and geographical location.

<sup>4</sup> USAID Country Profile (<http://www.info.usaid.gov/countries/kz/kaz.htm>), 1; and World Bank Country Brief (<http://www.wbln0018.worldbank.org>), 1.

<sup>5</sup> Gyorgy Sziracki, *Emerging Labour Market Policy in Kazakhstan*, Labour Market Papers No. 3 (Geneva: International Labour Office, 1995), 1.

<sup>6</sup> Armin Bauer, Boschmann, and Green, *Women and Gender Relations in Kazakhstan*, 2.

<sup>7</sup> World Bank Country Brief: Armenia, <http://wbln0018.worldbank.org>.

<sup>8</sup> Bauer, Boschmann, and Green, *Women and Gender Relations in Kazakhstan*, 2.

<sup>9</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999* (New York: Oxford University Press), 134.

<sup>10</sup> Valerie Bunce, "The Political Economy of Postsocialism," *Slavic Review*, Vol. 38, No. 4 (Winter 1999), 764.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Jeni Klugman and Kinnon Scott, "Measuring Labor Market Status in Kazakhstan," in Jane Falkingham, ed., *Household Welfare in Central Asia* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 118.



**Table 9.2. Change in Real GDP, 1989-1998 (1989=100)**

1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
100.0	99.6	86.7	84.1	76.4	66.8	61.3	61.6	62.8	63.5

Source: UNDP, Human Development Indicators, 1999.

### ***Labor Force Participation***

World Bank figures report that the labor force participation by Kazakh women remains at a high level. Labor market participation rates in Kazakhstan compare favorably with those of Western Europe even after the collapse of the Soviet system. From 1990 to 1995 the participation rates by women have fallen from 47-49 percent to about 45 percent of the total labor force. For those women aged 30-50, labor force participation exceeds 90 percent.<sup>13</sup> Yet since 1990 there has been a loss of women's jobs in every sector of the economy. The number of employed women decreased from 3.2 million in 1990 to less than 2.5 million in 1994. In total, the number of jobs occupied by women fell by 22.7 percent in these four years, while the number of jobs occupied by men fell by 10.2 percent.<sup>14</sup> Women were dismissed most often, too: in 1995, 80 percent of employees fired from their jobs were women.<sup>15</sup>

It is difficult to locate more recent data that sheds greater insight on the current participation of women in the economy. UNDP figures suggest that, in spite of the economic contraction, women have maintained their *relative* participation rate; if we index on 1985, the 1997 figure is 101 percent of the former year.<sup>16</sup>

Outward migration, mostly of ethnic Russians, has also played a role in the overall shift in the labor force, although the gender implications of this are unclear. Between 1990 and 1992 alone, 359,100 people, mainly highly trained professionals and skilled workers, left the country.<sup>17</sup> By 1995, approximately 10 percent of the labor force had emigrated.<sup>18</sup> Combined with loss of demand for production and loss of state funds, this trend led to a fall off in the nation's registered employed from 6.5 million in 1990 to 4.3 million in 1995.<sup>19</sup> Yet even that figure must be taken with caution; official figures still had 6.7 million employed (of a total labor force of 9.4 million) in 1994<sup>20</sup> and 6.3 million in 1998.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Bauer, Boschmann, and Green, *Women and Gender Relations in Kazakhstan*, 21. Recall that labor market participation includes the employed and the unemployed seeking work.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 25-26.

<sup>15</sup> Tlenchieva, "Discrimination Against Women," 14.

<sup>16</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, 234.

<sup>17</sup> Sziraczki, *Emerging Labor Market Policy in Kazakhstan*, 7.

<sup>18</sup> Bauer, Boschmann, and Green, *Women and Gender Relations in Kazakhstan*, 9.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>20</sup> Klugman and Scott, "Measuring Labor Market Status in Kazakhstan," 128.

<sup>21</sup> Agency on Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan, "Main socio-economic indicators," [www.asdc.kz/kazstat/fr1e.html](http://www.asdc.kz/kazstat/fr1e.html).

**Table 9.3. Labor Force Participation**

Labor Force Participation (ratio f/m)		Labor Force Participation (% of total labor force)			
1970	1997	1980		1998	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
0.9	0.9	52	48	53	47

Source: World Bank, 1999 World Development Indicators.

### *Unemployment*

Gross unemployment statistics offer a crude sketch of the economic situation, and reflect the downsizing of state industries, as well as the economy's overall stagnation. The effects of unemployment of women are particularized to certain sectors. Recorded unemployment in 1993 was estimated at 3 percent, a healthy figure that was the product of a huge fall-off in wages. In many firms, such a high degree of labor retention was possible because wages were not being adjusted to the hyperinflation.<sup>22</sup> Even in 1993, though, 70 percent of those unemployed were reported to be women. At the same time, unemployment has been a regionally sensitive phenomenon in Kazakhstan, showing very low incidences in the northern and central regions compared with as many as 10 unemployed per vacant position in the areas of Almaty, Atyrau, Western Kazakhstan, Pavlodar, Verny, Taldy Korgan, and Southern Kazakhstan. This trend points to a long-term need for major demographic relocations, which will undoubtedly be inhibited by the system of internal passports and by disincentives like severance pay.<sup>23</sup> More recently, unemployment figures have been recalculated at 8-12 percent or higher when under-employment and hidden employment are factored into the question.<sup>24</sup> Estimates for 1998 have 1 million unemployed, of whom only 252,000 are officially registered.<sup>25</sup> For 1996, the only year that figures are available disaggregated by sex for the officially unemployed, 63 percent were women.<sup>26</sup>

The figures that show an unequal distribution of the burden of unemployment on women begs the question: why women? In fact, there are strong indicators that status, sectoral distribution, and structural differences between men and women account for much of the bias in unemployment outcomes. Women have tended to concentrate in state-run social service work, despite trends toward the growth of the private sector. In 1994, 79.7 percent of all working women were public employees, as opposed to 59.7 percent of all working men.<sup>27</sup>

Redundancy seems to be the norm within female-dominated sectors as well, as 61.3 percent of all laid-off workers were women in 1993. The first people downsized from a previously state-run industry or communal farm are inevitably the service employees—canteen operators, nurses childcare workers—

<sup>22</sup> Sziraczki, *Emerging Labor Market Policy in Kazakhstan*, 2.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 5, 7, 13.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 6; see also World Bank Country Profile, 1.

<sup>25</sup> Agency on Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan, "Main socio-economic indicators," [www.asdc.kz/kazstat/fr1e.html](http://www.asdc.kz/kazstat/fr1e.html).

<sup>26</sup> ILO, Laborsta Database, <http://laborsta.ilo.org/>, Table 3A for Kazakhstan.

<sup>27</sup> Klugman and Scott, "Measuring Labor Market Status in Kazakhstan," 130.

who were not necessarily seen as critical to the maintenance of production. Moreover, remaining structural inefficiencies hint at a future pattern of continued lay-offs, forced leaves, and dismissals for social service workers.<sup>28</sup>

## *Wage Gaps and Wage Differentials*

### **Income and Inequality**

Data on the Gini Coefficient, which assess the distribution of income across the gamut of wage earners, was only available for 1994 during the period of the transition (Table 9B.4), making it impossible to detect trends. A figure from 1988 placed the Gini at 25.7,<sup>29</sup> suggesting a movement towards greater income inequality.

**Table 9.4. Gini Coefficient for Kazakhstan**

1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
--	--	--	--	33.0	--	--	--

Source: EBRD Transition Report 1999.

However, it is clear that real wage rates have fallen significantly for both men and women throughout the region since the transition began. As Table 9.5 shows, real wages have mirrored the shrinkage of the Kazakh economy.

**Table 9.5. Wage Trends in Kazakhstan, 1989-1997**  
(1991=100%)

1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
		100	64.8	49.1	32.9	33.4	34.4	36.6

Source: TransMONEE 3.0 Database

Differences in the average wages for men and women, like the toll of unemployment, are probably due to their sectoral segregation. During the hyperinflationary period from 1990-1992, for example, average industrial wages rose twice as fast as wages in health and education.<sup>30</sup> This trend persisted in 1995, when the national average monthly wage was 7,231 tenge (about \$110), compared with average wages in the agricultural sector of less than half this amount, and industrial salaries exceeding it by 50 percent. Average monthly wages in the female-dominated social sectors were far worse that year: 3,488 tenge for education, and 3,249 tenge for health and social protection.<sup>31</sup> The data in Table 9.6

<sup>28</sup> Sziraczki, *Emerging Labor Market Policy in Kazakhstan*, 5.

<sup>29</sup> Branco Milanovic, *Income, Inequality and Poverty During the Transition from Planned to Market Economy* (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1998), 188.

<sup>30</sup> Sziraczki, *Emerging Labor Market Policy in Kazakhstan*, 4.

<sup>31</sup> Bauer, Boschmann, and Green, *Women and Gender Relations in Kazakhstan*, 29-30.

suggests that the wage gap is within the range of western Europe. However, when the sectoral clustering of men and women is taken into account, the wage disadvantage of women may well be exacerbated.

**Table 9.6. Ratio of Female to Male Wages**

Year	Ratio
1999	75.5

*Note:* Ratio = female wages divided by male wages.

*Source:* *Women and Men of Kazakhstan* (Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Statistics, Almaty, 1999).

### ***The Informal Economy***

The non-wage burdens normally associated with women also compound the problem of female unemployment as employers began to see the increasing costs of childcare and healthcare, once provided by the state, to be too high.<sup>32</sup> As a result, women have begun to swell the ranks of the long-term unemployed (80 percent as of 1996) and are moving increasingly to the gender-segregated informal economy.<sup>33</sup> As we see in Table 9.7, the informal economy swelled between 1990 and 1995, and there are no indications that it has declined since then.

**Table 9.7. The Informal Economy**

1990 percent of GDP	1995 percent of GDP
17	34

*Source:* UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 6.

Women have reacted with creativity and flexibility to the stark economic realities presented by the new reforms. Evidence suggests that women are more pro-active in searching for work, as they are usually first to register at employment and training centers.<sup>34</sup> Labor offices, however, present few opportunities, leaving the majority of women to find employment in one of two informal sectors: the shuttle economy or the bazaar. The years following the collapse of the Soviet Union witnessed a sharp decline in inter-republic trade, enabling a new entrepreneurial class—usually women—to fill the void. Women travel within Kazakhstan and to neighboring republics and non-CIS countries such as China and Korea to purchase goods for resale in domestic markets. This common practice has become known as the “shuttle economy.” Women involved in the shuttle trade claim that they can make profits ranging from \$500 to \$3000 on any given trip.<sup>35</sup> Unfortunately, little data disaggregated by sex are available to

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>33</sup> Bauer, Boschmann and Green, *Women and Gender Relations in Kazakhstan*, 32.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

quantitatively establish the number of women in the shuttle economy. However, most observers of the CIS will acknowledge—at least anecdotally—that more women than men can be seen on the train carrying large amounts of goods for resale at home.

The other sector of the informal economy where women clearly make up the majority – closely related to the first – is urban trade, otherwise known as the bazaar economy. According to a 1996 Asian Development Bank study, 80 percent of the more than 20,000 people in Almaty involved in urban trade are women. The percentage is higher when accounting for food markets alone.<sup>36</sup> The bazaars afford women a considerable amount of security in that they need not carry cash over great distances and also a great deal of flexibility to earn an income while maintaining domestic responsibilities. The bazaars can be a source of substantial income. Women can earn a net monthly income from 4,800 tenge to 8,400 tenge in nonfood markets. This is considerable when compared to the average monthly salary of 7,000 tenge.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, women’s employment in the bazaars is by no means enviable. They often work six or even seven-day workweeks throughout the year in summer’s heat and in the deep cold of winter. Informal employment further exacerbates women’s lower social standing by cutting them off from valuable job experience, training and benefits that accompany work in the formal sector. Consequently, women often hold a nominal job in the formal market to maintain benefits and their formal connections to the workplace.<sup>38</sup> Thus, even though women are able to find work in the informal sector to support their immediate needs, they are increasingly segregated from the traditional workplace—adding to the an even more precarious future of women workers.

### *Sectoral Segregation and Privatization: toward the future*

In 1994, 79.7 percent of all working women were public employees, as opposed to 59.7 percent of all working men.<sup>39</sup> Table 9.8 provides data on employment in the public and private sectors.

**Table 9.8. Employment and the Private Sector**

		Women	Men
<b>Public</b>		79.7	59.7
<b>Private</b>		29.3	40.3
of which	Employer/owner	0.4	2.3
	Employee	17.3	25.7
	Indep. worker/profess.	10.5	10.7
	Other	1.0	1.6

*Source:* Klugman and Scott, “Measuring Labour Market Status in Kazakhstan,” 130, citing the Kazakhstan Labour Force Survey.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Klugman and Scott, “Measuring Labor Market Status in Kazakhstan,” 130.

The preponderance of women in the public sector has been unfortunate for women, especially as privatization severely downsized public enterprises. Sector-specific information is even more telling. As shown in Table 9.9, 65.9 percent of all working women held jobs in the social service sector in 1994, 14.5 percent in agriculture, and 9.2 percent in manufacturing and production. The corresponding figures for men are quite different: 38.3 percent were in social services, 19.7 percent in agriculture, and 26.0 percent in manufacturing and production.<sup>40</sup>

**Table 9.9. Percent of Male or Female Labor Force, 1994**

	Male	Female
<b>Agriculture</b>	19.7	14.5
<b>Industry</b>	26.0	9.2
<b>Services</b>	38.3	65.9
<b>Government</b>	8.8	3.6
<b>Unidentified</b>	7.1	6.9
<b>Administrators and Managers</b>	--	--
<b>Professional and technical workers</b>	--	--

*Note:* -- indicates data are not available for Kazakhstan.

*Sources:* For employment by sector, Klugman and Scott, "Measuring Labor Market Status in Kazakhstan," 131, reporting on the 1994 Kazakhstan Labour Force Survey, based on ILO standards of data collection. For managerial/professional workers, UNDP, Human Development Indicators, 1999.

At the core of the post-Communist transition lingers the fundamental question of who gets what in the newly privatized economy. How women will fit into this process in Kazakhstan remains to be seen, though the limited evidence to date suggests that women are not adequately represented.

The Kazak government has successfully moved most of the state-owned properties and enterprises into private hands through a two-phase process. The first involved the divestiture of small- and medium scale industries including state and collective farms.<sup>41</sup> It was generally considered a macroeconomic success, based on the rise of a flourishing agriculture industry that expanded by 51,000 workers.<sup>42</sup> As a result, most of the 2,000 previously state and collective farms have been privatized. Phase Two, which is currently being implemented, endeavors to privatize many of the very lucrative large-scale industries such as coal, gas and oil. This has been a considerably slower process because of the industries' inherent magnitudes.

Furthermore, post-Communist states have been disinclined to privatize these industries, as they are a major source of revenue. The privatization process in Kazakhstan has been relatively successful especially when compared to other post-Communist economies. However, the legacy of the past is not easily remedied. The centrally planned system often built factories and established farms in locations

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 131.

<sup>41</sup> USAID Country Profile, 1, <http://www.info.usaid.gov/countries/kz/kaz.htm>

<sup>42</sup> Sziraczki, *Emerging Labor Market Policy in Kazakhstan*, 9.

that were not economically sound or efficient—far from distribution points and in infertile areas. In the small southeastern town of Tekeli, for example, the Soviets built a textile factory to employ the female segment of the population. In the post-Communist era, however, the factory faces a multitude of problems—declining demand, a distant location and a crumbling transport system—which have diminished its staff from 360 to 69.<sup>43</sup> Many other rural towns throughout Kazakhstan face the same dilemma; inefficient and impractical planning combined with market economics slowly suffocate their industry. Thus, for many newly small- and medium-sized industries, privatization equates to closure.

### Attempts to Ease the Pressure

Privatization has been a revolutionary force—for better or worse—on the whole of Kazak society. The unraveling of the central authority has seen property and ownership rights passed to localities which were in turn are faced with stark economic realities. Support services traditionally staffed by women are usually the first sacrificed to productivity after a firm has been privatized. Differing regionally, 30 to 70 percent of support services that once surrounded collective farms and state industries have now been closed.<sup>44</sup>

The Kazakh government has not been unmoved by these consequences of privatization. In 1995 it established a “Program of Government Actions to Deepen the Reforms for 1996-98” in order to address increasing concerns over the labor market, social protection system, health and education.<sup>45</sup> The overall goal of the plan has been to build a socially oriented market economy providing fundamental protection to the citizens of Kazakhstan. In a bid to target women and other at-risk groups, the government established a quota system to promote certain hiring practices by large firms. Quotas oblige specific companies to hire preferentially to include: single mothers, mothers with four or more children, the long-term unemployed, the handicapped, soldiers, former prisoners, refugees and migrants.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, formal quota systems and governmental decrees have done little to lessen the plight of women in workforce. A 1995 State Committee on Statistics report found that women constituted only one third of employees among the new and newly privatized businesses.<sup>47</sup>

The forces of the market economy and the legacy of gender-specific employment continue to prove themselves too strong to curtail rising female unemployment and segregation in the new Kazak economy. Market economics and the privatization process are inexorably culling the many light industries in which women once found success and stable employment. Textile and garment industries face a double-edged sword of falling demand and crumbling infrastructure. The service industries, which once enabled the Soviet economy to function while maintaining high rates of female employment, continue their decline. Furthermore, as women seek to alleviate their economic needs, they migrate to bazaars and the shuttle life-style, thus becoming increasingly segregated from opportunities in the formal

<sup>43</sup> Bauer, Boschmann and Green, *Women and Gender Relations in Kazakhstan*, 34.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

economy. Privatization has exacted a high toll on the employment status of women and with the process yet to be completed, a high probability of increased unemployment and dislocation remains.

### ***Women in Business***

Expectations of a new entrepreneurial dawn pervaded the countries of the CIS after 1991. Many CIS countries have indeed witnessed the rise of a successful business class including large numbers of new shop owners as well as powerful tycoons. Their fates are inextricably tied to the fluctuations of the market, lack of access to capital, inflation and a bureaucratic maze that plagues the nation's entrepreneurial environment. Nonetheless, in the midst of this hostile environment, a new class of business owners is burgeoning in Kazakhstan. Early in the transitional period (1992), the fastest growing segment of the economy was the private enterprise sector. The self-employed, contract-workers and rural farmers comprised 1.15 million people or 15.2 percent of the workforce.<sup>48</sup>

### ***Findings***

#### **Have there been changes in labor force participation by women and men during the transition?**

Participation rates of women have fallen from 47-49 percent to about 45 percent of the total labor force. Jobs occupied by women during the transition fell by 22.7 percent.

**Is there evidence for wage gap trends and wage differentials?** Women earn 72.3 percent of men's wages, and female employment is clustered in lower-paying jobs.

**Has unemployment increased, whether official or hidden, and is there a gender dimension to unemployment?** Unemployment is 8-12 percent when under-employment and hidden unemployment are taken into account. In 1996, women made up 63 percent of the officially unemployed.

**How has the growth of the informal economy reflected gender differentiation?** No quantitative sex-disaggregated data are available on the informal economy. Qualitative data suggest women comprise a large portion of the informal economy.

#### **What is the impact of privatization of state enterprises on women's and men's employment?**

In 1994, 79.7 percent of all working women were public employees compared to 59.7 percent of all working men. Privatization of public enterprises, therefore, disproportionately affected women.

#### **What role do women play in new managerial positions or business formation in the growing private sector?**

Few sex-disaggregated data on management and entrepreneurialism exist. One statistic from the Asian Development Bank indicates that men make up 85 percent of directors of new private businesses.

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<sup>48</sup> Sciraczki, *Emerging Labor Market Policy in Kazakhstan*, 2.



### ***Opportunities for Future Research***

**More sex-disaggregated labor market information is needed.** Sex-disaggregated information is largely unavailable on such basic issues as unemployment rates and on changing characteristics of workers and the self-employed.

**Little information is available on the advancement of women into business, both as high-level managers of enterprises as well as entrepreneurs.** Research needs to be conducted on this aspect of the transition.

**The role of the informal economy in contributing to men's and women's relative economic position remains largely undocumented.**

**Little research has been done on the changing nature of work for men and women.**

## THE DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION

The purpose of this section is to discuss the differential experience of Kazakh men and women in the political sphere since the transition to democracy. The primary questions to be answered are:

1. Is there differential participation by women and men in the public sphere?
  - a) What is the role of women in party politics?
  - b) What is the representation of women in elected government positions, locally and nationally?
  - c) What is the representation of women in appointed governmental positions?
2. How is gender reflected in the development of civil society, especially NGOs?
  - a) What is the role of women in different types of NGOs?
  - b) Have NGOs developed that advocate for gender issues?
3. How has the rule of law been institutionalized and what impact is there on gender?
  - a) Have there been *de jure* legal reforms with an impact on gender?
  - b) Do men and women have equal legal rights, *de jure* and *de facto*? (Is there sufficient information to be able to contrast between *de jure* and *de facto*?)
  - c) Have there been reforms related to family law: inheritance, ownership, marriage, and divorce that impact on gender?

These questions are addressed below beginning with a brief discussion of how men and women participated in politics and civil society during the Soviet era and how the patterns of that participation has changed since independence and how they are now affected by rule of law.

### *Political Activity in the Soviet Period*

Russian administrative authority came to what is now Kazakhstan in the early 1800s and was solidified by the late 1850s. At the start of the Russian Revolution in 1917, Kazakhstan declared itself independent and initially aligned with the anti-Bolshevik Whites. However, shortly thereafter it realigned itself with the Bolsheviks, and the Kazakh Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic was created. Economic conditions did not improve under the Bolsheviks, however, and clan governance reemerged in the 1920s.<sup>49</sup>

Soviet policy toward women in Kazakhstan was tightly integrated with its attack on Islam, as it was in other Central Asian republics. On January 1, 1924, the USSR banned the Muslim practices of polygyny and kalym (brideprice). At the same time, in the late 1920s, the Red Yurt campaign brought literacy, health care and vocational training to women in the most remote areas of Kazakhstan. By the 1930s, women had begun to work outside the home and they were rapidly promoted to leadership

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<sup>49</sup> David Crowe, "The Kazaks and Kazakhstan: The Struggle for Ethnic Identity and Nationhood," *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 26, No. 3, 1998, 402.

positions. During World War II, women's labor force participation accelerated, particularly among ethnic Kazakhs.<sup>50</sup>

Afterwards, from 1959 to 1986, Dinmukhamed Kunaev, the head of the Kazakh Communist Party, worked to increase the number of ethnic Kazakhs in government and Party positions. Clan governance was still popular and Kunaev's policies encouraged it. This riled Moscow and Kunaev was replaced by Kolbin, an ethnic Russian, who worked unsuccessfully for three years to reverse Kunaev's efforts. Economic conditions continually worsened for most Kazakhs. At the time, Nursultan Nazarbaev was Prime Minister of Kazakhstan and he was credited with the improvement in industry, the only sector of the economy that performed well. In June 1989, Nazarbaev replaced Kolbin and was still in power when the Soviet Union dissolved. Nazarbaev then became the president of Kazakhstan on December 8, 1991.<sup>51</sup>

Legislative bodies have always been largely a formality in Kazakhstan since the creation of the Kazakh Supreme Soviet in 1937. The transition did not alter this situation significantly. In its first year of independence, Kazakhstan inherited the Soviet form of government, three branches dominated by the executive branch with guidance coming from Nursultan Nazarbaev rather than the Communist Party. The 12<sup>th</sup> Supreme Soviet (from April 1990 to December 1993) adopted a Declaration of Sovereignty and created the legislative basis for democratic reform.

Other important influences of the Kazakh past on today's political realities are the traditional divisions in Kazakh society that created a cadre of cultural elites which continued despite Soviet efforts to repress it through immigration. During World War II, Germans, Koreans, and other undesirable ethnic groups were forcibly resettled in Kazakhstan.<sup>52</sup> Later, in 1953, Moscow initiated its Virgin Lands program over Central Asian objections, bringing large numbers of Russians and Ukrainians to live and work in Kazakhstan.<sup>53</sup>

As a result of these waves of immigration, Kazakhstan has an extremely diverse population. Ethnic Kazakhs comprise less than half of the country's population (44 percent).<sup>54</sup> President Nazarbaev once observed that if ethnic violence were to break out in Kazakhstan, it would be worse than that in Yugoslavia.<sup>55</sup> Consequently, Kazakh legislation is designed to ensure ethnic harmony, which Nazarbaev considers a precursor to the establishment of Rule of Law.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, elements of earlier Muslim society provide some cultural continuity. For example, the *Khoja* still enjoy an exalted status above that of elders in Kazakh, Uzbek, and Tajik society. An individual gained *Khoja* status one of three ways: 1) making the holy pilgrimage to Mecca; 2) being a descendant of the Arabs who brought the Koran to

<sup>50</sup> Paula A. Michaels, "Kazak Women: Living the Heritage of a Unique Past," in Herbert L. Bodman and Nayereh Tohidi (eds.), *Women in Muslim Societies: Diversity with Unity*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998), 192-195.

<sup>51</sup> Crowe, "The Kazaks and Kazakhstan," 406-409.

<sup>52</sup> Bakhytnur Otarbaeva, "A Brief History of the Kazak People," *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 26, No. 3, 1998, 428.

<sup>53</sup> Crowe, "The Kazaks and Kazakhstan," 405.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 409.

<sup>55</sup> Otarbaeva, "A Brief History of the Kazak People," 429.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

Central Asia; or 3) being a descendant of Caliphs or the Prophet Mohammed. Another group called the *Töre*, descendants of *Zhuz* royalty or Chingis Khan, also enjoy high status in modern-day Kazakhstan.<sup>57</sup>

### ***Political Activity Since Independence***

The Constitution adopted January 28, 1993 declared the three branches of government equal. However, when the new parliament, elected in 1994, would not pass Nazarbaev's reform program, it was dissolved and new elections called.<sup>58</sup> These involved three candidate sources: a presidential list, registered political parties and public organizations, and independent candidates. Ultimately, though, international observers questioned the fairness of the elections, and the Kazakh Constitutional Court ruled that they had been illegally conducted. In 1995, the parliament was again dismissed and referenda were held to increase the president's powers.<sup>59</sup> And so, political power in Kazakhstan is now concentrated in the executive branch of government, specifically the office of the president. The Constitution of 1995 provides for three separate branches of government but no system of checks and balances.<sup>60</sup>

Unlike in many other post-Communist states, women's representation in parliament has improved since independence. In 1990, women comprised 7 percent of members of parliament. In the 1994 elections, 21 of the 176 members elected (11.9 percent) were women.<sup>61</sup> When elections were called again in 1995, women won 13 percent of seats.<sup>62</sup> As noted above, the opposition boycotted the elections of 1995 because the new constitution subjected the parliament to executive control.<sup>63</sup> The parliament now essentially rubber-stamps government-proposed legislation, so there have been no discernible gender related voting patterns. Women lost some ground in the 1999 elections. They now constitute 10.4 percent (8 of 77) of Kazakhstan's members of the Majlis and 12.8 percent (6 of 39) of Kazakhstan's Senate.<sup>64</sup> There is no women's parliamentary coalition because they are few and the parliament is too weak to be effective.

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<sup>57</sup> Hilda Eitzen, "Refiguring Ethnicity through Kazak Genealogies," *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 26, No. 3, 1998, 443-444.

<sup>58</sup> Azhar Kusainova and Gregory Gleason, "Constitutional Reform and Regional Politics in Kazakhstan," *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 26, No. 3, 1998, 532.

<sup>59</sup> Kusainova and Gleason, "Constitutional Reform and Regional Politics in Kazakhstan," 533-534.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 536.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 533.

<sup>62</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6* (New York: UNICEF International Child Development Centre, 1999), 98.

<sup>63</sup> Evgeny A. Zhovtis, "Freedom of Association and the Question of Its Realization in Kazakhstan," in M. H. Ruffin and D. Waugh (eds), *Civil Society in Central Asia* (Seattle: University of Washington Press and the Center for Civil Society International, 1999), 59-60.

<sup>64</sup> Inter Parliamentary Union website. <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

**Table 9.10. Political Positions Held by Men and Women in Kazakhstan**

Position	Total Number	Held by Women		Held by Men	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Members of Parliament*	116	13	11.2 %	103	88.8 %
Lower Chamber	77	8	10.4 %	69	89.6 %
Upper Chamber	39	5	12.8 %	34	87.2 %
Cabinet Ministers	15	1	6.7 %	14	93.3 %
Pres. Admin. Employees	NA	NA		NA	
Regional Administrators	NA	NA		NA	
Members of Judiciary	NA	NA		NA	
High Court	7	NA		NA	
Appeals Courts	NA	NA		NA	
Local Courts	NA	NA		NA	
Political Party Leaders	13	1	7.7 %	12	92.3 %

Note: Data are from January 2000.

Sources: Inter Parliamentary Union website, <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>; Women in Governments website, <http://hjem.get2net.dk/Womeningovernments/>; CIA Chiefs of State and Cabinet Members web page, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/chiefs/index.html>; President of Kazakhstan website, <http://www.president.kz/articles/>.

More information is available about the nation's executive branch. Prior to independence, women advanced to ministerial positions in the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (for the Kazakh SSR), and the Ministry of Education. Since independence was declared in 1991, there have been four women Ministers:

- Zaura Kadyrova, Minister of Social Affairs, 1990 to 1994;
- Byrganym Aytimova, Minister of Tourism, Youth and Sports, 1993 to 1996;
- Natalia Korzhova, Minister of Labor and Social Welfare, 1996 to 1999; and
- Aitkul Samakova, Minister without Portfolio and Chairman of the National Commission for Family and Women, 1999 to present.

Three of Kazakhstan's ambassadors, including one to the United Nations (1992 to present), Akmaral Arystanbekova, are women. In addition, the government has appointed women as the deputy minister of the Economy, deputy minister of Education, deputy minister of Industry and Trade, deputy minister of Justice, and deputy minister of Labor and Social Protection.<sup>65</sup>

Although it has not adopted an official program on the status of women, Kazakhstan has a special executive commission for address women's issues. The National Commission for Family and Women was created by presidential decree on December 22, 1998 to protect family interests and to provide conditions to enable women's participation in political, social, economic, and cultural life of the country. The Commission has five main tasks:

<sup>65</sup> Women in Governments website, <http://hjem.get2net.dk/Womeningovernments/Kazakstan.htm>

- Identifying priorities and recommending policy initiatives to assist families, women and children meet the government's goals of development by 2030;
- Developing a system of economic, social, psychological, and legal support for families, women and children;
- Assisting the expansion of women's representation in government;
- Assisting the development of laws which regulate the position of family, women and children; and
- Cooperating with women's NGOs and international organizations on the problems of family, women and children.

The Commission also works on business development among women and other economic issues. As an agency under the Office of the President, the Commission has fairly extensive powers. It has the right to direct investigations of infringements of the rights of families, women or children. It also has parallel structures at the regional level.<sup>66</sup>

Little information is available about the judicial branch in Kazakhstan or the proportion of men and women comprising it. The judiciary has been through some interesting transformations since 1991, and the end result is that the president controls the judiciary. In 1995, the new constitution abolished the Constitutional Court established in the 1993 constitution. A Constitutional Council has taken its place, comprised of seven members, two members selected each by the president, the Senate chair, and the Majlis chair, and then the Council Chairman, also selected by the president. If there is a split decision, the Council Chairman casts the deciding vote.<sup>67</sup> Only the president, prime minister, the chairmen of the Senate and Majlis, or one fifth of the members of parliament may appeal to the Council.<sup>68</sup> The president can object to rulings with a two-thirds vote is required to override his objection. He also appoints the rest of the judiciary on the recommendation of various Ministers or committees.<sup>69</sup>

Presidential control in Kazakhstan extends out to the level of local government as well. Kazakhstan is *de jure* a unitary state, but it operates largely along federal lines.<sup>70</sup> Local representative bodies or *maslikhats*, have more power than the national legislature or judiciary.<sup>71</sup> Since the president holds the power to select and remove *akims* (local officials), they may not act in their constituents' best interests.<sup>72</sup> *Akims* may also represent their clans.<sup>73</sup> However, one author asserts that *akims*, particularly in rural areas, now have divergent interests, making them more responsive than they were under communism. They want autonomy to access foreign currency, sell agricultural goods at market prices (rather than to the state at artificially low fixed prices), and an end to government production quotas. While local patronage networks are important, urban ruling elites are moving farther and farther

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<sup>66</sup> President of Kazakhstan website, [http://www.president.kz/articles/s...te\\_container.asp?lng=en&art=family/](http://www.president.kz/articles/s...te_container.asp?lng=en&art=family/).

<sup>67</sup> Kusainova and Gleason, "Constitutional Reform and Regional Politics in Kazakhstan," 537.

<sup>68</sup> Zhovtis, "Freedom of Association and the Question of Its Realization in Kazakhstan," 57.

<sup>69</sup> Kusainova and Gleason, "Constitutional Reform and Regional Politics in Kazakhstan," 538.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 540.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 538.

<sup>72</sup> Zhovtis, "Freedom of Association and the Question of Its Realization in Kazakhstan," 68.

<sup>73</sup> Kusainova and Gleason, "Constitutional Reform and Regional Politics in Kazakhstan," 540.

from the interests of those on the kolkhoz.<sup>74</sup> Only one woman, Vera Nicholaevna Sookhorykova, has been appointed as the *akim* of Ust-Kamenogorsk. There are also six female deputy oblast *akims* in Kazakhstan.

### *Civil Society Since Independence*

Although the constitution guarantees the right to assembly, secondary laws such as the Law on Public Associations, the Civil Code, and the presidential decree on the registration of legal entities all restrict the ability of citizens to act collectively.<sup>75</sup> Nevertheless, by January 1997, 3,050 NGOs had registered in Kazakhstan,<sup>76</sup> of which about 500 are truly active.<sup>77</sup>

Various justice agencies have the right to regulate the activities of NGOs to ensure that they are in accord with the NGO's charter.<sup>78</sup> NGOs are also both restricted from advocacy work and subject to territorial boundaries.<sup>79</sup> Moreover, if an organization is registered at the local level, it can only work in that administrative unit. To register as a national or republican organization, it must have offices in at least half of Kazakhstan's regions.<sup>80</sup> Finally, all meetings must be open to the public. A closed meeting, or one which occurs without the supervision of a justice official, can be considered illegal.<sup>81</sup> As a result of all these restrictions, NGOs have thus far had very little influence in Kazakhstan.<sup>82</sup>

This environment and the competition with the National Commission for Families and Women have not fostered the growth of the women's movement in Kazakhstan. Nevertheless, a movement does exist, and does seek to effect change in the nation's gender relations. One author describes the women's movement in Kazakhstan as being comprised of the *nomenklatura* from the State Committees for Women's Problems, the heads of various NGOs, as well as women's professional associations.<sup>83</sup> These disparate groups have taken several approaches to solving women's problems in Kazakhstan. These include a statist approach, an economic independence approach, a religious-patriarchal approach, and a liberal reform-feminist approach.<sup>84</sup>

Those organizations that subscribe to the statist approach are, of course, largely state-run. They include associations such as the National Commission and the successors to local Soviet Women's Committees. Addition, presidential decrees have established women's local *akimmats* in Kazakhstan,

<sup>74</sup> Olivier Roy, "Kolkhoz and Civil Society in the Independent States of Central Asia," in M. Holt Ruffin and Daniel Waugh (eds.), *Civil Society in Central Asia* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 117.

<sup>75</sup> Zhovtis, "Freedom of Association and the Question of Its Realization in Kazakhstan," 61.

<sup>76</sup> Scott Horton and Alla Kazakina, "The Legal Regulation of NGOs: Central Asia at a Crossroads," in M. Holt Ruffin and Daniel Waugh (eds.), *Civil Society in Central Asia*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 36.

<sup>77</sup> Zhovtis, "Freedom of Association and the Question of Its Realization in Kazakhstan," 65.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>79</sup> Horton and Kazakina, "The Legal Regulation of NGOs: Central Asia at a Crossroads," 39.

<sup>80</sup> Zhovtis, "Freedom of Association and the Question of Its Realization in Kazakhstan," 63.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>83</sup> Sveta Shakirova, "Philosophy and Feminist Thought," in *Assertions of Self: The Nascent Women's Movement in Central Asia*, (Lahore, Pakistan: Shirkat Gah, 1995), 24.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 24-25.

which receive government funding for salaries, but not overhead. These groups deal mostly with humanitarian and welfare assistance to families in need.<sup>85</sup>

Many women's NGOs in Kazakhstan work primarily to improve women's economic status.<sup>86</sup> The Women's Information Exchange Center in Almaty encourages information exchange between Kazakh and foreign women and offers a business start-up training program. It also publishes a women's magazine and organizes conferences to encourage communication among its members. Another NGO, Women Entrepreneurs of Kazakhstan, has created an information network, linking women in various parts of the country and compiled a database of women's NGOs in Central Asia.<sup>87</sup>

There are also NGOs that take the religious-patriarchal approach and promote the withdrawal of women from economic and public life. One is the League of Muslim Women, established in 1991, which promotes the purity of women and the centrality of the family to women's lives.<sup>88</sup> This type of association does not have widespread popularity in Kazakhstan. The form of Islam practiced by Kazakhs when they were nomads has left its mark on today's men and women.<sup>89</sup> After all, most Kazakh women still work, do not cover their hair and would not consider wearing a veil.

The NGOs that take the liberal reform-feminist approach are probably the fewest because reform generally involves advocacy. One organization that has successfully taken this approach is the Women's League for Creative Initiative. The League promotes equality for women across all spheres and has members across most of the country's ethnic groups.<sup>90</sup>

In addition to NGOs, there are several popular political movements in Kazakhstan about whose membership we know little, but whose agendas may have an impact on women's lives. Two of these, *Alash* and *Zheltoksan*, promote the interests of ethnic Kazakhs. Another two, *Edinstvo* and *Lad*, promote Slavic interests in Kazakhstan. A fifth popular movement, *Azat*, promotes mutual understanding and accommodation within Kazakh society.<sup>91</sup> The Republican Party was born of *Azat*, but seems to have a more ethnically Kazakh agenda than *Azat*.

### ***Rule of Law***

Women and men enjoy equal rights under the Constitution of Kazakhstan. It grants basic rights and freedoms to Kazakh citizens, including freedom of religion, speech, press, movement, and peaceful assembly. There are also several clauses that limit individual freedoms in the constitution, including the establishment of voluntary organizations; the propagation of ideas leading to ethnic, social, racial,

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<sup>85</sup> Ula Ikramova and Kathryn McConnell, "Women's NGOs in Central Asia's Evolving Societies," in M. Holt Ruffin and Daniel Waugh (eds.), *Civil Society in Central Asia*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 198.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 210.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.

<sup>88</sup> Michaels, "Kazak Women: Living the Heritage of a Unique Past," 198.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 199.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> Otarbaeva, "A Brief History of the Kazak People," 430.



religious, or clan conflicts; and use of force to change the constitutional order or compromise the security of Kazakhstan.<sup>92</sup> No information was available on *de facto* legal situations, such as customary practices of family law.

### *Findings*

**Is there differential participation by women and men in the public sphere?** Men dominate the public sphere in Kazakhstan. In spite of their predominance, however, some men have probably experienced a real decrease in access to power since political power is now concentrated in one office rather than in a committee. And although women have lost seats in parliament since independence, their numbers have rebounded somewhat and women have consistently improved their representation in legislative bodies in every election.

**How is gender reflected in the development of civil society, especially NGOs?** The limitations Kazakhstan places on civil society may prove to be problematic in the future. NGOs can provide benefits or services to clients if that is included in their charters, but they may be prevented from doing so for political reasons. Individual justice officials have the ability not only to prevent NGOs from providing services on a discriminatory basis, but also to prevent NGOs from providing services universally. It is not clear what the gender effects of these regulations are yet.

**How has the rule of law been institutionalized and what impact is there on gender?** Rule of law has not been firmly established in Kazakhstan. One view is that it is slipping into authoritarian habits as the government uses repression more and more frequently to stifle citizen complaint, but Kazakhstan's Constitution does not effectively safeguard individual rights. Another is that Kazakhstan's government seeks equality of all before the law, pluralism, tolerance, pragmatism and compromise.<sup>93</sup>

### *Opportunities for Future Research*

**More information on the composition of the judiciary and local governments is needed.**

**More information on the beneficiaries, activities, and composition of the staff and volunteers in the NGO sector are needed.** This will provide a more complete picture of political activity in Kazakhstan, as well as identify gaps in government services.

**Information on the *de facto* exercise of rights is needed.** This will help identify opportunities for education or temporary measures to improve gender equity in Kazakhstan.

<sup>92</sup> Zhovtis, "Freedom of Association and the Question of Its Realization in Kazakhstan," 57.

<sup>93</sup> Kusainova and Gleason, "Constitutional Reform and Regional Politics in Kazakhstan," 542.

## THE SOCIAL TRANSITION

This section reports findings from major sources regarding the effects of the transition in Kazakhstan on social benefits, poverty, pension reform, health, and education and explores these primary questions:

1. With the shredding of the social safety net, how have women versus men fared in access to / support from social programs?
2. Do data show women's poverty rates to be greater than men's?
3. What are the health-related impacts of the transition?
4. What differential impacts has pension reform had on men's and women's access to benefits?
5. What are salient changes in the state-funded education system since 1989/91?

### *Social Safety Net*

Kazakhstan's social safety net programs are described in Table 9.11. The U.S. Social Security Administration (SSA) collects data on social safety net programs around the world. Information about Kazakhstan's maternity, family allowances, and unemployment programs were unavailable from SSA, however.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) in its book, *Women and Gender Relations in Kazakhstan*, helps fill in some of the gaps. According to the ADB, five social benefit programs specifically target women: 1) assistance to single mothers, 2) assistance to mothers of more than four children under age seven, 3) assistance to mothers of handicapped or invalid children, 4) assistance to children whose fathers do not live with the family, and 5) assistance to women on maternity leave of up to three years.<sup>94</sup> In addition, women receive favorable eligibility and benefit treatment for old-age pensions.

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<sup>94</sup> Bauer, Boschmann, and Green, *Women and Gender Relations in Kazakhstan*, 71.

Table 9.11. Social Safety Net Program Eligibility and Benefits in Kazakhstan

Program	Value		Eligibility	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
<i>Universal Benefits</i>				
Family Allowances	No information available.			
Health Benefits	Medical services plus 100% of earnings for temporary and permanent disability.	Same.	Must be employed.	Same.
<i>Social Insurance</i>				
Maternity	No information available.			
Pension, Old-age	60% of earnings, plus 1% for each year in excess of 20 years of work. Minimum amount applies.	60% of earnings, plus 1% for each year in excess of 25 years of work. Minimum amount applies.	Age 55 ½ and 20 years of work. Requirements reduced for mothers of 5 or more children or disabled children. Requirements reduced for arduous or hazardous work, for work in ecologically damaged regions, and for the blind.	Age 60 ½ and 25 years of work. Requirements reduced for arduous or hazardous work, for work in ecologically damaged regions, and for the blind.
Pension, Disability	40-60% of earnings. Minimum of 50-100% of minimum old-age pension.	Same.	Disability from full to partial plus 2-15 years covered employment.	Same.
Pension, Survivorship	40% of earnings for each dependent. Full orphans receive 100% of minimum old-age pension.	Same.	Insured has 2- 15 years covered employment. Paid to surviving children and nonworking dependents (spouses, parents).	Same.

Program	Value		Eligibility	
	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>
Unemployment	No information available.			
Work Injury	Universal medical care, plus cash benefits of 100% of wages.	Same.	Employed persons, self-employed, farmers, and students.	Same.
<b><i>Social Assistance</i></b>				
Old-age Social Assistance Allowance	80% of minimum old age pension.	Same.	<i>Aged 58 <del>or</del> aged 55 ½ in ecologically damaged regions. Disadvantaged aged, disabled, and survivors not eligible for employment-related benefits.</i>	<i>Aged 63 ½ or 60 ½ in ecologically damaged regions. Disadvantaged aged, disabled, and survivors not eligible for employment-related benefits.</i>

*Notes:* The data in this table were current as of January 1, 1999 (the latest version of the Social Security Administration's report). Italicized text indicates a gender difference in eligibility or benefits.

*Source:* U.S. Social Security Administration, *Social Security Programs Throughout the World – 1999*, 201-202.

One program that tends to favor men, according to the Asian Development Bank, is the unemployment benefits system. This gender differentiation results from women accounting for a large proportion of the long-term unemployed, and benefits being targeted to the short-term unemployed (or men).<sup>95</sup>

Unemployment benefits are provided for six months and only to those who complete the lengthy registration process. However, for a time the real value of unemployment benefits declined so much that the unemployed refused to register. It was only after benefits were raised substantially in 1995 that registration increased.<sup>96</sup>

Although expenditures on social protection fell from 17.6 percent of GDP in 1990 to 7.4 percent in 1995,<sup>97</sup> receipt of social benefits is widespread: 28 percent of all households receive a pension, and 37 percent receive at least one benefit payment. Social benefits are poorly targeted, however: 60 percent of poor households receive no social benefit payments.<sup>98</sup>

The government has moved to tighten eligibility for social benefits, reducing the number of beneficiaries. This reduction in benefits allowed for an increase in per child expenditures for child allowances, according to a researcher at the World Bank.<sup>99</sup> Unlike child allowances, real pension benefits declined.<sup>100</sup> Table 9.12 shows the number of beneficiaries and the value of benefits between 1993 and 1997.

**Table 9.12. Social Beneficiaries and Benefits in Kazakhstan**

	1993	1997
<b>Pensions</b>		
Beneficiaries	2,829,000	2,670,000
Benefits*	100	43
<b>Labor Market Programs</b>		
Beneficiaries	40,000	258,000
Benefits	100	127
<b>Social Assistance (child allowances)</b>		
Beneficiaries	2,417,000	1,232,000
Benefits	100	247

Note: \*Index of real average benefits (1993=100)

Source: Mamta Murthi, *Kazakhstan: Living Standards During the Transition*, Report No. 17520-KZ (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1998), 34.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>96</sup> Mamta Murthi, *Kazakhstan: Living Standards During the Transition*, Report No. 17520-KZ (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1998), 30.

<sup>97</sup> Bauer, Boschmann, and Green, *Women and Gender Relations in Kazakhstan*, 5.

<sup>98</sup> Murthi, *Kazakhstan: Living Standards During the Transition*, 33.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 34.

## Poverty and Gender

“Gender – in particular female headship – does not appear to be significantly associated with poverty.” Mamta Murthi, *Kazakhstan: Living Standards During the Transition*, 18.

### Overall Poverty

Poverty has deepened since the transition. The World Bank estimates that 34.6 percent of the population now lives below a subsistence minimum – twice as many as before 1991.<sup>101</sup> The consumer basket used to establish this subsistence minimum was valued at \$70 purchasing power parity or \$40 at the market rate of exchange.<sup>102</sup> Another measure, using an international standard of \$4.00 per day, estimates that 65 percent of Kazakhstan’s population lives below the poverty line.<sup>103</sup>

### Poverty by Gender

Two reports – one by the Asian Development Bank and one by the World Bank – have conflicting views of the gender differentiation of poverty in Kazakhstan. The Asian Development Bank report states that “evidence” suggests poverty in Kazakhstan is gender-differentiated, with elderly women and single women with many children comprising the majority of the poor although no statistics are available.<sup>104</sup>

However, the World Bank, using household surveys of consumption, shows that while female-headed households are 40 percent of all households, they are under-represented among the poor.<sup>105</sup> Single women with many children would be more likely to be poor than single women with fewer children because household size is correlated with poverty in Kazakhstan. Nevertheless, World Bank data demonstrate that these female-headed households do not constitute a majority of the poor. Table 9.13 presents data on poverty by gender.

**Table 9.13. Poverty by Gender**

	Consumption Quintile			% of All Households
	Bottom	Second	Top	
<b>Female-headed households</b>	30	40	40	40
<b>Male-headed households</b>	70	60	60	60

Source: Mamta Murthi, *Kazakhstan: Living Standards During the Transition*, 23.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., ii.

<sup>103</sup> UNDP, 1999 Human Development Indicators.

<sup>104</sup> Bauer, Boschmann, and Green, *Women and Gender Relations in Kazakhstan*, 68.

<sup>105</sup> Murthi, *Kazakhstan: Living Standards During the Transition*, 22.

## Correlates of Poverty, Other Than Gender

Characteristics that are correlated with poverty include receipt of pensions, large family size, disability, unemployment, and low education. Regional differences are also great. While about 35 percent of the population lived below poverty in 1996, the average masks the regional differences: 69 percent of those living in the south (predominantly rural) are poor compared to nine percent in the north.<sup>106</sup> Unlike in several other countries of the former Soviet Union, pensioners, while poor, are not the one of the poorest groups. Pensioners – both women and men – are more likely to be living at the subsistence level than the population as a whole, but they are less likely to be in the bottom quintile of consumption.<sup>107</sup> In other words, pensions seem to maintain a minimum standard of living for pensioners.

### *Pension Reform*

To date, pension reform has included plans to raise the retirement age for both men and women (to 63 for men and 58 for women) by 2002.<sup>108</sup> Beginning in 1998, the government planned gradually to disassemble its government-financed defined benefit system and replace it with a privately-managed and fully-funded system (meaning based on workers' contributions) with a minimum benefit guaranteed by the state.<sup>109</sup> The minimum pension is set at 550 tenge (\$6.85) per month. Since 1996, pensions have not averaged more than 2,000 tenge (\$25).<sup>110</sup>

Because the effects of pension reform on gender issues are similar in E&E countries, these are discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

### *Health Reform*

Men and women have experienced different health effects during the transition in Kazakhstan. Life expectancy has fallen for both men and women, but respiratory diseases and tobacco-related mortality have disproportionately affected men. Table 9.14 presents basic health indicators for Kazakhstan. Below we discuss these indicators and other health findings.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., ii.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>108</sup> Bauer, Boschmann, and Green, *Women and Gender Relations in Kazakhstan*, 76.

<sup>109</sup> Murthi, *Kazakhstan: Living Standards During the Transition*, 30.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 70.

**Table 9.14. Demographic and Health Indicators for Kazakhstan<sup>111</sup>**

Maternal Mortality (per 100,000 live births) <sup>112</sup>	<b>1990</b>		<b>1997</b>	
	55.0		59.0	
Infant Mortality (per 1000 live births), 1997 <sup>113</sup>	37			
Abortion Rate (per 100 live births) <sup>114</sup>	<b>1990</b>		<b>1997</b>	
	76.9		67.5	
Contraceptive Prevalence, 1995 <sup>115</sup>	59%			
Total Fertility Rate (births per woman), 1997 <sup>116</sup>	2.3			
STD Incidence (new cases of syphilis/gonorrhea per 100,000 population), 1997 <sup>117</sup>	<b>1990</b>		<b>1997</b>	
	109		360	
Life Expectancy at Birth <sup>118</sup>	<b>Male</b>		<b>Female</b>	
	<b>1990</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1997</b>
	63.3	59.0	72.7	70.2
% Population 65 & older, 1997 <sup>119</sup>	7.0			

Sources: As indicated in the footnotes.

### Maternal Mortality

MONEE data, as shown in the table above, indicate an increase in maternal mortality to 59.0 in 1997. Data from Kazakhstan's National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) also show an increase, but to a higher rate of 77.3 in 1995 from 69.3 in 1994.<sup>120</sup> Both the MONEE and NIN statistics are much higher than those reported in industrialized countries, which typically report rates of between 3 and 10.<sup>121</sup>

<sup>111</sup> General note on sources: The major sources used for purposes of cross-country comparisons are from the MONEE and UNDP reports cited below, because they have data for most countries. MONEE is preferred for maternal mortality data because it is the most up-to-date comparable source of data. For infant mortality, UNDP is the preferred source for two reasons: a) UNDP data concords most closely with DHS data, for the three countries for which DHS surveys have been done; and b) data for six of the study countries cited in the MONEE database are based on Soviet rather than WHO definitions of infant death, impairing comparability. In some cases MONEE figures are significantly different (usually lower) than UNDP figures. Only the MONEE database provides reasonably complete and comparable data on abortion rates, STD incidence and life expectancy by sex. UNDP is the preferred source for total fertility rates because it concords most closely with DHS data in the cases in which it is available. Contraceptive prevalence sources identified are: Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), reproductive health surveys (RHS), UNDP Human Development Report (UNDP), Population Reference Bureau (PRB), Russia Longitudinal Monitoring Survey (RLMS). The year is specified when known.

<sup>112</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 119.

<sup>113</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, Oxford University Press, 1999, 169.

<sup>114</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 118.

<sup>115</sup> Kazakhstan 1995: Results from the Demographic and Health Survey, *Studies in Family Planning*, 28 (3), 256-260.

<sup>116</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, 198.

<sup>117</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 131.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 123-124.

<sup>119</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, 198.

<sup>120</sup> National Institute of Nutrition, *Kazakhstan Demographic and Health Survey* (no date available), 6.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*



The major causes of maternal death in Kazakhstan are hemorrhage, induced abortion, extragenital diseases and late gestosis, each accounting from 15 to 23 percent of the total deaths. Most maternal deaths are preventable with proper identification of high-risk pregnancies and preventive measures.<sup>122</sup>

### **Abortion**

By all accounts, abortion rates in Kazakhstan have decreased. DHS data indicate a 20 percent decline in the abortion rate between 1986-90 and 1993-95, which is in general accord with Ministry of Health (MOH) statistics.<sup>123</sup> Rates reported by MONEE are calculated on the basis of abortions per 100 live births. The rate shown for 1997 is 67.5, which shows a significant decrease over the highest rate during the transition period, 102.6 in 1992.<sup>124</sup>

### **Contraception**

In 1995, 59 percent of currently married women were using contraception; 46 percent were using a modern method and 13 percent a traditional method. By far the most common modern method was the IUD (39.6 percent); with the next most used method being condoms (3.7 percent). Birth control pills were used by only 1.8 percent. Among traditional methods, 6.5 percent used rhythm, 3.3 percent douches, and 3.2 percent withdrawal. For sexually active unmarried women, contraceptive use was slightly lower at 57.9 percent, and there was greater reliance (18.8 percent) on traditional methods, primarily rhythm (14 percent) and withdrawal (4.5 percent). Among modern methods, condoms were used most (19.3 percent), followed by IUDs (13.7 percent).<sup>125</sup>

### **Fertility**

Fertility, according to the DHS survey, declined from a total fertility rate of 2.9 children per woman in 1989 to 2.5 in 1995. The rate is lowest among women in Almaty City (1.5) and highest in the South Region (3.4). The rate for ethnic Russian women (1.7) is substantially lower than for Kazak women (3.1). As in many societies, fertility decreases with increasing education, from 2.9 children among women with primary or secondary education to 2.0 for women with higher education.<sup>126</sup> DHS data are concordant with the total fertility rate for 1997 reported by UNDP, 2.3.<sup>127</sup> The adolescent birth rate (live births per 1000 women aged 15-19) has also decreased from a high of 54.6 in 1991 to 38.4 in 1997, according to MONEE data.<sup>128</sup>

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., xxiii, 6.

<sup>124</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 118.

<sup>125</sup> National Institute of Nutrition, *Kazakhstan Demographic and Health Survey*, 49.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., xxi, 35.

<sup>127</sup> UNDP, 1999 Human Development Indicators, 198.

<sup>128</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 114.

## Infant Mortality

Infant mortality, an indicator of maternal as well as child health, declined about 10 percent over the preceding ten years, according to DHS data. The level for the period 1990-94 was estimated at 40 deaths per 1000 live births. All of the decline occurred in the postneonatal period.<sup>129</sup> UNDP data for 1997 are consistent with the DHS, showing an infant mortality rate of 37. This is in the same general range as other Central Asian countries, but is substantially higher than that of most of the other post-Communist countries in transition.<sup>130</sup>

## Sexually-Transmitted Diseases

The incidence of sexually-transmitted diseases has increased markedly over the transition period. Newly registered cases of syphilis and gonorrhea (per 100,000 people) increased from 118 in 1991 to 360 in 1997, one of the highest levels among the transition countries. Unfortunately, data are not sex-disaggregated. Newly registered cases of HIV grew nearly tenfold in 1997, to 429 cases, over the 1996 level of 46 cases.<sup>131</sup> The incidence of AIDS cases (per 100,000 people), however, was still low in 1997, 0.1 (no sex-disaggregated figures available).<sup>132</sup>

## Life Expectancy

Life expectancy has declined for both men and women to 59 years for men and 70.2 for women as of 1997.<sup>133</sup> Kazakhstan's population is relatively young, like the other Central Asian republics, with only 7 percent of the population aged 65 and over<sup>134</sup> and 35 percent under the age of 18.<sup>135</sup>

## Mortality

The major causes of death in Kazakhstan are cardiovascular diseases, cancer and respiratory diseases. The largest increases in mortality for males between 1989 and 1993 were in cardiovascular disease (related to stress, diet, sedentary lifestyle and smoking) and external causes (e.g., civil strife, homicide, accidents), which together explain about three-quarters of the increased mortality. For females, the increase in heart and circulatory disease alone explained 67.4 percent of increased mortality, and external causes explained another 10 percent. Cancer as a cause of death did not increase markedly for either sex, though the increase was greater for males than for females.

Two additional gender differences in causes of death are evident. First, respiratory disease increased ten times more for males than for females.<sup>136</sup> Among respiratory diseases, pulmonary tuberculosis is

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<sup>129</sup> National Institute of Nutrition, *Kazakhstan Demographic and Health Survey*, xxii.

<sup>130</sup> UNDP, 1999 Human Development Indicators, 169.

<sup>131</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 132.

<sup>132</sup> UNDP, 1999 Human Development Indicators, 173.

<sup>133</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 123-124.

<sup>134</sup> UNDP, 1999 Human Development Indicators, 198.

<sup>135</sup> Calculated from UNICEF data, [http://www.unicef.org/statis/country\\_1Page91.htm](http://www.unicef.org/statis/country_1Page91.htm).

one of the most serious health problems in Kazakhstan. The overall morbidity rate from tuberculosis in 1995 was 271.1 per 100,000 population, the highest in Central Asia and one of the highest in the world.<sup>137</sup>

Second, tobacco is estimated to have caused 20 percent of all deaths in 1995, including 20,000 males and 5,000 females. About 30 percent of all male deaths in 1995 were attributable to tobacco use, including nearly half of male deaths at ages 35-69.<sup>138</sup> Average annual age-standardized lung cancer mortality rates for the period 1991-93 were 96/100,000 for men and 12/100,000 for women. It is estimated that about one-third of the total population of Kazakhstan smokes, and the number is rising.

### Nutrition

Anemia has long been a major public health problem in Kazakhstan. Approximately half the women in the country suffer some degree of anemia: 37 percent mild, 11 percent moderate and 1 percent severe. The highest overall rate of anemia (59 percent) is found in the West Region, while Almaty City has the lowest rate (38 percent). The rate of anemia is higher among ethnic Kazak women (57 percent) than among ethnic Russian women (42 percent).<sup>139</sup> Among pregnant women in Kazakhstan, moderate anemia is two to three times more common than among non-pregnant women, even those who are breastfeeding. Anemia among women is primarily due to inadequate consumption of foods containing iron and promoters of iron absorption, such as animal protein and ascorbic acid. Long-term use of IUDs can also lead to iron deficiency because of increased loss of menstrual blood.<sup>140</sup> Half of live births in 1997 were complicated by anemia, nearly five times the level of 11 percent in 1989, indicating increased maternal nutritional deficiencies.<sup>141</sup>

Among children under age three, 69 percent suffer some degree of anemia, 30 percent mild and 34 percent moderate, with the same distribution pattern as for women. There is a high rate of severe anemia among Kazak children (9 percent), but no severe anemia among ethnic Russian children, and only 1 percent among other ethnic groups. Children with an anemic mother have a greater predisposition toward anemia.<sup>142</sup>

### Health Care

Kazakhstan has a well-developed health system with extensive maternal care services, including physician assistant/midwife posts throughout the rural areas. Nearly all births (98 percent) are in health facilities, and 78 percent of deliveries are attended by a doctor and 21 percent by a nurse or midwife.

<sup>136</sup> Jeni Klugman and George Schieber, *A Survey of Health Reform in Central Asia* (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1996), 7.

<sup>137</sup> National Institute of Nutrition, *Kazakhstan Demographic and Health Survey*, 5.

<sup>138</sup> World Health Organization, Tobacco or Health Programme, *Tobacco or Health: A Global Status Report, Country Profiles by Region, 1997* from web site: <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/who/whofirst.htm>

<sup>139</sup> National Institute of Nutrition, *Kazakhstan Demographic and Health Survey*, xxv.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 136, 139.

<sup>141</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 68.

<sup>142</sup> National Institute of Nutrition, *Kazakhstan Demographic and Health Survey*, xxv.

Only 2 percent of births are at home. A high proportion of DHS respondents (93 percent) received prenatal care, 69 percent from a doctor and 23 percent from a nurse or midwife. Only 7 percent reported no prenatal care. The median number of prenatal visits reported was 11.<sup>143</sup>

However, maintaining the state-supported system developed in the Soviet era requires substantial budgetary support and enormous manpower resources and managerial skill. The economic decline has forced reductions in health expenditures (real per capita health spending in 1994 was only 37 percent of the 1990 level<sup>144</sup>), which has made it difficult to cope with the exacerbated health problems during the transition. Due to cutbacks, some regions reduced the number of beds and supplies of essential drugs and medical equipment. Facilities are in poor condition, many lacking basic sanitary conditions, running water and electricity. Physicians now earn less than factory workers. In 1996 a new health insurance system was introduced in which private practitioners are financed by the national insurance fund, which is employment-based, with government support for those not covered through employment. Efforts are also being made to improve maternal and child health and nutrition, environmental and occupational health.<sup>145</sup>

### *Education and Gender*

As the data in Table 9.15 show, overall school enrollments in Kazakhstan have fallen for kindergarten, primary, and secondary school students. Tertiary enrollments have stayed about the same according to the UNICEF MONEE Project; however, researchers for the Asian Development Bank report that higher education enrollment has declined by 30 percent.<sup>146</sup>

**Table 9.15. School Enrollments During the Transition, as a Percent of the Relevant Population**

Kindergarten		Primary		Secondary		Tertiary	
1989	1997	1989	1997	1989	1997	1989	1997
52.2	11.7	93.9	89.2	30.4	26.5	12.9	13.4

*Source:* UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition, Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 133-134.

While overall access to education has decreased, there do not seem to be any gender-related access issues.<sup>147</sup> The World Bank, our source for cross-country comparable data on gender and education enrollments, has data only for primary and tertiary enrollments, and these are presented in Table 9.16. Female students made up about half of primary enrollment in 1996. As in most E&E countries, male students made up less than half (45 percent) of tertiary enrollment.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., xxiv.

<sup>144</sup> Klugman and Schieber, *A Survey of Health Reform in Central Asia*, 22.

<sup>145</sup> Klugman and Schieber, *A Survey of Health Reform in Central Asia*, 4-5.

<sup>146</sup> Bauer, Boschmann, and Green, *Women and Gender Relations in Kazakhstan*, 55.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 53.

**Table 9.16. Gender and Education, Female Enrollment as Percent of Total**

Primary		Secondary		Tertiary	
1980	1996	1980	1996	1980	1996
--	49	--	--	--	55

Note: -- indicates no data are available.

Source: World Bank, 1999 *World Development Indicators*.

Conclusions about education expenditures are difficult to make because the most recent available data for Kazakhstan are for 1995. The Asian Development Bank states that Kazakhstan's education expenditures fell by 55 percent between 1993 and 1995.<sup>148</sup> However, UNICEF MONEE Project data, shown in Table 9.17, indicate that while expenditures did decrease from 1993 to 1995, the 1995 figures are actually a higher percentage of GDP than in 1992.

**Table 9.17. Public Expenditures on Education, as a Percentage of GDP**

1992	1993	1995
2.1	3.9	3.2

Source: UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 135.

### *Findings*

**With the shredding of the social safety net, how have women versus men fared in access to / support from social programs?** Kazakhstan, according to the Asian Development Bank, has five social benefit programs that specifically target women. In addition, women receive favorable eligibility and benefit treatment for old-age pensions. Men, however, seem to be favored in the unemployment benefit system.

**Do data show women's poverty rates to be greater than men's?** The Asian Development Bank asserts that women and female-headed households are poorer; however, data from the World Bank show that female-headed households are less likely to be poor than male-headed households.

**What are the health-related impacts of the transition?** The health status of both men and women has declined during the transition. Life expectancy has declined for both men and women. Maternal mortality increased, as did the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases. However, abortion rates and infant mortality decreased.

<sup>148</sup> Bauer, Boschmann, and Green, *Women and Gender Relations in Kazakhstan*, 53.

**What differential impacts has pension reform had on men's and women's access to benefits?**

Pension reform has included raising the retirement ages for both men and women, although women will continue to retire earlier than men. Kazakhstan has created individual, private retirement accounts. Because the effects of these accounts on gender are similar in most E&E countries, these are discussed in Chapter 5.

**What are salient changes in the state-funded education system (secondary and higher) since 1989/91?**

Overall enrollments have decreased since the transition for kindergarten, primary, and secondary school students. Tertiary enrollments have remained about the same. There do not appear to be any gender-related effects of this decline in enrollment.

***Opportunities for Future Research***

**Research on Kazakhstan's social benefit programs targeted specifically to women should analyze the effects of the transition on these programs and their benefit levels.** For example, have the benefit levels been maintained throughout the transition?

**Pension reform, and the creation of mandatory private pension accounts, should be monitored for its impact on gender.**

**The decline in education enrollments should be also monitored although data do not yet indicate a gender impact of this decline.**

## Chapter 10: Kyrgyzstan



### Basic Indicators

For additional information, please see Country Data Table in the Appendix.

<i>Demographics</i>			
Population <sup>1</sup> (1998)	4,635,000; female 2,346,000 (50.6%)		
Rural / Urban <sup>2</sup>	Urban 40%		
Ethnic composition <sup>3</sup>	Kirghiz 52.4%, Russian 18%, Uzbek 12.9%, Ukrainian 2.5%, German 2.4%, other 11.8%		
<i>Economic Growth and Development</i>			
GDP per capita (all in 1987\$) <sup>4</sup>	<b>1985</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1997</b>
	NA	\$210	\$111
GDP per capita (PPP for 1997) <sup>4</sup>	<b>Female</b>		<b>Male</b>
	\$1,798		\$2,720
Registered Unemployment Rate <sup>1</sup>	1992		1997
	0.1%		3.1%
<i>Democracy and Governance</i>			
Women in Parliament <sup>5</sup>	4.8%		
Women in Ministerial Positions <sup>6</sup>	11.8%		
<i>Social Transition</i>			
Life Expectancy by Sex (1999 est.) <sup>3</sup>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Average</b>
	68.1 years	59.25 years	63.57 years
Combined first, second, and third level gross school enrollment ratio (1997) <sup>4</sup>	<b>Female</b>		<b>Male</b>
	71%		68%
Population below poverty line <sup>2</sup>	51%		

Sources: 1) UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*.

2) World Bank Country Data (<http://wbln0018.worldbank.org/eca/eca.nsf>).

3) CIA World Factbook 1999 (<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>).

4) UNDP Human Development Indicators 1999.

5) Inter Parliamentary Union website, <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

- 6) CIA Chiefs of State and Cabinet Members website, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/chiefs/index.html> and Women in Governments website, <http://hjem.get2net.dk/Womeningovernments/>.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### *Economic Transition*

- Data for overall labor force participation indicate that gender differentials are small: men make up slightly more than half of the labor force. Unemployment, however, has a gender dimension: women accounted for 58 percent of unemployment in 1996.
- Two sources, UNICEF MONEE and the ILO, show that the gender pay gap is increasing, and in 1997, women's wages were less than 75 percent of men's.
- World Bank interviews with Kyrgyz citizens reflect the growth of the informal economy and its significance to women. "Hard" data on this sector do not exist.
- We found no quantitative data on the impact of privatization on employment.
- UNDP, our source for cross-country comparable data on gender and managerial and professional positions, had no data on Kyrgyzstan. Other researchers wrote that women were more likely to hold lower-paying and lower-status jobs than men.

### *Democratic Transition*

- Despite progressive legislation and the appointment of women to high posts in the executive and judicial branches of government, however, men and women are not truly equal in Kyrgyzstan.
- Civil society is thriving, if somewhat reliant on foreign resources, and ostensibly providing services to vulnerable men, women and children. Women's NGOs are organizationally among the strongest in Central Asia.
- Rule of law has been institutionalized and equality of the sexes is guaranteed by the Constitution, international conventions, and secondary laws. In spite of those guarantees, there is *de facto* discrimination and the government has instituted the AYALZAT program to address the issue.

### *Social Transition*

- In five of eight social safety net programs, women receive preferential treatment in eligibility, benefits, or both.
- Poverty is gender-differentiated, and women tend to be poorer than men.
- Pension reform is too new for data on its effects on gender.
- The health status of both men and women declined.
- Education enrollment data from UNICEF MONEE do not show a gender differentiation; however, other research indicates growing gender-related problems.



## Country Overview

**Introduction:** Kyrgyzstan, a small, mountainous, and land-locked country of 200,000 square kilometers and a population of 4.7 million people, has pursued a fast-track transformation of its economy following the dissolution of the Soviet Union.<sup>1</sup> It is bounded by Kazakstan on the northwest and north, by China on the east and south, and by Tajikistan and Uzbekistan on the south and west. The Kyrgyz, a Muslim Turkic people, constitute more than half the population. The history of the Kyrgyz in what is now Kyrgyzstan dates at least to the 17th century. Kyrgyzstan, known under Russian and Soviet rule as Kirgiziya, was conquered by tsarist Russian forces in the 19th century. Formerly a constituent (union) republic of the USSR, Kyrgyzstan declared its independence on August 31, 1991.

**People:** The Kyrgyz speak a language belonging to the northwestern, or Kipchak, group of the Turkic languages. They were formerly a transhumant (nomadic) people who were settled into collectivized agriculture by the Soviet regime. Besides Kyrgyz, the country's population includes minorities of Russians, Uzbeks, Ukrainians, and Germans (exiled to the region from European parts of the Soviet Union in 1941), as well as Tatars, Kazaks, Dungans (Hui; Chinese Muslims), Uighurs, and Tajiks. Since independence in 1991, many Russians and Germans have emigrated.

**Cultural life:** Starting in the 1920s and '30s, several Kyrgyz-language newspapers appeared regularly in the republic, but they were subject to Soviet censorship. With the collapse of Moscow's control over the press, the editorial policies of the republic's publications have changed noticeably, and new press outlets have appeared, though press freedom has occasionally been curtailed. Kyrgyz cultural life has been greatly influenced by the rich oral literary tradition (including epic cycles and lyric poetry) of the region, by the development of a modern literary language, and by the change from the Arabic alphabet to Roman and finally to Cyrillic (with diacritical markings added) beginning in 1940. The Kyrgyz planned a return to the Roman alphabet in the 1990s, in concert with the other Turkic-speaking countries of Central Asia. Kyrgyz folk singers still recite the lengthy verse epic *Manas* and other heroic and lyric poetry, often to the accompaniment of the three-stringed *komuz*, which is plucked like a lute.

**Government:** Kyrgyzstan's 1993 constitution, which replaced the Soviet-era constitution that had been in effect since 1978, recognizes numerous rights and freedoms for citizens. It establishes legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government but gives the president, who is the head of state, the ability to implement important policies or constitutional amendments through a national referendum.

During the Soviet period, the Communist Party of Kirgiziya (CPK), a branch of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), determined the makeup of the government and dominated the political process. The CPK transformed itself into the People's Democratic Party during the Soviet Union's collapse and declined in influence after Kyrgyzstan, in contested elections in 1989, had gained its first democratically elected president, Askar Akayev, a former university professor and computer scientist. Informal political groups such as Ashar ("Solidarity") have since helped to open up the political process further.

**Education:** Kyrgyzstan's schools and colleges have undergone a drastic reorganization since emerging from the ideological control of the Communist Party. The republic made Kyrgyz the official state language in 1989, and since that time Kyrgyz has begun to play a primary role in education; whole generations of students previously received much of their training entirely in Russian, which was obligatory. As a consequence, the Kyrgyz language lacked a thoroughly modern technical vocabulary.

**Health and Welfare:** Kyrgyzstan, along with the other Central Asian republics, suffers from one of the highest rates of infant morbidity and mortality among the world's developed countries. Medical care is substandard; Kyrgyzstan's standard of living and educational and economic levels are among the lowest of the former Soviet republics.

From *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (<http://www.britannica.com>)

<sup>1</sup> World Bank Country Brief: Kyrgyzstan, <http://wbln0018.worldbank.org>.

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter explores the economic, democratic, and social transitions in Kyrgyzstan. Each section seeks to answer a set of research questions which are set out at the beginning of the sections. In addition to subsections addressing each of the research questions, each section includes a subsection on findings and opportunities for future research.

## THE ECONOMIC TRANSITION

This section seeks to answer the following questions as they relate to Kyrgyzstan:

1. Have there been changes in labor force participation by women and men during the transition?
2. Is there evidence for wage gap trends and wage differentials?
3. Has unemployment increased, whether official or hidden, and is there a gender dimension to unemployment?
4. How has the growth of the informal economy reflected gender differentiation?
5. What is the impact of privatization of state enterprises on women's and men's employment?
6. What role do women play in new managerial positions or business formation in the growing private sector?

In the subsections below we discuss GDP, labor force participation, unemployment, the informal economy, and privatization and present data on each of these issues as they relate to gender. Our findings on the impact of the economic transition on gender are presented in the concluding subsection.

### *Contextual Information about the Economy*

Data on GDP and how it has changed since independence provide an overall view of Kyrgyzstan's economy and the transition. Table 10.1 presents data on per capita GDP in 1990 and 1997.

**Table 10.1. Per Capita GDP**

Per Capita GDP (1987 US\$)			Female real GDP per capita (1997 PPP\$)	Male real GDP per capita (1997 PPP\$)
1985	1990	1997	1997	1997
--	210	111	1,798	2,720

Source: UNDP, Human Development Indicators, 1999.

As measured in GDP, the transition has not been easy for Kyrgyzstan: GDP in 1995 had fallen to 50 percent of its 1990 level and has recovered to only 60 percent of its 1990 level (see Table 10.2). UNDP GDP data analyzed by gender show that female GDP in 1997 was 66 percent of male GDP. The male and female GDP data are based on a comparison between male and female wages and income. While UNDP does not provide a time series for these data, the data do show that wages and income are less for women than for men. As data on labor force participation presented below indicate, lower wages and income for women may well be due to the jobs they tend to hold.

**Table 10.2. Change in Real GDP, 1989-1998 (1989=100)**

Country	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Kyrgyzstan	100.0	103.0	97.9	79.3	66.6	53.3	50.4	54.0	57.5	59.8

Source: UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition, Regional Monitoring Report No. 6* (New York: UNICEF International Child Development Centre, 1999), 138.

### **Labor Force Participation**

Women's experiences in the pre-transition labor market are impossible to assess accurately given the lack of statistics offered by official sources. Communist ideology maintained that collection of statistics related to wage earnings and status – especially when disaggregated by sex – was irrelevant because of the egalitarian nature of the socialist union.<sup>2</sup> With this caveat, we present labor force data from the World Bank in Tables 10.3 and 10.4.

The data in the tables do reflect some gender differences. Men make up slightly more than half of the labor force. The structure of the labor force, shown in Table 10.4, indicates that men are more likely than women to be employed in agriculture and industry, but less likely than women to be employed in services. These data, however, although they are the most recent data available, are from 1990. Therefore, no conclusions about the current structure of the labor force can be made.

**Table 10.3. Labor Force Participation**

Labor Force Participation (ratio of female to male)		Labor Force Participation (% of total labor force)			
1970	1997	1980		1997	
0.9	0.9	Male	Female	Male	Female
		52%	48%	53%	47%

Source: World Bank, 1999 World Development Indicators.

Shifting labor markets in Kyrgyzstan have also exacerbated existing gender inequalities. Traditionally in the Soviet Union women occupied the majority of positions in the social services: health care, education, childcare and old age centers. Massive downsizing of these state-run operations has disproportionately affected women. First, the loss of state childcare services means that fewer mothers, and much fewer rural mothers, can access daycare or kindergartens for their children in order to maintain full-time jobs. By 1995, two thirds of the nation's kindergartens were closed. In addition, the privatization, or downsizing of social services tended to disfavor women, because the transition cost them many service sector jobs. Women have been forced out of social services largely into the agricultural sector, a trend that reinforces their lower wage status, and which counteracts any efforts toward urbanization or upward social mobility. In the period from 1991 to 1999 alone, the percentage of women in agriculture rose from 13.9 percent to 36 percent.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, the type of agricultural work that women do

<sup>2</sup> Jim Windell and Guy Standing, *Women and Other Vulnerable Groups in Kyrgyz Industry*, Workshop on Enterprise and Employment Restructuring in Kyrgyz Industry, Paper No. 3 (Geneva: International Labour Office, 1994), 14.

<sup>3</sup> Armin Bauer, David Green, and Kathleen Kuehnast. *Women and Gender Relations: The Kyrgyz Republic in Transition* (Manila: Asian Development Bank, 1997), 56.

offers a wage that is one third of the national average wage.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, it is significant to note that while there was a rather high concentration of women in social services in 1993, this field offered the lowest wages relative to agriculture. However, as women were pushed out of social services into agriculture around 1995, the pay scale reversed, and agriculture became the least paying, least prestigious work.<sup>5</sup>

**Table 10.4. Labor Force By Sector and Gender,  
Percent Of Male Or Female Labor Force**

	Male	Female
<b>Agriculture</b>	36	28
<b>Industry</b>	30	23
<b>Services</b>	34	50
<b>Administrators and Managers</b>	--	--
<b>Professional and technical workers</b>	--	--

*Note:* -- indicates data are not available for Kyrgyzstan.

*Sources:* For employment by sector, World Bank Gender Stats database (latest available data are for 1990). For managerial/professional workers, UNDP, Human Development Indicators, 1999.

### *Wage Gaps and Wage Differentials*

Two sources – UNICEF MONEE and the ILO – provide data on wage differentials, and both are presented in Table 10.5. While the data conflict, both sources indicate that the gender pay gap has increased in Kyrgyzstan in the last few years (data are not available for the beginning of the transition).

**Table 10.5. Ratio of Female to Male Wages**

	1995	1996	1997
<b>UNICEF MONEE</b>	.733		.715
<b>ILO Laborsta Database</b>	.811	.822	.744

*Note:* Ratio = female wages divided by male wages.

*Sources:* UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 33; ILO Laborsta Database, <http://laborsta.ilo.org>.

While the UNDP, our primary source for cross-country comparison data on employment in managerial and professional positions (see Table 10.4 above and Chapter 3), has no data for Kyrgyzstan, other sources do provide some information about employment, gender, and the relation to wages. According to Windell and Standing, female participation in industrial labor has traditionally been concentrated in lower-wage factories, often textile and garment plants. In 1993, they accounted for almost 60 percent of those employed in factories with a low average wage. Fewer than 25 percent of women were

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 58.

earning enough to place them in the sector's highest wage bracket, and more than 75 percent were in the lowest wage bracket.<sup>6</sup>

### *Unemployment*

Unemployment figures presented in Table 10.6 show that official unemployment was 4.4 percent in 1997, though many estimations of "real" as opposed to "official" unemployment suggested a figure closer to 18 percent.

The International Labour Organization provides gender-disaggregated data on unemployment. As can be seen in the table, unemployment is gender-differentiated: women comprised 57.9 percent of the unemployed in 1996. However, the time series data also in the table show that women's share of unemployment has been decreasing since 1992 when women made up 72.8 percent of the unemployed. Therefore, while women account for a disproportionate share of the unemployed, this share has been decreasing.

**Table 10.6. Unemployment**

	1990	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
<b>Total Unemployment, in 1000s<sup>7</sup></b>	--	1.8	2.9	12.6	50.4	77.2	--
<b>Unemployment (% of total labor force)<sup>8</sup></b>	0.0	--	--	--	--	--	4.4
<b>% Male<sup>9</sup></b>	--	27.2	30.3	39.1	40.7	42.1	--
<b>% Female<sup>10</sup></b>	--	72.8	69.7	60.9	59.3	57.9	--

Sources: As indicated in the footnotes.

### *The Informal Economy*

The informal economy in Kyrgyzstan is dominated by women and has been dubbed the "women's shuttle economy," or the "women's suitcase economy" by the World Bank and the United Nations.<sup>11</sup> The informal, or gray, economy offers profitable alternatives to individuals seeking to add to what they may be earning in private or state sector jobs. The "bazaar economy" involves traveling to Russia, China, India, Turkey, and Korea to purchase merchandise for smuggling and resale at home. This unofficial trade becomes particularly lucrative where markets are liberalized, commodities are various,

<sup>6</sup> Windell and Standing, *Women and Other Vulnerable Groups*, 14.

<sup>7</sup> Figures calculated from ILO Yearbook, 1997.

<sup>8</sup> World Bank, Gender Stats Database, <http://genderstats.worldbank.org>.

<sup>9</sup> Figures calculated from ILO Yearbook, 1997.

<sup>10</sup> Figures calculated from ILO Yearbook, 1997.

<sup>11</sup> World Bank, *Kyrgyz Republic: Consultations with the Poor*, Participatory Poverty Assessment in the Kyrgyz Republic for the World Bank Development Report 2000/01, (Washington: World Bank, 1999), 121; and UN Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. A/54/38 (part 1), article 133.

and urban consumers are wealthy enough to shop for foreign goods.<sup>12</sup> Box 10.1 describes some of the effects of this trade on families.

### **Box 10.1. Effects on the Family**

“In the past, women were responsible for the home, and men provided for the family, and everything was clear. Now women trade at the market no matter what the weather is like, because they need to provide for the family, and men stay at home, take care of children and do other female work. It’s not right, it’s no good.” An older man from Kenesh village, Talas region.

“The unemployed men are frustrated, because they no longer can play the part of family providers and protectors. They live on the money made by their wives, and feel humiliated because of that. Suicides among young men have become more frequent.” An elderly woman from Uchkun village, Naryn region.

World Bank, *Kyrgyz Republic: Consultations With the Poor* (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1999), 110-111.

Several incentives have driven women into the “suitcase economy.” The most immediate motivation has once again been unemployment: women displaced from their traditional fields of labor must still support their families. Moreover, unofficial trade usually offers greater profits than state employment.<sup>13</sup> Beyond financial considerations, however, Kyrgyz women are attracted to the “shuttle economy,” because they tend to have better language skills than men, customs inspectors and border guards are less hostile toward women, and women are less likely to be robbed.<sup>14</sup>

## ***Privatization***

### **Privatization of the Economy**

According to the World Bank’s discussions with Kyrgyz citizens, privatization has led to the closure or downsizing of factories and other enterprises across the country, leaving a pool of displaced, surplus labor, and a very small group of wealthy elite that owns and manages the remaining production companies.<sup>15</sup> Privatization put an end to the former gender quota system. According to Windell and Standing, new managers selectively avoided hiring women for specialized or administrative positions. In 1994, only 9.0 percent of Kyrgyz firms reported a preference for females in managerial positions, as opposed to 63.1 percent reporting a preference for females in general services.<sup>16</sup>

The EBRD reports that small-scale privatization is almost complete in Kyrgyzstan, and about 97 percent of all small- and medium-sized enterprises were privatized by 1999. Large-scale privatization,

<sup>12</sup> World Bank, *Kyrgyz Republic: Consultations with the Poor*, 10; and Kathleen Kuehnast, “From Pioneers to Entrepreneurs: Young Women, Consumerism, And The ‘World Picture’ In Kyrgyzstan,” *Central Asian Survey*, 17 (4), 648.

<sup>13</sup> World Bank, *Kyrgyz Republic: Consultations with the Poor*, 9.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 110.

<sup>15</sup> World Bank, *Kyrgyz Republic: Consultations with the Poor*, 16

<sup>16</sup> Windell and Standing, *Women and Other Vulnerable Groups*, 3

however, has been much more slow, with little interest from investors.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, the private sector accounted for sixty percent of Kyrgyzstan's GDP in 1999.<sup>18</sup>

We found no quantitative data directly linking privatization and unemployment.

### Privatization of Land

Property law is another area that the government has been developing incrementally since the fall of Communism. Both men and women are free to purchase their apartments from the state, though figures on apartment ownership by gender are not available. Private ownership of land, however, is not currently legal in Kyrgyzstan. What has been approved is the leasing of agricultural plots for up to 49 years, which entails receiving a land use title. This option is available to men and women, either of whom can also inherit these leased titles. In practice, though, the privatization of commercial agricultural land tends to favor men over women.<sup>19</sup>

### Managerial Positions and Business Formation

Researchers for the Asian Development Bank (ADB) assert that as the result of a quota system, women accounted for one-third of all upper management positions in the political, economic, and social realms of society by the late 1980s.<sup>20</sup> The most recent data given by the ADB on women in managerial positions are from 1993 and 1994. These data are presented in Table 10.7. The World Bank maintains gender-disaggregated statistics on managerial/administrative and professional employment for each country in the region; however, no such data were available for Kyrgyzstan.

**Table 10.7. Gender and Managerial Positions**

	1993		1994	
	Women, % of all managers	Women managers, #	Women, % of all managers	Women managers, #
<b>Industry</b>	33.0	4,327	34.2	4,142
<b>Agriculture</b>	20.4	350	14.2	397
<b>Transport and Construction</b>	19.2	1,243	19.4	1,004
<b>Trade</b>	58.0	1,200	53.6	1,078
<b>Education</b>	45.1	2,787	50.5	3,588
<b>Health and Social Protection</b>	55.3	1,598	47.6	1,324
<b>Government/ Administration</b>	28.7	822	28.6	939
<b>TOTAL</b>	35.2	14,592	36.1	14,821

<sup>17</sup> European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, *Transition Report 1999: Ten Years of Transition* (London: EBRD, 1999), 234.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>19</sup> Bauer, Green, and Kuehnast, *Women and Gender Relations*, 17-18.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.



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Source: Bauer, Green, Kuehnast, *Women and Gender Relations*, 20.

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As shown in the table, in 1994, women accounted for about half of all managers in three fields: trade, education, and health and social protection. While education and health and social protection can be dismissed as “typical” female fields, trade cannot. Agriculture, trade, and health and social protection experienced a reduction in women as a percentage of all managers from 1993 until 1994. Overall, however, women made up 36 percent of all managers, a small increase from 1993.

### **Findings**

#### **Have there been changes in labor force participation by women and men during the transition?**

The most recent data on sectoral employment are from 1990, and, therefore, no conclusion about change during the transition can be made. Data for overall labor force participation indicate that gender differentials are small: women make up slightly less than half of the labor force.

**Is there evidence for wage gap trends and wage differentials?** Two sources, UNICEF MONEE and the ILO, show that the pay gap between men and women is increasing, and in 1997, women’s wages were less than 75 percent of men’s.

**Has unemployment increased, whether official or hidden, and is there a gender dimension to unemployment?** Unemployment has increased, though this is hardly surprising since official unemployment was zero in 1990. Unemployment has a gender dimension as reflected in the fact that women accounted for 58 percent of unemployment in 1996. These data reflect a decrease in women’s percentage of unemployment from a high of 73 percent in 1992.

**How has the growth of the informal economy reflected gender differentiation?** The World Bank and the United Nations have dubbed Kyrgyzstan’s informal economy the “women’s shuttle economy,” or the “women’s suitcase economy” because of women’s domination of this sector. World Bank interviews with Kyrgyz citizens reflect the growth of the informal economy and its significance to women. “Hard” data on this sector do not exist.

#### **What is the impact of privatization of state enterprises on women’s and men’s employment?**

We found no quantitative data on the impact of privatization on employment.

**What role do women play in new managerial positions or business formation in the growing private sector?** UNDP, our source for cross-country comparable data on gender and managerial and professional positions, had no data on Kyrgyzstan. Other researchers, notably Windell and Standing and the Asian Development Bank, wrote that women were more likely to hold lower-paying and lower-status jobs than men. The Asian Development Bank reported that in 1994, women accounted for about half of all managers in three fields: trade, education, and health and social protection. Agriculture, trade, and health and social protection experienced a reduction in women as a percentage of all

managers from 1993 until 1994. Overall, however, women made up 36 percent of all managers, a small increase from 1993.

### ***Opportunities for Future Research***

**Labor market information is essentially nonexistent in Kyrgyzstan.** Gender-disaggregated information is unavailable on such basic issues as wages, unemployment rates, labor market composition, and on changing characteristics of workers and the self-employed.

**Little information is available on the advancement of women into business, both as high-level managers of enterprises as well as entrepreneurs.** Research needs to be conducted on this aspect of the transition.

**The role of the informal economy in contributing to men's and women's relative economic position remains largely undocumented.**

**Little research has been done on the changing nature of work for men and women.**

## THE DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION

The purpose of this section is to discuss the differential experience of Kyrgyz men and women in the political sphere since the transition to democracy. The primary questions to be answered are:

1. Is there differential participation by women and men in the public sphere?
  - a) What is the role of women in party politics?
  - b) What is the representation of women in elected government positions, locally and nationally?
  - c) What is the representation of women in appointed governmental positions?
2. How is gender reflected in the development of civil society, especially NGOs?
  - a) What is the role of women in different types of NGOs?
  - b) Have NGOs developed that advocate for gender issues?
3. How has the rule of law been institutionalized and what impact is there on gender?
  - a) Have there been *de jure* legal reforms with an impact on gender?
  - b) Do men and women have equal legal rights, *de jure* and *de facto*? (Is there sufficient information to be able to contrast between *de jure* and *de facto*?)
  - c) Have there been reforms related to family law: inheritance, ownership, marriage, and divorce that impact on gender?

These questions are addressed below beginning with a brief discussion of how men and women participated in politics and civil society during the Soviet era and how the patterns of that participation has changed since independence and how they are now affected by rule of law.

### *Political Activity in the Soviet Period*

According to Soviet literature, Kyrgyz men and women enjoyed a sense of relative equality even before the introduction of Communism in the 1920s. Relationships were based on joint labor, Soviet scholars point out, though young women, particularly in the upper classes, were exploited as commodities, first by their parents and then as servants in their husband's house. Even during the Soviet era, traditions and tribal kinship were important and retained strong social influence, particularly in the southern part of the republic. For example, even through the early 1950s, some women in southern Kyrgyzstan still wore the *paranja* and lived in relative seclusion.<sup>21</sup>

As elsewhere in the former Soviet Union, before 1989 women consistently represented 30 percent of the republic's elected legislators, and a woman was usually the Third Secretary of Communist Party organizations. In spite of their numbers, however, only one woman attained membership in the Politburo of Kyrgyzstan's Communist Party, Kulpina Konduchalova, from 1952 to 1962.

<sup>21</sup> Kathleen Kuehnast, *Let the Stone Lie Where It Has Fallen: Dilemmas of Gender and Generation in Post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan*, Ph.D. Dissertation (University of Minnesota, 1997), 103.

One source states that women generally received governmental posts dealing with education, art and culture, and party indoctrination.<sup>22</sup> While women may have comprised most of the staff in those areas, they were only appointed as the Minister of Culture (1962 – 1989). Moreover, women held positions as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Social Affairs, Minister of Consumers' Protection, and Vice President of the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic.<sup>23</sup> Additionally, a few Kyrgyz women attained leadership positions in the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, notably Vice Chair of the Council of Nationalities, Vice Chair of the Federal Council, and Chair of the Committee for Social Affairs and Health in the House of Nations.<sup>24</sup> Women also comprised 30.5 percent of the judiciary in 1985.

### ***Political Activity since Independence***

The transition brought significant changes in women's representation in all three branches of government to Kyrgyzstan. Women's participation has decreased almost universally across all three branches of government. Kyrgyzstan has adopted the AYALZAT program to improve equality between men and women and one of its goals is to involve women in political decision-making. Having adopted this program, Kyrgyzstan ironically has one of the region's lowest proportions of women in elected office. As Table 10.8 below illustrates, women are too few to create any kind of formal coalition in either house of the *Jogorku Kenesh* (parliament).

The picture is much the same in the other branches of government where women are rarely promoted to high-level posts.<sup>25</sup> Women occupy two top-level positions in the executive branch, the Minister of Justice and the Chair of the Social Fund.<sup>26</sup> Their representation in lower levels of staff has dropped as well. Of the staff for the Cabinet of Ministers, 16 percent are women, 2.2 percent of whom are department heads. Women also comprise 38 percent of the President's Administration; two percent of these are department heads.<sup>27</sup>

From 1985 to 1995, women's representation in the judiciary has fallen from 30.5 percent to eight percent. One notable exception to the decrease of women in the judiciary has been the appointment of a woman as the Chairperson of the Kyrgyz Republic Constitutional Court (one of the nine members).<sup>28</sup> While this was a significant step, it was but one appointment that does little to redress the gender imbalance in the Kyrgyz government. However, the government is working on judicial system reform, part of which, it is hoped, will be addressing the promotion of more women to the bench.<sup>29</sup>

**Table 10.8. Political Positions Held by Men and Women in Kyrgyzstan**

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<sup>22</sup> Camilya Kenenbaeva, Anara Tabyshalieva, and Altynai Karasaeva, "Women of Kyrgyzstan: Traditions and New Realities," in *Assertions of Self: The Nascent Women's Movement in Central Asia* (Lahore: Shirkat GAH, 1995), 29.

<sup>23</sup> Women in Governments website, <http://hjem.get2net.dk/Womeningovernments/Kyrgysistan.htm>

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Kenenbaeva, Tabyshalieva, and Karasaeva, "Women of Kyrgyzstan," 30.

<sup>26</sup> Website of the Government of Kyrgyzstan, <http://www.kyrgyzstan.org/min.html>.

<sup>27</sup> Bauer, Green and Kuehnast, *Women and Gender Relations*, 19.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Adrian Karatnycky, Alexander Motyl, and Charles Graybow, eds., *Nations in Transit 1998: Civil Society, Democracy, and Markets in East Central Europe and the Newly Independent States* (Washington, DC: Freedom House, 1999), 333.

Position	Total Number	Held by Women		Held by Men	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Members of Parliament*	105	5	4.8 %	100	95.2 %
Lower Chamber	70	1	1.4 %	69	98.6 %
Upper Chamber	35	4	11.4 %	31	88.6 %
Cabinet Ministers	17	2	11.8 %	15	88.2 %
Pres. Admin. Employees	NA	NA	38.0 %	NA	62.0 %
Regional Administrators	60	1	1.7 %	59	98.3 %
Members of Judiciary	NA	NA	8.0 %**	NA	92.0 %
High Court	9	1	11.1 %	8	88.9 %
Appeals Courts	NA	NA		NA	
Local Courts	NA	NA		NA	
Political Party Leaders	10	0	0.0 %	10	100.0 %

Notes: Data are from January 2000 unless otherwise noted.

\*The last parliamentary elections were held in February 1995 and the parliament serves for a five year term.

\*\*Data are from 1995.

Sources: Inter Parliamentary Union website, <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>; Women in Governments website, <http://hjem.get2net.dk/Womeningovernments/>; CIA Chiefs of State and Cabinet Members web page, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/chiefs/index.html>; Bauer, Green and Kuehnast, *Women and Gender Relations*, 19; Government of Kyrgyzstan website, <http://www.gov.kg/english/law-e.htm>; and Kenenbaeva, Tabyshalieva, and Karasaeva, "Women of Kyrgyzstan," 28.

### *Civil Society since Independence*

Since independence, NGOs have proliferated and diversified to the extent that several researchers report vastly different numbers of NGOs in Kyrgyzstan, depending on how NGOs are defined. The Asian Development Bank reports that there are currently 18 active registered women's organizations in Kyrgyzstan among a full complement of 500 other NGOs.<sup>30</sup> This latter figure seems to be the subject of some disagreement, however. A recent article by Horton and Kazakina, counts 700 nonprofit organizations in Kyrgyzstan, 300 of which they claim are active.<sup>31</sup> Meanwhile, Erkinbek Kasybekov, an employee to the Counterpart Consortium, states that more than 800 NGOs registered with the government between 1991 and 1996.<sup>32</sup> Of course, as one author points out, the number of NGOs may reveal little about democracy, participation, or political life in Kyrgyzstan since many have been created by international donors rather than Kyrgyz citizens.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, it appears that Kyrgyz NGOs have been very successful lobbyists, involved among other matters in the drafting of laws to regulate their own activities.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Bauer, Green and Kuehnast, *Women and Gender Relations*, 76-77.

<sup>31</sup> Scott Horton, and Alla Kazakina, "The Legal Regulations of NGOs: Central Asia at a Crossroads," in Ruffin and Waugh, *Civil Society in Central Asia*, 36.

<sup>32</sup> Kasybekov, "Government and Nonprofit Sector Relations," in Ruffin and Waugh, *Civil Society*, 71.

<sup>33</sup> Christian Boehm, "Democracy as a Project: Perceptions of Democracy Within the World of Projects in Former Soviet Kyrgyzstan," *Anthropology of East Europe Review*, Vol. 17, No. 1, (1999), 42.

<sup>34</sup> Horton and Kazakina, "The Legal Regulations of NGOs," in Ruffin and Waugh, *Civil Society*, 39.

Most of the NGOs in Kyrgyzstan are not yet self-sustaining, including those focused on women's issues, as they rely heavily on international funding. But organizations that are led by women or which serve primarily women and families are among the strongest in Central Asia.<sup>35</sup> Recent studies have contradictory findings about the work of women's (and other) NGOs in Kyrgyzstan. Many women's organizations provide social services either to women, the poor, or to children, but provides no information on the number of beneficiaries.<sup>36</sup> Kasybekov, on the other hand, finds that there are no NGOs that provide services directly to vulnerable clients.<sup>37</sup> Some women's groups have successfully focused on improving the quality and quantity of gender research underway in Kyrgyzstan.<sup>38</sup>

Generally speaking, very little information is available about gender and civil society in Kyrgyzstan. The literature does not reveal whether membership or leadership in the NGO sector in Kyrgyzstan is feminized. Nor does it give any indication whether women lose leadership positions to men as organizations become larger, richer, better known, or more effective. Anecdotal evidence reveals that membership may be feminized, particularly those NGOs providing services to vulnerable populations. An NGO leader in Osh oblast said in 1997 that of the 40 NGOs working on social issues, women comprised 90 percent of their membership.<sup>39</sup>

### ***Rule of Law***

Women and men theoretically enjoy equal rights as citizens under the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan. Secondary laws support that equality, for example, Article 130 of the Criminal Code makes it illegal for an individual or organization to prevent the equality of women.<sup>40</sup> In addition, Kyrgyzstan has adopted 22 international human rights treaties, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The government has also adopted an official program, AYALZAT, to eliminate *de jure* and *de facto* discrimination against women in Kyrgyzstan, but no information about its effectiveness is available. According to USAID/Central Asian Republics, one of the major problems with rule of law in Kyrgyzstan, and Central Asia as a whole, is enforcement of the legislation.

### **Family Law**

In spite of the laws and treaties protecting the equality of all Kyrgyz citizens, women and men are not truly legal equals, as recent debates about family law illustrate. Both bigamy and polygamy have been ruled illegal, as have ransoming a bride and compelling a woman to marry against her wishes. However, these rulings came only after an extended public debate, particularly on the issue of polygamy, a practice common in the Islamic world. The matter seems to have been resolved against the traditional practice

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<sup>35</sup> Ula Ikramova and Kathryn McConnell, "Women's NGOs in Central Asia's Evolving Societies," in M. Holt Ruffin and Daniel Waugh (eds), *Civil Society in Central Asia*, 198.

<sup>36</sup> Bauer, Green and Kuehnast, *Women and Gender Relations*, 78-80.

<sup>37</sup> Kasybekov, "Government and Nonprofit Sector Relations," in Ruffin and Waugh, *Civil Society*, 79.

<sup>38</sup> Kenenbaeva, Tabyshalieva, and Karasaeva, "Women of Kyrgyzstan," in *Assertions of Self*, 29-30.

<sup>39</sup> Ikramova and McConnell, "Women's NGOs in Central Asia's Evolving Societies," in Ruffin and Waugh, *Civil Society*, 201, 203.

<sup>40</sup> Leila Sydykova, "The Rights of Women in Kyrgyzstan: Utopia and Reality," in *Assertions of Self*, 41.

primarily because so few men could afford a second wife in present-day Kyrgyzstan. The debate itself, however, revealed a great deal about male domination in Kyrgyz society.<sup>41</sup> In fact, despite the new laws against the aforementioned practices, as of 1995, no one had ever appeared in court for violating them.<sup>42</sup> This raises serious questions about the enforcement of Kyrgyzstan's otherwise progressive gender legislation. No information was readily available on Kyrgyzstan's divorce law.

### *Findings*

**Is there differential participation by women and men in the public sphere?** The Kyrgyz have gained significant political rights and liberties since independence from the Soviet Union. But despite progressive legislation and the appointment of women to high posts in the executive and judicial branches of government, however, men and women are not truly equal in Kyrgyzstan. This is illustrated in part by the dramatic decrease in women in political positions and recent public debates on the legalization of polygamy and other practices often deemed detrimental to women. This would indicate that women, at the very least, have lost some of the security they had in the knowledge that the Soviet state would safeguard their basic individual rights. We also know the government is aware of the problem and has taken some steps to remedy the situation through the implementation of the AYALZAT program.

**How is gender reflected in the development of civil society, especially NGOs?** Civil society is thriving, if somewhat reliant on foreign resources, and ostensibly providing services to vulnerable men, women and children. Women's NGOs are organizationally among the strongest in Central Asia.

**How has the rule of law been institutionalized and what impact is there on gender?** Rule of law has been institutionalized and equality of the sexes is guaranteed by the Constitution, international conventions, and secondary laws. In spite of those guarantees, there is *de facto* discrimination.

### *Opportunities for Future Research*

**More information on women in the judiciary and local governments is needed.**

**Better information on the activities of NGOs, their beneficiaries, and the composition of their staff and volunteers is needed.** This information would provide a more complete picture of political activity in Kyrgyzstan, as well as identifying gaps in government-provided services.

**Information on the de facto exercise of rights is needed.** This would assist the government in determining the effectiveness of the AYALZAT program, as well as possibly identifying opportunities for education.

<sup>41</sup> Kuehnast, *Let the Stone Lie Where It Has Fallen*, 75, 84-85.

<sup>42</sup> Sydykova, "The Rights of Women in Kyrgyzstan," 41.

## THE SOCIAL TRANSITION

“It takes fifty years to have a new people appear; it takes a hundred years to have a new land appear.” – Kyrgyz proverb. World Bank, *Kyrgyz Republic: Consultations with the Poor* (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1999), 35.

This section reports findings from major sources regarding the effects of the transition in Kyrgyzstan on social benefits, poverty, pension reform, health, and education and explores these primary questions:

1. With the shredding of the social safety net, how have women versus men fared in access to / support from social programs?
2. Do data show women’s poverty rates to be greater than men’s?
3. What are the health-related impacts of the transition?
4. What differential impacts has pension reform had on men’s and women’s access to benefits?
5. What are salient changes in the state-funded education system (secondary and higher) since 1989/91?

This chapter reviews World Bank, UNDP, UNICEF, and other sources, and major findings are presented in the five sections that follow: Social Safety Net, Poverty, Pension Reform, Health Reform, and Education.

### *The Social Safety Net*

As described in Chapter 5, The Social Transition, social safety net programs are of three general types: universal benefits, social insurance, and social assistance. Kyrgyzstan’s social safety net includes programs that fall into each of these three categories. Table 10.9 lists Kyrgyzstan’s social safety net programs and briefly describes their eligibility requirements and benefits and points out the major gender differences.

As is evident in Table 10.9, there are gender differences in five of eight social benefit programs. In all of these cases, women receive preferential treatment in eligibility, benefits, or both. In other words, the gender bias in social safety net programs is geared toward women. Although this issue is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, it should be noted here that when benefits are based on a percentage of wages, women’s benefits will tend to be lower than men’s.

Research by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) indicates that unemployment and falling levels of social assistance have combined to make the situation of women – particularly pensioners, women with many children, and female-headed households – worse than that of other Kyrgyz citizens.<sup>43</sup> The ADB study notes that although many families depend on social assistance such as pensions and family allowances as their only cash income, the real value of these benefits has declined. The real value of the minimum pension (purchasing power parity), for example,

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<sup>43</sup> Bauer, Green, Kuehnast, *Women and Gender Relations*, 10.



Table 10.9. Social Safety Net Program Eligibility and Benefits in Kyrgyzstan

Program	Value		Eligibility	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
<b>Universal Benefits</b>				
Health Benefits	Universal medical care, plus cash benefits for workers of 60-100% of earnings.	Same.	Universal for medical care. Employment required for cash benefits.	Same.
Old-age Social Assistance Allowance	70-150% of GM per month	70-100% of GM per month.	Age 55 or older. Age 50 or older for high-altitude residents. Mothers of 5+ children or disabled children aged 50-55 or older.	Age 65 or older. Age 55 or older for high-altitude residents.
<b>Social Insurance</b>				
Pension, Old-age	55% of average wage, plus 1% for each year more than 20. Maximum and minimum amounts apply.	55% of average wage, plus 1% for each year more than 25. Maximum and minimum amounts apply.	Age 55 and 20 years of work. Requirements reduced for mothers of 5 or more children or disabled children. Requirements reduced for arduous or hazardous work.	Age 60 and 25 years of work. Requirements reduced for arduous or hazardous work.
Pension, Disability	50-100% of value of old-age pension plus constant attendance supplement. Social assistance allowance (not means tested) also paid.	Same.	Disability from full to partial plus 1-15 years covered employment.	Same.
Pension, Survivorship	30% of wage or 50% of minimum wage. Full orphans receive 30% of wages of both parents or 100% of minimum wage.	Same.	Up to 15 years covered employment. Covered employment includes maternity leave, schooling, caring for disabled,	Up to 15 years covered employment. Covered employment includes schooling, caring for disabled, unemployment.

Program	Value		Eligibility	
	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>
			<i>unemployment.</i>	
Unemployment	<i>100% of minimum wage. 150% of minimum wage if 10 years of employment. Additional 10% for each dependent.</i>	100% of minimum wage. 150% of minimum wage if 12.5 years of employment. Additional 10% for each dependent.	Age 16-54. Must register, have ability and willingness to work.	Age 15-59. Must register, have ability and willingness to work.
Work Injury	Universal medical care, plus cash benefits of 100% of wages.	Same.	Employed persons.	Same.
<b><i>Social Assistance</i></b>				
Family Allowances	Means-tested. <i>100-150% of GM<sup>44</sup> if mother on leave for child care.</i> Social assistance allowance for each child that equals difference between income and GM.	Means-tested. Social assistance allowance for each child that equals difference between income and GM.	<i>Unwed mothers.</i> Single-parent families. Disabled or unemployed parents.	Single-parent families. Disabled or unemployed parents.

*Notes:* The data in this table were current as of January 1, 1999 (the latest version of the Social Security Administration's report). Italicized text indicates a gender difference in eligibility or benefits.

*Source:* U.S. Social Security Administration, *Social Security Programs Throughout the World – 1999*, 210-212.

<sup>44</sup> GM = Guaranteed minimum standard of living set at 100 soms per month as of April, 1998.

declined by 20 to 40 percent per year since independence.<sup>45</sup> ADB researchers also state that more than two-thirds of pensioners in 1996 were women, 80 percent of whom were estimated by the government to be destitute.<sup>46</sup>

Other problems noted by the ADB researchers include nonpayment of pensions or payment in-kind rather than in cash. Pensions are typically two to six months in arrears and tend to be paid in packages of flour and sugar.<sup>47</sup>

The delay in benefit payments and the low value of the payments led one elderly recipient to complain, “Why don’t they just come and kill me instead of letting me slowly die from starvation?” Bauer, et al. *Women and Gender Relations: The Kyrgyz Republic in Transition*, 51.

### ***Poverty and Gender***

Poverty in Kyrgyzstan appears to be gender-differentiated. However, researchers differ in their views of the amount of differentiation. Here we present findings from two major reports and discuss the reports’ implications. Poverty rates disaggregated by gender from the reports are shown in Table 10.10.

**Table 10.10. Poverty Rates by Gender in Kyrgyzstan**

Study	Overall		Urban		Rural	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Falkingham	45.2	43.6	29.2	38.4	52.4	49.4
Grootaert and Braithwaite	41.6	50.5	--	--	--	--

Notes: 1. -- indicates data are not available.

2. Both studies use household surveys to determine expenditures and poverty, and the poverty rates shown are based on the gender of the head of household.

Sources: Jane Falkingham, Jeni Klugman, Sheila Marnie, and John Micklewright, *Household Welfare in Central Asia* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), 90, and Christiaan Grootaert and Jeanine Braithwaite, *Poverty Correlates and Indicator-Based Targeting in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*, Policy Research Working Paper 1942 (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1998), 37.

The Falkingham et al study<sup>48</sup> shows how complicated poverty statistics can be. Although in the overall figures, women were slightly less likely than men to be poor, poverty rates broken out by geography indicate urban women were much more likely than urban men to be poor. Again, rural women were

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>48</sup> Although the Falkingham et. al. book was published in 1997, the data presented therein are from household surveys conducted in 1993.

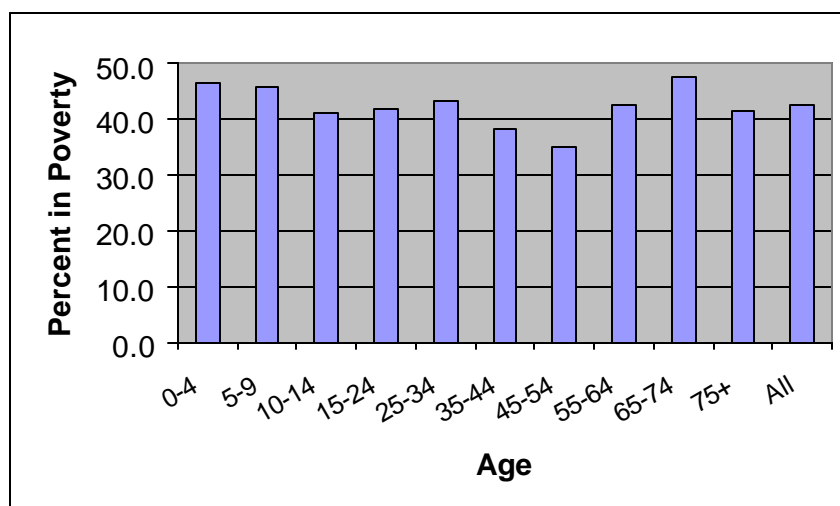
less likely than rural men to be poor, but when poverty rates were further broken down into the poor and very poor, 28.0 percent of rural women were very poor compared to 26.7 percent of rural men.<sup>49</sup>

The Grootaert and Braithwaite study<sup>50</sup> also indicates that rural dwellers are more likely than urban dwellers to be poor but does not analyze geography by gender. The Grootaert and Braithwaite study does, however, present data on household composition and age, both variables to help us understand the gender dimension of poverty.

First, household composition: in Kyrgyzstan, households made up of one female adult with no children are more likely than any other group to be poor. Of those households with one female and no children, 51.8 percent are poor, compared to 42.5 percent of all households. Single men with no children have a poverty rate of 40.0 percent. Grootaert and Braithwaite also analyze the poverty gap for households. The poverty gap is defined as “the poor’s average shortfall in expenditures from the poverty line, expressed as a percentage of the poverty line.” The data show that single females with no children have the largest poverty gap, i.e., are poorer, than any other group, with a poverty gap of 47.4 percent. The average poverty gap is 25.0 percent, and for single men with no children, the rate is 39.5 percent.<sup>51</sup>

Second, age: A 1998 World Bank study by economists Grootaert and Braithwaite found that the very young are more likely to be poor as are the very old. While the age data are not broken down by gender, these data, combined with household composition and gender poverty data, seem to indicate that female-headed households made up of single elderly females are one of the poorest segments of Kyrgyz society. Figure 10.1 presents the poverty data by age.

**Figure 10.1. Poverty by Age Group in Kyrgyzstan**



<sup>49</sup> Jane Falkingham, Jeni Klugman, Sheila Marnie, and John Micklewright, *Household Welfare in Central Asia* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), 90.

<sup>50</sup> The Grootaert and Braithwaite report was published in 1998, but the data are from 1993-1995.

<sup>51</sup> Christian Grootaert and Jeanine Braithwaite, *Poverty Correlates and Indicator-Based Targeting in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*, Policy Research Working Paper 1942 (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1998), 27.

Source: Christian Grootaert and Jeanine Braithwaite, *Poverty Correlates and Indicator-Based Targeting in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*, Policy Research Working Paper 1942 (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1998), 38.

One anthropologist, using qualitative research methods, has found that youth in Kyrgyzstan are “at-risk.” For the most part, these findings are not gender-disaggregated or based on quantitative data. This researcher notes that since poverty rates are high, access to education is decreasing, and health is deteriorating, youth are at risk from these effects.<sup>52</sup>

“Many rural respondents described the number of children are quitting school by age 14 (sic)... A common concern among rural women is the increase in drinking and crime among the male youth. There is little entertainment available since many of the youth clubs have shut down and most movie theaters cannot afford showing films.”

Kathleen Kuehnast, *Women and Economic Changes in Kyrgyzstan: Coping Mechanisms and Attitudes Toward Social Policies*, (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1993), 22.

Our understanding of Kyrgyzstan’s transition has benefited from anthropological study of women and men’s perceptions of poverty and changes in their standards of living. In 1999, a team of World Bank researchers conducted in-depth interviews with 60 persons and 90 focus groups (involving 1033 participants).<sup>53</sup> This study reveals indicators of poverty in addition to quantitative poverty rates. These indicators include inadequate income to purchase household necessities; lack of heat, water, and electricity in homes; an increase in bride stealing because families have no money available to pay dowries (paid to groom’s family) or kalym (paid to bride’s family); boys leaving school to work; families keeping girls out of preschool; and increased alcoholism, crime, and domestic violence.<sup>54</sup>

“In May 1996, twelve women, from the Sovietskaya Region in Osh Oblast, traveled by bus to Bishkek to ask for concrete action from the government. Representing 210 other women from their village, many of them single mothers, they suggested that they were ready to give up their children to orphanages if they did not receive assistance. The women described situations where they were either unemployed or had worked for up to six months without salary. Prime Minister Jumalgulov, impressed by the women’s conviction, donated wheat flour and sugar to their village. Several other charitable organizations also contributed food.”

Bauer, Green, Kuehnast, *Women and Gender Relations: The Kyrgyz Republic in Transition*, 30.

### ***Pension Reform***

Kyrgyzstan began pension reform in 1998 with new legislation that replaced its old earnings-related system with a system of personal accounts. Under the personal accounts system, actual contributions would be made on behalf of individuals. However, these contributions would still be under a Pay as

<sup>52</sup> Kathleen Kuehnast, “Coming of Age in Post-Soviet Central Asia: New Dilemmas and Challenges Facing Youth and Children,” January, 2000 (currently under review for a journal), 5-6.

<sup>53</sup> World Bank, *Kyrgyz Republic: Consultations with the Poor*.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

You Go approach (see Chapter 5 for a discussion of pension reform and the terms involved).<sup>55</sup> The World Bank, as part of a social sector adjustment credit, is helping Kyrgyzstan reform its pension system by establishing personal accounts for the state pension tier, plus a voluntary pension tier. The World Bank's program is intended to strengthen the accounting, audit, and financial management of the pension system and develop the Government's policy analysis capacity.<sup>56</sup>

Because Kyrgyzstan only recently began its pension reform, there are no data available on the effects of the reform on gender.

### ***Health Status and the Impact of the Transition***

“The greatest treasure is health, the second greatest treasure is a good wife, and the third greatest treasure is a hundred sheep.” -- Kyrgyz proverb. World Bank, *Kyrgyz Republic: Consultations with the Poor*, 35.

A number of basic health indicators have worsened over the transition period. These include life expectancy at birth, which decreased 1.2 years for women and 1.6 years for men between 1990 and 1997. The crude death rate increased from 7.0 in 1990 to 8.4 in 1994, then decreased to 7.5 in 1997, though still above the pre-transition level.<sup>57</sup> Table 10.11 presents data on major health indicators in Kyrgyzstan.

As the data in Table 10.11 show, generalizations about health in Kyrgyzstan are difficult to make. The following statements can be made based on the available data:

- Life expectancy decreased for both men and women.
- Between 1990 and 1997, the abortion rate decreased.
- In 1997, the contraceptive prevalence rate was almost 60 percent.
- The incidence of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) increased.
- Maternal mortality was about the same in 1997 as in 1990.<sup>58</sup>

Below, we look at each of these findings more closely.

#### **Life Expectancy**

Kyrgyzstan's population is one of the youngest in the region; only 5.9 percent of the population is aged 65 or older.<sup>59</sup> While life expectancy has decreased for both sexes over the transition period, the

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<sup>55</sup> World Bank, *Kyrgyz Republic: Social Sector Adjustment Credit*, Report No. PID6602 (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1998), 1.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>57</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition, Regional Monitoring Report No. 6* (New York: UNICEF International Child Development Centre, 1999), 123-124.

<sup>58</sup> Maternal mortality decreased fairly steadily from its 1990 level to a low of 31.5 in 1996. However, by 1997 it had increased to nearly the same level as in 1990. Unfortunately, there is no information to indicate whether this is a real increase or a statistical anomaly, common to the region, which involved calculating the ratio based on a relatively small number of deaths.

decrease for males is only slightly greater than that for females. The major causes of death for males (early 1990s) were (in decreasing order) ischemic heart disease, cerebrovascular disease, and cancer (with lung cancer causing over a quarter of cancer deaths). For women, the causes and order were the same, but the difference in the heart and cerebrovascular rates was smaller, and lung cancer caused only 8 percent of cancer deaths.<sup>60</sup> The cause which explained most of the increased adult mortality (1993), particularly for men, was heart and circulatory disease, associated with stress, diet, sedentary lifestyle and smoking.<sup>61</sup>

**Table 10.11. Demographic and Health Indicators for Kyrgyzstan<sup>62</sup>**

Maternal mortality (per 100,000 live births) <sup>63</sup>	<b>1990</b>		<b>1997</b>	
	62.9		62.7	
Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births) <sup>64</sup>	38			
Abortion rate (per 100 live births) <sup>65</sup>	<b>1990</b>		<b>1997</b>	
	57.3		31.0	
Contraceptive prevalence, latest available year <sup>66</sup>	59.5%			
Total fertility rate (births per woman) <sup>67</sup>	3.2			
STD incidence (new cases of syphilis/gonorrhea per 100,000 population) <sup>68</sup>	<b>1990</b>		<b>1997</b>	
	219		386	
Life expectancy at birth <sup>69</sup>	<b>Female</b>		<b>Male</b>	
	<b>1990</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1997</b>
	72.6	71.4	64.2	62.6
Percent of population 65 and older in 1997 <sup>70</sup>	5.9			

<sup>59</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 198.

<sup>60</sup> World Health Organization, Tobacco or Health Programme, *Tobacco or Health: A Global Status Report, Country Profiles by Region, 1997*, <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/who/whofirst.html>.

<sup>61</sup> Jeni Klugman, and George Schieber, *A Survey of Health Reform in Central Asia* (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1997), 5.

<sup>62</sup> General note on sources: The major sources used for purposes of cross-country comparisons are from the MONEE and UNDP reports cited below, because they have data for most countries. MONEE is preferred for maternal mortality data because it is the most up-to-date comparable source of data. For infant mortality, UNDP is the preferred source for two reasons: a) UNDP data concords most closely with DHS data, for the three countries for which DHS surveys have been done; and b) data for six of the study countries cited in the MONEE database are based on Soviet rather than WHO definitions of infant death, impairing comparability. In some cases MONEE figures are significantly different (usually lower) than UNDP figures. Only the MONEE database provides reasonably complete and comparable data on abortion rates, STD incidence and life expectancy by sex. UNDP is the preferred source for total fertility rates because it concords most closely with DHS data in the cases in which it is available. Contraceptive prevalence sources identified are: Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), reproductive health surveys (RHS), UNDP Human Development Report (UNDP), Population Reference Bureau (PRB), Russia Longitudinal Monitoring Survey (RLMS). The year is specified when known.

<sup>63</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 119.

<sup>64</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999* (Oxford University Press, 1999), 169.

<sup>65</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 118.

<sup>66</sup> DHS Survey.

<sup>67</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, 198.

<sup>68</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 131.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 123-124.

<sup>70</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, 198.

*Sources:* As indicated in the footnotes.

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### **Lifestyle-Related Mortality (Tobacco)**

Smoking-related death statistics indicate a gender differentiation: for males, the proportion of all deaths attributed to smoking was 17 percent; for females, 6 percent. Just under 40 percent of male cancer deaths are estimated to be due to tobacco use.<sup>71</sup>

### **Abortion**

Abortion rates in Kyrgyzstan are among the lowest in the region.<sup>72</sup> Women with higher levels of education are more likely to have an abortion (1.7 to 1.9) than women with only primary/secondary education (1.3). Russian women have higher abortion rates (2.2) than Uzbek (1.9) and Kyrgyz (1.3) women.<sup>73</sup> Rates also vary by region, with Bishkek City having the highest rate (2.0), and the Eastern part of the nation having the lowest (0.9).

### **Contraceptive Use**

In 1997, 59.5 percent of currently married women used some contraceptive method. Of these, 48.9 percent used a modern method, predominantly the IUD (38.2 percent); the next most popular method was the condom (5.7 percent). Urban women are more likely to use contraception (66 percent) than rural women (57 percent), and Russian women (72 percent) are more likely to use contraception than Uzbek or Kyrgyz women (63 percent and 56 percent, respectively). Nearly all women using modern methods (97 percent) obtain them through a public sector source, including women's consulting centers, hospitals, pharmacies and polyclinics.<sup>74</sup>

### **Fertility Rate**

Kyrgyzstan's fertility rate (births per woman) was the highest among the study countries. Women with a primary/secondary education have higher fertility (3.7) than those with more education (3.3 for secondary-special and 2.4 for women with higher education). The rate is higher for Uzbek women (4.2) than Kyrgyz women (3.6), and lowest for Russian women (1.5).<sup>75</sup> The rate is higher in rural (3.9) than in urban areas (2.3). It is lowest in Bishkek City (1.7).

### **Infant Mortality**

Infant mortality, which is used as an indicator of maternal as well as child health, has decreased slightly, according to available information (the DHS preliminary report has no information on infant mortality).

<sup>71</sup> World Health Organization, *Tobacco or Health*.

<sup>72</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 118.

<sup>73</sup> Institute of Obstetrics and Pediatrics (Kyrgyzstan) and Macro International, Inc., *Kyrgyz Republic Demographic and Health Survey 1997, Preliminary Report*, 1997, 7.

<sup>74</sup> Institute of Obstetrics and Pediatrics, *Kyrgyz Republic Demographic and Health Survey*, 9-10, 12.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-7.

According to UNDP data, the infant mortality rate (deaths per 1000 live births) was still quite high, 38, in 1997.<sup>76</sup> A slight decline is evident in MONEE data, although the rates given are lower than UNDP data, in part due to the fact that Kyrgyzstan still uses the Soviet rather than the WHO definition of infant death. In 1990 the rate was 30.0; it rose to 31.9 in 1993, and had declined to 28.2 by 1997.<sup>77</sup>

### **Sexually-Transmitted Diseases**

The incidence of sexually transmitted diseases has been increasing throughout the transition period, and the high level constitutes a serious problem.<sup>78</sup> Although the data are not sex-disaggregated, information from other countries in the region indicates that young women are particularly vulnerable to infection, and the consequences for women, and babies they bear, are broader and often more severe than for men. HIV/AIDS incidence is very low according to available information (not sex-disaggregated): there were only two newly registered HIV cases in 1997<sup>79</sup>, and the incidence of AIDS (per 100,000 population) was reported as 0 by UNDP.<sup>80</sup>

### **Nutrition and Health**

Anemia, a medical problem usually caused by a deficiency of iron or B-12 in the diet, is one of the leading public health problems in Kyrgyzstan, with 38 percent of women suffering some degree of anemia, mainly mild, according to the 1997 DHS. The percentage of live births complicated by anemia has increased markedly, from 15 percent in 1989 to 47 percent in 1997.<sup>81</sup> Half the children under three are anemic, 24 percent moderate and 1 percent severe. Although women are more likely than men to have anemia overall, more men than women had moderate and severe anemia.<sup>82</sup>

### **Health Care**

Residential, regional, educational and ethnic differentials exist in both prenatal and delivery care. For example, the majority of all deliveries in Kyrgyzstan were under the supervision of a doctor, with the exception of the southern region, where only 43 percent of births were attended by a doctor, and 54 percent by a nurse or midwife.<sup>83</sup> For the three years preceding the 1997 DHS survey, in urban areas, 92 percent of prenatal care was provided by doctors and 6 percent by nurses and midwives; in rural areas, doctors provided 58 percent of care and nurses and midwives 40 percent.

### ***Education and Gender***

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<sup>76</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, 169.

<sup>77</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 119.

<sup>78</sup> The inclusion of trichomoniasis in Kyrgyzstan's STD rate means that it cannot be directly compared with that of other countries, since the rate for most countries in the region measures only syphilis and gonorrhea.

<sup>79</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 132.

<sup>80</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, 173.

<sup>81</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 68.

<sup>82</sup> Institute of Obstetrics and Pediatrics, *Kyrgyz Republic Demographic and Health Survey*, 20, 22.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

“When our children were small, it was easier to take care of them. Now they need to go to school, which means – they need clothes, and shoes, and school supplies. We don’t have enough money, so only two of our children, two sons, attend school, and our daughters stay at home, because they have no shoes and the school is located very far from here, 6 kilometers. The boys walk this distance. Occasionally, some driver would pity them and give them a free ride.”

World Bank, *Kyrgyz Republic: Consultations with the Poor* (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1999), 7.

Education enrollment rates for the latest available year (1996) show that there is no gender differentiation in primary and secondary school enrollments. For tertiary school enrollments, women make up slightly more than half of all students. Table 10.12 presents gender-differentiated enrollment data for Kyrgyzstan. Table 10.13 shows the change since 1989 in overall enrollments.

**Table 10.12. Female School Enrollments in Kyrgyzstan, As a Percent of Total**

Primary		Secondary		Tertiary	
1980	1996	1980	1996	1980	1996
--	49	--	51	--	52

Note: -- indicates data are not available.

Source: World Bank, 1999 *World Development Indicators*.

**Table 10.13. School Enrollment in Kyrgyzstan, Percent of Relevant Population**

Kindergarten		Primary		Secondary		Tertiary	
1989	1997	1989	1997	1990	1997	1989	1997
31.3	7.0	92.5	89.2	36.6	32.4	10.9	15.2

Source: UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 133-134.

While the data presented in Table 10.12 do not indicate a gender issue in enrollment, Table 10.13 shows an enrollment problem for the youngest students. Kindergarten enrollments have declined significantly since independence. In addition, both primary and secondary enrollments declined, but not as severely as kindergarten enrollments. According to the Asian Development Bank, about half of the country’s kindergarten have been closed. These closures may be due to the financial crisis and a decrease in public expenditures on education. Public expenditures on education in Kyrgyzstan have varied since independence, but are still lower than 1990 expenditures. Table 10.14 presents data on expenditures.

**Table 10.14. Public Expenditures on Education in Kyrgyzstan,  
As a Percent of GDP**

1990	1991	1994	1997
8.0	1.3	6.1	5.2

Source: UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 135.

Lower public expenditures and financial problems have led to delays in paying teachers, deterioration of school buildings, lack of heat and lighting in school buildings, discontinuation of free school meals for students, and closure of pre-schools. The closure of about half of the country's kindergartens has negatively affected more girls than boys. According to the Asian Development Bank, girls make up 70 percent of the 130,000 preschool –age children not attending kindergarten.<sup>84</sup> Kyrgyz families may be choosing to send their sons but not their daughters to preschool as economic pressures tighten household income.<sup>85</sup> Rural children in grades 5 through 9 are increasingly leaving school to work, and according to the ADB, boys are more likely than girls to drop out of school to begin work.<sup>86</sup>

### *Findings*

**A gender differentiation in social benefit programs favors women.** In five of eight current social safety net programs, women receive preferential treatment in eligibility, benefits, or both.

**Poverty is gender-differentiated, and women tend to be poorer than men.** The poverty data are complicated and somewhat contradictory, but women, especially elderly, single women, do seem to be poorer than men.

**Pension reform is too new for data on its effects on gender.**

**The health status of both men and women declined.** Life expectancy decreased for both men and women. Men are at risk of smoking-related deaths. Women and their children have a higher risk of anemia since independence.

**Education enrollment data from UNICEF MONEE do not show a gender differentiation; however, other research indicates growing gender-related problems.** Research by the Asian Development Bank indicates that boys are more likely than girls to receive kindergarten schooling, but boys are more likely than girls to drop out of grades 5 through 9 to work.

<sup>84</sup> Bauer, Green, Kuehnast, *Women and Gender Relations*, 41.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

### ***Opportunities for Future Research***

**Additional research on poverty and its gender dimensions are needed.** Research is needed on intra-familial poverty, and quantitative poverty data are needed on youth and gender.

**More disaggregated data on health are needed.** Two areas warrant particular attention. First, tuberculosis incidence is among the highest in the entire region, second only to Romania.<sup>87</sup> Unfortunately, data are not sex-disaggregated, so it is not possible to tell if prevalence varies by sex. Second, data on sexually transmitted diseases are not sex or age disaggregated.

**Education enrollments in Kyrgyzstan should be closely monitored.** While enrollment data do not yet show a gender differentiation, qualitative research indicates that both boys and girls – at different ages – are at risk of not attending school. In addition, the drop in kindergarten enrollments should be watched to ensure primary and secondary enrollments do not also fall.

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<sup>87</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, 173.

## Chapter 11: Uzbekistan



### Basic Indicators

For additional information, please see Country Data Table in the Appendix.

<i>Demographics</i>			
Population <sup>1</sup> (1998)	23,626,000; 11,923,000 female (50.5%)		
Rural / Urban <sup>2</sup>	Urban 42%		
Ethnic composition <sup>3</sup>	Uzbek 80%, Russian 5.5%, Tajik 5%, Kazakh 3%, Karakalpak 2.5%, Tatar 1.5%, other 2.5% (1996 est.)		
<i>Economic Growth and Development</i>			
GDP per capita (all in 1987\$) <sup>4</sup>	<b>1985</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1997</b>
	\$NA	\$NA	\$NA
GDP per capita (PPP for 1997) <sup>4</sup>	<b>Female</b>		<b>Male</b>
	\$2,019		\$3,047
Registered Unemployment Rate <sup>1</sup>	<b>1992</b>		<b>1997</b>
	0.1%		0.4%
<i>Democracy and Governance</i>			
Women in Parliament <sup>5</sup>	6.8%		
Women in Ministerial Positions <sup>6</sup>	0.0%		
<i>Social Transition</i>			
Life Expectancy by Sex(1999 est.) <sup>3</sup>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Average</b>
	67.71 years	60.29 years	63.91 years
Combined first, second, and third level gross school enrollment ratio (1997) <sup>4</sup>	<b>Female</b>		<b>Male</b>
	74%		78%
Population below poverty line <sup>2</sup>	NA		

Sources: 1) UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*.

2) World Bank Country Data (<http://wbln0018.worldbank.org/eca/eca.nsf>).

3) CIA World Factbook 1999 (<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>).

4) UNDP Human Development Indicators 1999.

5) Inter Parliamentary Union website, <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

6) CIA Chiefs of State and Cabinet Members website, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/chiefs/index.html> and Women in Governments website, <http://hjem.get2net.dk/Womeningovernments/>.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### ***The Economic Transition***

- Official figures still place the labor force participation in Uzbekistan at high levels, nearly as high as in the western areas of the former Soviet Union. Labor market participation rates remain high, in spite of what are described as inflexible, traditional gender roles in Uzbekistan.
- Wage data are scarce, but real wages have declined significantly for all workers.
- Unemployment data on men and women are inconsistent. The drop in unemployment was less than in other countries in the region, though it may have had a greater impact on women. Recent data shows employment rates to have increased, and rates for women in urban areas to be lower.
- The informal economy has grown greatly and may be accounting for some 30 percent of all employed. Women have played a significant role in the growth of the “shuttle economy.”
- The business sector has grown slowly, and women have not yet played a large role in the small business sector.

### ***The Democratic Transition***

- Women comprise only six percent of members of parliament and do not currently serve in important appointed posts in the Uzbek government.
- The NGO sector is also weak and is not yet equipped to advocate for equal rights.
- Rule of law has not been institutionalized in Uzbekistan and new laws have created opportunities and incentives for discrimination against women in the areas of property rights and the right to work.

### ***The Social Transition***

- Women receive preferential treatment in four of eight social safety net programs.
- There are no gender-differentiated data on poverty in Uzbekistan.
- Data on health indicators shows some improvement in Uzbekistan since the transition: maternal mortality decreased, infant mortality decreased, and abortions decreased. Basic health indicators, nonetheless, are worse than for many countries in the region.
- Pension reform to date in Uzbekistan has focused on stabilizing the public pension system and ensuring that pensions are paid. There is no evidence that this reform has adversely affected men or women.
- Gender-disaggregated data show that women made up about half of primary school enrollments in 1996 but only 39 percent of tertiary enrollments (data were unavailable for secondary students).

## Country Overview

**Introduction:** Uzbekistan is a country in Central Asia. Uzbekistan is bordered by Kazakstan on the northwest and north, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan on the east and southeast, Afghanistan on the south, and Turkmenistan on the southwest. The autonomous republic of Qoraqalpoghiston (Karakalpakstan) is located in the western third of the country. Uzbekistan has an area of 172,700 square miles (447,400 square kilometres). The Soviet government established the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic as a constituent (union) republic of the U.S.S.R. in 1924; Uzbekistan declared its independence from the Soviet Union on Aug. 31, 1991. The capital is Tashkent.

**People:** Uzbeks make up about three-fourths of the population, followed by Russians, Tajiks, Tatars, Kyrgyz, Ukrainians, Kazaks, and Karakalpaks. The Uzbeks speak a language belonging to the southeastern, or Chagatai (Turki), branch of the Turkic language group. The Uzbeks are Sunnite Muslims, and they are considered to be among the most devout Muslims in all of Central Asia. They are also the least Russified of the Turkic peoples formerly under Soviet rule, and virtually all of them still claim Uzbek as their primary language. Two-fifths of the population of Uzbekistan lives in urban areas; the urban population has a disproportionately high number of non-Uzbeks. Uzbekistan's population is quite youthful in comparison to those of nationalities of the western parts of the former Soviet Union. This age structure results from the high birth rate: of all the former Soviet republics, Uzbekistan has the greatest number of mothers with 10 or more living children under the age of 20.

**Cultural life:** Over the centuries, the territory of what is now Uzbekistan has produced great scholars, poets, and writers whose heritage has enriched the general culture of humanity. Musical tradition throughout southern Central Asia provides a distinctive classical form of composition in the great cycles of maqoms handed down from master performers to apprentices. Television and radio as well as concert halls offer maqom cycles in live performances. Uzbekistan's cultural heritage includes magnificent monuments in the national architectural tradition: the mausoleum of the Samanid ruler Isma'il I (9th and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries) in Bukhara, the great mosques and mausoleums of Samarkand, constructed in the 14th and 15th centuries, and many other fine tombs, mosques, palaces, and madrasahs.

**Government:** In 1992 Uzbekistan adopted a new constitution to replace the Soviet-era constitution that had been in effect since 1978. The new constitution provides for legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government, dominated by a strong executive. Personal liberties generally are protected, but the government is given the right to restrict some of these liberties in certain circumstances. Nationalist or religious political parties are prohibited. A 150-member legislature (the Oliy Majlis, or Supreme Assembly) consists of members elected by territorial constituencies to five-year terms. The legislature has the authority to amend the constitution, enact legislation, approve the budget, and confirm presidential appointees. The president is the head of state and is elected for a maximum of two consecutive five-year terms, though the term can be extended by referendum. The president appoints the cabinet and the high court justices, subject to parliamentary approval, and has the authority to issue binding decrees and repeal legislation passed by local administrative bodies.

**Health and Welfare:** Hospital care for Uzbeks improved after 1924. Death rates at first fell markedly, but new problems later arose in public health because of environmental contamination, especially around the Aral Sea (see above Drainage), and maternal and infant morbidity and mortality rates now rank among the highest in the former Soviet states. The longevity of adult males also continues to lag behind rates elsewhere in the former Soviet republics. The poor quality of health care in Uzbekistan is attributable to discriminatory allocations for health care during the Soviet period and to a lack of sufficient attention to environmental problems by public health officials.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter explores the economic, democratic, and social transitions in Uzbekistan. Each section seeks to answer a set of research questions which are set out at the beginning of the sections. In addition to subsections addressing each of the research questions, each section includes a subsection on findings and opportunities for future research.

## THE ECONOMIC TRANSITION

This section seeks to answer the following questions as they relate to Uzbekistan:

1. Have there been changes in labor force participation by women and men during the transition?
2. Is there evidence for wage gap trends and wage differentials?
3. Has unemployment increased, whether official or hidden, and is there a gender dimension to unemployment?
4. How has the growth of the informal economy reflected gender differentiation?
5. What is the impact of privatization of state enterprises on women's and men's employment?
6. What role do women play in new managerial positions or business formation in the growing private sector?

In the subsections below we discuss GDP, labor force participation, unemployment, the informal economy, and privatization and present data on each of these issues as they relate to gender. Our findings on the impact of the economic transition on gender are presented in the concluding subsection.

### *Contextual Information about the Economy*

The collapse of the Soviet Union had led, so far, to a less precipitous economic downturn in Uzbekistan than in other states of the former Soviet Union. Uzbekistan may well have been one of the poorest of the Soviet republics. After the breakup of the Soviet Union, the newly independent government did not support reform, but worked to maintain the command economy through subsidies and Soviet-style controls on production and prices. By mid-1994, when inflation increased to high levels, however, the government began tentative reforms: introducing tighter monetary policies, expanding privatization, slightly reducing the role of the state in the economy, and improving the environment for foreign investors. But the state remains the dominant influence in the economy, and the reforms have not brought real structural changes. In late 1996, for instance, the IMF suspended Uzbekistan's \$185 million standby arrangement because of governmental steps that made it impossible to fulfill the IMF conditions. The Asian and Russian financial crises have led the government to tighten even more its controls over exports and currency.<sup>1</sup>

Current figures on GDP per capita are confusing for Uzbekistan. For example, World Bank Genderstats places GNP per capita at only \$US860 in 1997<sup>2</sup>, the UNDP places it at \$1,020,<sup>3</sup> and the CIA World Factbook provides an estimate of \$2,500 in purchasing power parity.<sup>4</sup> Estimates of changes in real GDP during the years of transition show that the first period showed little decline, and in 1998, the overall GDP was nearly 90 percent of what it had been ten years earlier

<sup>1</sup> CIA World Factbook, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/uz.html>

<sup>2</sup> World Bank, Gender Stats Database, <http://genderstats.worldbank.org/>

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 1999* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 181.

<sup>4</sup> CIA World Factbook, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/uz.html>

(Table 11.1). The nation's transition from Soviet rule to independence and economic reconstruction has been distinct from many of the others in the regions, due to the state's hesitancy to loosen its grip over industrial production and services.

**Table 11.1. Change in Real GDP, 1989-1998 (1989=100)**

Country	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Uzbekistan	100.0	101.6	101.1	89.9	87.8	84.1	83.4	84.7	86.7	88.5

Source: UNDP, Human Development Indicators, 1999.

### **Labor Force Participation**

Historically, the Soviet regime played an important role in initially raising the status of women in society and broadening their role in the formal economy. After 1927, the Bolsheviks forced women to publicly burn their veils, altered traditional culture by allowing women to dress modestly, and if they chose, to cover their heads in the style of a Russian babushka.<sup>5</sup> In a general sense, one may claim that Uzbek women advanced considerably in the workplace and in politics especially when compared to pre-soviet reforms. Soviet gender policy promoted women's participation in the work force to ensure current production levels while maintaining high fertility levels—offering generous maternity benefits and leave—to ensure future production capability.<sup>6</sup> The policies of socialism expanded the realm of women's participation in the workplace and in education, and recognized their equal rights before the law.

Official figures still place the labor force participation in Uzbekistan at high levels, nearly as high as in the western areas of the former Soviet Union. Figures suggest a small decline in women's participation rates in the past decade, but it was still estimated in the mid-1990's to have changed only slightly. Government figures report that women's proportion of the total labor market was 46.5% in 1992, 45.9% in 1993, and 43.5% in 1994 (Table 11.2). For every 100 males in the labor force, reportedly there were 89 females.<sup>7</sup> The government has attempted to implement programs to enhance women's labor market participation, but failed to do so for lack of budgetary resources.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, the state's consideration of such a program may indicate that female unemployment is more of a problem than published statistics indicate (see below).

**Table 11.2. Labor Force Participation**

Labor Force Participation (ratio f/m)		Labor Force Participation (% of total labor force)			
1970	1997	1980		1998	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
0.9	0.9	52	48	54	46

Source: World Bank, 1999 World Development Indicators

<sup>5</sup> Lucy Jones, "As Islam Replaces Communism in Uzbekistan, Economy Stagnates, Men Remain "More Equal" Than Women," *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, October-November, 1999, 33.

<sup>6</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition, Regional Monitoring Report No. 6* (New York: UNICEF International Child Development Centre, 1999), 9

<sup>7</sup> UN Country Profile, <http://www.un.org/esa/earthsummit/uzbek-cp.htm>, 7, 43, 54.

<sup>8</sup> UN Country Profile, 43.

Likewise, figures on Crude Economic Activity<sup>9</sup> are consistent with this picture of high levels of economic activity by women in Uzbekistan, although information is only available for 1989 (Table 11.3).

**Table 11.3 Crude Activity Rates and the Gender Gap, 89-97**

	<b>Crude Female Activity Rate (1989)</b>	<b>Gender gap in rate (male minus female)</b>
Uzbekistan	36.9%	6.9%

### **The “Dual Burden:” Domestic Responsibilities and Labor Market Participation**

Labor market participation rates remain high, in spite of what are described as inflexible, traditional gender roles in Uzbekistan. Observers state that the full burden of domestic work continues to be placed on women, even in situations where the mother is the primary income earner and the father is unemployed.<sup>10</sup> As in most industrialized countries, women who work in the formal labor economy carry a “dual burden” of domestic responsibility and work outside the home, but it may be greater in Central Asia than in other areas.<sup>11</sup> The potential of this problem is aggravated as Soviet social services like daycare and pre-school decline in the economic transition. The time demands of domestic duties now constitute the primary reason why many women cannot participate as full-time workers in the labor force.<sup>12</sup>

Equally important in our calculations of domestic circumstances are popular attitudes about home and work. Increasingly, women prefer to stay home caring for their children, especially when alternatives may involve strenuous, low-paid agricultural labor, like working in the cotton fields. Many women would prefer not to sacrifice the personal costs involved in full-time employment.<sup>13</sup> Also related to labor force participation are issues related to family size. Large families creates a further economic impediment for women. Husbands traditionally have substantial voice in how many children the wife will rear, and women aged 19-49 have an average of 4.1 children. Not only do such large families present enormous responsibilities for women to manage on top of any paid labor, but the close succession of children often prevents mothers from entering the workforce, or from returning to work after one child’s birth.

### ***Unemployment***

Government policy attempted to mitigate, for all workers, the impact of the transition. Compared to neighboring Central Asian countries, the post-communist period in Uzbekistan

<sup>9</sup> Crude activity levels compare the total workforce (employed and unemployed) to the total population. These typically do include as active those women on unpaid or maternity leave. These show a lower ratio than the working-age rates just cited, since they include women both older and younger than those typically in the workforce (i.e., 15-64).

<sup>10</sup> UN Country Profile, 6.

<sup>11</sup> Julianna Arnold: Gender Specialist/Summer Intern, “Gender-Related Activities in the Central Asian Republics,” Prepared for USAID/CAR, 1999, 5.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>13</sup> Jones, “As Islam Replaces Communism in Uzbekistan, Economy Stagnates, Men Remain “More Equal” Than Women,” 34.

presents contrasting (and possibly misleading) evidence on the socio-economic situation. Intent on maintaining the command economy after 1991, the Uzbek government used state subsidies and tight controls on production and price to modify, or at least postpone, the employment and output shocks that other post-Soviet states were suffering.<sup>14</sup> At first, this approach seemed successful; the cautious economic reform program limited the erosion of jobs in the early 1990s, and policies to support the poor limited the tide of social inequality.<sup>15</sup> Because the government and Uzbek firms placed such a high priority on maintaining employment, workers accepted lower-paying jobs or periodic employment. To their benefit, these workers were able to maintain some social security and employee benefits.<sup>16</sup>

Unemployment data are inconsistent. Official and unofficial statistics for changing unemployment in post-communist Uzbekistan present a confusing message about how women are faring in the labor market. Reliable independent information on current unemployment rates is not available. According to official government data, the outlook is very positive: unemployment, based on registered unemployment at State Employment Offices, was 0.4% in 1990, 0.3% in 1992, and 0.4% in 1995.<sup>17</sup> As in other countries, only a small percentage of unemployed register with the state employment offices. Table 11.4 provides data from 1992-1995 from that source; no annual labor market surveys are available to validate them.

**Table 11.4. Registered Unemployment**

Uzbekistan	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Total	20.2	29.0	29.4	31.0	--	--	--
Men	7.9	11.3	12.1	12.1	--	--	--
Women	12.3	17.7	17.3	18.9	--	--	--
Percentage of women	60.9	61.0	58.8	61.0	--	--	--

Source: ILO Laborsta Database, <http://laborsta.ilo.org>, from State Employment Offices.

The International Monetary Fund (as well as the CIA World Fact Book) estimate that about five percent of the labor force is unemployed and an additional 10 percent is underemployed.<sup>18</sup> Gender disaggregated figures are not available. Government figures for the total employment in the economy through 1995 provide another view and the only gender disaggregated data; they show relative stability, although women lost about 230,000 jobs between 1991 and 1995 (Table 11.5). More current figures are not available.

<sup>14</sup> CIA World Factbook, 5.

<sup>15</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 27 and UN Country Profile, 6.

<sup>16</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 7.

<sup>17</sup> UN Country Profile, 6.

<sup>18</sup> CIA World Factbook, 6; and International Monetary Fund, "Republic of Uzbekistan: Recent Economic Developments," IMF Staff Country Report No. 98/116 (Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund, 1998), 80.

**Table 11.5. Total Employment (1,000s)**

<b>Total employment: Uzbekistan</b>	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Total	8254.6	8271.0	8259.0	8150.3	8157.5	--	--
Men	4474.0	4425.0	4468.1	4604.9	4609.0	--	--
Women	3780.6	3846.0	3790.9	3545.4	3548.5	--	--

Source: ILO Laborsta Database, <http://laborsta.ilo.org/>, from official estimates.

Recent data on employment appear to show improvement for women. In the mid-1990's, observers concluded that women were losing jobs faster, remaining unemployed longer, and finding fewer job opportunities, than men were.<sup>19</sup> One UNDP report women's unemployment at about 60%, even including the most highly educated women.<sup>20</sup> If that was accurate, the trends have altered in the late 1990's. A 1997 limited labor market survey in the Tashkent region found that unemployment measured 9.8 percent, 11 percent among men and 8 percent among women. Unemployment was highest among men aged 16-24 (25.2 percent) and lowest among women between 45-54 (2 percent).<sup>21</sup>

Underemployment was not reported in this survey. Some observers argue that, as has been the trend among post-Soviet firms, women are proving redundant in their work, or being down-sized from service industries, and employers who want to maintain artificially high employment levels are sending these women off on extended maternity leaves. They are also offering women part-time, or reduced hours work, which the government continues to label ambiguously as "employed." Further complications in rural regions are the cost and inconvenience of traveling to a labor office in order to officially declare unemployment and apply for benefits. Many poor, remote, unemployed women may still be counted as employed among official data.<sup>22</sup>

On the other hand, the growth of the informal economy – legal activities that are nevertheless not registered and not paying taxes – also account for considerable expansion in employment (see below).

## **Wage Gaps and Wage Differentials**

### **Wages and Job Status Differentiation**

The general results of the slow, state-led transition period described above were positive demographic trends, some macroeconomic stability, and the modification of production losses.<sup>23</sup> Unfortunately, these indicators provide an incomplete, and potentially misleading picture of Uzbekistan's economic transition.

<sup>19</sup> Julianna Arnold, "Gender-Related Activities in the Central Asian Republics," 6.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, 6.

<sup>21</sup> UNDP, *National Human Development Report 1998* (Tashkent, Uzbekistan: UNDP, 1998), 47.

<sup>22</sup> Marnia Lazreg, *Gender and Agricultural Privatization in ECA*, draft report. (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1998), 36, 41.

<sup>23</sup> UN Country Profile, 11.

The wage gap reported for Uzbekistan is one of the lowest in the region. The relatively higher education levels of women, who thereby retain a competitive advantage in the labor market, can explain the fact that this differential has not noticeably widened over the last decade.<sup>24</sup> This is not to suggest that men and women often compete for the same positions, since the segregation described above leads to some segregation of wages as well. UNICEF data therefore provides a rather optimistic estimate of the gender-gap in wages in Uzbekistan, calculating that women earned 81 cents to each man's dollar in 1997 (Table 11.6). Although this estimate is greater than Russia's and high by most Western standards, it tells only part of the wage and job status story.<sup>25</sup> Importantly, these data do not address the virtual wage gap created by differential layoffs, reduction of hours, or hiring practices.<sup>26</sup> Table 11.6 reports on data from 1995.

**Table 11.6. Ratio of Female to Male Wages**

	<b>Year</b>	<b>Ratio</b>
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	1995	.805

*Note:* Ratio = female wages divided by male wages.

*Sources:* UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 33

Real wage rates have fallen significantly for both men and women in Uzbekistan since the transition began. The post-1994 reform led to even greater shocks in wages. Expensive state subsidization programs generated high rates of inflation and forced the government to initiate stricter macroeconomic policies. Not only would the government reduce its role in the economy, but it would also expand efforts toward privatization and tighten monetary policy.<sup>27</sup> Average real income fell by about 47 percent, while the purchasing power of the average wage declined by 40 percent.<sup>28</sup> GDP fell such that per capita GDP in 1999 was US\$870.<sup>29</sup> The Gini coefficient, which measures the distribution of income, grew from 0.26 in 1991 to 0.32 in 1996, indicating a less equitable income distribution.<sup>30</sup> What has resulted is a downward spiral. Widespread poverty severely contracted the national tax base, further reducing government revenues and limiting resources for state support programs.<sup>31</sup>

Wage trend data are not available for Uzbekistan. UNDP figures, drawing on purchasing power parities, do calculate a male and female "real GDP per capita," based on average wages and women's participation in the economy, provide the following figures (Table 11.7).

<sup>24</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 35.

<sup>25</sup> The Monee Project No. 6. p. 8.

<sup>26</sup> Lazveg, p. 13.

<sup>27</sup> CIA World Factbook. p.5.

<sup>28</sup> UN Country Profile. p.6.

<sup>29</sup> World Bank Country Brief (<http://wbln0018.worldbank.org/ECA/eca.nsf>)

<sup>30</sup> UNDP-Uzbekistan, *National Human Development Report 1998*, 52.

<sup>31</sup> The Monee Project No.6. p.2.

**Table 11.7. Per Capita GDP**

Female real GDP per capita (1997 PPP\$)	Male real GDP per capita (1997 PPP\$)
1997	1997
2,019	3,047

Source: UNDP, Human Development Indicators, 1999.

### Sectoral Issues

Significant gender segregation exists among economic sectors and in status levels within a field, as in other economies of the region. Some observers state that the transition process has systematically forced women out of their middle-skilled work in the formal sector: education, health care, trade, and social services, toward lower-skilled work in the traditional sector: agriculture, weaving, or toward complete unemployment,<sup>32</sup> USAID/Central Asian Republics, however, states that this is not a common occurrence. Among the women who do remain in the formal sector, they are concentrated in lower-level and middle-management work, and only 17.5% hold administrative or managerial positions.<sup>33</sup> This rapid decline suggests that their formerly high levels of representation were artificially maintained by the Soviet quota system, and that the resurgence of traditional gender stereotypes may have curbed female political participation.<sup>34</sup> The trend toward status segregation by gender may prove to be a self-reinforcing pattern, as the predominance of men in administrative and leadership positions legitimizes the sex imbalance, and discriminatory hiring practices

Table 11.8 shows the distribution of men and women in the three broad economic sectors; slightly more than a third of both men and women are employed in agriculture; nearly half of women are in the service sector while men take a greater role in industry.

**Table 11.8. Labor Force By Sector and Gender, 1990**  
Percent Of Male Or Female Labor Force

	Male	Female
<b>Agriculture</b>	35	36
<b>Industry</b>	30	19
<b>Services</b>	35	45
<b>Administrators and Managers</b>	82.5	17.5
<b>Professional and technical workers</b>	--	--

Note: -- indicates data are not available for Russia.

Sources: For employment by sector, World Bank Gender Stats database (latest available data are for 1990). For managerial/professional workers, UNDP, Human Development Indicators, 1999.

Much of the developing gender inequalities in Uzbekistan may be traced to the so-called

<sup>32</sup> Arnold, p. 5.

<sup>33</sup> UN Country Profile, 43.

<sup>34</sup> Jones, p. 33.



egalitarian policies of the Soviet Union.<sup>35</sup> So, understanding the current status of women means understanding the role that women played under the communist system.<sup>36</sup> First, the Soviet system applied gender quotas to government and industry to promote at least superficially equal participation in these fields.<sup>37</sup> Secondly, the communist system provided an inclusive, accessible, free education system that promoted male and female universal literacy and high levels of secondary education; schools were established in conjunction with collective farms to extend education to even the most distant rural areas.<sup>38</sup> Third, there were generous state-subsidized social services to assist working women once they had children: pre-school, kindergartens, after-school activities, long maternity leaves before and after delivery.<sup>39</sup>

However, the very elements of Soviet policy that seemed to encourage and protect women would ultimately disempower and shelter them from higher opportunities within the labor market. The integration of rural schools with collective farms has meant that as Uzbekistan loses its state-run farms, so too do rural populations lose ready access to free schools.<sup>40</sup> The application of gender quotas has had the same ill effect: the quotas often created redundant or marginal positions which disappear as the Soviet system collapses behind them. Finally, state-subsidized social services have reinforced and legitimized views of women as the domestic care-takers, rather than challenging traditional gender roles. Now that this support structure has fallen, Uzbek working women remain with the “double-shift” of labor and domestic duties, while husbands maintain that the home is not their sphere.<sup>41</sup>

### **Privatization**

The government of Uzbekistan adopted a slow, methodical approach to the problems and process of privatization, in contrast to the sweeping, hurried method witnessed in other post-Soviet states. The Uzbek government claims that this has permitted the survival of many state industries and alleviated some of the transitional trauma. Criticized by the IMF<sup>42</sup> and other international institutions for its failure to carry out rapid market-oriented reforms and macroeconomic stabilization, the Uzbek government nevertheless claims that the process of privatization is nearly complete. A Ministry of Macroeconomy report, stated that the government has already privatized 9,000 state-owned properties, including 2,000 enterprises and institutions. As of 1995, the report continues, the non-state sector is 67 percent of the national income.<sup>43</sup> The IMF claims that in 1998, however, Uzbekistan had privatized or partially corporatized less than 30% of its 11,800 national enterprises.

One area in which the government has made substantial progress has been agriculture. In the years following 1991, Uzbekistan radically changed its system of agriculture. Almost all state farms have been transformed into joint stock farms or small privately-owned farms that now

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<sup>35</sup> Lazreg, 1.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 1 and UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 19.

<sup>38</sup> Lazreg, p. 36.

<sup>39</sup> Arnold, p. 6.

<sup>40</sup> Lazreg, p. 36.

<sup>41</sup> Arnold, p. 6.

<sup>42</sup> IMF Staff Country Report. 7.

<sup>43</sup> Uzbekistan Ministry of Macroeconomy Report, <http://www.gov.uz/mms100fr.html>.

account for 97 percent of the nation's total agricultural production. To date, over 19,000 small farms have been established.<sup>44</sup> The success of agricultural privatization, however, elucidates many of the problems and inadequacies that accompanied the process.

Privatization of land appears to be reducing women's control of this resource. In agriculture, new social hierarchies were established based on the consolidation of land.<sup>45</sup> Essential aspects of Uzbek agricultural reformation and gender equality are property rights and the right to hold title on land. Currently, women's access to property shares is recognized by the government. However, the majority of titles tend to be registered under the husband's name.<sup>46</sup> This trend may reflect attitudes of ownership and property rights of traditional Uzbek culture, in which men possess primary responsibility for land and ownership.

The path of agricultural privatization may be an indicator of the future, when more of the state-run industrial operations are transferred into private hands: both sexes have the legal right to own and operate, yet the majority of ownership is male. The position of women in Uzbek society as a result of privatization will be determined as government moves its possessions into the private arena. Will the government ensure an equitable distribution of property? How will employers view women in the new market economy? These questions will inevitably determine how women advance in society.

In adherence to CEDAW, in 1995 the government specified new measures to enhance the role of women in building the state and society of Uzbekistan. The decree put forth one article for the formulation and implementation of equality in all aspects of society, including women's full participation in sustainable development – creating fertile ground for future progress.<sup>47</sup> However, the status of maternity and parental leave remains unknown with the emergence of the private sector. Employers may consider the associated costs of maternity leave—replacement workers and health benefits—to be too high and may engage in discriminatory hiring, firing, promotion and layoff practices. The future of women's opportunity, it seems, rests on the government's ability to implement the ideals it espouses in the current market place.

The reallocating of vast state resources into the public sector in post-Soviet states allowed for a monumental amount of wealth to be acquired by people in influential positions or with valuable contacts after the collapse of the Soviet Union. No sector of the economy, in the essentially unregulated and lawless transformation, was free from rampant hoarding and corruption.

### **The Development of Business and Women's Role in the Private Sector**

Development of small- and medium-sized enterprises in Uzbekistan has been slow and continues to be inhibited by bureaucratic regulations, limited resources, and old-style tax codes. Would-be entrepreneurs suffer from lack of access to foreign exchange, a complex business registration process, cash withdrawal restrictions, and inadequate access to credit. In addition, they face multiple taxes, high tax percentages; these burdens are unavoidable, because tax authorities

<sup>44</sup> UN Country Profile, 27.

<sup>45</sup> Lazreg, 12.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>47</sup> UN Country Profile, 42-43.

currently maintain direct access to small business' bank accounts.<sup>48</sup>

Little information related to business development and its particular effect on Uzbek women is available. Some trends are apparent.<sup>49</sup> We can trace women's subordinate job status to their jobs under communism and recognize the pattern of disadvantage. Men have tended to leverage their status under the old economic system to their profit in the new system, entering more promising professions, and occupying top-level positions.<sup>50</sup> Since the beginning of economic reforms, women have suffered limited access to loans, and have lacked the knowledge and skills in business management that are so vital to private enterprise.<sup>51</sup> Cultural attitudes that promote women's "double burden," and that discourage female business ownership, are also acting to keep women out of this field.<sup>52</sup> Sexual discrimination also works to women's disadvantage, although observers have not quantified its effects. Employers sometimes look for attractive women exclusively in their hiring, and they often view married women as a burden to employ, claiming that they entail high non-wage costs.<sup>53</sup>

There is also a bias among employers against women, because firms perceive that female labor entails higher non-wage costs: work time lost for family responsibilities and maternity leave, special compensation for leaves, etc..<sup>54</sup>

### **Ruralization**

Increasing migration to rural areas may also affect women's economic situation. It is estimated that 60 percent of the Uzbek population lives in rural areas,<sup>55</sup> and demographic studies show that rural population growth outstrips urban growth by far.<sup>56</sup> Why is this trend significant? The migration toward rural areas and rural natural population growth have been accompanied by a decline in rural educational resources, such that of all groups, rural girls have shown the steepest decline in school enrollment throughout Central Asia.<sup>57</sup> State expenditures in rural areas have fallen for social services, as well. Unfortunately, the reorganization of rural economies has cost rural women a vast network of services that had enabled them to work while raising children. It has also meant the downsizing of sectors where women predominated: livestock, dairy farming, and food processing.<sup>58</sup> Further adding to the problem, unemployment benefits and job-finding services are virtually inaccessible to rural populations. In Central Asia, the cost for a rural unemployed individual to travel to a labor office for assistance quite often exceeds the monthly benefit that she might receive.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> IMF Staff Country Report, 130.

<sup>49</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, 103.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>51</sup> Lazreg, 40.

<sup>52</sup> Arnold, 5.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>54</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, 7.

<sup>55</sup> CIA World Factbook, 5.

<sup>56</sup> UN Country Profile, 16.

<sup>57</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, 16.

<sup>58</sup> Lazreg, p. 41.

<sup>59</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, 28.

### *The Informal Sector*

Uzbek women's participation in the informal sector, or gray economy, remains one of the most under-documented phenomena of the post-Soviet period. Data exist concerning the general state women's participation in Central Asia and neighboring countries but it often disregards—because of the general dearth of information—Uzbekistan. However, we are often left with anecdotal information and accounts to describe the gray economy. The decrease in economic well being due to shifting labor markets—downsizing of state monopolies and a decreasing service sector—and the ever present need to support their families have led women into the informal sector of the economy.<sup>60</sup>

**Table 11.9. The Informal Economy**

	<b>1990 Percent of GDP</b>	<b>1995 Percent of GDP</b>
Uzbekistan	11	7

*Source:* UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 6.

Table 11.9, drawing on UNICEF figures, suggests that the informal economy is shrinking. How this is to be interpreted in light of the apparent expansion of women's role in these activities is unclear. The definition of the informal market covers a broad spectrum of employment, untaxed and unregulated by the government, ranging from the sale of homegrown fruits and vegetables in the market to the illicit drug and prostitution trade. The high tax burden and the often corrupt bureaucracy feeds an environment that enables the “gray economy” to flourish.<sup>61</sup> Women have found work across the entire informal spectrum.

In Uzbekistan and most other Central Asian countries, women have come to dominate what is known as the “shuttle economy”—traveling to neighboring countries and as far off as China and Korea to buy goods for resale at home.<sup>62</sup> The shuttle economy favors well-educated, urban women because they tend to be bi- or multilingual, have the necessary financial resources, and they often face less resistance than men from customs inspectors. Men, furthermore, although possibly unemployed or underemployed often shy away from this transient bazaar out of shame.<sup>63</sup> The shuttle economy, which for so long allowed women to support themselves and family, appears to be decreasing in activity due to increased customs regulations and patrols.<sup>64</sup>

Confronted with limited opportunity, women turn to the informal sector as a coping and survival mechanism. The informal sector, although providing temporary relief, is a volatile and often dangerous environment that can further isolate women from the mainstream economy. Women are still expected to maintain their households, yet receive none of the benefits—childcare and social services—that come from working in the formal sector. Also, by working in the informal sector, women miss valuable opportunities to develop the skills needed in the post-Soviet

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>61</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, 6.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>63</sup> Arnold, 5.

<sup>64</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, 6.

economy.

Estimates have as many as 30 percent of those engaged in trade and services as in unregistered employment, that is, as participating in the informal economy. In Tashkent, Korezm, and Fergana, this approaches 40 percent. Unregistered employment, for both men and women, may cover more than 2.3 million people, usually in second jobs, temporary employment, part-time and casual day work, and in personal plots in agriculture.<sup>65</sup>

## Findings

**Have there been changes in labor force participation by women and men during the transition?** Official figures still place the labor force participation in Uzbekistan at high levels, nearly as high as in the western areas of the former Soviet Union. Labor market participation rates remain high, in spite of what are described as inflexible, traditional gender roles in Uzbekistan.

**Is there evidence for wage gap trends and wage differentials?** Wage data are scarce, but real wages have declined significantly for all workers.

**Has unemployment increased, whether official or hidden, and is there a gender dimension to unemployment?** Unemployment data on men and women are inconsistent. The drop in unemployment was less than in other countries in the region, though it may have had a greater impact on women. Recent data shows employment rates to have increased, and rates for women in urban areas to be lower.

**How has the growth of the informal economy reflected gender differentiation?** The informal economy has grown greatly and may be accounting for some 30 percent of all employed. Women have played a significant role in the growth of the “shuttle economy.”

**What is the impact of privatization of state enterprises on women’s and men’s employment?** There are few quantitative data available on the effects of privatization on employment.

**What role do women play in new managerial positions or business formation in the growing private sector?** The business sector has grown slowly, and women have not yet played a large role in the small business sector.

## *Opportunities for Future Research*

**Labor market information – employment and unemployment, wage data, sectoral information, income distribution – is incomplete and outdated for Uzbekistan.** Gender disaggregated data are unavailable.

**Women’s role in the private sector has generally not been examined.** Data on the

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<sup>65</sup> UNDP, *National Human Development Report 1998*, 47-48.

advancement of women into business, both as high-level managers of enterprises as well as entrepreneurs, is not accessible.

**The role of the informal economy in contributing to men's and women's relative economic position remains poorly documented.**

**The nature of impact on women of the contraction of jobs in the economy is still unclear.**

**Although it appears that men's and women's unemployment rates are similar, what this actually means for continued participation in the labor market by different groups (men and women, young and old, etc.) should be the focus of further study.**

## THE DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION

The purpose of this section is to discuss the differential experience of Uzbek men and women in the political sphere before and after the transition to democracy. The primary questions to be answered are:

1. Is there differential participation by women and men in the public sphere?
  - a) What is the role of women in party politics?
  - b) What is the representation of women in elected government positions, locally and nationally?
  - c) What is the representation of women in appointed governmental positions?
2. How is gender reflected in the development of civil society, especially NGOs?
  - a) What is the role of women in different types of NGOs?
  - b) Have NGOs developed that advocate for gender issues?
3. How has the rule of law been institutionalized and what impact is there on gender?
  - a) Have there been *de jure* legal reforms with an impact on gender?
  - b) Do men and women have equal legal rights, *de jure* and *de facto*? (Is there sufficient information to be able to contrast between *de jure* and *de facto*?)
  - c) Have there been reforms related to family law: inheritance, ownership, marriage, and divorce that impact on gender?

These questions are addressed below beginning with a brief discussion of how men and women participated in politics and civil society during the Soviet era and how the patterns of that participation has changed since independence and how they are now affected by rule of law.

### *Political Activity in the Pre-Communist and Communist Periods*

Even before Soviet control, women in Uzbekistan were politically marginalized. Most wore *hijab* and many lived in seclusion, as dictated by Islam. Women had few political rights, even at the local level. Uzbek society was organized by *mahalla*, which usually translates into English as neighborhood, but it implies a community of people as well as a geographic location. The *mahalla* served an important economic purpose, as well as providing a social safety net, education, religious instruction, and enforcement of social standards and mores. The Soviets appropriated the *mahalla* and it officially became an administrative unit as well as an unofficial ecclesiastical unit, thus allowing Islam to continue its role in Uzbek life.<sup>66</sup>

In 1929, the Soviets began the Khudjum Movement designed to give women and men equal status in society. Women's Sections were established in cities and *raions* to counsel, provide services to and educate women. The Movement's impact was felt quickly. Women stopped wearing *paranji* and a new law forbade seclusion. By 1930, women were working on collective farms with men. That same year, Stalin closed the woman question by saying it was solved.

The woman question surfaced again after Stalin's death, but no real criticism was expressed until

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<sup>66</sup> Reuel Hanks, "Civil Society and Identity in Uzbekistan," in M. Holt Ruffin and Daniel Waugh (eds.) *Civil Society in Central Asia*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 166-167.

*perestroika*. Newspapers and journals published articles about the hardships working women faced and they generally agreed that women were exhausted from their triple burdens of work, home and children.<sup>67</sup> As a result of these and other pressures, Uzbeks began to reject Russian- and Soviet-imposed norms and standards and attempted to regain their cultural and political identity. In the late 1980s, two popular movements, the Birlik and Erk, sought to reintegrate Uzbekistan's national heritage with their reform programs. In 1993, these parties were banned.

Women, in addition to comprising a large percentage of Communist Party membership, used to fill approximately one third of the seats in the Soviet assemblies. One author referred to these women, and their male colleagues, as “incompetent conformists,” and says that as a result, equality of women in the political sphere was never accepted. Female members of the Supreme Council of the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic were drawn from the *kolkhoz*, industry, and the *nomenklatura*. Only a few female council members were intellectuals or professionals.<sup>68</sup>

### ***Political Activity since Independence***

The public sphere in Uzbekistan is still dominated and largely controlled by President Islam Karimov, who has vested few women with any real power. He appoints most of the important positions in the executive and judiciary branches and controls the parliament, as well as appointing regional *hokims* (governors).<sup>69</sup> Another barrier for women is the revitalization of the Uzbek clan system, whose patriarchal traditions exclude women.<sup>70</sup>

The pattern of female participation in politics in Uzbekistan has changed drastically in the past ten years. Women, who once comprised nearly 30 percent of the Communist Party membership, now have negligible membership in political parties. As one author puts it:

*Whereas the forms of organization in the old system supported women's presence in the public sphere, after independence, with the emphasis on breaking from the past and returning to tradition and cultural authenticity, it is observed that women are once more pulled back to the private domain in the framework of traditional solidarity networks at the level of mahallas.*<sup>71</sup>

Five political parties are currently recognized in Uzbekistan: the Peoples Democratic Party (the former Communist Party), the Adolat Social Democratic Party, Vatan Tariqqiyoti, Milliy Tiklanish Democratic Party, and Fidokorlar National Democratic Party.<sup>72</sup> Only two of the new parties, the Khalk Democratic Party and the Vatan Taraqqiyoti party have selected women for their party lists—mostly formerly members of *Komsomol* or the Communist Party.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Asli Ozatas, “The Role of Women in the Making of the New Uzbek Identity,” *Eurasian Studies*, vol. 3, no. 3, 1996, 106-107.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 11, 12.

<sup>69</sup> Abdumannod Polat, “Can Uzbekistan Build Democracy and Civil Society?” in M. Holt Ruffin and Daniel Waugh (eds.) *Civil Society in Central Asia*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 137.

<sup>70</sup> Marfua Tokhtakhodzhaeva, *Between the Slogans of Communism and the Laws of Islam*, (Lahore, Pakistan: Shirkat Gah, 1995), 251.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>72</sup> Polat, “Can Uzbekistan Build Democracy and Civil Society?” 137-138.

<sup>73</sup> Marfua Tokhtakhodzhaeva, “Women and Law in Uzbekistan,” in *Assertions of Self: the Nascent Women's Movement in Central Asia*, (Lahore, Pakistan: Shirkat Gah, 1995), 12.



The “protection of women” is now the dominant social discourse in Uzbekistan. The status of women in society represents a transformation of the society, and the new regime is rolling back the progress made under its predecessors. Some allege that the Soviets educated and emancipated women in order to benefit from their forced labor and in doing so, they destroyed the femininity of women.<sup>74</sup> Women have been remarkably silent in this debate.

**Table 11.10. Political Positions Held by Men and Women in Uzbekistan**

Position	Total Number	Held by Women		Held by Men	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Members of Parliament	250	17	6.8 %	233	93.2 %
Cabinet Ministers	18	0	0.0 %	18	100.0 %
Pres. Admin. Employees	NA	NA		NA	
Regional Administrators	NA	NA		NA	
Members of Judiciary	NA	NA		NA	
High Court	NA	NA		NA	
Appeals Courts	NA	NA		NA	
Local Courts	NA	NA		NA	
Political Party Leaders	5	0	0.0 %	5	100.0 %

Note: Data are from January 2000 unless otherwise noted.

Source: Inter Parliamentary Union website, <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>; Women in Governments website, <http://hjem.get2net.dk/Womeningovernments/>; CIA Chiefs of State and Cabinet Members web page, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/chiefs/index.html>.

### The Legislative Branch

Women now constitute six percent (15 of 250) of Uzbekistan’s members of the *Oli Majlis*, down from 32 percent in 1991. The last elections were neither free nor fair by international standards and many of the seats were simply allotted to those holding other important government offices. Due to the conditions of the parliament’s election and because it meets only every few months to approve the laws prepared by the government, women’s role in the legislative process is uncertain. These conditions have also effectively stymied opportunity for a women’s parliamentary coalition to emerge in Uzbekistan.<sup>75</sup>

### The Executive Branch

The decrease in women’s representation in the executive branch at the national level has exceeded that of the legislative branch. Whereas under the Soviet system, women were appointed members of government and Secretaries of Party Committees at the town, province and district levels,<sup>76</sup> in 1991, women were by and large forced out of the new national power structures in Uzbekistan. At various times, positions that were traditionally held for women under the Soviets’ quota system simply remained open and unfilled.<sup>77</sup> Three prominent women

<sup>74</sup> Ozatas, “The Role of Women in the Making of the New Uzbek Identity,” 105-106.

<sup>75</sup> Polat, “Can Uzbekistan Build Democracy and Civil Society?” 137.

<sup>76</sup> Tokhtakhodzhaeva, “Women and Law in Uzbekistan,” 12.

<sup>77</sup> Tokhtakhodzhaeva, *Between the Slogans of Communism and the Laws of Islam*, 251.

who have held national leadership positions are Sanobar Khodzhayeva, the Minister of Social Affairs from 1989 to 1993; Shako Makhmudova, Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1991; and Dilbar Ghulomova, the current Deputy Premier Minister and Chairman of the *Hotin Kizlar Komiteti* (State Committee for Women's Affairs).<sup>78</sup>

The goal of the *Hotin Kizlar Komiteti* is "to empower women economically, politically and socially in the process of transition to market economy." The Committee is supposed to promote equal rights and protect women (specifically mothers) and children.<sup>79</sup> When asked about the effect of Islamization on women, Chairman Ghulomova responded:

*Today there are no women left at the top decision-making level. Even the female presidents of the kolkhoz have been sidelined, yet society still expects women to be tied to factory machines and the cotton fields. If this is what society expects, then women must also be included in the management structures. If this does not happen, who will take up women's concerns? What is happening now is discrimination.*<sup>80</sup>

At the local level, women still occupy some positions of prominence, if of little power. President Karimov appoints the chair, or *hokim*, of each administrative unit and can remove him or her at any time. As a result, the *hokim* is responsible to the president rather than his or her constituents. Karimov also decreed on March 2, 1995, that "each administrative unit should have a female vice-chair...."<sup>81</sup> Therefore each administrative unit employs at least one woman, but it implies that he has not appointed, nor does he intend to appoint, women as *hokims*.

### The Judicial Branch

Very little information is available about the participation of men and women in the Uzbek judiciary. Although the Uzbek Constitution declares the courts independent of the executive and legislative branches of the government, all judges are appointed by the president and can be removed by him at any time. The only exception is the removal of Supreme Court Justices, which must be approved by the parliament. Although no official data exist, it is likely that most of the Soviet-appointed judges have remained in place. Judges rule over cases with the assistance of two citizen advisors who generally have little knowledge of the law.<sup>82</sup> Anecdotal evidence exists of bribe demands of defendants prior to sentencing.<sup>83</sup> According to a recent study of Uzbekistan's Union of Defense Lawyers, there have only been 65 cases in recent years in which the defendants were found not guilty. Sixty-four of those were overturned upon protests from the procurator's office.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>78</sup> The Women in Government website, <http://hjem.get2net.dk/Womeningovernments/Uzbekistan.htm> on 1/10/2000.

<sup>79</sup> Ozatas, "The Role of Women in the Making of the New Uzbek Identity," 104.

<sup>80</sup> Tokhtakhodzaeva, *Between the Slogans of Communism and the Laws of Islam*, 249.

<sup>81</sup> Ozatas, "The Role of Women in the Making of the New Uzbek Identity," 103.

<sup>82</sup> Polat, "Can Uzbekistan Build Democracy and Civil Society?" 138.

<sup>83</sup> Nations in Transit, p. 645.

<sup>84</sup> Polat, "Can Uzbekistan Build Democracy and Civil Society?" 139.

### *Civil Society since Independence*

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as they are known by westerners, have not emerged strongly in Uzbekistan. NGOs are not permitted to engage in political activity, must not criticize the government, and should not involve dissidents in their work.<sup>85</sup> Those that cooperate with the government receive funding, and those that are not viewed as favorably are suppressed by the government.<sup>86</sup> One such case was Tumaris, a feminist movement associated with the Birlik movement and, therefore, suppressed with it. Tumaris supported women's right to not work and to be secluded. Interviews with many Uzbek women, largely from urban areas, revealed that they were glad that the movement had been suppressed.<sup>87</sup>

Since they cannot engage in political activity, NGOs were not involved in drafting the legislation regulating them. Uzbekistan's regulations governing NGOs are very restrictive; registration with the government is required, as is a membership of at least 10 people, and there are special restrictions on religious organizations that disallow advocacy. NGOs have civil and administrative liability for operating without registration.<sup>88</sup> Because the laws set such a high bar for registration and President Karimov has suppressed Islamic movements, there may be an untold number of unofficial Islamic NGOs working in Uzbekistan. We know many were driven underground by the Karimov regime.<sup>89</sup>

According to Counterpart Consortium's database, there are 34 NGOs focused on women's issues in Uzbekistan. The only far-reaching women's organization in Uzbekistan is the network of government-sponsored Women's Committees. A national structure exists for the women's committees: the *mahalla* committees are linked to the *raion* committees, which are in turn linked to the metropolitan women's committees. The metropolitan women's committees report to the *Hotin Kizlar Komiteti*.<sup>90</sup> Women chair all Women's Committees by decree of the president. Each administrative unit has a female vice-chair and that woman must be the head of that unit's women's committee.

Women's Committees have in a sense become the government's watchdog, both in terms of monitoring women's issues and the activities of women's NGOs. In some regions, the Women's Committees encourage the development of independent women's NGOs, and in others, they do not. The support of the local Women's Committees can be an important factor in whether NGOs thrive or struggle.

Ozatas states that the members of the Women's Committees are elected "based on the advice of the *mahalla* inhabitants," but who elects them is unclear.<sup>91</sup> The *mahallas'* Women's Committees are charged to do the following: to assist with weddings, *bayrams*, celebrations, funerals, etc; to

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<sup>85</sup> Polat, "Can Uzbekistan Build Democracy and Civil Society?" 146.

<sup>86</sup> Ozatas, "The Role of Women in the Making of the New Uzbek Identity," 104-105.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>88</sup> Scott Horton and Alla Kazakina, "The Legal Regulation of NGOs: Central Asia at a Crossroads," in M. Holt Ruffin and Daniel Waugh (eds.) *Civil Society in Central Asia*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 40-41, 43.

<sup>89</sup> Hanks, "Civil Society and Identity in Uzbekistan," 170.

<sup>90</sup> Ozatas, "The Role of Women in the Making of the New Uzbek Identity," 103.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

be responsible for the inhabitants of the *mahallas*; to know the living conditions of each family; to advise and help families on all issues; and to mediate disputes within families.<sup>92</sup>

One problem with the Women's Committees is that they are a top-down initiative and probably do not respond to many community problems as a grassroots NGO might. For example, Women's Committees hold regular seminars on topics such as "How should a good woman be?", "What should be the relationships between bride and mother-in-law?" and "How to bring up daughters."<sup>93</sup> These are pertinent issues for women, since women often cite mothers-in-law as being more resistant to them working than their husbands.

Women have organized NGOs in Uzbekistan that deal with issues important to women, such as child nutrition and health, family planning, and professional associations. Some of these organizations have tried to promote women's issues to the general public. The Women's Resource Center has held roundtables and published a comprehensive booklet on women's rights in Uzbekistan. It has also conducted research on the conditions of women in the textile industry. The Women's League of Initiatives produced thirty nationally broadcast radio programs on women's rights. It also created a partnership with a local labor department to identify training and employment opportunities for poor and disabled women. Tadbirkor Ayel (a national businesswomen's association) and the Association of Young Women in Nukus have created training programs for women in business start-up and development.<sup>94</sup> Crisis Centers (now called Trust Centers) have emerged throughout the country as a place where women can find refuge from a troublesome domestic situation. Telephone hotlines are also widely promoted by these centers where psychologists, lawyers, and doctors can answer women's (and also men's) questions about their specific plights.

Women are organizing to mitigate the effects of the transition from socialism to market economy, probably more so than men. They are hampered, however, by the official support structures for women and restrictions on the activities of public associations. Not only are women increasingly unable to participate directly in government, their indirect participation through NGOs is limited as well.

### **Rule of Law**

Prior to Soviet rule, there were two sets of laws in Central Asia: the Russian Codes, and *Sharia* Law, which applied only to Muslims. The first Soviet constitution declared men and women equal and eventually the *Sharia* courts were abolished.<sup>95</sup> The abolition of the ecclesiastical courts, however, did not succeed in changing men and women's traditional roles.

Rule of law faces several challenges in Uzbekistan, not the least of which is the president's control of all three branches of the government. Women and men have equal rights under the

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 103-104.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 104.

<sup>94</sup> Ula Ikramova and Kathryn McConnell, "Women's NGOs in Central Asia's Evolving Societies," in M. Holt Ruffin and Daniel Waugh (eds.) *Civil Society in Central Asia*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 205, 206, 202-203.

<sup>95</sup> Tokhtakhodzaeva, "Women and Law in Uzbekistan," 16.

Constitution of Uzbekistan, but not under secondary laws and regulations. Further, one author states that because the law was largely disregarded by those who were supposed to enforce it in the colonial and Soviet eras, there is very little respect among the people for the rule of law now.<sup>96</sup>

### **Marriage Law**

According to Uzbek law, a woman does not have the right to marry on her own; her father must make the arrangements. Legally, men may marry at 18 and women at 17. The *hokim* can grant special exceptions for men and women to marry a year earlier than the legal age. Uzbek women tend to marry at a young age, which limits their access to upper level education and replaces opportunities for career development with domestic and child-rearing duties at an early age. Unlike in rural areas, in the larger cities, women appear to have some say as to whom they will marry. Fathers often choose marriage partners because it is in their interests. There are generally two ceremonies, a civil one at the town hall and a religious ceremony in which the marriage is sanctified.<sup>97</sup> In cases where women are married under the legal age without the *hokim's* exception, religious ceremonies are performed and the civil ceremony is held when the woman reaches legal age.

Polygamy is currently illegal in Uzbekistan, but a debate about its legalization is underway. Polygamy existed in rural areas during the Soviet period and among those involved in the black market. Now, there is a growing sentiment that polygamy should be legalized since it is permitted by Islam.<sup>98</sup> Those men entering into polygamous marriage are usually quite wealthy and thus able to sustain the livelihood of multiple families. Such practices are common in both rural and urban areas alike. To date, no high-level politicians, male or female, have protested this infringement on the equality of women, thereby granting tacit consent.<sup>99</sup>

### **Divorce Law**

The divorce rate in Uzbekistan is fairly low. Traditional norms may be one reason the rate is low. Even in Soviet times, it was half the divorce rate in Russia. Another reason may be that divorced mothers are entitled to child support, but it is often inadequate and most women are unaware of the legal mechanisms to which they have recourse in the case of nonpayment.<sup>100</sup> Two of the common causes of divorce are the woman not producing a child and the interests of the fathers going in different directions.<sup>101</sup>

The main problem within divorce law is the division of property. All property acquired by the spouses during the marriage belongs to both people in equal parts, and the law stipulates that property must be equally divided between the spouses. Although the division of property in a divorce seems fairly straightforward, it has not yet been decided whether an apartment is joint

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>97</sup> Tokhtakhodzhaeva, "Women and Law in Uzbekistan," 19.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Tokhtakhodzhaeva, *Between the Slogans of Communism and the Laws of Islam*, 231.

<sup>100</sup> Tokhtakhodzhaeva, "Women and Law in Uzbekistan," 17.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 19.

property (belonging to the spouses) or family property (belonging to the extended family, including parents, siblings and their families, etc.) and how it should be treated in a divorce. Moreover, judges have the right to divide property unevenly, such as, in cases where one parent may have sole custody of the children.<sup>102</sup>

### **Property Law**

Women were not included in the revision of the property and real estate laws after the disintegration of the Soviet Union and may have lost some of their rights as a result.<sup>103</sup> One author stated that an important reform that needs to be made in property law is the inclusion of women's names on the titles of family property,<sup>104</sup> implying that they currently are not, which in effect means that they have no legal claim to any family property. This is probably a greater problem for women in rural areas than in cities since apartments have not yet been designated joint or family property, but it may become an issue for all women if apartments become family property.

### **Labor Law**

In its effort to protect women, Uzbekistan has almost guaranteed that women will never be equal to men in the workplace. Maternity leave in Uzbekistan lasts for eighteen months with pay and another eighteen without pay. Firms must hold a woman's position for her for three years while she is on maternity leave.<sup>105</sup> Most women, however, take only six months maternity leave. What this means is that young women will not advance in their careers. It is impossible for a firm to operate with key positions unattended for two or three years and to pay for another employee to fill the position means doubling the salary and tax costs of that position, often an infeasible proposition for nascent firms.

### **Freedom of Religion**

While the Constitution of Uzbekistan guarantees freedom of religion, there is truly little freedom. Because the government perceives independent Islamic activists to be the greatest threat, Muslim clergy and supporters are harassed more often than other denominations.<sup>106</sup> Muslims are permitted to listen only to government-approved speeches at the mosques. Most men only attend prayers on Friday, and they are often harassed by police with identity checks and surveillance. Most of those arrested for religious extremism and membership of banned religious (i.e., Hezb-i Tahrir) groups are men. Additionally, many Christian sects have been attacked and harassed by in cities such as Nukus and Karshi.

### ***Findings***

**Is there differential participation by women and men in the public sphere?** Following the

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 17, 18.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>105</sup> Otazas, "The Role of Women in the Making of the New Uzbek Identity," 104.

<sup>106</sup> Polat, "Can Uzbekistan Build Democracy and Civil Society?" 141.

fall of the Soviet Union, Uzbek women suffered a major political setback. They now comprise only six percent of members of parliament and do not currently serve in important appointed posts in the Uzbek government. A larger problem than the loss of political representation, however, may be the domination of the political sphere by Islam Karimov and the institution of a government that cannot be held accountable to the electorate.

**How is gender reflected in the development of civil society, especially NGOs?** The NGO sector is also weak and cannot advocate for equal rights. However, according to USAID/CAR, the leaders of the most successful NGOs are women, and these include not only gender based NGOs, but NGOs that deal with the handicapped, ecology, and artisans. While the NGO sector has not successfully advocated for their issues on a national level, they have been quite successful in their local realms. There are also quasi-NGOs (meaning NGOs that were established by the government), but these quasi NGOs are often less active and less issue-oriented than independent NGOs.

**How has the rule of law been institutionalized and what impact is there on gender?** Rule of law has not been institutionalized in Uzbekistan. Further, new laws have created opportunities and incentives for discrimination against women. Men have been granted property rights while women, in effect, have not, since their names are not included on property titles. The maternity leave requirements almost guarantee that women can no longer advance in an organization because an organization can not function without key staff in place for three years. Therefore, the maternity leave system, therefore, which was meant to protect mothers and the development of children, essentially precludes equality in the workplace. Women have also lost face in the public sphere with the reintroduction of the debate on polygamy.

### *Opportunities for Future Research*

**More information is needed about the role of women in the judiciary and local governments.**

**More information is needed about the development of NGOs and grassroots alternatives, such as women's *mahallas*.** This information would provide a more complete picture of political life in Uzbekistan and might demonstrate that there are viable alternatives to NGO-based civil society.

**Information on the de facto exercise of rights is needed.** This would help identify opportunities for education and other measures to improve gender equity.

## **THE SOCIAL TRANSITION**

This section reports findings from major sources regarding the effects of the transition in Uzbekistan on social benefits, poverty, pension reform, health, and education and explores these primary questions:

1. With the shredding of the social safety net, how have women versus men fared in access to / support from social programs?
2. Do data show women's poverty rates to be greater than men's?
3. What are the health-related impacts of the transition?
4. What differential impacts has pension reform had on men's and women's access to benefits?
5. What are salient changes in the state-funded education system since 1989/91?

This chapter reviews World Bank, UNDP, UNICEF, and other sources, and major findings are presented in the five sections that follow: Social Safety Net, Poverty, Pension Reform, Health Reform, and Education.

### **Social Safety Net**

As described in Chapter 5, social safety net programs are of three general types: universal benefits, social insurance, and social assistance. Uzbekistan's social safety net includes programs that fall into each of these three categories. Table 11.11 lists Uzbekistan's social programs and briefly describes their eligibility requirements and benefits and points out major gender differences.

As indicated in the table, in four of eight social programs about which we have eligibility and benefit information, women receive preferential treatment in eligibility, benefits, or both. Although this issue is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, it should be noted here that when benefits are based on a percentage of wages, women's benefits will tend to be lower than men's.

Uzbekistan's social safety net has two unique features that warrant examination. First, in its unemployment benefits program, Uzbekistan penalizes job seekers with little work experience and no skills. Job seekers who have skills but have worked fewer than twelve weeks in the past year receive 100 percent of the minimum wage for the first 13 weeks and 75 percent for the next 13 weeks. Job seekers without skills and the required 12 weeks of employment receive only 75 percent of the minimum wage for 13 weeks. This amount is further reduced to 50 percent of the minimum wage if the unskilled job seeker has no dependents.



**Table 11.11. Social Safety Net Program Eligibility and Benefits in Uzbekistan**

Program	Value		Eligibility	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
<b>Universal Benefits</b>				
Health Benefits	Medical care.	Same.	All residents.	Same.
<b>Social Insurance</b>				
Pension, Old-age	First Tier: 55% of average earnings. Second Tier: 1% of average earnings for each year of service, or special pension for war veterans and others. Maximum and minimums apply.	Same.	Age 55 and 20 years of work. Requirements reduced for hazardous or arduous work, work in ecologically disastrous areas, unemployed older workers, teachers with at least 25 years of service, and others. Retirement necessary.	Age 60 and 25 years of work. Requirements reduced for hazardous or arduous work, work in ecologically disastrous areas, unemployed older workers, teachers with at least 25 years of service, and others. Retirement necessary.
Pension, Disability	30-55% of earnings depending on disability or 100% of first tier old-age pension if 20 years of covered employment.	30-55% of earnings depending on disability or 100% of first tier old-age pension if 25 years of covered employment.	1 to 15 years of covered employment.	Same.
Pension, Survivorship	30% of earnings for each dependent survivor. Minimum pension is 100% of minimum wage of 200% if loss of both parents or death of single mother.	30% of earnings for each dependent survivor. Minimum pension is 100% of minimum wage of 200% if loss of both parents.	Insured has 1 to 15 years of work.	Same.

Program	Value		Eligibility	
	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>
Unemployment	50% of previous average earnings for 26 weeks if employed at least 12 weeks in last 12 months. Re-entrants with skills but less than 12 weeks employment: 100% of minimum wage for 13 weeks, and 75% for next 13 weeks. Re-entrants without skills and first-time job seekers: 75% of minimum wage for 13 weeks (50% if no dependents).	Same.	Registered at employment office; ability and willingness to work; receiving no income from employment.	Same.
Sickness (cash benefits)	60-100% of last month's wage depending on length of employment.	Same.	Persons in covered employment; on leave from employment while pursuing secondary, technical or advanced education; and registered unemployed.	Same.
Maternity Benefits	<i>100% of wages for 60 days before and 56 days after confinement. 3 years unpaid leave to working mothers. Paid (20% minimum wage per month) leave for mothers caring for children under age 2.</i>	None.	<i>Mothers in covered employment; on leave from employment while pursuing secondary, technical or advanced education; and registered unemployed.</i>	None.
Work Injury	100% of earnings.	Same.	Employed persons.	Same.
<b>Social Assistance</b>				
Family Allowances	No information available about family allowances from this source. However, see discussion in text of social assistance and mahallas.			

*Notes:* The data in this table were current as of January 1, 1999 (the latest version of the Social Security Administration's report). Italicized text indicates a gender difference in eligibility or benefits.

*Source:* U.S. Social Security Administration, *Social Security Programs Throughout the World – 1999*, 379-381.

Second, as in other transition countries, Uzbekistan began targeting its social assistance in order to reduce expenditures and help the most vulnerable. However, beginning in 1994, Uzbekistan chose to implement its targeting program through local *mahallas*.<sup>107</sup> *Mahallas* are traditional, pre-Soviet community groups that existed for centuries in the Uzbek and Tajik cultures.<sup>108</sup> The *mahallas* elect a chairman and a committee of elders who decide which families will receive support and how much they will receive (within certain guidelines).<sup>109</sup>

The *mahallas* number about 12,000, and the number of households in each averages about 400. The *mahalla* chairman and committee members are, in principle, elected by the citizenry. While no hard data exist on the gender make-up of committee members, there is anecdotal evidence that the committee members are appointed by the *mahalla* elders and that women are rarely among their number.<sup>110</sup>

Funding for the targeted social assistance comes from the federal budget, and *mahallas* provide assistance to households for three months (renewable) in amounts between 1.5 and three times the minimum wage. *Mahallas* are given basic guidance on providing assistance but are also given considerable flexibility and discretion in determining need.<sup>111</sup>

Table 11.12 shows the types of households receiving social assistance from the *mahallas* based on surveys conducted by the European University Institute and the University of Essex Survey in Uzbekistan in 1995. As the data indicate, female-headed households and pensioner households were only slightly more likely than average to receive assistance.<sup>112</sup>

### Poverty and Gender

No gender disaggregated data are available on poverty in Uzbekistan. Below, we discuss the data that are available.

According to the World Bank, 1989 household budget survey data show that per capita income in Uzbekistan was among the lowest in the Soviet Union. The poverty rate (the percentage of the population living below the unofficial poverty line of 75 rubles per capita per month) was the second highest at 44 percent. In addition, the survey data indicated that only 1.4 percent of households in Uzbekistan were in the top Soviet income bracket, compared to 10 percent nationwide.<sup>113</sup>

**Table 11.12. Percentage of Households Receiving Social Assistance from *Mahallas***

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<sup>107</sup> Aline Coudouel, Sheila Marnie, and John Micklewright, *Targeting Social Assistance in a Transition Economy: The Mahallas in Uzbekistan*, Innocenti Occasional Papers, Economic and Social Policy Series No. 63 (Florence: UNICEF International Child Development Centre, 1998), 2.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>113</sup> World Bank, *Uzbekistan Social and Structural Policy Review*, Report No. 19626 (Washington: World Bank, 1999), 78.

Household Characteristics	Percentage
All Households	14.5
Number of Children	
0	7.5
1	10.0
2	12.5
3	20.1
4+	26.3
Unemployed Member(s)	19.7
Female Head (and no male adults)	16.0
Pensioner Households	15.8
Number of Working Adults	
0	14.7
1	15.3
2	11.5
3+	18.6

Source: Aline Coudouel, Sheila Marnie, and John Micklewright, *Targeting Social Assistance in a Transition Economy: The Mahallas in Uzbekistan*, Innocenti Occasional Papers, Economic and Social Policy Series No. 63 (Florence: UNICEF International Child Development Centre, 1998), 14.

The World Bank reported in its 1999 Social and Structural Policy Review that recent and reliable data on poverty for Uzbekistan do not exist.<sup>114</sup> For its review, the World Bank relied on a 1995 household survey conducted by the European University Institute. This survey, as reported by the World Bank, did not differentiate poverty rates by gender or by head of household. The data from this survey are summarized in Table 11.13 and show that poverty is highly variable by geography.

**Table 11.13. Percent of Households Below Poverty Line in Three Regions of Uzbekistan**

	Tashkent	Fergana	Karakalpakstan
Urban	10	28	50
Rural	na	47	70

Source: World Bank, *Uzbekistan Social and Structural Policy Review*, Report No. 19626 (Washington: World Bank, 1999), 78.

This survey used by the World Bank also indicates that large families are more likely to be poor and the incidence of poverty among pensioners was “very low” (only 10 percent of the mean rate).<sup>115</sup>

The UNDP in its 1997 Human Development Report for Uzbekistan reported poverty figures based on per capita income. These data, however, are also not disaggregated by gender. According to the UNDP, 22 percent of all households had average per capita incomes equal to or lower than the poverty line of 648 soum. Families with several children are more likely to be

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 79.

poor: 38.3 percent of families with four or more children are poor as are 19.6 percent of families with three or more children.<sup>116</sup>

The scale of the poverty and the perception that poverty has increased in Uzbekistan since the transition are reflected in qualitative data collected by the World Bank in its 1999 report, *Uzbekistan: Consultations with the Poor*. Respondents in interviews indicated that 80 to 85 percent of the population was the middle class 10 to 15 years ago. Now, however, respondents consider most people to be poor. Table 11.14 shows the categories of wealth as defined by survey participants.

**Table 11.14. Perceptions of Household Wealth**

Categories and Definitions of Household Wealth by Respondents	Proportion of the Respondents' Own Communities
The very rich: international travel and pocket money for their children	1-2%
The rich: own businesses or land, have large houses, can afford education or weddings for their children	3-5%
The well-to-do: can afford clothing, an education, and/or a wedding for their children	5-10%
The middle class: can afford enough food to feed their families, but not much else	20%
The poor: often hungry, rarely eat meat	40-80%
The destitute: have sold all their possessions and are often homeless	1-5%

Source: World Bank, *Uzbekistan: Consultations with the Poor* (Washington: World Bank, 1999), 11-12.

## Pension Reform

Pension reform began in 1991 with the creation of the Pension Fund of Uzbekistan and legislation that linked pension size to wages and length of service. As is true in all countries of the E&E region, Uzbekistan's pension system faced solvency issues following independence. Through tight control of tax collection and pension payments, Uzbekistan, according to the UNDP, had stabilized its pension system by 1997.<sup>117</sup>

Private pension funds do not yet exist in Uzbekistan. Under the public pension system, women continue to be eligible for retirement at age 55 with 20 years of work (compared to age 60 and 25 years for men).

## Health Status and the Impact of the Transition

Real per capita health spending in Uzbekistan declined by 1994 to 66% of its 1990 level.<sup>118</sup> This situation has constrained the health care system, although Uzbekistan has taken actions to improve maternal and child health which have helped to mitigate the impacts of the transition.

<sup>116</sup> UNDP, *National Human Development Report*, 53-54.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>118</sup> Jeni Klugman and George Schieber, *A Survey of Health Reform in Central Asia, Europe and Central Asia Region*, (Washington: World Bank, 1996), 14-15, 22.

Basic health indicators, nonetheless, are still worse than for many countries in the region, particularly with regard to infant mortality, which remains unacceptably high, at 49 deaths per 1000 live births, according to the 1996 DHS.<sup>119</sup> Table 11.15 presents data on some basic health indicators in Uzbekistan. Below we discuss the data shown in the table and other health-related findings.

**Table 11.15. Demographic and Health Indicators for Uzbekistan<sup>120</sup>**

Maternal mortality (per 100,000 live births) <sup>121</sup>	<b>1989</b>		<b>1996</b>	
	42.8		12.0	
Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births) <sup>122</sup>	<b>1989</b>		<b>1997</b>	
	37.7		22.8	
Abortion rate (per 100 live births). 1992 is latest available year. <sup>123</sup>	<b>1990</b>		<b>1992</b>	
	31.0		23.7	
Contraceptive prevalence (DHS 1996) <sup>124</sup>	56%			
Total fertility rate (births per woman) <sup>125</sup>	3.4			
STD incidence (new cases of syphilis/gonorrhea per 100,000 population) <sup>126</sup>	<b>1990</b>		<b>1997</b>	
	--		--	
Life expectancy at birth <sup>127</sup>	<b>Female</b>		<b>Male</b>	
	<b>1990</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1997</b>
	72.4	--	66.1	--
Percent of population 65 and older in 1997 <sup>128</sup>	4.5%			

Sources: As indicated in the footnotes.

## Life Expectancy

Uzbekistan has the youngest population among the study countries, with only 4.5% of the

<sup>119</sup> Institute of Obstetrics and Gynecology (Uzbekistan) and Macro International Inc., *Uzbekistan Demographic and Health Survey, 1996*, xxi.

<sup>120</sup> General note on sources: The major sources used for purposes of cross-country comparisons are from the MONEE and UNDP reports cited below, because they have data for most countries. MONEE is preferred for maternal mortality data because it is the most up-to-date comparable source of data. For infant mortality, UNDP is the preferred source for two reasons: a) UNDP data concords most closely with DHS data, for the three countries for which DHS surveys have been done; and b) data for six of the study countries cited in the MONEE database are based on Soviet rather than WHO definitions of infant death, impairing comparability. In some cases MONEE figures are significantly different (usually lower) than UNDP figures. Only the MONEE database provides reasonably complete and comparable data on abortion rates, STD incidence and life expectancy by sex. UNDP is the preferred source for total fertility rates because it concords most closely with DHS data in the cases in which it is available. Contraceptive prevalence sources identified are: Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), reproductive health surveys (RHS), UNDP Human Development Report (UNDP), Population Reference Bureau (PRB), Russia Longitudinal Monitoring Survey (RLMS). The year is specified when known.

<sup>121</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 119.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 118.

<sup>124</sup> World Bank, GenderStats Database, <http://genderstats.worldbank.org>.

<sup>125</sup> CIA World Factbook.

<sup>126</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 131.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 123-124.

<sup>128</sup> CIA World Factbook.

population aged 65 or older.<sup>129</sup> Among the population age 60 and over, females exceeded males by 17%, according to the DHS.<sup>130</sup> There are no recent estimates of life expectancy at birth, so trends during the transition period cannot be tracked.

### **Mortality**

In the early 1990s, the leading causes of death for both males and females were ischemic heart disease and cerebrovascular disease. The male death rate from lung cancer was four times the rate for women.<sup>131</sup> Data from 1991 show that circulatory disease mortality among women in Uzbekistan was almost four times greater than the average for the European Union, and mortality from respiratory diseases was 2.4 times higher. However, the breast cancer death rate was only about 40% of the EU rate.<sup>132</sup>

### **Maternal Mortality**

Maternal mortality estimates vary widely. The data cited in the DHS (from the Ministry of Health) indicate that the ratio of maternal deaths per 100,000 live births was 39 in 1994, a decrease from the 1991 level of 65.<sup>133</sup> Figures from the MONEE database are much lower and show a sharper decrease, from a level of 42.8 in 1989 (there are no data for 1991), to 17.3 in 1994 and 12.0 in 1996.<sup>134</sup> It is not possible to explain this difference with the information available. A 1994 study also noted sharp variation in maternal mortality estimates for Uzbekistan, which made interpretation difficult. The same study indicated that the primary causes of maternal mortality in Uzbekistan were hemorrhage (18 percent), abortion (6 percent), toxemia (5 percent) and sepsis (3 percent). "All other obstetric causes" accounted for 68 percent.<sup>135</sup>

### **Maternal Health Care**

Uzbekistan has an extensive infrastructure of maternal care facilities, including delivery hospitals, general hospitals, women's consulting centers, and doctor's assistant/midwife posts in rural areas. Maternal and child health services are mostly provided through primary health care institutions. The system is still state-owned and health services are provided free of charge. While the system has been effective in providing services for the majority of the population, maintaining such a system requires substantial budgetary support and human and managerial resources.

According to the DHS, 95 percent of respondents received prenatal care from professional personnel, 85 percent from a doctor and 10 percent from a nurse or midwife. Urban women

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<sup>129</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report*, 198.

<sup>130</sup> Institute of Obstetrics and Gynecology, *Uzbekistan Demographic and Health Survey, 1996*, 31.

<sup>131</sup> World Health Organization, Tobacco or Health Programme, *Tobacco or Health: A Global Status Report, Country Profiles by Region, 1997* (<http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/who/whofirst.htm>).

<sup>132</sup> Joana Godinho, *Reproductive Health in Transition Economies: A Four Countries Study* (draft) (Washington: World Bank, 1994), 53-54.

<sup>133</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 6.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>135</sup> Joana Godinho, *Reproductive Health in Transition Economies*, 23-24, 26.

were more likely to receive prenatal care from a doctor (91 percent) than rural women (83 percent). Nearly all births (94 percent) are delivered at health facilities, nearly all in delivery hospitals. Uzbek women are more likely to deliver under a doctor's supervision (95 percent) than are women of other ethnicities (88 percent).<sup>136</sup>

However, both the still-high maternal and infant mortality rates indicate that maternal health problems exist, in spite of the high level of care. Prior studies have indicated that the problem is less one of access than of health care quality. Health professionals are often poorly trained in maternal health and family planning. Also, due to the cutback in resources, drugs are scarce and equipment and supplies lacking, and infrastructure is poorly maintained and not adequately updated. To address some of these issues, the Ministry of Health launched in 1991 a health project aimed at reducing maternal mortality and morbidity by increasing contraceptive use to a target level of 75 percent, relying mainly on IUDs. However, it is estimated that about 30 percent of women will need another method, and the program must rely on international assistance for contraceptive supplies. Physicians are required to devote four hours a month to health education, but they do not give high priority to contraception and family planning. Also, the population is unlikely to accept some modern methods, such as the pill or injectables, until both professional and popular views of their risks and benefits change.<sup>137</sup>

#### **Box 11.1. Health in Uzbekistan**

“The quality of medical services has also deteriorated, thus leading to increased vulnerability of households to the ravages of illness. The risk of surrendering the economic well-being of one’s family to the ruin of illness has become very high. Formerly, all medical services were free of charge.... Today medical services are officially free. However, unofficial extortion on the part of doctors and nurses, practiced in mitigated form during the Soviet period, have increased, and patients are required to pay for hospital bedclothes, food, and medicines themselves.... As a result, if someone in the family falls seriously ill, it may very possibly ruin the entire family.”

World Bank, *Uzbekistan: Consultations with the Poor* (Washington: World Bank, 1999), 16.

#### **Infant Mortality**

Infant mortality, often used as an indicator of maternal as well as child health, has been steadily declining, according to Ministry of Health data reported in the MONEE database, from a level of 34.6 (per 1000 live births) in 1990 to 22.8 in 1997.<sup>138</sup> The Ministry of Health figures are lower than the DHS estimate of 49 (for mid-1992 to mid-1996) in part due to definitional differences, since Uzbekistan still uses the Soviet rather than the WHO definition of infant death.<sup>139</sup> Nevertheless, according to the DHS (which is consistent with UNDP data for 1997 showing the rate at 46), Uzbekistan still has the highest infant mortality rate among the countries in this study, indicative of serious health deficiencies.

According to a 1994 study, the overall female to male sex ratio, 1.02 in 1992 was lower than average, with only 2 percent more women than men. The European Union ratio was 105 women

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., xxi, 107-109.

<sup>137</sup> Joana Godinho, *Reproductive Health in Transition Economies*, 66, 63.

<sup>138</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 119.

<sup>139</sup> Institute of Obstetrics and Gynecology, xxi.



per 100 men. The study states that the low differential may be due to infant mortality almost as high among females as among males, as well as to high maternal mortality. The same study notes that mortality among females under 5 was almost six times higher than in the OECD countries. Although females under 5 were still at lower risk of dying than males, the normal gap had narrowed, indicating that males were benefiting more than females from declines in children's mortality.<sup>140</sup> This phenomenon should be investigated to determine whether this trend is continuing and why.

### **Abortion**

Abortion rates for Uzbekistan are substantially lower than for most of the former Soviet Union countries. The 1996 DHS calculated the total abortion rate (TAR) – the number of abortions a woman will have in her lifetime based on the currently prevailing abortion rates – at 0.7 abortions per woman for the period from mid-1993 to mid-1996. By comparison, the TAR for Kazakhstan was 1.8, for Romania 3.4 and for two cities in Russia, 2.3 and 2.8. The rate was substantially lower among ethnic Uzbek women (0.5) than among women of other ethnicities. According to DHS data, the abortion rate in Uzbekistan has declined by 31 percent over the last five years; according to Ministry of Health data, it has declined by 43 percent.<sup>141</sup> There are no recent data on illegal abortion in Uzbekistan, but information from 1991 indicated that 27 percent of all abortions were illegal, and that 65 percent of all abortion-related deaths resulted from illegal abortions.<sup>142</sup> The current incidence of illegal abortion should be investigated to determine its impact and causes.

### **Contraception**

According to the DHS, contraceptive prevalence among married women was 56 percent (current users); 68 percent reported having used a method of contraception at some time. More than half of current users (51 percent) used a modern method, with the IUD by far the most common method, used by 46 percent. Pills and condoms were used by about 2 percent each, and injectables and female sterilization accounted for only about 1 percent each, although the pill, condom and injectables were widely known (only 27 percent knew about female sterilization). Only 4 percent of women used a traditional method, principally withdrawal and rhythm. Counterintuitively, use of traditional methods was higher among urban women, women living in Tashkent City, women with higher education and women of other than Uzbek ethnic groups. No explanation is given.

### **Fertility**

Fertility has declined in recent years, and fertility among 25 to 29 year-olds has fallen by one-third over the past twenty years. The DHS survey results indicated a total fertility rate (births per woman) for all of Uzbekistan of 3.3 (consistent with the UNDP rate reported for 1997 of 3.4; UNDP rates are reported to enable cross-country comparisons, since only three of the study countries have comparable DHS data). The rate for urban women (2.7) is substantially lower

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 9, 37.

<sup>141</sup> Institute of Obstetrics and Gynecology, xx-xxi, 76.

<sup>142</sup> Joana Godinho, *Reproductive Health in Transition Economies*, 39.

than for rural women (3.7). The rate for Uzbek women (3.5) is higher than for women of other ethnicities (2.5). According to the DHS survey, 9.5 percent of women age 15-19 were either mothers already or pregnant with their first child (according to World Bank indicators, the adolescent fertility rate per 1000 women aged 15-19 for 1997 was 36<sup>143</sup>).

### **Sexually-Transmitted Diseases**

Comparable data on the incidence of sexually-transmitted diseases (syphilis and gonorrhea combined) is lacking for Uzbekistan, as well as data on HIV/AIDS, so it is not possible to assess the trend over time or in comparison with other countries in the region. However, Uzbekistan did show a fairly high incidence of syphilis in 1997, 35.6 newly registered cases per 100,000 population. While this level is much lower than the average for the former Soviet Union of 220.6 (principally due to very high rates in Russia, Ukraine and Latvia), it is three times the average level for Eastern Europe, and vastly higher than the average for the European Union, 1.6.<sup>144</sup> This is alarming because it indicates unsafe sex, which also increases HIV exposure, and is more likely to affect young people, and women more than men, with consequent risks for future children as well. A 1993 report also indicated that pelvic inflammatory disease and secondary infertility had been increasing in Uzbekistan.<sup>145</sup>

### **Lifestyle-Related Health Issues**

Tobacco use among women has increased, although it is still low, indicating that lung cancer rates for women are likely to increase. While a 1989 study indicated that smoking among women was very low (1 percent among Uzbek women and 3 percent among other ethnicities) compared with men (40 percent among Uzbeks, 50 percent among others), a 1994 report showed that, overall, 9 percent of women and 49 percent of men smoked. By age group, among those 20-29, 60 percent of men and 11 percent of women smoked; for the 30 to 39 group, the figures were 53 percent of men and 15 percent of women. Increases in smoking in the youngest age groups have become a serious concern. Tobacco was estimated to cause about 8 percent of all male and 3 percent of all female deaths a year, and represented almost 20 percent of deaths among men below the age of 70.<sup>146</sup>

### **Nutrition**

Poor nutrition, mainly among pregnant women and children, has often been mentioned as a problem in Uzbekistan, including anemia and excessive consumption of animal fat. The 1996 DHS was the first anemia study on a national basis. It found that 60 percent of women in Uzbekistan suffered from some degree of anemia, mainly mild (45 percent). Moderate anemia affected 14 percent, while 1 percent had severe anemia. Sixty-one percent of children under the age of three were anemic, 26 percent moderate and 1 percent severe. Among children of mothers with moderate anemia, 3 percent have severe anemia and 38 percent have moderate anemia. The

<sup>143</sup> World Bank, 1999 World Development Indicators, Reproductive Health (<http://genderstats.worldbank.org/menu.asp>).

<sup>144</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 71.

<sup>145</sup> Joana Godinho, *Reproductive Health in Transition Economies*, 55.

<sup>146</sup> World Health Organization.

prevalence of moderate anemia among these children is more than twice as high as among children of non-anemic mothers.<sup>147</sup>

## Education and Gender

Gender-disaggregated data on education enrollments are available only for primary and tertiary levels in Uzbekistan. Available data are shown in Table 11.16.

**Table 11.16. Female School Enrollments in Uzbekistan, As a Percent of Total**

Primary		Secondary		Tertiary	
1980	1996	1980	1996	1991	1996
--	49	--	--	40.2	39.4

Note: -- indicates data are not available.

Sources: For primary enrollments: World Bank, *1999 World Development Indicators*; for tertiary enrollments: UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 135.

While no figures are available for enrollments prior to the transition at the primary level, female enrollment was about half (49 percent) of total enrollment in 1996. Female enrollment at the tertiary level remained about the same from 1991 to 1996. However, female tertiary enrollment in Uzbekistan is the second lowest in the E&E region.<sup>148</sup>

Data on overall enrollment are shown in Table 11.17. Enrollments declined throughout the educational system: in kindergarten, primary, secondary, and tertiary schools.

**Table 11.17. School Enrollment in Uzbekistan, Percent of Relevant Population**

Kindergarten		Primary		Secondary		Tertiary	
1989	1996	1989	1997	1990	1997	1989	1997
38.5	22.7	92.2	89.7	37.5	28.6	9.1	5.0

Source: UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 133-134.

Information on education expenditures in Uzbekistan are unavailable from UNICEF MONEE, our source for cross-country comparable data, and therefore, no comparison can be made between expenditures and the decrease in enrollment. However, qualitative data indicate that the incidence of bribe payment for entrance to vocational training and “institutions of higher education” (whether these are universities or secondary schools is not clear) has increased and may be a factor in the declining enrollments.<sup>149</sup> Box 11.2 describes the importance of education in Uzbekistan and the rise of bribes.

<sup>147</sup> Institute of Obstetrics and Gynecology, xxii.

<sup>148</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 135.

<sup>149</sup> World Bank, *Uzbekistan: Consultations with the Poor* (Washington: World Bank, 1999), 17.

### Box 11.2. The Importance of Education and its High Price

Education was one of four most frequently reported criteria for a good life in interviews conducted by the World Bank in 1999. According to the World Bank, education ranked first or second among criteria of well-being, depending on the class to which the informants belonged. For those working in agriculture, post-secondary education was not highly valued. However, for many rural families, education was viewed as a coping strategy so important that “parents are ready to spend all their money and even sell their cattle in order to obtain it for their children.”

Respondents also addressed gender equity in enrollments. “Many parents do their best to give post school education to their daughters. They believe that education and training will provide their daughter with first, economic independence, and second, relatively high status and respect in her future husband’s family. In some cases, parents even try to give education to their daughters first and then to their sons. For example, in one Karakalpak family, daughters received education and son stayed with parents in the village without any post school education. The rationale for this is that the son will stay with his parents and will support them in their old age.”

Despite the importance of education to Uzbek families, it has become costly because of the requirement for bribes. One of the World Bank’s case studies states, “One of the young women in a site in Karakalpakstan said that she had flunked her entrance exams because she did not give a bribe. Now she is determined to give one. Even with a good knowledge of the exam topic one does not stand a chance. Many households allocate some part of their budget for their children’s education, earmarking it for entrance bribes.”

World Bank, *Uzbekistan: Consultations with the Poor* (Washington: World Bank, 1999), 10, 19, 41.

### Findings

**With the shredding of the social safety net, how have women versus men fared in access to / support from social programs?** Women receive preferential treatment in four of eight social safety net programs. Female-headed households are slightly more likely than average to receive social assistance from the local *mahallas*; however, anecdotal evidence suggests women are not participating on the *mahallas* committees that make funding decisions.

**Do data show women’s poverty rates to be greater than men’s?** There are no gender-differentiated data on poverty in Uzbekistan.

**What are the health-related impacts of the transition?** Data on health indicators shows some improvement in Uzbekistan since the transition: maternal mortality decreased, infant mortality decreased, and abortions decreased. Basic health indicators, nonetheless, are worse than for many countries in the region.

**What differential impacts has pension reform had on men’s and women’s access to benefits?** Pension reform to date in Uzbekistan has focused on stabilizing the public pension system and ensuring that pensions are paid. Reforms begun in 1991 included linking pensions more closely to wages and length of service. There is no evidence that this reform has adversely affected men or women.

**What are salient changes in the state-funded education system (secondary and higher) since 1989/91?** Enrollments fell at all educational levels in Uzbekistan. Gender-disaggregated data show that women made up about half of primary school enrollments in 1996 but only 39 percent of tertiary enrollments (data were unavailable for secondary students).

## Opportunities for Future Research

**Participation in the *mahallas* by women should be explored.** While anecdotal evidence indicates that women are not chosen to participate in the committees that disburse social assistance, more information is needed to assess the quantity and quality of women's participation in these decision-making bodies.

**The current incidence of illegal abortion should be investigated to determine its impact and causes.** There are no recent data on illegal abortion in Uzbekistan, but information from 1991 indicated that 27 percent of all abortions were illegal, and that 65 percent of all abortion-related deaths resulted from illegal abortions.

**The narrowing of the gender gap in infant mortality should be studied to determine whether this trend is continuing and why.** Although females under five were still at lower risk of dying than males, the normal gap had narrowed, indicating that males were benefiting more than females from declines in children's mortality.

**Education enrollments should be closely monitored.** Enrollments fell at each level of schooling in Uzbekistan, and a gender disparity exists at the tertiary level where female enrollment is only 39 percent of the total.

## Chapter 12: Russia



### Basic Indicators

For additional information, please see Country Data Table in the Appendix.

<i>Demographics</i>			
Population <sup>1</sup> (1998)	146,739,000; female 77,916,000 (53.1%)		
Rural / Urban <sup>2</sup>	77% urban		
Ethnic composition <sup>3</sup>	Russian 81.5%, Tatar 3.8%, Ukrainian 3%, Chuvash 1.2%, Bashkir 0.9%, Byelorussian 0.8%, Moldavian 0.7%, other 8.1%		
<i>Economic Growth and Development</i>			
GDP per capita (all in 1987\$) <sup>4</sup>	<b>1985</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1997</b>
	3,050	4,507	2,742
GDP per capita (PPP for 1997) <sup>4</sup>	<b>Female</b>		<b>Male</b>
	3,503		5,356
Registered Unemployment Rate <sup>1</sup>	<b>1992</b>		<b>1997</b>
	0.8		2.8
<i>Democracy and Governance</i>			
Women in Parliament <sup>5</sup>	5.7%		
Women in Ministerial Positions <sup>6</sup>	0.0%		
<i>Social Transition</i>			
Life Expectancy by Sex(1999 est.) <sup>3</sup>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>
	65.12 years	71.72 years	58.83 years
Combined first, second, and third level gross school enrollment ratio (1997) <sup>4</sup>	<b>Female</b>		<b>Male</b>
	80		74
Population below poverty line <sup>2</sup>	31%		

Sources: 1) UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*.

2) World Bank Country Data, <http://wbln0018.worldbank.org/eca/eca.nsf>.

3) CIA World Factbook 1999, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>.

4) UNDP Human Development Indicators 1999.

5) Inter Parliamentary Union website, <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

6) CIA Chiefs of State and Cabinets Members website, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/chiefs/index.html> and Women in Governments website, <http://hjem.get2net.dk/Womeningovernments/>.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### ***The Economic Transition***

- As a concomitant of the dramatic economic downturn in Russia, both men and women have withdrawn from the work force, and women have left in higher numbers than men.
- However, women have retained their traditionally high level of participation in the work force; nearly half the economically active population is women.
- Reviewing figures on crude economic activity, the drop in women's economic activity is also significant.
- The overall distribution of income in the Russian Federation is substantially more unequal today than it was prior to the transition; but the wage gap between men and women has held steady at about 30 percent.
- Currently, women's unemployment has stabilized in Russia and only varies by one percentage point from men.
- Women continue to lag behind men most noticeably in the move into the private sector.

### ***The Democratic Transition***

- Women's formal participation in public life, especially in national legislative and executive positions, has declined during the transition with the end of the communist-era quota system.
- Women's issues are not well addressed in the legislature at present. Since the disappearance of the "Women of Russia" coalition from the political scene in 1995, there has been little coordinated effort by women in the Duma to assert a "women's agenda."
- NGO's that address women's issues have grown rapidly in the decade since the transition; however, activists continue to lament their relative lack of political weight in Russian society, and have offered a number of strategies for redressing this problem.
- Discrimination against women in the workplace continues to be a principal concern related to women's legal situation.

### ***The Social Transition***

- In five of nine social safety net programs, women receive preferential treatment in eligibility, benefits, or both.
- Poverty seems to be gender-differentiated with some contradictory findings: female-headed households are poorer than male-headed households, but single males are poorer than single females.
- Pension reform has included voluntary private pension funds, and mandatory private pension funds are planned.
- Life expectancy has decreased for both men and women. More men than women die of tobacco-related causes, but more women than men are affected by poor nutrition. Maternal and infant mortality have remained about the same over the transition.
- Educational enrollments have fallen for kindergarten and primary schools but increased for secondary and tertiary schools. Sex-disaggregated data on enrollments are available only for primary and tertiary education: women make up about half of primary enrollment and 56 percent of tertiary enrollment.

## Country Overview

**Introduction:** With an area of 6,592,800 square miles, Russia is the world's largest country. On its northern and eastern sides Russia is bounded by the Arctic and Pacific oceans, and it has small frontages in the northwest on the Baltic Sea at St. Petersburg and at the detached Russian oblast (province) of Kaliningrad. On the south it borders North Korea, China, Mongolia, and the former Soviet republics of Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. On the southwest and west it borders the former Soviet republics of Ukraine, Belarus, Latvia, and Estonia, as well as Finland and Norway; in addition, Kaliningrad abuts Poland and Lithuania. The capital of Russia is Moscow.

**People:** The great majority of the people are Russians (about four-fifths of the total), but there also are some 70 smaller national groups living within its borders. Many of these are extremely small--in some cases consisting of only a few thousand individuals--and, in addition to Russians, only a handful of groups have more than a million members each: Tatars, Ukrainians, Chuvash, Bashkir, Belarusians, and Mordvins. Russian is the official language, but many other linguistic groups exist: the Indo-European group, comprising East Slavic speakers and smaller numbers speaking several other languages; the Altaic group, including Turkic, Mongolian, and Manchu-Tungus; the Uralic group, including Finno-Ugric and Samoyedic; and the Caucasian group, comprising Abkhazo-Adyghian and Nakho-Dagestanian.

**Cultural life:** Russia's unique and vibrant culture developed, as did the country itself, from a complicated interplay of native Slavic cultural material and borrowings from a wide variety of foreign cultures. In the Kievan period (c. 10th-13th centuries) the borrowings were primarily from Eastern Orthodox Byzantine culture. During the Muscovite period (c. 14th-17th centuries) the Slavic and Byzantine cultural substrates were enriched and modified by Asiatic influences carried by the Mongol hordes. Finally, in the modern period (since the 18th century) the cultural heritage of Western Europe was added to the Russian melting pot.

**Government:** The new Russian government has been characterized by a power struggle between the executive and legislative branches, primarily over issues of constitutional authority and the pace and direction of democratic and economic reform. Conflicts came to a head in September 1993 when President Yeltsin dissolved the Russian parliament (the Congress of People's Deputies and the Supreme Soviet). Parliamentary members and their allies revolted and were suppressed only through military intervention. In December 1993, a new constitution proposed by Yeltsin was approved in a nationwide referendum, and representatives were elected to a new legislature. The new constitution, effective Dec. 22, 1993, provides the president with significantly increased powers. The president appoints the prime minister and key judges as well as cabinet members and may override and even dissolve the legislature in some cases. The new parliament, the Federal Assembly, consists of the Federation Council (a 178-member upper house with equal representation for all 89 republics and regions) and a State Duma (a 450-member lower house elected through proportional representation on a party basis and through single-member constituencies).

**Education:** Preschool provision is well developed, and a high proportion of the preschool-age children attend crèches or kindergartens. Free compulsory schooling begins at age seven and lasts for at least eight years, with more than three-fifths now attending for up to 10 years. Admission to higher education is selective and highly competitive: first-degree courses usually take five years. Non-Russian schoolchildren are taught in their own language, but Russian is a compulsory subject at the secondary level. Higher education in Russia is almost entirely in Russian, although there are a few institutions, mainly in the minority republics, where the local language is also used. The most prestigious universities are those of Moscow and St. Petersburg.

**Health and Welfare:** Since the late 1980s, life expectancy has fallen sharply, particularly for men. In 1991 Russia began experiencing negative population growth, caused by a plummeting birth rate and a rising mortality rate. Air pollution in heavily industrialized areas has led to relatively high rates of lung cancer in these regions, and high incidences of stomach cancer occur in regions where consumption of carbohydrates is high and intake of fruits, vegetables, milk, and animal proteins is low. Rates of alcoholism--especially among young people--and drug addiction have increased. Russia has also experienced a decline in the quality of health care, such as poor intensive and emergency care, insufficiently trained medical personnel, shortages of medicine, and limited development of specialized services such as maternity and hospice care.

From *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (<http://www.britannica.com>)



## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter explores the economic, democratic, and social transitions in Russia. Each section seeks to answer a set of research questions which are set out at the beginning of the sections. In addition to subsections addressing each of the research questions, each section includes a subsection on findings and opportunities for future research.

## THE ECONOMIC TRANSITION

### Box 12.1. The “Transition”

“People grew up with a mentality of waiting for support from somebody else – it’s a handicapped vision– when people need care their whole life. But this mentality has been in our brains for seventy-five years.”

– Leah Lerner, founder, International Institute for Entrepreneurial Development  
in Racioppi and See, *Women’s Activism in Contemporary Russia*, 179.

This section seeks to answer the following questions as they relate to Russia:

1. Have there been changes in labor force participation by women and men during the transition?
2. Is there evidence for wage gap trends and wage differentials?
3. Has unemployment increased, whether official or hidden, and is there a gender dimension to unemployment?
4. How has the growth of the informal economy reflected gender differentiation?
5. What is the impact of privatization of state enterprises on women’s and men’s employment?
6. What role do women play in new managerial positions or business formation in the growing private sector?

In the subsections below we discuss GDP, labor force participation, unemployment, the informal economy, and privatization and present data on each of these issues as they relate to gender. Our findings on the impact of the economic transition on gender are presented in the concluding subsection.

### *Contextual Information about the Economy*

The assertion that past is prologue is nowhere more certain than in the economic transformation of the Russian Federation. Despite the best efforts of the World Bank and IMF, along with the many of the world’s leading economic specialists, Russia continues to find its process of modernization mired in a centuries-old legacy of backwardness and inefficiency. As most of the developed world greets the twenty-first century as participants of the global information revolution, Russia remains left behind, struggling with the outmoded heavy industrial economy of its Soviet past. No consideration of Russian gender issues can afford to ignore this legacy and its economic consequences. For instance, the current demographic situation in the Russian Federation, where women compose 53.3 percent of the country’s population, is the result of a trend extending back over fifty years. One of the highest percentages in the developed world, estimates have 3,360,000 more women than men in the prime working ages between 15 and 64.<sup>1</sup> Originating in the enormous losses the Soviet Union suffered during World War II, this demographic imbalance has persisted due to socioeconomic factors that have gradually shortened

<sup>1</sup> By comparison the figure is 51% in the US, 50.8% in Great Britain and 51.2% in France. US Census Bureau, International Database, <http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/idbsum.html>; L.V. Korel’, “Women and the Market,” *Russian Social Science Review*, Vol. 37, No. 5, September-October 1996, 25, 27.

the life expectancy for both Russian women and (especially) men.<sup>2</sup> The failure of Gorbachev's abortive economic and political reforms, the breakup of the Soviet Union itself in 1991, Russia's economic restructuring and its uncertain democratization have all brought about costly but potentially promising transformations in the lives of the nation's women and men.

The collapse of state socialism in Russia precipitated a striking economic downturn. Figures show the decline to have been more debilitating than that experienced by Western industrialized states during the Great Depression.<sup>3</sup> Over the last decade Russia has experienced an annual economic decline of 7.7 percent, resulting in a projected GDP in 1998 that is only 56 percent of that achieved in 1989 (Table 12.1).<sup>4</sup> Women have borne much of the brunt of this economic crisis owing to widespread discrimination in the workplace, professional and marital status, age and work status, and geographical location.

**Table 12.1. Change in Real GDP, 1989-1998 (1989=100)**

Country	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Russia	100.0	97.0	92.2	78.8	71.9	62.8	60.2	58.1	58.6	55.7

Source: UNDP, Human Development Indicators, 1999.

Measured in per capita GDP, the Russian Federation is back to the economic levels of a quarter century ago, and this shrinkage in the economy affects the population broadly, in employment, wages, and economic benefits (Table 12.2).

**Table 12.2. Per Capita GDP**

Per Capita GDP (1987 US\$)		
1975	1989	1997
2,250	4,665	2,742

Source: UNDP, Human Development Indicators 1999

### ***Labor Force Participation***

Official figures still place the labor force participation for women quite high in Russia. The World Bank reports that 49 percent of the workforce is female (Table 12.3), and comparative figures from 1970 and 1980 show that high participation rates by women in the labor force have been sustained for decades.

Recent data from the State Committee of the Russian Federation on Statistics (GOSKOMSTAT) place the size of the Russian economically active population – including, by definition, employed and unemployed – at 72,572,000; of that, 47 percent (34,217,000) are women.

<sup>2</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6* (New York: International Child Development Centre, 1999).

<sup>3</sup> Valerie Bunce, "The Political Economy of Postsocialism," *Slavic Review*, Vol. 38, No. 4, Winter 1999, 764.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

**Table 12.3. Labor Force Participation**

Labor Force Participation (ratio f/m)		Labor Force Participation (% of total labor force)			
1970	1997	1980		1998	
1.0	1.0	Male	Female	Male	Female
		51	49	51	49

Source: World Bank, 1999 World Development Indicators

Both male and female participation have declined since 1992, and the decline in women's participation has been greater than men's. Figures from GOSKOMSTAT (Table 12.4) show a somewhat larger decline in the size of the economically active population for women than for men over the period: the male population in 1998 is 98 percent of its 1992 figure, while for women, the 1998 figure is only 92.7 percent of the 1992 one.

**Table 12.4. Economically Active Population (1,000s)**

Economically active population	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Total	76,008	75,363	74,173	72,980	73,230	72,772	72,572
Men	39,121	38,950	38,533	38,278	38,599	38,380	38,355
Women	36,887	36,413	35,640	34,702	34,631	34,392	34,217

Source: GOSKOMSTAT, Russia in Figures 1999, <http://www.gks.ru/scripts/eng/>

Reviewing figures on crude economic activity,<sup>5</sup> the drop in women's economic activity is also significant. While the change in the gender gap (the difference between male and female crude economic activity rates) is reported in this context to be only two percent, the rate shows that female activity has dropped by 7.3 percent between 1989 and 1997. This translates into many millions of women who have withdrawn from the labor force.

**Table 12.5. Crude Activity Rates and the Gender Gap, 1989-1997**

Year	Crude Female Activity Rate		Rise or fall in CFAR	Gender gap in rate (male minus female)		Change in gender gap, % points
	1989	1997	1989-97	1989	1997	1989-97
Russia	47.9	40.6	-7.3	10.0	12.0	2.0

Source: UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 25.

<sup>5</sup> Crude activity levels compare the total workforce (employed and unemployed) to the total population. These typically do include as active those women on unpaid or maternity leave. These show a lower ratio than the working-age rates just cited, since they include women both older and younger than those typically in the workforce (i.e., 15-64).

### Wage Gaps and Wage Differentials

Real wage rates have fallen significantly for both men and women in Russia since the transition began. As Table 12.6 shows, all workers have suffered a dramatic decline in average wages. Indeed, average wages in 1997 were nearly half of what they were in 1989.

**Table 12.6. Wage Trends in Russia, 1989-1997**

1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
100	109.1	102.4	68.9	69.1	63.7	45.9	52.0	54.5

Source: TransMONEE 3.0 Database

### Income and Inequality

The overall distribution of income in the Russian Federation is substantially more unequal today than it was prior to the transition. Using the Gini Coefficient as a measure of the overall distribution of income, Table 12.7 shows that the trend has been towards much greater wage inequality throughout the decade of transition. Taking into account the drop in real wages, greater income is now going to the top of the wage hierarchy and substantially less to the bottom. In Russia, this process is more pronounced than in most of the other countries in the region. The bottom four quintiles of the population – that is, 80 percent of the population – lost ground, while the top quintile had sharp income gains.<sup>6</sup>

**Table 12.7. Gini Coefficient for Russia**

1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
26.9	32.5	37.1	46.1	44.6	47.1	48.3	--

Source: EBRD Transition Report 1999, 260.

With respect to the gender gap in wages, there was no significant expansion of the gender gap between the Communist period and current transition Russia. Prior to 1989, a differential of 30 percent favoring men's wages remained fairly constant.<sup>7</sup> The relatively higher education levels of women, who thereby retain a competitive advantage in the labor market, can explain the fact that this differential has not noticeably widened over the last decade.<sup>8</sup> This is not to suggest that men and women often compete for the same positions, since the segregation described above leads to some segregation of wages as well. Table 12.8 provides data on three successive

<sup>6</sup> Branko Milanovic, *Income, Inequality and Poverty During the Transition from Planned to Market Economy* (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1998), 45.

<sup>7</sup> UNICEF's MONEE Project data (which are a sophisticated set of data) are a striking contrast to Azhgikhina's assertion that the wage gender gap had doubled during the transition period and point to the care necessary in evaluating claims of wide disparity in men and women's experience of the transition. UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 35; Nadezhda Azhgikhina, "A Movement Is Born," *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, July/August 1995, 49.

<sup>8</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 35.

surveys of average wages in Russia, showing relative consistency during the years of the transition.

**Table 12.8. Ratio of Female to Male Wages**

Year	Ratio
1989	.709
1992	.685
1996	.695

*Note:* Ratio = female wages divided by male wages.

*Source:* UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 33.

The “real GDP per capita” by male and female for Russia, calculated in the UNDP *Human Development Report*, are figures based on estimates of the ratio of the average female wage to male wage and the percentage shares of women and men in the economically active population. The GDP per capita by gender provides an approximation of the relative economic situation of men and women. As Table 12.9 shows, female per capita GDP is calculated at about 65 percent of male per capita, in purchasing power parity.

**Table 12.9. Per Capita GDP**

Female real GDP per capita (1997 PPP\$)	Male real GDP per capita (1997 PPP\$)
1997	1997
3,503	5,356

*Source:* UNDP, Human Development Indicators, 1999

A factor that shapes wage issues for both men and women in Russia is that of wage arrears. One 1999 study suggests that only a third of those employed are getting paid regularly. Wage arrears and non-payment of wages are much more common outside large cities than in Moscow and St. Petersburg, and hit the old, the rural, and the least educated. In a world where many critical economic issues enfold the public, wage arrears are named as the most serious problem in surveys.<sup>9</sup> Non-wage benefits like health and child care are part of the attraction to staying employed even in jobs with severe wage arrears; but only a minority of workers receive more than two such benefits. When non-wage benefits are in the form of allowances rather than in kind, payment is just as likely to be delayed as payment of wages.<sup>10</sup>

### **Unemployment**

Current reported unemployment rates among women are difficult to evaluate. The 1992 Russian census revealed that 70 percent of all unemployed were women, a figure that did not include hidden unemployment.<sup>11</sup> These early figures must be taken on their own merits. For instance,

<sup>9</sup> USIA, “Poverty in Russia,” *Opinion Analysis* (Washington, DC: USIA, 1999), 1.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Azhgikhina, “A Movement Is Born,” 49.

they do not suggest that there is an equally large number of women among the “hidden unemployed.” Men have tended to earn significantly more from subsidiary economic activity than women and are correspondingly less eligible for benefits.<sup>12</sup>

### Box 12.2 Risks of Unemployment

“Women are the first to be dismissed.... The active women are dismissed so that they won’t ‘stir up trouble.’”  
(Woman, regional administrator, age 45, Nizhny Novgorod)

USIA, Office of Research and Media Reaction, Russian Families in Transition, Eight Focus Groups in Four Cities, July 1998, p. 34.

Women made up a large percentage of the lower management and line workers who faced the full brunt of corporate downsizing. Over 80 percent of working women held jobs in industries primarily staffed by females, particularly in the light and defense industries.<sup>13</sup> These were among the first sectors to restructure at the start of the transition, resulting in widespread unemployment among women at a very early stage.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, the 63 percent decline in Russian defense spending between 1991 and 1994 encouraged additional layoffs that have further undercut women’s position in industry.<sup>15</sup>

Between 1990 and 1995, women lost seven million jobs while men lost two million. Currently, women’s unemployment has stabilized in Russia and only varies by one percentage point (10 percent) from men.<sup>16</sup> Table 12.10 provides the results of annual labor market surveys; *registered* unemployment—those who have registered with state unemployment offices to receive benefits—number only a fraction of those counted in these labor market surveys.

Unemployment increased in late 1998 and 1999 due to the economic dislocation of 1998, with a total of nearly 10,400,000 reported as unemployed by June 1999; figures are not available by gender.<sup>17</sup> The decrease in the percentage of women as part of the total unemployed reflects the overall loss of women to the economically active, as reported above.

**Table 12.10. Unemployment in Russia (in 1,000’s)**

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Total	3877.1	4304.9	5702.4	6711.9	6732.4	8058.1	8876.2
Women	1851.0	2024.6	2628.0	3096.0	3069.9	3687.4	4089.6
Percentage of total unemployed	47.7	47.0	46.1	46.1	45.6	45.8	46.1

Source: GOSKOMSTAT, Russia in Figures 1999, <http://www.gks.ru/scripts/eng/>

<sup>12</sup> Sarah Ashwin and Elaine Bowers, “Do Russian Women Want to Work?” in M. Buckley (ed.), *Post-Soviet Women: from the Baltic to Central Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 24.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>14</sup> Penny Morvant, “Bearing the ‘Double Burden’ in Russia,” *Transition*, Vol. 1, No. 16, 6; Azhgikhina, “A Movement Is Born,” 49.

<sup>15</sup> Anders Aslund, *How Russia Became a Market Economy* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1995), 280.

<sup>16</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 24.

<sup>17</sup> GOSKOMSTAT, *Russia in Figures 1999*, <http://www.gks.ru/scripts/eng/>, “Economically Active Population” table.

### *Sectoral Issues: Private Sector, Informal Economy, and New Opportunities*

As is common worldwide, women have clustered by sector and by occupation. Labor force segregation existed in the Soviet period, and it continues.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, it was greater in Russia during the 1990's than for most other countries in the region, with up to 47 percent of jobs segregated by gender.<sup>19</sup> As mentioned, women held a large percentage of line workers in light and defense industry installations, though not in heavy industry. Women still predominate in the service fields of health and social security (84 percent), commerce, the hospitality industry (82 percent), education (80 percent), and in culture and the arts (73 percent).<sup>20</sup> In these areas of the economy that tend to be highly dependent on state subsidies, the decline in government social spending and unpaid wages has been significant. In general, however, unpaid wages – the arrears problem – are highest in industries now dominated by men.<sup>21</sup> World Bank data provides some sense of the dimensions of sectoral specialization by men and women (Table 12.11).

**Table 12.11. Labor Force By Sector and Gender, 1990**  
**Percent Of Male Or Female Labor Force**

	Male	Female
<b>Agriculture</b>	17	10
<b>Industry</b>	48	35
<b>Services</b>	34	56
<b>Administrators and Managers</b>	--	--
<b>Professional and technical workers</b>	--	--

*Note:* -- indicates data are not available for Russia.

*Sources:* For employment by sector, World Bank Gender Stats database (latest available data are for 1990). For managerial/professional workers, UNDP, Human Development Indicators, 1999.

Women continue to lag behind men most noticeably in the move into the private sector.<sup>22</sup> Many women have sought to compensate for their early disadvantages vis-à-vis privatization by relying on their relatively higher levels of education to afford greater adaptability within the new economy.<sup>23</sup> For instance, women have proven more willing to take entry-level positions with opportunities for advancement. As a result, women's income levels in managerial positions have begun to rise, from 50 percent of what their male counterparts earned in 1994 to 70 percent by 1997.<sup>24</sup> Universities also report more women enrolling in courses in business and economics courses.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>19</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 36.

<sup>20</sup> Korel, "Women and the Market," 27.

<sup>21</sup> Blasi, Kroumova and Kruse, *Kremlin Capitalism*, 111, 114.

<sup>22</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 31.

<sup>23</sup> Korel, "Women and the Market," 29.

<sup>24</sup> *Women's International Network News*, 24-1, (Winter 1998), 75.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.



As already noted, discrimination against women in the workplace did not suddenly appear at the start of Russia's transition from Communism to liberal capitalism. Indeed, the low share of women in top management positions during the Communist period meant that at the start of the transition women were poorly placed to participate in the process of privatization.<sup>26</sup> Instead, it was the largely male *nomenklatura* of the Communist party that was able to translate its already strong position in industrial management into lucrative management opportunities in restructured enterprises.<sup>27</sup>

**Box 12.3. Discrimination**

"I graduated from the polytechnic institute. I often see advertisements in which companies say they require a "man" with my specialty. This sounds insulting. I meet all their requirements except one." (Woman, engineer, age 24, St. Petersburg)

*USIA, Office of Research and Media Reaction, Russian Families in Transition, Eight Focus Groups in Four Cities, July 1998, p. 34*

At the same time, because of their more disadvantaged social position and the external obstacles facing them, women continue to shy away from entrepreneurial activities. In the private sector the ratio of male to female proprietors in Russia in 1993 was 2:1. Moreover, 1.4 times as many men as women worked for wages in the private sector that year.<sup>28</sup> Women constitute about 21 percent of entrepreneurs in Russia, a percentage slightly lower than any of the nine countries in the region for which figures were available.<sup>29</sup> Discrimination is often a key element here. One company specializing in high-level management employment reports that though 70 percent of its resumes are from "usually highly qualified women," 80 percent of the jobs go to men.<sup>30</sup>

**The Informal Economy**

An exception to women's smaller role in the private economy may well be in the informal economy. While measurements of the informal economy are, by definition, variable and subject to wide interpretation, it is widely accepted that the informal economy has grown dramatically in Russia in the decade of the transition (Table 12.12). While participation in these activities – ranging from retail sales of foodstuffs to household services to illegal products and international crime syndicates – do not provide its lowest paid workers any benefits, informality is attractive to many women by virtue the ability to determine hours and levels of participation.

**Table 12.12. The Informal Economy**

1990 Percent of GDP	1995 Percent of GDP
15	42

<sup>26</sup> Sue Bridger (ed.), *Women and Political Change: Perspectives from East-Central Europe: Selected Papers from the Fifth World Congress of Central and East European Studies, Warsaw, 1995*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 81.

<sup>27</sup> Racioppi and See, *Women's Activism*, 50.

<sup>28</sup> Korel, "Women and the Market," 35.

<sup>29</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 103.

<sup>30</sup> *Women's International Network News*, 24-1, (Winter 1998), 75.

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Source: UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 6.

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The current situation thus reflects a variety of difficulties and opportunities for women in the transition. Women have lost ground in employment, and have not yet managed to benefit equally from the expansion of the private sector. Nevertheless, where they have retained or found employment, women have not surrendered ground in their earnings. Furthermore, women's education and adaptability continues to offer them opportunities that did not exist in Russia's pre-transition economy.

### Socioeconomic Aspirations

Currently in Russia men and women are almost equally agreed (56.5 percent of men and 54.9 percent of women) that women have more time for housework (with only 3 percent of men and 3.5 percent of women believing the husband had more such time).<sup>31</sup> This acceptance of gendered divisions of labor is part of a mixed attitude on the part of Russian women toward "traditional" women's roles and often reflects a deeper ambivalence of Russian women toward work.<sup>32</sup> In contemporary Russia, the realities of unemployment as well as a popular rejection of Communist-propagated feminism and the Soviet cult of work have led many women to embrace a different vision of womanhood that values women's domestic role.<sup>33</sup> Women, who are now free to make their own ideological and personal choices, appear to be more careful in evaluating the costs and opportunities of participation in the market economy and have not been reluctant to opt out of direct participation for a variety of reasons. The current vogue of such discussions in the Russian media suggests the possibility that such a strategy is not only ideologically attractive to many women, but also an economically viable alternative.<sup>34</sup>

### Findings

In Russia's new millennium, after almost a decade of a painful transition from state socialism to a new society, the majority of Russia's women are engaged in building a different, non-collectivist future. In this endeavor women report a very high dissatisfaction with their lives. In one survey over half (56 percent) reported that their lives were unfolding badly, while almost a third (32 percent) thought that they were unable to realize their life's plans.<sup>35</sup> Yet in spite of, and perhaps even because of, this grim assessment of their current circumstances, Russia's women are taking a variety of individual roads to economic survival and development that are producing a new social as well as economic reality in their country.

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<sup>31</sup> Valentine Bodrova, "The Russian Family in Flux", *Transition: Events and Issues in the Former Soviet Union and East-Central and Southeastern Europe*, v. 1, n.16 (September 1995), 10.

<sup>32</sup> Penny Morvant: "Bearing the 'Double Burden' in Russia," *Transition: Events and Issues in the Former Soviet Union and East-Central and Southeastern Europe*, v. 1, n.16 (September 1995), 5.

<sup>33</sup> Rebecca Kay, "Images of an ideal woman: perceptions of Russian womanhood through the media, education and woman's own eyes," in Mary Buckley, ed., *Post-Soviet Women: from the Baltic to Central Asia* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997), 77-78.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>35</sup> G. Ianovskii, A.I. Perminova, and T.A. Mel'nikova, "Women and Society in Russia," *Russian Social Science Review*, Vol. 37, No. 5, September-October 1996, 8.

**Have there been changes in labor force participation by women and men, pre-1989 and current, by sector?** While labor force participation by men and women has been very high in Russia, both male and female participation have declined since 1992, women's somewhat more than men's. Figures on crude economic activity show a 7 percent drop in women's economic activity, although men have also withdrawn from the labor force in large numbers. Trends continue downward.

**Is there evidence for wage gap trends and wage differentials?** Two sources, UNICEF MONEE and the ILO, show that the pay gap between men and women has not increased significantly in the past decade. Real average wages for both men and women are only a little more than half what they were in 1989. In 1997, women's wages averaged about 70 percent of men's.

**Has unemployment increased, whether official or hidden, and is there a gender dimension to unemployment?** Unemployment has increased dramatically (though this is hardly surprising since official unemployment was zero in 1989). In 1992, women were reported to comprise 70 percent of the unemployed. Currently, however, men's and women's unemployment rates vary only by 1 percent. This closing of the gap may reflect an overall decline in the size of the economically active population, as women have retired or quit looking for work.

**How has the growth of the informal economy reflected gender differentiation?** The informal economy has grown dramatically in Russia and, in 1995, may have represented up to 42 percent of the GDP. Little data are available on the gender dimensions of the informal economy, however.

**What is the impact of privatization of state enterprises on women's and men's employment?** Russia is characterized by significant occupational segregation by gender. Women predominate in service activities (medicine, education, light industry) that have generally remained in the public sector. A smaller percentage of women than men have moved into the private sector. We found no quantitative data on the impact of privatization on employment.

**What role do women play in new managerial positions or business formation in the growing private sector?** UNDP, our source for cross-country comparable data on gender and managerial and professional positions, had no data on Russia. Women had a low percentage of top management positions during the Communist era, and were therefore poorly placed to take on high level roles as large enterprises were privatized.

### *Opportunities for Future Research*

**Little information is available on the advancement of women into business, both as high-level managers of enterprises as well as entrepreneurs.** Research needs to be conducted on this aspect of the transition.

**The role of the informal economy in contributing to men's and women's relative economic position remains poorly documented.**

**Little research has been done on the changing nature of work for men and women.** For example, are new work opportunities (for example, for desired part-time work) that allow women to combine domestic responsibilities and workplace roles being created?

**The nature of impact on women of the contraction of jobs in the economy is still unclear.** Although it appears that men's and women's unemployment rates are similar, what this actually means for continued participation in the labor market by different groups (men and women, young and old, etc.) should be the focus of further study.

## THE DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION

The purpose of this section is to discuss the differential experience of Russian men and women in the political sphere since the transition to democracy. The primary questions to be answered are:

1. Is there differential participation by women and men in the public sphere?
  - a) What is the role of women in party politics?
  - b) What is the representation of women in elected government positions, locally and nationally?
  - c) What is the representation of women in appointed governmental positions?
2. How is gender reflected in the development of civil society, especially NGOs?
  - a) What is the role of women in different types of NGOs?
  - b) Have NGOs developed that advocate for gender issues?
3. How has the rule of law been institutionalized and what impact is there on gender?
  - a) Have there been *de jure* legal reforms with an impact on gender?
  - b) Do men and women have equal legal rights, *de jure* and *de facto*? (Is there sufficient information to be able to contrast between *de jure* and *de facto*?)
  - c) Have there been reforms related to family law: inheritance, ownership, marriage, and divorce that impact on gender?

### *Political Activity Since the Transition*

The period of the post-Communist transition has witnessed a marked decline in the participation of women in government if one estimates such things in sheer numbers (see Table 12.13 for details of this shift and an accounting of the current situation). The end of the Soviet-era quota system is largely responsible for this trend. However, those women who currently serve in government have been afforded a greater voice than ever before, owing to the move away from Communist oligarchical rule. This is especially true in the Russian Duma, where legislators are afforded opportunities never imagined under Soviet rule to speak freely and openly about the problems plaguing society. The transition has also witnessed an explosion of activity within civil society, as women's NGOs become involved in a broad range of political, social, and charitable initiatives.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991 saw the replacement of the Soviet Women's Committee with the Union of Russian Women (URW) as Russia's official advocate of women's rights and interests. Attitudes toward the URW differed among activists within the broader women's movement. With a selective social base that consisted largely of pro-communist, anti-reformist forces, the URW was regarded by many independent feminists as a monopolistic obstacle to genuinely popular activism. Valentina Konstantinova, for instance, calls the URW a *nomenklatura* organization that has no right to represent the interests of all Russian women.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, it has been the URW, with its extensive institutional network and state sponsorship, that has been best positioned to translate activism into political influence for much of the post-Communist transition period.

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<sup>36</sup> Valentina Konstantinova, "Women's Political Coalitions in Russia (1990-1994)," in Anna Rotkirch and Elina Haavio-Mannila (eds.) *Women's Voices in Russia Today* (Brookfield, VT: Dartmouth Publishing Co., 1996), 246.

Concerned that none of Russia's new political parties were designating sufficient attention to the challenges facing women in the new system, the URW worked with the Union of Women's Entrepreneurs and the Union of Women of the Navy to create an electoral bloc in the run-up to the 1993 parliamentary elections. Calling itself "Women of Russia," the bloc first endorsed the slogan "Democracy Without Women is not Democracy," but soon changed to the more moderate "Women of Russia – for Russia."<sup>37</sup>

**Table 12.13: Political Positions Held by Men and Women in Russia**

Position	Total Number	Held by Women		Held by Men	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Members of Parliament	619	35	5.7 %	584	94.3 %
Lower Chamber	441	34	7.7 %	407	92.3 %
Upper Chamber	178	1	0.6 %	177	99.4 %
Cabinet Ministers	28	0	0.0 %	28	100.0 %
Pres. Admin. Employees*	NA	NA	44.0 %	NA	56.0%
Regional Administrators	NA	NA	%	NA	%
Members of Judiciary	NA	NA		NA	
High Court	19	3	15.8 %	16	84.2 %
Appeals Courts	NA	NA		NA	
Local Courts	NA	NA		NA	
Political Party Leaders	NA	NA	%	NA	%

Note: Data are from January 2000 unless otherwise noted.

\* Data are from 1995.

Sources: Inter Parliamentary Union website, <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>; Women in Governments website, <http://hjem.get2net.dk/Womeningovernments/>; CIA Chiefs of State and Cabinet Members web page, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/chiefs/index.html>; Nechemias, "Women and Politics;" University of Wuerzburg International Constitutional Law website, <http://www.uni-wuerzburg.de/law/rs00000.html>.

## The Legislative Branch

The elections of 1993 were the first multiparty elections Russia had held since 1917. Half of the members of the new legislature were elected by party lists, and half from single-member constituencies. The performance of the Women of Russia bloc at the polls proved to be among the most amazing political developments of the year. Of the thirteen blocs taking part in the election, only eight cleared the 5 percent entry barrier. Among them was the Women of Russia, coming in fourth with over four million votes, or 8.13 percent of the participating electorate.<sup>38</sup> This victory assured the bloc 21 seats in the State Duma, the nation's lower house.<sup>39</sup> Other party victories brought women in as well. On average women constituted about 7 percent of all candidates on federal lists in the run-up to the elections.<sup>40</sup> These party lists, in addition to the two women elected from individual district elections, returned an additional 38 women to the Duma, resulting in a grand total of 60 females out of a full complement of 444, or 13.5 percent. While still quite low, women's representation in the new legislature had more than doubled since

<sup>37</sup> Carol Nechemias, "Women and Politics in Post-Soviet Russia," in M. Rueschemeyer (ed.), *Women in Politics of Postcommunist Eastern Europe*, (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1998), 17.

<sup>38</sup> Konstantinova, "Women's Political Coalitions," 238.

<sup>39</sup> Nechemias, "Women and Politics," 16. By 1994 the faction included 23 members.

<sup>40</sup> Konstantinova, "Women's Political Coalitions," 246.

1990, and was roughly equal to that seen in the United States Congress. The story was less impressive in the Upper House of parliament, the Federation Council, where women accounted for only nine of 171 members (5.3 percent). At the regional level the proportion of women elected to local legislatures amounted to 9.9 percent, though there were several regions in which no women were elected at all.<sup>41</sup>

Once it had secured its surprising returns in the 1993 elections, the Women of Russia bloc began to entertain ideas for a definitive legislative agenda. Intended at first to be a temporary alliance, the bloc was not expected to continue any kind of legislative coordination in the Duma itself. “We did not even think we would make it into the parliament,” one leader remarked in an interview, “much less worry about whether to continue our cooperation beyond the elections.”<sup>42</sup> However, as intentions changed, the strategy that emerged was centrist and moderate, focused on creating democracy, the rule of law, and on safeguarding Russia’s territorial integrity. Socially, it stressed state support for education and healthcare, and argued for the need to address society’s moral ills.<sup>43</sup> A bloc member chaired the Committee on Women, Family, and Youth, and it was here that Women of Russia was able to make its most significant contribution. Legislative achievements included creating a program for the support of children and family planning called “Children of Russia,” and the adoption of a new Family Code.<sup>44</sup> Members worked to secure human rights legislation for Russia, along with a bill for the social protection of victims of political repression. They also signed President Yeltsin’s Agreement on Civic Accord.<sup>45</sup>

It is difficult to generalize about women’s voting preferences within the Russian Parliament. Factional loyalty was common, but by no means uniform in every vote. One leader of the Women of Russia faction suggested in an interview that “moral persuasion” often proved effective at maintaining party discipline, particularly during crisis situations.<sup>46</sup> This meant that women who were not members of the Women of Russia bloc could usually be counted on to vote with their own parties. As one member of the Yabloko faction once pointed out, “We include in our list only people with whom we can work constructively.”<sup>47</sup> Since the number of independent women in parliament was negligible, this meant that the Women of Russia constituted the only coordinated female action within the legislature.

While the Women of Russia coalition refused to conclude any formal political alliances, attention to the votes its members cast in parliament reveals a consistent pattern of supporting the same issues as the leftist opposition Agrarian Party of Russia and Communist Party.<sup>48</sup> Considering the origins of the Women of Russia in communist officialdom (the SWC), this pattern of voting is hardly surprising. Conversely, therefore, the parties most at odds with the votes cast by the Women of Russia were the pro-government factions Russia’s Choice and the

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 243.

<sup>42</sup> Moshe Haspel, *The Party’s Just Begun: Party Formation in the Russian Parliament*. Doctoral dissertation, Emory University, 1998, 35.

<sup>43</sup> Valerii N. Krasnov, *Rosii: Partii, Vybory, Vlast’*. (Moscow: Agentstvo Obozrevatel’, 1996), 116.

<sup>44</sup> Nechemias, “Women and Politics,” 18.

<sup>45</sup> Haspel, *The Party’s Just Begun*, 95.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 103.

Party of Russian Unity and Accord.<sup>49</sup> For example, on the 167 votes that arose addressing social policy issues, the Women of Russia voted with the Agrarian Party 93.7 percent of the time, and with the Communists 93.1 percent of the time. By contrast, they voted with Russia's Choice only 49.4 percent, and with the Party of Russian Unity and Accord 41.4 percent.<sup>50</sup> Similar patterns appear for virtually all issues addressed, from security policy to budgetary issues. Hence, though it sought to project the image of moderate centrism, in practice the Women of Russia bloc established a reputation of working against liberal reformism in parliament.

Within the women's movement itself, opinions varied widely concerning the effectiveness of their parliamentary representatives. One study suggests that 52 percent of the women it surveyed had voted for the Women of Russia in 1993. However, by 1997, only 28 percent still believed that the party had done a good job representing women's interests in parliament.<sup>51</sup> Of particular concern was the faction's reluctance to condemn the war in Chechnya and failure to deliver increased social benefits and support to women and their NGOs. Consequently, the Women of Russia failed to clear the 5 percent entry hurdle in the 1995 party-list elections, though it came in fifth from among the 43 parties who fielded candidates. Three members of the faction were elected in single-member district elections, but they were not numerous enough to reconstitute the bloc in parliament.<sup>52</sup> The balance of the 46 women who held seats in the parliament 1996-1999 were divided among various other factions, with the most in the Communist Party (11). Elections to the Federation Council returned only one woman to that body of 178 members.<sup>53</sup> The proportion of women subsequently fell to 10.2 percent in the Duma and 0.6 percent in the Federation Council. The 1999 elections returned only 34 women to the Duma, decreasing the proportion of women to 7.7 percent.

### The Executive Branch

The situation for women in the executive branch of the Russian government has not offered much in the way of solace to those frustrated with electoral politics. The Council of Ministers under Yeltsin in 1991 included 26 men and no women.<sup>54</sup> The situation improved as one moved down the hierarchical ladder, with one 1995 study showing that 44 percent of state bureaucrats to be women. However, according to the same study, women comprised only 3.9 percent of those in "responsible government posts." Organizationally, the one state ministry that showed an active interest in women's affairs, the Ministry of Social Protection, was eventually abolished, with its programs becoming absorbed by the Ministry of Labor. Following the 1996 presidential election, only one woman served on the Council of Ministers – Tatiana Dimitrieva, the minister of health. Of 152 Deputy ministers, only two were female.<sup>55</sup> That year the newspaper *Nezavisimaia Gazeta* published a ranking of the nation's top 100 political figures. The only women that made the list was Yeltsin's daughter and chief advisor, Tatiana Dyachenko.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 103, 30.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>51</sup> Myra Marx Ferree and Barbara Risman, *Women's Movements, Feminism, and Women's Political Activism in Russia* (Washington: The National Council for Eurasian and East European Research, 1997), 9.

<sup>52</sup> Nechemias, "Women and Politics," 19-20.

<sup>53</sup> Interparliamentary Union website, "Women in National Parliaments." <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

<sup>54</sup> Nechemias, "Women and Politics," 14.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 21.



In response to the widespread indignation among women toward this state of affairs, President Yeltsin issued a decree in June 1996 entitled “On Increasing the Rule of Women in the System of Federal Bodies of State Powers...” He invited women’s organizations to send representatives to meet with him on 21 July 1996 in order to discuss possible female appointees to administrative posts. Then, in 1997 Yeltsin nominated Natalia Dementeva as minister of culture, Natalia Fonareva as head of the State Monopoly Committee, and Viktoriia Mitina as the Kremlin’s deputy chief of administration. The following year, in 1998, Tatyana Nesterenko became the head of the Federal Treasury.<sup>57</sup> Yeltsin indeed appeared to have taken seriously the goal of promoting more women into the top levels of government. What remains to be seen is whether his likely successor, Vladimir Putin, shares this objective. Early indications have not been promising. Among Putin’s first steps as acting president following Yeltsin’s December 31 retirement was to remove Tatiana Diachenko from her post as presidential advisor, leaving no women in ministerial-level positions.

### **The Judicial Branch**

Advancement for Russian women in the judicial sector, like that in the executive branch, has been improving, albeit glacially. A study conducted after the 1993 elections found that women were well represented in district and city courts, constituting 40 percent of the College of Barristers, 50 percent of all chairpersons, and 95 percent of all notaries. However, once again, at the higher rungs of the hierarchical ladder, these percentages dropped off precipitously. For example women made up only 16 percent of Supreme Court chairpersons, and there was only one woman on the Constitutional Court, the nation’s highest judicial body.<sup>58</sup> By 1997 President Yeltsin had appointed two more women to the Constitutional Court.<sup>59</sup> These have been small steps, consistent with Yeltsin’s 1996 decree on appointing more women to administrative positions. However, as in the executive branch, it remains unclear whether the momentum in the judiciary sphere will outlive the Yeltsin presidency.

### ***Civil Society in the Soviet Period***

Feminism began to emerge at the grassroots in Russia during the 1970s through organizations like the Leningrad “Maria Club.” However, its critical assessments of Soviet gender relations encountered heavy repression from State authorities, who treated feminist activism with the same harsh sentences leveled against all internal dissent at the height of the Brezhnev era.<sup>60</sup> This forced the feminist movement underground until a change in the Soviet political climate occurred under Gorbachev in the late 1980s. Cautiously at first, small groups began gathering in Moscow and Leningrad as “consciousness-raising clubs” for women. As the State economy started to move away from strict central planning, these nascent organizations sought to coordinate assistance to women and families coping with the staggering rise in female unemployment and decline of State welfare services.

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>58</sup> Konstantinova, “Women’s Political Coalitions,” 243-244.

<sup>59</sup> Nechemias, “Women and Politics in Post-Soviet Russia,” 20.

<sup>60</sup> Konstantinova, “Women’s Political Coalitions in Russia,” 241.

When, in October 1990, it became legal to register “informal” associations with the Soviet Government, the Free Association of Feminist Organizations (SAFO) became the nation’s first officially recognized independent women’s network. Later renamed the Feminist Alternative (FALTA), this group set up seminars to address women’s issues, published its own journal called *FemInf*, and sponsored the First Independent Women’s Forum, held in Dubna in March 1991. SAFO/FALTA stressed the importance of liberating the women’s movement from State control, from the purview of the Communist Party, from men in general, and even from ties to the official Soviet Women’s Committee. Conferences were seen as places to build a network of women’s groups all over the country. When registration procedures were streamlined after 1991, this network expanded rapidly. By 1994 it included more than 300 organizations throughout Russia. These included a broad range of attitudes toward gender issues, from the assertively feminist Independent Women’s Forum, to the less radical Women’s League.<sup>61</sup>

### *Civil Society since the Transition*

The hundreds of women’s groups that had begun to appear at the grassroots in the late Gorbachev era have continued to build Russian civil society throughout the transition. Common to all has been the conviction that women are less recognized than men in virtually every sector of life, and that this has had more to do with society’s organization than with women’s preferences. At the same time, most have tended to express themselves in the language of justice, equality, rights, and dignity, rather than in the traditional slogans of Western feminism. For many, the term “feminism” carries a distinctly negative connotation.<sup>62</sup> Consequently, the women’s movement, and its constituent NGOs, have tended to divide along two lines.

The first approach, created largely by “veterans” of the Soviet-era women’s councils, tends to identify more with “pragmatic” issues, such as finding housing, consumer goods, and social services for women and families suffering through the economic dislocation of the transition period.<sup>63</sup> This type of group is especially prevalent in provincial areas, owing to the higher impoverishment of these areas over the last decade. Some have provided job training programs by working together with the local branches of the federal employment services. They teach embroidery, handicrafts, sewing, accounting, governess training, and a wide range of business skills. One such organization, Conversion and Women, has been working to assist women working in defense industry research institutes to find work after widespread layoffs.<sup>64</sup>

Other examples range from general associations, the Women’s Initiative Club, *Dzhenklub*, and the Association of Women Entrepreneurs, to self-selecting groups like Women in Law Enforcement, Women with a University Education, the Association of Women Journalists, the Association of Women Theater and Film Directors, and the Moscow Organization of Lesbian Literature and Art. Single mothers, mothers of large families, and mothers of disabled children have formed a number of mutual aid societies throughout Russia. Meanwhile, charitable organizations such as the International Association of Russian Women-Mothers raise money for sick children all over the world. Russian mothers are also responsible for creating one of the

<sup>61</sup> Sperling, *Engendering Transition*, 43.

<sup>62</sup> Ferree and Risman, “Women’s Movements,” 5.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>64</sup> Sperling, *Engendering Transition*, 50-51.

nation's most influential and best-known NGOs, the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers, an organization dedicated to promoting human rights in the Russian Army, helping men to leave the army, and arranging for some to register for alternative service.<sup>65</sup> Last, but by no means least, crisis centers have opened in every major Russian city to provide counseling and support for victims of rape and domestic violence.<sup>66</sup>

The second type of women's organization has tended to focus on promoting liberal feminism and women's empowerment rather than addressing the problems of everyday life. In general, these organizations have been centered in Moscow, "where the economic situation, though verging on the dreadful for women, was 'healthy' enough to merit organizations devoted to consciousness-raising and other non-material pursuits . . . and advocacy groups fighting for women's and children's economic rights."<sup>67</sup> These associations have organized themselves along a number of national networks. The first of these was the Independent Women's Forum (IWF), a network with a reputation for radical feminism founded in the early 1990s in an effort to liberate the women's movement from State supervision. Later, the more moderate Women's League emerged out of a 1992 Moscow women's conference. In 1994, a joint US-NIS Consortium was established with Western funding and leadership that managed to bring the IWF and the Women's League together into a partnership.

By 1995 all of these groups shared the overall goal of improving women's status in Russia through a struggle against discrimination. All remained independent of State control, while working hard to lobby politicians on issues of discrimination, equality, and social justice. Their hundreds of affiliated groups ranged in size from a small handful to thousands of members.<sup>68</sup> They included explicitly political organizations such as the hard-line Congress of Soviet Women, working to reestablish the USSR in defense of women's rights, and the Women for Social Democracy, a group dedicated to involving more women in political decision-making.<sup>69</sup> However, there were also a few less-partisan NGOs lobbying on behalf of women's issues, including Equality and Peace, the Moscow Center for Gender Studies, and the Inform Center of the Independent Women's Forum.<sup>70</sup> Common to virtually all of these groups, regardless of their political leanings, has been a focus on accomplishing strategic objectives rather than on increasing membership. This has prompted a channeling of limited resources through "methods that do not require mass membership and mobilization."<sup>71</sup>

### **NGO Membership and Organization**

The research of American anthropologist Valerie Sperling has focused on the leadership of women's NGOs in Russia today, most of whom tend to be highly trained women with a talent for self-expression. By profession, the largest percentage have been involved in academia, either as researchers or teachers. This comes as no surprise, considering that the intelligentsia has been among the sectors of society worst hit by the economic dislocation of the transition period.

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>68</sup> Sperling, *Engendering Transition*, 44-45.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 49-50.

Consequently, many of its most voluble members have assertively championed the cause of their suffering colleagues and friends.<sup>72</sup> Most of those surveyed by Sperling had at least one child (85 percent), and were married (67 percent). By age, the majority (58 percent) were between 41 and 55 years old, with an average age of 48. Virtually all had at least an undergraduate education, with 41 percent holding advanced degrees.<sup>73</sup> American researchers Myra Ferree and Barbara Risman have suggested that this accounts for a distinct elitism among feminist leaders, many of whom recognize that their thoughts and needs differed noticeably from those of the “woman in the street.”<sup>74</sup>

Information regarding the rank and file members of women’s NGOs in Russia is rather more limited. However, Sperling has been able to determine that roughly 80 percent of those in the 50 organizations she surveyed held at least an undergraduate degree, indicating that educated specialists are those most inclined to become involved in women’s activism. The average age among these women was 41, although those belonging to mothers’ groups tended to be slightly younger.<sup>75</sup> Many testified to belonging to more than one association. For instance, one woman from Moscow, Elena Ershova, told Sperling “I belong to many organizations: Women’s League, as the co-chair, President of the Women’s Center, Geia, member of Women in Global Security (WINGS), and of Women in International Security; Chair of the Russian division of the International Women’s Forum – an organization of women leaders, including Margaret Thatcher, Sandra O’Connor, and others; and a member of Klub F-1.”<sup>76</sup>

Organizationally, with few exceptions, Russia’s woman-run NGOs operate on a volunteer basis. Nearly all are resource-poor, with leaders citing a lack of money and equipment as their main problem. This is one reason that 75 percent of them are interested in wielding some kind of influence over the Russian political system – as politicians are a well-known source of additional resources.<sup>77</sup> As a rule, organizations in provincial cities are more desperate for support than those working in Moscow, as many of the latter receive funding from Western sources.<sup>78</sup> Understandably, therefore, provincial NGOs are more likely than those in Moscow to focus on “practical” issues of overcoming the poverty that has attended the transition from Communism.<sup>79</sup>

### ***Rule of Law***

The Russian Constitution guarantees the rights of the individual and equality of the sexes, “Man and woman shall have equal rights and liberties and equal opportunities for their pursuit” (Article 19).<sup>80</sup> Secondary laws are also written to protect both men and women, although the laws provide women with more generous social benefits. But it is not clear to what extent rule of law has been established in Russia.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>74</sup> Ferree and Risman, “Women’s Movements,” 5.

<sup>75</sup> Sperling, *Engendering Transition*, 69.

<sup>76</sup> Sperling, *Engendering Transition*, 72.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>80</sup> University of Wuerzburg International Constitutional Law website, <http://www.uni-wuerzburg.de/law/rs00000.html>.

What is apparent is the confusion many women feel with respect to the rule of law in Russia. Although the Women of Russia political faction made legal norms a part of its parliamentary platform, many women at the grassroots continue to wonder whether democracy and liberal capitalism promise them sufficient legal protection. Russia's tumultuous transition has fostered considerable uncertainty about what is naturally to be expected in the operation of market capitalism. Women are especially concerned about on-the-job discrimination, which, although officially prohibited, continues to be endemic nationwide.<sup>81</sup>

Nevertheless, most women continue to hope that legal reform, particularly focused on social protection, will provide a better world for the women of Russia. "In starting to reform the state," one woman told Western researchers, "we dreamed of achieving a new level of satisfying our needs... but we see again that the state is not able to do its job. Because the majority of the population is below the poverty line ... the point is to create a basis for the rule of law ... without solving this problem, without constructing a law-abiding state, women's social problems cannot be solved." Questioned as to whether this was an attainable goal in present conditions, however, the same woman responded that "the goal is so big that in the nearest future it cannot be attained ... we should look for and take the first steps in this direction."

### ***Findings***

**Is there differential participation by women and men in the public sphere?** Both during the Soviet period and in the present transition, women have largely been relegated to coordinating affairs at the local level and in the lowest ranks of the Party or State bureaucracy. Their share of seats in the national legislature illustrates this trend quite well. Under Communism, when the Supreme Soviet of the USSR had little decision-making power, women made up a full third of its membership. However, since the creation of the Congress of People's Deputies at the start of the transition, the female share of legislative seats has been steadily declining. Meanwhile, despite considerable public discussion, and even a presidential decree, limited access to the highest levels of the executive and judicial power seems likely to circumscribe women in politics for the foreseeable future.

**How is gender reflected in the development of civil society, especially NGOs?** The picture of women's activism is thus far brighter among the NGO's of Russia's burgeoning civil society than it has been within the walls of government over the last decade. Beginning in the mid-Gorbachev era, and continuing to this day, women have formed hundreds of NGOs, involving many thousands of activists nationwide, to cope with both the daily struggles and the long-term challenges facing women in Russian society. While their programs and strategies have varied, these groups have tended to involve society's most educated and well-trained women, both among their leaders and within their ranks. In large part, this has been due to the particular burden that the intelligentsia has borne over the course of the nation's economic transition. A number of these groups have earned national, and even international, reputations for their work, as witnessed by the remarkable efforts of the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers in Chechnya during the 1994-1995 conflict. Nevertheless, activists continue to lament their relative lack of political weight in Russian society, and have offered a number of strategies for redressing this

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<sup>81</sup> Ferree and Risman, "Women's Movements," 10.

problem. Valentina Konstantinova suggests that future efforts should focus on changing public attitudes toward gender equality by creating positive images of women in the mass media. This would entail a critical overview of the nation's previous policies toward women, not to mention the establishment of closer connections with Russia's top political figures.

**How has the rule of law been institutionalized and what impact is there on gender?**

Many of Russia's laws treat men and women equally, but rule of law has not been firmly established as of yet. The area of greatest concern seems to be discrimination in the workplace.

***Opportunities for Future Research***

**More information about the composition of local governments is needed.**

**More information about the beneficiaries and services provided by NGOs is needed.** This information would improve understanding of the social services available and provide a more complete picture of the spectrum of political activity in Russia.

**More information about the *de facto* exercise of rights is needed.** This would identify opportunities for education or interim measures to improve gender equity in Russian society.

## THE SOCIAL TRANSITION

This section reports findings from major sources regarding the effects of the transition in Russia on social benefits, poverty, pension reform, health, and education and explores these primary questions:

1. With the shredding of the social safety net, how have women versus men fared in access to / support from social programs?
2. Do data show women's poverty rates to be greater than men's?
3. What are the health-related impacts of the transition?
4. What differential impacts has pension reform had on men's and women's access to benefits?
5. What are salient changes in the state-funded education system (secondary and higher) since 1989/91?

The situation of the poor in Russia has worsened considerably since the start of the post-Communist transition. More people are poor, and those who are poor are worse off than ever. In large part, the deepening poverty can be attributed to wage nonpayment and a decline in the value of wages and social benefits. Because of the loss in value, wages and benefits such as pensions are no longer enough to keep a family out of poverty. The growth in poverty has affected more women than men, primarily because of two factors: two-thirds of old-age pensioners are women, and two-thirds of the unemployed are women.

### *The Social Safety Net*

Russia's current social safety net dates back nearly 100 years and includes provisions instituted under a variety of socioeconomic systems. Its work injury benefits were first established in 1903, more than a decade before the Bolshevik Revolution. Sickness and maternity benefits also came into force under the last tsar in 1912. Other programs date from the 1920s and the early days of Communist rule: pensions were established in 1922, and unemployment in 1921.<sup>82</sup> Family allowances were added in 1944.

While benefit programs in Russia have been maintained during the transition, benefit levels have shrunk, and government expenditures for social assistance have diminished.<sup>83</sup> Consequently, social benefits and their relation to poverty are complicated. The decline in the value of benefits has contributed to an increase in poverty, especially among single pensioners and the unemployed. However, the World Bank credits the creation of universal family allowances in 1991 with preventing further poverty.<sup>84</sup> Until that year, family allowances were means-tested and paid only to families with incomes less than 75 rubles a month and until children were 12

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<sup>82</sup> U.S. Social Security Administration. *Social Security Programs Throughout the World – 1999, Russia*.

<sup>83</sup> Jeni Klugman, ed., *Poverty in Russia: Public Policy and Private Responses* (Washington: The World Bank, 1997), 8.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

years of age. Under the new law, allowances are paid to all families with young children, regardless of income.

This is not to suggest that all differentiation of benefits has ended. Please see Table 12.14 for a description of Russia's social benefit system and the gender differentiation in benefits. As is evident in the table, gender differentiation exists in five of nine programs.

Gradually, though, gender differentiation has begun to give way in some corners of Russia's social sector. Unlike most of the other former Communist countries, Russia equalized benefits for men and women in two programs typically paid only to women. While maternity benefits are paid only to women for 10 to 12 weeks before and 10 to 16 weeks after giving birth, benefits equal to 200 percent of the minimum wage are paid to women *and men* on parental leave to care for children up to 18 months old. Similarly, family allowance supplements are paid to children of single-mothers, or children of *any* parent evading child support.<sup>85</sup>

### ***Poverty and Gender***

#### **Overall Poverty and Causes**

Poverty – though not acknowledged – did exist in Russia under the Soviet regime. The post-Communist transition has only exacerbated this hidden poverty. In January 1992, the poverty rate was 24 percent – three times its average level in 1991.<sup>86</sup> It increased to 34.3 percent in July 1993, but by December 1995 had fallen back to 20 percent.<sup>87</sup> The primary cause of the increase in poverty, according to the World Bank, was the decline in real terms of wages and pensions. By 1996, the average wage was 37 percent of its 1991 value. The average pension was worth 49 percent of its 1991 value.<sup>88</sup>

A survey commissioned by the U.S. Information Agency (USIA) provides additional insight into this problem. Only half of Russian adults were employed at the time of the survey in the fall of 1998, and only 25 percent of those who were working were paid regularly.<sup>89</sup> Pensioners, rural residents, and the less educated have been the most affected by wage arrears and nonpayment, though there appears to be no difference between men and women.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>85</sup> U.S. Social Security Administration, *Social Security Programs*.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>89</sup> USIA, "Poverty in Russia: Just How Bad is It?" *Opinion Analysis*, M-4-99, 1.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.



**Table 12.14. Social Safety Net Program Eligibility and Benefits in Russia**

Program	Value		Eligibility	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
<b>Universal Benefits</b>				
Family Allowances	200% of minimum wage for each child under 18 months. 70% of minimum wage for each child 18 months to 16 years (or until completion of school). Birth grant = 5 times minimum wage. Funeral grant = 5 times minimum wage. <i>Supplemental allowance to single mothers and children of parents evading support.</i>	200% of minimum wage for each child under 18 months. 70% of minimum wage for each child 18 months to 16 years (or until completion of school). Birth grant = 5 times minimum wage. Funeral grant = 5 times minimum wage.	All children under age 16 (or until completion of school). <i>Supplement for single mothers and children of parents evading support.</i>	All children under age 16 (or until completion of school). <i>Supplement for single mothers and children of parents evading support.</i>
Health Benefits	Universal medical care, plus cash benefits for workers of 60-100% of earnings.	Same.	Universal for medical care. Employment required for cash benefits.	Same.
<b>Social Insurance</b>				
Maternity	<i>100% of earnings payable for 10-12 weeks before and 10-16 weeks after confinement.</i> 200% of minimum wage paid to employees on parental leave to care for children under 18 months.	200% of minimum wage paid to employees on parental leave to care for children under 18 months.	Employed and non-working citizens (students and the unemployed).	Same.

Program	Value		Eligibility	
	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>
Pension, Old-age	<i>55% of average wage, plus 1% for each year more than 20. Maximum and minimum amounts apply.</i>	55% of average wage, plus 1% for each year more than 25. Maximum and minimum amounts apply.	<i>Age 55 and 20 years of work. Requirements reduced for mothers of 5 or more children or disabled children. Requirements reduced for arduous or hazardous work.</i>	Age 60 and 25 years of work. Requirements reduced for arduous or hazardous work.
Pension, Disability	75% of wage base plus constant attendance supplement. Social pension also paid.	Same.	Disability from full to partial plus 1-15 years covered employment.	Same.
Pension, Survivorship	30% of wage base. Full orphans receive 100% of minimum old-age pension.	Same.	1- 15 years covered employment	Same.
Old-age Social Assistance Allowance	2/3 of minimum old-age pension	Same.	<i>Disabled or age 60 and not eligible for employment-related pension.</i>	Disabled or age 65 and not eligible for employment-related pension.
Unemployment	<i>45-75% of average monthly wage for 12 months, plus an additional 2 weeks of benefits for every year worked over 20 (to a total of 24 months). Early pension to unemployed older workers aged 53-54.</i>	45-75% of average monthly wage for 12 months, plus an additional 2 weeks of benefits for every year worked over 25 (to a total of 24 months). Early pension to unemployed older workers aged 58-59.	<i>Age 16-54. Registered at employment office and employed for at least 12 weeks in last 26 months. Able and willing to work.</i>	Age 16-59. Registered at employment office and employed for at least 12 weeks in last 26 months. Able and willing to work.
Work Injury	Universal medical care, plus cash benefits of 100% of wages.	Same.	Employed persons, self-employed, farmers, and students.	Same.

*Notes:* The data in this table were current as of January 1, 1999 (the latest version of the Social Security Administration's report). Italicized text indicates a gender difference in eligibility or benefits.

*Source:* U.S. Social Security Administration, *Social Security Programs Throughout the World – 1999*, 295-297.

### Poverty Rates by Gender and Age

Data on poverty, gender, and age from the World Bank report, *Poverty Correlates and Indicator-Based Targeting in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union* by Christiaan Grootaert and Jeanine Braithwaite, are presented in Tables 12.15 and 12.16. Data in Table 12.15 show that single males have higher rates of poverty than single females or male- and female-headed households.<sup>91</sup> The data also indicate that female-headed households are poorer than male-headed households.

**Table 12.15. Poverty Rates by Gender**

Male, Head of Household	Male, Single	Female Head of Household	Female, Single	Total
37.8	52.5	46.0	47.8	39.4

Source: Christiaan Grootaert and Jeanine Braithwaite, *Poverty Correlates and Indicator-Based Targeting in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*, Policy Research Working Paper 1942 (Washington: World Bank, 1998), 27, 37.

Table 12.16 shows that young children and the elderly 65 and older have higher poverty rates than average. The lowest poverty rates occur in age groups 45-54 and 35-44, followed by youth ages 15-24. This is illustrated in Figure 12.1.

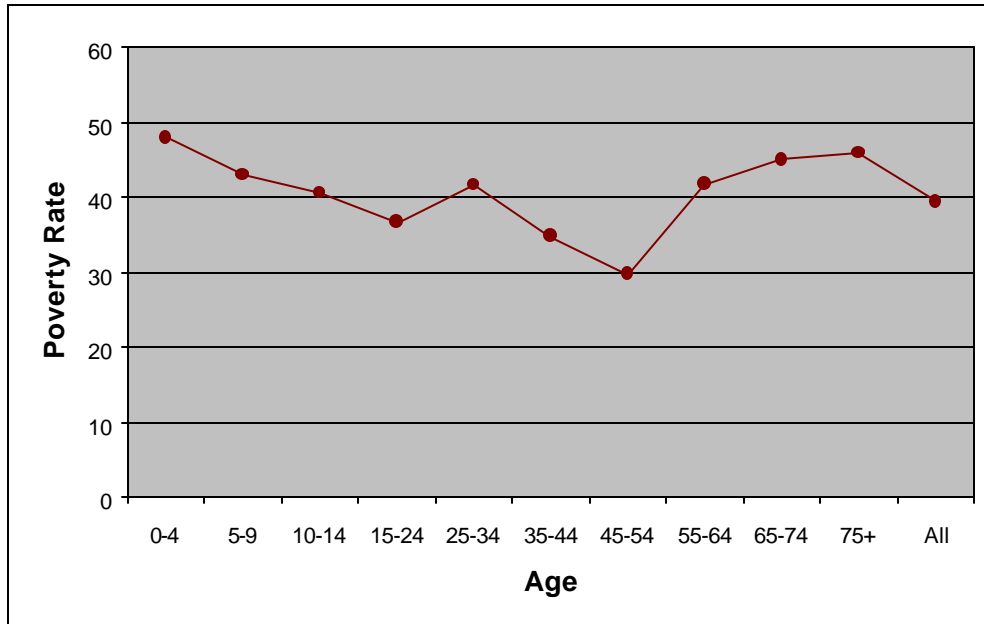
**Table 12.16. Poverty and Age,  
Percent of Population under the Poverty Line**

Age	
0-4	47.9
5-9	42.9
10-14	40.5
15-24	36.6
25-34	41.6
35-44	34.7
45-54	29.7
55-64	41.7
65-74	45.0
75+	45.9
<b>Overall Rate</b>	<b>39.4</b>

Source: Christiaan Grootaert and Jeanine Braithwaite, *Poverty Correlates and Indicator-Based Targeting in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union* (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1998), 38.

<sup>91</sup> Single males do not have the highest rates of poverty overall, however. Families with two adults and three or more children have a 64.2 percent poverty rate. Families with three or more adults and three or more children have a poverty rate of 60.4 percent. See Christiaan Grootaert and Jeanine Braithwaite, *Poverty Correlates and Indicator-Based Targeting in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*, Policy Research Working Paper 1942 (Washington: World Bank, 1998), 27.

Figure 12.1. Poverty and Age



Source: Christiaan Grootaert and Jeanine Braithwaite, *Poverty Correlates and Indicator-Based Targeting in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union* (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1998), 38.

In a book recently published by the World Bank, *Poverty in Russia: Public Policy and Private Responses*, Jeanine Braithwaite analyzes the old and new poor in Russia. Braithwaite concludes that poverty before the transition was gender-differentiated. The largest group of the poor was comprised of families with children under age 18, especially families with more than three children, and single mothers with low-paying jobs. The second largest group was single pensioners. The poorest of the poor were elderly women and young families in which the mother was on maternity leave.<sup>92</sup>

*“Being female was traditionally correlated with poverty in Russia, and this remains the case during the transition.”* Jeni Klugman, *Poverty in Russia*.

Braithwaite’s analysis of the new poor shows that old age is less of a risk factor, whereas household size continues to be correlated with poverty. Women continue to figure significantly in the ranks of the poor. Two-thirds of pensioners in Russia are women, and two-thirds of the registered unemployed were women in 1992 and 1993.<sup>93</sup> Women also face wage and occupation discrimination that contributes to their higher rates of poverty. The wages paid in traditionally female sectors, such as health, education, arts and culture, and light industry, are less than traditionally male sectors.<sup>94</sup> While old age is less of a risk factor for the new poor (largely because one in four pensioners has a job), single, elderly women continue to be likely to be

<sup>92</sup> Klugman, *Poverty in Russia*, 38.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

poor.<sup>95</sup> Single parent, female-headed households are also significantly more likely than other households with children to be poor.<sup>96</sup>

Braithwaite does not mention the case of single males, and her analysis in *Poverty in Russia* seems to contradict at least some of her findings in *Poverty Correlates*.

In addition to gender differentiation, regional differences in poverty abound, with prices, incomes, and poverty rates varying across Russia's 89 oblasts. Regional inequalities can be attributed to differences in prices, incomes, and social benefits. Local governments are now responsible for financing social assistance, so poorer oblasts are less able to support their struggling citizens.<sup>97</sup>

Large families are also poorer. Box 12.4 discusses some of the dilemmas for large families.

#### **Box 12.4. Large Families**

“The increased rate of poverty has fallen heavily on families with children: 37 percent of families with two children, 50 percent of families with three children, and 72 percent of families with four or more children were below the international poverty standard of US \$4/day.” UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 10.

“Most panelists now favor a family with one or, at most, two children. At the same time, however, they express great respect for large families. ‘I’d like to have ten children. I’m a woman, and this is the woman’s purpose in life, doesn’t every woman want to have a baby every time? Deep in her heart, she does. But her mind tells her that the child would have to be fed, supported, educated.’ (Woman feminist activist, age 42, Moscow).” USIA, Office of Research and Media Reaction, “Russian Families in Transition, Eight Focus Groups in Four Cities,” July 1998, 22.

#### ***Pension Reform***

Russia has been reforming its pension system since 1991. In 1992, legislation created voluntary private pension funds (Pillar 3 – for a discussion of pension terms, please see Chapter 5), and about 300 private pension plans were licensed in 1997.<sup>98</sup> Pension arrears of more than \$5 million were paid in 1997.<sup>99</sup>

Further pension reform, financed by a 1997 World Bank social protection adjustment loan, will include the creation of Pillar 2 mandatory private pension funds.<sup>100</sup> Reform of the existing pay-as-you-go first pillar includes gradually raising the minimum contribution period to 30 years and broadening the tax base to include some non-wage income currently not taxed.<sup>101</sup>

The effects on gender of creating mandatory private pension funds are discussed in Chapter 5.

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>98</sup> Barents Group, LLC, “USAID Guidebook to Pension Reform,” May 1999

([http://www.info.usaid.gov/economic\\_growth/egad/em/segir/segir\\_reports/pension\\_guide/RUSSIA2.pdf](http://www.info.usaid.gov/economic_growth/egad/em/segir/segir_reports/pension_guide/RUSSIA2.pdf)).

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Marco Cangiano, Carlo Cottarelli, and Luis Cubeddu, *Pension Developments and Reforms in Transition Economies*, IMF Working Paper WP/98/151 (Washington, DC: the International Monetary Fund, 1998), 24.

### ***Health Status and the Impact of the Transition***

Health and access to health care have decreased since the transition. Table 12.17 presents data on some basic indicators of health in Russia, and these data show that

- Life expectancy decreased for both men and women.
- The incidence of sexually transmitted diseases increased.
- The abortion rate decreased.
- Data on maternal mortality are mixed.

Below we discuss these and other findings in more detail.

#### **Declining Life Expectancy**

Life expectancy for both sexes has declined since 1989. At its lowest point in 1994 male life expectancy had dropped 6.6 years from the 1989 level and for females it had dropped 3.3 years. The major causes of death for males (in descending order) are ischemic heart disease, cancer and cerebrovascular disease. Lung cancer accounted for a third of all male cancer deaths in the early 1990s. For females, the leading causes were ischemic heart disease, cerebrovascular disease and cancer. Lung cancer deaths were 7.5 percent of all female cancer deaths.<sup>102</sup>

#### **Lifestyle-Related Mortality**

Tobacco is a major cause of mortality, responsible for 18 percent of all deaths in 1995, 86 percent of them among males. In 1995 tobacco was estimated to have caused almost a third of all male deaths (75 percent of them before the age of 70 years) and about 5 percent of all female deaths.<sup>103</sup> For teenagers (not sex-disaggregated) prevalence increased from 16.8 percent in 1992 to a high of 23.9 percent in 1995, and then began to decline, to 15.2 percent in 1998, a 36 percent drop and the lowest level since the survey began in 1992.<sup>104</sup> No explanation is available for this decline.

High levels of alcohol consumption have also been an area of concern in Russia. Although the alcohol-related mortality rate is much higher for men than for women in Russia, rates for both genders increased similarly over the 1987-94 period, fivefold for men aged 40-44 and sixfold for women.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>102</sup>World Health Organization, Tobacco or Health Programme, Tobacco or Health: A Global Status Report, Country Profiles by Region, 1997, <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/who/whofirst.htm>

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Namvar Zohoori, *Monitoring Health Conditions in the Russian Federation*, the Russia Longitudinal Monitoring Survey 1992-98, no date, 4.

<sup>105</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 70.

**Table 12.17. Demographic and Health Indicators for Russia<sup>106</sup>**

Maternal Mortality (per 100,000 live births) <sup>107</sup>	<b>1990</b>		<b>1997</b>	
	47.4		50.2	
Infant Mortality (per 1000 live births), 1997 <sup>108</sup>	20			
Abortion Rate (per 100 live births) <sup>109</sup>	<b>1990</b>		<b>1997</b>	
	206.3		198.3	
Contraceptive Prevalence, 1995 <sup>110</sup>	63%			
Total Fertility Rate (births per woman), 1997 <sup>111</sup>	1.3			
STD Incidence (new cases of syphilis/gonorrhea per 100,000 population), 1997 <sup>112</sup>	<b>1990</b>		<b>1997</b>	
	133		390	
Life Expectancy at Birth <sup>113</sup>	<b>Male</b>		<b>Female</b>	
	<b>1990</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1997</b>
	63.8	60.9	74.3	72.8
% Population 65 & older, 1997 <sup>114</sup>	12.2			

Sources: As indicated in the footnotes.

Poor nutrition is also a problem. Recent increases in underweight, which increased by 44 percent between 1992 and 1996 among the under-30 age group, are of concern. Undernutrition among women in this age group affects not only their own health, but also that of children born during women's prime reproductive years. Women are particularly susceptible to anemia, and by 1997 the percentage of live births complicated by anemia had increased to 25 percent, from 5 percent in 1989. A 1993 survey in three Russian cities indicated that 77 percent of women, 70

<sup>106</sup> General note on sources: The major sources used for purposes of cross-country comparisons are from the MONEE and UNDP reports cited below, because they have data for most countries. MONEE is preferred for maternal mortality data because it is the most up-to-date comparable source of data. For infant mortality, UNDP is the preferred source for two reasons: a) UNDP data concords most closely with DHS data, for the three countries for which DHS surveys have been done; and b) data for six of the study countries cited in the MONEE database are based on Soviet rather than WHO definitions of infant death, impairing comparability. In some cases MONEE figures are significantly different (usually lower) than UNDP figures. Only the MONEE database provides reasonably complete and comparable data on abortion rates, STD incidence and life expectancy by sex. UNDP is the preferred source for total fertility rates because it concords most closely with DHS data in the cases in which it is available. Contraceptive prevalence sources identified are: Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), reproductive health surveys (RHS), UNDP Human Development Report (UNDP), Population Reference Bureau (PRB), Russia Longitudinal Monitoring Survey (RLMS). The year is specified when known.

<sup>107</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition, Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 119.

<sup>108</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, 169.

<sup>109</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition, Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 118.

<sup>110</sup> Russia Longitudinal Monitoring Survey.

<sup>111</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, 198.

<sup>112</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition, Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 131.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 123-124.

<sup>114</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, 198.

percent of households and 32 percent of children were classified as hungry, which suggests that women may be less well fed than children or other household members.<sup>115</sup>

### Reproductive Health

Reproductive health in Russia stands among the nation's most pressing concerns, notwithstanding some positive indications over the last decade (Box 12.5). Maternal mortality estimates vary. The ratios reported in the MONEE database may be underestimated. WHO and UNICEF estimate a higher ratio in 1995 (75 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births), the same level as in 1990. In both cases, the trend is the same: no significant change in maternal mortality during the transition period which has remained at a level well above the WHO target for Europe of 15. The most important causes of maternal death (based on 1993 data) were abortion (mainly illegal), 29 percent; hemorrhage, 14 percent; and hypertensive diseases of pregnancy (toxemia), 12 percent.<sup>116</sup>

#### Box 12.5. Reproductive and Maternal Health

“Young women voice fears that they might give birth to sick or abnormal children because of the hazardous environment, radiation, hereditary alcoholism, or the use of hormone contraceptives. Such fears were most pronounced in Nizhny Novgorod and Yekatrinnburg, former “closed” cities of the Soviet military-industrial complex.

‘I can’t swear 100 per cent to the figure, but [I believe] only 4 percent of the children here are absolutely healthy to the age of 14.’ (Woman police officer, age 39, St. Petersburg)

‘We have practically no healthy women. Out of ten, maybe one or two are healthy.’ (Woman gynecologist/homeopathic physician, age 45, Nizhny Novgorod)

‘Whenever a woman comes to us [maternity welfare center], you talk to her and it turns out that every pregnant woman suffers from a certain pathology.’ (Woman gynecologist, age 50, St. Petersburg).”

USIA, Office of Research and Media Reaction, “Russian Families in Transition, Eight Focus Groups in Four Cities,” July 1998, 14.

### Abortion

The abortion rate has decreased somewhat over the transition period.<sup>117</sup> However, as these figures suggest, there are about 2 abortions for every live birth for the country as a whole. An alternate source, the 1992-95 Russia Longitudinal Monitoring Survey (RLMS), suggests that these official estimates may be overestimated. The RLMS estimated a rate of 47 per 1000 women aged 15-49 for 1995, about half the official rate reported for 1992.

In any case, abortion rates remain undeniably high, indicating that abortion remains a primary means of fertility regulation and a considerable health risk. Thirty-two percent of abortions occur in the second trimester, when the risks of maternal mortality or morbidity are considerably

<sup>115</sup> Zohoori, *Monitoring Health Conditions*, 68.

<sup>116</sup> Patricia Stephenson, F. Donay, O. Frolova, T. Melnick, and C. Worzala, *Improving Women's Health Services in the Russian Federation: Results of a Pilot Project*, (Washington, DC: the World Bank, no date, ca. 1996), 3.

<sup>117</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 118.



greater than in first-trimester procedures.<sup>118</sup> An estimated 70 to 90 percent of abortions in Russia that lead to maternal death are performed illegally.<sup>119</sup>

### **Contraception**

This reliance on abortion notwithstanding, contraceptive prevalence is quite high in Russia. The IUD was the method used by half of all contraceptive users. Another quarter used traditional methods (douche, rhythm, withdrawal), and 8.4 percent used the pill. The remainder used condoms and other modern methods.<sup>120</sup>

### **Fertility**

Fertility has been decreasing steadily since before the transition,<sup>121</sup> and the crude birth rate (live births per 1000 population) is one of the lowest in the region.<sup>122</sup> Fertility begins early but also ends early; more than 40 percent of births occur between the ages of 20 and 24. Nonetheless, the percentages of women who give birth before age 18 is low, five to seven percent, according to 1996 survey data, although teen births may be increasing, a trend which should be monitored because of its health implications for both mothers and children.<sup>123</sup>

### **Infant Mortality**

Like maternal mortality, infant mortality is at about the same level as before the transition, according to MONEE data, which permit year-to-year comparison.<sup>124</sup> However, there has been an increase in low-weight births (births under 2500 grams as percent of total live births) between 1990 and 1997, from 5.6 percent to 6.2 percent, which could reflect deterioration in maternal health. The percentage of births complicated by various conditions has risen dramatically over the transition period, climbing from 23 percent of births in 1989 to about 70 percent in 1997, another indicator of worsening maternal health.<sup>125</sup>

### **Sexually Transmitted Diseases**

The incidence of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV, has risen rapidly in Russia since the start of the transition and had reached 276.1 newly registered cases per 100,000 population by 1997. Adolescent girls are at greater risk than their male peers; about 1.3 percent of girls aged 18-19 were registered as new cases of syphilis in Russia in 1997.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Stephenson, *Improving Women's Health Services*, 4.

<sup>119</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 64.

<sup>120</sup> Popkin, *Family Planning and Abortion*, 3-4.

<sup>121</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, 198.

<sup>122</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 114.

<sup>123</sup> All-Russian Centre, *1996 Russia Women's Reproductive Health Survey*, 34.

<sup>124</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 119 and UNDP, *1996 Russia Women's Reproductive Health Survey*, 169

<sup>125</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 61.

<sup>126</sup> All-Russian Centre, *1996 Russia Women's Reproductive Health Survey*, 70-72, 131.

Intravenous drug use appears to be behind the surge in the spread of HIV. In Russia, four out of five newly diagnosed infections are among intravenous drug users; adolescents and young adults are the most affected. In 1997 there were 4,399 newly registered cases of HIV infection in Russia, compared with 189 in 1995 and 1,525 in 1996.<sup>127</sup> As of early 1994, about half of all registered HIV cases were under age 15.<sup>128</sup> Registered AIDS cases, however, were still low in 1997, 0.2 cases per 100,000 people.<sup>129</sup>

### **Health Care**

The best information available on prenatal and delivery care is from the 1996 three-site survey, which indicates that only 4 to 6 percent of respondents with recent live births received no prenatal care. About four of every five women initiated prenatal care during the first trimester. About half received care from a physician, with another fifth receiving it from a nurse/midwife or both a physician and nurse/midwife; for the remainder, the source of care was unclear.<sup>130</sup>

### **Health System Issues**

The Russian health care system is strong with regard to equity and access, but as resources have become increasingly scarce, reproductive health care has become increasingly inefficient and unable to provide effective primary care services, particularly health promotion and education. The policy of maintaining separate women's consultation facilities, maternity homes and hospitals for obstetrical and gynecological services, rather than integrating these services within general hospitals and polyclinics, has created a parallel service delivery system that must be maintained with shrinking resources.<sup>131</sup> Because health centers' budgets were determined by the number of hospital beds occupied during the year, medical care focused on curative rather than preventive treatment, including providing abortions rather than contraception.<sup>132</sup> Efforts are now underway to introduce needed changes in the system.

There is also evidence that many individuals have lost access to health services due to increased cost. RLMS data indicate that lack of money is emerging as the main reason for the inability to obtain prescribed medication in both urban and rural areas. Among respondents who were unable to obtain prescribed medications in 1998, 64 percent gave lack of money as the primary reason, a large increase over the 1994 level of 25 percent. The cost of condoms is becoming increasingly prohibitive, with consequent implications for STD and HIV transmission. In 1995, the price of a twelve-unit pack represented nearly one-third of the minimum monthly salary.<sup>133</sup>

### ***Education and Gender***

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 70, 132.

<sup>128</sup> Stephenson, *Improving Women's Health Services*, 5.

<sup>129</sup> UNDP, *1996 Russia Women's Reproductive Health Survey*, 173.

<sup>130</sup> All-Russian Centre, *1996 Russia Women's Reproductive Health Survey*, 67-69.

<sup>131</sup> Stephenson, *Improving Women's Health Services*, 6-7.

<sup>132</sup> All-Russian Centre, *1996 Russia Women's Reproductive Health Survey*, 13.

<sup>133</sup> XI International Conference on AIDS, *The Status and Trends of the Global HIV/AIDS Pandemic: Final Report*, July 1996 from <http://www.fhi.org/en/aids/aidschap/aidspubs/special/statustrends/vanpan.html>.

Russia's experience with education since the transition has been mixed. Enrollment in kindergarten and basic education decreased between 1989 and 1997, while secondary and tertiary enrollments increased. Data on enrollments are presented in Table 12.18.

**Table 12.18. School Enrollments During the Transition, as a Percent of the Relevant Population**

Kindergarten		Primary		Secondary		Tertiary	
1989	1997	1989	1997	1989	1997	1989	1997
69.3	56.0	93.0	90.8	23.6	28.7	16.6	18.7

Source: UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 133-134.

Higher education has faced particular problems as the government provided only 75 percent of budgeted funds between 1995 and 1997 and universities have been expected to find funds to pay some of their own bills.<sup>134</sup> Despite these financial problems, however, students continue to enter higher education. In 1997, 748,000 students enrolled in university, and 565,000 were eligible to attend at no charge. The remainder of the students paid a \$1,000 to \$2,000 annual fee.<sup>135</sup> Sex-disaggregated data on enrollments are available only for primary and tertiary education. These data (presented in Table 12.19) show that girls and boys each made up about half of primary enrollment in 1996 while women made up 56 percent of enrollment in tertiary education.

**Table 12.19. Female School Enrollments in Russia, As a Percent of Total**

Primary		Secondary		Tertiary	
1980	1996	1980	1996	1980	1996
--	49	--	--	56	56

Note: -- indicates data are not available.

Source: World Bank, 1999 World Development Indicators.

Government spending, presented in Table 12.20, may help explain some of these data. Real government education expenditures in 1997 were less than one-third of expenditures in 1990.<sup>136</sup> Those expenditures, however, increased as a percentage of GDP from 3.7 percent in 1990 to 4.2 percent in 1997 as the economy contracted.<sup>137</sup> Lower real expenditures may have led to the closure of kindergartens and preschools, as in other former Soviet countries.

**Table 12.20. Public Expenditures on Education in Russia, as a Percent of GDP**

1990	1994	1997
3.7	4.5	4.2

<sup>134</sup> UNESCO, "Russia: Blues and Reform," *Sources*, No. 104 (September 1998), 5.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 16.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

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Source: UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 135.

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### ***Findings***

**With the shredding of the social safety net, how have women versus men fared in access to / support from social programs?** Social safety net programs have not been shredded in Russia. Instead during the transition, Russia has maintained its universal benefits and social insurance programs although the benefits are poor and untargeted. As shown in Table 12.14, in five of the nine social safety net programs in Russia, women receive preferential treatment in eligibility, benefits, or both. Gender differentiation in social programs, particularly in the pension system, is being reduced, however.

**Do data show women's poverty rates to be greater than men's?** Poverty in Russia is gender-differentiated. However, two studies by the World Bank reached different conclusions about the makeup of the poor in Russia. Female-headed households, according to both studies, are poorer than male-headed households. One study, though, provided data indicating that single males are poorer than single females.

**What are the health-related impacts of the transition?** Gender-differentiated health impacts of the transition include differences in lifestyle-related mortality. For example, tobacco-related deaths affect more men than women. Life expectancy overall has decreased for both men and women. Abortion has decreased, and both maternal and infant mortality have remained about the same. The incidence of sexually transmitted diseases has increased.

**What differential impacts has pension reform had on men's and women's access to benefits?** Pension reform to date has included creation of voluntary private pension funds. Planned reform includes increasing the age of retirement for both men and women and creating mandatory private pension funds. The effects of these changes on gender are similar throughout the E&E region and are discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

**What are salient changes in the state-funded education system (secondary and higher) since 1989/91?** Overall enrollments decreased for kindergarten and primary schools and increased for secondary and tertiary levels. Sex-disaggregated data on enrollments are available for primary and tertiary education: women make up about half of primary enrollment and 56 percent of tertiary enrollment. These data seem to indicate that the decline in overall enrollments for younger students has not had a significant gender dimension. Men have lower tertiary enrollments; however, the enrollment ratio has remained steady over the transition.

### ***Opportunities for Future Research***

Additional research on the following issues would add to our knowledge of the social transition in Russia:

**Future research on poverty in Russia should focus more specifically on gender and attempt to sort out the issue of single males.**

**Pension reform, and the creation of mandatory private pension accounts, should be monitored for its impact on gender.**

The percentages of women who give birth before age 18 is low, five to seven percent, according to 1996 survey data, although **teen births may be increasing**, a trend which should be monitored because of its health implications for both mothers and children.

**The decline in early education enrollments should be also monitored although data do not yet indicate a gender impact of this decline.**

## Chapter 13: Ukraine



### Basic Indicators

For additional information, please see Country Data Table in the Appendix.

<i>Demographics</i>			
Population <sup>1</sup> (1998)	50,245,000; 26,903,000 female (53.5%)		
Rural / Urban <sup>2</sup>	Urban 72%		
Ethnic composition <sup>3</sup>	Ukrainian 73%, Russian 22%, and Jewish 1%, other 4%		
<i>Economic Growth and Development</i>			
GDP per capita (all in 1987\$) <sup>4</sup>	<b>1985</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1997</b>
	\$NA	\$1,165	\$496
GDP per capita (PPP for 1997) <sup>4</sup>	<b>Female</b>		<b>Male</b>
	\$1,691		\$2,763
Registered Unemployment Rate <sup>1</sup>	<b>1992</b>		<b>1997</b>
	0.3%		3.1%
<i>Democracy and Governance</i>			
Women in Parliament <sup>5</sup>	7.8%		
Women in Ministerial Positions	6.7%		
<i>Social Transition</i>			
Life Expectancy by Sex(1999 est.) <sup>3</sup>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Average</b>
	73 years	60 years	66 years
Combined first, second, and third level gross school enrollment ratio (1997) <sup>4</sup>	<b>Female</b>		<b>Male</b>
	80%		74%
Population below poverty line <sup>2</sup>	32%		

Sources: 1) UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*.

2) World Bank Country Data, <http://wbln0018.worldbank.org/eca/eca.nsf>.

3) CIA World Factbook 1999, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>.

4) UNDP Human Development Indicators 1999.

5) Inter Parliamentary Union website, <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>.

- 6) CIA Chiefs of State and Cabinets Members website, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/chiefs/index.html> and Women in Governments website, <http://hjem.get2net.dk/Womeningovernments/>.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### ***Economic Transition***

- Data show that since independence, more women have dropped out of the labor force than men and the ratio of women's participation to men's has decreased from 1.0 to 0.9.
- The gender wage gap remains largely unchanged; women in Ukraine earn approximately 75 percent of what men do, as they did in the Soviet period.
- Official unemployment has increased slowly. Data is unclear whether men or women have been more adversely affected.

### ***Democratic Transition***

- Men and women do not have equal standing in the political sphere in Ukraine. Since independence, though, female politicians have advocated for greater equality of the sexes.
- Although the Constitution guarantees the equality of men and women, considerable legislation must be enacted and implemented before the rule of law is institutionalized. Secondary laws, however, discriminate against women in marriage and against men in divorce.

### ***Social Transition***

- Gender is not a major factor in the composition of poverty.
- Health status is mixed: life expectancy decreased for both men and women, but maternal mortality remained stable, and abortion rates fell. Sexually transmitted diseases – syphilis, gonorrhea, HIV, and AIDS – all affect more men than women.
- Female students continue to make up about half (49 percent) of primary enrollment but 56 percent of secondary enrollment.

## Country Overview

**Introduction:** Ukraine, country located in Eastern Europe, after Russia the second largest on the continent. It is bordered by Belarus on the north, Russia on the east, the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea on the south, Moldova and Romania on the southwest, and Hungary, Slovakia, and Poland on the west; in the far southeast, Ukraine is separated from Russia by the Kerch Strait, which connects the Sea of Azov to the Black Sea. Ukraine has an area of 233,100 square miles (603,700 square kilometres). The capital is Kiev (Kyyiv), located on the Dnieper River in north-central Ukraine. An independent Ukraine emerged only late in the 20th century, after long periods of successive domination by Poland-Lithuania, Russia, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union itself in December 1991, Ukraine gained full independence and changed its official name to Ukraine.

**People:** When Ukraine was part of the Soviet Union, a policy of Russian in-migration and Ukrainian out-migration was in effect, and ethnic Ukrainians' share of the population in Ukraine declined from 77 percent in 1959 to 73 percent in 1991. The 1991 Soviet census also revealed Russians to be the largest minority, at 22 percent. The remaining minorities, in 1991 making up about 5 percent of the population, include Jews, Belarusians, Moldovans, Bulgarians, Poles, Hungarians, and Romanians. The Crimean Tatars, who were forcibly deported to Uzbekistan and other Central Asian republics in 1944, began returning to the Crimea in large numbers in 1989 and now number about 250,000.

**Cultural life:** Ukrainians take pride in their cultural tradition, which is part of a broader Slavic culture but retains a distinctive national flavour. In the countryside, outdoor festivals feature brightly coloured folk costumes, dance, and traditional music. Urban life is enriched by a large number of performing arts facilities and other cultural institutions created during the Soviet era.

**Government:** The highest legislative unit of the Ukrainian government is the unicameral Supreme Council of Ukraine (formerly the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian S.S.R.), the members of which are elected to terms of four years. The Presidium of the Supreme Council, which is elected by the council from among its members, consists of a chairman, two vice-chairmen, a secretary, and 15 members; it acts for the council between sessions. The highest executive office is that of the president, elected by direct popular vote for a five-year term. The president appoints a Cabinet of Ministers, subject to approval by the Supreme Council. The Cabinet, headed by the prime minister, coordinates the day-to-day administration of the government and may introduce legislation to the Supreme Council. The highest court in the judicial system is the Supreme Court of Ukraine, consisting of five judges elected for five-year terms by the Supreme Council. The court's function is to supervise judicial activities; it does not rule on constitutional questions (this is a function of the Presidium).

**Education:** Children must attend school for eight years. About three-quarters of the teachers are women; the student-teacher ratio is low. Since independence, the curriculum has increasingly emphasized Ukrainian history and literature. Private and religious schools also have appeared since 1990. As a whole, great emphasis is placed on general and correspondence schools, as these institutions allow young industrial and agricultural workers to receive an education without interrupting their work. An extensive system of higher education includes the state universities at Kiev, Kharkiv, Odessa, Dnipropetrovsk, Lviv, Chernivtsi, Uzhhorod, and Donetsk. The largest single scientific organization is the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, which governs a host of research institutions and scientific workers.

**Health and Welfare:** Ukraine emerged from the Soviet period with an extensive infrastructure of health care facilities, including hospitals, workplace- and school-based medical centres, rest homes, and women's clinics. These facilities have deteriorated badly, however, and, combined with a lack of medicine and equipment, there has been a significant decline in the quality of health care. Diseases such as diphtheria and cholera have reappeared in Ukraine; life expectancy declined during the early 1990s.

From *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (<http://www.brittanica.com>)



## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter explores the economic, democratic, and social transitions in Ukraine. Each section seeks to answer a set of research questions which are set out at the beginning of the sections. In addition to subsections addressing each of the research questions, each section includes a subsection on findings and opportunities for future research.

## THE ECONOMIC TRANSITION

This section seeks to answer the following questions as they relate to Ukraine:

1. Have there been changes in labor force participation by women and men, pre-1989 and current, by sector?
2. Is there evidence for wage gap trends and wage differentials?
3. Has unemployment increased, whether official or hidden, and is there a gender dimension to unemployment?
4. How has the growth of the informal economy reflected gender differentiation?
5. What is the impact of privatization of state enterprises on women's and men's employment?
6. What role do women play in new managerial positions or business formation in the growing private sector?

In the subsections below we discuss GDP, labor force participation, unemployment, the informal economy, and privatization and present data on each of these issues as they relate to gender. Our findings on the impact of the economic transition on gender are presented in the concluding subsection.

### *Contextual Information about the Economy*

As the Soviet system entered into its final crises of the late 1980s, the leader of the Ukrainian SSR, Vladimir Shcherbitski, was determined to stay the course of Ukraine's Russification and centrally planned economy. While paying lip service to the notion of reform, Shcherbitski avoided any deep restructuring, at one point claiming that "...[the] socialist society and its planned economy possess enormous advantages and opportunities that are far from fully utilized."<sup>1</sup>

By the end of the Soviet era such pronouncements and the beginnings of Ukraine's economic free fall left many Ukrainians skeptical of the both the local Ukrainian and national all-Union leadership's claims that Ukraine's Soviet experience was an economic success. In 1990, Ukraine's GNP of prices in 1990 declined by 2.4 percent which would accelerate to 7.4 percent by 1991. The GDP continued to fall in the first quarter of 1992 by 20 percent.<sup>2</sup> In surveys conducted in December 1990, only 1 percent of Ukrainians rated their country's current economic situation as "favorable," with 35 percent rating it "unfavorable," and a majority (57 percent) judging the situation as "critical."<sup>3</sup>

It was this economic free fall brought about by a leadership unwilling to engage in reform, rather than an upsurge in Ukrainian nationalism, that set the stage for Ukraine's secession from the Soviet Union.<sup>4</sup> In

<sup>1</sup> Anders Aslund, *Gorbachev's Struggle for Economic Reform* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), 56.

<sup>2</sup> Roman Frydman, Andrzej Rapaczynski, John S. Earle, et al., *The Privatization Process in Russia, Ukraine and the Baltic States* (Budapest: Central European Press, 1993), 87.

<sup>3</sup> Vladimir Kosmarskii, "Public Attitudes to the Transition," in Anders Aslund, ed., *The Post-Soviet Economy: Soviet and Western Perspectives* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 27.

<sup>4</sup> Martha Bohachevsky-Chomiak, "Practical Concerns and Political Protest in Post-Soviet Ukraine," in *Transition: Events and Issues in the Former Soviet Union and East-Central and Southeastern Europe*, vol. 1, no.16 (September 8, 1995), 12-13.

spite of enduring decades of officially sponsored Russification, ethnic tensions between Russians and Ukrainians are relatively rare.<sup>5</sup> Even pro-independence nationalists in Ukraine are willing to concede a privileged place for the Russian language.<sup>6</sup>

While there is some discrepancy in wage arrears in some industries between ethnic Russian and Ukrainian women,<sup>7</sup> there is little evidence of nationalist tensions among Ukrainians. Ukraine has made a successful transition to an independent state, but in order to address the various problems the country faced in establishing political independence, its leadership proved unwilling to tackle the country's pressing economic problems.

Of all the regions of the former Soviet Union that declared their independence in 1991, few looked to have a more promising future than Ukraine. Only the Russian Republic produced more goods and services, with the Ukrainian SSR's economy producing about four times the output of the next-ranking republic. Its fertile black soil generated 23 percent of the total Soviet harvest and its diversified heavy industry represented 42 percent of the Soviet Union's industrial output.<sup>8</sup> Ukrainian equipment and raw materials were a staple of industrial and mining sites in the other regions of the former USSR.<sup>9</sup> Ukraine's only significant economic weakness was its high dependence on imports of energy sources. Over 90 percent of Ukraine's oil and 70 percent of its natural gas still comes from Russia.<sup>10</sup>

In spite of all of these advantages the newly independent Ukraine has suffered an economic collapse worse than any other former Soviet Republic, save war-torn Moldova. Over the last decade Ukraine has suffered a negative growth rate of -11 percent (compared to all the former communist countries' average GDP decline of -5.3 percent), with a resulting GDP that is only 37 percent of that recorded in 1989 (Table 13.1).<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Russification was particularly intense in Ukraine in the 1970s and 1980s, and took the form of active discrimination against the Ukrainian language and an ongoing distortion of Ukrainian history. Soviet officialdom believed that the ethno-linguistic proximity of Russians and Ukrainians made the later prime candidates for Russification. Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History* (University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1988), 521-522.

<sup>6</sup> Ann Margaret Zollner, *Ukrainian Women in Transition: a critical ethnography of Odessitkas*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX, 1998, 19.

<sup>7</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6* (New York: UNICEF International Child Development Centre, 1999), 34.

<sup>8</sup> Frydman, Rapaczynski, Earle, *et al*, *The Privatization Process*, 87.

<sup>9</sup> "Ukraine," *CIA World Factbook 1999*.

<sup>10</sup> Zollner, *Ukrainian Women in Transition*, 68.

<sup>11</sup> Valerie Bunce, "The Political Economy of Postsocialism," *Slavic Review*, Vol. 58, No. 4, 764.

**Table 13.1. Change in Real GDP, 1989-1998 (1989=100)**

1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
100.0	96.6	85.4	73.7	63.2	48.7	42.7	38.5	37.2	37.2

Source: UNDP, Human Development Indicators, 1999.

The intensity of that decline is made even sharper by a review of GDP per capita figures, in constant dollars; this declined from \$1,165 in 1990 to only \$497 in 1997 (Table 13.2).

**Table 13.2. Per Capita GDP, 1985-1997**

Per Capita GDP (1987 US\$)		
1985	1990	1997
N/A	\$1,165	\$497

Source: UNDP Human Development Report, 1999

Like most of the other former Soviet republics, Ukraine has been greatly handicapped in the transition period by its lack of trained economists and officials, most of whom were more accustomed to taking orders from Moscow than in framing independent policies.<sup>12</sup> The reluctance of these officials to pursue radical economic reform, combined with Russia's decision to raise the price of its energy exports to world levels, has produced a profound economic crisis in Ukraine.<sup>13</sup>

### ***Labor Force Participation***

In the decades prior to the collapse of the Soviet system, labor force participation among men and women was equal, as illustrated in Table 13.3. Currently in Ukraine, the cost of the transition has been high: over one million jobs for women have disappeared; several million more are on the verge of disappearing.<sup>14</sup> As a result, the ratio of female to male participation has dropped from 1.0 to 0.9.

<sup>12</sup> Alexander Motyl, *Dilemmas of Independence: Ukraine After Totalitarianism* (New York, Council on Foreign Relations, 1993), 137.

<sup>13</sup> Zollner, *Ukrainian Women in Transition*, 70.

<sup>14</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 27.

**Table 13.3. Labor Force Participation**

Labor Force Participation (ratio of female to male)		Labor Force Participation (% of total labor force)			
1970	1997	1980		1998	
1.0	0.9	Male	Female	Male	Female
		50	50	51	49

Source: World Bank, 1999 World Development Indicators.

In spite of these losses, however, a March 1999 household survey showed that 49 percent of the women in Ukraine are employed.<sup>15</sup> As a percentage of the total female population, there are more economically active women today than there were before independence. Moreover, the gender gap (the difference in the male and female participation rates) in employment has decreased 2.7 percentage points since 1989, in spite of the large absolute disparity in the male and female population (see Table 13.4).

**Table 13.4. Crude Activity Rates and the Gender Gap, 1989-1997**

Country	Crude Female Activity Rate		Rise or fall in CFAR	Gender gap in rate (male minus female)		Change in gender gap, % points
	1989	1996	1989-97	1989	1996	1989-96
Ukraine	46.4	46.8	0.4	9.6	6.9	-2.7

Source: UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 25.

#### **Box 13.1. Discrimination Against Women in the Workplace**

The majority of Ukrainian women, including politicians, do not regard gender discrimination as a significant force in Ukrainian society. Women workers interviewed in the Ukrainian industrial city of Luhansk claimed that women currently had better (3.8 percent) or equal opportunities (43.8 percent) for job promotion, with another 8.5 percent responding, "it is difficult to say." In recent years only 17.8 percent could recall an instance of on the job discrimination, with 53.5 percent denying such discrimination took place, and 19.5 percent saying they "couldn't recall" such discrimination.

-- Pavlychko, "Conservative Faces of Women in Ukraine," 227.

As of 1996, the labor force as a whole was employed primarily in industry and construction (32 percent), agriculture and forestry (24 percent), health, education, and culture (17 percent), trade and distribution (8 percent), and transport or communications (7 percent).<sup>16</sup> As during the Soviet period, men and women in Ukraine are segregated vocationally. For instance, women still predominate in the service fields of health and social security (84 percent), commerce and the hospitality industry (82 percent), education (80 percent), and in culture and the arts (73 percent).<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Financial Markets International, *Ukraine Employment*, (Kiev, Ukraine: Financial Markets International, USAID Labor Market Monitoring Project, June 1999), 3.

<sup>16</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 27.

<sup>17</sup> L.V. Korel', "Women and the Market," *Russian Social Science Review*, Vol. 37, No. 5, September-October 1996, 27.

Prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union these areas were among the fastest-growing sectors of the economy. Even during Gorbachev's reforms, when the productive sectors of the economy were already beginning to experience declining employment, over 1 million jobs were added to the service sector, with particularly sharp rises in education and health care.<sup>18</sup> In spite of their dominance of these sectors, however, only 5 percent of Ukrainian women held positions of authority as managers, directors, or heads of departments.<sup>19</sup>

In the current era of economic decline many Ukrainian women, have rejected the efforts of Soviet feminism to foster women's economic activity, and are turning to traditional women's roles.<sup>20</sup> Though women's economic participation remains high in Ukraine, in a situation where few can afford to withdraw from the labor market, there is apparently little commitment on the part of the vast majority of Ukrainian women to maintaining their employment or transforming the workplace along feminist-inspired lines.

Ukrainian women, like their Russian counterparts, are claiming that women's biology does not suit them for manual labor.<sup>21</sup> Many Ukrainian women claim that they don't want to work outside of the home,<sup>22</sup> though more educated women are often an exception to this trend.<sup>23</sup> This has prompted a widespread disinterest in issues that, in the West, are regarded as key impediments to women's socioeconomic progress: affirmative action, the "glass ceiling", and internalized acceptance of gender stereotypes.<sup>24</sup>

### *Unemployment*

Ukraine's official unemployment rate has risen slowly since independence. Officially, Ukraine's unemployment rate in 1999 was 3.7 percent based on registered unemployment, but this figure does not include the nation's large number of unregistered or underemployed workers.<sup>25</sup> For the economically active population in the working age, the unemployment level measured under the ILO methodology was higher and constituted 14.7 percent, one fifth of whom fell in the 20 to 29 age range. Unemployment is more observed with men rather than women; 14.9 percent and 14.4 percent, respectively, of economically active population in the working age.<sup>26</sup> According to ILO Laborsta figures, men comprise 52 percent of the unemployed (see Table 13.5), indicating that they have been more adversely affected than women. Bohachevsky-Chomiak, however, asserts that women really comprise 70 percent of the unemployed.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Kosmarskii, "Public Attitudes," 42-44.

<sup>19</sup> Zollner, *Ukrainian Women in Transition*, 22.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>24</sup> Bohachevsky-Chomiak, "Practical Concerns," 14.

<sup>25</sup> "Ukraine," *CIA World Factbook 1999*.

<sup>26</sup> Financial Markets International, *Ukraine Employment*, 3.

<sup>27</sup> Bohachevsky-Chomiak, "Practical Concerns," 16.

**Table 13.5 Unemployment**

	1995	1996	1997	1998
<b>Total Unemployment, in 1000s</b> <sup>28</sup>	1,437.0	1,997.0	2,330.1	2,937.1
<b>Unemployment (% of total labor force)</b> <sup>29</sup>	5.6	7.6	8.9	11.3
<b>% Male</b> <sup>30</sup>	56.1	52.9	52.2	51.6
<b>% Female</b> <sup>31</sup>	43.9	47.1	47.8	48.4

Source: ILO Laborsta Database, <http://laborsta.ilo.org>.

### **Wage Gaps and Wage Differentials**

The current gender gap in wages is approximately the same as it was under the Soviets. Many women hold positions in the service sector, such as health, hospitality, education, and culture and the arts. All of these are areas with traditionally low wages, but in which women have often had more flexible work hours.<sup>32</sup> Women's pre-independence wages were 75.4 percent of men's wages, but by 1992 had fallen to 59.7 percent.<sup>33</sup> In spite of this initial drop and significant fluctuation in the past few years, Ukrainian women now earn between 72 and 78 percent of the pay of their male counterparts, a figure that exceeds the 70 percent earned by women in Great Britain (see Table 13.6).<sup>34</sup>

**Table 13.6. Ratio of Female to Male Wages**

	1995	1996	1997
<b>UNICEF MONEE</b>	--	--	.777
<b>ILO Laborsta Database</b>	.801	.649	.725

Note: Ratio = female wages divided by male wages.

Sources: UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 33; ILO Laborsta Database, <http://laborsta.ilo.org>.

“Real GDP per capita” figures by male and female for Ukraine, calculated in the UNDP *Human Development Report*, are figures based on estimates of the ratio of the average female wage to male wage and the percentage shares of women and men in the economically active population. The GDP per capita by gender provides an approximation of the relative economic situation of men and women. As Table 13.7 shows, female per capita GDP is calculated at about 61 percent of male per capita, in parity purchasing power.

<sup>28</sup> Figures calculated from ILO Yearbook, 1997.

<sup>29</sup> World Bank Gender Stats Database, <http://genderstats.worldbank.org>.

<sup>30</sup> Figures calculated from ILO Yearbook, 1997.

<sup>31</sup> Figures calculated from ILO Yearbook, 1997.

<sup>32</sup> Brainerd, *Distributional Consequences*, 173.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 183, 206.

<sup>34</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 33.

**Table 13.7. Per Capita GDP**

Female real GDP per capita (1997 PPP\$)	Male real GDP per capita (1997 PPP\$)
<b>1997</b>	<b>1997</b>
\$1,691	\$2,763

Source: UNDP, Human Development Indicators, 1999

Although year-by-year information is incomplete, it is apparent that income inequality increased from 1992 to 1996 in Ukraine, based on the Gini Coefficient as a measure (Table 13.8). Moving from a relatively flat wage structure, Ukraine's Gini Coefficient in 1996 indicated an income inequality somewhat greater than in the United States (40.1 in 1996).

**Table 13.8. Gini Coefficient for Ukraine**

1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
--	--	25.1	36.4	--	--	41.3	--

Source: EBRD Transition Report 1999, 280.

Unfortunately, no wage trend data are available for Ukraine, but it is likely that wages have decreased in Ukraine as they have in all the former Soviet countries. Table 13.8 shows that the disparity in the distribution of wages has increased since independence, as well. Since more women work in low-paying sectors than men, it would seem that men are benefiting from this increase in wage disparity.

### ***Sectoral Issues: Private Sector and Informal Economy***

#### **Privatization**

According to World Bank sources, privatization of medium- and large-scale enterprises has gone forward well, and between 1992 and 1998, of 8,500 medium and large enterprises, some 70 percent had been privatized. Nearly all small-scale enterprises had been privatized. The government has also developed the structures for the operation of capital markets operation and created a Securities and Stock Market Commission. Privatization in the agricultural sector has gone more slowly.<sup>35</sup>

#### **Private Enterprise**

A new survey of business in Ukraine shows that women are a very important part of the labor force in general and in the development of private enterprise in particular. In addition, women-owned

<sup>35</sup> World Bank, "Ukraine: Country at a Glance," [www.worldbank.org/html/extdr/offrep/eca/ua2.htm](http://www.worldbank.org/html/extdr/offrep/eca/ua2.htm)



businesses are more likely to hire women workers, thus creating even more economic opportunities for women.<sup>36</sup>

Compared to Western economies, women own and control a larger percentage of medium-sized and large firms. In addition, they make up 30 percent of business owners of “small” firms.<sup>37</sup> The total of firms of all sizes owned by women is 23 percent.<sup>38</sup> Table 13.9 shows the percent of businesses in Ukraine that are owned or controlled by women.

**Table 13.9. Percent of Businesses that are Owned or Controlled by Women, by Size of Business**

Type of Business	Employment Size of Business					Medium 51-250 Employees	Large 251 or More Employees	Total
	Small Zero to 50 Employees							
Number of Employees	Zero	1-5	6-10	11-50	All Small			
Percent Owned or Controlled by Women	50.1	26.8	26.5	21.0	30.0	12.7	13.0	23.4

*Source:* Management Systems International and Kiev International Institute of Sociology for USAID/West NIS, *A Survey of Business in Ukraine*, October 1999, 21.

Women entrepreneurs also hire a larger proportion of women workers than male business owners. Small businesses owned by women hire more than four women for every man hired. Medium and large-sized firms owned or controlled by women average three women employees for every male employee. Male-owned businesses hire two men for every woman. Table 13.10 provides the percentage of women employees by size and type of business.

**Table 13.10. Share (Percent) of Women Employed by Size and Type of Business**

Type of Business	EMPLOYMENT SIZE OF BUSINESS			
	Small Zero to 50 Employees	Medium 51-250 Employees	Large 251 or More Employees	Total
<b>All Business</b>	50.2	45.7	46.4	48.6
<b>Privately-owned or Controlled</b>	49.1	43.1	46.9	47.7
<b>State-owned or Controlled</b>	62.6	51.7	44.8	52.2

<sup>36</sup> Management Systems International and Kiev International Institute of Sociology for USAID/West NIS, *A Survey of Business in Ukraine*, October 1999, xv.

<sup>37</sup> “Small” is defined as 0-50 employees; “medium” as 51-250 employees; “large” as 251 or more employees.

<sup>38</sup> Management Systems International and Kiev International Institute of Sociology, *A Survey of Business in Ukraine*, 21.

<b>Women-owned or Controlled</b>	84.0	74.2	74.8	82.1
<b>Men-owned or Controlled</b>	31.2	34.6	39.0	33.0

*Source:* Management Systems International and Kiev International Institute of Sociology for USAID/West NIS, *A Survey of Business in Ukraine*, October 1999, 32.

State-owned businesses use a workforce dominated by women, with more than 50 percent of workers being women. Male-owned businesses,<sup>39</sup> on the other hand, hire two men for every woman.<sup>40</sup>

Other data from Ukraine echo the role of women in the private sector: women are 35% of the entrepreneurs buying newly-privatized land parcels in one privatization project.<sup>41</sup>

### Agriculture

One example of the continuing economic and human cost in Ukraine of attempting to maintain old Soviet economic forms is the collapse of Ukraine's agricultural sector. Ukrainian agriculture, like all of Soviet agriculture, was already in the midst of a steep decline even prior to Ukraine's independence. From 1985 to 1989 over 1.4 million *kolkhoz* jobs were lost. From January to March 1991 there was a further drastic decline in the *kolkhoz* sector by over 1.2 million people.<sup>42</sup> This trend was particularly significant for women since a large percentage of the country's rural elderly women are employed in agriculture. The failure of agrarian reform is so pronounced that last year an American expert has been quoted as saying that the "[Ukrainian] government...couldn't do a better job of destroying the farm sector if it tried." The result has been catastrophic crop failures and a Ukrainian population that is eking out its agricultural subsistence primarily from the produce of small private vegetable gardens on 12 percent of the country's arable land.<sup>43</sup> For Ukrainian women the result of this ongoing macroeconomic crisis is higher food prices and the corresponding necessity for them to spend what little money they have on food, or to take on extra work, which is often difficult and unsatisfying.<sup>44</sup>

#### Box 13.2.

*Many people say we live in a mousetrap, but without the cheese. And it's not because there is no cheese, but because we can't afford it.*  
Zollner, *Ukrainian Women in Transition*, 72.

<sup>39</sup> *Male-owned* are defined as private, non-woman-owned, non-State-owned, non-large joint-stock companies.

<sup>40</sup> Management Systems International and Kiev International Institute of Sociology, *A Survey of Business in Ukraine*, 32.

<sup>41</sup> UKRels (Ukraine Enterprise Non-Agricultural Land Privatization Project), A joint project of the US Government and the Government of Ukraine, September 1999.

<sup>42</sup> Kosmarskii, "Public Attitudes," 41-42.

<sup>43</sup> Ron Synovitz, "Ukraine: Kyiv's Policies Destroy Productive Farming," Kyiv, 21 May 1998 (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Reports.)

<sup>44</sup> Zollner, *Ukrainian Women in Transition*, 72, 76.

## Informal Economy

One result of the increasing economic problems in Ukraine is the growth of the informal economy. While little is known about the composition of the informal economy, including its labor force, experts estimate that the informal economy grew from 16 percent of GDP in 1990 to 49 percent of GDP in 1995; recent estimates reach 60 percent<sup>45</sup> (see Table 13.11).

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**Table 13.11. The Informal Economy**

1990, % of GDP	1995, % of GDP
16	49

*Source:* UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 6.

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### *Findings*

**Have there been changes in labor force participation by women and men, pre-1989 and current, by sector?** Men and women participated in the labor force at equal rates prior to independence. Since independence, more women have lost jobs than men and the ratio of labor force participation has decreased from 1.0 to 0.9.

**Is there evidence for wage gap trends and wage differentials?** There is a gender gap in wages in Ukraine. Women earn approximately 75 percent of what men do, as they did in the Soviet period.

**Has unemployment increased, whether official or hidden, and is there a gender dimension to unemployment?** Official unemployment has increased slowly since independence and the data on unemployment show that men, as 52 percent of the unemployed, have been more adversely affected. One scholar, however, claims that women have been more adversely affected, comprising 70 percent of the unemployed.

**How has the growth of the informal economy reflected gender differentiation?** No information is available about the gender effects of the informal economy.

**What is the impact of privatization of state enterprises on women's and men's employment?** No information is available about the impact of privatization of state enterprises on employment.

**What role do women play in new managerial positions or business formation in the growing private sector?** No information is available about the role of women as managers or entrepreneurs in Ukraine.

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

### ***Opportunities for Future Research***

**Information on wage trends** in Ukraine since independence would be helpful to fully determine the impact of the transition on men and women.

**Information about the impact of the informal economy, privatization on employment and entrepreneurialism**, disaggregated by gender would provide a basis for developing active labor market assistance programs.

**Data on the composition of managerial staff and entrepreneurs** would provide the Ukrainian government and donors with better information on which to base assistance programs to private firms.

## THE DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION

The purpose of this section is to discuss the differential experience of Ukrainian men and women in the political sphere since the transition to democracy. The primary questions to be answered are:

1. Is there differential participation by women and men in the public sphere?
  - a) What is the role of women in party politics?
  - b) What is the representation of women in elected government positions, locally and nationally?
  - c) What is the representation of women in appointed governmental positions?
2. How is gender reflected in the development of civil society, especially NGOs?
  - a) What is the role of women in different types of NGOs?
  - b) Have NGOs developed that advocate for gender issues?
3. How has the rule of law been institutionalized and what impact is there on gender?
  - a) Have there been *de jure* legal reforms with an impact on gender?
  - b) Do men and women have equal legal rights, *de jure* and *de facto*? (Is there sufficient information to be able to contrast between *de jure* and *de facto*?)
  - c) Have there been reforms related to family law: inheritance, ownership, marriage, and divorce that impact on gender?

These questions are addressed below beginning with a brief discussion of how men and women participated in politics and civil society during the Soviet era and how the patterns of that participation has changed since independence and how they are now affected by rule of law.

### *Political Activity in the Soviet Period*

The Ukrainian Republic that emerged from the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 carried with it a dual political inheritance owing to the fact that Western Ukraine was incorporated into the USSR from Poland nearly twenty years after the Bolshevik Revolution. The Polish-Soviet War of 1919-1921 saw the partitioning of Ukraine between Warsaw and Moscow, resulting in a very different course of development between the two. As one of the constituent republics of the new Communist state, the eastern portion of the Ukrainian lands underwent the same sociopolitical transformation as Soviet Russia, complete with its attention to issues of gender, women's employment, and destruction of the bourgeois family unit.

Stalin's move to introduce universal collectivization and rapid industrialization in the early 1930s brought further devastation to Ukrainian families as millions of people perished in a terrible famine engineered in Moscow. The historian Robert Conquest suggests that Stalin sought to use the famine as a political tool to weaken Ukrainian national resistance to Soviet power once and for all. Ukraine had proven difficult to conquer during the Civil War, and so the loyalty of its citizens remained suspect even into the 1930s. Therefore, as the population of the republic dropped precipitously during the famine, Russians were resettled throughout the region to dilute its ethnic balance. As a result, Communist power remained virtually unchallenged in Eastern Ukraine right up until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Western Ukraine carries with it a decidedly different political legacy. During the interwar years, those living in the western part of the Ukrainian lands faced ethnic antagonism at the hands of the Polish government, which served to galvanize their own national solidarity. The absence of an effective state welfare program in Poland at the time prompted Ukrainians to create an entire network of cultural, economic, and social organizations based on widespread volunteerism. Many of these organizations were large, community-oriented women's groups carrying on a tradition of social activism that went back to the nineteenth century.<sup>46</sup>

When the Soviet Union invaded Poland in September 1939 and annexed the Western Ukraine, this tradition of community assistance and national solidarity reawakened the spirit of resistance in Soviet Ukraine. For the first time since the Civil War, organized bands of Ukrainian guerillas fought in skirmishes against units of the Red Army in a civil conflict that lasted until the late 1940s. As part of this effort, Stalin outlawed the Ukrainian Catholic (Uniate) Church in yet another bid to reassert Soviet control in this troublesome republic. On the whole, he was successful. Armed resistance collapsed before the might of the Red Army, and the Uniate Church went underground and remained powerless for nearly forty years. As for women's movements, they were branded as evidence of bourgeois nationalism and so ceased to function.<sup>47</sup> Although Ukrainian nationalism featured among the dissident movements of the 1960s and 1970s, it was not until the start of the Gorbachev reforms that it began once again to mobilize the kind of community action that had characterized life in interwar Poland.

Prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Communist officials in Ukraine trumpeted the unique benefits that they claimed the Soviet Union had brought to all Ukrainians. Not only was Soviet Ukraine supposedly among the most progressive and egalitarian societies in the world, committed to the development of full social, legal and economic equality for women, but Soviet rule in Ukraine had also brought unique national benefits to Ukrainians of all of the Republic's ethnicities.<sup>48</sup>

Politically, the representation of women in Soviet Ukraine looked remarkably like that in Soviet Russia. Thanks to quotas fixed by the Communist Party, women consistently held approximately 30 percent of the seats in the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet. Party elections returned a similar 30 percent of seats in Party congresses. However, as elsewhere in the former Soviet Union, these seats were largely symbolic, lacking any real political power. Women in Ukraine were never admitted into the highest ranks of the Party hierarchy, and rarely, if ever, held high State offices.<sup>49</sup>

When Gorbachev authorized the formation of Women's Councils of the Union in January 1987, he had in mind the creation of an organization that would mobilize support for his reform program. However, his efforts faced widespread apathy in Ukraine, where Communist Party member and vice president of the Ukrainian Council of Ministers, Mariia A. Orlyk, found it very difficult to mobilize the Council of

<sup>46</sup> Martha Bohachevsky-Chomiak, *Political Communities and Gendered Ideologies in Contemporary Ukraine* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Papers in Ukrainian Studies, 1994), 21n.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, 521.

<sup>49</sup> Zollner, *Ukrainian Women in Transition*, 148.

Women of Ukraine.<sup>50</sup> The Communist experience had demonstrated over many decades that the promise of women's liberation had been long on rhetoric, and short in practice. As one author asserts, "for the women in Eastern Europe, equality meant a double burden: work outside the home to earn the salary necessary to keep the family alive, and work in the home in a paternalistic society in which consumer goods were scarce, the economy being subject to centralized planning that did not take any women's or family needs into consideration."<sup>51</sup> Ultimately, while claiming to be "gender-blind," Marxism had been an ideology formulated by males, and male-oriented.<sup>52</sup>

As the Gorbachev Era began to give way to the post-Communist transition, this mistrust of Communist officialdom continued to compromise efforts to mobilize Ukrainian women on a large scale. Allegations that the State-sponsored Women's Councils had been established to launder money for the Party prompted most new women's groups to eschew any contact with Mariia Orlyk and her organization.<sup>53</sup> However, this effort to distance themselves from the Party and State did little to alter the opinion in the minds of many Ukrainians, that women were not to be trusted in politics. Women were widely seen to have profited from the Communist system, thanks to decades of rhetoric and propaganda to this effect.

One factor that clearly contributed to the low returns for women in the 1990 elections was the comparatively low level of female activism in Ukraine. A survey conducted by the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine found that 45 percent of those interviewed found their family duties too consuming to permit participation in political life. A further 29 percent refused to believe that women could wield political power effectively, while 22 percent felt that they themselves were simply not "oriented to political activity." Fully 60 percent claimed that there was not a place for them in the top levels of Ukrainian politics or society.<sup>54</sup>

One of those surveyed, a female professor, offered the explanation that "There are patriarchal views in our society and, for example, the problems of a political career for a woman are very serious, as well as, the problems of starting her own business. So the main obstacle is our patriarchal thinking not only of men, but also of women."<sup>55</sup> On the whole, women seemed to remain out of politics from the very start of the democratic transition largely thanks to the pressure of traditional values and the "immediacy of the economic crisis that makes them cope with the situation of their families."<sup>56</sup>

Ukraine's move away from Communist rule began in earnest on 16 July 1990 when the Supreme Rada, the republican legislature, approved a Declaration on Ukraine's State Sovereignty that led to an annulment of Communist Party's leading role in Ukrainian society, an end of state planning, and the creation of a new presidency.<sup>57</sup> On 1 December 1991, the citizens of Ukraine voted overwhelmingly to

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<sup>50</sup> Bohachevsky-Chomiak, *Political Communities*, 20n-21n.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 20-21.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 149.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 150.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 62-63.

support a national independence referendum, and the republic moved to reclaim the status of a sovereign state. That same day saw the election of Ukraine's first president, Leonid Kravchuk, who managed to win 61.6 percent of the electorate, eliminating the need for a run-off with his six competitors.

### ***Political Activity since Independence***

The parliamentary deputies elected in 1990 at the end of the Soviet period remained in office for the first four years of the transition to liberal democracy. It was during this period that the first political parties began to form in Ukraine. Almost no effort ever went into the creation of parties made up exclusively by women. The Christian Women's Party created by Olha Horyn in 1991 collapsed after less than a year. No other political initiatives ever emerged from the women's movement. Only one political party, the Progressive Socialist Party, is currently led by a woman, Natalia Vitrenko, who challenged Kuchma in the last presidential elections in Fall 1999. Indeed, with the exception of a few writers and academics, rarefied notions such as affirmative action have few proponents in a post-Communist Ukraine that tends to take gender equality for granted.<sup>58</sup>

### **The Legislative Branch**

The elections of 1994 once again demonstrated that in the realm of politics assumptions of gender equity were far off the mark, as women's share of the legislature remained at 2.9 percent.<sup>59</sup> Nevertheless, the women who were elected to parliament were able to bring the issue of discrimination to the forefront of popular attention through a series of hearings held in July 1995. The hearings were convened in advance of the United Nations Conference on Women scheduled to take place in Beijing later that year. Ten years earlier Ukraine had signed the UN Document to End Discrimination of Women at the 1985 Nairobi Conference. The idea of the parliamentary hearings was to discuss how the country had lived up to this goal. No doubt recognizing that Soviet practice had fallen rather short, the large Socialist Party tried to postpone the hearings. However, in a rare moment of gender solidarity, the women in the Socialist Party voted against the postponement, and the hearings went ahead.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Bohachevsky-Chomiak, "Practical Concerns," 14.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*



**Table 13.12 Political Positions Held by Men and Women in Ukraine**

Position	Total Number	Held by Women		Held by Men	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Members of Parliament	450	35	7.8 %	415	92.2 %
Cabinet Ministers*	15	1	6.7 %	14	93.3 %
Pres. Admin. Employees	NA	NA		NA	
Regional Administrators	27	0	0.0 %	27	100.0 %
Members of Judiciary	NA	NA		NA	
High Court	18	NA		NA	
Appeals Courts	NA	NA		NA	
Local Courts	NA	NA		NA	
Political Party Leaders	8	1	12.5 %	7	87.5 %

Note: Data are from January 2000.

\*The Embassy of Ukraine lists two female ministers of twenty (10%), but five of the ministers listed are not included in the Cabinet.

Sources: Inter Parliamentary Union website, <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>; Women in Governments website, <http://hjem.get2net.dk/Womeningovernments/>; CIA Chiefs of State and Cabinet Members web page, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/chiefs/index.html>; Embassy of Ukraine website, <http://www.ukremb.com/DOVIDN.htm>

The candor expressed at the July 1995 hearings was quite remarkable. Parliamentary deputy Nina Karpacheva, one of the organizers of the event, pushed hard for the introduction of some kind of affirmative action in Ukraine if the country was ever to enjoy real gender equity. It is not sufficient to have legal equality on paper, she argued, when society is structured along such patriarchal lines. President Kuchma's chief of staff, speaking on the president's behalf, seemed to support this point of view. He read a letter from Kuchma that recognized how difficult the transition had been on women.

Traditionally female professions had indeed been hit the hardest by unemployment, the president admitted; and women continued to represent a large percentage of those working in exhausting heavy labor jobs. Moreover, the slow pace of attitudinal change toward women's rights had indeed been an obstacle to new legislation needed to address their particular concerns. "Women are the most vulnerable ... to the wave of exploitation, criminality and violence," Kuchma wrote. "Women suffer discrimination in the workplace. They constitute more than 70 percent of the unemployed. The mean income level of women is one-third less than the equivalent among males. These factors have a negative impact upon the health and welfare of the whole population, but especially on women and children. These factors are in great measure responsible for the catastrophic demographic situation in Ukraine, where the death rate is higher than the birth rate."<sup>61</sup>

Presenters at the July hearings offered a battery of proposals to redress these problems. The deputy prime minister for humanitarian affairs talked of creating a special commission on women, children, and the family. Other members of Kuchma's government promised to establish additional medical centers

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 16.

alongside crisis centers for battered and refugee women. Parliamentary organizers called for a broad range of reforms, starting with legislation that would enable women's community organizations to propose candidates for parliament. They called on the Cabinet of Ministers to work with women's organizations to prepare more effective human rights programs. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, they added, should begin providing meaningful opportunities for women while promoting UN conventions on labor, migration, and prostitution.

They further recommended that the Ministry of Information develop programs intended to promote a more positive image of women and gender issues in the media. This effort would parallel similar moves in the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences focused on promoting gender education and popular dialogue on the question of women's status in society. It was an ambitious agenda – but it failed to receive any official support. Although the parliament noted each recommendation, it did not formally approve any of them. Nevertheless, organizers regarded the hearings as an important step forward in the nation's evolution on issues of gender equality.<sup>62</sup>

Following a major overhaul of Ukrainian electoral law in 1997, the nation held its most recent parliamentary elections in 1998. From what had been previously a strictly majoritarian electoral process, Ukraine moved to a proportionate-majoritarian model. The new system filled 225 seats of the Supreme Rada with the winners of majoritarian constituencies, and 225 with candidates from political parties and blocs who won more than 4% of the national vote. Of the 21 parties and nine blocs that participated in the elections, eight cleared the 4 percent barrier and introduced their candidate lists into parliament. The largest faction, the Communist Party, won 121 seats, the Socialist and Peasant Parties 35 seats, the Rukh faction 47 seats, Hromada 40 seats, the Green Party 24 seats, the People's Democratic Party 92 seats, the Progressive Socialists 16 seats, and the Socialist Democratic Party (United) 25 seats. Independents controlled 39 seats. Consistent with Ukrainian law, the prime minister is nominated by the president from whichever party he chooses, though his nomination must be approved by the parliament. The standing Prime Minister, Valery Pustovoitenko, is a member of the pro-governmental People's Democratic Party.

The situation for women in the parliament improved dramatically between the elections of 1994 and those of 1998. It has been suggested that women tend to perform better in elections that include a proportionate component involving candidate lists. This seems to have been the case in Ukraine, as the female component in parliament increased from 2.9 percent in 1994 to 7.8 percent, with women occupying 35 of 450 seats. What remains to be seen is whether these women will seek to coordinate their strength in parliament across factional lines in the same way as half their number did in 1995 to demand greater attention to issues of gender equality and discrimination.

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<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

## The Executive Branch

The executive branch of the Ukrainian government has long been a holdout of male politics. When Leonid Kuchma defeated incumbent candidate Leonid Kravchuk in July 1994, he established a government in which women represented less than one percent of appointed positions.<sup>63</sup> By 1996, the situation had improved incrementally to 1.7 percent. However, this growth came from a 2.2 percent share at the sub-ministerial level. There were no women included at the ministerial level.<sup>64</sup> Since 1996, two women have been appointed to Ministerial positions, Suzanna Stanik as the Minister of Justice, and Valentyna Dovzhenko as the Minister of Family and Youth Issues. As a result, women comprise 10 percent (2 of 20) of all ministerial positions, but five ministerial positions are not cabinet ministers, including the Minister of Family and Youth Issues, so women comprise only 6.7 percent of all cabinet ministers.<sup>65</sup> President Kuchma won the most recent elections in November 1999, extending his tenure by five years. It is therefore reasonable to expect that, unless significant reforms are instituted, the gender imbalance will continue in Ukraine's executive branch.

## Local Government

While there are no disaggregated figures available to indicate gender participation at the local level of government, the low level of female appointees in the national executive is suggestive of a similar dearth of women in regional and local administration. This is because a 1994 presidential decree rendered local councils and their executive committees subservient to the president. The 27 heads of the regional state administration, who are (currently all male) appointees of the president, are the real power brokers in Ukraine's regional government. Local councils are elected directly, while chairpersons of city, town, and village councils are chosen through majoritarian constituencies.<sup>66</sup> As noted earlier, this process has tended to favor men over women at the national level; and so there is good reason to assume that women are significantly underrepresented at virtually every level of regional and local administrative government. More data is necessary, however, to say for certain how gender issues have fared in local constituencies.

## The Judicial Branch

The 1996 Ukrainian Constitution stipulates that courts in Ukraine are completely independent from political control. In practice, however, the three branches of government, executive, legislative, and judicial, have not become completely separated from one another. And so, investigation, interrogation, and prosecution all remain within the purview of the executive branch. The nation's attorney general and his deputy are both nominated by the president, and confirmed by parliament. Moreover, the

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>64</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 97.

<sup>65</sup> Embassy of Ukraine website, <http://www.ukremb.com/DOVIDN.htm> and the CIA Chiefs of State and Cabinet Members of Foreign Governments website, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/chiefs/>.

<sup>66</sup> Adrian Karatnycky, Alexander Motyl, and Charles Graybow, (eds.), *Nations in Transit 1998: Civil Society, Democracy and Markets in East Central Europe and the Newly Independent States*, (Washington, DC: Freedom House, 1999), 616-617.

parliament selects judges on the basis of recommendations received from the Ministry of Justice. The attorney general in turn appoints state and local prosecutors. Notwithstanding official proscriptions against attempting to influence the judiciary, “courts and prosecutor’s offices, especially at the oblast and local levels, seem to be closely attuned to local administrations’ interests.”<sup>67</sup>

At the top of the judicial ladder in Ukraine is the Constitutional Court, a body consisting of 18 justices who must all be fluent in Ukrainian in addition to other age, citizenship, and professional qualifications. Six of these are appointed by the president, six by the parliament, and six by the Congress of Ukrainian Judges. Independent of the Constitutional Court is the Supreme Council of Justice, established in 1998 to ensure fairness and professionalism in the judiciary. Its twenty members are responsible for dealing with overseeing the nomination and resignation of judges, along with disciplinary measures within the judiciary. It also conducts investigations into alleged offenses committed within the court system. In total, the Supreme Council supervises the activities of approximately 5,600 judges, 70 percent of whom received their legal training under the Soviet system.<sup>68</sup> It is not clear from available data how many of these are men and how many are women. Additional research is needed into this question in Ukraine.

### *Civil Society since Independence*

The most noteworthy gender-oriented activity in Ukraine over the last 10 years has come from emergent women’s groups. Beginning in the late Gorbachev period, a number of new organizations sought to mobilize women around the challenges that faced them and their families. The Ukrainian Committee of Soldiers’ Mothers was perhaps the classic case in point. Headed by Lyudmyla Trukhmanova, it held a series of protests to draw attention to the plight of soldiers in the Soviet Army. Condemning the ethnically motivated abuse of conscripts that often befell Ukrainians (and other non-Russians) in the army, this high-profile group of women demanded shorter terms of service, extended leave time, and the appointment of a civilian to the post of Ukrainian defense minister. While it achieved few of these demands, the group is credited by many with accelerating the break-up of the Soviet Army by 1991.<sup>69</sup>

Yet another women’s organization formed during the Gorbachev reform period, Women’s Community, began its activities in support of the Ukrainian nationalist reform movement, Rukh. On 8 March 1991, the Women’s Community staged the single largest independent women’s rally ever seen in Kiev. Working with the Committee of Soldiers’ Mothers, the Committee of Families with Many Children, Mother-86, and the Union of Women of Ukraine, the Women’s Community sought to focus national attention on the plight of women on the very day singled out by the UN for the appreciation of women. Celebration of International Women’s Day is not sufficient appreciation for the challenges facing women in Ukraine, the demonstrators protested. It was time that Ukrainian society recognized the difficulties faced by women in the allegedly “liberated” Ukrainian republic.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 620.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Bohachevsky-Chomiak, “Practical Concerns,” 12.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

The post-Communist transition has seen an explosion of Ukrainian civil society, and with it a proliferation of NGO activity. By the end of 1997, Ukraine boasted over 4,000 registered NGOs, including 215 women's groups.<sup>71</sup> There do not appear to be any NGOs focused exclusively on men's issues. Many of these organizations focus on lobbying the government for improved legislation, including support for the evolution of NGOs themselves. However, the Civil Code under consideration in parliament in 1998 contained no reference to NGO activity. Consequently, NGO lobbying has faced difficulties connected with a lack of understanding on the part of government and parliament regarding their role in society. The issue of funding is also highly significant, as many NGOs currently lobbying the government, including those focused on women's issues, are heavily dependent on state support for their activities.<sup>72</sup>

Of those groups engaged in women's issues, few are focused on what Western feminists would understand as women's rights. What motivates the large majority of those involved in NGO work is concern for their families – for their sons in the military, for their children in the face of ecological disasters like Chernobyl, etc. “Every women with a child in Ukraine,” writes Martha Bohachevsky-Chomiak, “regardless of her ethnic origin, was a Ukrainian mother, interested in establishing a state in which she would have a say about her children's future.” Bohachevsky-Chomiak goes on to point out that the pursuit of individual happiness is not an openly desired cultural trait in Ukraine. As a result, “the goal for women is not emancipation or liberation, but rather, as had been the goal of early American women activists, the welfare of their community – making life better for others.”<sup>73</sup>

These concerns are manifested in a variety of NGO activities. Some organizations have pushed for the opening of private day-care centers, schools, and nursing homes, along with more medical clinics and legal advisory bureaus. Others have worked to create commissions on preventative childcare or ecological awareness. Job training, cultural centers, and academic scholarships have also been established to assist women professionally. Those NGOs that prefer to focus on lobbying efforts have been petitioning the government and parliament for laws combating narcotics and prostitution, as well as greater support for the needy. Once again, little attention has been given to traditional women's issues such as discrimination in the workplace, even among lobbyists. “Activists make a point of commenting,” notes Bohachevsky-Chomiak, “that the discussion of women's issues will have to be deferred until basic social ills are addressed.”<sup>74</sup>

This attitude has prompted considerable skepticism on the part of outside observers with respect to the activities of Ukrainian NGOs. They are criticized for working in isolation from one another, and for failing “to challenge prevalent patriarchal values and attitudes.”<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid. Note that UNICEF recognizes only 70 women's NGOs in Ukraine during the period 1997-1998. See UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 102.

<sup>72</sup> Karatnycky, Motyl, and Graybow, *Nations in Transit 1998*, 612.

<sup>73</sup> Bohachevsky-Chomiak, “Practical Concerns,” 17.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>75</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 102.

## **Rule of Law**

As part of the USSR the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic was, in theory, committed to women's equality. As early as April 29, 1918 the Constitution of the Ukrainian People's Republic proclaimed, "the law of the UPR does not recognize any differences in the rights and duties of men and women."<sup>76</sup> The vast labor requirements of the Soviet Union's rapid industrialization in the 1930s led the Soviet Union to enact, on paper at least, the most progressive gender labor policy in the world. It mandated in the Soviet Labor Code and 1936 Constitution that women receive equal pay for equal work, and that they be provided with day care centers and relatively generous maternity leave provisions.<sup>77</sup>

Since independence, Ukraine has been relatively slow in transforming its legal code. Its Soviet-era constitution, created in 1978, remained the law of the land until 1996. The second chapter of the new constitution guarantees broad human rights, civil liberties, political liberties, religious rights, and minority rights. Moreover, its Article 42 provides all citizens with the right to engage in free enterprise. Consequently, the parliament adopted the new constitution into law on a vote of 338 to 18.<sup>78</sup>

Early laws barring discrimination in post-Communist Ukraine focused chiefly on race, national origins, and religious beliefs, as is evident from Article 66 of the Criminal Code which came into force in the fall of 1991. A similar bill, passed in parliament in November 1991, guaranteed equal political, economic, social, and cultural rights to all individuals and nationalities in Ukraine.<sup>79</sup> The Law on National Minorities, enacted in June 1992, further assures the protection of the nation's ethnic minorities. By 1996, discrimination on the basis of gender was also prohibited in Article 24 of the new constitution.<sup>80</sup> Once again, however, it is unclear from existing research the degree to which this proscription is observed in practice.

## **Marriage Law**

The marriage law in Ukraine allows women to marry at 17, but men must wait until they are 18. Further, a woman's parents still legally have control over her until she is 18, even if she is married. This appears only to have become a source of societal contention since the 1994 abortion decree cites being under the age of 18 as a legal ground for abortion. In this case, parents have the right to determine whether a married woman should terminate a pregnancy until she is 18.

Another problem with the current marriage law is that, although illegal, polygamy is currently possible in Ukraine. Article 197 of the Criminal Code releases citizens from criminal liability for not disclosing

<sup>76</sup> Zollner, *Ukrainian Women in Transition*, 16.

<sup>77</sup> Elizabeth Brainerd, *Distributional Consequences of Economic Reform in Russia and Eastern Europe*, Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1996, 152.

<sup>78</sup> Karatnycky, Motyl, and Graybow, *Nations in Transit 1998*, 612.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 621.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 623.

information that would prevent the marriage. It is not clear whether there have been any cases of polygamy as a result.<sup>81</sup>

### **Divorce Law**

Although most provisions of Ukraine's divorce law treat men and women equally, men can very rarely obtain custody of children in a divorce. The mother must die, be imprisoned, be absent for a long period of time or permit her ex-husband to take the children.<sup>82</sup> These restrictions limit a father's ability to be a parent after a divorce and may inadvertently have a negative impact on the children involved.

### **Findings**

**Is there differential participation by women and men in the public sphere?** There is significant gender differentiation in political participation in Ukraine. Ukraine has emerged from the post-Communist transition as one of the most traditional of the former Soviet republics with respect to its attitudes toward gender roles. Although the introduction of party lists to the nation's electoral law has doubled female representation in parliament since 1994, women still occupy only a fraction of the seats they once commanded under Communism. As in Russia, however, it can be argued that this smaller voice has nevertheless been heard more clearly on issues ranging from support for families to discrimination. The hearings of July 1995 represent a clear step forward in this respect, as does the stipulations providing for gender equality in the 1996 Constitution.

**How is gender reflected in the development of civil society, especially NGOs?** Clearly, the greatest need in Ukraine is to address the nation's societal collapse. It is here that the vast majority of the nation's NGOs, particularly those run by women, are employed. Ultimately, support for their efforts should lay the groundwork for more assertive development of the women's movement in Ukraine over the long term. Ukrainian women themselves appear willing to advance at an incremental pace, choosing to focus first on societal and environmental improvements before taking on the nation's deeply rooted patriarchal traditions. While this might frustrate outside observers, it is an indication of how difficult the socioeconomic transition has been for many women and their families.

**How has the rule of law been institutionalized and what impact is there on gender?** Rule of law has been institutionalized. Most laws protect and treat men and women equally, but the marriage and divorce laws discriminate against women and men respectively. In spite of having the laws in place, though, Ukraine is still a long way from providing the infrastructure necessary for gender egalitarianism.

### **Opportunities for Future Research**

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<sup>81</sup> Ukrainian Center for Independent Political Research, *Gender Monitor*, vol. 1, no. 2, September 1997, [http://www.friends-partners.org/~ccsi/elctronic/women/gm\\_1-2.htm](http://www.friends-partners.org/~ccsi/elctronic/women/gm_1-2.htm)

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

**More information on the composition of the judiciary and local governments is needed.**

Information in these branches of government will allow us to determine whether the recovery of women's participation in the legislative and executive branches of government is a national trend at all levels.

**Information about the composition of the staff and volunteers in the NGO sector, as well as better information about the size and activities of the sector is needed.** This information would allow officials to identify gaps in service provision and learn how communities are meeting their own needs.

**Information on the *de facto* implementation of laws, versus *de jure* rights is needed.**



## THE SOCIAL TRANSITION

This section reports findings from major sources regarding the effects of the transition in Ukraine on social benefits, poverty, pension reform, health, and education and explores these primary questions:

1. With the shredding of the social safety net, how have women versus men fared in access to / support from social programs?
2. Do data show women's poverty rates to be greater than men's?
3. What are the health-related impacts of the transition?
4. What differential impacts has pension reform had on men's and women's access to benefits?
5. What are salient changes in the state-funded education system (secondary and higher) since 1989/91?

This chapter reviews World Bank, UNDP, UNICEF, and other sources, and major findings are presented in the five sections that follow: Social Safety Net, Poverty, Pension Reform, Health Reform, and Education.

Although Ukraine has experienced a significant socioeconomic crisis over the past decade, it has not faced the poverty experienced by other countries analyzed in this study. With abundant arable land, Ukrainians have supplemented their wages with home-grown food which has provided as much as 18 percent of household consumption.<sup>83</sup> Women have also fared better in Ukraine than in some other E&E countries as indicated by data showing that gender is not a strong correlate of poverty.

### *Social Safety Net*

As described in Chapter 5, social safety net programs are of three general types: universal benefits, social insurance, and social assistance. Ukraine's social safety net includes programs that fall into each of these three categories. Table 13.13 lists Ukraine's social programs and briefly describes their eligibility requirements and benefits and points out major gender differences.

As indicated in the table, in five of 10 social programs, women receive preferential treatment in eligibility, benefits, or both. Although this issue is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, it should be noted here that when benefits are based on a percentage of wages, women's benefits will tend to be lower than men's.

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<sup>83</sup> World Bank, *Poverty in Ukraine*, Report No. 15602-UA (Washington: World Bank, 1996), 9.

Table 13.13 Social Safety Net Program Eligibility and Benefits in Ukraine

Program	Value		Eligibility	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
<b>Universal Benefits</b>				
Health Benefits	Medical care.	Same.	All residents. Special provisions for victims of Chernobyl catastrophe.	Same.
<b>Social Insurance</b>				
Pension, Old-age	55% of wage base if 20 years of work, plus 1% of wage for each year in excess of 20. Maximum and minimum amounts apply.	55% of wage base if 25 years of work, plus 1% of wage for each year in excess of 25. Maximum and minimum amounts apply.	Age 55 and 20 years of work. Requirements reduced for arduous or hazardous work, mothers of 5 or more children or of disabled children, disabled veterans, and other conditions. Early pension available for unemployed aged 53 to 55 in case of enterprise liquidation or reorganization.	Age 60 and 25 years of work. Requirements reduced for arduous or hazardous work, mothers of 5 or more children or of disabled children, disabled veterans, and other conditions. Early pension available for unemployed aged 58 to 60 in case of enterprise liquidation or reorganization.
Pension, Social	50% of minimum old-age pension	Same.	Not working and aged 55 or disabled from childhood.	Not working and aged 60 or disabled from childhood.
Pension, Disability	40-70% of earnings, depending on disability. Social pension of 30-200% of minimum old-age pension. Carer's allowance for carer of disabled child under 16.	Same.	1-15 years of covered employment.	Same.
Pension, Survivorship	30% of wage base for each dependent. 40% of earnings for widow if spouse died in war. Minimum amount applies.	30% of wage base for each dependent. Minimum amount applies.	Insured had up to 15 years of work. Payable to surviving children and to nonworking dependents (including spouse, parents, and grandparents)	Same.

Program	Value		Eligibility	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Unemployment	100-50% of wages. Maximum and Minimum amounts apply.	Same.	Registered at unemployment office, ability and willingness to work, no other income exceeding the minimum wage.	Same.
Sickness (cash benefits)	60-100% of earnings, depending on length of employment. Total of 5 months per year. 100% of earnings for working parent caring for sick family member, up to 14 days per case.	Same.	Employed persons, on leave to pursue education and training, unemployed due to enterprise liquidation, registered unemployed, military personnel.	Same.
Maternity Benefits	<i>Employed women: 100% of earnings for 70 days before and 56 days after confinement. Women on leave for education and training: 100% of stipend. Unemployed women due to enterprise liquidation: 100% of earnings at last job. Registered unemployed for at least 10 months: 100% of minimum wage. Members of armed forces: 100% of earnings plus in-kind benefits (payable to spouse).</i>	None.	<i>Women; no minimum qualifying period.</i>	None.
Work Injury	100% of earnings.	Same.	All employed persons.	Same.
<b>Social Assistance</b>				

Program	Value		Eligibility	
	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>
Family Allowances	<i>Most benefits are means-tested. 50-200% of minimum wage per child. Single mothers (including widows and widowers not receiving survivor pension or social pension) and children whose fathers evade child support – 50% of minimum wage. Delivery grant of 400% of minimum wage. Additional 200% of minimum wage paid to mothers who undergo prescribed prenatal care.</i>	50-200% of minimum wage per child. Single mothers (including widows and widowers not receiving survivor pension or social pension – 50% of minimum wage. Delivery grant of 400% of minimum wage.	<i>Families with 3 or more children, single mothers with 1 or more children, and families with 1 or more disabled children.</i>	Families with 3 or more children and families with 1 or more disabled children.

*Notes:* The data in this table were current as of January 1, 1999 (the latest version of the Social Security Administration's report). Italicized text indicates a gender difference in eligibility or benefits.

*Source:* U.S. Social Security Administration, *Social Security Programs Throughout the World – 1999*, 365-367.

Over the last few years reform of the social benefit system in Ukraine has focused on better targeting assistance to the most needy. In 1995, as the government began this process in the housing and utility sectors, it also introduced price increases to help meet its additional costs. Meanwhile, USAID was requested to help design a targeted assistance program that would assist poor families in covering these increased costs. The resulting housing subsidy program relies on assistance offices that take applications from families and determine eligibility based on income. The subsidies are not cash benefits. Rather, they are discounts on monthly payments equal to the difference between 20 percent of income and actual payments.<sup>84</sup>

Work is underway to subject a supplemental child allowance program to a means-test as well, in order to improve targeting. Ukraine is also creating social protection monitoring centers to assess the economic and social needs of the population, measure the effectiveness of existing social insurance and assistance programs, measure how economic and social reforms are affecting the population, and assist the government in managing social protection programs.<sup>85</sup>

### ***Poverty and Gender***

Poverty in Ukraine, although it existed prior to independence, was exacerbated by the financial crisis brought on by the post-Communist transition. The exact percentages of Ukrainians living in poverty differ according to the methodology imposed. The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency estimates that in 1997, 50 percent of Ukrainians lived in poverty.<sup>86</sup> PADCO estimates that as of 1998, 20 percent of households are poor.<sup>87</sup> The UNDP calculates that 63 percent had an income of below \$4.00 per day,<sup>88</sup> and the World Bank, using household consumption surveys rather than income as a measure, suggests that 29.5 percent of households lived beneath an established poverty line.<sup>89</sup>

This World Bank poverty line, based on consumption of basic food and non-food items, was set at about \$24 per month in 1995. Further analysis of the World Bank consumption data reveal that many households that qualify as impoverished are clustered very close to the poverty line. An increase in consumption of 20 percent would therefore lift 34 percent of households out of poverty.<sup>90</sup> Data from this World Bank study are presented in Table 13.14.

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<sup>84</sup> Roger Vaughan, "Creating Sustainable Social Programs in the Caucasus" (Memorandum to USAID, 1998), A.1.2.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., E.1.

<sup>86</sup> *The CIA World Factbook 1999*, Ukraine, <http://www.cia.gov>.

<sup>87</sup> PADCO, *Poverty Among Households Receiving Targeted Assistance* (Kyiv: PADCO, October, 1998).

<sup>88</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Indicators*, 149.

<sup>89</sup> World Bank, *Poverty in Ukraine*, 1.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

**Table 13.14. Poverty Rates by Gender in Ukraine**

Overall	Female	Male
29.5	32	29
	29 (excluding pensioners)	

Source: World Bank, *Poverty in Ukraine*, 19.

As shown in the table above, while women are slightly poorer than men, gender does not appear to be a key indicator of poverty. These data may reflect the longevity of women – there are twice as many elderly women as elderly men – and four-fifths of the elderly poor are women. The World Bank notes that these data may also understate women’s poverty since data are based on household consumption and do not differentiate intra-household consumption rates.<sup>91</sup>

### Other Correlates of Poverty

Although gender does not appear to be a good indicator of poverty, family composition and age are. Families with both children and the elderly to support are more likely to be poor<sup>92</sup> as are old-age pensioners over age 60, for whom poverty increases with each successive age bracket.<sup>93</sup> Receipt of an old-age pension is not a good proxy for poverty, however, since only 35 percent of old-age pensioners are poor, and 39 percent are under age 65.<sup>94</sup> A means-tested elderly allowance for people over age 64 is recommended by the World Bank to alleviate the poverty faced by this group.<sup>95</sup> Other characteristics of the poor include geography, education, and unemployment. Urban poverty is more frequent than rural poverty, but this conclusion is based on the use of food-based consumption measures: urban families are food-poor while rural families are more cash-poor.<sup>96</sup> Low education is correlated with poverty as is unemployment, though official unemployment is low, and low wages and wage arrears are more important.<sup>97</sup>

### *Health Status and the Impact of the Transition*

Table 13.15 presents data on major health indicators in Ukraine. These indicators show that, since the transition:

- Life expectancy decreased for both men and women.
- Maternal mortality decreased.
- Abortion rates decreased.
- The incidence of sexually transmitted diseases increased.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 20.

These and other findings are discussed in more detail below.

### **Life Expectancy**

Life expectancy at birth has decreased for both men and women since 1989. For men, life expectancy decreased by four years, from 66 in 1989 to 62 in 1997. For women, the decrease was two years, from 75 in 1989 to 73 in 1997. Male life expectancy decreased particularly in urban areas. The crude death rate increased sharply from 11.7 (per 1000 population) in 1989 to a high of 15.5 in 1995, and had decreased slightly to 15.0 by 1997.<sup>98</sup>

### **Mortality**

While deaths rose for all age groups, the increase of premature deaths among men was notable. Between the ages of 20-50, death rates for men were more than three times higher than for women; and in the 30-34 age group, they were four times higher.<sup>99</sup> The difference in life expectancy for men and women was 11 years in 1997, much higher than in Western Europe. In 1996, cardiovascular diseases (especially ischemic heart disease) were the leading cause of death (57.5 percent), followed by neoplasms (16.6 percent) and external events such as accidents, homicides and suicides (10.9 percent).<sup>100</sup>

### **Nutrition**

Nutrition levels have suffered as a result of the economic crisis. According to survey data, more than 53.5 percent of families could not provide adequate nutrition for their children. Low-income families are especially hard hit, with 86.3 percent unable to provide adequate nutrition; virtually all single-parent families (mainly headed by women) are in this situation.<sup>101</sup> The diet of women of reproductive age is deficient in calories and unbalanced in terms of nutrients. The protein deficit among female workers in light industry is 231 calories; among female students it is 363. Twenty-four percent of mothers have inadequate protein and fat consumption. Deficiencies of vitamin A are acute, from a quarter to 25 times below the norm for young people age 18-25.<sup>102</sup> The percentage of live births complicated by maternal anemia increased from 3 percent in 1989 to 24 percent in 1997.<sup>103</sup> Anemia among pregnant women has risen over 3.5 times in recent years (to 32 percent in 1996) and cardiovascular disorders almost twice. As a result, complications have increased, so that only a quarter to a third of all deliveries are classified as normal.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 122-123.

<sup>99</sup> Cabinet of Ministers and Ministry of Health, Ukraine, *The Health of Women and Children in Ukraine* (Kiev: Cabinet of Ministers, 1997), 19.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 88-89.

<sup>103</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 68.

<sup>104</sup> Cabinet of Ministers, *The Health of Women and Children in Ukraine*, 66-68.

**Table 13.15. Demographic and Health Indicators for Ukraine<sup>105</sup>**

Maternal mortality (per 100,000 live births) <sup>106</sup>	<b>1989</b>		<b>1997</b>	
	32.7		25.1	
Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births) <sup>107</sup>	21.73 (1999 est.)			
Abortion rate (per 100 live births) <sup>108</sup>	<b>1990</b>		<b>1997</b>	
	155.1		134.8	
Contraceptive prevalence, latest available year <sup>109</sup>	--			
Total fertility rate (births per woman) <sup>110</sup>	1.34 (1999 est.)			
STD incidence (new cases of syphilis/gonorrhea per 100,000 population) <sup>111</sup>	<b>1990</b>		<b>1997</b>	
	79		208	
Life expectancy at birth <sup>112</sup>	<b>Female</b>		<b>Male</b>	
	<b>1990</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1997</b>
	75.0	73.0	66.0	62.0
Percent of population 65 and older in 1997 <sup>113</sup>	14%			

Sources: As indicated in the footnotes.

<sup>105</sup> General note on sources: The major sources used for purposes of cross-country comparisons are from the MONEE and UNDP reports cited below, because they have data for most countries. MONEE is preferred for maternal mortality data because it is the most up-to-date comparable source of data. For infant mortality, UNDP is the preferred source for two reasons: a) UNDP data concords most closely with DHS data, for the three countries for which DHS surveys have been done; and b) data for six of the study countries cited in the MONEE database are based on Soviet rather than WHO definitions of infant death, impairing comparability. In some cases MONEE figures are significantly different (usually lower) than UNDP figures. Only the MONEE database provides reasonably complete and comparable data on abortion rates, STD incidence and life expectancy by sex. UNDP is the preferred source for total fertility rates because it concords most closely with DHS data in the cases in which it is available. Contraceptive prevalence sources identified are: Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), reproductive health surveys (RHS), UNDP Human Development Report (UNDP), Population Reference Bureau (PRB), Russia Longitudinal Monitoring Survey (RLMS). The year is specified when known.

<sup>106</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 119.

<sup>107</sup> CIA World Factbook 1999.

<sup>108</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 118.

<sup>109</sup> World Bank, GenderStats Database, <http://genderstats.worldbank.org>.

<sup>110</sup> CIA World Factbook 1999.

<sup>111</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 131.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 123-124.

<sup>113</sup> CIA World Factbook 1999.



### **Maternal Mortality**

Maternal mortality has remained at a relatively stable level between 1990 and 1996, around 30 to 33 deaths per 100,000 live births, twice or more the WHO target level for Europe of 15. The ratio decreased somewhat in 1997, to 25.1.<sup>114</sup> Abortion, both safe and unsafe, accounts for 23 percent of all maternal deaths (it is estimated that 5 percent of abortions are performed illegally outside medical facilities; the unsafe abortions lead to death three times more often than legal abortions). The other leading causes of maternal death are unconnected with pregnancy (extragenital pathology), particularly cardiovascular disorders (in 20 percent of these cases the pathology is complicated by midwife errors, thus complicating the birth further, and indicating that physician care is needed, in addition to a midwife). However, in 1996 there was an increase in mortality from pregnancy-related causes (sepsis, bleeding and gestosis), resulting from worsening of pregnant women's health, lower quality of medical assistance and environmental deterioration.

### **Reproductive Health**

Cancer of the female reproductive organs increased in Ukraine between 1989 and 1996, from about 53 (per 100,000 women) to about 56 in 1997, peaking at 57.5 in 1995. Breast cancer is the most prevalent, with an incidence of 51.2, followed by 21.4 for uterine cancer. Since 1989, the number of pap smears performed has decreased, and by 1996 only half of all women got them. The use of mammography to detect breast cancer is limited, and since 1989 the use of mammography has decreased, while breast cancer morbidity has increased.<sup>115</sup>

### **Fertility**

The sharp fall in living standards has also contributed to declining fertility. The total fertility rate (births per woman) has fallen from 1.9 in 1989 to 1.3 in 1997, among the lowest levels in the transition region.<sup>116</sup> Although most married women want two children, inadequate income is cited by 43 percent for not having as many children as they want. Most families opt for one child or often remain childless.

### **Sexually Transmitted Diseases**

The incidence of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) has increased during the transition period. While the incidence of gonorrhea has stabilized, that of syphilis has increased greatly. In 1997 147.7 new cases of syphilis (per 100,000 population) were registered, second only to Russia. Combined incidence of syphilis and gonorrhea (newly registered cases per 100,000 people) has climbed steadily, from 79 in 1990 to 208 in 1997.<sup>117</sup> The incidence of gonorrhea is under-reported, however. In order to help reduce the spread, in 1994 the Ministry of Health permitted anonymous and private treatment for gonorrhea, and the majority of such cases do not get officially reported.

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<sup>114</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 119.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 74-75.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 71, 131.

Fortunately, sex-disaggregated data are available for Ukraine. Morbidity from syphilis among girls aged 16-18 rose from 5.2 cases per 100,000 girls in 1990 to 63.3 in 1996. For boys the same age, the figures were 6.9 and 74.7. However, the rate of increase among girls is much greater than among boys. Syphilis among girls under 18 in Ukraine increased twelve-fold between 1990-1996. Gonorrhea incidence for age 16-18 girls in 1996, 73.7, was about half the level for boys, 146.6. Actual incidence may be higher, since many minors use private doctors to avoid registration.<sup>118</sup>

Until 1995, Ukraine had a low level of AIDS. By early 1998, about 110,000 were infected. About 70 percent of all HIV infections in Ukraine over the period 1995-97 occurred among intravenous drug users, especially among young people in cities bordering the Black Sea. HIV infection and AIDS disproportionately affect men—about 76 percent of HIV infections registered in 1996 were among men. By the end of December 1996, a reported total of 228 Ukrainians were ill with AIDS, among them 70 women (31%).<sup>119</sup>

### **Contraception**

The information available is not adequate to determine current contraceptive prevalence. Available sources either use old figures, data for unspecified years, or express data in an unclear manner. Older or unspecified estimates of prevalence range from 18 percent to 23 percent. According to a 1996 health survey, the most commonly used methods (in descending order) were the IUD (24 percent), condoms (20 percent), rhythm (20 percent) and withdrawal (17 percent).<sup>120</sup> It is not clear, however, whether these figures refer to all women, married women or to women who use contraception. According to the same survey, 21 percent of women who relied on abortion for fertility control said they did not have adequate information on the ways and means of contraception.<sup>121</sup>

### **Abortion**

In fact, over the last several decades, abortion has been the basic method of regulating fertility, and Ukraine has the second highest number of abortions (behind Russia) in the post-Communist world. The abortion rate (per hundred live births) has decreased slowly and unevenly since 1990, from a rate of 155.1 to 134.8 in 1997.<sup>122</sup> Expressed as the number of abortions per 1000 women of reproductive age, the rate has decreased steadily, from 82.6 in 1990, to 51.9 in 1996 (compared to a 1996 level of 20 for the USA and 15 for France).

### **Infant Mortality**

<sup>118</sup> Cabinet of Ministers, *The Health of Women and Children in Ukraine*, 61, 71-72.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 60, 72.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>122</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 117-118.

The main causes of infant mortality are indicative of decreased maternal health: perinatal conditions (35 percent) and congenital anomalies (28.2 percent). According to national statistics (which are also those used in the MONEE database), infant mortality has increased from 12.9 (per 1000 live births) in 1989 to 14.0 in 1997, reaching its highest point, 14.9, in 1993.<sup>123</sup> These figures are lower than those given by UNDP (18 in 1997), in part because Ukraine still uses the Soviet rather than the WHO definition of infant death.

Gender differences are evident in infant and child mortality. In 1995, the death rate among infant boys (under 1 year) exceeded that of girls by 30 percent, among 1-3 year-olds by 20 percent, among 4-7 year-olds by 44 percent, and among 8-14 year-olds by 77 percent. Contributing factors may include the difficulties of raising and caring for children during the crisis and the increasing numbers of orphaned and homeless children. In urban areas, the death rate among boys most notably exceeds that of girls in provinces with large industrial centers, and in regions near large water basins.<sup>124</sup> This could indicate that environmental as well as economic and social factors are contributing to this problem.

### Age

The population of Ukraine is aging rapidly. The proportion of the population aged 65 or older in 1997 was 14 percent,<sup>125</sup> the second highest among the study countries, following Bulgaria. This means that the burden of chronic and age-related disease is likely to increase significantly, particularly for older women, who predominate in the elderly population. This demographic trend also portends increased social and economic problems, making it harder to reverse the depopulation trend, increasing the dependency ratio, and making it harder to overcome the economic crisis.

### Lifestyle-Related Health Issues

The 1996 health survey indicated that, while 87 percent of women consume some alcohol, over 40 percent do so less than once a month and 18 percent drink once a month. Only 9 percent drink once a week, and only 1.4 percent do so 2-3 times a week. Overall, 23 percent of women reported smoking, and 13.6 percent of women smoked during pregnancy.<sup>126</sup> Data from 1990 indicate that smoking begins at a young age: 10 percent of 12-13 year-olds smoked, and 40 percent of 16-17 year-olds. Smoking peaked at 61 percent for the 20-29 age group (not sex-disaggregated). For the period 1990-92, the age-standardized mortality rate for males from lung cancer was 89/100,000, and about 10/100,000 for females. In 1995, tobacco accounted for 31 percent of male deaths and 6 percent of female deaths. Smoking is estimated to be the cause of 43 percent of male deaths for the age group 35-69, and of more than half of all male deaths from cancer.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Cabinet of Ministers, *The Health of Women and Children in Ukraine*, 19; UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 119.

<sup>124</sup> Cabinet of Ministers, *The Health of Women and Children in Ukraine*, 19-20.

<sup>125</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1997*, 198.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>127</sup> World Health Organization, Tobacco or Health Programme, *Tobacco or Health: A Global Status Report, Country Profiles by Region, 1997*, <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/who/whofirst.htm>

Drug use is predominantly a male issue: 80 percent of users are men, and 20 percent women. About 90 percent of registered drug users (56,000 in early 1996) are under 30. Over 85 percent use drugs intravenously (homemade opiates produced from poppies), with consequent high risk of HIV infection from shared needles and other unsafe practices. Further, this group rarely uses condoms, failing to understand that they protect against HIV and STD infections, as well as protecting against pregnancy.<sup>128</sup>

### **Health Care**

Most Ukrainian women give birth in specialized delivery facilities; only an insignificant number give birth at home.<sup>129</sup> There is no information on the type of professional assistance at births (e.g., physicians, midwives) or on the prevalence of prenatal care. However, it is clear that decreasing access to health services and deficiencies in those services have been factors in the worsening situation with regard to reproductive health (e.g., increased birth complications, continued reliance on abortion rather than contraception, continued high maternal mortality) as well as health in general.

The health system emphasizes curative care rather than prevention (family planning services, for example, are inadequate), and the quality of curative care is deteriorating. Private and fee-for-service medicine cannot compensate for the decline in the state health care system because these services are too expensive for most of the population. According to a 1996 health survey, commercial health care services were reported as too expensive by 68.5 percent of those interviewed, and only 14 percent had ever visited a private physician. Only 39.8 percent were able to buy needed medications; of those who couldn't, for nearly all it was because of lack of money.<sup>130</sup> Due to the economic decline, even the state system now requires families to cover some of their health care needs themselves. As a result of financial hardship, many families do not seek medical care and rely on self-treatment.

### ***Education Reform***

The available data on education enrollments, as detailed in Tables 13.16 and 13.17, show a gender differentiation only in tertiary enrollment. For primary enrollment, female students account for 49 percent. Data are unavailable for secondary enrollment.

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<sup>128</sup> Cabinet of Ministers, *The Health of Women and Children in Ukraine*, 61-62.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 20, 32.

**Table 13.16. Female School Enrollments in Ukraine, As a Percent of Total**

Primary		Secondary		Tertiary	
1980	1996	1980	1996	1980	1996
--	49%	--	--	--	56%

Note: -- indicates data are not available.

Source: World Bank, 1999 *World Development Indicators*.

Data on overall enrollment are shown in Table 13.17. Enrollments in kindergarten declined substantially; primary school enrollments also declined, but by only two percentage points. Secondary and tertiary enrollments increased.

**Table 13.17. School Enrollment in Ukraine, Percent of Relevant Population**

Kindergarten		Primary		Secondary		Tertiary	
1989	1997	1989	1997	1990	1997	1989	1997
65.1%	41.6%	92.8%	90.7%	25.8%	27.4%	15.3%	20.1%

Source: UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 133-134.

Although data are not available for Ukraine from the MONEE Project (our source of cross-country comparable data), information from the UNDP indicate that education expenditures have fallen since the transition. Expenditures fell from 5.54 percent of GNP in 1995 to 4.97 percent in 1996. The 1996 education budget provided only half of the funds necessary for operation.<sup>131</sup>

In order to make up for the reduction in government spending, the education system has undertaken several cost-saving measures. These include requiring payment for the use of textbooks of up to 20 percent of their value, elimination of free hot lunches for elementary school students, increasing the number of students per class, increasing the ratio of teachers to students in universities, and charging fees for preparatory programs in universities. In addition, twenty percent of all students at public institutes and universities in 1996 paid tuition for their studies.<sup>132</sup>

### **Findings**

**With the shredding of the social safety net, how have women versus men fared in access to / support from social programs?** The current social protection system favors women, in eligibility, benefits, or both, in five of 10 benefit programs.

<sup>131</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1997*, Chapter 7.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

**Do data show women’s poverty rates to be greater than men’s?** Poverty in Ukraine, though it has increased during the transition, is not as severe as in other countries of the former Soviet Union and is clustered around the poverty line. Gender is not a major factor in the composition of this poverty.

**What are the health-related impacts of the transition?** Life expectancy decreased for both men and women. Maternal mortality remained stable, and abortion rates fell. Sexually transmitted diseases – syphilis, gonorrhea, HIV, and AIDS – all affect more men than women.

**What differential impacts has pension reform had on men’s and women’s access to benefits?** Pension reform to date in Ukraine has included paying pension arrears, a move important to both male and female pensioners. The creation of individual pension accounts may have a disproportionately negative impact on female pensioners, and this impact is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

**What are salient changes in the state-funded education system (secondary and higher) since 1989/91?** Enrollment of kindergarten and primary students decreased during the transition, and female students continue to make up about half (49 percent) of primary enrollment. Secondary and tertiary enrollments increased, but male students accounted for only 44 percent of tertiary enrollment (sex-disaggregated data are unavailable for secondary students).

### ***Opportunities for Future Research***

**Additional research on gender and intrahousehold poverty is needed.** Although the World Bank’s data indicate gender, in particular being female, is not a strong correlate of poverty, the Bank also suggests that women may be poorer if intrahousehold poverty is taken into account. Data on nutrition (presented in the section on health status and the impact of the transition) indicate that women suffer from anemia and have protein deficiencies. These data may warn that within families women are less likely to eat as well as other family members.

**Use Ukraine to inform our knowledge of sexually-transmitted diseases in the region.** Ukraine is one of the few countries with sex-disaggregated data on sexually-transmitted diseases. Additional research in Ukraine could help us better understand why males are at greater risk.

**Falling kindergarten and primary enrollments should be monitored.** While no gender differentiation is yet evident at the lower educational levels, declines in early education should be monitored to ensure that gender gaps do not emerge.

## Chapter 14: Albania



### Basic Indicators

For additional information, please see Country Data Table in the Appendix.

<i>Demographics</i>			
Population <sup>1</sup> (1998)	3,364,571 (1999 est.); 1,726,000 female (51.3%)		
Rural / Urban <sup>2</sup>	Urban 38%		
Ethnic composition <sup>3</sup>	Albanian 95%, Greeks 3%, other 2% (Vlachs, Gypsies, Serbs, and Bulgarians) (1989 est.)		
<i>Economic Growth and Development</i>			
GDP per capita (all in 1987\$) <sup>4</sup>	<b>1985</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1997</b>
	\$696	\$640	\$562
GDP per capita (PPP for 1997) <sup>4</sup>	<b>Female</b>		<b>Male</b>
	\$1,501		\$2,711
Registered Unemployment Rate <sup>1</sup>	<b>1992</b>		<b>1997</b>
	7.0%		13.9%
<i>Democracy and Governance</i>			
Women in Parliament <sup>5</sup>	5.2%		
Women in Ministerial Positions	17.6%		
<i>Social Transition</i>			
Life Expectancy by Sex(1999 est.) <sup>3</sup>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Average</b>
	72.33	65.92	69
Combined first, second, and third level gross school enrollment ratio (1997) <sup>4</sup>	<b>Female</b>		<b>Male</b>
	68%		67%
Population below poverty line <sup>2</sup>	NA		

Sources: 1) UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*.

2) World Bank Country Data, <http://wbln0018.worldbank.org/eca/eca.nsf>.

3) CIA World Factbook 1999, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>.

4) UNDP Human Development Indicators 1999.

5) Inter Parliamentary Union website, <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>.

6) CIA Chiefs of State and Cabinets Members website, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/chiefs/index.html> and Women in Governments website, <http://hjem.get2net.dk/Womeningovernments/>.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### ***The Economic Transition***

- The labor participation rate has contracted significantly for men and women since 1989, with women withdrawing from the labor force in high numbers.
- There is a significant difference in the GDP per women and the GDP per man; this may be due to the fact that women comprise more than half the population, while thirty percent fewer women participate in the labor force. Gender-disaggregated wage data were not available.
- Unemployment grew to 27 percent early in the transition and, while now lower, remains a serious problem for both men and women.
- No useful data were available on the informal economy in Albania.
- The principle area of privatization that has affected women is the privatization of agricultural lands. Agriculture has surged to predominate the economy, and the situation of women as agricultural workers remains largely unstudied.
- The lack of disaggregated data by sex hinders our ability to assess concretely and accurately women's new roles in the private sector as managers and entrepreneurs.

### ***The Democratic Transition***

- Women are generally much less politically active now than they were under communism, both in terms of input and direct involvement.
- The NGO sector is weak and although there are three promising women's groups, it appears they will be able to do little to improve women's situations until they have significantly more political clout.
- Rule of law is still weak in Albania. Legally, men and urban women appear to have gained some rights since the communist period, but rural women have been effectively deprived of their legal property rights. Women still do not have equal rights to either marriage or divorce. Men are also suffering from some discrimination, as they alone now have compulsory military service.

### ***The Social Transition***

- The social safety net in Albania is gender-differentiated, and women receive preferential treatment in three of nine social benefit programs.
- Data on poverty in Albania are contradictory, and few gender-disaggregated data are available. A World Bank study provided data on urban households showing that women are more likely to be poor than men.
- Life expectancy decreased for both men and women. In addition, maternal mortality decreased, as did abortion rates.
- Pension reform is in the beginning stages, and no data are available on gender-differentiated impacts.
- Education enrollments decreased at the kindergarten and primary levels. Girls made up slightly less than half of primary and secondary enrollments but 57 percent of tertiary enrollments.



## Country Overview

**Introduction:** Albania is located in the western part of the Balkan Peninsula on the Strait of Otranto, the southern entrance to the Adriatic Sea. It encompasses an area of 11,100 square miles (28,748 square kilometres), with a maximum length from north to south of about 210 miles (340 kilometres) and a maximum width of about 95 miles. It is bounded to the northwest by Montenegro, to the northeast by the Kosovo region of Serbia, to the east by Macedonia, and to the southeast and south by Greece. To the west and southwest, Albania is bordered by the Adriatic and Ionian seas. Albania's immediate western neighbour, Italy, lies some 50 miles across the Adriatic. The capital city is Tiranë.

**People:** There are an estimated seven million ethnic Albanians in the world, but fewer than half of them live within the boundaries of the Albanian state. The largest concentrations of Albanian-speaking people outside Albania are in the portions of Yugoslavia and Macedonia bordering the country; notable is the Kosovo region, where Albanians constitute a majority population. There are also large Albanian communities in Italy, Greece, Turkey, Bulgaria, and Romania. Since the 1970s, many Albanians have emigrated to western Europe and the United States. No country in Europe has a more homogeneous population than Albania, where non-Albanians account for only 2 percent of the total population. Greeks, concentrated mainly in the southeast, and Slavs, almost all of them Macedonians, constitute the largest minorities.

**Cultural life:** The government has made a conscious effort to encourage and preserve the nation's rich folk life. There are some 4,300 cultural institutions of various sorts in the country. The National Library, as well as the State Choir and the Opera and Ballet Theatre, are located in Tiranë. Albania's best-known writer is Ismail Kadare, a novelist and poet whose writings have been translated into some 30 foreign languages. Cultural development in general, however, has been handicapped by restrictions on freedom. Under more than four decades of communist rule, the government imposed strict censorship on the press, publications, and the performing arts, and these restrictions were not eased until as recently as 1990.

**Government:** The People's Assembly is the legislative branch of the government. Its deputies are elected by direct suffrage of all citizens over 18 to four-year terms and meet in regular session four times per year. The Presidency of the People's Assembly acts on behalf of the assembly between sessions. The president, who is also commander-in-chief of the armed forces, is elected by the assembly for a five-year term. The president can declare a state of emergency, dissolve parliament, and call new elections. With the approval of the People's Assembly, the president also appoints the prime minister, who chairs the Council of Ministers. Appointed by the People's Assembly, the Council of Ministers is the executive branch of the government. It is in charge of the country's social, economic, and cultural activities. The Supreme Court is the country's highest judicial organ, and its members are elected by the People's Assembly. The Ministry of Justice supervises the implementation of the country's laws.

**Education:** The government has devoted considerable resources to the educational development of the country. Schooling is compulsory between ages 7 and 15. Education at the primary and secondary levels is free, and higher-education fees are based on family income. The University of Tiranë (1957) is the country's major institution of higher education. The government has also built an impressive network of professional and vocational schools.

**Health and Welfare:** Albania has a relatively well-developed health care system, with all services reported to be provided free of charge. There are about 20 doctors for every 10,000 inhabitants. There has been a considerable reduction in the incidence of most infectious diseases, with malaria and syphilis having been especially widespread in the past. Nevertheless, despite real improvements in health care, Albania still has a high infant-mortality rate, about 25 deaths per 1,000 live-born children. This is a result of poor nutrition and the difficulty of obtaining medical treatment in many rural areas. Life expectancy, at 69 years for men and 75 years for women, is slightly below the average for southern Europe.

From *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (<http://www.britannica.com>)

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter explores the economic, democratic, and social transitions in Albania. Each section seeks to answer a set of research questions which are set out at the beginning of the sections. In addition to subsections addressing each of the research questions, each section includes a subsection on findings and opportunities for future research.

## THE ECONOMIC TRANSITION

This section seeks to answer the following questions as they relate to Albania:

1. Have there been changes in labor force participation by women and men during the transition?
2. Has unemployment increased, whether official or hidden, and is there a gender dimension to unemployment?
3. Is there evidence for wage gap trends and wage differentials?
4. How has the growth of the informal economy reflected gender differentiation?
5. What is the impact of privatization of state enterprises on women's and men's employment?
6. What role do women play in new managerial positions or business formation in the growing private sector?

In the subsections below we discuss GDP, labor force participation, unemployment, the informal economy, and privatization and present data on each of these issues as they relate to gender. Our findings on the impact of the economic transition on gender are presented in the concluding subsection.

### *Contextual Information about the Economy*

The Post World War II National Liberation Front government of Enver Hoxha began as a close ally of Tito's communist Yugoslavia, and the latter's split with the USSR in 1948 led to Albania's own separation from Soviet influence.<sup>1</sup> The withdrawal of Soviet economic assistance from Albania in 1961 left Hoxha searching for alternative allies.<sup>2</sup> The nation's economy was increasingly backward, exacerbated by the inflexible isolationist trade outlook, rigidly centralized planning and administration, and virtually total state ownership of all means of production<sup>3</sup>

Gaining China as ally and aide during the 1960s did not improve domestic economic conditions, and the relationship faltered as China introduced market-oriented reforms during the 1970s and attempted a rapprochement with the United States until 1978, when China withdrew all diplomatic and economic assistance. With China's departure, Albania lost in one year about half of its external commerce and quickly declined into economic ruin.<sup>4</sup>

Hoxha's death in 1985 brought few changes. However, the 1992 electoral victory of the Democratic Party of Albania promised improvement and radical transformation. The new government initiated Western-oriented market economic and democratic reforms including large-scale privatization, price and exchange rate liberalization, fiscal consolidation, and

<sup>1</sup> Background Notes: US Department of State, [http://www.state.gov/www/background\\_notes/albania\\_9903\\_bgn.html](http://www.state.gov/www/background_notes/albania_9903_bgn.html).

<sup>2</sup> Michael Kaser, *The Economy*, 113 (full citation not available).

<sup>3</sup> Kaser, *The Economy*, 112.

<sup>4</sup> Background Notes: US Department of State, [http://www.state.gov/www/background\\_notes/albania\\_9903\\_bgn.html](http://www.state.gov/www/background_notes/albania_9903_bgn.html); Kaser, *The Economy*, 113.

monetary restraint.<sup>5</sup> Yet the costs of this transition were enormous, and the obstacles to economic growth seemed insurmountable. Even when the new president Berisha entered office in April 1992, the nation's real GDP stood at 60 percent of its 1989 level. Indeed, the late collapse of communism in Albania proved more chaotic, more destructive to productivity and standard of living than in any other Eastern European country. A mass exodus of the poor and of political opponents to Italy and Greece further exacerbated the economic losses in 1991 and 1992.<sup>6</sup>

Yet despite these difficulties, Berisha's macroeconomic policies seemed to bring some success. Albania enjoyed an output recovery in 1993 as private agricultural production developed from the chaos of decollectivization. Real GDP rose to 85 percent of its 1989 value, about an 11 percent growth from the previous year.<sup>7</sup> GDP continued to grow at 8 percent in 1994 and 1995, mostly fueled by developments in the private sector, and the 250 percent annual inflation of 1991 dropped to single-digit figures. In fact, the response of private entrepreneurs to Albania's liberalized markets was faster and more positive than officials had expected.<sup>8</sup>

Unfortunately, however, this prosperity was short-lived. The miracle of Albania's fast-paced economic liberalization lacked adequate institutional regulation to keep the new system in check. The US State Department characterizes Albanian business-government relations as wrought with "endemic corruption," and points to nominal police authority and ineffective government regulation.<sup>9</sup> In late 1996 and early 1997, increasing numbers of investors, managers, and unsuspecting money-savers were drawn into pyramid financial schemes, which all collapsed. Widespread civil disorder followed the collapses, highlighting Albanian government corruption and ineptitude.<sup>10</sup> GDP growth in 1996 was negligible, and contracted by 9 percent in 1997, while inflation rose from 20 percent in 1996 to 50 percent in 1997.<sup>11</sup> At that point, after a brief economic recovery and a startling economic implosion, Albania was Europe's poorest country, with a GNP per capita of \$558.<sup>12</sup> The government was replaced in 1997, and the struggle began again for macroeconomic stability. The outbreak of the Kosovo crisis in March 1999 has brought further difficulties to those efforts, particularly as the tide of refugees, adding nearly 15 percent to the nation's population by mid-May 1999, must be accommodated into the economy.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 2 and 112.

<sup>6</sup> Background Notes: US Department of State, [http://www.state.gov/www/background\\_notes/albania\\_9903\\_bgn.html](http://www.state.gov/www/background_notes/albania_9903_bgn.html).

<sup>7</sup> Kaser, *The Economy*, 113.

<sup>8</sup> Background Notes: US Department of State, [http://www.state.gov/www/background\\_notes/albania\\_9903\\_bgn.html](http://www.state.gov/www/background_notes/albania_9903_bgn.html).

<sup>9</sup> US Department of State: Albania Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1998, [http://www.state.gov/www/global/human\\_rights/1998\\_hrp\\_report/albania.html](http://www.state.gov/www/global/human_rights/1998_hrp_report/albania.html).

<sup>10</sup> IMF Staff Country Report No. 99/69, *Albania: Recent Economic Developments and Statistical Appendix*, July 1999, 3, and Background Notes: US Department of State, [http://www.state.gov/www/background\\_notes/albania\\_9903\\_bgn.html](http://www.state.gov/www/background_notes/albania_9903_bgn.html)..

<sup>11</sup> Background Notes: US Department of State, [http://www.state.gov/www/background\\_notes/albania\\_9903\\_bgn.html](http://www.state.gov/www/background_notes/albania_9903_bgn.html)..

<sup>12</sup> Kaser, *The Economy*, 112.

<sup>13</sup> IMF Staff Country Report No. 99/69, *Albania: Recent Economic Developments and Statistical Appendix*, 3.

**Table 14.1. Change in Real GDP, 1989-1998 (1989=100)**

1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
100	90	65.1	60.4	66.2	72.4	78.8	86	80	87.2

Source: UNDP, Human Development Indicators, 1999.

### ***Labor Force Participation***

Labor force participation for women has declined substantially during the transition years. From a peak of 84 percent in 1989, overall labor force participation (both men and women) had declined to about 73 percent in 1995. Most of those who have left the work force and are no longer working or seeking work (about 200,000, or a quarter of the 1990 labor force) were women).<sup>14</sup> Employment in 1995 as a proportion of 1990's figure was 88 percent for men, versus 72 percent for women.<sup>15</sup> Table 4.2 shows that women have dropped out of the labor market in large numbers. In 1989, a higher percentage of adult, non-retired women were working than men; by 1995, a higher percentage of men were working than in 1989, whereas women's participation had declined by 25 percent.

**Table 14.2. Labor Force Participation and Employment**

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Labor Force (as % of working age pop.)	83.5	83.2	80.2	80.5	76.4	79.7	72.8
Female	84.6	81.6	75.6	75.4	67.3	68.7	59.8
Male	82.5	84.7	84.6	85.7	85.9	90.4	85.6
Employment (as % of working age pop.)	77.4	75.3	72.9	59.2	59.3	65.1	63.4
Female	77.5	72.7	67.7	54.1	51.0	55.1	51.0
Male	77.3	77.7	78.0	64.5	67.9	74.8	75.6

Source: Allison, *Growing Out of Poverty*, 9.

Contradicting this sharp drop in labor force participation documented in the World Bank report *Growing Out of Poverty* were the figures from the World Development report, which indicate little change in participation rates between past years and 1997. These may be incorrect, or they may reflect the fact that women's participation increased after 1980, only to drop again during the transition (Table 14.3)

<sup>14</sup> Christine Allison, *Albania: Growing Out of Poverty*, Report No. 15698-ALB (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1997), 7.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

**Table 14.3. Labor Force Participation**

Labor Force Participation (ratio f/m)		Labor Force Participation (% of total labor force)			
1970	1997	1980		1998	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
0.7	0.7	61	39	59	41

Source: World Bank, 1999 World Development Indicators

This occurs in the context of some significant shifts in the sectoral composition of the workforce. Since the economic shocks of the early 1990s, the agricultural sector has grown relative to the rest of the economy. In 1990, agricultural production (including forestry and fishing) employed 48 percent of the population and contributed 40 percent to the GDP. As industry and transport declined to about 30 percent of GDP agriculture has taken on a much larger role, 56 percent of GDP in 1997.<sup>16</sup> At that point, 410,000 workers were employed in the non-agriculture formal sector: 211,800 in the private sector and 198,600 in the public sector, while 750,000 workers were employed in agriculture.<sup>17</sup> Table 14.4 shows that women predominate in agriculture and hold a relatively low percentage of positions in the service sector. This contrasts with other countries in Southeastern Europe and the New Independent States, in which often the majority of women work in service provision.

**Table 14.4. Labor Force By Sector and Gender, Percent Of Male Or Female Labor Force**

	Male	Female
<b>Agriculture</b>	51%	60%
<b>Industry</b>	26%	19%
<b>Services</b>	24%	21%

Note: -- indicates data are not available for Albania.

Sources: For employment by sector, World Bank Gender Stats database (latest available data are for 1990).

### **Unemployment**

Unemployment is virtually impossible to track historically, as no official data were collected before 1991, and current figures on underemployment and absenteeism are still unreliable.<sup>18</sup> When statistical data finally were assembled in 1992, about 27 percent of the population was officially unemployed, predominantly young people.<sup>19</sup> The numbers of unemployed have been expanded as state enterprises either dissolved or abandoned their employment and production targets, and as residence restrictions were lifted.<sup>20</sup> In 1998, official unemployment was 17

<sup>16</sup> Kaser, *The Economy*, 113-114.

<sup>17</sup> US Department of State: Albania Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1998, [http://www.state.gov/www/global/human\\_rights/1998\\_hrp\\_report/albania.html](http://www.state.gov/www/global/human_rights/1998_hrp_report/albania.html).

<sup>18</sup> Kaser, *The Economy*, 117.

<sup>19</sup> Allison, *Albania: Growing Out of Poverty*, 8.

<sup>20</sup> Kaser, *The Economy*, 113.

percent, or about 226,400 persons.<sup>21</sup> Gender-disaggregated data are available on unemployment only through 1995 (Table 14.5).

Fluctuations in unemployment are partly due to reclassifications. Employment fell by 400,000 between 1990 and 1993. The labor has grown since then. However, much of that can be attributed to the expansion of agriculture. With the distribution of land to individuals in late 1993 and 1994, 160,000 former state farm workers, considered unemployed, were granted land and registered as self-employed. There has also been a steady drop in registered unemployed as benefits run out or as individuals withdraw from the labor force. At the end of 1997, however, the long-term unemployed (those out of work more than a year) numbered 70 percent of the unemployed, about 135,000 persons, both men and women; and half of these were heads of household.<sup>22</sup>

**Table 14.5 Unemployment**

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Unemployment (thousands)	11	150	140	394	301	261	171
Unemployment (% of working age pop)	7.4	9.5	9.1	26.5	24.2	18.9	14.7
<b>Female</b>	8.4	10.9	10.5	28.3	24.2	19.9	14.7
<b>Male</b>	6.3	8.4	7.8	24.8	20.9	17.3	11.7

Source: Allison, *Growing Out of Poverty*, 9.

Albania's unemployment problem parallels its very high population growth, a trend encouraged by the communist regime. The country's population rose from 1.2 million in 1950 to 3.3 million in 1990, and at the end of the 1980s the population was still growing at a rate of 2.1 percent per year, the highest in Europe. Almost two-thirds of the population was under the age of 26 and the annual addition to the labor force was around 40,000.<sup>23</sup>

### ***Wage Gaps and Wage Differentials***

Wage data are not available by gender. The average monthly wage for workers in the public sector is approximately \$69 (10,015 lek). The legal minimum wage for all workers over age 16 is about \$40 (5,800 lek) per month. Many workers seek additional jobs in order to maintain subsistence level income. Remittances from friends and family living abroad are also a significant source of income for many Albanians.<sup>24</sup> Wages lost ground through 1995, but then recovered through two major wage increases. Although no data are available for private sector wages, the average is believed to be considerably higher than in the public sector (Table 14.6).

<sup>21</sup> US State Department: Albania Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1998, [http://www.state.gov/www/global/human\\_rights/1998\\_hrp\\_report/albania.html](http://www.state.gov/www/global/human_rights/1998_hrp_report/albania.html).

<sup>22</sup> Allison, *Albania: Growing Out of Poverty*, 8.

<sup>23</sup> Kaser, *The Economy*, 113.

<sup>24</sup> Allison, *Albania: Growing Out of Poverty*, 13, 2.

**Table 14.6. Wage Trends in Average Public Sector Wages and Prices, 1996-1997**

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
<b>Wages</b>	100	127.5	312.8	541.1	838.2	1152.3	1440.4
<b>CPI</b>	100	135.5	441.7	817.2	1000.0	1079.1	1165.4

Source: Allison, *Growing Out of Poverty*, p. 8

The “real GDP per capita” by male and female for Albania, calculated in the UNDP *Human Development Report*, are figures based on estimates of the ratio of the average female wage to male wage and the percentage shares of women and men in the economically active population. The GDP per capita by gender provides an approximation of the relative economic situation of men and women. As Table 14.7 shows, female per capita GDP is calculated at about 55 percent of male per capita, in parity purchasing power.

**Table 14.7. Per Capita GDP**

Per Capita GDP (1987 US\$)			Female real GDP per capita (1997 PPP\$)	Male real GDP per capita (1997 PPP\$)
1985	1990	1997	1997	1997
\$696	\$640	\$562	\$1,501	\$2,711

Source: UNDP, Human Development Indicators, 1999.

### ***Sectoral Issues: Privatization and Economic Activity***

The burgeoning business life in Albania has assumed two general titles, the formal and the informal. Little information exists to measure women’s performance in this new sector of the economy. Legal codes do not exclude women from employment or certain sectors of the economy. They generally are not represented, however, in the upper echelons of the business community.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, women are afforded all the rights to equal pay as men, but because they are typically relegated to positions of less importance, they rarely realize equal remuneration. The general stratification of women into lower positions extends into all areas of Albanian life. The social and economic accomplishments made under socialism continue to wither, reducing women’s participation in the formal sector and forcing them into the growing informal sector. The high degree of education which women achieved under socialism goes unused as they become the majority of new street vendors selling food and supplies to survive—a phenomenon seen in most post-socialist countries.

The isolation of Albanian women from the growing business class threatens their future position in society. As their representation continues to fall in the new economic life, women will face increased pressure to find work in the informal economy, forgoing opportunities for skills and experience in the formal sector. Albania on the whole has suffered tremendous turmoil since 1990 leaving all segments of the population uneasy about their ability to survive in the post-

<sup>25</sup> US Department of State: Albania Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1998, [http://www.state.gov/www/global/human\\_rights/1998\\_hrp\\_report/albania.html](http://www.state.gov/www/global/human_rights/1998_hrp_report/albania.html).



socialist world. For women, the collapse of the socialist economy has proven particularly difficult.

### **Privatization**

The position of women in the privatization process and development of small business remains largely unknown. Racked by the social turmoil that followed the collapse of the 1997 pyramid schemes and the neighboring conflict in the Balkans, the Albanian government has paid little attention to the advancement of women through equal opportunity in the newly privatized economy.

Under the terms of Albania's 1991 Privatization Law, most of the nation's small businesses—such as services shops—were privatized, offering many Albanian citizens an opportunity for personal economic growth and freedom. This was viewed as significant progress for a country that for decades worked within the inefficient and often stifling parameters of socialism. In the new private sector, many are self-employed, and little is known about wages and labor conditions in this sector.

The government also employed a voucher scheme allowing citizens to buy shares of firms to further the process of privatization of medium-scale industry. Again, the Albanian government found success and little difficulty in the divestiture of medium scale industry, creating a policy to privatize 950 industries (employing 160,000 people) by 1995.<sup>26</sup> However, many members of the government and also citizens have been loath to completely transfer the nation's strategic industries, such as the energy and mining industries, citing their importance to the well-being of the nation. This has been a policy of many post-socialist nations in their struggle to become market economies: advancing privatization in agriculture and small- and medium-scale industry, yet stopping short of total privatization to protect industries employing large amounts of people and to provide necessary services to the nation.

### **Two Systems of Property Privatization**

#### *The Privatization of Agricultural Lands*

After years of dogmatic adherence to socialist principles, 1990 began the transition to a quasi-market economy with the enactment of agricultural and homeowner reforms. Family ownership of property was established in the 1991 Law on Land that allotted former cooperative-owned land to the families that worked it.<sup>27</sup> Each family was allowed 2000 square meters of land in the mountainous regions and farmers in the lowlands could increase their holdings up to 2000 square meters. However, issues arose early in the process, since there is no legal definition of "family," making it difficult to know who should be considered a joint owner of the property.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Kaser, *The Economy*, 116

<sup>27</sup> Susana Lastarria-Cornhiel and Rachel Wheeler, *Gender, Ethnicity, and Landed Property in Albania*, Working Paper No.18, Albania Series (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin, Land Tenure Center, 1998), 2.

<sup>28</sup> Rachel Wheeler and Mirvjena Laha, *Property Rights, Women and the Family in Contemporary Albania*, (Tirana, Albania: *Immovable Property Registration Service (IPRS), Project Management Office*, 1995), 8.

As privatization began in rural areas, land was allotted to each family based on number of people in the household, but the title bearer was the head of household. This system may be detrimental to both men and women because when the property was allotted, only the head of household's name was placed on the title and there is no record of who the other household members were at the time of issuance.<sup>29</sup> Very few women were listed on property titles; on average, between 1.6 and 3 percent of title bearers in a given region were women.<sup>30</sup>

Since all household members technically have a share in the property, family members who behave irresponsibly can compromise the tenure rights of their relatives. If the head of household gambles away the property, the other family members have no recourse. If a family member wants to leave the countryside and move to an urban area, s/he might try to sell her/his share, breaking up the land and challenging family tenure.<sup>31</sup>

In northern Albania, land was not distributed according to the law, but rather the families to whom it belonged before collectivization retook it.<sup>32</sup> Titles have not been issued due to the irregularity of the land transfer.

Toward the end of July 1990, farmers were allowed to set prices for their products.<sup>33</sup> Albania, like most of countries in transition from socialism, found the distribution of agricultural land and domestic dwellings to be a straightforward aspect of transition. By 1993, 92 percent of agricultural land was privatized.

#### *The Privatization of Urban Property*

In urban areas, men and women were treated equally and legally have equal property rights, which protect all adults in the household. The privatization process consisted of the state selling apartments to their residents. Anyone over the age of 18 was identified as a co-owner and was required to sign the sales contract and property titles.<sup>34</sup> Lastarria-Cornhiel and Wheeler also found that many people are unaware that men and women have equal rights to property under the law. Further, even if they did know, women would still not press for ownership either because they do not see a need for it or because tradition is strong.<sup>35</sup>

A recent survey confirms these attitudes toward property rights. Researchers surveyed 180 households (60 in each region) and found that though women were considered the head of household in 2 to 5 percent of cases, 100 percent of the property titleholders were men.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>30</sup> Lastarria-Cornhiel and Wheeler, *Gender, Ethnicity, and Landed Property in Albania*, 8.

<sup>31</sup> Wheeler and Laha, *Property Rights, Women and the Family in Contemporary Albania*, 9.

<sup>32</sup> Lastarria-Cornhiel and Wheeler, *Gender, Ethnicity, and Landed Property in Albania*, 9.

<sup>33</sup> Kaser, *The Economy*, 114.

<sup>34</sup> Wheeler and Laha, *Property Rights, Women and the Family in Contemporary Albania*, 8.

<sup>35</sup> Lastarria-Cornhiel and Wheeler, *Gender, Ethnicity, and Landed Property in Albania*, 11, 15.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 13.

**Table 14.8: Percentage of Men and Women  
Who Feel the Titleholder Has More Property Rights**

Northern Region		Central Region		Southern Region	
Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
12%	44%	32%	35%	4%	0%

*Source:* Lastarria-Cornhiel and Wheeler, "Gender, Ethnicity, and Landed Property in Albania," 15.

Table 14.8 shows considerable variation in attitudes toward titleholders' property rights across Albania's three regions. Only the northern region shows a statistically significant difference in the responses of men and women. Opinions in the southern region show much more egalitarian tendencies among family members there. This question did not specify, however, who respondents include in their perception of family members with property rights (i.e., brothers, elderly parents, children).

**Table 14.9: Percentage of Men and Women  
Who Think the Wife Has Rights as an Equal Owner**

Northern Region		Central Region		Southern Region	
Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
100%	97%	76%	81%	93%	65%

*Source:* Lastarria-Cornhiel and Wheeler, "Gender, Ethnicity, and Landed Property in Albania," 20.

Their responses to the question about the titleholder having greater rights to the property notwithstanding, Table 14.9 above shows that the majority of men and women in all three regions believe that the wife has rights as an equal owner of the property. This is an interesting finding, given that the majority of people were unaware that men and women legally have equal property rights.

### **The Informal Economy**

Little data, beyond that reported above, are available on the growth of the private economy and the degree to which new enterprises are registered. Studies have not been conducted that provide gender-related information on the informal economy in Albania.

### **Findings**

**Have there been changes in labor force participation by women and men during the transition?** The labor participation rate has contracted significantly for men and women since 1989. There are now thirty percent fewer women in the labor force, in spite representing more than half the population.

**Has unemployment increased, whether official or hidden, and is there a gender dimension to unemployment?** Unemployment grew to 27 percent early in the transition and, while now

lower, remains a serious problem for both men and women. It is not clear who is more adversely affected by unemployment.

**Is there evidence for wage gap trends and wage differentials?** Gender-disaggregated wage data were not available.

**How has the growth of the informal economy reflected gender differentiation?** No useful data were available on the informal economy in Albania.

**What is the impact of privatization of state enterprises on women's and men's employment?** The principle area of privatization that has affected women is the privatization of agricultural lands. Agriculture has surged to predominate the economy, and the situation of women as agricultural workers remains largely unstudied.

**What role do women play in new managerial positions or business formation in the growing private sector?** The lack of disaggregated data by sex hinders our ability to assess concretely and accurately women's new roles in the private sector as managers and entrepreneurs.

### *Opportunities for Future Research*

**Information on labor market circumstances is limited and outdated for Albania.** The best gender-disaggregated information on labor market participation, wages, employment, and unemployment is based on 1995 information.

**The informal economy and the role of women and men as workers within it remains undocumented.** Research should be carried out to expand our knowledge of its characteristics.

Agriculture has become dominant in the Albanian economy, and most agriculture is now carried out on newly privatized smallholdings. **Little is known about how women and men have adapted to the agricultural economy**, how they are faring, and if small-scale agriculture is introducing greater inequity into economic relationships among men and women.

## THE DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION

The purpose of this section is to discuss the differential experience of Albanian men and women in the political sphere before and after the transition to democracy. The primary questions to be answered are:

1. Is there differential participation by women and men in the public sphere?
  - a) What is the role of women in party politics?
  - b) What is the representation of women in elected government positions, locally and nationally?
  - c) What is the representation of women in appointed governmental positions?
2. How is gender reflected in the development of civil society, especially NGOs?
  - a) What is the role of women in different types of NGOs?
  - b) Have NGOs developed that advocate for gender issues?
3. How has the rule of law been institutionalized and what impact is there on gender?
  - a) Have there been *de jure* legal reforms with an impact on gender?
  - b) Do men and women have equal legal rights, *de jure* and *de facto*? (Is there sufficient information to be able to contrast between *de jure* and *de facto*?)
  - c) Have there been reforms related to family law: inheritance, ownership, marriage, and divorce that impact on gender?

These questions are addressed below beginning with a brief discussion of how men and women participated in politics and civil society during the communist era and how the patterns of that participation has changed since independence and how they are now affected by rule of law.

### *Political Activity in the Communist Period*

The Labor Party was the ruling communist party in Albania for forty years. It established a militarized political culture in Albania and exercised its authority arbitrarily.<sup>37</sup> Government was highly centralized and local governments had little or no power so citizens were not allowed to make decisions on local issues reflecting local needs. Few people outside the Politburo had any access to power. Under communist rule, women were allocated approximately 30 percent of the seats for national assembly deputies or local councilors, holding 29.2 percent in 1989.<sup>38</sup> Women were not effective in those arenas, in part because of the criteria for their selection by the Democratic Front (an organ of the Labor Party) and in part because decisions were made in the Politburo (which had no female members) and rubber-stamped in the People's Assembly.<sup>39</sup> The Women's Union of Albania was the Labor Party's official women's organization. Its agenda was dictated by the Labor Party's politburo.<sup>40</sup>

### *Political Activity since the Transition*

<sup>37</sup> Andrew C. Janos, "What Was Communism: A Retrospective in Comparative Analysis," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 1, 1996, 20.

<sup>38</sup> Tarifa, "Disappearing from Politics: Social Change and Women in Albania," 282.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 272.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 270.

There is conflicting information about the level of interest in politics among Albanian women. One author found that most Albanian women find politics to be dirty and to be avoided.<sup>41</sup> Another, however, found that women have about the same level of interest in politics as men, but have fewer opportunities to discuss political matters because they have less leisure time than men. Women also have less access to information; men get most of their political news from print sources whereas women learn about politics from television.<sup>42</sup>

There is a significant difference in the political participation of men and women, but more so among women.<sup>43</sup> Men are more likely to take political action than women. Urban women are much more likely to take political action, such as writing a letter to the editor of a newspaper or contacting a public official, than their rural counterparts. There is no gender-specific information available on the quintessential political activity, voting, for any election since the transformation.

Further, good data are currently not available on female membership in political parties. We do know that no political party has elected a woman as its leader in Albania.<sup>44</sup> The Democratic and Socialist Parties have women's fora that advocate women's concerns. These groups are interesting in that they claim to not be political,<sup>45</sup> though advocacy is by nature political. This may be in response to the negative perception women seem to have of politics (Table 14.10).

**Table 14.10: Political Positions Held by Men and Women in Albania**

Position	Total Number	Held by Women		Held by Men	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Members of Parliament	155	8	5.2 %	147	94.8 %
Cabinet Ministers	17	3	17.6 %	14	82.4 %
Pres. Admin. Employees	NA	NA		NA	
Regional Administrators	NA	NA		NA	
Members of Judiciary	NA	NA		NA	
High Court	9	NA		NA	
Appeals Courts	NA	NA		NA	
Local Courts	NA	NA		NA	
Political Party Leaders	NA	0	0.0 %	NA	100.0 %

Note: Data are from January 2000.

Sources: Inter Parliamentary Union website, <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>; Women in Governments website, <http://hjem.get2net.dk/Womeningovernments/>; CIA Chiefs of State and Cabinet Members web page, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/chiefs/index.html>; Karatnycky, Motyl, and Graybow (eds), *Nations in Transit 1998*.

## The Legislative Branch

The withdrawal of women from politics in Albania is most obvious in the legislature where

<sup>41</sup> Chris Corrin, *Gender Issues and Women's Organisations in Albania*, (Oxfam, 1992), 2.

<sup>42</sup> Tarifa, "Disappearing from Politics: Social Change and Women in Albania," 273-274.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 275.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 281.

<sup>45</sup> Corrin, *Gender Issues and Women's Organisations in Albania*, 15.

women used to occupy one third of the seats. In the 1992 parliamentary elections, women won only 2.9 percent of seats. Only eight of the 521 candidates were female (among 11 parties and independent candidates) for the 100 directly elected seats.<sup>46</sup> Of those eight, three were elected, which actually makes the women's success ratio better than the men's (37.5 percent to 18.9 percent). It also means that while women were only 1.54 percent of the candidates, they comprised three percent of elected deputies. Of the remaining 40 list candidates, only one woman was elected. Of the 87 people proposed on the lists, 10 were women. The men's success rate from party lists was 50.6 percent and the women's was 10 percent.

Women's representation has increased slightly since 1992; they now comprise 5.2 percent (eight of 155) of parliament members in Albania. They are still too few to create a parliamentary coalition in Albania, but it does not seem likely that even with increased numbers they would do so at this point anyway, as men and women both tend to vote along party lines. If more women are to be elected to parliament, as well as local councils, political parties must nominate more female candidates.<sup>47</sup>

### **The Executive Branch**

Women were more poorly represented in the executive branch of government than the legislative branch until the appointment of the current cabinet. No women had been appointees at the ministerial level, or any other high-ranking level for that matter, since the transformation (through four different governments).<sup>48</sup> Those ministers that were appointed have stayed in the cabinet for an average of 1.75 years,<sup>49</sup> which means that the ministers probably have not stayed in their positions long enough to work effectively in the new system. Three women currently hold cabinet positions, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister of Economic Cooperation and Trade, and the Minister of Public Works and Transportation.<sup>50</sup>

### **Local Government**

The country is divided into 26 rrethe (districts). People's councils constitute government at the district, regional, and city levels. Elected for three-year terms, people's councils administer all the affairs of their geographic areas.<sup>51</sup>

### **The Judicial Branch**

Albania's court system has three levels, district courts, courts of appeal and the Court of Cassation. The president heads the High Council of Justice, which appoints and dismisses all judges and prosecutors. A nine-member Constitutional Court hears cases that require interpreting constitutional legislation (since Albania currently has only an interim constitution) or legislative acts. Constitutional Court justices serve nine-year terms, with three justices

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Tarifa, "Disappearing from Politics: Social Change and Women in Albania," 283.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 284.

<sup>49</sup> John T. Ishiyama and Matthew Velten, "Presidential Power and Democratic Development in Post-Communist Politics," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 3, 1998, 223.

<sup>50</sup> Women in Governments website, <http://hjem.get2net.dk/Womeningovernments/Albania.htm>, 1/10/2000.

<sup>51</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Albania," <http://www.britannica.com>

rotating every three years. The Parliament approves and dismisses the justices of the Constitutional Court, as well as the 100 Cassation Court judges.<sup>52</sup> No data on the gender composition of the judiciary are available.

### ***Civil Society since the Transition***

The difficult economic situation in Albania made service-providing NGOs particularly important in the early nineties. Despite the need for them, the NGO sector is not well developed; there were only about 200 civil society organizations operating in Albania at the end of 1996.<sup>53</sup> According to the Albanian Civil Society Foundation, there were at least 350 NGOs in Albania by 1998. Most rely on volunteers, but information about public participation is not readily available.<sup>54</sup>

In a report on the status of the NGO sector in Albania, Rasim Gjoka names 11 NGOs that are promising for future development. Three of these are specifically women's organizations; one is an education-oriented organization and the rest are concerned with democracy and human rights.<sup>55</sup> The three women's organizations are: the Women's Democratic League (associated with the Democratic Party), the Women's Forum of Albania, and the Reflection Women's Club.<sup>56</sup> Although there are now three large women's organizations, women's issues have not won a place on the political agenda in Albania as of yet. The three women's organizations have no influence in politics and no influence in rural areas,<sup>57</sup> but their presence among the most promising bodes well for future advocacy of women's concerns.

### ***Rule of Law***

Women have fewer rights in Albania than anywhere else in the region. Women and men enjoy equal rights under the Albanian Law on Major Constitutional Provisions, which prohibits gender-based discrimination, but it holds no more than nominal value in the absence of any government-sponsored program to protect the rights of women.<sup>58</sup> The northern part of Albania still maintains strong traditional beliefs in *kanun*, a cultural system in which women are considered chattel. *Kanun* effectively legitimizes discriminatory practices, while lax police supervision, combined with high levels of unreported violence against women, aggravates this problem.

Further, women are not treated equally under secondary laws. The worst discrepancies are in family law and property law (see The Economic Transition section), under which men enjoy preferential treatment. Although the laws may not treat all citizens equally, rule of law appears

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<sup>52</sup> Adrian Karatnycky, Alexander Motyl, and Charles Graybow, (eds), *Nations in Transit 1998: Civil Society, Democracy and Markets in East Central Europe and the Newly Independent States*, (Washington, DC: Freedom House, 1999), 52-53.

<sup>53</sup> Liza W. Poinier, *The New Civic Atlas: profiles of civil society in 60 countries*, (Washington, DC: CIVICUS, 1997), 1.

<sup>54</sup> Karatnycky, Motyl, and Graybow (eds), "Nations in Transit 1998, 44.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Tarifa, "Disappearing from Politics: Social Change and Women in Albania," 279.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 280.

<sup>58</sup> US Department of State: Albania Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1998, February, 1999, 10.



to exist to some extent in Albania.

### **Marriage Law**

Unlike elsewhere in the region, polygyny is not illegal in Albania. Men may have up to four wives, though this is generally only practiced when the first wife is unable to have children.<sup>59</sup> Many marriages appear to still be arranged by the parents for their daughter, often at a young age.<sup>60</sup>

### **Divorce Law**

Women do not have the right to divorce their husbands in Albania. A man may divorce his wife in one of three cases: 1) if she steals; 2) if she is not loyal; and 3) if she lies. The divorce law provides for a process of reconciliation. If this attempt is unsuccessful, there will be a court settlement, which takes approximately two to three months. The mother automatically gains custody of children under three. Children over ten are asked with which parent they prefer to live. Custody of children between the ages of three and ten are decided by the court, taking into account morals (important given the legal grounds for divorce), income and accommodation each parent provides. The custodial parent is supposed to receive child support from the other parent.<sup>61</sup> Women rarely receive property in a divorce, but in some cases in southern Albania, land has been divided between the husband and wife.<sup>62</sup>

### **Inheritance Law**

The Civil Code and the usufruct law in Albania recognize the right of all individuals to own and inherit property, but custom in Albania dictates that even family property is passed from father to son and the daughters lose any right to it when they marry.

In rural areas where land has been privatized to families, the inheritance law specifies that “anyone from joint heirs has the right to demand at any time apportion of hereditary property even if the testator has ordered differently.”<sup>63</sup> Wheeler and Laha have interpreted this to mean that the head of household cannot will family property to anyone; the designated inheritors (or family members who wish to leave) can only take their portion in cash.<sup>64</sup>

According to Lastarria-Cornhiel and Wheeler, women in northern Albania do not inherit family land, rather it goes to nephews or grandchildren.<sup>65</sup> In the central region of Albania, attitudes and practices regarding female ownership and inheritance of property resemble those in the north. Even in southern Albania, where women consider themselves equal to their husbands within the household, when a daughter marries, she loses the right to her family’s property.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Corrin, *Gender Issues and Women’s Organisations in Albania*, 33.

<sup>60</sup> Lastarria-Cornhiel and Wheeler, *Gender, Ethnicity, and Landed Property in Albania*, 11.

<sup>61</sup> Corrin, *Gender Issues and Women’s Organisations in Albania*, 33, 3-4

<sup>62</sup> Lastarria-Cornhiel and Wheeler, *Gender, Ethnicity, and Landed Property in Albania*, 11, 15.

<sup>63</sup> Albanian Civil Code, Article 353.

<sup>64</sup> Wheeler and Laha, *Property Rights, Women and the Family in Contemporary Albania*, 10.

<sup>65</sup> Lastarria-Cornhiel and Wheeler, *Gender, Ethnicity, and Landed Property in Albania*, 10.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

**Table 14.11. Percentage of Men and Women Who Believe Sons and Daughters Have Equal Inheritance Rights**

Northern Region		Central Region		Southern Region	
Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
39%	86%	29%	27%	22%	23%

Source: Lastarria-Cornhiel and Wheeler, *Gender, Ethnicity, and Landed Property in Albania*, 17.

Only the northern region shows a statistically significant difference in the responses of men and women. Lastarria-Cornhiel and Wheeler assert that one possible explanation for this difference is the lack of autonomy of women in the northern region that has created a desire to better their daughters' situations.<sup>67</sup>

**Table 14.12. Percentage of Men and Women Who Believe That Daughters Are Entitled to Her Own Family's Property After Marriage**

Northern Region		Central Region		Southern Region	
Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
0%	0%	29%	25%	15%	12%

Source: Lastarria-Cornhiel and Wheeler, *Gender, Ethnicity, and Landed Property in Albania*, 19.

### Other Laws

Another law that has been changed is that women are no longer required to perform compulsory military service (they previously had to complete two years of training before the age of 35).<sup>68</sup> Men are still required to complete military service.

### Findings

**Is there differential participation by women and men in the public sphere?** In many ways, Albania is slipping back into its pre-communist patriarchal ways. Women are generally much less politically active now than they were under communism, particularly in rural areas. Men are much better represented in all branches and levels of government than women. Women's representation in parliament is among the lowest in the region, but those women have access to power that women did not have under the Communists.

**How is gender reflected in the development of civil society, especially NGOs?** The NGO sector is weak and although there are three promising women's groups, it appears they will be able to do little to improve women's situations until they have significantly more political clout.

**How has the rule of law been institutionalized and what impact is there on gender?** Legally, men and urban women appear to have gained some rights since the communist period, but rural

<sup>67</sup> Lastarria-Cornhiel and Wheeler, *Gender, Ethnicity, and Landed Property in Albania*, 17.

<sup>68</sup> Corrin, *Gender Issues and Women's Organisations in Albania*, 3.

women have been effectively deprived of their legal property rights. Women still do not have equal rights to either marriage or divorce. Men are also suffering from some discrimination, as they alone now have compulsory military service.

***Opportunities for Future Research***

**More information is needed on the composition of the judiciary and local and regional levels of government.**

**More information is needed on the composition of the staff and volunteers of the NGO sector, as well as the activities of the sector.** This information would provide a more complete picture of the political activity of Albanian men and women and allow the government to determine where service gaps exist.

**Information on the *de facto* implementation of rights and freedoms is needed.**

## THE SOCIAL TRANSITION

This section reports findings from major sources regarding the effects of the transition in Albania on social benefits, poverty, pension reform, health, and education and explores these primary questions:

1. With the shredding of the social safety net, how have women versus men fared in access to / support from social programs?
2. Do data show women's poverty rates to be greater than men's?
3. What are the health-related impacts of the transition?
4. What differential impacts has pension reform had on men's and women's access to benefits?
5. What are salient changes in the state-funded education system since 1989/91?

This chapter reviews World Bank, UNDP, UNICEF, and other sources, and major findings are presented in the five sections that follow: Social Safety Net, Poverty, Pension Reform, Health Reform, and Education.

The transition for Albania has not been easy: Albania remains the poorest country in Europe.<sup>69</sup> In addition to issues of poverty and the problem of modernization, Albania has faced unique crises: Kosovo and pyramid schemes. The Kosovo crisis resulted in more than 460,000 refugees flooding into Albania, adding 14 percent to the local population. The refugees and the demands for caring for them placed a huge burden on government budgets.<sup>70</sup> In 1997, pyramid schemes collapsed, causing many Albanians to lose their savings.

### *Social Safety Net*

As described in Chapter 5, The Social Transition, social safety net programs are of three general types: universal benefits, social insurance, and social assistance. Albania's social safety net includes programs that fall into each of these three categories. Table 14.13 lists Albania's social safety net programs and briefly describes their eligibility requirements and benefits and points out the major gender differences.

Prior to the transition, Albania provided a complete social safety net for its citizens which included retirement, disability, and survivor's pensions; sickness and maternity benefits; and work injury protections. These programs continued to exist during the transition. Following the transition, Albania created an unemployment insurance program and a family allowances program (both created in 1993).<sup>71</sup>

As shown in Table 14.13, Albania's social safety net is gender-differentiated. Women receive preferential treatment in eligibility, benefits, or both in three of nine social benefit programs. These programs are old-age pension, survivorship pensions, and maternity benefits. Birth grants

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<sup>69</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Indicators 1999*, 152.

<sup>70</sup> Government of Albania, "Letter of Intent to the IMF," <http://www.imf.org/external/np/loi/1999/052299.HTM>, May 1999.

<sup>71</sup> U.S. Social Security Administration, *Social Security Programs Throughout the World – 1999*, 2-4.

Table 14.13. Social Safety Net Program Eligibility and Benefits in Albania

Program	Value		Eligibility	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
<i>Universal Benefits</i>				
Health Benefits	Medical care.	Same.	All residents.	Same.
<i>Social Insurance</i>				
Pension, Old-age	Basic pension equal to minimum living standard, plus earnings-related increment equal to 1% for each year of coverage multiplied by the average assessed wage of which contributions were paid.	Same.	Age 55 with 35 years of contributions and retirement from work. Mothers of 6 or more children over the age of 8 are eligible at age 50 with 30 years of contributions. Partial pensions available with 20-35 years.	Age 60 with 35 years of contributions and retirement from work. Partial pensions available with 20-35 years.
Pension, Disability	Basic pension and increment as for old-age pension. Maximum applies. Supplement for dependent children.	Same.	Incapacity for any economic activity, blind, or suffering from severe mutilation. Minimum insurance period is at least 1/4 the difference in years between claimant's age and 20.	Same.
Pension, Survivorship	50% of pension of deceased for the surviving spouse; 25% for each orphan and other dependents up to 100%. Death benefit of 1 month's basic pension.	Same.	Deceased was insured or had terminated insurance not earlier than 1 year before death. Eligible for old-age or disability pension. Dependents include spouse caring for child under 8; disabled or aged spouse (age 50); orphans under age 18 or 25 if students;	Deceased was insured or had terminated insurance not earlier than 1 year before death. Eligible for old-age or disability pension. Dependents include spouse caring for child under 8; disabled or aged spouse (age 60); orphans under age 18 or 25 if students;

Program	Value		Eligibility	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
			parents or grandparents aged 65 or older and living with deceased; dependent grandchildren.	parents or grandparents aged 65 or older and living with deceased; dependent grandchildren.
Maternity	365 days of paid leave: 80% of average daily wage prior to birth and 150 days after. 50% of average daily wage for rest of period. For more than 1 child, leave extended to 390 days. Benefits available in case of adoption. Birth grant: lump sum payment of 1500 lek for either insured parent.	Birth grant: lump sum payment of 1500 lek for either insured parent.	Employed or self-employed and 12 weeks of contributions.	Same.
Sickness (cash benefits)	50-80% of average daily wage, depending on years of contributions, hospitalization, and dependents.	Same.	Employed and 1 week of employment.	Same.
Unemployment	Flat rate providing for a minimum standard of living as decided by the Council of Ministers (4,000 leks/month as of 1998). Payable for a total of 365 days.	Same.	At least 1 year's contribution, receiving no other benefits (except for partial disability), registered at unemployment office, and willing to undergo training.	Same.
Work Injury	50-100% of average wage, depending on disability. Also medical care.	Same.	Employees, apprentices, students in practical training. No minimum qualifying period.	Same.
<b>Social Assistance</b>				

Program	Value		Eligibility	
	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>
Family Allowances (means-tested)	5% of the basic pension or unemployment benefit for each dependent child up to a maximum of 20%. Family supplement, 15% of pension.	Same.	Resident families.	Same.

*Notes:* The data in this table were current as of January 1, 1999 (the latest version of the Social Security Administration's report). Italicized text indicates a gender difference in eligibility or benefits.

*Source:* U.S. Social Security Administration, *Social Security Programs Throughout the World – 1999*, 2-4.

under the maternity benefits program are available to either parent, a benefit not typically paid to men. Although this issue is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, it should be noted here that when benefits are based on a percentage of wages, women's benefits will tend to be lower than men's.

## Poverty and Gender

### Overall Poverty

Data on poverty in Albania are contradictory and unreliable, and only minimal data are available on the differences in poverty rates between men and women. Table 14.14 presents non-gender disaggregated poverty rates from three sources, and Box 14.1 provides additional information on the UNDP-reported study.

**Table 14.14. Poverty Rates in Albania**

Study	Overall	Urban	Rural
U.S. Bureau of the Census, International Programs Center	--	48-56% below subsistence	27% in poverty
UNDP*	80% in poverty	--	--
World Bank	25% in poverty	15% in poverty	30% in poverty

Note: -- indicates data are not available.

\*While these data were reported in the latest available UNDP Human Development Report for Albania (1996), they are based on a private study.

Sources: International Programs Center, U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Populations at Risk in Central and Eastern Europe: Income and Poverty in Eastern Europe*, fifth report (Washington, DC: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1997), 19.

UNDP, *Human Development Report 1996* (<http://www.tirana.al/hdr96/hdrindex.html>), Chapter 1, Part 2. Christine Allison, *Albania: Growing Out of Poverty*, Report No. 15698-ALB (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1997), iv.

### Box 14.1 Poverty in Albania as Reported by UNDP

In the 1996 Human Development Report for Albania, UNDP reported on a private study that fixed the minimum income needed for a family of four at 14,033 lek, or \$143, per month. According to this measure, 80 percent of Albanians are living below poverty. To put this minimum standard of living in perspective, the following lists some wages in Albania:

State minimum wage	3,300 lek
Average state wage (for jobs in the state sector)	6,568 lek
Average private wage	13,000 lek
Unemployment benefits	1,920 lek
Pension, urban	3,725 lek
Welfare, family of four	2,948 lek

UNDP, *Human Development Report 1996* (<http://www.tirana.al/hdr96/hdrindex.html>), Chapter 1, Part 2.



To counteract this high poverty rate and the low benefit levels of government assistance, Albanians rely heavily on an informal social safety net, according to the World Bank. Families borrow money from family and friends, and many families rely on remittances from the large Albanian diaspora. These remittances supply a large portion of the income in rural areas.<sup>72</sup>

### Poverty and Gender

Few gender-disaggregated poverty data are available for Albania. The World Bank in a 1997 report reported data on urban households but warned that the data must be viewed with caution because of data collection problems. Table 14.15 presents these data.

**Table 14.15. Poverty and Gender in Albania**

Female	Male
74.1	66.7

*Note:* Data refer to extended families in urban areas only. These are the only households for which gender disaggregated data were available.

*Source:* Allison, *Albania: Growing Out of Poverty*, 41.

### Pension Reform

Pensions are currently based on a basic flat-rate pension (equal to a minimum living standard) given to all pensioners. In addition to the basic pension, pensioners receive an earnings-related increment: one percent for each year of coverage multiplied by the average wage for which contributions were paid. While women will still typically receive lower pensions than men because of the earnings-related portion, the basic pension portion provides a minimum level of benefits for all recipients.

Pension reform remains in the early stages in Albania. In 1994, the Albanian Social Insurance Institute (SII) and the World Bank asked the U.S. Department of Labor to assist the SII in developing staff capabilities and forecasting tools for planning pension reform. DOL, through an actuarial consultant company, developed a budget projection model for SII and provided staff training on operating the model. The model allows SII to make short-term actuarial analysis, three-year financial forecasts, and analyses of proposed reforms to the social insurance system.<sup>73</sup>

### Health Reform

Data on health in Albania show that during the transition, life expectancy declined for both men and women. Other data indicate that maternal mortality decreased, and abortion rates increased over the transition. Table 14.16 provides basic health data for Albania. These and other data are discussed below.

<sup>72</sup> World Bank, *Balancing Protection and Opportunity* (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1999), 42.

<sup>73</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, "ILAB Technical Assistance Program on Social Insurance Reform: Central and Eastern Europe," undated mimeo.

**Table 14.16. Demographic and Health Indicators for Albania<sup>74</sup>**

Maternal mortality (per 100,000 live births) <sup>75</sup>	<b>1990</b>		<b>1996</b>	
	37.7		27.8	
Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births) <sup>76</sup>	34			
Abortion rate (per 100 live births) <sup>77</sup>	<b>1990</b>		<b>1996</b>	
	31.8		40.6	
Contraceptive prevalence (RHS 1998)	--			
Total fertility rate (births per woman) <sup>78</sup>	2.5			
STD incidence (new cases of syphilis/gonorrhea per 100,000 population) <sup>79</sup>	<b>1990</b>		<b>1997</b>	
	--		--	
Life expectancy at birth <sup>80</sup>	<b>Female</b>		<b>Male</b>	
	<b>1990</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1995</b>
	75.4	74.3	69.3	68.5
Percent of population 65 and older in 1997 <sup>81</sup>	5.7			

Sources: As indicated in the footnotes.

### Life Expectancy

Male and female life expectancy declined over the transition period. Nonetheless, the magnitude of change is apparently not associated with the magnitude of overall economic decline, when comparing changes in life expectancy with socioeconomic decline across the region. Adult males at the age of 15 in Hungary, one of the wealthiest countries, would have more than twice the chance of dying within the next 50 years than their counterparts in Albania, the poorest of the former socialist economies. Adult male mortality risk in Albania (21 percent between ages 15 and 65) is on par with the average for established market economies.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>74</sup> General note on sources: The major sources used for purposes of cross-country comparisons are from the MONEE and UNDP reports cited below, because they have data for most countries. MONEE is preferred for maternal mortality data because it is the most up-to-date comparable source of data. For infant mortality, UNDP is the preferred source for two reasons: a) UNDP data concords most closely with DHS data, for the three countries for which DHS surveys have been done; and b) data for six of the study countries cited in the MONEE database are based on Soviet rather than WHO definitions of infant death, impairing comparability. In some cases MONEE figures are significantly different (usually lower) than UNDP figures. Only the MONEE database provides reasonably complete and comparable data on abortion rates, STD incidence and life expectancy by sex. UNDP is the preferred source for total fertility rates because it concords most closely with DHS data in the cases in which it is available. Contraceptive prevalence sources identified are: Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), reproductive health surveys (RHS), UNDP Human Development Report (UNDP), Population Reference Bureau (PRB), Russia Longitudinal Monitoring Survey (RLMS). The year is specified when known.

<sup>75</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 119.

<sup>76</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999* (Oxford University Press, 1999), 169.

<sup>77</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 118.

<sup>78</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, 198.

<sup>79</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 131.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 123-124.

<sup>81</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, 198.

<sup>82</sup> Ellen Goldstein, Alexander S. Preker, Olusoji Adeyi, and Gnanaraj Chellaraj, *Trends in Health Status, Service and Finance, Volume I: the Transition in Central and Eastern Europe*, World Bank Technical Paper No. 341 (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1996), 14.

## Mortality

As with other countries in Eastern Europe, chronic diseases are common. The leading causes of death in the early 1990s for both males and females (in descending order) were cerebrovascular disease, cancer and ischemic heart disease.<sup>83</sup> However, the death rates are lower than for wealthier former socialist economies. The age-standardized death rates for circulatory diseases and ischemic heart disease in Hungarian and Russian males are double that of Albanian males.

## Lifestyle-Related Issues

A 1990 survey indicated that among adults 25 and over, nearly half the male population smoked. Among females, smoking prevalence was 7.9 percent. The highest prevalence for both men and women was found in the 45-54 age group, 54.9 percent for men and 18.5 percent for women. Among people aged 15-24, 26.2 percent of males and 3.3 percent of females smoked. In 1992, the age-standardized death rate from lung cancer was 20/100,000 for males and 7/100,000 for females.<sup>84</sup>

## Maternal Mortality and Abortion

Maternal mortality in Albania was the highest in Europe in 1990, 57 deaths per 100,000 live births (UNDP put the figure at 65 for 1990); in the mountain regions, it reached 83/100,000. About half these deaths were due to illegal abortion; hemorrhage and eclampsia were other major causes of death.<sup>85</sup> Unlike most of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, abortion was illegal in Albania, unless medically required, until 1991.<sup>86</sup> Since then, Albania's maternal mortality has been halved, and is currently estimated at 27.8.<sup>87</sup> This decrease in maternal mortality is directly linked to the decrease in deaths due to illegal abortion. Nonetheless, Albania's maternal mortality ratio is still nearly double the WHO target for Europe of 15/100,000.

In May 1992, the government further changed its prior pro-natalist policy by introducing family planning programs, in addition to legalizing abortion.<sup>88</sup> The abortion rate has increased due to legalization, and while the Albanian abortion rate is substantially lower than the average for the transition region as a whole (100 abortions per 100 live births in 1996), it is still double the European Union average of 20 abortions per 100 live births (1994).<sup>89</sup>

## Fertility

<sup>83</sup> World Health Organization, Tobacco or Health Programme, *Tobacco or Health: A Global Status Report*, Country Profiles by Region, 1997, <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/who/whofirst.htm>

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> UNICEF, *Women and Gender in Countries in Transition: a UNICEF Perspective* (Regional Office for Central & Eastern Europe, Commonwealth of Independent States and Baltic States, October 1994), from notes.

<sup>86</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, International Programs Center, Population Division, *Populations at Risk in Central and Eastern Europe*, Fourth Quarterly Report (Washington, DC: USAID/ENI/PCS/PAC, 1996), 36-37.

<sup>87</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 119.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 63.

The total fertility rate (births per woman), 2.5, is substantially higher than for other Eastern European countries, though somewhat lower than some Central Asian countries.<sup>90</sup> Adolescent pregnancy is lower than for most countries in the transition region. The adolescent fertility rate is 30 births per 1000 women aged 15 to 49 (1997), though still high when compared with rates for Western Europe, which range from 4 for the Netherlands to 21 for Portugal.<sup>91</sup>

### **Infant Mortality**

The infant mortality rate for 1997, reported as 34/1000 live births by UNDP and 25.8/1000 by the MONEE Project<sup>92</sup>, is substantially higher (using either set of figures) than in the rest of Eastern Europe, and is similar to rates for Central Asia. Infant mortality is an indicator of maternal as well as child health.

### **Sexually Transmitted Diseases**

The rate of AIDS cases (per 100,000 people) for Albania is 0.3 for 1997.<sup>93</sup> No data are available on other sexually transmitted diseases, and no gender-disaggregated data are available. In Central and Eastern Europe (except for Romania) and Central Asia, the HIV/AIDS epidemic is more recent and AIDS incidence is much lower than in Western Europe.

### **Health Care System Issues**

Even though real health spending has declined drastically in Albania (as a percent of spending levels in 1990, health spending in 1994 declined to 41.9 percent),<sup>94</sup> there has been little change in medical staffing and in-patient capacity, and little downsizing or restructuring.

After the collapse of the old regime, about half the rural health posts (ambulancias) and health centers were reported to be no longer functional. Those that continued operating faced severe shortages of equipment, supplies and medicines.<sup>95</sup> More current information on the status of rural health care is unavailable.

Maternity care has traditionally been of high standard throughout the region, though there was greater emphasis on number of visits, diagnostics and tests rather than on quality, counseling and education. Most women were followed regularly through their pregnancies, and the great majority of births took place in health centers, attended by qualified staff. Most of these advantages have been maintained, although there have been signs of decline. Birth assistance in Albania decreased until 1992, when only 86 percent of births took place with professional attendance, but rose to 91 percent in 1997.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, 198.

<sup>91</sup> World Bank, *1999 World Development Indicators on Reproductive Health*, <http://genderstats.worldbank.org/menu.asp>.

<sup>92</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 119; UNDP, *Human Development Report*, 169.

<sup>93</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, 173.

<sup>94</sup> Goldstein, *Trends in Health Status, Service and Finance*, 23.

<sup>95</sup> UNICEF, *Women and Gender in Countries in Transition*.

<sup>96</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 62.

## Education and Gender

### Historical Context

The first elementary school providing instruction in Albanian was opened in 1887; girls were admitted in 1891. At the end of World War II, however, 80 percent of the population and 90 percent of women were illiterate.<sup>97</sup> Increasing literacy was a major goal of the Albanian government following the war, and compulsory primary education was implemented in 1946. To address adult literacy, the government instituted a literacy program for all illiterate men and women up to age 40 in 1947. These measures eradicated illiteracy among Albanians -- both men and women -- under age 40 by 1955.<sup>98</sup>

### Current Status of Education

Data on overall enrollments in Albania are not available for years since 1995. The available data do show, however, that enrollments at the kindergarten and primary levels fell between 1989 and 1994. Secondary school enrollments increased, while tertiary enrollments stayed about the same. These data are presented in Table 14.17.

**Table 14.17. School Enrollment in Albania, Percent of Relevant Population**

Kindergarten		Primary		Secondary		Tertiary	
1989	1994*	1989	1994	1990	1995	1989	1994
43.1	26.5	90.8	87.6	20.0	30.5	4.8	4.6

Note: \*1994-1995 data are the most recent available.

Source: UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition, Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 133-134.

Gender-disaggregated data from the World Bank show that girls accounted for a little less than half of primary and secondary enrollments. Between 1980 and 1996, men's share of tertiary enrollment dropped from 50 percent to 43 percent. These data are presented in Table 14.18.

**Table 14.18. Female School Enrollments in Albania, As a Percent of Total**

Primary		Secondary		Tertiary	
1980	1996	1980	1996	1980	1996
47	48	--	49	50	57

Note: -- indicates data are not available.

Source: World Bank, *1999 World Development Indicators*.

Public expenditures on education increased between 1990 and 1991 and then decreased; these data are shown in Table 14.19.

<sup>97</sup> Fatos Tarifa, *Albania's Exit From Communism in the East European Context*, Ph.D. dissertation (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1998), 178.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

**Table 14.19. Public Expenditures on Education in Albania,  
As a Percent of GDP**

1990	1991	1994	1996
4.2	5.0	3.2	3.2

Source: UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition, Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 135.

### *Findings*

**With the shredding of the social safety net, how have women versus men fared in access to / support from social programs?** Women receive preferential treatment in three of nine social benefit programs in Albania.

**Do data show women's poverty rates to be greater than men's?** Data on poverty in Albania are contradictory, and few gender-disaggregated data are available. A World Bank study provided data on urban households showing that women are more likely to be poor than men.

**What are the health-related impacts of the transition?** Life expectancy decreased for both men and women. In addition, maternal mortality decreased, as did abortion rates.

**What differential impacts has pension reform had on men's and women's access to benefits?** Pension reform is in the beginning stages, and no data are available on gender-differentiated impacts.

**What are salient changes in the state-funded education system since 1989/91?** Education enrollments decreased at the kindergarten and primary levels, increased at the secondary level, and stayed about the same at the tertiary level. Girls made up slightly less than half of primary and secondary enrollments but 57 percent of tertiary enrollments.

### *Opportunities for Future Research*

**More data, especially gender-disaggregated data, on poverty are needed.** The data that are available on poverty in Albania are not recent and are contradictory. In addition, gender-disaggregated data are available only for urban households. Subsequent assessments of poverty in Albania should focus on analyzing poverty by gender.

**Gender-disaggregated data on sexually-transmitted diseases and AIDS are needed.** Data on sexually-transmitted diseases (STDs) are not available, and AIDS data are not gender-disaggregated. Research on the incidence of STDs should be conducted, and the analysis should include gender.

**Education enrollments should be monitored.** The declines in overall enrollment at the early levels of education (kindergarten and primary) as well as the decline in male enrollment at the tertiary level merit observation.

## Chapter 15: Bulgaria



### Basic Indicators

For additional information, please see Country Data Table in the Appendix.

<i>Demographics</i>			
Population <sup>1</sup> (1998)	8,283,000; 4,238,000 female (51.2%)		
Rural / Urban <sup>2</sup>	Urban 69%		
Ethnic composition <sup>3</sup>	Bulgarian 85%, Turk 9%, other 6%		
<i>Economic Growth and Development</i>			
GDP per capita (all in 1987\$) <sup>4</sup>	<b>1985</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1997</b>
	\$2,870	\$3,176	\$2,332
GDP per capita (PPP for 1997) <sup>4</sup>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	
	\$3,256	\$4,801	
Registered Unemployment Rate <sup>1</sup>	<b>1992</b>	<b>1997</b>	
	13.2%	14.0%	
<i>Democracy and Governance</i>			
Women in Parliament <sup>5</sup>	10.8%		
Women in Ministerial Positions <sup>6</sup>	18.8%		
<i>Social Transition</i>			
Life Expectancy by Sex(1999 est.) <sup>3</sup>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Average</b>
	76.03 years	68.72 years	72.27 years
Combined first, second, and third level gross school enrollment ratio (1997) <sup>4</sup>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	
	73%	68%	
Population below poverty line <sup>2</sup>	36%		

Sources: 1) UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*.

2) World Bank Country Data, <http://wbIn0018.worldbank.org/eca/eca.nsf>.

3) CIA World Factbook 1999, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>.

4) UNDP Human Development Indicators 1999.

5) Inter Parliamentary Union website, <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>.

6) CIA Chiefs of State and Cabinets Members website, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/chiefs/index.html> and Women in Governments website, <http://hjem.get2net.dk/Womeningovernments/>.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### *The Economic Transition*

- The data regarding male and female participation in the Bulgarian labor force are contradictory. No clear conclusions can be drawn.
- The wage gap trend has changed over time in Bulgaria. Wages have declined across the board, but for the first few years after the transition, men's earnings relative to women's declined. Since 1994 women's earnings have declined faster than men's.
- Bulgarian women constitute a larger number and percentage of the unemployed, but from 1990 to 1993, men's unemployment increased more rapidly than women's. Since 1994 men's unemployment has decreased at a faster rate than women's.
- Gender is not a significant factor in employment in the private sector. Educational attainment appears to be the most influential factor.

### *The Democratic Transition*

- Men are better represented in all branches and levels of government than women. Since the transition, women's representation in parliament has remained steady and after an initial drop, their representation in ministerial levels of government has increased.
- Many NGOs are devoted to issues that impact women's lives, acting both as advocates and service providers, but with many political and financial obstacles confronting them.
- Most of Bulgaria's laws protect the rights of both men and women. The Labor Code and divorce law may disadvantage women, but overall, the government seems to have established rule of law in Bulgaria that treats men and women equally.

### *The Social Transition*

- In five of nine social safety net programs, women receive preferential treatment in eligibility, benefits, or both. In one program that typically benefits women only, fathers in Bulgaria can receive maternity benefits if the mother agrees.
- Data from the World Bank show that women, both single women and female heads of households, are poorer than single men and male heads of households.
- To date, Bulgaria has raised the retirement age for both men and women. Private pension reform has been limited to voluntary contributions to private pension funds.
- Life expectancy declined slightly for men and stayed about the same for women. Maternal mortality stayed the same, abortion rates decreased, and sexually transmitted diseases decreased.
- Girls' enrollment declined to 48 percent of primary school enrollment in 1996 and increased to 50 percent of total enrollment in secondary school. Men's enrollment in tertiary education declined to 39 percent in 1996.



### Country Overview

**Introduction:** The fall of socialist governments in eastern Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s, culminating in the dissolution of the Soviet Union, has caused Bulgaria to enter a period of transition with regard to both internal reorganization and foreign policy. Although the influence of centuries of Ottoman rule is still visible, Bulgaria's chief historical, cultural, and political ties have been with Russia and the Soviet Union. Bulgaria occupies 42,855 square miles of the eastern portion of the Balkan Peninsula in southeastern Europe. It is bounded by Romania on the north, most of the border being marked by the lower Danube River. The Black Sea lies to the east, Turkey and Greece to the south, Macedonia to the southwest, and the Yugoslav republic of Serbia to the west. The capital of the country is Sofia, which lies in a mountainous basin in the west, near the geographic centre of the entire Balkan region.

**People:** Ethnically, the population is fairly homogeneous, Bulgarians making up about 85 percent of the total. The Turks, Bulgaria's largest minority, live in some regions of the northeast and in the eastern Rhodope Mountains region. Gypsies (Roma) and Macedonians are two other sizable minorities (though the government does not consider Macedonians as such, regarding them as ethnically Bulgarian), and there are a few thousand Armenians, Russians, and Greeks (mostly in the towns) and Romanians and Tatars (mostly in the villages). The Bulgarian language belongs to the South Slavic group, along with Serbo-Croatian, Slovene, and Macedonian (the last, however, considered to be a dialect of Bulgarian by the government). A number of dialects remain in common speech.

**Cultural Life:** Bulgaria's literary tradition can be traced to the 9th century, when Saints Cyril and Methodius created the alphabet for Old Bulgarian (Old Church Slavonic). During Ottoman domination, literature could be preserved only in the monasteries and churches. Bulgaria has almost 10,000 libraries, with a total holding of about 110,300,000 volumes, and more than 200 museums. There are also a few thousand *chitalishtes*, cultural centres similar to reading rooms, found in even the smallest villages. The early impetus of Bulgarian traditions in the arts was cut short by the Ottoman occupation in the 14th century, and many of the early masterpieces were destroyed. Artistic life emerged again in Bulgaria during the national revival in the 19th century.

**Government:** In July 1991 the National Assembly passed a new constitution establishing a parliamentary system of government and guaranteeing direct presidential elections, separation of powers, and freedom of speech, press, conscience, and religion. New laws allowed for the return of some land that had been confiscated by the previous communist government to its former owners, and other laws were passed regarding competition, foreign investment, and a commercial code. Prior to the overthrow of the veteran communist party leader Todor Zhivkov in November 1989, the ruling party had been the Bulgarian Communist Party. After Zhivkov's fall, the party gave up its guaranteed right to rule, adopted a new manifesto, streamlined its leadership, and changed its name to the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP). Despite these reforms, the opposition Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) won leadership of the Bulgarian government by a small margin over the BSP in elections held in October 1991. Dozens of new political parties and organizations were created in the early 1990s, including labour, religious, environmental, ethnic, and other groups.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter explores the economic, democratic, and social transitions in Bulgaria. Each section seeks to answer a set of research questions which are set out at the beginning of the sections. In addition to subsections addressing each of the research questions, each section includes a subsection on findings and opportunities for future research.

## THE ECONOMIC TRANSITION

This section seeks to answer the following questions as they relate to Bulgaria:

1. Have there been changes in labor force participation by women and men during the transition?
2. Is there evidence for wage gap trends and wage differentials?
3. Has unemployment increased, whether official or hidden, and is there a gender dimension to unemployment?
4. How has the growth of the informal economy reflected gender differentiation?
5. What is the impact of privatization of state enterprises on women's and men's employment?
6. What role do women play in new managerial positions or business formation in the growing private sector?

By reviewing changes in GDP, the labor force gender structure, unemployment rates, female-male wage ratio (and, in some cases, occupational segregation), the informal economy, and privatization, we can begin to assess the differential economic experience of Bulgarian men and women during the transition. Although measures of outcomes such as unemployment and wage ratio in the available research are not necessarily consistent, they do suggest broad trends in men and women's labor market experiences for the transition period.

### *Contextual Information about the Economy*

The transition to democracy and a market economy that began in Bulgaria in 1989 led to a dramatic fall in trade with Russia and severe shortages of foreign exchange.<sup>1</sup> This created major dislocations in all aspects the economy. Since the implementation of post-communist reforms in the early 1990s, Bulgarians – like others in formerly state socialist economies – have been plagued with spasms of hyper-inflation, high unemployment, and economic uncertainty. Bulgaria's economic crisis period has been protracted in comparison with many of its Eastern European neighbors. In significant part, this is due to halting reforms and a slow privatization process.

The transition was marred by a severe decline in the standard of living for the majority of Bulgarians. The real GDP dropped from 1990 through 1993, recovering slightly in 1994 and 1995, but then dropping again in 1996 and 1997 (Table 15.1).

**Table 15.1. Change in Real GDP, 1989-1998 (1989=100)**

1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
100.0	90.9	80.3	74.4	73.3	74.6	76.2	67.9	63.2	65.7

Source: UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 138.

<sup>1</sup> World Bank, "Bulgaria: Country Overview," <http://www.worldbank.org/html/extdr/offrep/eca/bgrcb.htm>.

The contraction of the economy is highlighted by per capita GDP figures, measured in constant dollars. Figures from 1997 show a per capita GDP that is 20 percent below where it was twelve years earlier, and only 73 percent of its 1990 value (Table 15.2).

**Table 15.2. Per Capita GDP, 1985-1997**

Per Capita GDP (1987 US\$)		
1985	1990	1997
\$2,870	\$3,176	\$2,332

Source: UNDP Human Development Report, 1999

In 1996 and 1997, the value of the *lev* (the Bulgarian currency) declined from 70/\$1 to more than 2,500/\$1 in February 1997. The inflation rate increased to more than 300 percent in 1996. This out-of-control inflation, in conjunction with the election of a new government in 1997, led to the implementation of an IMF-sanctioned currency board to administer strict and painful monetary policy, which helped to bring the *lev* up to 1,800/\$1.

While the economy seems to be responding to the more stringent macro-economic policies now being implemented, the economic situation of many Bulgarians remains precarious. Ninety percent of the population was estimated to live below the poverty line in February 1997.<sup>2</sup> The average pension amounted to less than \$5/month, while bread cost about \$.50 per loaf and eggs \$1/dozen. In addition, the grain harvest in Bulgaria in 1996 had been the lowest in 20 years, leading to shortages of bread, the staple food.<sup>3</sup>

Bulgarians in early 1997 demonstrated against the government and the prevailing economic conditions — the first such protests since the transition began in 1989. These demonstrations called for pre-term parliamentary elections and led to the election of Petar Stoyanov as president.

### ***Labor Force Participation***

The data regarding labor force participation patterns in both the pre- and post-transition periods are contradictory. According to Dimitrova, an author whose findings were met with controversy, 84.6 percent of working age men and 86.1 percent of working age<sup>4</sup> women were employed in 1985. Since women comprise a greater proportion of the population than men, this would indicate that more women were in the labor force than men. By 1992, as reported by Dimitrova, the figures had dropped to 66.4 percent for men and 67.4 percent for women,<sup>5</sup> which would show that women had dropped out of the labor force faster than men. Other estimates show

<sup>2</sup> USAID/Sofia, "USAID, Sofia, Bulgaria, Results Review FY 1997," March 1997.

<sup>3</sup> FBIS, "Economic Review," July 22, 1996, <http://wnc.fedworld.gov>.

<sup>4</sup> In the 1980s "working age" included women up to the age of 55 and men up to the age of 60. This legal difference may have accounted for some of the difference between men and women in this statistical measurement.

<sup>5</sup> Dimitrova, *Social Inequality and the Second Economy during the Transition Away From State Socialism: Bulgaria 1985-1992*; NSI 1993

employment dropping by 30 percent (due to dismissals and encouraged early retirement) for the general population between 1990 and 1992.<sup>6</sup>

World Bank figures, on the other hand, show that the gap between male participation rates and female participation rates in the labor force has closed somewhat since the transition (see Table 15.3). These numbers could mean that men have dropped out of the labor force faster than women or that the number of women in the labor force has increased.

**Table 15.3. Labor Force Participation**

Labor Force Participation (ratio of female to male)		Labor Force Participation (% of total labor force)			
1970	1997	1980		1997	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
0.8	0.9	55	45	52	48

Source: World Bank, 1999 World Development Indicators.

According to UNICEF data on crude activity rates, women were less economically active than men in 1989, a contradiction of Dimitrova's finding, and that disparity has increased since the transition, in contradiction to World Bank data (Table 15.4). Men's economic activity has increased since the transition by 3.3 percentage points (from 43.3 in 1989 to 46.6 in 1997), and that women's has decreased by 3.1 percentage points in the same time (42.4 to 39.3). These data indicate that women have dropped out of the labor force while men have increased their participation in the labor force.

**Table 15.4. Crude Activity Rates and the Gender Gap, 1989-1997**

Crude Female Activity Rate		Rise or fall in CFAR	Gender gap in rate (male minus female)		Change in gender gap, % points
1989	1997	1989-97	1989	1997	1989-97
42.4	39.3	-3.1	1.9	7.3	5.4

Source: UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 25.

### **Unemployment**

Unemployment has become a significant problem for Bulgarian workers. Unemployment as an economic phenomenon was officially recognized in 1989, and in the next two to three years new liberal legislation was introduced that increased enterprise flexibility in hiring and firing employees.<sup>7</sup> The first big wave of unemployment came in 1991, as enterprises were unable to sustain production at former levels. In the span of a single year, unemployment grew from 1.5 percent to 11 percent of the labor force. By 1993 unemployment in Bulgaria reached 16.4

<sup>6</sup> Elizabeth Brainerd, *Women in Transition: Changes in Gender Wage Differentials in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*, (Williams College, 1997).

<sup>7</sup> Official statistics on unemployment were first published in the 1992 *Statisticheski Godishnek*.

percent, and continued to remain among the highest levels of unemployment in the region.<sup>8</sup> USAID expected joblessness due to continued privatization of state-owned enterprises to increase to between 480,000 and 800,000 persons, or as much as 25 percent of the work force, in 1997.<sup>9</sup>

A higher percentage of men than women have become unemployed. A basic analysis of men and women as a proportion of the registered unemployed points to an interesting trend: from 1990 to 1996, the percentage of registered unemployed who were men increased from a low of 35 percent to 45 percent. While women still comprised a greater number of registered unemployed, men's unemployment rose more sharply than did women's from 1990 to 1993. Thereafter, men's unemployment decreased faster than women's. It is perhaps surprising that the increase in male to female unemployment was not even greater, given that industries with a high percentage of well-paid male positions, such as machine building and metallurgy, have suffered most during the transition (see Table 15.5).

**Table 15.5. Official Unemployment in Bulgaria by Year**

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
# in thousands	65.1	419.2	576.9	626.1	488.4	423.8	478.8
(% workforce)	(1.7%)	(11.1%)	(15.2%)	(16.4%)	(12.4%)	(11.1%)	(12.5%)
% Men	35	45.5	47.6	47.7	45.7	45	45
% Women	65	54.5	52.4	52.3	54.3	55	55

Source: ILO Yearbooks

The changes in the gender structure of employment and unemployment may be influenced by several factors. First, women's higher rates of education and the increasing returns to education are significant.<sup>10</sup> The share of workers with only basic education all but disappeared, and the amount of workers' experience became more important. Although Dimitrova argues that occupational and sectoral differences do not explain increasing inequality, Brainerd comes to another conclusion. She suggests that the lower rates of unemployment in traditionally feminized sectors of the economy, such as retail and services, helped buoy women's labor market position vis-à-vis men. Sziracki and Windell support this assessment with results from their own survey research, concluding that clerical and other feminized white-collar jobs did not decline, and even increased, in the first years of transition.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> ILO Yearbooks.

<sup>9</sup> USAID/Sofia, "USAID, Sofia, Bulgaria, Results Review FY 1997," March 1997.

<sup>10</sup> Brainerd, *Women in Transition: Changes in Gender Wage Differentials in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*; Lisa Giddings, Giddings, *Changes in Gender and Ethnic Earnings Differentials in Bulgaria's Transition from Plan to Market* (American University, Washington, DC., 1999); Dimitrova, *Social Inequality and the Second Economy during the Transition Away From State Socialism: Bulgaria 1985-1992*.

<sup>11</sup> Sziracki and Windell, 1992. Sziracki and Windell's paper is based on the Labor Flexibility Survey, including a study of 500 companies. See "Impact of Employment Restructuring on Disadvantaged Groups in Hungary and Bulgaria," *International Labour Review*, vol. 131, no. 4/5, 1992, 471-496.

### *Wage Gaps and Wage Differentials*

For those still on the job, the real value of average working salaries declined substantially between 1991 and 1997. By 1995, the real value of the average salary had declined 48.8 percent as compared to 1990<sup>12</sup> (Table 15.6). Another measure of labor market experience, the average monthly wage, indicates that earning differentials among working Bulgarians have increased. Between 1986 and 1993 the wage gap increased within all categories: men, women, ethnic Bulgarians, and ethnic Turks. Men experienced the greatest increase in intra-group wage inequality.<sup>13</sup> Rutkowski's analysis corroborates this finding of increasing earnings inequality, pointing out that earners at the bottom of the wage scale experienced a greater decline in their real wages than high-paid workers in Bulgaria.<sup>14</sup>

**Table 15.6. Wage Trends in Bulgaria, 1989-1997**

1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
100.0	111.5	68.0	76.7	77.6	63.7	60.2	49.6	40.1

Source: TransMONEE 3.0 Database

The overall increase in inequality, measured by wages and the Gini coefficient, initially served to even out wage inequalities between men as a group and women as a group. Brainerd, Dimitrova and Giddings all conclude that wage inequality between women and men decreased between the mid-1980s and early 1990s. In 1994, the mean this wage ratio was approximately 86 percent, compared to 73 percent in 1986<sup>15</sup> (Table 15.7). By some measures, therefore, the wage gap between men and women fell from approximately 25 percent to 20 percent during that period.<sup>16</sup> Since 1994, however, the wage gap seems to have increased, as has the Gini coefficient, with women earning only 69 percent of what men did in 1997.

<sup>12</sup> UNDP, "Bulgaria Human Development Report," 1996.

<sup>13</sup> Giddings, *Changes in Gender and Ethnic Earnings Differentials in Bulgaria's Transition from Plan to Market*; Dimitrova, *Social Inequality and the Second Economy during the Transition Away From State Socialism: Bulgaria 1985-1992*. Both compared household surveys conducted in 1985 and 1992 to assess changing patterns of wage inequality.

<sup>14</sup> Jan J. Rutkowski, *Changes in the Wage Structure During Economic Transition in Central and Eastern Europe*, World Bank Technical Paper No. 340, 1996.

<sup>15</sup> Brainerd, *Women in Transition: Changes in Gender Wage Differentials in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*; Dimitrova, *Social Inequality and the Second Economy during the Transition Away From State Socialism: Bulgaria 1985-1992*.

<sup>16</sup> Giddings, *Changes in Gender and Ethnic Earnings Differentials in Bulgaria's Transition from Plan to Market*. There are some important differences between the two surveys. In pre-transition Bulgaria, the sample consisted of women age 16 to 55 and men age 16 to 60, while no upper age restrictions were placed on the 1993 sample. Also, since all of the employed technically worked full-time during the communist era, it was necessary to adjust earnings for hours worked in 1993.

**Table 15.7. Ratio of Female to Male Wages**

Source	1990	1994	1997
UNICEF MONEE	.740		.691
Brainerd and Dimitrova	--	.86	--

Note: Ratio = female wages divided by male wages.

Sources: UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 33; Brainerd, *Women in Transition: Changes in Gender Wage Differentials in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union.*; Dimitrova, *Social Inequality and the Second Economy during the Transition Away From State Socialism: Bulgaria 1985-1992*.

In 1994, the female-male wage ratio was high compared to other countries in the region, including the Northern Tier countries. The figure was also significantly higher than those for Russia or Ukraine.<sup>17</sup> Brainerd, however, argues that calculating women's average wage as a percentage of men's average wage likely over-estimates women's real wages. She suggests that a better measure is the mean female position in the male wage distribution. By this measure, Bulgarian women's average wage was only 45 percent of men's average wage.<sup>18</sup>

Another estimate for Bulgaria is made in the form of "real GDP per capita," by male and female, calculated in the UNDP *Human Development Report*. This provides figures based on estimates of the ratio of the average female wage to male wage and the percentage shares of women and men in the economically active population. The GDP per capita by gender provides an approximation of the relative economic situation of men and women. As Table 15.8 shows, female per capita GDP is calculated at about 68 percent of male per capita, in parity purchasing power. No data are available on the change in GDP by gender.

**Table 15.8. Per Capita GDP**

Female real GDP per capita (1997 PPP\$)	Male real GDP per capita (1997 PPP\$)
1997	1997
\$3,256	\$4,801

Source: UNDP, Human Development Indicators, 1999

The overall Gini coefficient for Bulgaria, which measures income inequality, has shown a modest increase in the 1990's (Table 15.9).

<sup>17</sup> Brainerd, *Women in Transition: Changes in Gender Wage Differentials in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.; Brainerd, "Market Reform and Mortality in Transition Economies," 2013.



**Table 15.9. Gini Coefficient for Bulgaria**

1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
21.2	26.2	--	25.1	--	--	29.1	--

Source: EBRD Transition Report 1999, 204.

### ***Sectoral Issues: the Private Sector and the Informal Economy***

By 1992 about 7.2 percent of women and 10.1 percent of men had reported having a main job in the private sector at least one month per year. Surveys from the early 1990s show that women comprised approximately 22 percent of new private entrepreneurs and 14 percent of managerial positions within new private firms.<sup>19</sup> In September 1993, the number of people working in the private sector equaled about 21 percent of the labor force. Almost half of these people were self-employed, and a high proportion had low educational attainment (45 percent less than secondary education).

Little data is available on the degree to which women have been able to assume leadership positions in business. An estimate from 1990 reports about 29 percent of administrators and managers were women; well more than half (57 percent) of professional and technical workers were female (Table 15.10).

**Table 15.10. Labor Force By Sector and Gender,  
Percent of Male or Female Labor Force**

	Male	Female
<b>Administrators and Managers</b>	71.1	28.9
<b>Professional and technical workers</b>	43.0	57.0

Note: -- indicates data are not available for Bulgaria.

Sources: UNDP, Human Development Indicators, 1999.

This finding also suggests that at least some movement into the private sector occurred at lower levels of the occupational and skill hierarchy. Although no information on earnings was collected, this composite suggests substantial shares of low earners. In early stages of the private sector's emergence, it is likely that a substantial portion of the new recruits were people with weak positions in the state economy. People who broke ties to the familiar and, at that time, more secure state sector may have done so out of desperation rather than choice. Although none of these people had been unemployed, it is possible that their decision to leave state jobs was taken in anticipation of future unemployment.<sup>20</sup> It is important to note, however, that in the first years of economic reforms, private sector employment did not necessarily translate into higher

<sup>19</sup> Bistra Anachkova, "Women in Bulgaria," in Barbara Lobodzinska (ed.), *Family, Women, and Employment in Central-Eastern Europe*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, Contributions in Sociology Series, 1995).

<sup>20</sup> Dimitrova, *Social Inequality and the Second Economy during the Transition Away From State Socialism: Bulgaria 1985-1992*.

earnings. Whether or not a person's income increased or decreased in their new private sector employment depended on their previous position. At least in the first years of post-communist economic transition, private sector employment was initially associated with lower than average income for the majority of people who undertook it.<sup>21</sup>

According to Dimitrova's statistical analysis, virtually none of the usual statistical indicators, including sex, were predictors of primary employment in the private sector in 1993.<sup>22</sup> Women entered the private sector at rates similar to men. In terms of the number of employees entering, women have not been left behind. Moreover, Dimitrova also shows that the unemployed and newcomers to the labor force have a higher propensity to become private sector workers. Apparently the most important factors that support transition into the private sector are the practice of secondary non-farm work and the employment of family members in the private sector.

### Agriculture

Bulgarian data indicate that, at least until the mid-1990's, women in agriculture were becoming unemployed more rapidly than men, both from field work and from the handful of skilled, better-paid jobs to which they once had access.<sup>23</sup> In the state socialist period, the collectivization of agriculture formalized women's farm work, and expanded the peasant woman's visibility and remuneration. While official statistics indicate that women constituted 40 percent of agricultural workers in 1942, by 1967 they comprised 67 percent of collective farm workers.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, sex segregation was rife within collectivized agriculture, with men occupying the majority of higher-paying technical and mechanical jobs and women representing the majority of manual laborers. In 1986, an estimated 66 percent of female agricultural workers relied on hand tools, as opposed to 35 percent of male agricultural workers.<sup>25</sup> Although women constituted approximately 50 percent of agricultural workers in the mid-1980s, only two to four percent of tractor drivers, machinists and combine drivers – the most lucrative agricultural jobs – were women.

The collectivization of agriculture created opportunities for white-collar jobs as well. These jobs were, on average, paid better than the blue-collar jobs. Here too, though, women occupied secretarial, administrative and agronomist positions, while men occupied the better-paying management and veterinary positions. Nevertheless, in the best paid white collar farm jobs women comprised as much as 18 to 21 percent of the work force – well above the four to six percent participation women achieved in the best paid blue-collar jobs.

Bulgaria's post-Communist Land Law has returned collective farm holdings to their pre-collectivization owners, resulting in radical change in the structure of Bulgarian farms. The emerging productive structure of private, small-scale, often family-based units will have

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<sup>21</sup> Dimitrova, *Social Inequality and the Second Economy during the Transition Away From State Socialism: Bulgaria 1985-1992*.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Meurs, 1994

<sup>24</sup> Meurs, 1994: CSO, 1967, Statistical Yearbook 1942

<sup>25</sup> Meurs, 1994: Institute of Sociology, 1986

frequently meant the loss of significant social welfare benefits associated with state employment, such as pensions, paid vacations, and subsidized cafeterias. Additionally, the loss of maternity leave has affected women's earning options. Since white-collar workers associated with the large collective farms are usually not necessary to small, private farms, both men and women in these positions have faced high unemployment. And even here it seems that women have been displaced from white-collar managerial and agronomist positions more rapidly than men.<sup>26</sup>

### **Informal Economy**

Bulgaria's pre-transition private sector was not as well developed as those of its socialist allies to the north. Secondary work in the non-state sector was referred to at the time as "supplementary," and was more common among households that were better off. The direction of causality in this relationship is not clear. However, it is possible to say that in Bulgaria during the mid-1980s, secondary or "supplemental" work did not exert the leveling effect that some theorists have described.

Since the start of the economic transformation, the meaning of secondary income has changed. The old pattern of better access for the already relatively affluent seems to have prevailed only in urban centers. In contrast to the mid-1980s, participation in the second economy is no longer invariably associated with higher levels of total income. However, neither have secondary incomes become the last resort of the most disadvantaged.<sup>27</sup>

### **Findings**

**Have there been changes in labor force participation by women and men, pre-1989 and current, by sector?** The data regarding male and female participation in the Bulgarian economy are contradictory. No clear conclusions can be drawn.

**Is there evidence for wage gap trends and wage differentials?** The wage gap trend has not been steady in Bulgaria. For the first few years after the transition, men's earnings relative to women's declined. Since 1994, however, men's earnings have increased relative to women's, which probably means that women's earnings have declined faster than men's since wages continued to decrease across the board for a few years.

**Has unemployment increased, whether official or hidden, and is there a gender dimension to unemployment?** While Bulgarian women constitute a larger number and percentage of the unemployed, from 1990 to 1993, men's unemployment increased more than women's. From 1994 on, however, men's unemployment has decreased faster than women's. In the agricultural sector, women have consistently become unemployed more rapidly than men.

**How has the growth of the informal economy reflected gender differentiation?** The participants in the informal economy have diversified among socio-economic strata, but it is not clear whether there is any gender differentiation.

<sup>26</sup> Meurs, 1994

<sup>27</sup> Dimitrova, *Social Inequality and the Second Economy during the Transition Away From State Socialism: Bulgaria 1985-1992*.

**What is the impact of privatization of state enterprises on women's and men's employment?** More and more people continue to migrate from the state sector to the private sector, but gender is not a significant factor in that move. Educational attainment appears to be the most influential factor.

**What role do women play in new managerial positions or business formation in the growing private sector?** Women comprised only 28 percent of managerial posts in all sectors of the economy in 1999. A breakdown of public sector and private sector is not available.

### *Opportunities for Future Research*

**Further research on the real labor force participation trends would be useful.** The contradictory data do not allow conclusions to be drawn. It is important to disaggregate these analyses to document the gendered dynamics at the level of economic sector and the firm as well. An analysis of the types of jobs that women and men occupy, how they get there, and details about unemployment (i.e., how long it lasts, the sectors and levels at which it is most prevalent) are essential for understanding the impact of economic transition on men and women. Some research approaches this issue of job stratification by sex in Bulgaria, although it is not sufficiently systematic, thorough or broad to make grounded conclusions about trends or changes on the labor market. The work of the Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation (1999) provides some detailed description of the situation of Bulgarian women in the post-communist labor market. Unfortunately, the Foundation's work does not analyze changes in men's labor market position, rendering incomplete their conclusions about the changing economic order and its harsh effects on women.

Answering research questions related to these topics, in conjunction with an analysis of changing job structures and valuations over the past decade, would paint a much clearer picture of gendered processes in Bulgaria's post-communist economic transition. Furthermore, addressing the types of questions and issues suggested here would provide a more detailed view of the winners and losers in Bulgaria's economic transition. For although the gender gap appeared to be closing during the first years of transition in Bulgaria, it is not possible to say that most women are doing comparatively well compared to most men. After all, men still earn more than women and are a significantly smaller portion of registered unemployed.

## THE DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION

The purpose of this section is to discuss the differential experience of Bulgarian men and women in the political sphere before and after the transition to democracy. The primary questions to be answered are:

1. Is there differential participation by women and men in the public sphere?
  - a) What is the role of women in party politics?
  - b) What is the representation of women in elected government positions, locally and nationally?
  - c) What is the representation of women in appointed governmental positions?
2. How is gender reflected in the development of civil society, especially NGOs?
  - a) What is the role of women in different types of NGOs?
  - b) Have NGOs developed that advocate for gender issues?
3. How has the rule of law been institutionalized and what impact is there on gender?
  - a) Have there been *de jure* legal reforms with an impact on gender?
  - b) Do men and women have equal legal rights, *de jure* and *de facto*? (Is there sufficient information to be able to contrast between *de jure* and *de facto*?)
  - c) Have there been reforms related to family law: inheritance, ownership, marriage, and divorce that impact on gender?

These questions are addressed below beginning with a brief discussion of how men and women participated in politics and civil society during the communist era and how the patterns of that participation has changed since independence and how they are now affected by rule of law.

### *Political Activity in the Communist Period*

The Fatherland Front, the ruling Communist Party that took power in Bulgaria after World War II, created one of the most repressive state structures in the world. As a result, Bulgaria's post-Communist transition has been shaped by the lack of any internal political challenge to the Front. Nor was there any pressure for reform within the Communist Party. Rather, civic interest groups catalyzed Bulgaria's transition when, in September 1989, representatives from 35 nations met to discuss international environmental concerns in Sofia.<sup>28</sup> During the conference, domestic environmental groups staged unauthorized rallies and protests that continued and grew through October. It was these protests that prompted Petar Mladenov, then Bulgaria's Foreign Minister, to orchestrate President Todor Zhivkov's ouster and allow the creation of an opposition party from the ranks of the Communist Party.

Women held a significant proportion of the positions in local and regional leadership under the Communists, as Table 15.11 illustrates. Women were also well represented in the formal political structures, although many have argued that women's access to the highest levels of party and government was restricted. For instance, in the last communist parliament, women comprised 20.75 percent of the delegates.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Christine L. Allison. *Electoral Systems and the Transition to Democracy in Hungary and Bulgaria* (M.A. Thesis, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD, 1997), 44.

<sup>29</sup> Kostova, "Similar or Different?: Women in Postcommunist Bulgaria," 256.

**Table 15.11: Percentage of Communist Leadership Positions Held by Women**

Level of Leadership	Fatherland Front (1979)	Communist Youth Organization (1980)
Local	47.1%	51.7%
Municipal	38.5%	45.2%
Regional	41.1%	38.4%

Source: Kostova, "Similar or Different?" 252.

### *Political Activity since the Transition*

Women's interest and past activity in politics have continued under the new democratic regime. According to a 1993 USIA report, 67 percent of Bulgarian women and 78 percent of Bulgarian men said they had at least a fair amount of interest in politics.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, in a survey based on the 1992 presidential elections, most women were found to generally have stable party attachments. In spite of this, women have been a swing block in Bulgaria. Thirty percent of women claim no party allegiance, compared to 13 percent of the total electorate.<sup>31</sup> Researchers have also found that women with party allegiances, particularly those with a university education, have felt freer than men to vote against their party if they felt another candidate would be a better choice for the country. Women also apparently prefer candidates with strong personalities and do not necessarily favor female candidates for their own sake. Indeed, most claim that they would support women candidates only if they have demonstrated their leadership capabilities.<sup>32</sup>

Despite this show of interest in public life, direct political participation has decreased among women in Bulgaria over the last decade. While no numbers are available by gender, less than ten percent of eligible voters belong to political parties.<sup>33</sup> All parties currently in parliament have male chairmen. The only party with women at high levels of leadership is the Bulgarian Socialist Party, with nine men and three women on its Supreme Council<sup>34</sup> (Table 15.12).

<sup>30</sup> USIA, *A World View of Women*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Information Agency), 18.

<sup>31</sup> Dobrinka Kostova, "Similar or Different?: Women in Postcommunist Bulgaria," in Marilyn Rueschemeyer, ed., *Women in Politics of Postcommunist Eastern Europe*, (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1998), p. 261

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 262.

<sup>33</sup> Adrian Karatnycky, Alexander Motyl, and Charles Graybow (eds), *Nations in Transit 1998: Civil Society, Democracy and Markets in East Central Europe and the Newly Independent States*, (Washington, DC: Freedom House, 1999), 156.

<sup>34</sup> Who Is Who in Bulgarian Politics, <http://www.db.online.bg/bg/who/>.

**Table 15.12: Political Positions Held by Men and Women in Bulgaria**

Position	Total Number	Held by Women		Held by Men	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Members of Parliament	240	26	10.8 %	214	89.2 %
Cabinet Ministers	16	3	18.8 %	13	81.9 %
Pres. Admin. Employees	NA	NA		NA	
Regional Administrators	28	0	0.0 %	28	100.0 %
Members of Judiciary	NA	NA		NA	
High Court	12	NA		NA	
Appeals Courts	NA	NA		NA	
Local Courts	NA	NA		NA	
Political Party Leaders	5	0	0.0 %	5	100.0 %

Note: Data are from January 2000 unless otherwise noted

Sources: Inter Parliamentary Union website, <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>; Women in Governments website, <http://hjem.get2net.dk/Womeningovernments/>; CIA Chiefs of State and Cabinet Members web page, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/chiefs/index.html>; University of Wuerzburg International Constitutional Law website, <http://www.uni-wuerzburg.de/law/>.

### The Legislative Branch

Women's representation in the legislative branch has increased slightly since the transition. In the last communist parliament, women comprised 20.75 percent of deputies, but in the 1990 Grand National Assembly, only nine percent of the elected members were women.<sup>35</sup> Table 15.13 below shows the breakdown of female candidacy by party in the 1990 parliamentary elections.

**Table 15.13. 1990 Parliamentary Election Candidates**

Political Party	% women
Bulgarian Socialist Party	10.7
Peasant Party	8.6
Movement for Freedom and Rights	9.7
Union of Democratic Forces	7.8
Other	14.2

Source: Kostova, "Similar or Different?" 257.

Not only has the number of women in elected office declined, but the parties that are likely to elect women have changed over time as well. Women currently constitute 10.8 percent (26 of 240) of Bulgaria's parliament or *Duma*. This is in part a function of the party-list style of parliamentary elections. When women have been presented as candidates, they have rarely been at the top of their parties' lists, so the probability of their election was lower than that of their male colleagues.<sup>36</sup> This becomes particularly important when parties lose large numbers of seats. In 1991, the Bulgarian Socialist Party had a greater representation of women in parliament

<sup>35</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition, Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, (UNICEF International Child Development Centre, 1999), 94.

<sup>36</sup> Kostova, "Similar or Different?: Women in Postcommunist Bulgaria," 256.

than the other parties, but Table 15.14 shows that women now comprise a much smaller proportion of its reduced delegation. The balance of Bulgaria's female parliamentarians are independents whose parties failed to win the four percent of the popular vote required to introduce a slate of candidates into the Duma.

**Table 15.14. Percentage of Party Delegation Comprised of Women in the National Assembly**

Party	1991	1997
Bulgarian Socialist Party	18.9%	5.2%
Union of Democratic Forces	10.0%	11.7%
Movement for Rights and Freedom/UNS coalition (MRF, Greens)	8.3%	0.0%
Euroleft	*	14.3%
Bulgarian Business Block	*	0.0%

*Note:* \* indicates that the parties were not elected to the 1991 assembly.

*Source:* Kostova, "Similar or Different?" 259.

Kostova asserts that the decrease in women's representation occurred because of a confluence of two events, the removal of quotas for women's representation and women's need to put family first in a time of economic transition. She points to the dramatic changes in the household economy during the transition and suggests that, given the role of women in household management and child care, women have had to turn their attentions away from the public square.<sup>37</sup> Women, she argues, were never as "equal" in the political sphere as they have been in the occupational sphere. Therefore the removal of the female quota after 1989 led to the rapid diminution of the number of women in representative roles.

Those women who have successfully run for parliament have not organized themselves into a women's parliamentary coalition. Thus far, they have largely represented their party programs instead of developing their own agendas.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, any system that uses party lists discourages extra-factional coalitions, as participation in them may be viewed as party disloyalty for which they may be punished by being passed over for leadership positions within the party or demoted on the party list.

### The Executive Branch

In contrast with the situation in parliament, Bulgarian women have greatly improved their representation in executive branch positions since 1996. Whereas they comprised 4.8 percent of ministerial positions and 16.2 percent of sub-ministerial positions in 1996, currently, three of sixteen appointed ministers (18.75 percent) are women, the Minister of Culture, the Minister of Environment and Waters and the Minister of Foreign Affairs.<sup>39</sup> In addition, of the 21 deputy ministers now listed in "Who's Who in Bulgarian Politics," six are women (28.57 percent), as is the chair of the Central Election Commission. This may in part be due to the fact that cabinet members have changed frequently in Bulgaria because of the country's unstable political

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 258.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 256.

<sup>39</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 97.



climate. The average ministerial duration for Bulgaria is only 1.55 years, which is less than most countries in the region.<sup>40</sup> Unfortunately, this also means is that ministers have less time to develop their professional capacity than their colleagues in other countries.

Women have also faced considerable difficulties in getting a political foothold at the regional level since the transition to democracy. Regional governors are now appointed by the Council of Ministers. There are 28 regional governors in Bulgaria, but as of late 1999, none were women.<sup>41</sup>

### **The Judicial Branch**

Less information is available about the participation of men and women in the judiciary in Bulgaria. The Constitutional Court is comprised of twelve members. Only eight were listed in “Who Is Who in Bulgarian Politics,” and all of those were men.<sup>42</sup> A Supreme Judicial Council elects, promotes, demotes, and dismisses all justices, prosecutors and magistrates. There are 25 members, 11 elected by the National Assembly, 11 elected by judicial branch bodies and three ex officio members (the Chief Prosecutor, Chair of the Supreme Court and Chair of the Supreme Administrative Court). Judicial salaries are low and many people have left the judiciary, some to private practice that was expected to thrive as the transition was made.<sup>43</sup>

On the whole it can be said that women’s participation in Bulgarian politics is a mixed story during the transition. Direct participation, which decreased initially in 1990, has rebounded somewhat, particularly in the executive branch after 1996. Fewer women hold office in provincial government than before. Future objectives might be an increase in women on the bench and in parliament. However, even without their direct participation, women’s influence as a voting bloc in a context of open political debate should ensure that parties and politicians address women’s issues more in the future, even if the politicians are not women.

### ***Civil Society since the Transition***

Bulgaria’s NGO sector had already shown strength by 1989, as evidenced by its role in the fall of Communism described earlier.<sup>44</sup> That sector has continued to grow. At the end of 1996, there were more than 4,600 “civil society organizations” (CSOs) registered in Bulgaria, sixty percent which were located in Sofia and other large cities. CSOs employ approximately 2,500 persons full- or part-time, along with 150,000 volunteers. However, in a survey of 2,644 CSOs in Bulgaria in 1996, only 37 (1.4 percent) were found to be exclusively concerned with women’s issues. An additional 9.5 percent dealt with social care for children, the elderly or the poor, while 3.8 percent were focused on health issues.<sup>45</sup> Inasmuch as women often take leading roles

<sup>40</sup> John T. Ishiyama and Matthew Velten, “Presidential Power and Democratic Development in Post-Communist Politics,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, v.31, n.3, 1998, 223.

<sup>41</sup> Personal communication, Boyan Byuzelev, *Bulgaria Online*.

<sup>42</sup> Who Is Who in Bulgarian Politics, <http://www.db.online.bg/bg/who/> on 1/7/2000.

<sup>43</sup> Albert P. Melone, “The Struggle for Judicial Independence and the Transition Toward Democracy in Bulgaria,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, v.29, n.2, 1998, 234, 237.

<sup>44</sup> Georgi Karasimeonov, “Bulgaria’s New Party System,” in Geoffrey Pridham and Paul Lewis (eds) *Stabilising Fragile Democracies* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 254.

<sup>45</sup> Liza W. Poinier, *The New Civic Atlas: profiles of civil society in 60 countries*, (Washington: CIVICUS, 1997), 17.

in supporting vulnerable populations, a significant percentage of the respective NGOs were also female-operated.

For NGOs, funding is a problem in Bulgaria as elsewhere in the region. As a recent phenomenon, NGOs have no history of corporate or individual donor support. Tax laws often have inadequate incentives for businesses to donate to charitable institutions. Nor does the Orthodox Church exhort its parishioners to assist charities with the same dedication as the Catholic and Protestant churches do. Therefore, NGOs are often dependent on funding from international donors and foreign foundations.

One exception to this reliance on foreign support is the *chitalishta*. Focusing its activities on education, culture, and the arts at the municipality level, the *chitalishta* is tied to, and receives up to 70 percent of its funding from local governments. There are 4,288 registered *chitalishta* and more than 30,000 people are employed in these organizations around Bulgaria.<sup>46</sup> These NGOs represent a large percentage of the employment and available funding in Bulgaria's nonprofit sector, though no data are available on specific services provided or number of clientele served.

Another obstacle facing Bulgarian NGOs is the strict limits imposed by the State on political advocacy. As a result, NGOs cannot operate as freely in Bulgaria as they might elsewhere. In 1989, some politicians developed an understandable wariness toward NGOs and the political influence they had begun to demonstrate. Consequently, Article 6 of the Bulgarian Constitution now bans ethnic, religious and racial associations from becoming political parties or organizing associated political parties.

### ***Rule of Law***

Under the 1991 Constitution, all citizens are equal and restrictions of privileges on the grounds of sex, as well as any other categorization of people, are inadmissible. Thus, while it follows that women and men enjoy equal rights, there is no specific article declaring men and women equal as there was in the 1971 Constitution.<sup>47</sup> In spite of that omission, men and women formally receive equal treatment under the law except in two areas, labor laws and the treatment of property under the divorce law.

### **Labor Laws**

Although legally protected to the same extent as men, women have been more vulnerable to layoffs than men in Bulgaria's contracting economy, as discussed previously. Interviews in late 1998 conducted by the Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation with the staff of the Labor Inspectorate, which is charged with overseeing employment relations, showed staff to be uninformed about the practice of discrimination against women. Workers do have recourse in the courts in such cases, and Article 359 of the Labor Code requires court fees and expenses to be waived for discrimination and labor rights violations cases.<sup>48</sup> However, there are some

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<sup>46</sup> Kostova, "Similar or Different?: Women in Postcommunist Bulgaria," 251.

<sup>47</sup> Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation, *Strengthening Citizens' Participation in the Privatization Process: women's rights during the economic transition*, (Sofia: Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation, 1999), 32.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 52, 54.

indications that some of the provisions in Bulgarian law designed to protect women may actually limit women's professional opportunities. Article 47 of the Constitution guarantees state support for childcare, education, and protection of women as mothers. As a result, Bulgaria's Labor Code contains special provisions to restrict pregnant women and breast-feeding mothers from doing potentially harmful or arduous work. Article 310 prohibits a company from sending a pregnant woman or mother of a child under three on a business trip, a policy that could limit the career advancement of female professionals. Articles 140 and 147 prohibit pregnant women and mothers of children under three from working night shifts, though these positions often pay more than day hours.<sup>49</sup> These restrictions do not apply to men with children under three.

Certain practices are also not addressed in the Labor Code, the absence of which may enable firms to discriminate against women. For example, Bulgaria does not have regulations in place to limit the types of questions asked in an interview with a potential employee.<sup>50</sup> Nor is it illegal to refuse to hire a woman because she is or may become pregnant.<sup>51</sup> Even if it were, proving such discrimination in court would be difficult, according to those working toward equality between the sexes in Bulgaria, given current attitudes. It is also easy to understand a corporation's potential reluctance to hire a woman who may get pregnant. The firm would bear double wages – for her and for her replacement – during the nearly six months of paid maternity leave to which she is entitled. Bulgaria also lacks a specific law or regulation to protect workers from sexual harassment in the workplace. Article 127 of the Labor Code requires the employer to provide normal working conditions to perform his or her job,<sup>52</sup> while this could be interpreted to mean an environment free of sexual harassment, its enforcement would depend heavily on the judge's interpretation.

Finally, although abundant anecdotal evidence exists regarding sex discrimination in the workplace, there have not yet been systematic studies of its impact on women and men. If harassment and discrimination based on looks and age are as prevalent as some people claim, then it would be unlikely that such a workplace environment would not differentially constrain opportunities and outcomes for certain groups.

### **Divorce Law: Disposal of Property**

A final important legal issue facing women in Bulgaria involves questions of property division following a divorce. Divorce law in Bulgaria states that in the absence of a voluntary agreement between the two parties, all property shall be divided equally between them. This straightforward procedure may be complicated if one spouse owns a company that may have to be dissolved in order to divide the property as required by law. Current law also places a divorced woman at risk to loss of property if her former spouse faces losses while owning a company of unlimited liability. The Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation states that women are usually affected by the commercial activity of their husbands in these cases.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 36-50.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>53</sup> Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation, *Strengthening Citizens' Participation in the Privatization Process*, 66, 34-35.

### ***Findings***

**Is there differential participation by women and men in the public sphere?** Men are much better represented in all branches and levels of government than women. Women's representation in parliament has fallen to half of what it was in the last communist government, but those women have access to power that women did not have under the Communists. In the future, however, women may only be able to augment their role by joining political parties in greater numbers to pressure for promotion on party lists.

**How is gender reflected in the development of civil society, especially NGOs?** Civil society has long since taken root in Bulgaria and involves the work of thousands of dedicated individuals. Many NGOs are devoted to issues that impact women's lives, acting both as advocates and service providers, an impressive accomplishment considering the political and financial obstacles confronting them.

**How has the rule of law been institutionalized and what impact is there on gender?** Finally, most of Bulgaria's laws protect the rights of both men and women. Certain measures of the Labor Code which are meant to protect women may, in fact, diminish their competitiveness in the labor market vis-a-vis men. The divorce law may disadvantage one spouse due to the other's commercial activity. But overall, the government seems to have established rule of law in Bulgaria that treats men and women equally.

### ***Opportunities for Future Research***

**More information is needed on the composition of the judiciary and local and regional levels of government.**

**More information is needed on the composition of the staff and volunteers of the NGO sector, as well as the activities of the sector.** This information would provide a more complete picture of the political activity of Bulgarian men and women and allow the government to determine where service gaps exist.

**Information on the *de facto* implementation of rights and freedoms is needed.**

## THE SOCIAL TRANSITION

This section reports findings from major sources regarding the effects of the transition in Bulgaria on social benefits, poverty, pension reform, health, and education and explores these primary questions:

1. With the shredding of the social safety net, how have women versus men fared in access to / support from social programs?
2. Do data show women's poverty rates to be greater than men's?
3. What are the health-related impacts of the transition?
4. What differential impacts has pension reform had on men's and women's access to benefits?
5. What are salient changes in the state-funded education system (secondary and higher) since 1989/91?

This chapter reviews World Bank, UNDP, UNICEF, and other sources, and major findings are presented in the five sections that follow: Social Safety Net, Poverty, Pension Reform, Health Reform, and Education.

### *The Social Safety Net*

As described in Chapter 5, The Social Transition, social safety net programs are of three general types: universal benefits, social insurance, and social assistance. Bulgaria's social safety net includes programs that fall into each of these three categories. Table 15.15 lists Bulgaria's social safety net programs and briefly describes their eligibility requirements and benefits and points out the major gender differences.

Prior to the transition, Bulgaria provided a complete social safety net for its citizens which included retirement, disability, and survivor's pensions; sickness and maternity benefits; work injury protections; and family allowances. These programs continue to exist during the transition. Additionally, Bulgaria's unemployment insurance program, dormant during the Communist years because of official full employment, was reinstated in 1989. As a result, the number of Bulgarians receiving social benefits was 30 times higher in 1992 than in 1990.<sup>54</sup>

As is evident in Table 15.15, women receive preferential treatment in benefits, eligibility, or both in five of nine social benefit programs in Bulgaria. In other words, the gender bias in social safety net programs is geared toward women. Although this issue is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, it should be noted here that when benefits are based on a percentage of wages, women's benefits will tend to be lower than men's.

In Bulgaria, unlike other countries in the E&E region, fathers are eligible to receive maternity benefits, if the mother agrees. More detail is provided in Table 15.15.

<sup>54</sup> Fareed M. A. Hassan and R. Kyle Peters, Jr. *Social Safety Net and the Poor During the Transition: the Case of Bulgaria* (Washington, DC: the World Bank, undated), 18.

Table 15.15. Social Safety Net Program Eligibility and Benefits in Bulgaria

Program	Value		Eligibility	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
<i>Universal Benefits</i>				
Family Allowances	8,540 leva/month per child. Double for handicapped children. <i>Additional for single mothers.</i>	8,540 leva/month per child. Double for handicapped children.	Employed, collective farmer, students, <i>single mothers</i> , military, social insurance beneficiaries.	Employed, collective farmer, students, military, social insurance beneficiaries.
Health Benefits	National health insurance.	Same.	All residents.	Same.
<i>Social Insurance</i>				
Pension, Old-age	55% of average earnings during highest 3 years in last 15. Increment of 2% of pension per year of service.	Same.	<i>Age 55 with 20 years of service. Or age 60 and proportionately reduced pension if at least 1/2 of period completed. Requirements reduced for arduous and unhealthy occupations, teachers, military, handicapped, and mothers of five or more children.</i>	Age 60 with 25 years of service. Or age 65 and proportionately reduced pension if at least 1/2 of period completed. Requirements reduced for arduous and unhealthy occupations, teachers, military, handicapped, and mothers of five or more children.
Pension, Disability	25-55% of average earnings, depending on disability. Constant attendance supplement.	Same.	Permanent or long incapacity for work incurred no later than 2 years after work termination, 3-5 years of service.	Same
Pension, Survivorship	50-100% of disability pension.	Same.	Deceased had 5 years of service or was pensioner. Eligible survivors are children, siblings, aged or disabled parents or spouse, needy grandparents, <i>and grandchildren under age 26.</i>	Deceased had 5 years of service or was pensioner. Eligible survivors are children, siblings, aged or disabled parents or spouse, needy grandparents, and grandchildren under age 28 and completed military service.
Maternity	100% of earnings for 4-6 months. Additional leave, paid at minimum wage until child is 2.	Same.	6 continuous months of employment immediately before claim.	Same. Payable to father or grandparent under certain circumstances and if mother agrees.

Program	Value		Eligibility	
	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>
Unemployment	60% of average earnings during last 6 months. Proportionately reduced for part-time employment. Different increments if taking vocational training. <i>Different increments if taking care of two or more children. Duration depends on age: 12 months at age 51.</i>	60% of average earnings during last 6 months. Proportionately reduced for part-time employment. Different increments if taking vocational training. <i>Different increments if taking care of two or more children. Duration depends on age: 10 months at age 51.</i>	6 months of employment in last year or qualified graduates. Registration at employment office, unemployment not due to voluntary leaving, dismissal for misconduct, refusal of suitable offer, transfer, or training.	Same.
Work Injury	70-90% of earnings, depending on disability.	Same.	No minimum qualifying period.	Same.
<b><i>Social Assistance</i></b>				
Social Pension (Means-tested)	34,650 leva/month	Same.	<i>Unemployment more than 3 months because of liquidation of enterprise, over age 52, and enough years of coverage to qualify for old-age pension. Or, over age 70, or totally disabled and over age 16.</i>	<i>Unemployment more than 3 months because of liquidation of enterprise, over age 57, and enough years of coverage to qualify for old-age pension. Or, over age 70, or totally disabled and over age 16.</i>

*Notes:* The data in this table were current as of January 1, 1999 (the latest version of the Social Security Administration's report). Italicized text indicates a gender difference in eligibility or benefits.

*Source:* U.S. Social Security Administration, *Social Security Programs Throughout the World – 1999*, 210-212.

One issue challenging any proposed social reform is the question of gender-differentiated household dependency on assistance income. In Bulgaria, welfare payments provide a large portion of household income especially for poor and female-headed households. Table 15.16 presents data on the percentage of household income provided by welfare payments.

**Table 15.16. Percentage of Household Income Provided by Welfare Payments**

Female-headed Households	Poor Households	Overall Average
64	54	24

Source: Fareed M. A. Hassan and R. Kyle Peters, Jr., *Social Safety Net and the Poor During the Transition: the Case of Bulgaria* (Washington, DC: the World Bank, undated), 18.

### **Poverty and Gender**

According to a 1998 World Bank report, poverty is gender-differentiated in Bulgaria. Single women and female heads of households are poorer than single men and male heads of households. These data are presented in Table 15.17. The table includes poverty rates by geography, another significant correlate of poverty, according to the World Bank.

**Table 15.17. Poverty Rates in Bulgaria**

<b>Overall</b>	26.1
<b>Male</b>	
Head of Household	24.0
Single	33.1
<b>Female</b>	
Head of Household	40.5
Single	45.0
<b>Urban</b>	19.9
<b>Rural</b>	39.2

Source: Christiaan Grootaert and Jeanine Braithwaite, *Poverty Correlates and Indicator-Based Targeting in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*, Policy Research Working Paper 1942 (Washington: World Bank, 1998), 24, 27, 37.

Reinforcing the conclusion that women are more likely to be poor are these data:

- 33 percent of female-headed households spend more than 61 percent of income on food compared to 23.6 percent of male households.
- 60.6 percent of female households reported that in the previous 12 months they sometimes had no money for food, whereas only 40 percent of male households reported this problem.
- 24.5 percent of female households own automobiles; 61.8 percent of male households do.



- 28.7 percent of female households own washing machines compared to 58.2 percent of male households.<sup>55</sup>

### **Institutionalized Children**

One consequence of Bulgarian poverty has been the number of children who have found themselves institutionalized since the start of the transition. Although Romania's orphanages received broader international media attention and subsequent aid and charity in the aftermath of the transition, Bulgaria's crowded orphanages did not.

Table 15.18 provides comparison data for Bulgaria and Romania, the countries of the E&E region with the highest rates of child institutionalization, and shows that institutionalization has increased in both countries. Readers should note that the numbers presented here reflect only children over age three. Many more children over that age are also in orphanages and hospitals. Whether the institutionalization situation and these increases are due to increasing poverty, to a family breakdown due to stresses unleashed by the transition, or to some longer-term cultural pattern, is unclear.

**Table 15.18. Institutionalized Children Aged 0-3, Rate per 100,000**

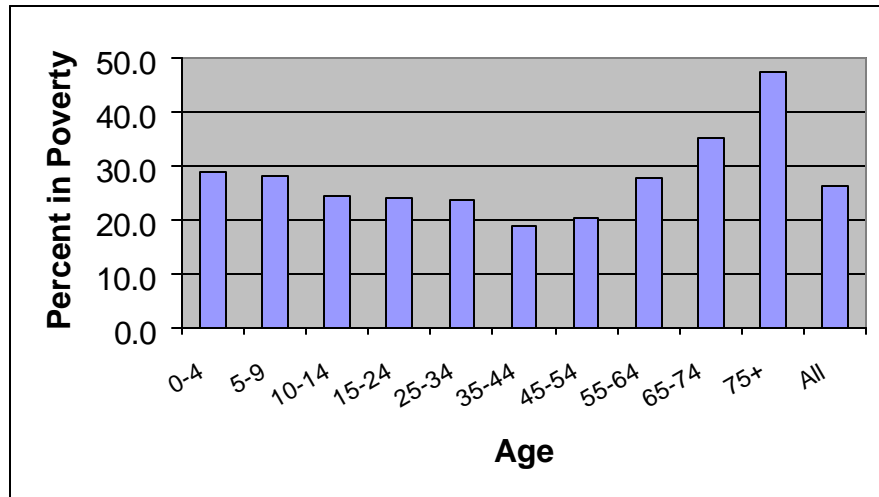
	<b>1990</b>	<b>1997</b>
<b>Bulgaria</b>	861.8	1,263.1
<b>Romania</b>	597.1	944.3

*Source:* UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 136.

### **Poverty and Age**

World Bank data presented in Figure 15.1 clearly show that the elderly are the poorest age group in Bulgaria. Young children (aged 0-9), while their poverty rates are lower than those for the elderly, are more likely to be poor than the average.

<sup>55</sup> ILO/UNDP, *Bulgaria: Women in Poverty*, Report 4 (Geneva: ILO/UNDP, 1998), Chapter 3, 3.

**Figure 15.1. Poverty by Age Group in Bulgaria**

Source: Christian Grootaert and Jeanine Braithwaite, *Poverty Correlates and Indicator-Based Targeting in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*, Policy Research Working Paper 1942 (Washington: World Bank, 1998), 38.

Box 15.1 provides qualitative information from UNDP in Bulgaria and the World Bank on poverty and the female elderly.

#### **Box 15.1 Female Poverty and the Elderly**

A survey of ten elderly Bulgarian women in two large cities found them to have a very poor assessment of social workers. Four of them were covered by the social assistance system, receiving vouchers for utilities and financial aid from the European Union. They complained about the lack of systematic care and supportive attitude by the social welfare employees. Most of the elderly women were not aware of the range of available forms of social assistance. They judged their neighbors to be the best source of assistance, higher than that provided by relatives and children, government institutions, and non-governmental organizations. For many elderly women in Bulgaria, the value of long life was offset by its poor quality. ILO/UNDP, *Bulgaria: Women in Poverty*, 14.

The ongoing erosion of the value of pension benefits in the face of mounting inflation has particularly affected the large number of Bulgarian women who depend on their pensions. Whereas prior to the transition pensions provided a comfortable existence, they are no longer sufficient. Consequently, elderly women make up the most marginalized sector of Bulgarian society. Pension-dependent women in large cities are particularly vulnerable to poverty because 1) pensions are low, 2) they lack farms or vegetable plots for additional income or food, 3) the cost of living in cities is higher than elsewhere, and 4) owning their homes means they do not qualify as poor for social assistance. Hassan and Peters, *Social Safety Net and the Poor During the Transition*, 27-28, and ILO/UNDP, *Bulgaria: Women in Poverty*, Chapter 4, 13.

#### **Pension Reform**

With the assistance of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Bulgaria began the reform of its *public* pension system in 1992. The 1992 reforms included reducing the retirement age from 64 to 60 for men

and from 58 to 55 for women.<sup>56</sup> *Private* pension reform, begun in 1996, was necessitated by several factors, including the increasing insolvency of the public system, and the establishment of private pension funds. The Voluntary Pension Insurance Law, which governs private pensions, was finally adopted by parliament in July 1999.

In its September 1999 Letter of Intent to the IMF, the Government of Bulgaria admits that reform of the public pension system is still needed. Its list of proposed reform measures includes sharply reducing eligibility for early retirement, gradually raising and bringing closer together the minimum retirement age for men and women, harmonizing the contribution rates paid by employees and the self-employed, and introducing a closer link between benefits and lifetime contributions.<sup>57</sup>

The gender-differentiated effects of pension reform in Bulgaria to date have been neutral. The retirement age was raised for both men and women although it continues to favor women. Bulgaria's proposed reforms, particularly linking contributions and benefits, may likely have a gender effect. Because the effects of private pension reforms on gender are similar in most countries of the E&E region, these are discussed in Chapter 5.

Ten case studies of elderly Bulgarian women living in large cities (5 in Sofia and 5 in Varna) were conducted to investigate whether that group could be identified as a marginalized group of women, and to assess its status and characteristics.

Women in large cities are particularly vulnerable because their pensions cannot be supplemented by income from personal farms, while the costs of electricity and heating considerably exceed the capacity for support and normal life. The problems of this group are not only financial, but also social and psychological – they are related to disappointment and loneliness, destruction of illusions and values. The growth of the general crime rate rendered the elderly one of the most vulnerable categories. Women tend to live longer than men and are thus more likely to experience these problems.

Findings:

- Seven of the women had no children to assist them or their relatives faced serious material problems and could not help them. Some had been abandoned by their children.
- The monthly income of the surveyed women averaged BGL 35,000 (about USD 20). In recent years they have not purchased any shoes or clothes. They eat low-calorie food which resulted in anemia in some cases. The only items on the menu in winter are bread and milk.
- A problem relating to social assistance for this group is that their property, including the valuation of their homes, reduces their chances of being included in the category of the poor.
- The most serious problem of old women in the big cities is the maintenance of the home in winter. The central heating was turned off in the homes of almost all surveyed women.
- The fear of violence is an additional stress factor in their difficult lives. Two of the respondents had already been victims of violence.

In spite of their difficult situation, the elderly women would not go to a home for old people because of their negative perceptions about such assistance. One woman said: "One cannot live on alms."

The survey of the ten case studies revealed that as a rule the children of this marginalized group were also poor and unemployed and could not support their parents even if they wished to do so.

UNDP, *Women in Poverty*, Chapter 4, pp. 13-14

<sup>56</sup> Fareed Hassan and R. Kyle Peters, *Social Safety Net and the Poor During the Transition*, 26.

### ***Health Status and the Impact of the Transition***

Table 15.19 presents basic health indicators for Bulgaria. As these data show, basic health indicators are relatively favorable. The following statements can be made based on the available data:

- Life expectancy remained about the same for women but declined about one year for men.
- Between 1990 and 1997, the abortion rate slightly decreased.
- In 1997, the contraceptive prevalence rate was 76 percent.
- The incidence of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) decreased.
- Maternal mortality was about the same in 1997 as in 1990.<sup>58</sup>

Below, we look at each of these findings more closely.

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<sup>57</sup> Government of Bulgaria, "Letter of Intent to the IMF," September, 1999.

<sup>58</sup> Maternal mortality decreased fairly steadily from its 1990 level to a low of 31.5 in 1996. However, by 1997 it had increased to nearly the same level as in 1990. Unfortunately, there is no information to indicate whether this is a real increase or a statistical anomaly, common to the region, which involved calculating the ratio based on a relatively small number of deaths.

**Table 15.19. Demographic and Health Indicators for Bulgaria<sup>59</sup>**

Maternal mortality (per 100,000 live births) <sup>60</sup>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>		
	18.7	18.7		
Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births) <sup>61</sup>	12.37 (1999 est.)			
Abortion rate (per 100 live births) <sup>62</sup>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1997</b>		
	137.5	135.4		
Contraceptive prevalence, latest available year <sup>63</sup>	76%			
Total fertility rate (births per woman) <sup>64</sup>	1.23 (1999 est.)			
STD incidence (new cases of syphilis/gonorrhea per 100,000 population) <sup>65</sup>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1997</b>		
	67	46		
Life expectancy at birth <sup>66</sup>	<b>Female</b>		<b>Male</b>	
	<b>1990</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1997</b>
	74.8	74.4	68.1	67.2
Percent of population 65 and older in 1997 <sup>67</sup>	16%			

Sources: As indicated in the footnotes.

### Life Expectancy

Bulgaria has the highest proportion of population aged 65 and over of all the countries in this study, 15.1 percent.<sup>68</sup> There were 78 men per 100 women aged 65 and over in 1990; this ratio was projected to decrease to 74 by 2025.<sup>69</sup> Life expectancy for females is about the same (a decline of 0.4 years). For males, life expectancy has declined from 68.1 to 67.2 years.

### Mortality

<sup>59</sup> General note on sources: The major sources used for purposes of cross-country comparisons are from the MONEE and UNDP reports cited below, because they have data for most countries. MONEE is preferred for maternal mortality data because it is the most up-to-date comparable source of data. For infant mortality, UNDP is the preferred source for two reasons: a) UNDP data concords most closely with DHS data, for the three countries for which DHS surveys have been done; and b) data for six of the study countries cited in the MONEE database are based on Soviet rather than WHO definitions of infant death, impairing comparability. In some cases MONEE figures are significantly different (usually lower) than UNDP figures. Only the MONEE database provides reasonably complete and comparable data on abortion rates, STD incidence and life expectancy by sex. UNDP is the preferred source for total fertility rates because it concords most closely with DHS data in the cases in which it is available. Contraceptive prevalence sources identified are: Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), reproductive health surveys (RHS), UNDP Human Development Report (UNDP), Population Reference Bureau (PRB), Russia Longitudinal Monitoring Survey (RLMS). The year is specified when known.

<sup>60</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition, Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 119.

<sup>61</sup> CIA World Factbook 1999, <http://www.cia.gov>.

<sup>62</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 118.

<sup>63</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 198.

<sup>65</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 131.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 123-124.

<sup>67</sup> CIA World Factbook (<http://www.cia.gov>).

<sup>68</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report*, 198.

<sup>69</sup> Victoria Velkoff and K. Kinsella, *Aging in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*, (Washington, DC: Bureau of the Census, US Dept. of Commerce, September 1993), 43.

Causes of death are consistent with global trends, which show higher death rates due to chronic diseases in wealthier countries. However, unlike the established market economies, in which life expectancy at birth increases moderately with rising per capita GDP, in the former socialist economies male life expectancy, particularly, declines moderately as per capita income rises – male populations in wealthier former socialist economies appear less healthy than those in poorer countries. Age-standardized death rates for chronic diseases generally associated with unhealthy lifestyles are extremely high when compared with wealthier established market economies. The death rate for Bulgaria from circulatory system disease, for example, was nearly double that for the US in 1993.<sup>70</sup> Circulatory diseases accounted for about 68 percent of female deaths and nearly 60 percent of male deaths in 1993, by far the leading cause of death for both sexes. Neoplasms were the next leading cause, accounting for about 15 percent of male and 13 percent of female deaths.<sup>71</sup>

### **Infant Mortality**

The infant mortality rate, 16 per 1000 live births, is the second lowest among the Eastern European countries included in this study.<sup>72</sup> The rate reported by the MONEE project is slightly higher, 17.5, making Bulgaria the third lowest.<sup>73</sup> Infant mortality, however, has increased from its 1989 level of 14.4, due largely to congenital abnormalities and perinatal causes.<sup>74</sup>

### **Maternal Mortality**

The maternal mortality ratio (deaths per 100,000 live births) for 1997 was exactly the same as in 1989, 18.7, and slightly higher than the WHO target level for Europe of 15. However, within this period there were numerous fluctuations, from a low of 10.4 in 1991 to a high of 21.3 in 1992, with no apparent pattern.<sup>75</sup> It is common for rates based on a relatively small number of maternal deaths (less than 50 a year) to fluctuate. Among the countries in this study, Bulgaria's maternal death rate is the fourth lowest.

### **Health Care**

Bulgaria's low maternal mortality rate was possible in part because of relatively available health care. For instance, while the proportion of women with no pre-natal care was 22 percent in 1996 and 17 percent in 1997,<sup>76</sup> nearly all births (99%) were assisted by trained health professionals.<sup>77</sup> There was very little change in medical staffing and in-patient capacity through 1994, the latest

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<sup>70</sup> Ellen Goldstein and A. Preker, O. Adeyi, G. Chellaraj, *Trends in Health Status, Services and Finance: The Transition in Central and Eastern Europe, Volume I*, World Bank Technical Paper No. 341 (Washington, DC: the World Bank, ca. 1996), 12, 14.

<sup>71</sup> International Programs Center, *Populations at Risk*, 19.

<sup>72</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, 169

<sup>73</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 119.

<sup>74</sup> International Program Center, Population Division, US Bureau of the Census, *Populations at Risk in Central and Eastern Europe, Fourth Quarterly Report, Health in Eastern Europe*, USAID/ENI/PCS/PAC, June 26, 1996, 5.

<sup>75</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 119.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>77</sup> World Bank, *1999 World Development Indicators*.

year for which data are available. Spending on health relative to GDP was nearly identical in 1994 as in 1990; and real per capita health spending in 1994 was 99.9 percent of the 1990 level.<sup>78</sup>

Privatization of health services has been voluntary, and has proceeded most rapidly in the pharmaceutical and dentistry areas, where a larger share of costs has been shifted onto households. In Bulgaria, nearly 50 percent of pharmacists left the public sector between 1990 and 1993, compared to only about 5 percent of physicians. Hospitals have undergone privatization only in isolated cases. In Bulgaria, public hospitals have been divested from central to local government, as part of a trend toward decentralization.<sup>79</sup>

In one quarter of Sofia, a young disabled person who suffers from poliomyelitis and moves with difficulty positively assesses the services and the operation of the employees of the social assistance system. She is the mother of a young girl whose father left when she was still a baby. She states:

“The official in our social welfare office is a guardian angel! She is always so caring and helps a lot! It is hard for me to move, so when she makes her rounds of the quarter, she always drops by to see me. She connects us with the Red Cross and some other charity people. Apart from the aid, she provides good second-hand clothes, packs of food and wood. I just pray for her good health and may God bless her!”

UNDP, *Women in Poverty*, Chapter 4, p. 9

### Lifestyle-Related Mortality

Data from 1989 indicate that 49 percent of men and 17 percent of women smoked in Bulgaria, and that smoking rates among younger women are increasing. In 1989, an estimated 35 percent of women aged 20-35 were smokers. Among men aged 20-45, 65 percent smoked. In 1995, smoking was estimated to be the cause of 18 percent of all male deaths, and almost 40 percent of all male cancer deaths. Lung cancer mortality rates among men rose 20 percent between 1980 and 1995, to a rate of 60/100,000. Female mortality from lung cancer was still comparatively low, 9.4/100,000.<sup>80</sup>

### Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Sexually transmitted disease is also becoming a concern. Syphilis is reemerging as a health problem, after having been practically eradicated in the region by the early 1990s. Prevalence in Bulgaria has been increasing since 1993. In 1997, there were 87.4 newly registered cases per 100,000 population, compared to the average for Central and Eastern Europe of 11.2 cases/100,000. A gender breakdown is not available, although data from Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine and Russia show that adolescent girls are at particular risk; rates for female adolescents are much higher than for their male peers, while rates for older men and women are similar.<sup>81</sup> AIDS incidence is low, 0.6 cases per 100,000 people (1997).<sup>82</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Goldstein and Preker, Adeyi, Chellaraj, *Trends in Health Status, Services and Finance: The Transition in Central and Eastern Europe, Volume I*, 18, 23.

<sup>79</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report*, 19

<sup>80</sup> World Health Organization, Tobacco or Health Programme, *Tobacco or Health: A Global Status Report, Country Profiles by Region, 1997*, from web site: <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/who/whofirst.htm>.

<sup>81</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 71-72.

<sup>82</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report*, 173

### **Fertility Rate**

Bulgaria, along with Romania, has reached a total fertility rate (births per woman) of 1.2, the lowest among the study countries.<sup>83</sup> The adolescent fertility rate, however, is the highest in Eastern Europe, 45 births per 1000 women aged 15-19, according to World Bank figures.<sup>84</sup>

### **Abortion and Contraception**

The abortion rate (abortions per 100 live births) has increased during the transition period from 117.6 in 1989 to 135.4 in 1997, although it has fluctuated from year to year; the highest rate during this period, 149.1, was recorded in 1992.<sup>85</sup> While modern contraceptives are available and the contraceptive prevalence rate is quite high (76%),<sup>86</sup> contraceptives are imported and quite expensive; the cost of abortion is much lower, providing an economic incentive to use abortion for family planning. In Bulgaria, the cost to the individual for an abortion in 1998 was less than 1 percent of the minimum wage.<sup>87</sup>

### **Nutrition**

The percentage of children with low birth weights has increased steadily in Bulgaria, from 6.9 percent in 1989 to 9.2 percent in 1997. The share of children born with low birth weights to women under age 20 increased from 10 percent in 1989 to 14 percent in 1997. Both the level and the deterioration are greater among this age group. While this increase may partly reflect improved perinatal and obstetric care that results in fewer stillbirths and more low-weight survivors, it may also reflect a deterioration in maternal health, such as poorer nutrition.<sup>88</sup> Data from the 1992-97 Household Budget Survey in Bulgaria indicate that the latter may be likely. The consumption of protein-rich foods has declined steadily during the transition. Not only has the average consumption of milk, yogurt and meat decreased, but the disparity in consumption has widened – most people are eating less protein, but the poor are eating far less. By 1997, yearly consumption of milk and yogurt by the highest income group was almost four times that of the lowest income group, while before the transition milk and yogurt, the most common protein sources, were affordable across the population.<sup>89</sup>

### **Education and Gender**

The World Bank data presented in Table 15.20 show sex-disaggregated enrollment data for primary, secondary, and tertiary education. Female primary and secondary school enrollment, as a percentage of the total enrollment, has stayed about the same. As in other E&E countries,

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 198.

<sup>84</sup> World Bank, 1999 World Development Indicators, Reproductive Health, from GenderNet web site: <http://genderstats.worldbank.org/menu.asp>.

<sup>85</sup> World Bank, 1999 World Development Indicators, 118.

<sup>86</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report*, 198.

<sup>87</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*, 66.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 116.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 11.



women make up the majority of tertiary students. By 1996 in Bulgaria, the percentage of men in tertiary schools had decreased to 39 percent.

**Table 15.20. Female School Enrollments in Bulgaria, As a Percent of Total**

Primary		Secondary		Tertiary	
1980	1996	1980	1996	1980	1996
49%	48%	48%	50%	56%	61%

Source: World Bank, 1999 *World Development Indicators*.

In addition to the sex-disaggregated data presented above, overall enrollment data help us understand the situation facing education in Bulgaria. As the data presented in Table 15.21 show, enrollments in both kindergarten and primary schools have decreased since the transition. Enrollments in secondary schools remained about the same while enrollments in tertiary schools increased.

**Table 15.21. School Enrollment in Bulgaria, Percent of Relevant Population**

Kindergarten		Primary		Secondary		Tertiary	
1989	1997	1989	1997	1990	1997	1989	1997
63.9	58.8	98.4	94.0	30.7	30.6	16.4	27.1

Source: UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 133-134.

Public expenditures on education have decreased as a percentage of GDP. Data on government expenditures from the UNICEF MONEE Project are shown in Table 15.22. Since the transition, Bulgaria has begun to move to a student-paid tuition system for university-level education. The number of students paying their own tuition increased from 3.5 percent of enrollment in 1990-91 to 51.4 percent in 1993-94. Student-paid tuition was a controversial policy in Bulgaria, and setting tuition prices was problematic for universities. Therefore, tuition charges have often been established at less than real cost.<sup>90</sup> Bulgaria also instituted paid post-graduate re-training programs in the early 1990s.<sup>91</sup> Despite these changes, tertiary enrollments increased, as discussed above.

**Table 15.22. Public Expenditures on Education in Bulgaria, As a Percent of GDP**

1990	1991	1994	1997
5.0	5.1	4.8	4.0

Source: UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 135.

<sup>90</sup> Ivan Nikolov, *Tempus I in Bulgaria: Institutional Impact of the European Community Assistance Program in Higher Education 1990-1994*. Dissertation, 86.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

## **Findings**

**A gender differentiation in social benefit programs favors women.** In five of nine social safety net programs, women receive preferential treatment in eligibility, benefits, or both. In one program that typically benefits women only, fathers in Bulgaria can receive maternity benefits if the mother agrees.

**Poverty is gender-differentiated, and women tend to be poorer than men.** Data from the World Bank show that women, both single women and female heads of households, are poorer than single men and male heads of households.

**Pension reform in Bulgaria to date has had no gender differentiated effects.** To date, Bulgaria has raised the retirement age for both men and women. Private pension reform has been limited to voluntary contributions to private pension funds.

**The health status of both men and women is relatively favorable.** Life expectancy declined slightly for men and stayed about the same for women. Maternal mortality stayed the same, abortion rates decreased, and sexually transmitted diseases decreased.

**Education enrollment data from the World Bank do show a gender differentiation.** Girls' enrollment declined to 48 percent of primary school enrollment in 1996 and increased to 50 percent of total enrollment in secondary school. Men's enrollment in tertiary education declined to 39 percent in 1996.

## **Opportunities for Future Research**

**Research on Bulgaria's institutionalized children is needed.** Research is needed to investigate the increase in child institutionalization and abandonment since the transition. In addition, no sex-disaggregated data on the children living in orphanages are available.

**Research on single male poverty is needed.** Although the data clearly show that women are more likely to be poor than men, they also show that single men are poorer than male-headed households. Qualitative data could help us understand the reasons behind this male poverty.

**Education enrollments in Bulgaria should be monitored.** Enrollment data do show a gender differentiation: girls make up only 48 percent of primary school enrollments, and men make up only 39 percent of tertiary enrollments. Both enrollments should be monitored to ensure that these gender differences do not continue to increase.

## Chapter 16: Romania



### Basic Indicators

For additional information, please see Country Data Table in the Appendix.

<i>Demographics</i>			
Population <sup>1</sup> (1998)	22,526,000; 11,499,000 female (51.0%)		
Rural / Urban <sup>2</sup>	Urban 57%		
Ethnic composition <sup>3</sup>	Romanian 89.1%, Hungarian 8.9%, German 0.4%, Ukrainian, Serb, Croat, Russian, Turk, and Gypsy 1.6%		
<i>Economic Growth and Development</i>			
GDP per capita (all in 1987\$) <sup>4</sup>	<b>1985</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1997</b>
	\$1,722	\$1,452	\$1,457
GDP per capita (PPP for 1997) <sup>4</sup>	<b>Female</b>		<b>Male</b>
	\$3,221		\$5,435
Registered Unemployment Rate <sup>1</sup>	<b>1991</b>		<b>1997</b>
	3.0%		8.8%
<i>Democracy and Governance</i>			
Women in Parliament <sup>5</sup>	5.6%		
Women in Ministerial Positions <sup>6</sup>	5.6%		
<i>Social Transition</i>			
Life Expectancy by Sex(1999 est.) <sup>3</sup>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Average</b>
	74.81 years	67.05 years	70.83 years
Combined first, second, and third level gross school enrollment ratio (1997) <sup>4</sup>	<b>Female</b>		<b>Male</b>
	68%		68%
Population below poverty line <sup>2</sup>	30%		

Sources: 1) UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition*.

2) World Bank Country Data, <http://wbln0018.worldbank.org/eca/eca.nsf>.

3) CIA World Factbook 1999, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>.

4) UNDP Human Development Indicators 1999.

5) Inter Parliamentary Union website, <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

6) CIA Chiefs of State and Cabinets Members website, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/chiefs/index.html> and Women in Governments website, <http://hjem.get2net.dk/Womeningovernments/>.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### *The Economic Transition*

- The slow pace of reform in Romania's economy has had a very high price for the country's women.
- Women have suffered a higher rate of unemployment than men, though recent data suggests that this disparity is shrinking.
- The gender gap in earnings in Romania is relatively small by world averages.
- Romania has been relatively slow in the process of privatization, except in agriculture.
- The agricultural sector is an especially important area for women in Romania's transition economy, and women have played a significant role in its growth.
- Women comprise about 30 percent of managers and own at least a quarter of businesses in Romania.

### *The Democratic Transition*

- Women's status has improved in the political sphere since 1991. Women in politics are much more professional than they were nine years ago. They also express a desire to focus on the economic and social problems of women in their country.
- No information about the feminization of the NGO sector is available.
- Women in Romania are also significantly better off legally under the new system than they were under the Ceaușescu regime, particularly in terms of abortion rights and labor regulations that require equal pay for equal work.

### *The Social Transition*

- There is a gender dimension to the social safety net in Romania, and women receive preferential treatment in five of nine social programs.
- Poverty rates for female-headed households are slightly higher than for male-headed households.
- The health impacts include decreases in maternal mortality, infant mortality, and abortion during the transition and an increase in sexually transmitted diseases. Despite these improvements, the rates of maternal mortality, infant mortality, and abortion are still very high relative to other countries.
- Pension reform is nascent; to date, there have been no reported effects on access for either men or women.
- At the primary and secondary levels, enrollments are about equal between the sexes while women's enrollment at the tertiary level increased to 53 percent.

## Country Overview

**Introduction:** Romania lies in the eastern half of the Balkan Peninsula, having an area of 91,699 square miles (237,500 square kilometres). Its boundaries total 1,959 miles (3,153 kilometres), with Ukraine on the north, Moldova on the northeast, the Black Sea on the east, Bulgaria on the south, Serbia on the southwest, and Hungary on the west. The capital is Bucharest (Bucuresti). The country forms a complex geographic unit centred on the Transylvanian Basin, around which the peaks of the Carpathian Mountains and their associated subranges and structural platforms form a series of crescents. Beyond this zone, the extensive plains of the south and east of the country form a fertile outer crescent extending to the frontiers.

**People:** Minority ethnic groups compose about one-tenth of the population. The largest group is the Hungarians, followed by the Gypsies, the Germans, and the Ukrainians. Of the larger minority groups listed in the 1977 census (i.e., those constituting more than 1.0 percent of the population), only the Gypsies have increased their share of the population; by contrast, the number of German speakers has fallen drastically, mainly through emigration.

**Cultural life:** In spite of modern developments, Romania still offers a variety of customs, traditions, and forms of folk art. Wood carvings, brightly ornamented costumes, skillfully woven carpets, pottery, and other elements of traditional Romanian culture remain popular and, with the onset of tourism, have become known internationally. Special folk arts of Romania are the decoration of highly ornamental Easter eggs and painting on glass, which, however, is becoming a lost skill. Folk music includes dance music, laments and ballads, and pastoral music. Major instruments are the violin, the cobza (a stringed instrument resembling a lute), the tambal (a dulcimer played with small hammers), and the flute. Folk melodies are preserved in the music of modern Romanian composers such as Georges Enesco.

**Government:** Following the collapse of communism in 1989, a constituent assembly drafted a constitution that was approved by referendum in December 1991. This document established a parliament consisting of a Chamber of Deputies and a Senate. Members of both houses are elected to four-year terms from each of the country's 41 administrative counties under a system of proportional representation: the number of seats allotted to each county is determined by the number of votes cast within the county, and the seats allotted to each county are divided among political parties according to their share of the vote. The president, who also serves a four-year term, is elected directly by a majority of a nationwide vote. The president nominates the prime minister after consulting the dominant parties in parliament. The prime minister and the cabinet ministers are responsible for implementing the domestic and foreign policy of the state. The judicial system comprises the Supreme Court of Justice (with members appointed by the president), county courts, local courts, and military courts.

**Education:** With the exception of some private universities that have appeared since 1989, education is free and universal in Romania, and its development has been a key to the economic transformation of the country in modern times and to the gradual elimination of illiteracy. After the obligatory general school, students attend middle schools (general or specialized, four or five years) or one of a wide range of professional and technical schools and institutes of higher education. Associated with this educational system is an extensive national library network. Of the institutions of higher learning, the University of Bucharest was founded in 1864. Other long-established universities are located in Cluj-Napoca and Iasi. In most of the large provincial cities, universities have developed out of polytechnics—Brasov and Craiova before 1989 and Constanta, Oradea, Suceava, Timisoara, and others afterward.

**Health and Welfare:** Medical services suffered from the austerity program of the 1980s, when priority was given to the repayment of foreign debts. The number of doctors and dentists, which had risen rapidly from 1.47 per 1,000 population in 1970 to 2.09 per 1,000 in 1985, did no more than keep pace with the growth of population. Ancillary staff actually decreased between 1985 and 1990. The death rate increased from 9.6 per 1,000 in the late 1970s to 10.2 in the early 1980s and 10.9 in the late 1980s; but, perhaps more important, the number of stillbirths and infant deaths, which had fallen significantly from the early 1970s to the early 1980s, rose in the late 1980s. The practice of giving underweight babies microtransfusions of unscreened blood resulted in large numbers testing positive for HIV, which causes AIDS. In order to keep up population growth, abortion and contraception were made illegal, and large numbers of unwanted children were placed in orphanages. Medical treatment for the elderly was also restricted.

From *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (<http://www.britannica.com>)

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the economic, democratic, and social transitions in Romania. Each section seeks to answer a set of research questions which are set out at the beginning of the sections. In addition to subsections addressing each of the research questions, each section includes a subsection on findings and opportunities for future research.

### *Background*

Romania, often torn by corrupt and often extremist politics, has undergone a number of radical changes in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. From 1900 to the Communist takeover in 1947, Romania was a predominantly peasant country (72 percent were employed in agriculture in 1930<sup>1</sup>) with a small Westernized elite. After World War I, Romania gained significant portions of territory at the expense of its arch-rival Hungary (Transylvania) and the Soviet Union (present-day Moldova), greatly increasing the size, if not the security, of the Romanian state.<sup>2</sup> Romania initially sided with Nazi Germany in World War II, since Hitler had made ultimate Romanian control of Transylvania contingent on its subservience to Germany. Romania managed to switch sides in August 1944 and join the victorious Allies. The Soviets then allowed Romania to retain its control of Transylvania at the price of losing Moldova and eventually accepting a Communist-dominated government.<sup>3</sup>

The tentativeness of 20<sup>th</sup> century Romania's territorial integrity has resulted in an often charged relationship with its ethnic Hungarian minority. This has had a significant impact of women of all ethnicities in Romania. For ethnic Romanian women, the ongoing sense of real or imagined threats to Romania's sovereignty and frontiers played a key role in the country's post-war rapid and lopsided industrialization as well as in Ceau<sup>o</sup>escu's aggressive pro-natalist policies. For Romanian women of Hungarian ethnicity, the situation has been even more grim. They have frequently been regarded by their government as particularly dangerous enemies who were encouraged either to emigrate or assimilate, and who were often subjected to especially restrictive anti-minority legislation.<sup>4</sup>

Embodying this legacy of insecurity, and adding to it, was the key figure of 20<sup>th</sup> century Romanian politics, Nicolae Ceau<sup>o</sup>escu. Under Ceau<sup>o</sup>escu's leadership Romania enjoyed the dubious distinction of being long dominated by one of the most oppressive dictatorships in a region notorious for its oppressive dictatorships. From the beginning of his rule, Ceau<sup>o</sup>escu launched a series of socioeconomic policies meant to increase Romania's industrial production that have left a grim legacy of poverty and declining living standards for Romania's women.

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<sup>1</sup> The mining and industrial sector combined composed a mere 9.5 percent of the employed population. Joseph Rothschild, *East Central Europe Between the Two World Wars* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1974), 285.

<sup>2</sup> In 1912 Romania had an area of 130,177 sq. km. After the war this more than doubled, to 295,049 sq. km., with a corresponding more than doubling of its population from 7 to 15 million people (of whom almost 30 percent were national minorities). Rothschild, *East Central Europe*, 281, 284.

<sup>3</sup> Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans: Twentieth Century: Volume II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 290.

<sup>4</sup> "Romania: all quiet in Transylvania," in *Eastern Europe: The Fortnightly Political Briefing* 10:4, 15 February 1996, 5.

Ceau°escu’s policies from the 1970s on were described as “neo-Stalinism without terror” and a demonstration of “increasing megalomania.”<sup>5</sup> The weight of these policies fell particularly heavily on Romania’s women, and resulted in a spiral of economic decline almost a full decade before the final collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe.

The most infamous of Ceau°escu’s policies towards women was his effort to force Romanian women to become “a simple mechanism of reproduction”<sup>6</sup> by re-criminalizing abortion and contraception and putting heavy pressure on Romanian women to have children, to provide future workers for an expanding industry. But his other economic policies proved equally disastrous for women. Under Ceau°escu’s leadership Romania went heavily into debt to invest in an obsolete, wasteful industrial base and a pattern of industrial capacity unsuited to the country’s needs.<sup>7</sup> By the late 1970s, the tremendous increase in world oil prices forced Romania to borrow heavily. This resulted in an increase in the country’s debt from \$3.6 to \$10.2 billion from 1977 to 1982, when Romania negotiated a rescheduling of debt payments with Western banks and was barred from receiving any further loans.<sup>8</sup> To avoid the possibility that the debt could lead to international political pressure for economic reform, Ceau°escu launched a break-neck effort to repay Romania’s debt. An almost complete ban on imports (including desperately needed spare parts for Romania’s industry) and a massive export drive and austerity program inflicted tremendous suffering on the Romanian people beginning in 1984.<sup>9</sup>

As peaceful revolutions swept across much of the former Soviet bloc in 1989, Romania underwent the only violent “revolution” (or coup)<sup>10</sup> in Eastern Europe. The new governing bloc, the National Salvation Front headed by Ion Iliescu, openly admitted to its close ties to the previous regime, and proved quite unwilling to engage in sustained or systematic economic reform.<sup>11</sup> Only since the election of Emil Constantinescu in November, 1996, have substantial reforms begun, and, even with these, the pace has been slow. Both the Russian financial crisis of 1998 and the Kosovo conflict in 1999 have had negative impacts on the Romanian economy.

<sup>5</sup> J.F. Brown, *Eastern Europe and Communist Rule* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1988), 275.

<sup>6</sup> Society for Inter-Balkan Cooperation of Romanian Women, *Voices of Romanian Women: The Status of Romanian Women Between 1980-1994 Viewed by a Non-Governmental Organization*, prepared for the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, September 1994, 3.

<sup>7</sup> *CIA World Factbook 1999: Romania*, <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/ro.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Brown, *Eastern Europe and Communist Rule*, 285.

<sup>9</sup> Vladimir Tismaneanu, *Reinventing Politics: Eastern Europe from Stalin to Havel* (New York: The Free Press, 1992), 226.

<sup>10</sup> Tanya Renne, “Romania: Feminism in Unchanged Hardship” in T. Renne (ed.), *Ana’s Land: Sisterhood in Eastern Europe* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), 134.

<sup>11</sup> Barbara Łobodzińska, “Romania,” in B. Cobodinska, ed., *Family, Women, and Employment in Central and Eastern Europe* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Publishing, 1995), 205.

## THE ECONOMIC TRANSITION

This section seeks to answer the following questions as they relate to Romania:

1. Have there been changes in labor force participation by women and men during the transition?
2. Has unemployment increased, whether official or hidden, and is there a gender dimension to unemployment?
3. Is there evidence for wage gap trends and wage differentials?
4. How has the growth of the informal economy reflected gender differentiation?
5. What is the impact of privatization of state enterprises on women's and men's employment?
6. What role do women play in new managerial positions or business formation in the growing private sector?

In the subsections below we discuss GDP, labor force participation, unemployment, the informal economy, and privatization and present data on each of these issues as they relate to gender. Our findings on the impact of the economic transition on gender are presented in the concluding subsection.

### *Contextual Information about the Economy*

The slow pace of reform in Romania's economy has had a very high price for the country's women. It was only in February 1997 that Romania embarked on a comprehensive economic reform program, and even this reform has been a stop-and-go process. Reform has included eliminating large energy-intensive industries and embarking on major, though haphazard, agricultural and financial sector reforms. Currently, Romania is continuing its difficult transition to a market-based economy. Its GDP contracted by an estimated 7.3 percent in 1998 after a 6.6 percent decline in 1997.<sup>12</sup> The lack of bold economic reform has not shielded women from the worst aspects of the former Soviet bloc's economic crisis, and appears to have contributed to the lack of progress in combating the country's chronic economic doldrums.<sup>13</sup> Its annual rate of GDP growth from 1995 to 1997 was -2.2 percent, with a GDP index in 1997 of only 82.2 percent of its 1989 GDP. In 1998 Romania suffered a further significant downturn in GDP growth of -3 percent, the worst economic performance for all of East Central and Eastern Europe. Its projected 1998 GDP was to decline to 78 percent of its 1989 GDP.<sup>14</sup> Using 1989 as a base year, Table 16.1 presents a picture of ongoing GDP decline.

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<sup>12</sup> CIA, *World Factbook 1999: Romania*.

<sup>13</sup> In the former Soviet bloc Romania is only surpassed by Bulgaria (-5.5 annual GDP growth) and most of the war-torn former Republics of Yugoslavia (with the exception of Slovenia) in the extent of its post-socialist economic decline. Valerie Bunce, "The Political Economy of Postsocialism," *Slavic Review*, Vol. 58, No. 4, 76.

<sup>14</sup> Bunce, "The Political Economy of Postsocialism," 74.



**Table 16.1. Change in Real GDP, 1989-1998 (1989=100)**

1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
100.0	94.4	82.2	75.0	76.1	79.1	84.7	88.0	82.2	78.1

Source: UNDP, Human Development Indicators, 1999.

Romania's current economic situation has suffered a decline even from the desperately lean years of the Ceau°escu regime. In 1995 Romania had a GNP of \$1480 in 1987 dollars, with 24 percent of its labor force in agriculture. In 1987 dollars, Romania has continued to lose ground, with a slight upturn in 1997 (Table 16.2).

**Table 16.2. Per Capita GDP, 1985-1997**

Per Capita GDP (1987 US\$)		
1985	1990	1997
1722	1452	1457

Source: UNDP, Human Development Report, 1999

### ***Labor Force Participation***

In spite of Romania's significant economic decline in the 1990s, it appears that the number of economically active women in Romania may have actually risen.<sup>15</sup> While much of this is due to women's ongoing dominance of the relatively healthier agrarian sector of the economy, privatization has also led to the creation of new small family businesses such as shops and restaurants.<sup>16</sup> World Bank estimates show that women made up about 44 percent of the total work force, a slight decline from the past, but still a high level of participation by world standards (Table 16.3).

**Table 16.3. Labor Force Participation**

Labor Force Participation (ratio f/m)		Labor Force Participation (percent of total labor force)			
1970	1997	1980		1998	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
0.8	0.8	54	46	56	44

Source: World Bank, 1999 World Development Indicators

Data on the total economically active population – those who both employed and looking for work – are not available; but, in terms of sheer numbers, the employed workforce contracted in

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>16</sup> Fischer, "From Tradition," 217.

the critical years of 1991-1993 but then resumed growing. More women – and more men – were employed in 1997 than in 1990 (Table 16.4).

**Table 16.4 Employment in Romania (in 1,000's)**

ROMANIA	1990 <sup>1</sup>	1991 <sup>1</sup>	1992 <sup>1</sup>	1993 <sup>1</sup>	1994 <sup>2</sup>	1995 <sup>2</sup>	1996 <sup>2</sup>	1997 <sup>2</sup>
Total #	10,840	10,786	10,458	10,062	10,914	11,152	10,935	11,050
Men	5,838	5,727	5,570	5,415	5,872	6,026	5,979	6,004
Women	5,001	5,059	4,888	4,647	5,041	5,125	4,956	5,045

Source: ILO Laborsta Database, <http://laborsta.ilo.org>. (1) Official estimates, Dec 31. (2) Labor force survey, March.

Crude activity rates confirm the relatively high levels of economic participation by women (Table 16.5), and also show a rise in the percentage of active women in the 1990's. (The Crude Activity Rate includes all ages, from children through pensioners, rendering a lower total percentage.) However, it also suggests that the gender gap for participation may also have grown, with men moving into the labor market in greater numbers than women.

**Table 16.5. Crude Activity Rates and the Gender Gap, 1990-1997**

Crude Female Activity Rate		Rise or fall in CFAR	Gender gap in rate (male minus female)		Change in gender gap, percent points
1990	1997	1989-97	1990	1997	1989-97
42.6	46.9	4.3	8.4	10.9	2.5

Source: UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Monitoring Report No. 6*, 25.

### *Unemployment*

Women have suffered a higher rate of unemployment than men, though recent data suggests that this disparity is shrinking. In spite of disadvantages, women managed to hold their own in Romania's quasi-transitional economy. Total jobs in Romania fell by approximately 15 percent from 1989 to 1997.<sup>17</sup> (This is not fully reflected in unemployment rates, Table 16.6, since some jobs loss resulted in retirement or withdrawal from the workforce). In roughly the same period (1990-1996), women's employment in Romania dipped from 43 percent to 41 percent of the total in industry and rose from 73 to 76 percent in health care and social services,<sup>18</sup> leaving women's total share of employment at about 49 percent in 1997,<sup>19</sup> roughly the same percentage as in 1990.<sup>20</sup> However, in the first years of the transition of large increases in unemployment, women bore a disproportionate share of job loss. That trend has been reversed; since 1991, the percentage of the unemployed who are women has steadily declined (Table 16.6).

<sup>17</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 8.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>20</sup> Łobodzińska, *Romania*, 211.

**Table 16.6. Unemployment in Romania (in 1,000's)**

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Total #	337.4	929.0	1164.70	1223.9	998.4	657.6	881.4
% Workforce	3.0	8.2	10.4	10.9	9.5	6.3	8.8
% Men	38.3	39.4	41.1	43.4	44.8	46	51.4
% Women	61.7	60.6	58.9	56.6	55.2	54	48.6

Source: ILO Laborsta Database, <http://laborsta.ilo.org>.

### *Wages and Wage Differentials*

Overall wage trends have been very hard on Romanian workers. As Table 16.7 shows, the average worker earned only about 62 percent, in real terms, of the 1989 wages. This drop in income partially explains the high levels of labor participation and the efforts made by Romanian women workers to continue working.

**Table 16.7. Wage Trends in Romania, 1989-1997 (1989 = 100)**

1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
100.0	105.2	88.9	77.3	64.4	64.6	72.7	79.8	62.3

Source: TransMONEE 3.0 Database

The gender gap in earnings in Romania is relatively small by world averages, with women earning 76 percent of the wages of their male counterparts in 1997,<sup>21</sup> a figure that appears not to have fluctuated greatly during the transition (Table 6.8).

**Table 16.8. Ratio of Female to Male Wages**

1994	1997
.786	.762

Note: Ratio = female wages divided by male wages.

Source: UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Monitoring Report No. 6*, 33.

Income inequality has increased strikingly in Romania in the past decade, however. Using the Gini Coefficient, which assesses the degree distribution of earnings on a scale of 0 to 100 (with 100 meaning that all income is in the hands of a single person), we see in Table 16.9 that Romania has moved from a relatively "flat" income distribution of 15.5 in 1989 to 42.2 in 1997. The earlier figure may well indicate a sharing of misery; the Ceaușescu campaign to pay off the national debt impoverished the population at large. Nor does the Gini coefficient provide sex-disaggregated information. Nevertheless, the growth of income inequality suggests that the transition to a market economy, as in Russia, Ukraine, and several other countries in the region,

<sup>21</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 33.

brings with it greatly increased income inequality, and the nature of that should be studied to determine its impact on men and women. As a point of comparison, the United States, with high levels of income inequality, had a Gini coefficient in 1994 of 40.1.

**Table 16.9. Gini Coefficient for Romania**

1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
15.5	--	20.4	--	22.6	27.6	27.8	30.3	42.2

Source: EBRD Transition Report 1999, MONEE Report, 10.12

“Real GDP per capita” figures by male and female for Romania, calculated in the UNDP *Human Development Report*, are figures based on estimates of the ratio of the average female wage to male wage and the percentage shares of women and men in the economically active population. The GDP per capita by gender provides an approximation of the relative economic situation of men and women. As Table 16.10 shows, female per capita GDP is calculated at about 59 percent of male per capita, in parity purchasing power.

**Table 16.10. Per Capita GDP**

Female real GDP per capita (1997 PPP\$)	Male real GDP per capita (1997 PPP\$)
<b>1997</b>	<b>1997</b>
3221	5435

Source: UNDP, Human Development Indicators, 1999

### ***Sectoral Issues: Private Sector and Informal Economy***

Romania has been relatively slow in the process of privatization, except in agriculture. The role of women in agriculture is discussed in a subsequent section. A considerable degree of occupational segregation exists in Romania that, as in other countries in the region, affects the security of their employment. As seen in Table 16.11, women have a somewhat greater role both in agriculture and services, while men have predominated in industry. While agriculture is growing, heavy industry has been strongly affected by the downturn in the economy.

**Table 16.11. Labor Force By Sector and Gender, 1990**  
**Percent Of Male Or Female Labor Force**

	Male	Female
<b>Agriculture</b>	21	28
<b>Industry</b>	53	40
<b>Services</b>	26	32

Sources: For employment by sector, World Bank Gender Stats database (latest available data are for 1990).

The informal economy has received little attention from researchers; estimates of the percentage of the GDP made up of the informal economy were not available.

The theory of women's equality in the workforce was undermined in practice. In Ceaușescu's Romania women were shut out of effective political and economic power. So, for example, women were quite common in trade union councils but were less present in the more powerful government councils,<sup>22</sup> and men, either behind or above women in the organizational hierarchy, often wielded real power.<sup>23</sup> This also occurred in occupational segregation, such as in the teaching profession. Though women composed a majority of teachers,<sup>24</sup> they predominated in preschool and the lower rungs of secondary education: 19.6 percent of all women teachers worked in preschools, while no men did, and a further 64.3 percent of women were employed as primary and secondary teachers vs. 55.9 percent of men. Male teachers on the other hand vastly outnumbered women in high schools (30 percent to 18 percent), vocational schools (.8 percent to 1.8 percent) and the universities (12.3 percent to 2 percent).<sup>25</sup>

Sexist stereotyping remained important even in industrial employment, where women were encouraged to take jobs in textile and food processing industries while men were encouraged to seek employment in metal processing, construction, and mine industries.<sup>26</sup> In the 70s women were often refused entrance into vocational schools run by the ministries of electricity, energy, mining, petroleum, metallurgy and machine building. In contrast, women comprised 59 percent of the students enrolled in the schools of the Ministry of Light Industry and 36 percent of those of the Ministry of Food Industry.<sup>27</sup>

In addition to the burdens of Romania's continuing economic failures and past discrimination, women have faced further hurdles in their efforts at socioeconomic advancement. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century Romania has been divided between a small, Westernized urban elite among whom women were regarded as exercising a relatively more prestigious place, and a majority Romanian peasant culture that was deeply patriarchal. Even when industrialization led to greater urbanization, many Romanian peasants transferred older patterns of social relationships to the new towns and cities.<sup>28</sup> In recent years, the universally hated memory of Nicolae Ceaușescu's wife, Elena, who played a very public role in the Ceaușescu regime, has produced an even deeper backlash that restricts women's socioeconomic advancement. The "Elena Ceaușescu syndrome" has led many women to avoid positions of responsibility and further undercut their socioeconomic influence.<sup>29</sup>

### **Women and Agriculture during Romania's Transition**

The agricultural sector is an especially important area for women in Romania's transition economy, and women have played a significant role in its growth. Only 53 percent of Romania's

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 205.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 208-09.

<sup>24</sup> UNICEFMONEE Project, *Women in Transition: A Summary* (Florence, Italy: UNICEF International Child Development Centre, 1999), 8.

<sup>25</sup> Łobodzińska, *Romania*, 210.

<sup>26</sup> Doina Pasca Harsanyi, "Participation of Women in the Workforce: The Case of Romania," in B. Cobodinska, ed., *Family, Women, and Employment in Central and Eastern Europe*, 214.

<sup>27</sup> Łobodzińska, *Romania*, 209.

<sup>28</sup> Harsanyi, "Participation of Women in the Workforce: The Case of Romania," 202.

<sup>29</sup> Society for Inter-Balkan Cooperation of Romanian Women, *Voices of Romanian Women*, 3.

population was urban in 1993.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, agricultural production was relatively less hard hit by the ongoing decline in the Romanian economy. While from 1991 to 1993 industrial production declined by an average of over 10 percent per year, agricultural production experienced significant initial declines in 1991 and 1992 (-5 % and -12%) but made an impressive comeback in 1993 of 14 percent.<sup>31</sup> Ironically, the sexist stereotyping that relegated many women to less ideologically prestigious sectors of the economy under state socialism has given them a relative advantage amidst the collapse of heavy industry in post-Ceau<sup>o</sup>escu Romania.

Agricultural policy and the rural economy did not escape the Ceau<sup>o</sup>escu regime's efforts at "rationalization." In an effort to create the image of a socially progressive, more advanced Romania, the government engaged in a policy of "*sistematisarea*" which forced much of the rural population to leave their traditional villages (over 7,000 of which were bulldozed) and settle in urban shanty towns.<sup>32</sup>

These policies fell particularly heavily on women since the majority of economically active women (62.3 percent) were employed in agriculture, one of the highest rates of gender segregated agriculture in any socialist country.<sup>33</sup> Life in the Romanian countryside was particularly oppressive; the standard of living in the rural regions was especially low. Rural Romania suffered acutely from a housing crisis, low income, primitive and overcrowded houses in rural areas, a lack of household conveniences, a shortage of consumer goods and appliances and a shortage of family services.<sup>34</sup> The difficulties of rural life often encouraged young men and women to leave the countryside, resulting in a rural workforce that was both older and female.<sup>35</sup> As with many other sectors of the economy, while women held low level positions in the collective farm economy, it was men who were entrusted with village leadership.<sup>36</sup>

As part of a coping strategy in difficult rural conditions men often commuted to work in factories while women stayed on collective farms in order to secure the families' right to a small private plot that was often a necessary supplement to the family's food allotments.<sup>37</sup> Women made good use of the small private plots allotted to them; they made up only 6 percent of all of Romania's agricultural land but supplied 60-80 percent of cooperative farmers' family income.<sup>38</sup>

Currently it appears that Romanian women are benefiting from the discrimination they suffered under state socialism which relegated them to agricultural work. Though women's total percentage of agricultural employment has slightly declined as men who used to commute to industrial jobs are being fired (women now make up 56 percent of agricultural employees), they

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<sup>30</sup> Clyde Hertzman, *Environment and Health in Central and Eastern Europe* (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1995), viii.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, xii.

<sup>32</sup> Tismaneanu, *Reinventing Politics*, 227.

<sup>33</sup> Łobodzińska, *Romania*, 206.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 208.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> Harsanyi, "Participation of Women in the Workforce: The Case of Romania," 204.

<sup>38</sup> Łobodzińska, *Romania*, 208.

are benefiting from the rise in agricultural prices.<sup>39</sup> Self-employment among women is relatively high in Romania (35 percent of all women are self-employed, the highest ratio of country's surveyed for the former Soviet bloc), and 90 percent of these women are employed in agriculture.<sup>40</sup>

It is important to bear in mind that this *relative* success has occurred in the midst of a small but real decline in agriculture. Efforts to privatize agriculture remained stalled throughout the 1990s even though a significant number of small producers (often women) were improving their economic position and putting pressure on the government to allow them to buy more land and thus hasten the commercialization of agriculture.<sup>41</sup>

Conditions in the countryside remain extremely bad. Environmentally, elevated levels of nitrates in rural water supplies (probably due to excessive fertilization) has led to excessive mortality in the countryside, particularly infant mortality.<sup>42</sup> There are other carcinogenic substances that also pose a substantial health risk, including DDT, which is still produced in Romania for export and has been found contaminating towns all along the Danube River in Romania.<sup>43</sup> Economically, Romania's indebtedness and lack of fuel led to significant declines in the agricultural sector in the mid 1990s. In 1996, Romania's wheat harvest was the lowest since World War II.<sup>44</sup> This poor performance was compounded by the fact that the majority of what little help the Romanian government gave to Romania's agricultural sector during this period of crisis went predominantly (75 percent) to state farms, in spite of the fact that these composed only 10 percent of farming land.<sup>45</sup> Throughout the 1990s Romania's farmers lacked titles to their land (possessing a kind of "fuzzy property")<sup>46</sup> and were thus ineligible for bank loans. This severely limited the speed of economic development in the Romanian countryside.<sup>47</sup>

Currently, there is some hope that the government is at last ready to begin significant structural reform of the rural economy. A land restitution law signed by Romanian President Constantinescu on January 10, 2000 is potentially a key step toward bringing back family farms. More than a million and a half Romanians are hoping a new law will let them reclaim farms confiscated from their families by Communist authorities almost a half century ago. The legislation, which comes after years of delays and parliamentary debates, allows the restitution of land seized by the Romanian state since nationalization began in the 1950s—up to 50 hectares of farmland per family and 10 hectares of forest.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Harsanyi, "Participation of Women in the Workforce: The Case of Romania," 214.

<sup>40</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 31.

<sup>41</sup> Harsanyi, "Participation of Women in the Workforce: The Case of Romania," 218.

<sup>42</sup> Hertzman, *Environment and Health*, 42.

<sup>43</sup> Hertzman, *Environment and Health*, 49.

<sup>44</sup> "Romania," *Eastern Europe: The Fortnightly Political Briefing* 10:16, 4.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> Katherine Verdery, "Fuzzy Property: Rights, Power, and Identity in Transylvania's Decollectivization," in Michael Burawoy and Katherine Verdery, eds., *Uncertain Transition: Ethnographies of Change in the Postsocialist World* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., Lanham, 1999), 55-56.

<sup>47</sup> "Romania," *Eastern Europe: The Fortnightly Political Briefing* 10:16, 6.

<sup>48</sup> Ron Synovitz, "Romania: Land Restitution Law a Step Toward Farm Reforms," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, January 13, 2000, <http://www.rferl.org/nca/features/2000/01/F.RU.000113151553.html>.

### ***Women in Managerial Positions and as Entrepreneurs***

Less than 30 percent of managers are women. As with all the other countries of the former state socialist bloc in Eastern Europe, Romania was ostensibly committed to women's full equality, emancipation from the narrow bounds of domesticity, and socioeconomic equality with men. Thus, in the mid-1960s, at the beginning of the coercive pro-natalist campaigns, the regime put a great deal of emphasis on filling gender quotas by promoting women to positions of authority. The result was that women were often promoted into positions they did not have the training for, and which demanded more time than they wished to spend at work, all of which led to high turnover rates of women employees, managers and supervisors. Estimates for the percentages of women and men as administrators and managers, and as professionals and technical workers, are provided in Table 16.12.

**Table 16.12. Women as Managers and Professionals**

	Men	Women
Administrators and Managers	71.9	28.1
Professional and Technical Workers	43.6	56.4

*Source:* UNDP, Human Development Indicators, 1999

In 1995 the private sector had a 40 percent share of Romania's GDP.<sup>49</sup> In this area, women already composed 25.4 percent of the total workforce by 1992,<sup>50</sup> and they owned and/or managed 2,325 out of 8,427 private firms in that year. Women owned 130,765 private firms and businesses (out of a total of 337,002) in 1994.<sup>51</sup> Their role in agriculture also places women in an expanding role in small business. However, little data is available on how this is developing as women take on more entrepreneurial roles in the private sector.

### ***Findings***

Like their counterparts in Ukraine, Romania's women have paid a high price for delays in fundamental reforms. Romania's declining economy produced a significant drop in the 1990s in living standards that were already among the lowest of all the nations of the former Soviet bloc. While the legacies of Ceaușescu's policies and the longer term burden of Romania's historical underdevelopment and tense ethnic relations continue to plague the country, women have fared relatively well in Romania's quasi-transition state. Women's dominance in the "backward" and (for the Communist) less prestigious agrarian sector has allowed them to establish a high degree of economic independence. Furthermore, women's entrepreneurial activity is paving the way for women's further economic advancement. On the surface, it appears that Romania's current political culture is profoundly opposed to any open efforts at creating an exclusive women's agenda of economic development. However, the ongoing decline in Romania's economy and its uncertain and tentative transition to a free market is creating numerous opportunities for women to actually develop their potential.

<sup>49</sup> Bunce, *The Political Economy*, 765.

<sup>50</sup> Society for Inter-Balkan Cooperation of Romanian Women, *Voices of Romanian Women*, 5.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, 6.



**Have there been changes in labor force participation by women and men in the transition?**

Data show only minor changes in labor force participation by women since 1989. Overall participation rates, measured by the number employed and the unemployed, dropped in the mid-1990s but have recovered to pre-1989 levels.

**Is there evidence for wage gap trends and wage differentials?** Wage surveys show that women earn about 76 percent of men, a figure that is relatively high in world terms. Data based on wages and participation, GDP data per capita by male and female from the UNDP, show a gender differentiation of women at about 59 percent of male GDP.

**Has unemployment increased, whether official or hidden, and is there a gender dimension to unemployment?** Unemployment increased dramatically in the early 1990s. Unemployment has a gender dimension as reflected in the fact that women accounted for 62 percent of unemployment in 1991; that has decreased to 48 percent in 1997.

**How has the growth of the informal economy reflected gender differentiation?** Data were unavailable to analyze the gender dimensions of the informal economy.

**What is the impact of privatization of state enterprises on women's and men's employment?** Privatization has been slow in Romania and is only recently addressing the larger state industries. We found no quantitative data on the impact of privatization on employment.

**What role do women play in new managerial positions or business formation in the growing private sector?** UNDP, our source for cross-country comparable data on gender and managerial and professional positions, reports that 28.1 percent of women are managers. Women in 1992 owned and managed about a quarter of the private sector firms. The privatization of agriculture is also reported to be expanding women's entrepreneurial activities, but little data are available.

***Opportunities for Future Research***

**Labor market information, while more available than in some neighboring countries, is sparse and incomplete.** Sex-disaggregated information is unavailable changing characteristics of workers and the self-employed.

**Little information is available on the advancement of women into business, both as high-level managers of enterprises as well as entrepreneurs.** Research needs to be conducted on this aspect of the transition.

**The role of the informal economy in contributing to men's and women's relative economic position remains largely undocumented.**

**Little research has been done on the changing nature of work for men and women.**

**The nature of impact on women of the contraction of jobs in the economy is still unclear,** as are reasons why certain categories of women have withdrawn from participation in the labor market.

## THE DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION

The purpose of this section is to discuss the differential experience of Romanian men and women in the political sphere before and after the transition to democracy. The primary questions to be answered are:

1. Is there differential participation by women and men in the public sphere?
  - a) What is the role of women in party politics?
  - b) What is the representation of women in elected government positions, locally and nationally?
  - c) What is the representation of women in appointed governmental positions?
2. How is gender reflected in the development of civil society, especially NGOs?
  - a) What is the role of women in different types of NGOs?
  - b) Have NGOs developed that advocate for gender issues?
3. How has the rule of law been institutionalized and what impact is there on gender?
  - a) Have there been *de jure* legal reforms with an impact on gender?
  - b) Do men and women have equal legal rights, *de jure* and *de facto*? (Is there sufficient information to be able to contrast between *de jure* and *de facto*?)
  - c) Have there been reforms related to family law: inheritance, ownership, marriage, and divorce that impact on gender?

These questions are addressed below beginning with a brief discussion of how men and women participated in politics and civil society during the communist era and how the patterns of that participation has changed since independence and how they are now affected by rule of law.

### *Political Activity in the Communist Period*

In its earliest years as a socialist republic, Romania's government included women at the highest levels. The first woman appointed to a ministerial position in Romania was Florica Bagdasar, Minister of Health, from 1946 to 1947. Ana Pauker was appointed the Minister of Foreign Affairs and served from 1947 until 1953.<sup>52</sup>

Women were expected to contribute to the public sphere as much as men and in the same ways. Ceaușescu set rigid quotas to promote women when he came into power. In reality, however, men dominated the political arena under communism; men always held the top positions within the political hierarchy.<sup>53</sup> Fewer men faced opposition in elections under communism than women. Women tended to cluster at the lower levels of any hierarchy, political or economic.<sup>54</sup> Women tended to have less influence than male colleagues, to hold less prestigious positions, and to hold positions as representatives of disadvantaged groups.<sup>55</sup> The Communist Party had a

<sup>52</sup> Women in Governments website, <http://hjem.get2net.dk/Womeningovernments/Romania.htm>, 1/10/2000.

<sup>53</sup> Irina Liczek, "The Masquerade of Equality: Woman and Politics in Romania," in Barbara Wejnert and Metta Spencer (eds.), *Women in Post-Communism: Research on Russia and Eastern Europe*, (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press Inc., 1996), 97.

<sup>54</sup> Mary Ellen Fischer, "From Tradition and Ideology to Elections and Competition: The Changing Status of Women in Romania," in M. Rueschemeyer (ed.), *Women in the Politics of Postcommunist Eastern Europe* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1998), 170, 173, 172.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 175.

National Council of Women, ostensibly to address women's concerns and represent women, but as in other communist countries, it served as a mouthpiece for the Party.

One author asserted that women's political participation was "artificial and placed under the strict control of the communist party; it had no real significance for the status of women because the selection was almost never based on competence criteria, but on political and family reasons."<sup>56</sup> Another believes this generalization should be critically reviewed, due to the high education level of Romanian women.<sup>57</sup> A third author comments that although the women might have been well educated, the quotas set by Ceaușescu were unrealistic and women were promoted before they had gained enough experience to excel at their posts. Others were coerced into taking posts they did not want and there was therefore a high turnover rate among female bureaucrats.<sup>58</sup> In spite of, or perhaps as an illustration of their criticism, by the end of the communist era, two women belonged to the Permanent Bureau of the Party (the highest political committee within the Communist Party), one of whom was Elena Ceaușescu.<sup>59</sup>

One effect of the communist past that is unique to Romania is what some authors have called the "Elena Ceaușescu syndrome." Women in top political positions under the communist regime, namely Elena Ceaușescu and Ana Pauker, were cold, ambitious, ruthless and ill thought of by the Romanian people. Traditionally, women were expected to be wiser and more sensitive than men are and these women disappointed their constituency.<sup>60</sup> As a result, Romanians became wary of women in high political positions.

### ***Political Activity since the Transition***

In spite of the negative connotations left by past politicians, women in Romania are interested in politics in general. They have not, however, shown great interest in running for political office, but one might attribute this to "the practical impossibility of combining their roles as workers, mothers, and wives so as to have time for social and political activities."<sup>61</sup> Another view is that low involvement now is a natural reaction to coerced involvement in the past.<sup>62</sup>

Despite the quotas, women were and still are seen as having "quantitative value regarding political representation (as votes taken from, instead of being given to), while the notion of equality inherited from the previous regime continues to be maintained as a 'politically correct' statement only."<sup>63</sup> The communists did, however, succeed in raising women's expectations of equality within the political process.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Society for Inter-Balkan Cooperation of Romanian Women, *Voices of Romanian Women: The Status of Romanian Women Between 1980-1994 Viewed by a Non-Governmental Organization*, prepared for the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, September 1994, 22.

<sup>57</sup> Liczek, "The Masquerade of Equality: Woman and Politics in Romania," 97.

<sup>58</sup> Fisher, "From Tradition and Ideology to Elections and Competition," 174-175.

<sup>59</sup> Liczek, "The Masquerade of Equality: Woman and Politics in Romania," 97.

<sup>60</sup> Fisher, "From Tradition and Ideology to Elections and Competition," 175.

<sup>61</sup> Liczek, "The Masquerade of Equality: Woman and Politics in Romania," 100, 99.

<sup>62</sup> Fisher, "From Tradition and Ideology to Elections and Competition," 182.

<sup>63</sup> Liczek, "The Masquerade of Equality: Woman and Politics in Romania," 94.

<sup>64</sup> Fisher, "From Tradition and Ideology to Elections and Competition," 191.

**Table 16.13: Political Positions Held by Men and Women in Romania**

Position	Total Number	Held by Women		Held by Men	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Members of Parliament	486	27	5.5 %	459	94.5 %
Lower Chamber	343	25	7.3 %	318	92.7 %
Upper Chamber	143	2	1.4 %	141	98.6 %
Cabinet Ministers	18	1	5.6 %	17	94.4 %
Pres. Admin. Employees					
Regional Administrators	42	5	11.9 %	37	88.1 %
Members of Judiciary	NA	NA		NA	
High Court	9	NA		NA	
Appeals Courts	NA	NA		NA	
Local Courts	NA	NA		NA	
Political Party Leaders	NA	NA		NA	

*Note:* Data are from January 2000 unless otherwise noted.

*Sources:* Inter Parliamentary Union website, <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>; Women in Governments website, <http://hjem.get2net.dk/Womeningovernments/>; CIA Chiefs of State and Cabinet Members web page, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/chiefs/index.html>.

As the number of political parties has increased, women's participation in politics has decreased. Immediately after the change, several women were involved in the National Salvation Front, but they have slowly dropped out; some have joined the opposition.<sup>65</sup> Since the transformation, no women have been elected as political party leaders.<sup>66</sup> Those women who achieved political success early on complained that they were constrained by their parties. For example, they were not selected for important delegations, were passed over for committee chairmanships, and were prevented from creating a women's issues commission. One author believes that political parties have not effectively encouraged women and have even impeded women as political candidates.<sup>67</sup> Women in the 1997 parliament, however, had earned high posts within their parties.<sup>68</sup>

### The Legislative Branch

In 1987, women comprised 34.4 percent of members of parliament. In 1990, 2.8 percent of those elected to the Grand National Assembly were women (13 to the Chamber of Deputies and one to the Senate). Mid-term resignations brought nine more women to the Chamber of Deputies and one to the Senate, increasing the percentage of women to 4.8 percent. In the 1992 elections, women representatives again dropped below three percent.<sup>69</sup>

Women now constitute 7.3 percent (25 of 343) of Romania's members of the Chamber of Deputies and 1.4 percent (two of 143) of the members of the Senate (and 5.5 percent overall). Table 16.14 shows that within the Chamber of Deputies, female representatives are spread across most of the parties (meaning they probably do not have a critical mass for women's issues in any

<sup>65</sup> Fisher, "From Tradition and Ideology to Elections and Competition," 182.

<sup>66</sup> Society for Inter-Balkan Cooperation of Romanian Women, *Voices of Romanian Women*, 5.

<sup>67</sup> Liczek, "The Masquerade of Equality: Woman and Politics in Romania," 99.

<sup>68</sup> Fisher, "From Tradition and Ideology to Elections and Competition," 184, 185.

<sup>69</sup> Society for Inter-Balkan Cooperation of Romanian Women, *Voices of Romanian Women*, 5.

one party). In the Senate, both women were elected from the Party of Social Democracy in Romania (the successor to the Communist Party).

**Table 16.14: Women in the Chamber of Deputies by Political Party**

Party	Total Deputies	Female Deputies	Women as % of Total
<i>Democratic Convention</i>			
National Peasant Party-Christian Democrat	83	6	7.23
National Liberal Party	25	1	4.00
Others	14	0	0
<i>Party of Social Democracy in Romania</i>	91	8	8.79
<i>Social Democratic Union</i>			
Democratic Party	43	3	6.98
Romanian Social Democratic Party	10	1	10.00
<i>Hungarian Democratic Union</i>	25	1	4.00
<i>Greater Romania Party</i>	19	3	15.79
<i>Party of Romanian National Unity</i>	18	0	0
<i>Minority Organizations</i>	15	2	13.33
<i>Total</i>	343	25	7.29

Source: Fisher, "From Tradition and Ideology to Elections and Competition," 180.

The women who are now in Parliament, particularly those who have been reelected through multiple terms, are much more professional than the representatives were in 1990. Interviews with parliamentarians over the past several years reveal that in the first parliament, the women were not happy, largely due to the treatment they received from their male colleagues. The men did not take them seriously, "paid no attention when they spoke," and reacted to their proposals with resentment, intimidation, scorn, or amusement.<sup>70</sup> They found they were much more effective talking with colleagues in corridors and using flattery or cajolery to accomplish their goals.

By 1996, women in parliament no longer complained that they received unequal treatment. Six of the thirteen women in the previous parliament had been reelected, making the women's retention rate (46 percent) slightly better than the overall rate. They were pro-active in making themselves necessary to their parties and in wielding their influence to pass legislation. The younger women tended to be the most assertive and those in the Party of Social Democracy in Romania tended to be the least aggressive. But as a group, they have developed a full spectrum of attitudes, illustrating the development of pluralism.<sup>71</sup>

Although there is no official women's parliamentary coalition in Romania, the women do have an interest in establishing a coalition (though not specifically a women's coalition) to work on women's issues. The women have not organized for two reasons. First, party loyalties are currently overriding the interest to work together.<sup>72</sup> And second, the Party of Romanian National

<sup>70</sup> Fisher, "From Tradition and Ideology to Elections and Competition," 183-184.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 185, 186.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 187.

Unity blocked the passage of legislation promoting women's interest and prevented the women from being able to use parliamentary space to meet regularly.<sup>73</sup>

Female members of parliament have tended to work on the same issues and committees. When the Chamber of Deputies created a Commission on Labor, Health, Social Protection, and the Status of Women (chaired by a male physician), nine women out of 25 chose to serve on that commission. Women have also been particularly active in the European Integration Commission.<sup>74</sup>

### **The Executive Branch**

Women's representation in the executive branch has decreased since Romania's transition. Women figured prominently in government in the 1970s and 1980s. By 1987, women comprised 14 percent (22 of 157) of managerial personnel within ministries and 12 percent of ministers (five of 42).<sup>75</sup> In 1992, only one of 17 managerial positions within ministries was filled by a woman (6 percent). Women then comprised only 21.4 percent of public administrators.<sup>76</sup> Since 1990, there have only been two female ministers. Daniela Bartos was the Minister of Health for two months in 1996 and 1997. In 1999, Smaranda Dobrescu was appointed the Minister of Labor and Social Protection.<sup>77</sup> There are no female ambassadors currently appointed by Romania.<sup>78</sup>

### **Local Government**

At the local level, women are slightly better represented. They comprise 12 percent (five of 42) of prefect's office directors, 17 percent (seven of 41) of County Council secretaries, and 15 percent (15 of 100) of Municipal Council secretaries.<sup>79</sup>

### **The Judicial Branch**

A breakdown of men's and women's participation in the judiciary is unavailable. The Prosecutor's Office is virtually unaccountable. There is a lack of trained judges and court personnel.<sup>80</sup> Judges are appointed by the president on the proposal of the Higher Council of the Judiciary. They tend to judge impartially in civic and petty cases, but are subject to bribery and political pressures in other trials. The Higher Council comprises 15 members elected by the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies for four-year terms. The law was changed in 1997 to make the Minister of Justice responsible for appointing the Higher Council (generally Supreme Court

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 184.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Liczek, "The Masquerade of Equality: Woman and Politics in Romania," 97.

<sup>76</sup> Society for Inter-Balkan Cooperation of Romanian Women, *Voices of Romanian Women*, 11.

<sup>77</sup> Women in Governments website, <http://hjem.get2net.dk/Womeningovernments/Romania.htm> on 1./10/2000

<sup>78</sup> Liczek, "The Masquerade of Equality: Woman and Politics in Romania," 98.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Adrian Karatnycky, Alexander Motyl, and Charles Graybow, (eds), *Nations in Transit 1998: Civil Society, Democracy and Markets in East Central Europe and the Newly Independent States*, (Washington, DC: Freedom House, 1999), 472.

judges and public prosecutors as well as judges and prosecutors from the Court of Appeals of Bucharest.<sup>81</sup>

### *Civil Society since the Transition*

Upon Ceaușescu's overthrow, Romania had nothing that resembled civil society.<sup>82</sup> Romania's National Council of Women was a mouthpiece for the Communist Party and did not represent or serve women. Its support of policies that were detrimental to women left a legacy of mistrust for groups whose mission is to assist or represent women.<sup>83</sup>

As the impact of the transition worsened, women began to feel the need for political participation of some sort. There are no governmental organizations that promote women's rights or their equitable participation in politics,<sup>84</sup> so women had to turn to non-governmental organizations. In 1992, there was considerable negativity toward NGOs that had a feminist bent for two reasons. First, the rhetoric of collective action and female equality closely resembled communist rhetoric. Second, western feminist thought is often interpreted as being anti-family and anti-men.<sup>85</sup> By 1997, however, the economic situation had deteriorated to the point that women began to establish relationships with NGOs providing social services and those advocating improved economic and political status for women.<sup>86</sup>

By 1997, 15,000 NGOs had registered with the government. About half of these NGOs are located in the western part of the country, 15 percent in the southern region and 16 percent in the east. Rural NGOs have increased steadily in number, but account for less than 20 percent of NGOs.<sup>87</sup> There are many ways to measure the development of NGOs, but the most common are levels of employment and public sector funding. According to a 1995 national survey of NGOs, nonprofits (excluding public education and health) employed the equivalent of 25,530 full time staff. Volunteers in those fields represent the equivalent of another 46,000 full time staff. Volunteers are most active in the provision of social services and environmental work.<sup>88</sup> Most NGOs in Romania still rely largely on the government for their funding, particularly those that provide social services. The only exceptions are NGOs that work on community development and related issues, which rely equally on fees and public sector funding and professional associations, which rely largely on fees.<sup>89</sup>

It is not clear how many NGOs serve women, children or other specific client groups, nor how many clients those NGOs serve. In a 1996 survey of 11,000 NGOs, 25 percent reported that they

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 473.

<sup>82</sup> Fisher, "From Tradition and Ideology to Elections and Competition," 177.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 176.

<sup>84</sup> Liczek, "The Masquerade of Equality: Woman and Politics in Romania," 100.

<sup>85</sup> Fisher, "From Tradition and Ideology to Elections and Competition," 189.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Poinier, *Civic Atlas*, 113.

<sup>88</sup> Lester M. Salamon, *Global Civil Society: Dimensions of the Nonprofit Sector*, (Baltimore, MD: the Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies, 1999), 338, 339, 344, 346.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 351.



were active in the direct provision of social services to children, the disabled, and others in need.<sup>90</sup>

There is an NGO providing a service to Romanian women that is unique. One particular NGO has been established to prepare Romanian women for politics. Women from several political parties have taken advantage of the training offered to create a nucleus of women elected in 1996.<sup>91</sup> This may account for part of the increase in professionalism among women in parliament.

### ***Rule of Law***

Women and men enjoy equal rights under the Constitution of Romania. Under Ceaușescu, Romania signed many international declarations and conventions guaranteeing women's rights, but according to the Society for Interbalkan Cooperation, they were never enforced.<sup>92</sup> If enforced under the new system of government, women's status would improve.

### **Labor Law**

The constitution specifically guarantees legal equality between the sexes, equal pay for equal work, and paid maternity leave. In 1997, a new law was adopted to extend maternity leave benefits without loss of seniority at the workplace, but the female members of the parliamentary committee could not persuade their male colleagues to allow the parents to choose which parent would receive the benefit, which would have enabled men to take paternity leave.<sup>93</sup> The Romanian Labor Code also contains special protections for women (i.e., protection against hard labor, protection of mothers, etc.)<sup>94</sup> that may, in effect, lead to discrimination against women at the workplace.

### **Abortion Law**

Ceaușescu's pro-natalist policies were extremely harsh on women, robbing them of the right to control their bodies. If an unmarried couple was found together, the woman was charged with prostitution, but the man suffered no consequences. If a woman was found to have had an abortion, she (but not her partner) was subject to two year's imprisonment or a hefty fine. If she was admitted to the hospital due to complications from an abortion, she would be denied care until she reported who had performed the abortion.<sup>95</sup> These laws were overturned immediately once the new government came to power and women now have the right to an abortion, as is common elsewhere in Eastern Europe.

<sup>90</sup> Poinier, *Civic Atlas*, 113.

<sup>91</sup> Fisher, "From Tradition and Ideology to Elections and Competition," 186.

<sup>92</sup> Society for Inter-Balkan Cooperation of Romanian Women, *Voices of Romanian Women*, 22.

<sup>93</sup> Fisher, "From Tradition and Ideology to Elections and Competition," 187.

<sup>94</sup> Society for Inter-Balkan Cooperation of Romanian Women, *Voices of Romanian Women*, 8.

<sup>95</sup> Fisher, "From Tradition and Ideology to Elections and Competition," 173.

## **Findings**

**Is there differential participation by women and men in the public sphere?** Men dominate the political sphere in Romania. The status of women in Romania can be described as “marginal but considerably more promising than in 1992.”<sup>96</sup> Those women who are in politics are much more professional than they were nine years ago. They also express a desire to focus on the economic and social problems of women in their country. Political parties are beginning to understand the contribution that women can make to their efforts.<sup>97</sup>

**How is gender reflected in the development of civil society, especially NGOs?** A vibrant NGO sector has emerged in Romania and seems to be serving perceived needs, if dependent on international funding. No information about the feminization of the sector is available.

**How has the rule of law been institutionalized and what impact is there on gender?** Women in Romania are also significantly better off legally under the new system than they were under the Ceaușescu regime, particularly in terms of labor regulations that require equal pay for equal work.

## **Opportunities for Future Research**

**More information on the composition of the judiciary and local governments is needed.**

**More information on the beneficiaries, activities, and composition of the staff and volunteers in the NGO sector are needed.** This will provide a more complete picture of political activity in Romania, as well as identify gaps in government services.

**Information on the *de facto* exercise of rights is needed.** This will help identify opportunities for education or stop gap measures to improve gender equity.

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 190.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 191.

## THE SOCIAL TRANSITION

This section reports findings from major sources regarding the effects of the transition in Romania on social benefits, poverty, pension reform, health, and education and explores these primary questions:

1. With the shredding of the social safety net, how have women versus men fared in access to / support from social programs?
2. Do data show women's poverty rates to be greater than men's?
3. What are the health-related impacts of the transition?
4. What differential impacts has pension reform had on men's and women's access to benefits?
5. What are salient changes in the state-funded education system (secondary and higher) since 1989/91?

This chapter reviews World Bank, UNDP, UNICEF, and other sources, and major findings are presented in the five sections that follow: Social Safety Net, Poverty, Pension Reform, Health Reform, and Education.

### *The Social Safety Net*

As described in Chapter 5, social safety net programs are of three general types: universal benefits, social insurance, and social assistance. Romania's social safety net includes programs that fall into each of these three categories. Table 11.x lists Romania's social programs and briefly describes their eligibility requirements and benefits and points out major gender differences.

Since the transition, Romania expanded its social safety net by adding unemployment insurance, assistance for the disabled, social assistance, increased maternity leave, and pensions and other assistance for those who faced political persecution or were injured or died in the Revolution.<sup>98</sup> Romania's social safety net prior to the transition included old-age, disability, and survivor pensions; sickness and maternity benefits; work injury protection; and family allowances.

The value of these social benefits, however, has eroded since 1990. For example, in 1995, the average pension was 59 percent of its 1990 level, the average family allowance was 27 percent, and unemployment benefits were only 55 percent of their 1991 value.<sup>99</sup> To help counteract declining benefit value, better targeting would get assistance to those who need it most. For example, 42 percent of eligible poor and very poor households do not receive child allowances.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>98</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1997* (Bucharest: UNDP, 1997), <http://www.undp.ro/nhdr97>, Chapter 2.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Subbarao and Mehra, *Social Assistance and the Poor in Romania*, ESP Discussion Paper Series (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1995), 11.

**Table 16.15. Social Safety Net Program Eligibility and Benefits in Romania**

Program	Value		Eligibility	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
<b>Universal Benefits</b>				
Family Allowances	65,000 lei per month per child. Doubled for totally disabled child. Supplemental allowances for families with more than one child. <i>Supplemental allowances for wives of military conscripts.</i>	65,000 lei per month per child. Doubled for totally disabled child. Supplemental allowances for families with more than one child.	All children under age 16 (or 18 if student or disabled).	Same.
<b>Social Insurance</b>				
Pension, Old-age	<i>54-85% of reference wage.<sup>101</sup> Increment of 0.5-1% of earnings per year of employment beyond 25 years. Minimum applies.</i>	54-85% of reference wage. Increment of 0.5-1% of earnings per year of employment beyond 30 years. Minimum applies.	<i>Age 55 and 25 years of employment. Age 57 if retirement initiated by enterprise. Lower age requirements for arduous or dangerous work and for women who have raised at least 3 children. Early pension available under certain conditions at age 50.</i>	Age 60 and 30 years of employment. Age 62 if retirement initiated by enterprise. Lower age requirements for arduous or dangerous work. Early pension available under certain conditions at age 55.
Pension, Disability	49-70% of reference earnings depending on length of employment.	Same.	<i>1-17 years of employment.</i>	1-22 years of employment.
Pension, Survivorship	50-100% of pension of insured, depending on number of survivors.	Same.	<i>Insured had to meet pension requirements or be pensioner at death. Eligible survivors are widows meeting certain age and marriage conditions, or if disabled. Children below age 16 or 26 if student.</i>	Insured had to meet pension requirements or be pensioner at death. Eligible survivors are children below age 16 or 26 if student.

<sup>101</sup> Reference wage is average base earnings of best 5 consecutive years during last 10 years.

Program	Value		Eligibility	
	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>
Unemployment	50% of average earnings, plus 5% for 5-15 years employment, and an additional 5% for more than 15 years. Minimum amount applies. For recent graduates seeking jobs: 18% of national average wage or 20% if university graduate. Benefit is paid for 270 days, then paid at 60% of minimum wage for 18 months.	Same.	6 months employment in last 12 months. Registered at local labor office. No income higher than 1/2 of national minimum wage.	Same.
Sickness	50-100% of earnings depending on illness and length of employment. Medical care.	Same.	Employment for cash benefits. All residents eligible for medical care.	Same.
Maternity Benefits	<i>50-94% of earnings depending on length of employment and number of children. Payable up to 52 days before and 60 days after confinement. Maternity leave of 85% of earnings until child is 2.</i>	None.	<i>Employment.</i>	None.
Work Injury	54-100% of earnings depending on type of disability.	Same.	Employed persons, apprentices, students during occupational training.	Same.
<b><i>Social Assistance</i></b>				
Means-tested Social Pension	Not specified.	Same.	Ineligible for pension (no more information available).	Same.

*Notes:* The data in this table were current as of January 1, 1999 (the latest version of the Social Security Administration's report). Italicized text indicates a gender difference in eligibility or benefits.

*Source:* U.S. Social Security Administration, *Social Security Programs Throughout the World – 1999*, 292-294.

The social safety net is ubiquitous: more than 50 percent of Romania's population, or about 12 million people, received social benefits in 1996. This number is an increase of 50 percent since 1989.<sup>102</sup>

However, the probability of receipt of social benefits is gender-differentiated, as female-headed households are less likely to receive any benefit payment according to a 1995 report by the World Bank. These researchers noted that receipt of benefits, related to the number of adults in the household, may depend on having someone available to visit benefit offices and queue for benefits.<sup>103</sup> Female-headed households, with fewer adults, may be at a disadvantage.

Romania does differentiate by gender in its social safety net programs. As indicated in the table, in five of Romania's nine social benefit programs, women receive preferential treatment in eligibility, benefits, or both. Although this issue is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, it should be noted here that when benefits are based on a percentage of wages, women's benefits will tend to be lower than men's.

One interesting move toward gender equity in maternity benefits came in 1997 when women members of Parliament tried unsuccessfully to pass legislation allowing maternity leave to be paid either to the mother or the father.<sup>104</sup> Men in Romania, as in almost all CEE and NIS countries, are not eligible for maternity benefits.<sup>105</sup>

### ***Poverty and Gender***

Poverty in Romania is gender-differentiated, with female-headed households having higher poverty rates than male-headed households. However, while there are 4.12 million male-headed households, there are only 760,000 female-headed households in Romania.<sup>106</sup> Table 16.16 presents data from the World Bank on poverty.

**Table 16.16. Poverty in Romania**

Household	Percent in Poverty
Male-headed households	21.14
Female-headed households	23.88
Urban households	15.59
Rural households	27.96
<b>Average</b>	<b>21.52</b>

*Source:* World Bank, *Romania: Poverty and Social Policy*, Volume I: Main Report, 16.

The finding that poverty in Romania is gender-differentiated seems to rely on the significant poverty of elderly women, particularly elderly rural women. According to the World Bank,

<sup>102</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1997*, Chapter 2.

<sup>103</sup> Subbarao and Mehra, *Social Assistance and the Poor in Romania*, 7.

<sup>104</sup> Fischer, "From Tradition and Ideology to Elections and Competition," 187.

<sup>105</sup> U.S. Social Security Administration, *Social Security Programs Throughout the World – 1999*, 292.

<sup>106</sup> World Bank, *Romania: Poverty and Social Policy*, Volume I: Main Report (Washington, DC: the World Bank, 1997), 16.

elderly rural women who receive pensions are the poorest of all pensioners; however, their pensions provide a barrier against extreme poverty. Those elderly rural women without pensions are the most vulnerable of all the poor.<sup>107</sup>

“The Gypsy community is believed to be the poorest segment of the population in Romania. A 1993 survey of the Gypsy community conducted by Zamfir and Zamfir (1993) estimated that Gypsies constitute approximately 4.6 percent of the total population in Romania. More than half of the gypsies surveyed were unemployed. Unemployment was lower among heads of households than their wives. Nearly 71 percent of women were unemployed (2 percent receiving benefits) while only 22 percent of male heads report unemployment (4 percent receiving benefits). Not surprisingly, a comparison of poverty rates for gypsies compared to the total population revealed that while only 16 percent of the total population was under the subsistence level (defined by the Institute for Research for the Quality of Life) nearly 63 percent of the gypsies lived below subsistence. The level of education among Gypsy families is extremely low. Nearly 60 percent of all women and almost 45 percent of all men cannot read. The low level of education reflects poor school attendance among Gypsy children. Only 51 percent of children attend school regularly, 16 percent attend occasionally, while 33 percent have never attended school or have dropped out of school altogether.”

World Bank, *Romania: Poverty and Social Policy*, 23.

### Child Welfare

Poverty among children has been of particular importance in Romania where the problem of institutionalized children has received extensive attention from the media and donor organizations since 1989. Prior to the transition, there were more than 100,000 children living in Romanian orphanages.<sup>108</sup> According to a 1997 census, 98,872 children remained institutionalized in 653 orphanages — 1.7 percent of all children in Romania. In comparison, about 0.62 percent of all children (19 years of age and under) in the United States were in institutional care in 1994.<sup>109</sup>

Reasons often cited for the high rate of institutionalization of children in Romania include 1) the economic situation of families and 2) the availability of institutions as an option. Poverty seems to have affected children particularly, and this child poverty may be driving the continued high rate of institutionalization. According to a study by the Institute for Quality Life Research in Bucharest, 60 percent of children in families with two or more children have incomes in the bottom 30 percent of Romanians. Only six percent of children (in families with two or more children) live in families with incomes in the top 20 percent.<sup>110</sup>

<sup>107</sup> World Bank, *Romania: Poverty and Social Policy*, iv.

<sup>108</sup> World Vision and Bethany Christian Services, “Child Welfare and Protection Project,” Detailed Implementation Plan, October 7, 1998.

<sup>109</sup> Calculated from data from the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cb/stats/vcis/ji01.htm>, and the U.S. Census Bureau, <http://www.census.gov/population/estimates/nation/intfile2-1.txt>.

<sup>110</sup> Catalin Zamfir, Sorin Cace, Adrian-Nicolae Dan, Mariana Nicoara, and Elena Zamfir, *Care and Female Labour Force Participation in Romania* (Bucharest: Institute of Life Quality Research, 1998), 40.

### ***Pension Reform***

Pension reform remains in the beginning stages in Romania. According to a 1998 World Bank report, the government plans to raise retirement ages to 67 for men and 62 for women to create a three-pillar system on the World Bank model.<sup>111</sup>

Because pension reform has not yet been started, there are no data on its effects on gender. Implementation of the three-pillar system will have similar effects on gender in Romania as in other countries of Europe and Eurasia, and these effects are discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

### ***Health Status and the Impact of the Transition***

Health spending relative to GDP increased in Romania according to the most recent figures available, from 2.8 percent in 1990 to 3.6 percent in 1994. Real per capita health spending in 1994 was 104.1 percent of the 1990 level.<sup>112</sup> The improvements in several basic health indicators shown in Table 16.17 may be related to this increased spending. Despite these improvements, however, Romania's health status remains low as measured by two indicators: life expectancy at birth, 69.9, is the lowest among the Eastern European countries studied, while infant mortality, at 22 deaths per 1000 live births, is the second highest, after Albania.<sup>113</sup>

Below, we discuss Table 16.17 and other findings.

#### **Life Expectancy**

About 12.4 percent of Romania's population is 65 or over, one of the higher percentages among the study countries.<sup>114</sup> While life expectancy for women increased about half a year between 1989 and 1997, male life expectancy decreased by over a year.

#### **Mortality**

As in the rest of the region, most of the "excess" male deaths are due to cardiovascular and circulatory diseases, accidents and violence. In the case of Romania, as with some other countries in which GDP declined 20 percent or more from 1989 levels, the adult male mortality increase appears to correlate with this economic decline.<sup>115</sup> Overall, by far the leading cause of death for both women and men (1993) was circulatory disease (accounting for 55 to nearly 70 percent of deaths), followed by neoplasms (12 to 15 percent). Respiratory diseases were the

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<sup>111</sup> Marco Cangiano, Carlo Cottarelli, and Luis Cubeddu, *Pension Developments and Reforms in Transition Economies*, IMF Working Paper WP/98/151 (Washington, DC: the International Monetary Fund, 1998), 24-25.

<sup>112</sup> Ellen Goldstein, A. Preker, O. Adeyi, and G. Chellaraj, *Trends in Health Status, Services and Finance: The Transition in Central and Eastern Europe*, Volume I, World Bank Technical Paper No. 341 (Washington, DC: the World Bank, no date but ca. 1996), 17-18, 23.

<sup>113</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, 169.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 198.

<sup>115</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 12.



third most common cause of death (6-8 percent).<sup>116</sup> Cervical cancer is the third cause of death among women in Romania; mortality rates from cervical cancer increased from 12/100,000 in 1990 to 14/100,000 in 1993. The 1993 crude incidence rate of 24.7 per 100,000 females was higher than the Eastern European average (21.6/100,000) and well over the Western European average of 15/100,000.<sup>117</sup>

**Table 16.17. Demographic and Health Indicators for Romania<sup>118</sup>**

Maternal mortality (per 100,000 live births) <sup>119</sup>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1996</b>		
	169.4	41.4		
Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births) <sup>120</sup>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1997</b>		
	26.9	22.0		
Abortion rate (per 100 live births) <sup>121</sup>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1997</b>		
	315.3	146.5		
Contraceptive prevalence (RHS 1993) <sup>122</sup>	57%			
Total fertility rate (births per woman) <sup>123</sup>	1.2			
STD incidence (new cases of syphilis/gonorrhea per 100,000 population) <sup>124</sup>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1996</b>		
	23	32		
Life expectancy at birth <sup>125</sup>	<b>Female</b>		<b>Male</b>	
	<b>1990</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1997</b>
	72.7	73.0	66.5	65.2
Percent of population 65 and older in 1997 <sup>126</sup>	12.4			

Sources: As indicated in the footnotes.

<sup>116</sup> International Program Center, Population Division, US Bureau of the Census, *Populations at Risk in Central and Eastern Europe, Fourth Quarterly Report, Health in Eastern Europe* (Washington, DC: USAID/ENI/PCS/PAC, 1996), 11, 31.

<sup>117</sup> Florina Serbanescu and L. Morris, *Young Adult Reproductive Health Survey, Romania 1996, Final Report* (Bucharest: International Foundation for Children and Families, National Institute for Mother and Child Health Care and National Commission for Statistics, 1996), 158.

<sup>118</sup> General note on sources: The major sources used for purposes of cross-country comparisons are from the MONEE and UNDP reports cited below, because they have data for most countries. MONEE is preferred for maternal mortality data because it is the most up-to-date comparable source of data. For infant mortality, UNDP is the preferred source for two reasons: a) UNDP data concords most closely with DHS data, for the three countries for which DHS surveys have been done; and b) data for six of the study countries cited in the MONEE database are based on Soviet rather than WHO definitions of infant death, impairing comparability. In some cases MONEE figures are significantly different (usually lower) than UNDP figures. Only the MONEE database provides reasonably complete and comparable data on abortion rates, STD incidence and life expectancy by sex. UNDP is the preferred source for total fertility rates because it concords most closely with DHS data in the cases in which it is available. Contraceptive prevalence sources identified are: Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), reproductive health surveys (RHS), UNDP Human Development Report (UNDP), Population Reference Bureau (PRB), Russia Longitudinal Monitoring Survey (RLMS). The year is specified when known.

<sup>119</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 119.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 118.

<sup>122</sup> World Bank, GenderStats Database, <http://genderstats.worldbank.org>.

<sup>123</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, 198.

<sup>124</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 131.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 123-124.

<sup>126</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, 198.

## Maternal Mortality

During the 1979-1989 period, Romania had the highest maternal mortality rate in Europe, reaching an average level of 150 per 100,000 live births, ten times higher than that of any other European country. About 80 to 85 percent of deaths were due to complications from illegal abortion (unlike most countries in the region, abortion and importation and sale of contraceptives were illegal under the rigorously enforced pro-natalist policies of the previous regime).

Restrictions on abortion and contraception were revoked immediately following the fall of the regime, in December 1989. Subsequently, the maternal mortality rate declined dramatically, from 170/100,000 in 1989 to 60/100,000 in 1992, almost entirely as a result of the decrease in abortion-related mortality, since most abortions were performed safely by skilled physicians in hospitals or clinics.<sup>127</sup> However, Romania's maternal mortality rate in 1996 was still by far the highest among the Eastern European countries studied.<sup>128</sup>

Abortion remains the first cause of maternal death in Romania, accounting for 60 percent or more of maternal deaths, mainly because of the continuing use of unsafe abortions.

## Abortion

The limited availability of modern contraceptives, combined with a high level of misinformation and preconceptions concerning modern methods and a heavy reliance on failure-prone traditional methods, has made induced abortion the primary method for averting unwanted births, and most abortions are obtained by married women.<sup>129</sup> The abortion ratio (per 100 live births) has decreased steadily from its high point of 315.3 in 1990, to 146.5 in 1997, but is still among the highest in the region.<sup>130</sup>

## Fertility Rate

The total fertility rate (births per woman), 1.2, is less than half its level in 1975, and (with Bulgaria) is the lowest among the study countries.<sup>131</sup> Urban women averaged almost one child less than rural women.<sup>132</sup> The adolescent fertility rate (births per 1000 women aged 15-19) was estimated at 41 in 1997, the second highest (after Bulgaria) among the Eastern European countries included in this study.<sup>133</sup> The highest percentage of pregnancies was reported by lesser educated women and those with low socioeconomic status. A much higher proportion of Gypsy

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<sup>127</sup> Institute for Mother and Child Care, Ministry of Health and Division for Reproductive Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Reproductive Health Survey, Romania 1993, Final Report* (Bucharest: Institute for Mother and Child Care, 1995), 2.

<sup>128</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 119.

<sup>129</sup> Institute for Mother and Child Care, *Reproductive Health Survey, Romania 1993, Final Report*, 59, 56-57, 51.

<sup>130</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 118.

<sup>131</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, 198.

<sup>132</sup> Institute for Mother and Child Care, *Reproductive Health Survey, Romania 1993, Final Report*, executive summary (no page numbers).

<sup>133</sup> World Bank, 1999 World Development Indicators, Reproductive Health, <http://genderstats.worldbank.org/menu.asp>.

(Romany) women, who tend to marry young and have a higher ideal number of children, reported having had a pregnancy compared with other ethnic groups.

### **Contraception**

The high rate of abortion appears to be the principal determinant of the decline in total fertility, since no significant changes had occurred in the prevalence of contraceptive use or contraceptive mix at the time of the 1993 reproductive health survey (the most recent available data). The survey reported contraceptive prevalence for married women at 57 percent, 43 percent of whom used traditional methods and only 14 percent used modern methods. The most prevalent method was withdrawal (34 percent), followed by the rhythm method (8.4 percent). Among modern methods, the IUD, condoms and pills were the most common methods, each accounting for about 3 to 4 percent. Only 1.4 percent of women currently in union reported surgical sterilization, and none reported that her partner had had a vasectomy.<sup>134</sup>

### **Infant Mortality**

Romania's infant mortality rate has decreased from its 1989 level of 26.9 (per 1000 live births) to 22 in 1997, though it is still the second-highest rate among the Eastern European countries in the study. The share of low-weight births (births under 2500 grams as percent of total live births) has increased, from 7.3 percent in 1989 to 9.2 percent in 1997.<sup>135</sup> There are no reliable data on the causes of infant mortality or of the increase in low-weight births, but they may be indicative of poor maternal health.

Stillbirths are reported to the Ministry of Health, but because the definition of a stillbirth is not consistent, the statistics are not reliable. According to the Ministry of Health, however, Romania has the second highest stillbirth rate in the region. The high rate of stillbirths is probably indicative of poor maternal health, as well as poor medical equipment and training in some hospitals.<sup>136</sup>

### **Sexually Transmitted Diseases**

In 1997, according to the UNDP, our source for cross-country comparable data, there were 22.8 AIDS cases per 100,000 people, by far the highest rate for the 10 study countries with comparable data.<sup>137</sup> AIDS cases in Romania have been concentrated among pediatric patients, especially abandoned children in public institutions, owing primarily to nosocomial transmission (through non-sterile needles and syringes or through transfusion of contaminated blood). About 90 percent of the cases reported as of September 1995 were among children under 13 years of age, accounting for over 50 percent of the pediatric cases reported in all of Europe. Few cases have been reported among cohorts born after 1990 as a result of the prevention and control mechanisms put in place by late 1990. Of the 322 adult AIDS cases reported by September

<sup>134</sup> Institute for Mother and Child Care, *Reproductive Health Survey, Romania 1993, Final Report*, 59, 69.

<sup>135</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 119-120, 116.

<sup>136</sup> Ministry of Health, *Anuar de Statistica Sanitara* (Bucharest, Romania: Ministry of Health, 1998).

<sup>137</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*, 174.

1995, 81 percent were caused by sexual transmission – 145 among heterosexual men and women and 25 among homosexual or bisexual men.<sup>138</sup>

A Romanian source of statistics on HIV/AIDS, the Romanian National AIDS Commission, in a July 1999 report presented slightly different data. The Commission set the rate of AIDS cases per 100,000 people at 26.4. More than 87 percent of those cases were among children under age 13. Of the 749 adult cases, 5.2 percent (39 cases) were categorized as homosexual or bisexual. Almost half (48.6 percent) were categorized as heterosexual. Readers should note, however, that 38.5 percent of the cases were of “unknown origin.”<sup>139</sup>

Romania has also experienced an alarming increase in other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), especially syphilis. The reported syphilis rate (new cases) increased by almost 5 times between 1986 and 1996, from 7.1 to 32.2 per 100,000 inhabitants.<sup>140</sup> The Romanian Ministry of Health reported the incidence of STDs at 34.5 per 100,000 people in 1998.<sup>141</sup>

### **Lifestyle-Related Health Issues**

Tobacco use in Eastern Europe has increased since 1990, owing mostly to the transition toward a market economy and the arrival of the international tobacco industry, whose advertising has thrived in the absence of legislative regulations.<sup>142</sup> Smoking is becoming an increasing health problem for young women. Between 1993 and 1996, the share of girls aged 18-19 who had ever smoked rose from 18 to 25 percent.<sup>143</sup> Among young men 18-19, nearly 60 percent had ever smoked and 47 percent were current smokers. Male lung cancer mortality has been rising steadily. By 1992, the rate was almost 60/100,000. It is estimated that tobacco causes about 20 percent of all male deaths per year, 80 percent of which occur among men under 70 years of age. Female mortality from lung cancer, 9.4/100,000, was still low in the early 1990s, though is likely to increase.<sup>144</sup>

### **Prenatal Care**

According to the most recent RHS survey, 94 percent of women received some prenatal care, but a large proportion did not meet the recommendations of Romania's maternal health program (at least 10 prenatal visits before delivery, beginning during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy). For survey respondents, the median number of prenatal care visits was 6. Slightly over half began prenatal visits during the first trimester.<sup>145</sup> There were substantial inequalities in access to prenatal care by age, education and economic status. For example, while 10 percent of women with only a primary education lacked prenatal care, only 2 percent of those with post-secondary

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<sup>138</sup> Serbanescu, *Young Adult Reproductive Health Survey*, 165.

<sup>139</sup> Romanian National AIDS Commission, July, 1999.

<sup>140</sup> Serbanescu, *Young Adult Reproductive Health Survey*, 165-169.

<sup>141</sup> Ministry of Health, *Anuar de Statistica Sanitara* (Bucharest, Romania: Ministry of Health, 1998).

<sup>142</sup> Serbanescu, *Young Adult Reproductive Health Survey*, 145.

<sup>143</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 70.

<sup>144</sup> World Health Organization, Tobacco or Health Programme, *Tobacco or Health: A Global Status Report, Country Profiles by Region, 1997*, <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/who/whofirst.htm>

<sup>145</sup> Institute for Mother and Child Care, *Reproductive Health Survey, Romania 1993, Final Report*, 118.

education went without care.<sup>146</sup> Figures for 1996-98 indicate that 99 percent of births were attended by skilled health staff.<sup>147</sup>

### *Education and Gender*

Access to education at the primary and secondary levels does not seem to be gender-differentiated, with female students making up 49 percent of total enrollments. At the tertiary level, female students account for more than half (53 percent) of enrollment. Table 16.18 presents sex-disaggregated education enrollments.

**Table 16.18. Female School Enrollments in Romania, As a Percent of Total**

Primary		Secondary		Tertiary	
1980	1996	1980	1996	1980	1996
--	49	--	49	43	53

Note: -- indicates data are not available.

Source: World Bank, 1999 World Development Indicators.

During the transition, overall enrollments in Romania increased at every level except kindergarten. The increase in secondary school enrollments is particularly high: from 3.8 percent to 20.6 percent of the relevant population. These data, from the UNICEF MONEE Project, are presented in Table 16.19. However, in its 1997 Human Development Report for Romania, the UNDP reported that school enrollment rates for children over age 11 are falling.<sup>148</sup> No quantitative data were given to support this statement.

**Table 16.19. School Enrollment in Romania, Percent of Relevant Population**

Kindergarten		Primary		Secondary		Tertiary	
1989	1996	1989	1997	1990	1997	1989	1997
63.3	52.8	93.6	95.0	3.8	20.6	8.8	18.7

Source: UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 133-134.

Education through 8<sup>th</sup> grade (gymnasium) has continued to be free of charge and mandatory. Education reform initiated in 1990, however, gave public universities the authority to charge fees and allowed private educational institutions to operate.<sup>149</sup> Despite the creation of a fee structure for previously free of charge universities, demand for higher education is high, and enrollments have increased significantly for both public and private institutions. Enrollment at public universities increased from 164,507 in 1989 to 255,273 in 1994. Private university enrollment went from 0 in 1989 to 145,800 in 1994.<sup>150</sup>

<sup>146</sup> UNICEF MONEE Project, *Women in Transition: Regional Monitoring Report No. 6*, 62.

<sup>147</sup> World Bank, 1999 World Development Indicators.

<sup>148</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 1997*, Conclusions.

<sup>149</sup> World Bank, *Romania: Reform Of Higher Education And Research Project*, Staff Appraisal Report, Report No. 15525-RO (Washington: World Bank, 1996), 2.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

## ***Findings***

**With the shredding of the social safety net, how have women versus men fared in access to / support from social programs?** There is a gender dimension to the social safety net in Romania, and women receive preferential treatment in five of nine social programs.

**Do data show women's poverty rates to be greater than men's?** Poverty rates for female-headed households are slightly higher than for male-headed households. The World Bank suggests these female-headed households are primarily pensioners.

**What are the health-related impacts of the transition?** The health impacts include decreases in maternal mortality, infant mortality, and abortion during the transition and an increase in sexually transmitted diseases. Despite these improvements, the rates of maternal mortality, infant mortality, and abortion are still very high relative to other countries and should be a cause of concern regarding the well-being of women and quality of life.

**What differential impacts has pension reform had on men's and women's access to benefits?** Pension reform is nascent; however, the government plans to increase the retirement age for both men and women and create private pension funds. To date, there have been no reported effects on access for either men or women.

**What are salient changes in the state-funded education system (secondary and higher) since 1989/91?** Education enrollments increased at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels with a substantial increase at the secondary level. At the primary and secondary levels, enrollments are about equal between the sexes while women's enrollment at the tertiary level increased to 53 percent.

## ***Opportunities for Future Research***

**More sex-disaggregated data on poverty are needed.** Few data are available on poverty, and none of the available data are recent.

**An investigation into the causes of and solutions for the child AIDS problem is necessary.** Ninety percent of the reported AIDS cases in 1995 were in children under age 13, and these cases are believed to be concentrated among children in orphanages.

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