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**Determinants of Female Labor
Force Participation in the
Middle East and North Africa**

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**DETERMINANTS OF FEMALE LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION IN
THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA**

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Introduction: Class, Gender and the State in the Middle East

In the Middle East and North Africa, class, gender and the state are the principal determinants of women's work and women's lives. Throughout the contemporary world, of course, class and gender are the fundamental "fault lines" (Papanek 1985) in society. Education and employment often reflect and indeed perpetuate these divisions. Occupations and professions are largely class phenomena, for both men and women, but they exhibit a pronounced gender hierarchy as well. There is considerable sex-typing within the labor market, and around the world certain occupations are typically male or female (Hartmann and Reskin 1986). But at times in the development cycle, or during periods of social change, class structures and gender relations may be altered. For example, in the United States, the legal profession, once the bastion of male authority, has opened its ranks to women. In the Soviet Union, the medical profession and the scientific community are heavily female, as are certain production-related activities normally considered "men's work" around the world. Such changes in gender relations and in the structure of employment may come about as a result of state action, social activism, or development processes.

In theorizing the position of women in the Middle East and North Africa, I would argue that class and gender frame the structure of work opportunities, while state action constitutes a critical source of women's positions and legal status. In late-developing states the role of political elites is central, and this suggests an empirical relationship between government policy toward women and female access to the modern sector, as Marshall (1984) and Charrad (1980) have found for North Africa. Thus beyond the fundamental social determinants of class and gender, impacting factors are the nature and policies of the state and the type and level of economic development. And what of cultural/ideological norms, generally emphasized in the case of Muslim countries? In the Middle East the cultural/ideological realm of social life indeed plays a critical role in shaping the parameters of women's activities. It is important, however, to specify its nature and role, and its relation to other social structures.

The theoretical framework that informs this paper assumes that in societies everywhere, cultural institutions and practices, economic processes, and political structures are interactive and relatively autonomous. Each social formation is located within and subject to the influences of a national class structure, a regional context, and a global system of states and markets (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 about here

In some societies, notably the industrialized West, economic relations and structures tend to predominate, while in other societies and at other times, cultural or ideological matters may override other considerations. In part because modernization is fairly recent in the Middle East, and partly because of earlier colonial encounters with the West, culture (cultural defensiveness, cultural self-definition) tends to play a stronger role in Middle Eastern societies. At the heart of this culture lies notions about male and female, womanhood, masculinity, and the family (gender). Cultural identity generally, and gender specifically, have become increasingly politicized in the Middle East, a region which is undergoing the long and arduous transition to modernity. Where women are regarded as the custodians of cultural values and traditions in the face of real or perceived external challenges, then we can expect women's roles to be more privatized than public, and their reproductive functions in particular to be reified.

Even so, gender is not fixed and unchanging in the Middle East (and neither is culture), for there exists internal regional differentiation in gender codes, as measured by differences in women's legal status, educational levels, fertility trends, and employment patterns. For example, sex segregation is the norm and the law in Saudi Arabia, but not so in Syria, Iraq, or Morocco (Ingrams 1988). Following the Iranian

Revolution, the new authorities prohibited abortion and contraception, and lowered the age of consent to 13 for girls. But in Tunisia contraceptive use is widespread and the average age of marriage is 24 (Weeks 1988, 26). In Afghanistan, female illiteracy may be the highest among Muslim countries, but important steps have been taken in the past 12 years to expand educational facilities and income generating activities for women (Moghadam 1989). Women's status and women's employment opportunities are very dissimilar in such countries as Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iran, South Yemen, and Algeria, as we shall see presently. Variations across the region and changes within a society are linked to wider changes such as the expansion of the state, incorporation within and responses to the world market system, socialist reform, and stages in the development cycle.

The countries of the Middle East and North Africa differ in their economic structures and the nature of their political regimes. Economically, they can be divided into the following groups: a) oil economies poor in other resources, including very small populations (United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, Libya); b) mixed oil economies (Tunisia, Algeria, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Egypt); and c) non-oil economies (Israel, Turkey, Jordan, Morocco, Sudan, North Yemen, South Yemen). The countries are further divided into the city-states (such as Qatar and the UAE), the "desert states" (for example, Libya and Saudi Arabia), and the "normal states" which have a more diversified structure and whose

resources include oil, agricultural land, and large populations (e.g., Turkey, Egypt, Iran, Syria). Some of these countries are rich in capital and import labor (e.g., Libya, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait), while others are poor in capital or are middle-income countries that export labor (Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia, Turkey, Yemen). Consequently, industrialization patterns and the pace of socio-economic changes tend to differ between these various types; the structure of the labor market and the characteristics of the labor force, including the female labor force, are also varied.

Table 1 illustrates some economic characteristics of Middle Eastern countries, as well as juridical features relevant to women. A key factor is the absence of a comprehensive civil code. Most of the countries of the Middle East and North Africa are governed, in varying degrees, by Islamic canon law, the Sharia. (Israeli law is also based on the Halacha.) Like the laws and traditions of the other world religions, Islam does not prescribe gender equality and equal treatment before the law. As a result, state law and cultural attitudes combine to keep women in a situation of economic dependency and limited labor force participation.

Table 1 about here

The discussion which follows is concerned with the links between development, social change, and women's work in the modernizing countries of the Middle East and

North Africa. It explores and assesses women's employment opportunities and the specific characteristics of the paid female labor force in the formal sector, using secondary sources and statistical surveys. This paper does not examine housework, the informal sector, or agricultural production -- all areas where gender is an organizing principle of labor use, and where women are both active and productive, albeit invisible in national census profiles and "manpower" surveys, and unrewarded by capital, the state, and very often male kin. Rather, the focus is on the gains made by women in the formal labor market, and their access to remunerative work in the modern sector, a necessary (but not sufficient) condition of women's empowerment.

The Thirty-Year Record: Gains, Setbacks, Stagnation

The argument in brief is that beginning in the 1960s, state expansion, economic development, oil wealth, and increased integration within the world system have combined to create educational and employment opportunities favorable to women in the Middle East. For about 10 years after the oil price increases of the early 1970s, a massive investment program by the oil-producing countries affected the structure of the labor force not only within the relevant countries, but throughout the region, as a result of labor migration. Since then, the urban areas have seen an expansion of the female labor force, as women have occupied paid positions in factories and offices, as workers, administrators, and

professionals. Feminist concerns and women's movements also emerged, and by 1980 most Middle Eastern countries had women's organizations dealing with issues of literacy, education, employment, the law, and so on. These social changes have had a positive effect in reducing traditional sex segregation and female seclusion, and in producing a generation of middle class women not dependent on male kin or marriage for survival and status. But the overall impact, in terms of altering and improving women's work and women's lives, has been limited. Moreover, social tensions and difficulties have emerged from the economic strategies pursued (excessive reliance on oil revenues, high military expenditures) and the political mechanisms deployed (authoritarian rule).

By 1980, the heady days of the 1970s, when OPEC was a major international economic actor, were over. High population growth rates, coupled with strong rural-urban migration, have concentrated larger numbers of the unemployed in major urban areas. In the 1980s, countries of the Middle East, and especially North Africa, have experienced low or negative growth rates, declining state revenues, and high levels of indebtedness to foreign creditors. In some cases (Egypt, Morocco, Algeria), debts have become truly enormous in relation to the country's economic capacities. The most active Arab borrowers from the World Bank -- Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia -- have faced structural adjustment problems during the 1980s, and several have experienced "IMF riots." The economic and social costs

of such policies have encouraged Islamist fundamentalist movements, who have renewed calls for cultural introspection.

In a number of cases, such as Lebanon, the Palestinians in Israel and the West Bank, Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq, civil war and political conflict have introduced new variables into the equation, with distinct effects on the labor market and economy generally and women's work and lives specifically. Civil conflict usually does not produce conditions propitious for development, or for women's enhanced access to resources. In a situation of low employment and high fertility, women's social positions are stagnating, if not regressing.

Political repression, social disparities and the austerities required by debt servicing and structural adjustment have tended to de-legitimize "Western-style" systems and revive questions of cultural identity. In this context, Islamist movements are renewing calls for greater control over female mobility. These movements are especially strong in Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, and Turkey. And of course in Iran, Islamists came to power in 1979. The extent and strength of Islamist movements vary across the region (Keddie 1988), and in general they do not call for total female domesticity. But insofar as cultural concerns take precedence over economic ones, the question of women's autonomy and mobility, including active participation in the paid labor force, will remain a vexed one. In particular, as long as the reproduction

role of women in the home is emphasized, by political as well as cultural and religious leaders, women's access to the kinds of resources available to men in education and employment will remain circumscribed.

Integration or Exploitation?

"Integrating women in development" has come under attack by feminist researchers of Latin America, Asia, and Africa. They argue that women have indeed been integrated into development projects -- much to their disadvantage, as they have become the latest group of exploited workers, a source of cheap and expendable labor (Fuentes and Ehrenreich 1983; Elson and Pearson 1981). It has also been argued that development, especially modernization of a capitalistic kind, has everywhere reduced the economic status of women, resulting in marginalization and impoverishment (Ward 1984; Sen and Grown 1985). It is true that the terms "development" and "modernization" obscure the relations of exploitation, unequal distribution of wealth, and other disparities (not to mention environmental degradation) that ensue. But it is also true that within a national economy framework there is room to improve working women's lot: sex-segregated occupational distribution can be challenged and altered, as can gender-based wage differentials, inadequate support structures for working mothers, unfair labor legislation pertaining to women, and so on. Moreover, while the proletarianization of women entails labor control (as it does for men), wage work also

provides prospects for women's autonomy -- a not insignificant consideration in patriarchal contexts.

It is now a truism that development (capitalist or otherwise) has not traversed a linear path in the Third World; rather, there have been variations in the depth and scope of industrialization, infrastructural development, class relations, and types of political regime. But the implications of this for women's work and women's lives are not properly appreciated, particularly for places where socio-economic development has been limited. Afghanistan, for example, has a very low level of infrastructural development, and the material and symbolic benefits of wage work have hardly reached women. Patriarchal structures remain strong and women's subordination is extreme (Moghadam 1989b).

Whether modernization and paid employment has resulted in an increase or a diminution of women's economic status continues to be a matter of debate for the Middle East as for other regions of the Third World. Some researchers note that women of rural backgrounds suffered a decline in status; they lost the productive role they traditionally played in the pre-industrial economy as the goods they produced were replaced by imported or locally produced factory ones (Rassam 1984). Mernissi's interviews with women working in various craft industries such as weaving textiles and rugs indicate how dependent women are upon men as intermediaries, a situation that only increases their precarious economic position. She concludes that the increasing capitalist

penetration of such industries has had the consequence of further degrading women's status (Mernissi 1978; 1988). Some have argued that in nomadic communities men's work and women's work are complementary, and that modernization reduces, marginalizes, and devalorizes women's work. The complementarity of rural work has been argued by researchers of Afghanistan (Dupree 1989; Tapper 1984). Within communities where the labor of women outside the home is not needed by the community, the argument goes, those women who must work typically experience a loss in status. Only when a certain level of social development is reached is it possible for women to work outside the home without losing status.

On the other hand, research by Turkish and Iranian women scholars suggests the importance of cultural/ideological factors in shaping women's work and status, the salience of precapitalist patriarchal relations, and the complex and contradictory nature of the relationship between development and women's status (Kandiyoti 1977, 1982, 1988; Berik 1985, 1987; Isvan-Hayat 1986; Afshar 1985b; Moghadam 1989b). Kandiyoti's research comparing the status of Turkish women in nomadic tribes, peasant villages, rural towns, and cities reveals that the influence of the patrilineal extended household is pervasive in all sectors, but is less so in the towns and cities because of neolocal residence and the diminished importance of elders. It is true that compared to peasant and nomadic women, urban women play a sharply reduced role in the productive process, even though they

are more likely to head their own households. But peasant and nomadic women do not receive recognition for their own labor, not even for their offspring, as these belong to the patrilineal extended family. (The complementarity mentioned above may thus be in the eye of the outside beholder). In many parts of rural Turkey, women have been traditionally called the "enemy of the spoon", referring to the fact that they will share the food on the table without contributing economically to the household (Berik 1985). Berik's study of carpet weavers in rural Central Anatolia reveals that the labor power of the female weavers, and the wages that accrue to them, are controlled by male kin (Berik 1985; 1987). This pattern has also been found for Iran (Afshar 1985b) and Afghanistan (Moghadam 1989b). Thus, because of the existence of "archaic and patriarchal family structures" (Abadan-Unat 1981, 127), "we cannot speak of a simple decline in women's status with the transition to an urban wage labor economy. Their diminished role in production may be offset by other factors, which are, however, increasingly specific to certain class sectors" (Kandiyoti 1977).

"Development" must be seen, therefore, to have had, historically, a differential impact on people's lives, particularly on women. The structure of pre-industrial relations, and women's pre-existing positions in their communities, provide important clues as to the impact of modernization on women's status. The mobility and autonomy women enjoyed in the Andes and in sub-Saharan

Africa prior to colonialism and modernization stand in contrast to the situation of women in the belt of "classic patriarchy" (Kandiyoti 1988): North Africa, the Muslim Middle East (including Turkey and Iran), and South and East Asia (Pakistan, Afghanistan, India and China). In this region, patriarchal family structures remain strong in rural areas where women, though unveiled, are controlled (Keddie 1989). It is in this sense that integrating women into development remains a relevant and legitimate objective. The material bases of classic patriarchy crumble under the impact of capital penetration, infrastructural development, and women's employment.

Culture and Class Factors in Women's Employment

In Muslim countries (which would include those of Africa, South Asia and Southeast Asia as well as the Middle East), the percentage of economically active females among females of working ages is less than half of that in non-Muslim countries. The participation rates are even lower in the Arab countries of the Middle East and North Africa (Mujahid 1985, 114). The female share of the labor force is also lower in Middle Eastern countries than elsewhere; only Israel and Turkey come close to other Asian countries with their 30-40 percent female share of the total labor force in 1980 (ILO 1985a, 60). The ratio of women to men in the labor force is lowest in the Middle East (29 percent in 1980) and highest in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, where the

ratio is 90 percent (Sivard 1985, 13). Figure 2 and Table 2 illustrate the regional disparities. A look at data for the 1970s, illustrated in Table 3, reveals that there has been some, but not spectacular, progress in women's employment in the Middle East, and their labor force participation relative to other regions.

Figure 2, Tables 2 and 3 about here

Some researchers report that because of the continuing importance of values such as family honor and modesty, women's participation in non-agricultural or paid labor carries with it a social stigma, and gainful employment is not perceived as part of their role (Azzam, Abu Nasr and Lorfing 1985, 6). According to Mujahid (1985, 128), "the main underlying cause of limited female economic activity appears to have been the socio-economic set-up in which Islamic teachings, or rather their current interpretations, are a dominating influence."

The influence of cultural norms on female participation is also reflected in the occupational preferences of female workers. The most significant aspect in this respect appears to be the very low preference of females in Muslim countries for becoming "sales workers" -- an occupation in which the likelihood of indiscriminate contact with outsiders is highest (Mujahid 1985, 115). This may be an extension of a longstanding pattern in which the merchant class has been typically male, and the traditional urban markets --

bazaars and souks -- have been the province of men. It is also a function of socialization. In their recent study of sex role socialization in Iranian textbooks, Higgins and Shoar-Ghaffari (1989) note that in both pre- and post-revolutionary textbooks nearly half of the lessons in which women are portrayed working, they are doing housework, and in both eras three-quarters of the lessons portraying women at work outside the home show them in professional positions (almost always teaching). The remainder portrayed women in agricultural work; no lessons in either set of texts portrayed women in blue-collar, clerical, or sales or service positions. Throughout the Middle East, the large numbers of women who choose teaching young children as a profession view it as a natural extension of their mother role and, therefore, see this kind of employment as socially very acceptable (Chamie 1985, 77).

The gender configurations which draw heavily from religion and cultural norms to govern women's employment patterns and women's lives in the Middle East are not unique to the Muslim countries of the region but are also present in the Jewish state of Israel. Women cannot initiate divorce, and rabbinical judges are reluctant to grant women divorces. As in Saudi Arabia, Israeli women cannot hold public prayer services. The sexual division of labor in the home and in the society is largely shaped by the Halacha, or Jewish law, and by customary practices which continue to discriminate against women (Aloni 1984). Marital relations and the marriage contract in

Israel, governed by Jewish law, determine that the husband should pay for his wife's maintenance, while she should provide household services. "The structure of the arrangement is such that the woman is sheltered from the outside world by her husband and in return she adequately runs the home. The obligations one has toward the other are not equal but rather based on clear gender differentiation" (Lahav 1977). Nevertheless, female participation rates and female shares in the labor force are higher in Israel than in the other countries of the region, no doubt due to its greater integration in the world market.

For most Third World women, class barriers are equally if not more important obstacles to equality and mobility than gender oppression (Nash and Safa 1976). The intersection of class and gender means that there is no unitary, undifferentiated category, no abstract, universal Woman, but rather, "women immersed in systems of social class relations" (Jelin 1982). In the highly stratified societies of the Middle East and North Africa, social class location, in addition to state action and the level and pace of economic development, act upon and modify gender relations and women's social positions. Although state-sponsored education has resulted in a certain amount of upward social mobility and has increased the numbers of women willing and able to fill the administrative and welfare jobs in the ever-expanding state systems as well as in the private sector, women's access to resources, including education, is determined

by their class location. That a large percentage of urban employed women in the Middle East are found in the services sector, or in professional occupations, can be understood by examining their social class background. As in other Third World countries where social disparities are great, upper and upper-middle class urban women can exercise a greater number of choices (certainly vis-a-vis lower middle class, working class, urban poor or peasant women) and thus become much more "emancipated." Professional and marital roles become compatible because of the availability of cheap domestic labor and because of the extended family network (Safilios-Rothschild 1971). This is especially important when one realizes that while at the level of ideology and policy the state is committed to women's participation in industrial production (such as in Egypt), the system extracts the labor of women in economic need without giving them the social services to coordinate their productive roles in the family and workplace (Badran 1982, 80).

A provocative argument has also been advanced by Oncu (1981) that a kind of affirmative action or quota system may be operating for the upper class, limiting the social mobility of the lower classes. She suggests that under conditions of rapid expansion, the elite recruitment patterns into the most prestigious and highly remunerated professions are maintained by the admission of women from the upper reaches of the social hierarchy (Oncu 1981, 189).

As with their role in production and work generally, class also shapes women's choices and practices in reproduction. Fertility patterns are largely a class phenomenon; in countries where educated middle-class and upper-class women work they can be expected to have fewer children. In general, Muslim societies are characterized by higher-than-average fertility and rapid rates of population growth (Weeks 1988, 12, 46), which should be understood in terms of both stage of development and cultural prescriptions. However, class location provides quite different options in terms of childbearing and childrearing, which in turn influence work opportunities.

Women and Development in the Middle East

In this section we consider the impact of global economic factors, national development, and state policies, especially during the 1960s and 1970s, on women's status and employment.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the Middle East was part of a global process which has been variously called the internationalization of capital (Palloix 1977), the new (or changing) international division of labor (Frobel, Heinrichs, and Kreye 1980; Warren 1980; Southall 1988), and global Fordism (Lipietz 1982). In this regard, the transnational corporations (TNCs) were significant, as were national development plans and domestic industrialization projects. Since that period, there has been both increasing recorded urban female labor force participation, especially among working mothers in the age groups 25-44, and greater unemployment and

underemployment. While all regions saw a rise in the rates of labor force participation, the largest proportion increase was reported for the Middle East, at 53 percent (ICRW 1980a, 9).

Significant developments which influenced these trends were: the changing structure of world labor markets involving massive rural and international migration; the growth of the services and industrial sectors; the decline of the labor force in agriculture; the relocation of labor-intensive industries; and the spread of new technologies changing the future of work (ILO 1985a). During the 1970s, then, the trends included the following: regional and global decline in agriculture for both men and women; increase in the service sector; and a shift toward industrial employment, especially in the developing countries, many of which had embarked upon rapid industrialization as a key factor in their development. These trends were all present in the Middle East and North Africa, with variations across the region.

In the 1960s, most of the large Middle East countries such as Iran, Egypt, Turkey and Algeria embarked on import-substitution industrialization (rather than the development of manufacturing for export). This was associated with an economic system characterized by central planning and a large public sector. Whatever the economic shortcomings of this approach (Mabro 1988, 692), it opened up employment opportunities for women, mainly in the civil service, but also in state-run factories or industrial plants in the private sector receiving state

support. There was also some foreign investment, through the TNCs.

TNCs created employment opportunities for many women throughout the Third World, leading to the globalization of female labor (Joeekes 1987). An important feature of the global restructuring of employment affecting women workers has been the relocation of labor-intensive industries from industrially developed to developing countries in search of cheap labor, mostly young, unmarried, and inexperienced in industrial work (ILO 1985a, 21). Textiles and clothing were the first industries relocated, followed by food processing, electronics, and in some cases pharmaceutical products. In this process, various forms of subcontracting arrangements were made to relocate production, or subsidiaries set up with foreign or partly local capital. This TNC relocation has affected women mainly in Mexico and Southeast Asia, but Morocco, Tunisia, and Turkey were also affected. Free production zones were established in Bahrain, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Democratic Yemen, Egypt and Tunisia (Frobel et al. 1980). In Iran, a world market factory, commencing operations in 1974 with U.S. and West German capital investment, produced shoes, leather goods, textiles and garments (Frobel, Heinrichs, and Kreye 1980, Appendix, Table III-17/18). By 1980, the total female labor force employed in the industrial sector in Tunisia was 40 percent (ILO 1985a), and in Morocco it was nearly 30 percent.

For the oil-producing countries of the Middle East, increased oil revenues and foreign exchange facilitated changes in the structure of the economy. The increase in the activities of capital was followed by changes in the pattern of employment and an increase in the labor force involved in industry and services. These changes affected women, too, who were increasingly brought into the labor force. Massive interregional migration from the labor surplus countries of Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and North Yemen to better paying jobs in the oil-rich states of the region (such as Libya, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the UAE) also affected female employment patterns. Among other things, the working age population remaining in the rural areas came to be dominated by women (Chamie 1985b, 3). Some of the labor-receiving countries experienced a dramatic rise in female labor force participation; this was true for Bahrain and Kuwait, though not so for Libya and Saudi Arabia. The female activity rate in Bahrain reached 11.1 percent in 1981, while in Kuwait the female economically active population doubled between 1970 and 1980. By 1980, women's employment represented 18.8 percent of total employment (ILO 1985d). In a special economic report (1982) on the PDRY, the World Bank estimated women's employment at more than 20 percent. Here, too, between 1976 and 1984 the number of women working in the public and mixed sectors together doubled. The migratory trend created labor shortages in agriculture and in the job labor markets of the sending countries (Abu-Nasr et al

1985). The agricultural sector thus became dependent on its female resources. Male outmigration also increased the phenomenon of female-headed households (ILO 1985e).

Concomitantly, new job vacancies were created in the services and industrial sectors that were filled by women. For the relatively well-educated women, services (teaching, health and welfare) were, and remain, the main areas of possibilities, while in the more developed Middle Eastern countries (such as Turkey and Egypt), women's participation increased in commercial and industrial undertakings and in public administration. During the period of rapid growth, some governments tended to provide generous benefits to working women. In Iraq, the ruling Baath party encouraged a wide range of employment for women, who by the late 1970s comprised 30 percent of the country's medical doctors and pharmacists, 33 percent of its teachers and university lecturers, 33 percent of the staff of government departments, 26 percent of workers in industry, and 45 percent of those on farms. Maternity leave was comparatively generous, and pregnant women's jobs protected. In Turkey, too, a woman on maternity leave was given the right to return to the job she held before childbirth. Employment protection also existed in Iran; labor legislation enacted before the Revolution still provides women with 12 weeks' maternity leave (ILO 1985b, 16).

The degree of occupational choice that women had within the structural margins of employment was linked to, among other factors, the type of industrialization

the country was undergoing, as well as the attendant expansion of the state structures and the public and private sectors. In some places, this afforded women with a range of work opportunities in the professional labor market that was wider than that in the most industrialized societies of the West. This is particularly striking in Turkey, where the female share of teaching, banking, and the medical profession reached one-third, and where one in every five practicing lawyers is female (Kazgan 1981, 136). This pattern obtains in other Third World countries, such as Mexico, Argentina, and India. Cross-national studies indicate that in societies undergoing capitalist development, there is a curvilinear relationship between the level of industrial and economic development and the range of options open to women in professional careers. At intermediate levels, there are higher proportions of women in professional schools and also in the professional labor market than at either extreme. In such countries, law, medicine, dentistry and even engineering constitute a "cluster" of occupations that appear as women's options (Safilios-Rothschild 1971).

In developing countries female employment increased significantly during the 1970s; especially high increases were in Syria and Tunisia, where female labor increase topped that of men (ILO 1985a, 35). Female unemployment also increased at the same time. The formal economy could not absorb all the entrants to the labor force, and the urban population in developing countries has been

growing rapidly due both to both natural population growth and high in-migration rates. Thus the period also saw unemployment, the expansion of the urban informal sector, and the rising phenomenon of female heads of households from male migration, separation, divorce, and widowhood. In 1980, the female share of unemployment was generally higher than their share of employment (ILO 1855a, 36). For example, the female share of unemployment in Syria was 16 percent; in Tunisia, it was 18 percent. Low wages tended to enlarge the informal sector and to push women into it.

By 1980, therefore, the trends in female employment globally included the following: the proletarianization of women, and their sectoral distribution in services and industry; the globalization of female labor, via TNCs and female labor migration; the feminization of poverty and the interrelated phenomena of high unemployment rates, growth of the urban informal sector, and the proliferation of female-headed households. All of these trends were present in varying degrees in the Middle East and North Africa. Variations in the region are best explained by examining state policy. (See Appendix for tables on female labor force participation.)

The Significance of State Policy

The process of incorporation of women in the labor market was also mediated by the state which, in Third World countries, is an active economic agent and a major actor in its own right. The state can act as a

facilitator or an impediment in the integration of female citizens in economic (and political) life. Legal changes and state-sponsored education in particular have affected women's work opportunities. Indeed, the work potential of Middle Eastern women has increased with education. Literacy rates are still low in comparison to Latin America and East Asia, and there remains a serious gender gap in educational attainment, but state-financed education has produced a generation of women who actively seek employment. The positive relationship between female education and non-agricultural employment is marked throughout the Middle East. Census data reveal that each educational level is reflected in a corresponding increase in the level of women's non-agricultural employment, and in lower fertility (Chamie 1985b; Moghadam 1989a). Women's employment and education are obviously linked: it is assumed to have increased the aspirations of women in certain sectors of society for higher income and better standards of living (Azzam, Abu Nasr and Lorfing 1985, 11). Moreover, it has weakened the restrictive barriers of traditions and increased the propensity of women to join the labor force.

During the decade of the 1980s, however, women have faced restrictions on their mobility deriving from both economic problems and the rise of Islamist movements. We now survey a few cases to show the extent to which the depth and scope of the socio-economic changes of the 1960s and 1970s, and in particular the vicissitudes of women's status in the past 30 years, have been largely

determined by the nature of the state, or the political will of the ruling elites.

Turkey provides a nearly unique example (the other being Tunisia) of a country which replaced the Islamic personal status laws with a civil law code regulating personal and family relations and equalizing the duties and responsibilities of the sexes (Badran 1982, 83). The Turkish state has frequently been authoritarian, but it has consistently been secular. A consequence has been the expansion of professional opportunities for women in law. In 1973 there were 149 women judges in Turkey, or five percent of the total number (Abadan-Unat 1978, 303). Today Turkey is the only Middle Eastern country with female judges. But during the 1980s there has been a slight shift in state orientation. The social-democratic years of the 1970s were halted by a military coup in 1980. Since 1983, some 700 Koranic schools have been established throughout the country, and their graduates have raised calls for Islamization. Prime Minister Turgut Ozal, the architect of a tough stabilization and structural adjustment program, is also the most openly Islamic Turkish leader in modern times.

In Tunisia, government policy since independence prioritized women's emancipation and integration in development, and the constitution and civil code reflected and reinforced that position. In the constitution all citizens are ensured the same rights and obligations as well as equality before the law. Polygamy and unilateral divorce were forbidden, though in matters

of inheritance men and women were still not equal. A law in 1960 made it possible for the minority of women who are members of the social insurance service (mainly those employed in industry, handicrafts, and services, with the exception of housework) the right to pregnancy-leave six weeks before delivery and six weeks afterwards. During this period 50 percent of monthly wages were to be paid (SIDA 1974). But in the 1980s, economic and political problems have threatened women's gains. In May 1989 Islamic parties competed openly in Tunisia's parliamentary elections, winning 14% of the total vote and 30% in Tunis and other cities, beating the main secular opposition party, the Movement of Democratic Socialists, into third place (*The Economist*, July 8, 1989, p. 48). Unlike his predecessor, the staunchly secular Habib Bourguiba, current president Ben Ali has built more mosques and restored Koranic universities.

In other cases, state managers remain wedded to the ideology of domesticity and refrain from encouraging female participation in the paid labor force. Examples are Saudi Arabia, North Yemen, and Algeria. In North Yemen, the 1975 census and manpower survey listed only nine percent of all Yemini women as participants in the urban modern sector labor force. These women are generally young, unmarried women in their late teens or early 20s, or widowed or divorced women. Interestingly enough, in Yemen's case female factory workers actually exceeded female government employees (even though both categories represent a fraction of the total labor force

in these areas); female production workers tend to be older, illiterate, of low socio-economic status and often migrants to the cities (Myntti 1985). In government offices women employees are veiled. Barriers to female employment include the importation of foreign labor to compensate for out-migration (rather than training domestic female labor), inadequate access to education, and "culturally defined attitudes and practices.... lack of childcare facilities, and the legal code, the Sharia" (Myntti 1985). In 1983, only 2 percent of North Yemen women were literate, and the total fertility rate was 6.8 percent.

A review of government policy in Saudi Arabia and in Algeria reveals that state personnel have designed policy not only to promote economic growth and development but also to reproduce traditional familial relations. In Saudi Arabia women's place is in the home and their life is more circumscribed than in any other Middle Eastern country. The percentage of Saudi women who work outside the home, mainly in the teaching and health sectors, is about five percent. Saudi culture -- devotion to Islam, extended-family values, the segregated status of females, and the al-Saud monarchic hegemony -- is being formulated in an increasingly deliberate fashion, constituting a new political culture which acts as a screen to insure that technological and human progress remains within acceptable bounds (Gallagher and Searle 1985). For example, to minimize sensitivities concerning male physicians and female patients, a substantial number of

Saudi female physicians are being trained, whose efforts will be directed toward female patients.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the Algerian state promoted industrialization in tandem with the preservation of the close-knit family union. By the 1980s, as a result of a galloping birth rate, nearly three-quarters of its population was under the age of 30. While the new Family Code of 1984 gives women the legal right to work, women are still considered economic dependents of men (Knauss 1987; Jansen 1987). In the midst of a privatization effort, faced with high rates of unemployment (in the order of 22%), a heavy debt servicing burden, and other assorted economic ills, Algerian policy-makers were unwilling to risk legislation that could potentially aggravate the situation, and thus conceded to the Islamists (the Islamic National Front) in the National Assembly.

As a result, women's participation in state and other social agencies is quite low when compared to male participation. For example, women comprise only 11 percent of the employees of ministries, 34 percent of schoolteachers, 24 percent of higher education instructors, and 36 percent of public health workers. There are no women in the sectors "affaires religieuses" and "protection civile" (Saadi 1990, 74).

On the other hand, women in Algeria, as elsewhere, are more likely to work in the government sector than in the private sector. Indeed, 86 percent of employed Algerian women are engaged in the public sector, as

against 14 percent in the private sector (Saadi 1990, 74). For Algerian men, the respective rates are 55 percent and 45 percent. In Iran, too, women who are waged and salaried are found primarily in the public sector, where they enjoy insurance, pensions, and other benefits, whereas in the private sector they are likely to be low-paid carpet weavers or characterized as "unpaid family" (Moghadam 1989a).

In Jordan, one finds a low crude participation rate (19.6% in 1984), due partly to a very high natural rate of growth (about 3.8 percent annually) and large under-15 population, high outmigration, and low female economic activity. During the 1970s the state encouraged education and indeed made educational compulsory for nine years. There has consequently been an impressive increase in female education: by 1984-85 girls accounted for some 48% of the total school enrollment (Hijab 1988, 96). The area of women's employment, however, has been less impressive. In 1979, the percentage of economically active women in the total labor force was only about four percent, while the female share of employees was only nine percent. As in Yemen, outmigration of Jordanian male labor did not result in an increasing number of women being brought into the wage labor market; rather their activities in informal sector and as unpaid family workers increased. Labor shortages due to migration led to labor importation, mainly Egyptians, at all levels of skills, rather than the training of women in marketable skills to meet the shortages (Mujahid 1985).

Jordan's five year plan (1980-85) sought to further integrate women into the development process, and predicted an increase of the total number of women in the working age bracket, excluding agricultural workers, to nearly 14 percent (National Planning Council 1981). But by 1984 the crude female participation rate was only 4.8 percent. Nearly half of all women in the modern sector are in education, while textile workers represent about 30 percent of Jordan's female labor force. In an untoward economic situation characterized by a large external debt and high male unemployment, there has in fact been an implicit government policy to discourage female employment (Hijab 1988, 114). In the first parliamentary elections since 1967, held in November 1989, 34 out of 80 seats were won by members of the Muslim Brotherhood and like-minded Islamists. This political development, too, will likely minimize efforts to integrate women into public life.

Elsewhere, the regime's search for political legitimacy, a larger labor force, or an expanded social base have led it to construct health, educational and welfare services conducive to greater participation by women, and to encourage female activity in the public sphere. Examples are the Iraqi Baathists during the 1960s and 1970s, the Pahlavi state in Iran in the same period, and Tunisia under former President Bourguiba. In Egypt, since Nasser's time, many women have entered into previously male strongholds -- universities, the administration, professions, industry, the business

world, politics. But the economic crisis in Egypt, as well as rapid demographic growth, limit formal employment opportunities for women, and thus the vast majority of Egyptian women are engaged in the informal sector.

"Socialist" ideology has sometimes underpinned state support for female emancipation, including education and employment. An example is the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY, or South Yemen). Legal reform in the 1970s, modeled after that of other socialist states, expressly targeted the "traditional" or "feudal" family which is "incompatible with the principles and programme of the National Democratic Revolution", ... "because its old relationships prevent it from playing a positive role in the building up of society" (Molyneux 1985, 155-56). Left-wing radicals were responsible for the 1970 constitution which explicitly included "women" as part of the "working people" and "productive forces", who had both the right and obligation to work (Molyneux 1985, 159). The PDRY state consequently went further than any other Middle Eastern regime in legislating gender equality and mandating women's active involvement in the construction of the new order. Another example is Afghanistan. When socialists came to power in Kabul in 1978, they too attempted to implement a wide-ranging and radical program for women's emancipation, combining land reform with marriage reform and compulsory education.

While the above examples are intended to underscore the centrality of state action in the determination of women's legal status and employment opportunities, it

should also be understood that state capacity is subject to such internal and external constraints as economic resources, political legitimacy, the weight of cultural values and institutions, regional trade, capital and labor flows, world market prices and global power politics. In the case of South Yemen, poor resource endowments have stymied government policy. In the case of Afghanistan, the political elite was unable to implement its radical program for land reform and women's rights in the face of massive internal opposition from rural and tribal groups, as well as external intervention. Another, less obvious example is Iran, whose new state in 1979 abrogated many of the liberal codes instituted by the previous state. Among other things, the new authorities adopted a pro-natalist stance which deemed women, especially young mothers, inappropriate for full-time work. However, by the mid-1980s a number of factors converged to modify and liberalize the Islamist state's position on women, education, and work. These factors included the expansion of the state apparatus, the dearth of male labor in a war situation, and women's own resistance to their second-class citizenship (Moghadam 1988, 1989a). Thus, while state policy and national development plans have been principal determinants in shaping women's opportunities and expectations, other factors such as labor shortage, the high cost of living, and educational attainment influence the overall rate of women's participation in the workforce, while resource endowments and political

stability/instability also structure limits and opportunities.

The active role of the state in national development has meant that for many women it is no longer a male guardian -- father or husband -- who is the provider, but the State. As Mernissi remarks, "...The North African woman of today usually dreams of having a steady, wage-paying job with social security and health and retirement benefits, at a State institution; these women don't look to a man any longer for their survival, but to the State. While perhaps not ideal, this is nevertheless a breakthrough, an erosion of tradition. It also partly explains the Moroccan women's active participation in the urbanization process: they are leaving rural areas in numbers equaling men's migrations, for a 'better life' in the cities -- and in European cities, as well" (Mernissi 1984, 448-449).

Industrialization and Female Proletarianization

If industrialization in parts of the Third World "has been as much female led as export led" (Joeke 1987, 81), this is less pertinent to the Middle East. For one thing, a widespread Middle Eastern attitude is that factory work is not suitable for women. To be sure, in nearly all the large countries women are engaged in light manufacturing -- clothing, woven goods, shoes, food processing, chocolates, confectionaries. But modern sector industrial work remains limited, for both men and women. In part because of import-substitution policies,

and partly because of excess reliance on oil wealth, industry in the Middle East has failed to make progress comparable to that achieved in India, Brazil, Hong Kong, or Singapore. Middle Eastern countries with large shares of manufacturing in their merchandise exports are Israel with 80 percent and Turkey with 57 percent (Mabro 1988, 695). The other countries do not usually come near the top 50 in ranking of world manufacturing production. This has implications for patterns of female employment. Lower levels of industrialization and manufacturing for export means less female proletarianization and activity in the productive sectors, including trade unionism.

In some cases, much of what purports to be industrial activity for women is in fact of a rural and traditional type, such as carpet weaving. An example is Iran. In the 1970s Iran was sometimes included in the varying lists of Newly Industrializing Countries (NICs), and the development literature noted a significant increase not only in male but in female participation in industry. One ILO study cites the increase in female labor force participation in Iran in the same category as Hong Kong, Japan and Singapore (ILO 1985a, 64). By 1976, industry's share of the total labor force was about one-third. According to ILO data, some 33 percent of the female economically active population in 1976 was engaged in industrial work. However, what this statistic masked was the dualistic nature of Iranian industry, and the polarization of the industrial labor force (both male and female) between workers in small and traditional

workshops, and workers in large and modern factories (Moghadam 1987). Close examination of census data reveal that most female industrial workers were actually rural women involved in traditional manufacturing (carpets, handicrafts, textiles, etc.). A far smaller proportion were in the larger urban factories. The proportion of "female employers/own-account workers" was not as high in Iran as elsewhere (in Iran in 1976 it was 6.8 percent), but two-thirds of the women in this category were in manufacturing (ILO 1985a, 49). And a far larger percentage of women in "industrial/manufacturing" activities comprised the category "unpaid family workers." This fact may explain the near absence of female participation in the factory councils which emerged from the strike committees in industrial plants during the Iranian Revolution (Moghadam 1988).

Turkey's proximity to Europe and its greater participation in the international division of labor have drawn more women into world market activities. Agriculture, light manufacturing industry (tobacco, textiles-apparel, food-beverages, packaging of chemicals) and certain subdivisions of service industries are typically "feminine" occupations. Despite this, and notwithstanding the large numbers of female professionals, Turkish women occupy a relatively unimportant place in the urban labor force. Ten years ago the female share of the urban labor force was about 11 percent (Kazgan 1981, 136). In 1985 fully 69 percent of the economically active female population of 5.5

million was in agriculture, and only 7 percent in industry (see Tables 7-8, Appendix). In Israel, the most industrialized economy in the region, the role of women in industrial work is negligible (See Table 7).

In the cities of the Middle East and North Africa, therefore, most women are marginalized from the formal sector productive process and are concentrated in community, social and personal services. The percentage of women, although low in the labor force as a whole, is disproportionately high when one looks at the services sector in comparison to industry in general, and manufacturing in particular. High percentages of the female economically active population in community, social and personal services (group 9 of the branches of industry in standard classifications) are found in Kuwait (88 percent) and Israel (48 percent). For the region in general, the profiles of working women that emerge from census data, statistical surveys and similar sources are discussed below.

Characteristics of the Female Labor Force

- Since the 1960s, there has been a steady increase in women's labor force participation in nearly all countries save Iran (see Table 4).
- During the 1980s, overall activity rates ranged from a low of 4.8 percent in Jordan, 6.8 in Syria and 7 percent in Algeria to highs of 18 percent in Kuwait, 22 percent in Turkey and 27 percent in Israel (ILO 1988, 13). As mentioned above, there are high levels of male

unemployment in Jordan, Egypt and Iran as well as in Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco.

- In relation to Latin America, Southeast Asia, and of course the advanced industrialized countries, female activity rates in all age groups are quite low.

Moreover, female labor force participation tends to have limited distribution across the age groups, and be concentrated in the age groups 15-29. The exceptions are Turkey and Israel, where female activity rates are fairly consistent across the age groups, and are the highest in the region (over 45 percent). They are followed by Tunisia, with a 30 percent activity rate for women in the age group 15-34. Kuwait and Qatar report fairly high activity rates (37 percent) for women aged 25-49; these are professional women who in fact comprise the female labor force in those countries.

- In general, the female share of the economically active population is under 20 percent, except in Israel and Turkey (see Table 5). Other countries with large populations (for example, Iran) do not count women in agriculture, and thereby report a very small female economically active population.

- In terms of employment status, the female share of the total salaried population is generally under 20 percent (see Table 5), from a low of 5.2 percent in the UAE and 9 percent in Iran to 17 percent in Morocco. Kuwait reports 20.8 percent female share, while Israel's female share is highest at 41.5 percent.

- The percentage of the economically active female population that receives a wage or salary (see Table 6) is high in Kuwait (97 percent) and Israel (79 percent), average in Syria (46 percent) and Egypt (30 percent), and low in Turkey (14 percent). In Iran's case, because the 1986 census counts so few women, the proportion of the female EAP appears high (51.6%).
- In Turkey, fully 80 percent of the female labor force was classified "unpaid family labor" in 1980. These women are mostly in agriculture. Of the Turkish female labor force, only 14 percent are waged, while the female share of the salaried labor force is only 15 percent (see Table 6).
- In some cases, women in agriculture are not enumerated, but large percentages of the female economically active population are found in Turkey, Egypt, and Syria (see Tables 7 & 8).
- In terms of the sectoral shares of the labor force, employed women in many of the countries are found in the services sector, especially Group 9 of the industry branches (community, social, and personal services). Those in industry tend to be concentrated in small enterprises.
- There is a marked disinclination for women to enter into sales work or even clerical work (see Table 8).
- In terms of occupational groups in the female labor force, the high incidence of women workers within the "professional, technical, and related workers" group possibly is the outcome of occupational stereotyping

prevalent in the region, where women cluster around specific jobs such as teaching and nursing. It may also be a function of the class distribution of income and participation, whereby women from elite families are most likely to be those who are employed.

- The data reveal nothing about wages, but one can safely assume a gender disparity.

Summary and Conclusion

This paper has schematically surveyed women's work and women's lives over the past three decades in the modernizing countries of the Middle East and North Africa. An essential point of the endeavor has been to underscore the diversity of women's positions within the region, and to link women's status and work opportunities to their class location, state policies, and the broad cultural parameters. The paper's approach rejects the view of "culture" and religion as fixed, uniform, and predominant in the Middle East, but posits instead the interactive relationship of economic processes, political dynamics, and cultural practices. Only through such an approach can variations within the region and changes over time, be understood and explained.

On the other hand, there continues to exist an exceedingly large population of under-utilized labor, that is, women. To be sure, gains have been made since the 1960s, and more women have joined the salaried labor force. But female labor force participation is still low in relation to other regions of the world, and of course

low in relation to male labor force participation. A convergence of economic, political, and cultural developments accounts for the lack of significant progress in women's status in recent years. In popular accounts and in scholarly works, much has been made of the rise of Islamist movements, but little has been noted of the economic crisis facing the region. This has resulted in part from the drop in real prices of primary commodities, including oil. According to the UN, debt as a percentage of GNP for the Middle East and North Africa has risen to 70 percent; during the 1980s, the region's debt has increased from 4.4 billion dollars to 118.8 billion dollars (UN DPI 1989). In Israel, the serious economic plight has been alleviated by massive American aid. But elsewhere, tough economic reforms, along with poverty, unemployment, and debt servicing have led to a spate of popular protests and "IMF riots" in Algeria, Jordan, Tunisia, and Turkey. Women have frequently been made the scapegoat during periods of economic crisis; they can be expected to bear the burden of debt and the inflationary-recessionary cycles which have been plaguing the region, as indeed the entire Third World.

In this context, calls for structural changes in the relations between North and South are as pertinent as ever, while the "Forward Looking Strategies" adopted at Nairobi in 1985 at the end of the UN decade for women remain sound. The document calls for governments and international donor agencies to provide incentives for the economic betterment of women by working to release

some of the structural and protectionist constraints against female employment. But it is not only economic factors which shape women's conditions; constructions of gender are cultural and ideological. The continuing subordination of women in the society, at the workplace, and before the law, will ultimately be most effectively challenged by separate women's organizations which can bring pressure to bear on the state, on development practitioners, and on cultural institutions.

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FIGURE 1

Social Structures and Principal Institutions in Contemporary Societies,
Their Embeddedness within Class, Regional and Global Relations

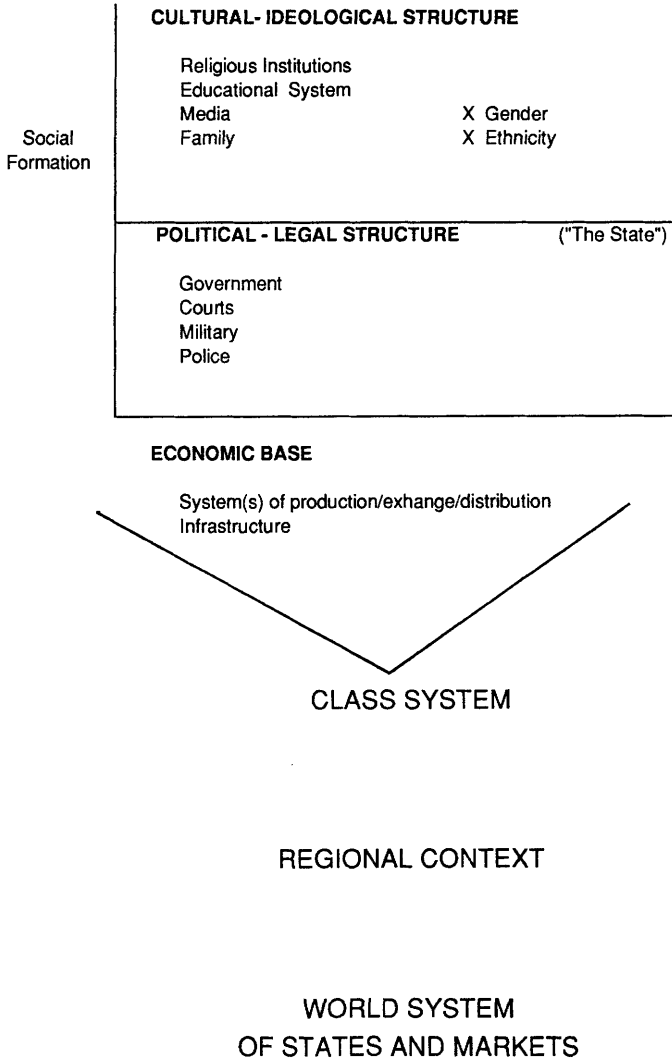


TABLE 1
SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF MIDDLE EASTERN
AND NORTH AFRICAN COUNTRIES, 1989

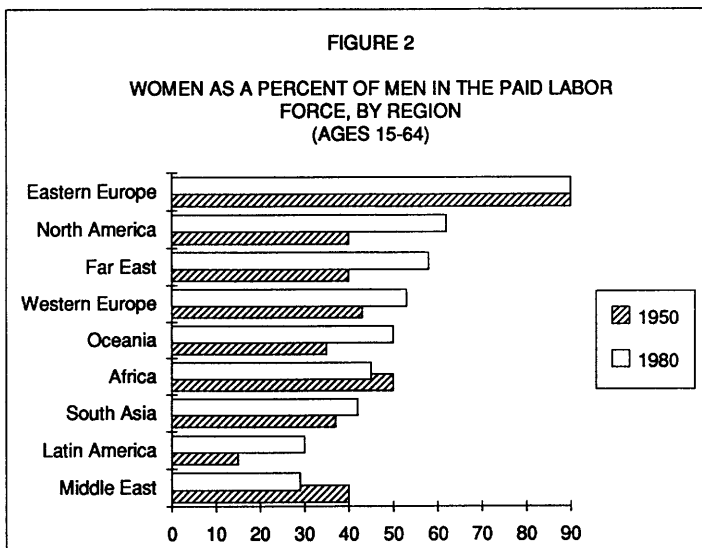
Country	Income Level			Oil Exporter	Labor Exporter	Highly Indebted	Signatory of CEDAW *	Comprehensive Civil Code
	High	Medium	Low					
Afghanistan			X					
Algeria		X		X	X	X		
Bahrain	X			X				
Egypt		X		X	X	X	X	
Iran		X		X				
Iraq		X		X	X		X	
Israel		X						
Jordan		X			X			
Kuwait	X			X				
Lebanon					X			
Libya	X			X			X	
Morocco		X			X	X		
Oman	X			X	X			
Qatar	X			X				
Saudi Arabia	X			X				
Sudan			X		X	X		
Syria		X			X			
Tunisia		X			X	X	X	X
Turkey		X			X	X	X	X
UAE	X			X				
N. Yemen		X			X			
S. Yemen		X			X	X	X	

* Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979.

Non-Arab countries: Afghanistan, Iran, Israel, Turkey.

Non-Muslim: Israel.

Sources : ILO World Labour Report 1984; World Bank, World Development Report 1985; UN DPI, Info. on CEDAW, 1989.



Source: Sivard (1985), p. 13.

TABLE 2

REGIONAL FEMALE LABOR PARTICIPATION RATES, 1985

Africa	32.0 %
Asia	27.9 %
(Middle East)	11.4 %
Latin America	24.2 %

Source: ILO, *Women in Economic Activity: A Global Statistical Survey 1950-2000*, Table 1, pp. 18-19.

TABLE 3

FEMALE LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION IN MUSLIM
AND NON-MUSLIM COUNTRIES, 1975

	Labor force as % of population aged 15-64	% of females in labour force
All countries	46.8	35.0
Developed	53.7	39.7
Less developed	43.3	32.8
Non-Muslim	50.1	36.6
Muslim*	23.4	21.3
(Non-Arab)	(28.7)	(24.8)
(Arab)	(8.0)	(8.8)

* With at least 75 percent Muslim population.

Source: Mujahid 1985, p. 114.

APPENDIX: TABLES ON FEMALE EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS

Table 4
Evolution of Labor Force Participation in Selected Countries of the Middle East and North Africa, %

Country	Year	Male	Female	Total	% Female in EAP*
Algeria	1966	42.2	1.8	21.7	4.3
	1975	43.4	1.9	22.3	4.3
	1982	38.9	2.9	21.1	6.7
Egypt	1966	51.2	4.2	27.9	7.5
	1975	50.4	4.1	27.9	7.5
	1982	48.2	5.8	27.3	10.4
Iran	1966	50.7	8.3	30.2	12.8
	1976	48.1	8.9	29.1	15.3
	1982**	46.3	7.0	27.6	12.6
	1986	45.5	5.4	25.9	10.0
Jordan	1961	42.4	2.6	22.9	5.7
	1971	43.1	2.6	23.1	5.6
	1975	44.4	3.0	24.2	6.0
	1979	38.0	3.3	21.3	7.4
Kuwait	1961	47.4	0.4	29.7	0.5
	1970	53.0	5.2	32.4	6.9
	1975	47.9	5.1	28.5	8.1
	1980	55.1	10.9	36.2	12.8
Libya	1964	46.6	2.7	25.6	5.1
	1975	47.4	2.7	25.9	5.0
Morocco	1960	50.1	5.9	28.0	10.6
	1971	44.5	8.0	26.3	15.2
	1975	44.4	7.9	26.1	15.1
	1982	47.9	11.6	29.6	19.6
Syria	1960	46.0	5.4	26.3	10.1
	1970	42.7	5.5	24.8	10.8
	1975	45.2	6.0	26.6	11.2
	1983	38.5	5.6	22.4	12.1

* economically active population

** The 1982 figures for Iran are for urban areas only; the comparable figures for 1976 are: male 63.9%; female 9.0; total 37.9; percent female in EAP 11.2.

Sources: Azzam, Abu Nasr, and Lorfing, 1985: 21; ILO, Yearbook of Labour Statistics, 1981, 1985, Table 1; ILO, Yearbook of Labour Statistics, Retrospective, 1945-89, Table 1, p. 60

Table 5
Characteristics of the Economically Active Population
Various Countries, 1980s

Country (year)	Total pop.	Total EAP	% Female	Total salaried	% Female
Algeria					
(1983)	20,192,000	3,632,594	6.8	n.a.	n.a.
(1985)	n.a.	3,007,799	11.6	n.a.	n.a.
Bahrain					
(1987)	278,481	73,972	19.3	n.a.	n.a.
Egypt					
(1984)	45,231,000	14,311,300	21.4	6,376,800	14
Iran					
(1986)	49,400,000	12,820,291	10	5,327,885	9.4
Iraq					
(1977)	12,000,477	3,133,939	17.3	1,864,701	7.9
(1983)	14,700,000	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Israel					
(1987)	4,365,200	1,494,100	39.0	1,110,800	41.5
Kuwait					
(1985)	1,697,301	670,385	19.7	619,722	20.8
Morocco					
(1982)	20,449,551	5,999,260	19.6	2,429,919	17.6
Qatar					
(1986)	369,079	201,182	9.4	196,488	9.6
Sudan					
(1973)	14,113,590	3,473,278	19.9	905,942	7.4
Syria					
(1984)	9,870,800	2,356,000	13.8	1,216,781	** 12.4
Tunisia					
(1984)	6,975,450	2,137,210	21.2	1,173,630	14.30
Turkey					
(1985)	50,958,614	21,579,996	35.40	6,978,181	15.3
UAE					
(1980)	1,042,099	559,960	5.0	518,969	5.2

* n.a. = not available

** data for 1983.

Source: ILO, Yearbook of Labour Statistics 1986, 1987 and 1988, Tables 1 and 2A;
 Retrospective 1945-89, Table 2A, World Bank, WDR, 1985.

Table 6
Percent Distribution of Economically Active Women by Status of
Employment in Selected Countries, Various Years.

Country Year	Employers and Own-Account Workers	Employees		Unpaid Family Workers	Not Classified by Status
Algeria 1977	1.7	42.1		0.5	55.7
Tunisia 1984	27.2	38.7	(14.3) *	20.5	13.4
Egypt 1983	17.0	42.3	(14.5)	30.0	10.5
Morocco 1982	14.5	36.3	(18)	27.5	21.6
Bahrain 1981	0.9	88.6	(11.7)	-	10.3
Iran 1976	10.2	39.3	(12)	32.4	17.9
1986	19.6	51.6	(9.4)	21.5	7.0
Iraq 1977	10.6	27.3	(7.9)	58.0	3.6
Israel 1982	11.1	79.7	(40)	3.2	6.0
1986	11.0	78.5	(41.1)	2.3	7.9
Kuwait 1985	0.2	97.7	(20.8)	-	2.0
Syria 1979	9.9	41.7	(12)	44.5	3.9
1981	11.4	60.9	(8.7)	22.2	4.0
1983	9.8	48.0	(12.4)	36.9	4.7
Turkey 1985	4.7	14.0	(15.3)	79.2	2.0
UAE 1980	0.8	97.5	(5.2)	-	1.5

* Female share of total employees, %.

Note about Iran: The 1986 Census, (indeed, all previous censuses) seriously undercounts the female economically active population. Out of a total female population of 24 million, of whom perhaps 12 million may be presumed to be of working age, only 1 million are counted. Of that number, 50% are classified as 'employees'.

Sources: ILO, Yearbook of Labour Statistics, Table 2A, 1981, 1985, 1986, 1987;
 Abu Nasr, Azzam, and Lorfing, 1985; ILO, 1985a.
 ILO, Yearbook of Labour Statistics, Retrospective, 1945-89, Table 2A.

Table 7
% Distribution of Female Economically Active Population in Branches of Industry, Selected Countries, 1980s

Country Year	Industry Branches									NAD	Total Number
	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 6	Group 7	Group 8	Group 9		
Algeria 1985	3.6	11.9			2.7	2.7	3.0	75.7		-	326,000
Egypt 1984	41.2	0.003	8.6	0.3	0.6	6.8	1.1	13.7	23.8	4.7	2,354,600
Israel 1983	2.7	14.0		0.3	0.9	10.6	2.9	11.3	48.2	8.6	556,495
Kuwait 1983	0.08	0.25	0.96	0.05	0.89	2.2	1.5	2.2	89.3	1.5	132,128
Syria 1984	44.6	0.3	10.7	0.03	1.2	2.9	1.5	1.2	30.0	6.7	327,200
Tunisia 1984	22.1	0.4	40.6	1.1*	0.7	2.3	-	4.6	13.0	14.5	433,630
Turkey 1985	69.5	0.07	7.0	0.01	0.08	1.5	0.4	1.4	7.8	11.4	5,543,862

* This includes groups 4 & 7

NAD = not adequately defined, unemployed persons not previously employed, and/or unemployed persons previously employed.

Source: ILO, Yearbook of Labour Statistics 1988, Table 2A.

- Group 1 = agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing
- Group 2 = mining and quarrying
- Group 3 = manufacturing
- Group 4 = electricity, gas and water
- Group 5 = construction
- Group 6 = wholesale/retail trade, restaurants and hotels
- Group 7 = transport, storage and communication
- Group 8 = financing, insurance, real estate and business services
- Group 9 = community, social and personal services

Table 8

**% Distribution of Female Labour Force by Occupation,
Major Groups**

Country Year	Group 1 (prof.)	Group 2 (ad. & mng.)	Group 3 (clerical)	Group 4 (sales)	Group 5 (service)	Group 6 (agric.)	Group 7 - 9 (prod.)	Not classified & unemployed
Egypt 1984	17.6	1.8	12.9	5.5	2.7	41.3	6.5	11.3
Israel 1983	28.9	1.7	27.1	5.3	14.9	1.6	8.9	10.2
Kuwait 1985	27.2	0.2	14.3	0.75	53.7	0.04	0.37	1.5
Morocco 1982	6.6	5.4		1.4	13.7	32.5	33.2	6.8
Syria 1984	25.9	0.9	7.9	1.2	2.4	43.7	10.3	6.7
Turkey 1985	5.5	0.1	4.5	0.9	1.6	69.0	6.9	10.8

Group 1 = Professional, technical and related workers.

Group 2 = Administrative and managerial workers.

Group 3 = Clerical and related workers.

Group 4 = Sales workers.

Group 5 = Service workers.

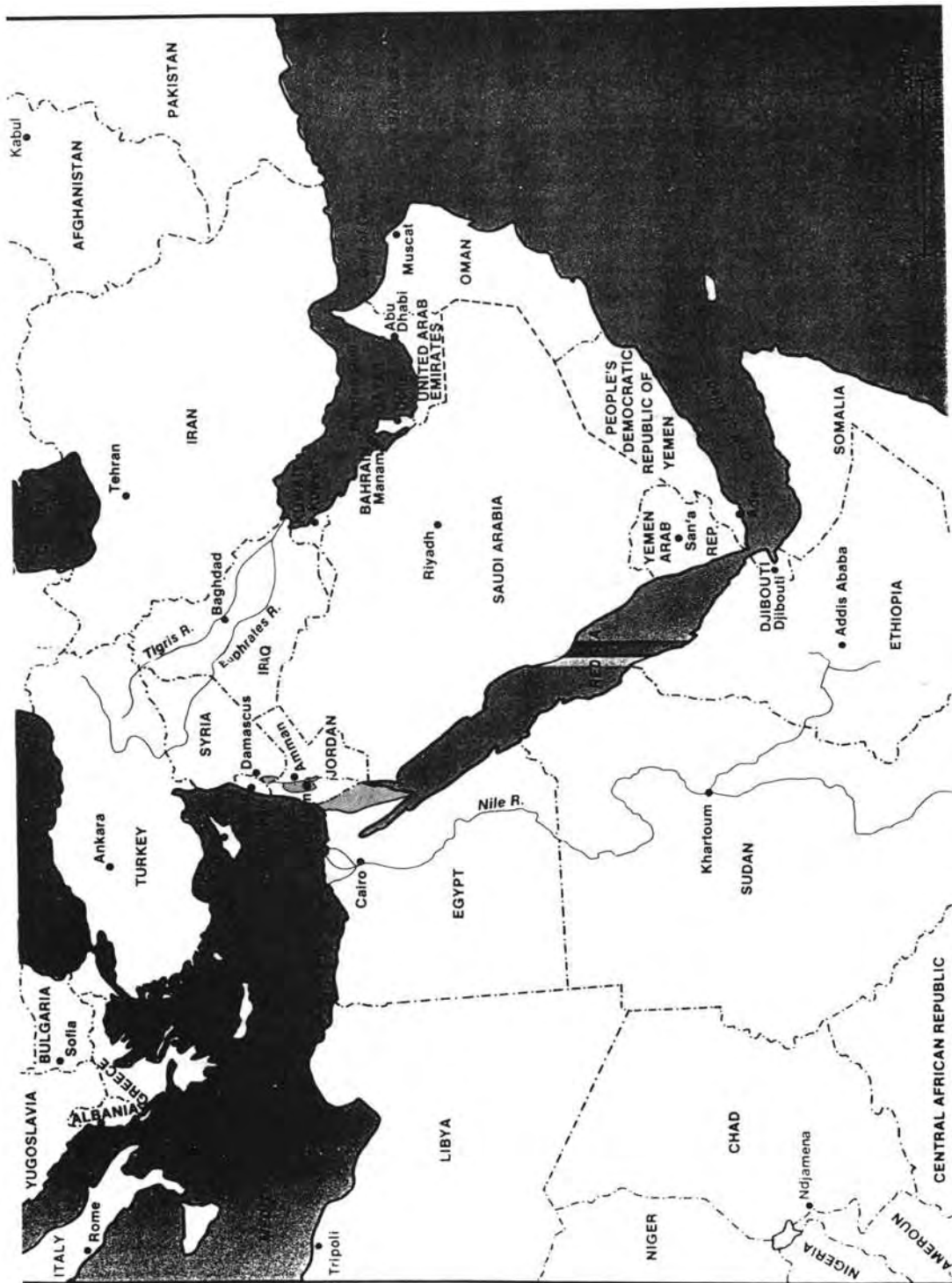
Group 6 = Agricultural, animal husbandry and forestry workers, fishermen and hunters

Group 7-9 = Production /related workers, transport equipment operators and labourers

Source: ILO, Yearbook of Labour Statistics 1987, 1988, Tables 2B;
Retrospective 1945-89, Table 2B.

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