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AFTERWORD

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Behind the Scenes: A Content Analysis  
of Perdita Huston's Interviews with  
Women in Six Countries

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Mayra Buvinic with Pandora Anwyl, Luann Martin and Jennefer Sebstad

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Throughout the book, Perdita Huston has conveyed individual portraits of women she interviewed. This afterword attempts to reconstruct and describe the background information behind these individual portraits. With the help of tools from the social sciences, we undertook a systematic analysis of the transcripts of Huston's interviews with women in six countries to find out the themes and concerns expressed by the typical woman. The main findings of this analysis, summarized below, complement her recollections by going "behind the scenes" and focusing on the average woman rather than the individual actor, emphasizing both what women said during the interviews as well as what they did not.

The reader might and should find discrepancies between this analysis and Huston's recollections of her interviews. First, not all the women she interviewed are included in this analysis. Women excluded were those occupying highly visible policy making positions. Second, the women interviewed usually continued talking after the recorder was turned off. During this unrecorded --i.e., unanalyzed--conversation women communicated more personal thoughts and feelings to the interviewer. (For instance, one of Huston's striking findings was the frequency with which women stated that their husbands beat them. But, few statements about wife beating were actually recorded; it seems apparent that wife beating was a topic mentioned more often than not off-the-record.) Thirdly and more importantly, this

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content analysis of the interview material does not pick up the intensity of women's statements nor does it handle the non-verbal components of the interviews (face and body expressions). The similarities between the two analyses however, far outnumber their discrepancies. A sensitive interviewer, interviewing articulate women who shared obvious and unambiguous problems and concerns across the board, is probably responsible for this concordance.

#### METHOD

The content analysis is based on transcripts of interviews with 123 women. Fifty four percent (54%) of these women were from rural areas, 60% were literate and 40% were illiterate.<sup>1</sup> Thirty-one percent (31%) of the women were from Kenya; the other five countries were represented in the population interviewed in a proportion varying between 11% and 17% (see Table 1). The findings below are subject to a number of restrictions: first and most importantly, since women were not selected at random, the findings cannot be generalized to women other than the 123 interviewed. (However, they can and should be used to generate hypotheses for future testing using scientific field methods.) Secondly, the materials analyzed are women's verbal statements, elicited by questions or born naturally out of the dialogue. These responses, then, reflect women's needs and attitudes, perceptions and opinions, but do not necessarily reflect real conditions. The responses are the reality as perceived by the women or the reality as the women wanted the interviewer to perceive it. (However, if what women say is supported by independent evidence and is shared by most of the women interviewed, there are better grounds to assume that their verbal statements portray an accurate picture of reality.)

A modified version of the content analysis method was used to analyze

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1) For this analysis, women with three or more years of formal schooling were considered "literate;" women with two or fewer years of formal schooling were considered "illiterate."

the data. A statement, that is, a verbal response whose content (or major portion of it) could be attributed to one topic, was the unit identified for analysis. Comments made by a woman on one topic but at different points in the interview were defined as two different statements as were comments made by her contiguously during the interview but on different topics. For instance, if a woman started talking about family planning, then moved on to describe her relations with her husband and then went back to talking about family planning, three statements were identified for that woman, two on "family planning" and one on "family relations." Topic or subject categories and sub-categories were then defined, and statements (which quote verbatim the responses from the woman) were placed in a major category and a minor sub-category. After this was done once, statements were re-read, and sub-categories were re-defined and some statements were relocated to fit the final categorization. Only at this point were the statements analyzed in an attempt to quantify women's perceptions and their statements about various subjects. The data further provided the opportunity of exploring more in-depth, qualitative responses that could further explain quantitative ones. For instance, if we had had sufficient numbers, not only could we have found the number of women mentioning wife-beating and their rural/urban, literate/illiterate breakdowns, but also all the possible reasons women mentioned for this behavior as well as other comments made by them in connection with this issue -- all of them emerging from the women themselves in the context of an unstructured interview.

In standard content analysis exercises the categories and sub-categories are first defined, and then the data is placed in the categories. The process is one of going from categorization to analysis. Here the process was and had to be different. Because we were not familiar with the materials, we had to go forwards and backwards between the interviews themselves and the

establishment of categories until we became familiar enough with the materials to match content with the relevant categories. The main drawback of this method is that it is very time consuming; the main advantage is that no prior assumptions are made on the data and the categories are derived from the data and are not imposed from the outside.

#### CHANGE<sup>2</sup>

One of the first questions that Perdita Huston asked the women yielded information on their changing situation when compared to women from prior generations. Questions asked were such as "Was your mother's life greatly different from yours?" "Do you have as much or more control over your life than your mother did?" "What do you think is better in your life as compared to your mother's?"

Of the 123 women interviewed, 73% (or 89 women) made statement about change between past generations and the present. A total of 226 change-statements were identified and their positive or negative character was determined as follows: statements were assigned a score of +1 when the woman stated that the generational change was positive, a score of -1 when the woman viewed the generational change negatively, and a score of zero when there was no indication whether the woman perceived the change to be beneficial or detrimental. Zero was also used when the woman viewed both a positive and a negative aspect in the same change. Two female judges rated each statement independently. The final score for each statement is the sum of these two ratings divided by two. (Coding from many statements was straightforward because words such as "luckily," or "unfortunately" appeared in the statement. In other cases, clue words or phrases were missing but the nature of the change suggested the appropriate code, i.e.,

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2. For a detailed breakdown of numbers of women in the Change category see Table 2.

improved hygiene, less respect for the elderly.) Overall, there was a very high degree of agreement between the two judges (Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient of .93), indicating that this change measure is highly reliable for the population analyzed.

The women perceived change to have been both beneficial and detrimental. According to a rural Mexican woman: "Despite advances, women are still poor." The remark made by a rural woman in Sri Lanka captures the dual nature of change very vividly:

"Our land got distributed. Now our portion is very small. This is not sufficient for us to exist. Our mother's generation did not have all the opportunities that we have at the moment --mainly for education, health, transport and so on. But economically, they were better off because the earlier generation got income that was sufficient to meet all their requirements. Economically, of course, we get much more than what our parents earned. Because of the high cost of living since then, we are not living a happy life. We find life hard."

This mixed character of change is evident in the rating system. Positive statements totaled 136 points, negative statements 46 points. What is fascinating is the distribution of the positive and negative statements according to the different categories. Women find changes in the areas of education, health, social participation and political-legal rights to be, on the whole, beneficial. Forty-two percent (42%) of the women who commented on change found education clearly to have improved since the preceding generation. Nearly one-third of the women who identified a positive change phrased it in terms of freedom, independence, and gains in political rights and health and public services. Their perceptions of change were mixed when they talked about family relations. Choice or prior knowledge of their marital partner and higher age at marriage are identified as positive changes. Husband-wife relations are perceived more often deteriorating than improving. Less attention to, and respect for, the elderly and less communication within the extended family are

also perceived as negative changes. Some women are glad to see children having more freedom in the family, others are concerned about declining parental authority. One category where negative statements outnumber positive ones was the economic category. Women speak favorably of easier access to out-of-home remunerated work and a higher standard of living but the cash economy, higher prices, food shortages, and loss of property ownership are perceived by the women as inflicting severe hardships on them. <sup>3</sup>

But, who are the women who talked about these changes? The percentage of urban and rural women talking about change was proportional to the breakdown between urban and rural women in the population. Literate women were slightly under-represented as part of literate women in the population. Both the literate and illiterate, the urban and rural women, are quick to cite changes in education and in the economy; the former changes are positive, the latter negative. However, a disproportionate number of rural women speak of positive health changes, they make up 81% of the women talking about health advances. On the other hand, more urban than rural women mention changes in family relations; 61% of the women in this category are from the city. Although many of the same themes emerge in statements on change, country differences are apparent. The comments referring to change are overwhelmingly favorable in Tunisia. The predominant theme in this northern African country is independence, freedom and political rights. Education is the major positive change cited by Mexican women; Egyptian women add social and economic independence to the list. Some of the same themes --educational opportunity, independence, mobility-- are reiterated in Sri Lanka. Thirty-three percent (33%) of the women who

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3. Not all the categories defined were subject to the analysis described in the following pages; categories that remain to be analyzed are "religion," "mass media," "politics," "women's organizations," and "International Women's

commented on change are from Kenya, and Kenyan women comprise 31% of the total number interviewed; however, a highly disproportionate number of negative comments, 71% of them in fact, was made by these East African women. They are grateful that their children are healthy and better educated, but they find changes in family relations, high prices, and the cash economy oppressive. Is it really that these Kenyan women are worse off than their counterparts in other countries?

A more detailed account of why these changes have been positive in certain instances and negative in others is obtained when analyzing each subject category.

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ECONOMIC CONDITIONS In the economic realm, more than in any other, the women consider the changes that have taken place since their mothers' generation to be negative. Statements in the category of economic conditions were analyzed both to determine what the women considered to be their major problems and to assess what the women's proposed solutions to these problems were. Although few questions pertaining to the economy were asked, 68 women made 172 statements related to economic problems and 82 women made 200 statements related to solutions to economic problems. Thirty-seven (37) urban and 31 rural, 46 literate and 22 illiterate women talked about economic problems. Forty (40) urban and 42 rural, 49 literate and 33 illiterate women mentioned solutions to economic problems.

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3. cont. Year." The data for these and all other categories is available through the International Center for Research on Women (2000 P Street, N.W. Suite 403, Washington, D.C. 20036) for those who wish to conduct further analyses. Because the data is in more than 900 typed cards, it can only be used at the ICRW Washington, D.C. offices. The ICRW will thus not be able to fulfill any mail requests for copies of this data.

4. For a detailed breakdown of the number of women in the Economic Problems and Economic Responses categories see Table 3.

### STATEMENTS DESCRIBING ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

These are statements where women indicate some difficulty in meeting their own, their families', their communities' or women's (in general) economic needs. Problem statements are seen as the result of either general (i.e., "now everything is dependent on money") or individual ("she didn't go to school because they didn't have enough money to buy a pencil and a notebook") economic conditions, and are subdivided into the following:

-unemployment: Includes both general unemployment problems and specific problems a given woman has in finding employment.

-sex discrimination: Indicates situations in the work place that reveal the existence of sex inequalities. Statements here fall under the headings of general job discrimination, lower salaries for women, exploitation of women workers by men, and lack of promotions for women.

-problems of the cash economy: Describes problems associated with the exchange or money sector of the economy. Included here are references to the high cost of living, lack of cash, inflation, the lack of wages for most of women's subsistence production, and general difficulties associated with the need for money.

-lack of satisfaction of basic needs: Shows lack of minimum requirements for personal or family consumption, such as food, shelter and clothing.

-lack of resources: Describes absence of resources such as land, capital and machines necessary for production, and a lack of markets for the exchange of goods and services produced.

-family restrictions: Reveals restrictions on women's economic activities as a result of their expected role within the family and their relationships with other family members (especially their husbands) as well as strains within the family as a result of women's out-of-home economic

activities.

-miscellaneous: Includes a wide range of stated problems from lack of women's organizations, to government restrictions, to hard work. These statements were not repeated frequently enough to warrant their own subcategory.

Most negative statements about change focused on the lack of cash and on high prices. Here again, the economic problems stated most frequently by the women were those associated with the cash economy. 34 women made fifty-five (55) statements related to the cash economy, indicating problems given women's lack of purchasing power and their difficulty in earning money, as well as problems due to the high cost of living and inflation. Family problems resulting from economic conditions was the next largest subcategory. Thirty-one (31) women mentioned husbands restricting wives' access to the workplace, the strain of women's double role at home and at the workplace, problems associated with men not contributing income to the family, lack of economic independence for women, and the problems of polygamy enforcing a division of resources. Sixteen (16) women stated problems associated with the lack of access to resources such as land, capital, education, skills and a profession and 14 women described unemployment as a problem. Other economic problems mentioned by women related to sex discrimination in the workplace (9 women), lack of satisfaction of basic needs (9 women), institutional restrictions (labor regulations) placed on women working for wages (5), hard work (3), social restrictions on women working for wages (2) and lack of leisure time (2).

Lack of Cash. Slightly more urban (48%) and literate (64%) women -- given their proportions in the population interviewed -- mentioned economic problems related to absence of available cash. Women from Kenya and Mexico made these statements most often: 45% of the Kenyan women and 36% of the

Mexican women interviewed talked about lack of cash. The most frequently stated problem by the women in the interviews is not having enough money; for most of them this lack of money is connected to the resulting inability to satisfy essential needs like food, health care, and education. Lack of money seems to be a pervasive problem that crosses class, education, and location boundaries. Women stating problems about the high cost of living and inflation were primarily from rural areas. They most often associated the high cost of living with a difficult, complicated, unhappy life. The change from subsistence to a cash economy has not always been advantageous to women. Women often stated that in the past money was not needed to purchase food or satisfy other basic needs while it is required today. And women's work, either in farming, handicrafts, or within the household, does not bring enough money or any money at all.

Lack of resources. In the past, women had access to land where they cultivated food for their family. Neither women nor men had to generate income to purchase food for subsistence. Nowadays women are being denied access to land and have to purchase food with money. Land is the resource most frequently mentioned lacking, especially by women from Kenya, who constitute 62% of those mentioning lack of resources. Women in Kenya who had traditionally engaged in subsistence agriculture see a major change from producing their own food on their land to being denied access to land, and ultimately having to purchase food with money. Next, women (six of them) mentioned capital as a resource that they lack.

Unemployment. Unemployment was mentioned as a problem by more literate (11 versus 3 women) and more urban (9 versus 5) women. It is quite probable that because literate and urban women have more wage employment options than illiterate and rural women, they also are more aware of the lack of jobs. A repeated complaint was that even with an education, women

cannot find jobs; this suggests first, that education in its present form is not appropriate for the demands of the job market in the city, or second, that education alone is not sufficient in dealing with massive problems of the economy. Unemployment was perceived as a general economic problem, not just specific to women.

Family Problems. Given their representation in the population interviewed, again more urban (55%) and literate (71%) women commented on economic problems related to their family situation. In one third of these statements women complain that men spend their earned income on themselves and do not share it with the family. Of the 11 statements addressing this problem, 9 were made by rural and 2 by urban women. A large proportion of these women were illiterate.

Next, women commented on the strains associated with the double roles of working both within and outside the household. A woman from Egypt states: "I work ... in the field, opposite the men, seven hours of hard work, and then I go home, I am required to play the role of a housewife 100%, cooking, cleaning, washing for the children." Another woman states: "I am working outside and inside. I am doing a dual job. Some people think that work is liberation of women. It is not liberation. Sometimes it is more exploited."

Sex Discrimination. Sex discrimination is a problem seen primarily by urban, highly educated women. Statements of 10 of these women indict men as exploiters: "Women are bullied by their (male) bosses," "He put her at home and began feeding her and deprived her of pay work." Women also complained of lower salaries than men, that they are not allowed to compete, and that in a situation of massive unemployment, men are given job preferences since they are considered "heads of households."

Lack of Satisfaction of Basic Needs. All but one of the nine women stating lack of satisfaction of basic needs were from Kenya; seven of these eight Kenyan women lived in rural areas, and stated most often that currently they lacked enough food to feed themselves and/or their families: "I don't have anything to eat as it was before," "Nowadays we don't have enough grain, so you can see, our things are not doing well."

The interviews revealed many other interesting economic problems which the women perceived. The five women who complained of hard work were from urban areas. Considering the type of work women do in rural areas, it is interesting to note that there was not a single complaint about the difficulty of their work. All seven women who made reference to institutional restrictions on women's economic activities were highly educated urban women.

Statements Expressing Potential Solutions to Economic Problems.

More women mentioned potential solutions to stated or implied economic problems than mentioned economic problems. 82 women made 200 statements suggesting possible solutions to economic problems. Rural and urban, literate and illiterate women were adequately represented in this category given their proportion in the population interviewed. Kenyan women, again, were overrepresented in the response category; 82% of all the Kenyan women interviewed commented on one or more solutions to economic problems. Next, 68% of the Sri Lankan and Egyptian women interviewed stated solutions to economic problems. Most women commenting on this subject stated that they would like to be given the opportunity to work for pay. Seventy-five (75) statements made by 43 women referred to engaging in some form of work that would generate an income to improve or deal with economic realities. Education and family planning were the next most frequently stated responses with 26 and 24 women making 37 and 24 statements respectively. Changing aspects of the family situation followed the above as a method of improving economic condi-

tions (17 women). Other responses mentioned were control over land and capital (10 women), migration (6 women) and community organization (5 women).

Work. Women want work that will bring in cash. In 50 of the 75 statements in this subcategory women made reference to the wage sector of the economy, suggesting that they see wage employment as the main channel to resolve their economic problems. The desire or need for a profession was the second largest work subcategory with 23 statements. Women most often mentioned wanting to enter the professions of teaching and nursing, office work and midwifery. Eleven (11) statements were made (mostly by rural women) expressing a desire to participate in the establishment of commercial businesses, trade and marketing activities. Rural women also mentioned handicrafts and agricultural production as a means of bettering their lives. Women in the interviews were not concerned with increased salaries or increased prices for products they sell; rather, they were mainly interested in the opportunity to earn an income at all. Women want to work and assume they will work, the right to work does not seem to be an issue. What kind of work (work for pay) is.

Education. The women that saw education as a way of dealing with economic problems proportionately represent urban and rural (12 and 14 women respectively), the literate and illiterate (16 and 10 women respectively) women in the interviews. Literacy is not an issue and is not seen by these women as a direct mean of increasing economic productivity. Instead, they call for education which will lead directly to income-generation, and see the need for training in agricultural techniques, handicrafts, technical skills, marketing and business. Only 5 (out of 37) women in this subcategory mentioned education as the sole answer to economic problems. All others cited education as only one of several responses.

Family Planning. Urban and rural women were proportionately represented

in this subcategory (11 and 13 women respectively). Relative to all those interviewed, more illiterate (14 versus 10) than literate women commented on family planning as an economic option. Women from Kenya and Egypt most often cited family planning as an answer to economic difficulties, especially given the scarcity of food. Family planning was also seen as a way to better educate children. Family planning is a means to both immediate and future well being. As in the education category, most women responding here gave more than one type of solution, suggesting that for them, family planning and other actions will lead to an improved economic environment.

Family Relations. Proportionate to their proportion in the population more urban than rural women responded here (10 or 59% of them were from urban areas). It might be that city living produces more family strains or increases these women's expectations of the family's economic responsibilities. In other ten of the family relations statements women expressed the desire for the husband to provide more resources, to contribute to the family income, to allow their wives to work and to allow their wives to have economic independence. They also called for child care centers to ease the burden of the double-role of mother and worker.

Resources. Of the ten women who saw the need to gain control over resources 7 were from rural areas and six were illiterate. All but two of the 13 statements referred to resources related to agriculture such as land, seeds and grinding mills. Two women expressed the need for capital. This suggests that these rural women see the control of resources and means of production as a more viable alternative for improving their economic situation.

Migration, as a response to economic problems, was given by six women in their interviews; it was not seen as a viable alternative for women, and was often associated with prostitution. Still fewer women (3 of them)

mentioned technology as a response to economic problems. All these women were urban, and saw technology primarily for increasing household production as opposed to increasing production in the work place.

For both urban and rural women the lack of cash is the main economic problem followed by family problems. Unemployment is more of a problem for urban women, and lack of vital resources such as land is more of a problem for rural women. However, both urban and rural women invoke the same responses to economic problems, and in the same order of priority. These are work for pay, education that will lead to employment, and family planning that will distribute the resources in the household more evenly and will provide better education for the children. These women see that they, as women, have the main responsibility for the economic well-being of their families. They do not question the appropriateness of women working for pay outside the household, nor do they expect men to be the main economic providers and women's main solution to their economic problems. First and foremost, these women see that they themselves can be the answer to the economic needs they have, if society gives them the chance to participate in income generating economic activities.

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FAMILY RELATIONS. The other major area of change about which women spoke negatively was "family relations." In making statements describing the interactions between members of the family they expressed positive feelings from the past generation in some areas (i.e., the process of courtship and marriage, that is, the ability to nowadays choose, or have prior knowledge of marital partners as well as their somewhat greater age at the time of marriage) and negative feelings in others (i.e., deteriorating relationships with their husbands). These perceptions of change are supported by women's descriptions of family relations.

5. For a detailed breakdown of the numbers of women in the Family Relations category see Table 4.

In this category 254 statements were made by 90 women. Given their proportions in the population interviewed, slightly more urban and literate women made statements describing relations between members of the family. 57% of these women described --in 83 statements-- the interactions between husbands and wives. After relationships between marital partners, women talked about interactions between parents and children (49 women) and described the process of courtship and marriage (45 women). They also talked about other relatives (16 women) and commented on the problem of wife-beating (12 women).

Husband-Wife Relations. Do the women interviewed describe husband-wife relations in harmonious or conflicting terms? Of those 39 women who described husband-wife interactions in either positive, negative or neutral terms, 62% phrased these interactions negatively. No rural/urban or education differences were apparent in the data. There was, however, a country difference. In Kenya, all but one of the (12) women talked about husband-wife relations in negative terms. Why is this so? Could it be that husband-wife interactions for these women in Kenya actually are more negative than for women in other countries? Or, perhaps could it be instead that these Kenyan women feel more free to talk about this topic, or that they have higher expectations as to how this interaction should be and therefore feel more disappointed by less-than-ideal interactions?

About what aspects of their relationships with their husbands did the women interviewed have negative reactions? The statements revealed most often conflicts over women's non-traditional work, educational and social roles (7 women) and, next, conflicts over child-care and household tasks (6 women). Also mentioned were conflicts over the sexual aspects of marriage, women's lack of domestic authority and power and conflicts over

the household budget. The analysis of those statements that reveal women's perception of who has power or decision-making prerogatives in husband-wife interactions indicated that of the 22 women who talked about the subject, 72% perceived that it is the husband who has control and authority in the husband-wife relationship (only four women mentioned that it is both who share the authority; and only two mentioned that it is the woman who has the control in the relationship). Positive husband-wife interactions, on the other hand, were phrased by more than half of the women in terms of husband and wife sharing in tasks and in terms of respect and understanding between husband and wife. Married women's aspirations about husbands also were phrased most often in terms of the sharing of both household decisions and responsibilities. Thus, it appears that the women want more equal husband-wife roles, but perceived the husband to have the upper hand in the relationship. Twenty-eight (28) women described what an ideal husband would be like. The most frequently stated desirable qualities in an ideal husband were "good character i.e., honest, honorable, and having high moral principles" (50% of the women), educated (26%), and hardworking and abstaining from alcohol (21%). Good character and moral soundness was a wish stated most often by urban women (67%); rural women, instead, placed more emphasis in having educated, hardworking and nonalcoholic husbands (70% of these wishes were stated by rural women).

Interactions between parents and children. The specific point most frequently commented on was who, the father or the mother, had been most influential in shaping the women's personality and social development.

Of the 31 women who described such parental influence, 17 women saw their father as having had a positive or supportive attitude in their personality and social development, while 11 women saw mothers in the same role.

Rural and urban women singled out fathers as having had a positive influence with equal frequency. Five women mentioned fathers and nine women mentioned mothers as having had a negative influence in their lives. Here again, no significant urban differences were apparent.

What kind of supportive or positive influence do fathers and mothers give their daughters? The women's statements about positive parental influence were classified into those showing passive or active influence. Positive statements about parental influence phrased in terms of emotional support or affection were categorized as representing passive parental influence; those statements revealing that parents motivated the woman to do something specific were called active parental influence statements. When responses were coded this way, 10 women phrased fathers' positive influence in active terms. Instead, eight women phrased mothers' positive influence as passive. Mothers give love and affection, fathers teach and motivate. When the negative influence statements that parents have had on women's lives are classified into passive and active, five versus three women mentioned mothers as using the passive love withdrawal responses while 4 of 5 women mentioned fathers actively opposing something they wanted to do.

Marriage and Courtship. Of the 20 women who explicitly mentioned how their marital partners had been chosen, 65% said that they themselves had chosen their husbands. A woman from Sri Lanka, who did a survey on urban working class women, stated in the interviews that she found that roughly 50% of these women's marriages had been based on choice. She further states: "I wouldn't say it', (traditional arranged marriages) completely breaking down, but the two systems seem to be surviving independently and not coming into conflict."

Women give no one prevalent reason for deciding to marry. They mention

love, fulfillment, respect, among others, suggesting that perhaps the clear-cut, rational choice, as perceived by the women, is who to marry rather than if to marry or not. Nor was there a common perception of the components of an ideal marriage. Elements for a good marriage mentioned were understanding between husband and wife, sexual satisfaction, friendship, and education. Few women mentioned reasons for divorce. Out of the five who did so, two of them said that men divorce their wives for not bearing children or for bearing daughters instead of sons.

Wife-beating. Only 11 women were recorded talking about wife beating. (As it was said before, many more women mentioned wife-beating after the tape recorder was turned off.) Speaking about why wives got beaten by their husbands, two women gave money as the reason, three mentioned drunkenness and six stated that husbands beat their wives when the wives "misbehave." Referring to society's sanction of wife beating, a woman said that "It is legal because the husband is the master." Another said, "Nothing happens because it is between you, your husband and your family." Although the number of women talking about wife beating precludes any analysis, these responses are suggestive of problems relating to wife beating that seem to be world wide. Wife beating exists, and it is the result of domestic conflict and an outcome of drunkenness, but it has not been recognized as a social problem because even their victims feel that it is a private affair, sanctioned by the society and solved within the family.

#### EDUCATION<sup>6</sup>

If women perceived negative changes over time in the areas of economics and family relations, they also saw advancements that have been a direct

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6. For a detailed breakdown of the numbers of women in the Education category see Table 5.

consequence of development. These centered in the areas of education, health, and social relations. All but three out of 40 statements about change in the area of education were positive statements. The majority of women say their lives are better because they are better educated than their mothers and grandmothers. Second in importance, they perceive that their lives are better now because their children and people, in general, have or can have more education. Development's contribution to this change is obvious: it has provided the infrastructure for education (i.e., more schools, roads, etc.) But in the developing world boys use this infrastructure more often than girls do. Many variables explain why boys tend to go (and stay in) school more often than girls; one of which is who motivates the child to do so.

Family's Influence on Education. The topic most frequently mentioned in the education category was who had had most influence in motivating women to pursue an education. Forty-nine (49) women talked about who had influenced their pursuit of an education often in response to the question: "What was your family's influence on your education?" Thirty-four (34) women mentioned a parent as having influenced them in their education. Only four of the 34 women are illiterate, 16 live in rural areas, and 18 live in cities. 71% of these women mentioned fathers rather than mothers as having had an influence --either positive or negative-- on their education. This influence was described as positive by 14 women, and as negative by 10. (Mother's educational influence was phrased slightly more often in negative than in positive terms). In each of the countries and in both rural and urban situations, women perceived that their fathers exerted a predominant influence, supportive or not, in their education. While perception is not synonymous with reality, the central role that fathers seem to have played in the women's education is further supported by the fact that all but one of the illiterate

women mentioned the father as having prevented them from going to school while all the mothers described as having had a negative influence on the women's education were mothers of literate women. Women phrased the father's positive influence most often in terms of actively encouraging them to break with traditions and pursue an education. It was often also mentioned that the fathers themselves were educated men. Father's influence, thus, seems to be transmitted to the daughter directly through teaching and encouragement and indirectly by providing a role model to be imitated. Women phrased fathers' negative influence most often in terms of the father saying that education was not necessary for, or even competing with, daughter's future role as home-maker and child-bearer. One woman stated that her father thought education encouraged permissiveness in women; "Girls who go to school get pregnant." The majority of women from both rural and urban areas phrased mothers' positive influence in terms of teaching women appropriate sex role norms and behaviors, both in the personal (i.e., how to behave as and be a good girl) and the work sphere (i.e., housework and child care),

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Educational Aspirations. Whether or not they themselves were literate, all the women commenting on education believe in the advantages that education offers. Seventy-two percent (72%) of the women talking about their own aspirations wanted to acquire an education, 24% wanted a variation of this, that is, acquiring educational skills that require minimum training. Among those who wish for formal educational training, the desired careers vary from teaching to being a prison guard. About 45% of the women, however, wanted to be teachers; 30% expressed an interest in medical careers half wanting to be doctors, the other half, nurses. The major reason

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7. See Table 6 for the number of women making statements about aspirations in general.

given for pursuing a formal education was to provide services to others (82% of the women). Few wanted to see education as an end in itself. Sixty-nine percent (69%) of the women who wished to acquire skills which require minimum training were from rural areas.

Education is not only an aspiration the women have for themselves; education for their children is important to them as well. 71% of the women talking about aspirations for their children identify education as a major priority.

Women are concerned that children get the education, training or skills that they will need to get a good job. As in the case of aspirations for self, the most frequently stated occupations for children are teachers, followed by doctors. Only one woman mentioned that she wanted her children to be farmers. Education today, however, is no guarantee for upward mobility and access to income, especially for those women who continue to pursue "traditional" female jobs that are low in demand and high in supply. The frustration these women and their children might suffer when they realize that the effort and money spent in education does not pay off might turn out to be a severe set back for the advancement of women.

#### HEALTH, NUTRITION AND FAMILY PLANNING<sup>8</sup>

Twenty-seven (27) women explicitly mentioned that their lives are better than their parents' because of health related advances. 81% of these women are from rural areas and most of them are illiterate. Better availability of health services along with improved general health, nutrition and hygiene are most frequently mentioned as positive health changes from the past generation. (Few and scattered comments on health and nutrition made it impossible, unfortunately, to further analyze statements on

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8. See Table 7 for a detailed breakdown of the number of women in the Family Planning category.

these categories.) The availability of modern contraceptives is the next most frequently mentioned positive change in health. Women are split on their opinions on family size. Some women mentioned that families nowadays are larger, and this is the negative change from the past generation. Other women said that families are now smaller and this is a positive change from the former generation. Of the women interviewed, 68 gave information on the size of their families. The average number of children ever born to these women was 5.2 (see Table 1).

Obstacles to Family Planning. Fifty-three (53) women gave reasons why they or other women in their country are unwilling to control their fertility. Concern about the side effects of contraceptives was the reason mentioned most often (40% of these women talked about actual or rumored negative side effects of contraceptives). Other reasons, in order of importance, were: male opposition (13 women), religious or superstitious reasons (12 women), problems with the health delivery system (10 women) and societal pressures (10 women). (Only two women mentioned that children provide future economic security to the parents.) Relative to their proportion in the population interviewed, women giving obstacles to family planning adequately represented rural and urban, literate and illiterate women. Concern about the physical side effects of contraceptives was shared by women in all six countries. Both the pill and the IUD were associated with deterioration of health and bleeding. The pill was associated with headaches and fainting, the IUD was mostly associated with bleeding and loss of weight. The IUD however, seemed to provoke more "irrational" fears. Some women feared that the inserted IUD will move in the body and get lost. A woman said, for instance: "I am afraid that the coil would get lost and come through on the other side of the head."

Mexican women identified the priest's opposition as the main obstacle to family planning. In addition, Mexican women must deal with their

husbands' opposition. Mexican and Kenyan women make up 67% of those who referred to husbands' disapproval of family planning. The women believed that the men object to family planning for the following reasons: First they are afraid of the physical side effects of the birth control devices; some are afraid that these devices will sterilize their wives. Second, they are afraid that their wives will become sexually permissive. Some husbands will not permit the wives to get an IUD because the wives would be examined by a male doctor. In the words of an Egyptian woman: "In the rural section, there was no question of a man examining a woman. She would not go, the husband would not allow it." A Kenyan woman believes that men want their wives to bear children so that they will stay at home. She said: "The men could not care less about family planning, you never see a man going to a family-planning clinic; some, I think would like to have more children to keep the women at home." A social worker in Sri Lanka, on the other hand, described the other side of the picture. She said that some women refuse contraceptives because they think the children will keep the men home. Talking about her husband's objection, a Tunisian woman said her husband does not want her to use contraceptives because, "He says it is not normal to avoid the life that you are destined to live. She (woman) is like the chicken with a certain number of eggs to lay, it would be a sin not to lay them." This 40-year-old woman has given birth to ten children. Despite her husband's objection, she got an IUD.

Women who want to plan the spacing of the family are often up against societal and family pressures to bear children. A rural Tunisian woman who has given birth to eight children tells of her experience: "All the women made fun of me, they reproached me for getting an IUD, but I decided to get one and I did." When another Tunisian woman, a mother of

four got an IUD, her mother-in-law said: "We have only one son, why do you want to stop your pregnancies?" Women in Sri Lanka mentioned cultural pressures to bear sons and the inferior status of childless couples. Sudanese women also feel cultural pressures to have large families. In fact, "the women who have had more children will get a medal."

Reasons for Family Planning. Despite these obstacles, 48 women identify reasons for spacing their children. Eighty-one percent (81) of these women gave an economic reason as the one most prevalent for limiting their family size. Women say that it is better to have fewer children because they can be better clothed, better fed and better educated. Women seem to be more concerned about their ability to provide for the children when planning the family than about themselves. When they do speak about themselves, it is in terms of their health, and as such they realize that child-spacing will give them strength. Unfortunately, no data was available on the number of women actually using family planning.

#### SOCIAL CHANGES

When women speak positively about change from preceding generations their remarks are usually related to improvements in their standard of living and in social advancements. Ten (10) women mentioned more public services, such as electricity, water and transportation, and technological advances (i.e., labor saving devices) as positive changes from their mothers' lifetimes. 24 women mentioned social gains, phrased most often in terms of expanding choices and opportunities, greater freedom and mobility, as major advancements over past generations.

Has this perception of expanding opportunities also improved women's images of themselves?

PERCEPTIONS.<sup>9</sup>

The women interviewed not only shared their feelings about changes in their lives and their hopes for their families but also provided glimpses of how they feel about themselves, about other women, and about men.

Perceptions about Oneself. Images people have of themselves in different situations and enacting different roles all contribute to their self-identity. Two important images or components of the self are how people see themselves as individuals (self image) and as females or males (sex-role image). Women in the interview talked about their own personality features and behavioral traits (i.e., "I am a brave woman," "My life is fruitful," "I am unhappy") and discussed whether or not they would have rather been born male. The former statements were identified as contributing to these women's self image, the latter to their sex-role image.

Of the few women (17) who described characteristics having to do with their self-image, 70% saw themselves in a positive light. While no significant rural-urban differences were apparent, most of these women were literate. Moreover, all the five women who gave negative views of themselves were illiterate. These results are most probably biased by self-selection and interviewer effects. When talking to a stranger, and especially if this person has a high status and is liked, people will tend to reveal their "best side." Yet, education might well be an important factor in people's and perhaps specifically in women's positive view of themselves.

Of the 49 women who made statements about their sex-role image, half revealed a positive and half a negative sex-role image. Here rural-urban distinctions rather than education seemed to be correlated with women's responses. Equal number of rural and urban women gave positive views of

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9. For breakdown of numbers of women in this category see Table 8.

their sex-roles; however, of those women revealing a negative perception of their sex-role identity, 83% lived in rural areas. These women wished they had been born male instead of female because, first, they would have had the freedom to go out (two women said that they would have preferred to be a male because they would have had the freedom to stay in their place of birth rather than moving to where the husband lives) and as a man they would have had less work and responsibilities. Second in importance, and with equal frequency, they mentioned that they would have had education and the privileges, power and authority that men have. This data supports the hypothesis that sex-roles are more clearly defined and separated in rural than urban areas, and that this definition is biased against women. Women perceive that they bear all the burdens and responsibilities of family and work, and have none of the benefits that men have. It seems clear that women are cognizant of and wish for those things in life that society reserves for men only. (It is interesting to notice that only an indirect question, phrased in terms of a wish, elicited in rural women complaints about their condition.)

Perceptions of Women. Fifty-three (53) women expressed their opinions of other women. 23 commented on other women's social character, 30 on their sex-role image. The views women have of women are strikingly positive. Seventy percent (70%) view other women as having attributes which contribute to a positive social character, i.e., women are sincere, honest, patient, persistent. Six women expressed negative views of other women. They said women are immoral, gossipy, and do quarrel. Eighty percent (80%) view women as being either equal or better than their menfolk; i.e., "woman is as capable as man," "she is more psychologically mature, clever and broad minded."

Perceptions of Men. Perceptions women have of other women are generally

positive. Perceptions women have of men are not. Of the 34 women describing men's social character, 68% phrased it in negative terms. By far the most common complaint was that men are women's oppressors: they do not regard women as people, they are jealous and selfish, they regard women as servants and as children to beat. Next, women expressed that men are lazy and do not help with housework and child care, that they are not responsible to the family. In a majority of the cases, perceptions of men turn out to be complaints about men's traditional superior place in society.

#### SOME CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Modernization, industrialization, urbanization, that is, fast and profound social and economic changes, have had both positive and negative effects for the lives of the 123 women whose interview statements have been examined. At least, that is their own account of this process.

#### The Experience of Economic Change

In recent years scholars have argued that socio-economic development more often than not has had a negative or adverse impact on the lives of women. These women, however, mentioned more positive than negative changes in the interviews. Are these two positions --one generated by studying the effects of changes, the other by experiencing them first hand-- contradictory? Not necessarily. First, this analysis did not, and could not, pick up the intensity of women's change statements. Negative changes could have outweighed positive ones if the method had allowed us to measure the intensity or value assigned to different change statements. More importantly, nevertheless, is the fact that the thrust of the "negative impact argument" is an economic one. Briefly, it argues that along with aid and technology, Western developers often exported their Western beliefs about women and women's roles in society. They saw women only as homemakers and child-

bearers and consequently implemented programs that gave the benefits of technology and aid to the men. But, in many Third World societies women had roles that extended far beyond homemaking and childbearing. Economic roles in subsistence agriculture, commerce, and some manufactures that had been enacted mainly by women or shared between men and women were thus --along with the aid-- reassigned to the men, undermining women's economic power and widening the gap between women's and men's earnings. Most often cited as an example par excellence of this negative impact, is the case of subsistence economies in some East African nations (i.e., Kenya) where women played and continue to play a fundamental role in subsistence agriculture. Past colonial regimes and more recent rural development extension programs introduced into this region cash crops, private property, extension services and farming techniques, along with the economic power that all this meant, to the men. The result was that they took up the best lands for cash crops and the money that these crops yielded, and generally started dominating in the modern sectors of the economy. Women, meanwhile, continued to work in the traditional sector without remuneration. Their burdens were increased since they continued to fulfill their traditional responsibilities of feeding their families, yet no longer had access to the best land or to other alternative means of acquiring capital.<sup>10</sup>

In this analysis, the economic category had the highest number of women responding and the highest number of statements, despite the fact that economic questions were not specifically asked in the interviews. It seems quite clear that economic conditions affect these women directly and are salient in their minds. More importantly, and consistent with the "negative impact argument," women in the interviews state that they have not benefited greatly from

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10. See, for instance, Ester Boserup, Women's Role in Economic Development. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1970; and Irene Tinker and Michelle Bø Bramsen, eds., Women and World Development. Washington, D.C.: Overseas Development Council, 1976.

economic changes. When compared to all other categories, the frequency of negative statements about change is highest for the economic category.

The economic problem statements analyzed show that these women see a general deterioration of economic conditions which cause their lives to be more complex and difficult. Being a woman in the economy is not their main complaint; structural economic problems such as the cash economy, unemployment, scarcity, and lack of access to resources such as land and capital are reported as their primary concerns. At the same time, they do recognize problems they face as women in the labor market, such as the double-role of family and work, the fact that most of women's work does not bring money, and sex discrimination in their work place. A corollary to the above is the ability of rural and illiterate as well as urban and literate women in this sample to articulate and communicate their economic problems. The myth that the rural, illiterate women does not know what is happening and is not able to articulate her needs, remains, at least for these women, simply that, a myth. Equally useful information for policy makers is that these women's many and resourceful solutions to economic problems show that they feel responsible for the economic welfare of the family, know what should be done to improve the family's economic situation, and do wish to integrate themselves into the economy of their communities and countries so they can better provide for their families.

#### The Experience of Social Change

Changes have not only affected women's economic options; they have also affected their private and social lives --many times positively. Change has given these women more education, better health services, and above all it has opened up a world of actual or perceived choices and opportunities for them. Women have more freedom nowadays to chose a husband, a career, a contraceptive.

The analysis of these women's education and educational aspirations statements reveals not only the emphases they place on education as the single most important road for advancement but also the central role fathers play in helping women find and follow this road. In fact, fathers are seen as having a more active and influential role both in their daughters' educational pursuits and social and personality development. If daughters' perceptions of fathers' roles are accurate, apart from providing more schools and more teachers, convincing fathers of the advantages of educating girls might have a significant effect in increasing women's school enrollment ratios in the developing world.

The rural women interviewed feel particularly the positive effect that better health services have had in their lives. But it is obvious from the interviews that they need many more health improvements. The women themselves had the following suggestions for policy makers to follow:

1- Train more women for the health profession. A recurring theme in the interviews is women's preference for female doctors. As pointed out earlier, some husbands would not allow their wives to be examined by male physicians.

2- Improve the accessibility to family planning as well as health services and train more field workers. The clinics should be in the rural areas, near the people, and should have female doctors.

3- Educate the men about family planning. Women say that family planning will not succeed unless men and women are involved in planning together. A Kenyan woman stressed that this be done in a sensitive manner; she said it would go against tradition to talk about sexual relations openly. Instead of talking solely about family planning, she recommends that the discussion be put in the larger framework of health and economic development.

### One Hypothesis for a Possible Country Difference

The analysis of the statements has suggested country differences for one group of women interviewed: those from Kenya. These Kenyan women felt economic changes to have been negative most often and described husband-wife interactions in negative terms also most frequently. The question was raised earlier if these findings suggested that these Kenyan women were really worse-off than their counterparts in other countries. Women have always played a central role in the economy of Kenya. Still today, 80% of subsistence agriculture is in the hands of women. Women's central economic role probably had an "equalizer" impact on the interactions between husbands and wives. Modernization and development have strengthened men's role at the expense of women's in the economic sphere. This could have had repercussions in the private sphere of interactions between husband and wife. Kenyan women might have lost some of their rights or prerogatives vis-a-vis their husbands. Thus, their perception of a negative economic change over time and their viewing husband-wives interactions negatively perhaps is not because in absolute terms they are worse off than other women, but because in the past they were better off. It might well be that their negative statements are elicited by this past-present comparison.

### A Final Afterword

At least to another woman interviewer, these women verbalize their aspirations for a better life for themselves and their families and their willingness to participate in actualizing these aspirations. It might well be that the author chose an extremely unique and enlightened group of women for her interviews. This, however, does not seem likely, especially because women's responses tend to agree with results from other studies. If it were true that these women are the norm rather than deviant cases, women, --rural and urban,

literate and illiterate,-- become capable and willing human resources who should be fully utilized in development efforts.

TABLE 1

NUMBER OF WOMEN INTERVIEWED BY COUNTRY  
RURAL (R) - (URBAN), AND LITERACY (I, L)\*  
IN TOTALS AND PERCENTAGES

COUNTRY	RURAL		URBAN		TOTALS			%
	L	I	L	I	R	U	T	
KENYA	5	12	16	5	17	21	38	31%
EGYPT	2	5	11	3	7	14	21	17%
SRI LANKA	9	6	4	0	15	4	19	15%
TUNISIA	5	11	2	0	16	2	18	15%
MEXICO	3	4	6	1	7	7	14	11%
SUDAN	4	1	7	1	5	8	13	11%
TOTALS	%	42	58	82	18	54	46	
	(N)	28	39	46	10	67	56	123

## NOTES:

1. 60% of the women interviewed are literate and 40% are illiterate.
2. Based on information for 118 women, the mean age of women interviewed is 33.5 years, the standard deviation is 12.07.
3. Based on 68 cases, the mean number of children ever born to women interviewed who had children is 5.22; the standard deviation is 3.33.
4. Based on information for 101 women, of those women interviewed (n=101) 72% are married, 24% are single, 2% are widowed, and 3% are divorced.

TABLE 2

## CHANGE

NUMBER OF WOMEN OFFERING STATEMENTS ABOUT CHANGE  
BY COUNTRY, RURAL(R) - URBAN(U), AND LITERACY (I, L)  
IN TOTALS AND PERCENTAGES

COUNTRY	RURAL		URBAN		TOTALS			%	
	L	I	L	I	R	U	T		
KENYA	3	10	9	7	13	16	29	33%	
EGYPT	2	4	7	1	6	8	14	16%	
SRI LANKA	9	3	4	0	12	4	16	18%	
TUNISIA	3	9	0	0	12	0	12	13%	
MEXICO	0	3	7	1	3	8	11	12%	
SUDAN	2	1	3	1	3	4	7	8%	
TOTALS	(%)	21	34	34	11	55	45		
	(N)	19	30	30	10	49	40	89	

## NOTE:

1. 55% of the women are literate and 45% are illiterate.

TABLE 3

## ECONOMICS

NUMBER OF WOMEN OFFERING STATEMENTS ABOUT ECONOMIC PROBLEMS  
BY COUNTRY, RURAL(R) - URBAN(U), AND LITERACY (L,I)  
IN TOTALS AND PERCENTAGES

COUNTRY	RURAL		URBAN		TOTALS			
	L	I	L	I	R	U	T	%
KENYA	5	9	12	5	14	17	31	46%
EGYPT	1	0	8	0	1	8	9	13%
SRI LANKA	3	2	4	0	5	4	9	13%
TUNISIA	1	1	1	0	2	1	3	4%
MEXICO	2	4	5	1	6	6	12	18%
SUDAN	3	0	1	0	3	1	4	6%
TOTALS	(%)	48	52	84	16	46	54	
	(N)	15	16	31	6	31	37	68

NOTE:

1. 68% of the women are literate and 32% are illiterate.

NUMBER OF WOMEN OFFERING RESPONSES TO ECONOMIC PROBLEMS  
BY COUNTRY, RURAL(R) - URBAN(U), AND LITERACY (L,I)  
IN TOTALS AND PERCENTAGES

COUNTRY	RURAL		URBAN		TOTALS			
	L	I	L	I	R	U	T	%
KENYA	3	9	14	5	12	19	31	38%
EGYPT	1	4	9	0	5	10	15	18%
SRI LANKA	5	5	4	0	10	4	14	17%
TUNISIA	2	4	0	0	6	0	6	7%
MEXICO	2	3	2	1	5	3	8	10%
SUDAN	3	1	3	1	4	4	8	10%
TOTALS	(%)	38	62	82	18	51	49	
	(N)	16	26	33	7	42	40	82

NOTE:

1. 60% of the women are literate and 40% are illiterate.

TABLE 4

## FAMILY RELATIONS

NUMBER OF WOMEN OFFERING STATEMENTS ABOUT FAMILY RELATIONS  
BY COUNTRY, RURAL(R) - URBAN(U), AND LITERACY (L,I)  
IN TOTALS AND PERCENTAGES

COUNTRY	RURAL		URBAN		TOTALS			%
	L	I	L	I	R	U	T	
KENYA	3	8	11	5	11	16	27	30%
EGYPT	2	2	9	3	4	12	16	18%
SRI LANKA	5	3	4	0	8	4	12	13%
TUNISIA	5	7	1	0	12	1	13	14%
MEXICO	3	2	6	1	5	7	12	13%
SUDAN	4	0	6	0	4	6	10	11%
TOTALS	(%)	50	60	80	20	49	51	
	(N)	22	22	37	9	44	46	90

NOTE:

1. 66% of the women are literate and 34% are illiterate

TABLE 5

## EDUCATION

NUMBER OF WOMEN OFFERING STATEMENTS ABOUT EDUCATION  
BY COUNTRY, RURAL(R) - URBAN(U), AND LITERACY (L,I)  
IN TOTALS AND PERCENTAGES

COUNTRY	RURAL		URBAN		TOTALS			%
	L	I	L	I	R	U	T	
KENYA	2	6	13	2	8	15	23	33%
EGYPT	1	3	10	2	11	12	16	23%
SRI LANKA	1	1	3	1	1	4	5	7%
TUNISIA	4	8	1	0	12	1	13	19%
MEXICO	1	0	3	1	1	4	5	7%
SUDAN	3	1	3	0	4	3	7	10%
TOTALS	(%)	39	61	87	13	45	55	
	(N)	12	19	33	5	31	38	69

NOTE: 1. 65% of the women are literate and 35% are illiterate

TABLE 6

## ASPIRATIONS

NUMBER OF WOMEN OFFERING STATEMENTS ABOUT ASPIRATIONS  
BY COUNTRY, RURAL(R) - URBAN(U), AND LITERACY (L,I)  
IN TOTALS AND PERCENTAGES

COUNTRY	RURAL		URBAN		TOTALS			
	L	I	L	I	R	U	T	%
KENYA	4	5	9	5	9	14	23	33%
EGYPT	2	1	2	3	3	5	8	11%
SRI LANKA	5	3	1	0	8	1	9	13%
TUNISIA	4	9	0	0	13	0	13	19%
MEXICO	1	1	3	1	2	4	6	9%
SUDAN	6	1	3	1	7	4	11	16%
TOTALS	(%) 52	48	64	36	60	40		
	(N) 22	20	18	10	42	28	70	

## NOTE:

- 57% of the women are literate and 43% are illiterate.

TABLE 7

## FAMILY PLANNING

NUMBER OF WOMEN OFFERING STATEMENTS ABOUT FAMILY PLANNING  
BY COUNTRY, RURAL(R) - URBAN(U), AND LITERACY (L,I)  
IN TOTALS AND PERCENTAGES

COUNTRY	RURAL		URBAN		TOTALS			
	L	I	L	I	R	U	T	%
KENYA	4	7	8	6	11	14	25	33%
EGYPT	0	1	8	1	1	9	10	13%
SRI LANKA	7	3	3	0	10	3	13	17%
TUNISIA	1	8	1	0	9	1	10	13%
MEXICO	2	3	6	0	5	6	11	14%
SUDAN	3	0	3	1	3	4	7	9%
TOTALS	(%) 44	56	78	22	51	49		
	(N) 17	22	29	8	39	37	76	

NOTE: 1. 61% of the women are literate and 39% are illiterate.

TABLE 8

## PERCEPTIONS

NUMBER OF WOMEN OFFERING STATEMENTS ABOUT PERCEPTIONS  
BY COUNTRY, RURAL(R)- URBAN(U), AND LITERACY (L,I)  
IN TOTALS AND PERCENTAGES

COUNTRY	RURAL		URBAN		TOTALS			
	L	I	L	I	R	U	T	%
KENYA	3	9	11	5	12	16	28	29%
EGYPT	2	4	9	3	6	12	18	19%
SRI LANKA	8	4	4	0	12	4	16	16%
TUNISIA	5	9	1	0	14	1	15	15%
MEXICO	3	2	4	1	5	5	10	10%
SUDAN	4	1	4	1	5	5	10	10%
TOTALS	(%)	46	54	77	23	56	44	
	(N)	25	29	33	10	54	43	97

## NOTE:

1. 60% of the women are literate, 40% are illiterate.

### DEFINITIONS AND CATEGORIZATIONS

The following definitions and categorizations were used in the analysis:

#### CHANGE

Change is defined as an individual's perception of differences between the past and the present. The change may be very specific (comparison with mother's life) or general (women nowadays...). Statements about change were often evoked by questions such as: "How does your life differ from your mother's?" or, "Do you think that life is easier for your generation?"

Of the 122 women interviewed, 73% made reference to change. A total of 226 change statements were identified for analysis. These statements were distributed into one of the following six subcategories:

- economic: changes affecting one's ability to provide basic needs, such as food, clothing, and shelter for oneself or others.
- education: changes affecting the transmittal of knowledge, generally in a formal setting.
- political/legal: changes affecting laws, government policy or participation in political affairs.
- family relations: changes affecting interactions and interrelationships between family members.
- health: changes affecting the physical condition of the body.
- social: changes affecting lifestyle and/or cultural patterns and attitudes which do not fit into the above categories.

#### ECONOMICS

Statements included in this category relate to the production, consumption or distribution of goods and services. Production is defined as the creation of utility or the making of goods (or services) available for

human wants. Consumption is defined as the utilization of goods and services in the satisfaction of wants or in the process of production. The category refers to production, consumption and distribution both within and outside the household and includes references to such things as scarcity of resources, the cash economy, occupation, and lack of basic needs. The economic category is divided into two major subcategories: problems and responses.

I- Problems: Statements where a woman indicates some difficulty in meeting economic needs of herself, her family, women in general, or of her community or society at large. Problems are seen as the result of either general economic conditions (for example, "now everything is dependent on money") or individual conditions ("she didn't go to school because they didn't have enough money to buy a pencil and a notebook."). The problem subcategory is further subdivided into the following:

-unemployment: a statement which indicates a problem related to finding employment. Statements refer both to the general problems of unemployment and the specific problems a given woman has in finding employment.

-sex discrimination: statements which indicate situations in the work place where sex inequality is observed. Statements fall under the headings of general job discrimination, lower salaries for women, exploitation of women workers by men, and lack of promotion.

-problems of the cash economy: statements in this category refer to problems associated with the exchange or money sector of the economy. Included here are references to the high cost of living, lack of cash, inflation, the lack of wages for much of women's subsistence production, and the general difficulties associated with the need for money.

-lack of basic needs: statements indicating a lack of minimum requirements for personal or family consumption, such as food, shelter and clothing.

-lack of resources: statements which refer to a lack of resources such as land, capital, machines, skills and education necessary for production, and a lack of markets for the exchange of goods and services produced.

-family restrictions: statements which refer to restrictions on women's economic activities as a result of her expected role within the family and relationships with family members (especially her husband). Also included are statements which indicate strains within the family as a result of women's economic activities outside the home.

-miscellaneous: includes a wide range of stated problems, from lack of women's organizations to government restrictions, to hard work. These are statements which have not been repeated frequently enough to warrant their own subcategory.

II- Responses: statements which indicate an action which has been or could be taken in response to an economic problem, stated or implied. They indicate women's perceptions of actions to improve (change) general and personal economic conditions. Also included are statements indicating actions taken in response to economic problems which have not necessarily led to better conditions. The "response" subcategories are the following:

-family planning: statements which indicate how limiting the number of children one has will improve the distribution of resources and general economic conditions.

-migration: indicates the action of moving from one place to another as a result of either poor conditions in one place (push), or perceptions of better conditions in another (pull).

-work: describes how women's participation in exchange production could (or has been) increased and/or improved, resulting in better economic condi-

tions, and in the generation of income. Work associated with household or subsistence production is not included here. Statements propose: increased participation of women in production and marketing activities outside the home, establishment of businesses and enterprises by women, and improvement of women's knowledge of market and business.

-education: statements which show a need for women to learn something related to improving their economic conditions (i.e., budgeting, how to earn money, a profession, skill, agriculture).

-control of resources: statements which reveal a need for women to control land, capital, means of production and markets.

-technology: reveals a need for labor saving devices, primarily for household production.

-organization: statements which indicate how women's organizations can aid women in production, learning skills, marketing and providing services for working women.

-improved family situation: statements describing the need for more cooperation and economic contribution from men within the family as well as the need for domestic services (such as day care centers) to facilitate women's economic participation.

-miscellaneous: includes a wide range of stated responses which have not been repeated frequently enough to warrant their own subcategory.

(The economic category includes statements from the "change" category which refer to the production and consumption of goods and services, or related categories of the money economy, resources, occupation, etc. These statements are analyzed in both categories.

#### FAMILY RELATIONS

Family relations is defined as the interactions between the members of the family, the outcomes of these interactions affecting one or more members

of the family, and the attitudes that family members have about each other as individuals enacting a family role. The concept of the family is not restricted to the nuclear or any other family configuration; it includes all the family configurations that are mentioned by the women interviewed.

This category includes all statements that women make about family relations and family members. These statements usually focus on past or current family interactions, women's attitudes about family members, and influences that family members have on each other. The statements are either from the women in the position of members of the family (i.e., wife, daughter, sister) or from the women talking about family relations and members in general terms. The latter includes women's perceptions of husbands vis-a-vis themselves as wives, but it excludes women's aspirations about husbands, children and themselves as wives or mothers (see "aspiration" category). This category also excludes statements on the economics of the family (see relevant category).

The influence part of the Family Relations category includes all those statements that reveal one family member's influence on another when enacting roles that are central to the structure of the family (i.e., mother, son, grandfather). It does not include a family member's influence on areas that are not directly related to family relations, for instance, education.

Statements in the Family Relations category tend to have a high emotional tone, and quite often they express a positive or negative feeling about some family member. It includes the following subcategories.

-relatives: describes women's interactions with and attitudes about members in the family other than parent-children interactions. Within this subcategory are included all those statements that mention women's interactions with the elderly, women's attitudes towards them, and what women think is society's attitude toward the elderly.

-parents-children: statements that describe both parents attitudes towards their children. It includes the women's perception of her parents attitudes towards her and her own attitude, as a mother, towards her children. Attitudes and influences of parents are usually compared and many times contrasted.

-father-children: statements that describe women's perception of her father's influence on herself, as a child (daughter), and those statements that express her feelings and attitudes towards her father. Here, the father is always the predominant subject matter of the statement.

-mother-children: describes the mother's influence on the woman, and the woman's (as a mother) influence on an attitudes towards her children.

-marriage: statements that describe the process of getting married: the perceptions and decisions involved in the act of marrying, the reasons for deciding or not to marry, the right age at marriage, and the process of courtship.

-husband-wife: statements that describe women's attitudes about husband-wife relationships in general and their attitudes about their own husbands. It also includes women's statements about her own relationship (past or present) with her husband. This category excludes those statements that reveal women's aspirations about husband and children.

-wife-beating: statements that mention that they (the women interviewed) themselves or other women get beaten or physically abused by their husbands or mates.

## EDUCATION

Education is defined as the process of teaching that takes place either in formal or non-formal settings (i.e., school, farm, house).

This category includes all those statements where the women interviewed

view themselves in the role of teacher or learner. It includes retrospective responses to the general question of family's influence on the woman's own education, as well as women's current attitudes on the education of their children or themselves. This category does not include women's prospective attitudes on their's or their children's education (see "aspirations" category) nor does it include women's statements on the economic aspect of the education process (see "economics"). The education subcategories are the following:

-general: statements describing women's own educational history and attainments (or lack thereof), and their opinions about the educational system.

-parents' influence: statements where the influence of both parents (father and mother) on woman's education is described and, usually, compared or contrasted.

-father's influence: statements that indicate the influence the father had on the woman's education.

-mother's influence: statements that describe the influence of the mother on the woman's education as well as those statements where women's influence, as mothers, is stated.

-other influences: statements where influences, other than the parents, on the woman's education are mentioned.

-discrimination: statements that respond to the general question of equality of educational opportunities by sex or that reveal sex inequalities in the education process.

-sex education: statements that refer either to the sex education women had or the sex education that women's children are having.

### ASPIRATIONS

Aspirations are the individual's expressions of future goals. They may be realistic or not and do not necessarily guide behavior. Also included in this category are expectations. Expectations are cognitions or anticipations of events to occur in the immediate or long term future and do not tend to influence or guide behavior. The category does not distinguish between aspirations and expectations. Both aspirations and expectations that are related either to the self or others are included in this category.

Aspirations (and expectations) have been broken down into three subcategories: (1) self, (2) children, (3) husband. Women's statements about aspirations or expectations frequently respond to the following questions asked by the interviewer:

- What do you want people to say about you when you are 80 years old?
- If you had a chance to go to school longer, is there anything particular that you would like to have learned or studied?
- What do you want most for your children?
- What are the ideal qualities in a husband?

### PERCEPTIONS

Perceptions are defined as the views, images, or opinions women have of themselves or others as well as their views of others' (men and women's) perceptions of women and men. This category is divided into the following subcategories: 1) perceptions of self, 2) perceptions of women, 3) perceptions of men, 4) perceptions of children, and 5) perceptions of others.

Perceptions of self include statements that describe women's (personal and social) image of themselves and their degree of satisfaction with their lives. It also includes responses to the question if she (the woman) wished she had been a boy instead.

Perceptions of women include statements that describe women's images of other women (both of women in the country and abroad), as well as women's opinion of what are men's and society's views of women.

Perceptions of men includes statements that describe women's views of men.

Women's views on children and on others, like the elderly, are included in the last two subcategories. These subcategories were not analyzed because there were too few responses in them.