

Research Report Presented by

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'Women are there to serve men'

The challenge of care work and domestic labour
for women's position,
status and economic contribution in MENA



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Preface

We are delighted to release this new publication by CRTD.A's longtime associate, Dr. Tina Wallace. This publication is within the framework of CRTD.A's new initiative entitled *Advocacy towards Gender Equitable Economic Engagement in Lebanon - Overcoming Marginalization of Women* and made possible through the support of the African Women Development Fund.

The main objectives of this initiative seek to:

- 1) increase public awareness on gender equitable economic engagement of marginalized women as a vehicle to sustainable development;
- 2) enhance capacities of marginalized women in relation to their agency;
- 3) enhance the body of knowledge on gender equitable economic engagement.

This publication is the outcome of the first research component of this project and will be subsequently used to inform the project's capacity building, awareness raising and lobbying activities.

The publication reposes on the assumption that women's burden of care work reflects their subordinate position in both the private and public sphere and that a gender equitable economic engagement ought to address unpaid care work by focusing on recognition, reduction and redistribution of unpaid care work (the 3 Rs). Readers who would like details on promising strategies from across the global on addressing unpaid care work should scan the technical brief "*The Imperative of Addressing Care Needs for G20 Countries*" prepared by a team of experts led by Dr Sarah Gammage, a world authority on unpaid care work. We will quote the definitions of these 3 Rs from the said brief as follows:

"Recognise unpaid care work so that the work performed, primarily in the household, is both "seen" and acknowledged as being "work." Recognition can take several forms, including provision of compensation for the work, recognising care work when determining other benefits such as pension payments or social transfers, or at the very least measuring unpaid care work in national statistics.

Reduce unpaid care work so that the burden of caring is reduced for care-givers and for society more generally. This can happen when the service is provided directly or in a different way, such as through accessible and affordable child care services.

Redistribute unpaid care work so that it is more fairly shared among men and women, the market and the state. For example, male household members can take on a greater share of housework and childcare. Additionally, governments can elect to provide after-school care or elder care "

In her publication, Dr. Wallace says that “care work is slowly becoming recognised as an important factor shaping women’s lives and opportunities around the world, especially their economic engagement and participation in labour markets, both formal and informal” but she also points out to the persistent absence of measurement.

The author goes on to say that: “The limited data available show that not only are women in MENA disproportionately engaged in home based and unpaid family and care work, but that this correlates to high levels of exclusion from paid work and disadvantage in relation to the key indicators of women’s status and access to rights.”

The report ends with a short discussion, ‘looking forward’, “that tries to take a holistic view of what is needed to help leverage change for women around domestic care work and accessing the paid labour market. It identifies some key questions that need to be addressed that might ‘change the conversation’ and the way the whole issue is approached in the region”.

We hope that this contribution to knowledge that this publication offers will serve as a framework for a gender analysis of the economy and as food for thought for feminist activists in the MENA region and in Lebanon in particular.

Finally, we wish to acknowledge individuals who have been instrumental in continuously and relentlessly bringing to light women’s unpaid care work in the MENA and in Lebanon and who have been the masterminds in shaping CRTD.A’s work in this direction namely Omar Traboulsi and Claude Boustany. CRTD.A is indebted to their intellectual contributions and to their commitment in bringing to light these important issues.

The Collective for Research and Training for Development – Action
For gender equality and social justice
CRTD.A
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Abbreviations

CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CESE: Conseil Economique, Social et Environnemental (Morocco)
CRTD.A: Collective for Research and Training on Development – Action
EBRD: European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ELMPS: Egypt Labour Market Panel Survey
ELMS: Egypt Labour Market Survey
ERF: Economic Research Forum (Egypt)
FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization
GADN: Gender and Development Network (UK)
GDI: Gender Development Index (UNDP)
GDP: Gross Domestic Product
GEI: Gender Equality Index
GEM: Gender Empowerment Measure (UNDP)
GGI: Gender Gap Index
GID: Gender, Institutions and Development index (OECD)
GII: Gender Inequality Index
GSDRC: Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (United Kingdom)
HCP: High Commission for Planning (Morocco)
HDR: Human Development Reports (UNDP)
IDS: Institute of Development Studies (United Kingdom)
ILO: International Labour Organization
MENA: Middle East and North Africa
MDGs: Millennium Development Goals
NGO: Non Governmental Organization
OECD: The Organization for the Economic Co-operation and Development
OPT: Occupied Palestinian Territories
SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals
SIGI: Social Institutions and Gender Inequality index (OECD)
SNAs: System of National Accounts (United Nations)
TUS: Time Use Survey
UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
UN Women: United Nations organization for gender equality and women’s empowerment
VAW: Violence against Women
WB: World Bank
WEF: World Economic Forum

Section 1: Introduction and the scope of this report

The importance and significance of care work for women and society

Care work is slowly becoming recognised as an important factor shaping women's lives and opportunities around the world, especially their economic engagement and participation in labour markets, both formal and informal. Care work is essential for the successful reproduction and promotion of individuals, families and societies, and in almost all societies much of this work is done by women, yet considerable development work ignores how much work women do, the norms that control it, and the real costs of this reproductive work. The time and energy expended by women are largely omitted from economic studies and the existing analyses of the value and importance of different kinds of work remain largely focused on formal labour market participation. Women's work only gets measured when a woman ventures out of the domestic sphere and into the world of paid employment.

The measurements of the scale and contribution of women's care work to national economies, communities and households is growing slowly globally, and while there is a growing body of work that looks at the definitions, dimensions and role of care work, it remains largely neglected in the MENA region. This is surprising because women in this region are far less likely to work in the formal or informal paid sectors of the economy than any other region in the world, and much of their time is spent in and around the home on unpaid care work (OECD¹). Those studies that do exist often use different definitions and inconsistent indicators. The role of care work in inhibiting women's participation in politics, development and paid work is too often glossed over or simply taken for granted, as something women must do for their families, without much exploration of the costs to women or to the wider society.

Yet, a good analysis of the opportunities and barriers that these heavy responsibilities place on women in the care economy is essential for understanding how the time and energy expended on care work affects women's ability to enter into different forms of productive paid work. It is also critical for developing policies that can address the barriers to women accessing paid work, including the 'traditional gender roles' of women as serving husbands and their families. These barriers, once identified, can be addressed and women can be supported to meet the multiple care responsibilities in

1 Ferrant, G., Pesando, L M, Nowacka, K. 2014. *Unpaid care work: the missing link in the analysis of gender gaps in labour outcomes*. Issues paper, OECD, Gender, Institutions and Development Centre.

different ways, including through the sharing of care burdens, so women can participate in income generation beyond the household.

The scope of this report

The primary focus of this report will be on women's work at home in the care economy in four countries of MENA, Lebanon, Morocco, Egypt and Jordan. Care work in this context can include unpaid work in agriculture, food processing, and small family businesses where women do generate income for the family but receive no income themselves, as well as all the unpaid work they do within the domestic sphere. This has been identified as 'the missing link' in many discussions and analyses of labour markets and women's place within them and the OECD report rightly stresses that the data that do exist are scattered, limited and often not comparable across countries.

The reality that this work absorbs many hours every day, most especially for married women with children and those unable to hire labour to help them, is interesting in that it is not recognised as work, nor counted as work or allocated any monetary value in most MENA countries. The limited data available show that not only are women in MENA disproportionately engaged in home based and unpaid family and care work, but that this correlates to high levels of exclusion from paid work – even in conditions of falling GDP and family poverty- and disadvantage in relation to the key indicators of women's status and access to rights. It is an issue of importance for women's position and status within the society, for family income and addressing growing poverty, as well as for the wider national wealth creation of each country. The apparent lack of curiosity about why the region has the lowest female participation in the labour force in the world and scores so low on many gender indexes appears to rest in the easy assumptions, oft repeated, that traditional and cultural norms keep women in the home, that this is widely acceptable, and an issue taken for granted. Interestingly, international studies into women's care work (e.g. from Oxfam, Womankind, Gender and Development Network, IDS reports²) often omit or gloss over women's care work across MENA, citing culture as the reason for women's situation, ignoring issues of difference between e.g. countries, between women of different classes or religions, and rural-urban differences.

This report takes on these assumptions and tries to explore both the causes of women's high involvement in domestic and care work and the consequences of this reality for women, their families and the wider society. It also explores as far as possible, within the data limitations, where things diverge within and between countries, and what is changing around both attitudes and behaviour – for women and for men.

² References to these reports will be made later in this document. See the bibliography for more details.

In order to explore the role, responsibilities and consequences of unpaid care work in different women's lives this report will draw on globally recognised definitions of care work, which broadly refer to all the unpaid services provided within a household for its members, including:

- care of persons,
- housework
- Voluntary community work³.

The intention is to review existing, scattered data in order to start addressing the neglect of this critical area. While it proved hard to locate a lot of data, enough evidence has been gathered to highlight the importance of the issue across the region, the variations between the four selected countries, and the diversity of experiences between women of different classes, locations, religions and wealth. The report takes into consideration the range of factors that affect women's work in and outside of the home; these include male attitudes, household composition, allocation of roles and responsibilities within the family, the community and each country, levels of wealth and education, and the location of households (rural or urban) as well as the wider politics, laws and history of each country, which have resulted in different policies and approaches to women's role within the home. Work on the different laws and policies introduced to support or discourage women into paid work and how they have been implemented do show that Government approaches can directly impact on women's position and status within the household and the wider society.

In Section 2, a review of the definitions and measurements of care work, as well as the methodology used for this study are presented. This reviews data largely collected from within MENA but draws on concepts and research carried out in other regions where appropriate. The use of statistics will be complemented throughout the report by smaller scale studies and research that try to explore what is changing, how women's and men's attitudes are diverging in some contexts, and how factors such as where people live- in which country, whether they are rural or urban - wealth status, education and other issues mean that there is more divergence between women and between countries than is often reported, especially at international level.

Section 3 presents an overview of the statistics available, first at the global and then at the national level, presenting the findings, the strengths and weaknesses of the data and what they show in terms of identifiable trends. Most of the available global data reviewed is general and the analyses about women's work in MENA seem generic, focusing largely on the commonalities of women's experience based in the cultural, religious and traditional laws and norms that keep women in the home. The specific study of MENA using

³ Elson, D. 2000: *Progress of the world's women*, UNIFEM Biennial Report, Unifem, New York.

statistical data starts to draw out a more nuanced picture of the contexts and women's positions.

Section 4 explores the differences and commonalities between the four countries selected, exploring the broad themes and divergences identified through the statistics and the case material identified. It is clear that the specificities around the position of women in different MENA countries in relation to formal, informal and care work are still relatively unknown: the legal and economic contexts are often addressed only patchily, and the links between studies of women's work in the different labour markets are usually poorly linked to the few studies of women's domestic responsibilities (with the exception of some work in Morocco). Yet this information would enable researchers to explore how far women's low participation outside the home is due to barriers they face within the home and family/community, poor policy making, or a lack of legal support for women entering the workplace safely, with secure rights. The consequences of women's care work for poverty reduction, women's rights, women's participation and representation in politics and decision making are rarely touched on in most debates.

Each of the four brief country case studies are of different lengths and focused on different factors, which reflect the research identified in each country. From these studies the factors shaping care work, including attitudes and policies, are analysed to see what enables or inhibits women from joining the labour force.

In Section 5 the country case studies are supported by a short section focusing on some relevant and useful international reports, which have ideas and information to contribute to these national debates.

This paves the way for Section 6 which draws together the core barriers and challenges for women across the region and the key findings. The barriers that exist in the workplace, which prevent women's participation in the world of work, and their links to the barriers that women face within the household around leaving and going out to work, including women's home based work, are both presented. The push and pull factors around women going out to work or staying at home will be linked, looking at job market opportunities, the terms and conditions of paid work as well as the constraints and demands of domestic roles and responsibilities.

Section 6 of the report also draws out four overarching findings:

- The paucity of the data and the lack of research information available
- What is counted is what is important in a country and where policy work is focused; what is not counted is forgotten
- There is diversity within and between countries, and things are shifting in response to different factors; work to understand changes need to continue on women's care work

- Most reports are full of recommendations from small to large, local to national and international, yet few have ever been taken up. New ways of tackling these problems are needed

The report ends with a short discussion, 'looking forward', that tries to take a holistic view of what is needed to help leverage change for women around domestic care work and accessing the paid labour market. It identifies some key questions that need to be addressed that might 'change the conversation' and the way the whole issue is approached in the region.

Section 2:

The challenges of definitions and measurement of care work and the methodology for the study

The challenges of definitions

The CRTDA study on women's work in Lebanon said:

'there is no clear definition and only a very limited acknowledgement of household and domestic care work in Lebanon, even within women's organisations and international agencies....There is no clear consensus about the meaning of, or how to count, women's work in the domestic economy'.⁴

For that study, as for this, the broad definition of care work comes from Diane Elson, an international feminist economist, where unpaid care work refers to all unpaid services provided within a household for its members, including the care of persons, housework and voluntary community work.⁵ These activities are considered work, because theoretically one could pay a third person to perform them. This definition includes:

- Unpaid = the individual performing this activity is not remunerated.
- Care = the activity provides what is necessary for the health, well-being, maintenance, and protection of someone or something
- Work = the activity involves mental or physical effort and is costly in terms of time resources

For the MENA region, ILO added to the list of domestic work that focuses on shopping, cooking, cleaning, child care including education and health care, care for the elderly, community care and contributions, a particular category: work in agriculture and domestic production that may bring in a small income for the household, but one where women do not receive pay themselves in return for their work. They noted that because of the heavy burden of these unpaid care responsibilities and the multiple contributions women make to the household, in addition to housework, that are essential for the well being of the family, women are often unable to find the time or energy for paid employment beyond the confines of the domestic.⁶

There are a few writers in the MENA region who have defined and grouped care work systematically, but the term broadly covers cooking, cleaning, washing, child care, care for the elderly, care for small household animals and garden plots, provision of water, fuel, heat, and where services are lacking can

4 Wallace, T. 2016. *Women's work in Lebanon: making the invisible visible*. CRTDA, Beirut, p.51

5 Elson, D. 2000, *Op. cit.*

6 ILO, Regional office for the Arab States, 2008: *Employment in the informal economy of Lebanon, a gender equality and rights perspective*. ILO.

include education for the children. For example, a time-use study in Egypt⁷, building on time use surveys used elsewhere, looked at the involvement of women and men in:

- Farming activities and animal and poultry breeding for the family consumption, including cutting grass, harvesting, making cheese and butter
- Shopping for the family, including purchasing food, clothes, house necessities, or transporting family members to their activities
- Construction or maintenance work in the family house
- Domestic activities including food preparation, washing dishes and bowls, laundry and ironing, cleaning the house.
- Fetching water, collecting firewood for the oven or any other purposes
- Total dedication to care for children, the elderly and the sick
- Caring for children and the elderly along with other activities at the same time

Different studies of women's time in the region have used different categorizations, but all broadly cover these many different areas of work; however the lack of real clarity about tasks and categories of tasks makes comparisons very hard across countries. Some work is seasonal and tasks fluctuate a lot, and some work is done simultaneously – washing and child care for example- and as such is undercounted, being ascribed to only one category or another. In addition, women's care work rises and expands at times of cutbacks to government services caused by structural adjustment, austerity or crises in a country. Women then have to invest more time in e.g. collecting water, coping without electricity, feeding a family with fewer resources, and providing basic education and health care, as well as contributing to community level activities, necessary for sustaining a basic level of living. Women's care work also expands when there is no male head of household and tasks more associated with men, such as some shopping, house maintenance, or going to market, have to be taken over by the women or children.

In ordinary times male tasks for the household are those that require heavy lifting or take place in public spaces and female tasks are those that can be done within or near the household. Women's unpaid care work is essential for the reproduction of the next generation, support to those in the family working outside, care for the weak and vulnerable, and contributions to community cohesion through participations to weddings, funerals, community soup kitchens and more.

⁷ Hendy, R. 2015. *Women's participation in the Egyptian labor market 1998-2012* Working Paper No 907. ERF, Cairo, Egypt. This paper reports on data collected around time-use in Egypt.

Measurement

While care work is essential to the maintenance of the family and the wider society, it has largely been 'unseen' until recently and in many societies in MENA 'these activities are [taken for granted and] defined as women's work and reinforced through their religious responsibilities as wives and mothers. It has been ignored and very little research exists to date.'⁸ A report from the Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona, argued that the unequal care responsibilities heaped on women was a major barrier to gender equality and to women's enjoyments of human rights and 'across the world, millions of women still find that poverty is their reward for a lifetime spent caring, and unpaid care provision by women and girls is still treated as an infinite cost-free resource that fills the gaps when public services are not available or accessible'.⁹

Yet 'their contribution is rarely acknowledged by policy makers' even though housework cuts across girls' schooling, the leisure time of women and affects their ability to join the labour market. It also affects women's health but is not recognised by the State. The Special Rapporteur called upon Governments to conduct regular surveys on time given over to care work, with a view to reducing or redistributing it, and she underlined the fact that they need policies that take into account the volume of unpaid care work.

In 2015, United Nations member states adopted the *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs), which call for recognizing, reducing, and redistributing unpaid care work – a measure long proposed by feminist economists and gender-equality advocates. The question now is what can actually be done to meet this objective.¹⁰ At present, women's organisations are highlighting the urgent need for funding for gender equality, as the funding targets have been dramatically missed to date.

In spite of the reality that this work absorbs many hours every day, especially for married women with children, it is largely not recognised as work, counted as work or allocated a monetary value in most MENA countries. Indeed in Egypt, for example, the term used for women dedicated to domestic work is "settled at home",

'implying that women outside the market are indulged in a state of relaxation and leisure, despite the actual reality, where these women are swamped for long hours in house chores and they may not have enough time to rest'¹¹.

8 Wallace, T. 2016, *Op. cit.*, p 52.

9 Ford, L. 2013. *A woman's job: who cares about the unpaid carers?* Global Development. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2013/oct/07/woman-job-unpaid-carers>

10 Sadasivam, B. 2017: *Making women's work count*. UNDP <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/blog/2017/8/22/Making-women-s-work-count.html>

11 El-Antary, S. 2016: *The value of women's unpaid housework in Egypt*. New Woman Foundation, Egypt, p.3

Meeting domestic obligations is central to the many concepts and definitions of what being a woman means. The ideology, reinforced by religion, law and practice, is that men are the head of the household and providers for the family while women are there to serve and run the household. To be a good woman is to be one who runs a smooth household that pleases her husband and services the many people relying on her; this role of 'the good wife' is often not acknowledged or counted but rather taken for granted.

At present much of the limited but available statistical data comes from international agencies; these figures are repeated and recycled across many different publications. Often these statistics are out of date, based on small samples, use different definitions and indicators and are not easily comparable. Within MENA itself, while some data on care work has been collected in different ways, the measurement of time spent on unpaid care work is unsystematic and there are real challenges around how different studies define unpaid care and the different categories of care work. These problems are quite severe because very few time use studies have been done (only 1-2 studies each in Morocco and Egypt) and some data remain to be analysed.

The other available data on care work identified for this report will be used as a basis for describing care work in each country and has been taken from:

- statistics from the National Office's published statistics;
- focused data extracted from Government household surveys and follow-up studies;
- small scale studies done by Universities or international agencies on definitions and the meaning of care work;
- a few studies looking at women's experiences of care work and the perceptions of women and men around the issues.

The reality is, however, that a good amount of women's actual participation in essential work remains unmeasured, unrecognized and unvalued despite their importance to the welfare of the family and the community as a whole. Women's contribution is assumed, often invisible, expected and not defined as work even by women themselves, as found in a Lebanon study.¹²

Women's work in the care economy affects their ability to go out into the workplace, whether formal or informal, and similarly the opportunities - or lack of them - for employment, entrepreneurship, access to credit and training for income generation. It impacts on whether women and their families see a point or value in women going out to earn an income. The barriers to women's access to employment and the terms and conditions they find at work in different sectors of employment will be explored to see how far these contribute to women staying at home. While a detailed analysis of the formal

12 Boustany Hajjar, C. 2018. *Women's household work in marginalized locations in Lebanon: an exploratory research in six communities of the Bekaa valley and South Lebanon*. CRTDA, Beirut, Lebanon

labour markets and women's involvement in them will not be presented in detail, some broad statistics will be provided to highlight the low levels of engagement, and the extremely low levels of women's participation in the formal and informal labour force in some specific contexts (for example, Jordan). Some statistics will be used to show variations within the region and within countries, where for example in Morocco male migration and new opportunities in the Free Trade Zones are opening up new jobs in factory work for poorer women. Contrarily the closing of government jobs in Egypt has led to a fall in women's employment, undermining the commitment made by Nasser long ago to employ all female graduates in government services. Shifts in the formal labour market that affect opportunities and access will be part of this study, though there are limited data. However, the complexities around definitions of formal and informal work, who is employed, who is part time employed, and how unemployment is defined and measured will not be included: these issues were defined and discussed for Lebanon in the earlier study.¹³

Certain trends that affect women's work opportunities and choices, which have been studied, are included, for example

'the regular trend of increasing informality in the Egyptian labour market especially for the female labour force, which now finds it more difficult to access the private sector except through becoming informally self-employed or an employer. This coincides with the privatization process and the male bias evident in private sector employment'¹⁴.

Shifts out of agricultural work into small enterprises in rural areas is another trend that affects women, where 'women have especially high rates of unemployment compared to men, face open discrimination in hiring in the private sector, and contribute (along with children) as unpaid family workers in over a fifth of the micro and small businesses'¹⁵.

Methodology

The methodology that was adopted for this report relied on secondary sources, literature was reviewed and analysed, from international studies and statistics on women's care work, national data that could be located on these issues, as well as small scale studies and data gleaned from international and local NGOs and research websites. Only data accessible on the internet or through published studies, in English, and some French, have been used. It is not clear how much 'grey literature' or writing there is available in Arabic on these issues and this is a weakness in the study, however, it does not prevent the research outlining the many core issues and trends that can be seen from

13 Wallace, T. 2016, *Op. cit.*

14 El Mahdi, A. 2002. *Towards Decent Work in the Informal Sector: The Case of Egypt*. Employment Paper 2002/5, Series on the Informal Economy, ILO, Geneva, p7

15 El Mahdi, A. 2002, *Ibid.*, p.iii

the data identified. It should be noted that some studies reviewed do draw on local grey literature and Arabic research, so this is not completely missing from the research.

No original case material was collected for this study, due to lack of time/resources. The focus has been on collecting small-scale studies carried out by researchers in Universities or NGOs as well as government in each country, to try and find evidence for looking in more detail at the working lives of women. It has, however, been hard to find very many easily available studies through publications in English or French or on the internet.

While a lot of global data and readings were accessed, references to these are kept to a minimum in this report. They provide a broad global background for the study and a basis for comparison, and the knowledge and ideas drawn from them inform the framing of this report, but it was intended to avoid overloading the report with data from contexts that were not, in the end, so relevant to the MENA region.

Each country case study is different and shaped by the very different levels of information and debates accessible in each country. There was no attempt made to homogenise them, as it is in the similarities and differences that some interesting information emerges.

Limitations

Therefore, these factors all mean this is quite a circumscribed study, intended primarily to identify issues and ideas for future research and for policy making, and to kick-start debates that take the issues more seriously.

The paucity of available statistics and research studies inevitably makes the report – which relies on secondary data – preliminary. More research and policy work is needed if the issues of women's economic empowerment, inequality and rights are to be well addressed. While the limited data and analyses mean that the results are preliminary, the report does draw together a range of existing debates and research, which give a strong indication of the many issues tying women to domestic care work in MENA, and how this impacts on them and the wider society.

Section 3:

An overview of the global statistics: quite a confusing picture

The global context

There are a number of different indexes set up by different international agencies for measuring gender equality gaps, women's inequality, women's empowerment and where countries rank in relationship to increasing women's status and equality.

These include: the Human Development Reports' Gender Empowerment Measures (GEM) and their Gender Development Index (GDI), now combined since 2010 into the Gender Inequality Index (GII), the most recent of which is 2014 (UNDP¹⁶). These have each measured different core indicators to measure women's health, knowledge and living standards (GDI); issues such as women's access to male jobs, professional work and parliament (GEM); and reproductive health, empowerment measured through seats in parliament and secondary education, and labour market participation.

On all these scales MENA countries score quite low: Egypt, Morocco, Lebanon and Jordan all scored very low on the equality index between women and men (GDI, 2016). On the GI Lebanon was placed and 65, Jordan at 77, Egypt at 110 and Morocco at 129 in the world. None of these looked at issues of women's work in relation to their care work, moreover, while they show that MENA is scoring quite poorly on issues of gender equality, these indexes say nothing about the time spent, the value or the issues raised by women's heavy domestic care burdens.

The Human Development Report in 2010-11 did look at these issues using time-use surveys to measure work outside the formal and informal paid sectors, but unfortunately only Morocco had completed a time-use survey by then. The results of that survey showed that women in Morocco did 300 minutes per day of unpaid domestic work, compared to 43 minutes for men, and only 81 minutes of paid work compared to 325 minutes for men. The other MENA country that completed a time-use survey had similar results. Tunisia showed 326 minutes of unpaid work for work and 54 for men, and 108 minutes of paid work for women compared to 298 for men.¹⁷

The OECD has a Gender Institutions and Development department, which drew up a GID-index:

'In order to give a broad overview of important traditions, laws, cultural norms, and religious practices affecting the economic status of women, we distinguish among the following social institutions: (i) the prevailing family

16 UNDP, 2014, Human Development Reports: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-inequality-index>.

17 UNDP, 2011, *Human Development Report 2011: sustainability and equity for all* - <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-report-2011>.

code; (ii) women's physical integrity; (iii) women's civil liberties; and (iv) women's ownership rights.'¹⁸

This is a more comprehensive way of measuring gender equality across a range of issues and their other index, the Social Institutions and Gender Inequality Index, looks across a wider range of indicators and does include references to women's care work as part of their work¹⁹. The main areas of focus are discriminatory family codes (which impact directly on the norms that define women's roles in the home); restricted physical integrity, including mobility (again a factor that can directly impact on women's work outside the home); son bias; restricted resources and assets (relevant especially for self employment and access to land); and restricted civil liberties. The focus on formal and informal laws, social norms and practices makes this index more relevant in measuring the practices that prevent or enable women to work outside the home and what the expectations of women are within the family.

On this scale MENA countries are more diverse, with Morocco scoring low on gender inequality, mainly because of progressive laws, and Jordan and Lebanon high, with Egypt scoring very high for gender inequality.

Another index highlighted here is the World Economic Forum Gender Gap Index, which measures economic participation, economic opportunities, political empowerment, education attainment, health and well being. Some of the interesting indicators within this index that are of relevance to women's work include: male and female unemployment, how far equal pay exists, conditions for maternity and support for childcare, and the effectiveness of governments' efforts to reduce poverty and inequality. On the overall index Egypt scores 134 in 2017, Jordan 135, Morocco 136 and Lebanon, 137 out of 144 countries. On the economic indices Lebanon came 133 out of 144 countries, Egypt 135, Morocco 137 and Jordan 138²⁰. Again it is not possible to draw out details about women's care work from this index.

A final index that was reviewed is the Women's Economic Opportunity Index which, like the SIGI index, includes factors and issues relating to women's work outside the workforce, including the degree of violence they experience, their domestic work and the fact that they are rarely represented in discussions or policy making forums. In this index 2010, Lebanon came 79 out of 218 countries, Egypt 80, Morocco 89 and Jordan 93.

'Women in the Middle East and North Africa have made gains, but they continue to struggle in nearly every domain. Despite the spread of education, women in the region continue to suffer more than men from a lack of opportunity to study. The region has some of the lowest rates of

18 Ferrant, G., Maria Pesando, L. and Nowacka, K. (2014). *Unpaid Care Work: The missing link in the analysis of gender gaps in labour outcomes*. Issues paper, OECD Development Centre, p.9

19 OECD, SIGI Index, 2014. <https://www.genderindex.org/ranking/>

20 World Economic Forum, 2017: The Global Gender Gap Report http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2017.pdf.

female literacy in the world—43.9% and 44.7% for Morocco and Yemen, respectively. It also has some of the lowest rates of enrolment in primary and secondary, as well as tertiary, education....many girls, even when allowed to attend school, are pressured to drop out to get married and start a family. High reproductive rates, poor education and laws designed for the “protection” of women are obstacles to economic opportunity. Requirements that a father or husband grant permission to work, travel or open a bank account further restrict women’s economic opportunity. These limitations have combined to create the lowest rate of female labour participation in the world...In Jordan, for example, only 17% of 20- to 45-year-old women work. From Morocco to Iran, no country in the region has a female labour participation rate above 50%²¹.

A lot more work has been done on trying to measure women’s work in the last ten years yet the findings of a Bridge Report from 2007 still stand across almost all these indices:

‘Another major shortcoming of both the GGI and the GEI is that neither includes indicators for informal work, unpaid and reproductive work, or time-use. These are critical to understanding women’s participation in the economy because much of women’s work falls outside the formal sector.’²²

While time use surveys are being introduced slowly in many countries, the reality is that these international indexes are all constrained by the lack of data from regions such as MENA, where the statistical information is often limited. The more nuanced the index is, the fewer countries they can find to provide the data required, and to date, MENA data on all aspects of women’s work, especially care work, are sparse at the national and so at the international level too.

The national and more local and specific statistics on women’s work care work found for this study will be presented within each country case study. It is to be noted that there is one recent paper that presents the existing data across the MENA region.

Setting the regional scene: a statistical report on MENA for women’s work, especially care work

The OECD drew up a database on available data from MENA in 2014 drawn largely from the GEM (Gender Empowerment Measure, UNDP) and GDI (Gender-related Development Index, UNDP), Government household surveys, and data collected for some of the UNDP Human Development Reports. It is highly aggregated and does not analyse differences within regions, but it

21 Economist Intelligence Unit, 2012: *Women’s Economic Opportunity Index* - http://www.eiu.com/Handlers/WhitepaperHandler.ashx?fi=WEO_full_report_final.pdf&mode=wp&campaignid=weoindex2012

22 Bridge report, 2007: *Gender Indicators: What, Why and How?* (Prepared by Justina Demetriades and based on BRIDGE’s *Gender and Indicators Cutting Edge Pack, 2007*), p.6 - <http://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-develOpment/43041409.pdf>

does clearly show that women in MENA are the most engaged in unpaid care work of any region in the world.

The following chart presents the average hours per day spent on unpaid care work by women and men, by regions of the world: Middle East and North Africa (MENA), South Asia (SA), Eastern Europe and Central Asia (ECA), Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), East Asia and Pacific (EAP), Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and North America (NA).

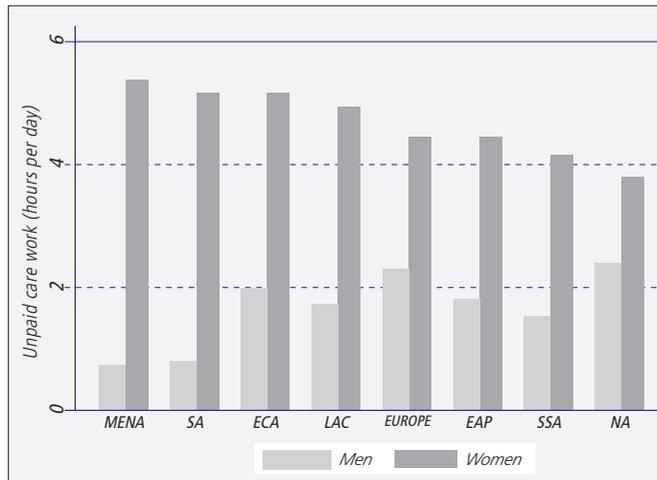


Figure 1. Unpaid Care Work: The missing link in the analysis of gender gaps in labour outcomes ²³

In analysing the data, the GID database looked at how far these findings correlated or not with the social factors described in the previous section: (i) the prevailing family code; (ii) women’s physical integrity; (iii) women’s civil liberties; and (iv) women’s ownership rights. The GID database researchers looked for evidence wherever they could find it, noting that the data are very scattered and patchy.

They highlighted several factors that play a significant role in shaping women’s work:

- the wider/macro economic frameworks that shape opportunities for women in each different context,
- the significance of political trends in shaping women’s lives,
- the legislative frameworks that do or do not enable women to change their situation,
- policy changes in family law, employment law and practices, that impact directly on women,
- migration patterns

²³ Ferrant, G., Maria Pesando, L. and Nowacka, K. (2014). *Unpaid Care Work: The missing link in the analysis of gender gaps in labour outcomes*. Issues paper, OECD Development Centre, p.2

- economic realities in each context
- the broad social attitudes and beliefs that shape the family and the psychological and emotional impact of these on individual women's lives and sense of agency

This analysis of the statistical picture across MENA showing the high rates of women working only within the home, and their low labour participation rates were reinforced at a recent UN meeting. Women's heavy engagement in care work is one key part of a complex picture of why rates of women's participation in the labour market are so low. Addressing women's limited economic empowerment in the region, a UN panel identified several barriers to women's paid work. There is a need to understand the causes of women's low rate of participation because women's economic empowerment

'is not limited to decent employment and income for women. It requires removing barriers in the market and public institutions to redistribute women's unpaid care, deliver women's security and agency, recognizing that social norms primarily limit what is considered women's work and their role in society.'²⁴

24 Winnie Byanyima, on being appointed to UN High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment, quoted in: <https://www.oxfam.org/en/pressroom/pressreleases/2016-02-23/winnie-byanyima-appointed-un-high-level-panel-womens-economic>

Section 4:

Women's care work and factors shaping this in the four countries.

The focus in this section is on the presentation of key issues that have emerged from the literature at the national and local levels, which helps to show and explain the similarities and common themes across and between countries around women's care work, the significant differences that are apparent, and what is changing.

More papers and references were found for Egypt and Morocco (both of which have undertaken time-use surveys on women's work), while very little was located for Jordan, and not much recent material from Lebanon. The case studies are quite sketchy as a result, but do highlight some key similarities and differences – some of which are located in issues such as Government laws and policies around women's work and women's rights to equality, as well as differences in attitudes and religious interpretations of women's place in society.

4.1. Lebanon

The context in Lebanon is one of post conflict following the long civil war and complicated by the massive influx of refugees from Syria in recent years. There has been growth since the war, which is slowing now, and the private sector dominates the economy with the public sector being small and services limited. There has been limited data collection on many aspects of the economy and politics but Lebanon has poor political representation for women and has done very few studies into the role of women in the workforce. It has never undertaken time use studies and the paucity of data is commented on in international reports. Laws protecting women's rights in the formal and informal sectors are weak and women's participation in paid work is low. The traditional division of labour within households is strongly embedded in the society independently of which of the many confessions women belong to, knowing that personal laws of marriage, children, inheritance, and women's responsibilities are more governed by confessional law than national legislation.

The data sources

The data are weak for women's work, including care work, in Lebanon. The best figures available are on formal work participation, however:

'Recent research by CRTDA (2010, 2013) supports the finding that there is a dearth of reliable national information about women's participation within the formal economy and the available data are inconsistent.'²⁵

25 Wallace, T. 2016, *Op. cit.*, p. 27

There is very little on women's care and domestic work and Lebanon has never undertaken a time use survey. There are no clear definitions and only limited acknowledgement of household and care work, and very little has been done to try and measure how much time women spend on this or how many women are predominantly engaged in this kind of work. FAO did a study in 1995 that showed that women in Lebanon work up to 14 hours a day in agriculture and unpaid housework, and an ILO study on these issues in 2008 stressed the amount of time women spend on this kind of work and that paid work has to fit in around their domestic commitments²⁶.

The ILO study on advancing women's employment in Lebanon showed that 57% of women work informally, and that informal work fits better with the demands for women to do all the domestic work at home. The low participation of women in the workforce was seen to be linked to cuts in services and the lack of decent government provision for quality accessible and affordable care for children, the elderly and vulnerable. 'Care needs in Lebanon have outpaced and overwhelmed the few services that do exist'²⁷ and consequently women have to fulfil home based responsibilities first and any other work has to fit in with that.

'Unpaid care work consumes much of women's time and energy and largely keeps them from pursuing employment opportunities outside the home... women have to opt for informal arrangements, such as home based work, in order to balance their family responsibilities'²⁸

Other international data show similar findings, with Lebanon coming 124th worldwide for economic participation and opportunities for women (as quoted by El Solh and Hijab²⁹) and it is acknowledged in many reports from UN and other agencies that Arab women's participation in formal employment is the lowest in the world, and is dropping in some countries; Lebanon is no exception. Lebanon is sometimes omitted from international indexes because their data is deemed to be patchy or poor. In addition, women's work in the care economy is not recognised or valued and is poorly conceptualised and measured in Lebanon, although the ILO has formally included women's care work as work since 2006.

A few local case studies on women's work in the home were identified, along with studies of women's participation in the formal and informal workforce, that help to identify the barriers for women's participation and highlight the role of care work as a key challenge.

26 ILO Regional Office, 2008. *Advancing women's employment in Lebanon*. ILO, Regional Office for the Arab States, Beirut, Lebanon. http://www.ilo.org/gender/Informationresources/WCMS_100280/lang--en/index.htm

27 Ibid., p.2

28 ILO Regional Office, 2009. *Social care needs and service provision in Arab states: bringing care work into focus in Lebanon*. ILO Regional Office for the Arab States, Beirut, Lebanon, p.1

29 El-Solh, C. and Hijab, N. 2008: *Women's Economic Rights in the South Mediterranean Region, a Comparative Analysis of Laws, Regulations and Practice*. EUROMED, Role of Women in Economic Life Programme.

The statistics, analysed and used repeatedly by multiple agencies, show the very low participation rates for women in the workforce, both formal (around 21%) and informal (a similar percentage), and highlight the reality that the majority of women – in and out of paid work- are engaged in unpaid care and home work. The analyses undertaken by Wallace in 2016³⁰ showed clearly that this work is ignored or undercounted by statisticians, policy makers, and people themselves. Being largely unrecognized as an issue, it falls outside of almost all policy debates and actions.

Women's work and the division of labour

In the few more detailed qualitative studies identified, the lives of women in Lebanon were explored in some depth, for example a research in disadvantaged communities outside of Beirut³¹. This study developed a categorization of care work and 28 categories of domestic work were identified. The authors explored who did what in the home. They found that women and girls did the bulk of the domestic work of cleaning, cooking, laundry, and care giving, while some men did the financial and home management. The division of labour was clear and highly gendered.

A smaller study of 26 families in Bekaa valley³² also found that the traditional division of labour is firmly established and is accepted by both women and men. The gender division of labour was similarly found in other studies. However, when exploring attitudes to domestic work, some differences were identified: while performing domestic tasks well was seen to be a key contributor to women's sense of well being and their understanding of being a 'good wife' and family member, the low income they generate from home based food production and their lack of opportunities for wider income generation was a cause of resentment for some women. Some women said their lack of earning power contributed to their lower status within the household.

A third more recent study carried out by Boustany Hajjar in rural Lebanon³³ again found that women's home work is often overlooked, and indeed all the studies said that women find it hard to discuss and measure this work because it is 'just what they do'. All in the family (and at policy level) disregard the economic value of care and home-based work, yet the work women do within the home takes much time, is tiring and leaves little time or space for many women to even consider going out to earn money in these rural

30 Wallace, T. 2016, *Op.cit*

31 Habib, R., Nuwayhid, I., Teretzian, J. 2006: *Paid work and domestic labour in disadvantaged communities on the outskirts of Beirut, Lebanon*. *Sex Roles, a Journal of Research*, Volume 55, No 5-6, pp 321-329

32 Obeid, M. 1998: *Gender and the division of labour in a changing rural area. Irsal, a case study*. AUB, Beirut, MSc these, May.

33 Boustany Hajjar, C. 2018: *Women's household work in marginalized locations in Lebanon: an exploratory research in six communities of the Bekaa valley and South Lebanon*, CRTDA, Beirut, Lebanon. Note: The study was undertaken in 2010 but only published this year.

communities. It is also essential for providing food security and sustaining the family, especially in poorer communities. The lack of recognition of the value and importance of home working by women for both the households and the wider economy is serious, when without women's unpaid work, families and the wider society would struggle to provide food, care, and support for workers, children, and the elderly.

The realities and ideology that maintain the existing division of labour

The opportunities for paid work are anyway few for women, and within the formal workforce they suffer discrimination from men, they are not expected to stay beyond marriage and child bearing, except in the public sector. Women get paid less than men for the same work, in spite of the labour laws, and in Lebanon there are few laws and policies to protect their rights to work, for social security, for support with childcare and as consequence few women continue work after they become mothers. Women struggle to get access to training and promotion and have few rights within the private sector. There are many disincentives for women going out to work in the formal sector or staying there once they marry because they receive little encouragement or support.³⁴ A study showed that 57% of women interviewed in Lebanon said society did not encourage them to get ahead and 73% saw no chance of getting equality with men at work and the dominant ideologies, which define men as breadwinners and women as home-makers, are strong.³⁵ Even where women are making a good and much needed financial contribution to the family, their primary role continues to be defined as running a good home and their value is based on concepts of being a good wife and mother.

While Lebanon has signed up to the CEDAW and ILO conventions it has opted out of clauses, for example around maternity leave, family allowances, sexual harassment at work, as well as rules around part time and home working. At the national level, there are few policies to support women in their care work, and going out to do paid work means they have to work a double day in order to fulfil all their responsibilities.

This ideology around the appropriate roles and behaviour for women are upheld by religious concepts such as the *qiwama* (which defines men as providing for their wives who, in turn, must be faithful and obey) in Islam, and seeing the man as head of the family and closer to Christ in Christianity. These cement women's dependence on men, their inequality and second-class status. The personal status laws are established according to the different faith groups (there are 18 sects in Lebanon) and they define the roles and position of women. These multiple personal laws leave space for all kind of

34 Kabbanji, quoted in UNESCO, 2012. *Policy brief: school to work transition of young women in Lebanon*. http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/world-heritage-37th-session/whc37-details/news/from_school_to_work_the_situation_of_young_women_in_lebanon/

35 Ibid.

interpretations and contribute to maintaining women as subservient to men who consider having the right to control their mobility, their inheritance, the major household decisions, and whether or not women can go out to work, sometimes even access a bank, or apply for credit.

The literature on women's work more broadly in Lebanon highlights a number of barriers that prevent women thriving in the labour force, either formal or informal, including lack of good maternity and child care provision, inflexible working hours, women being paid less than men, women doing better in the public rather than the private sector at a time when the public sector is shrinking, women's limited access to resources such as credit, financial support and advice and their more limited mobility. The lack of economic opportunities for women revealed two things. First, that while education for girls was rising significantly in Lebanon, their job opportunities were not growing hardly at all; and second, that their lack of rights and progression within the labour market pushed many back into the home even when, for example, the woman had a good education. Expectations of women's roles as wives and mothers and the lack of good maternity and childcare provisions meant that most women left formal employment once they became pregnant.

The data show that there are many factors that keep women out of work (the demand for women is low in the labour market) and in the home, the pull factors that tie them to their roles as wives, mothers and family carers are high. To date there is a lack of coordinated research addressing the issues that could improve the demand for working women by addressing their skills, training, the terms and conditions of work including childcare, flexible working, discrimination and sexual harassment in male dominated workplaces. There are some discrete studies but not linked together or connected to discussions and research on the issues of religion, ideology, and social norms that keep many women at home.

Changing attitudes

One key issue that was expected to change the current situation was educating girls, but that has had only a small impact on enabling women to leave their homes and access paid employment. In some of the research there are indications that attitudes are changing more in urban areas than rural areas, but little work has been done to date to really explore what is changing for women in different locations, classes, religions in Lebanon.

One study of changing attitudes 'the IMAGES project in MENA'³⁶ did recently look in depth at attitudes and behaviour of men and women around many key issues relating to gender equality, including the division of labour in the

36 El-Feki, S., Hellman, B. and Barkers, G., Eds. 2017. *Understanding masculinities: results from International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES), Middle East and North Africa (Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco and Palestine)*. Cairo and Washington DC, Promundo and UN Women-US

home, attitudes to women's work, and violence against women. The domestic division of labour is firmly entrenched with only 26% of men (1050 men aged 18 to 59 nationwide were interviewed) ever helping with domestic chores, and those men were from homes where migration or a woman at work has shifted some pattern, 'but the overall trend speaks to widespread inequality in sharing household duties'³⁷ and these attitudes are more resistant to change than issues around, for example, being prepared to work with a woman boss.

'The man has a role in taking care of the income and the expenses of the family, and taking care of them financially. His role is outside of the house; her role is inside the house' (Beirut woman)³⁸

This traditionally gendered attitude is dominant even though this is a society undergoing multiple changes, with the influx of refugees, and many people say they have begun to embrace concepts of gender equality; yet women and men largely continue to believe that men are the ones to provide for and protect the home, and women are their dependents. Some women and younger men hold somewhat more gender equitable attitudes on other issues, e.g. around violence against women and women's freedom to access the internet, but attitudes to women's roles within the home remain largely unchanged, 'nearly all women are raised to do domestic work in Lebanon, while most men are not.'³⁹. Girls continue to face restrictions on their mobility and are kept close to home. The only roles men play within the home to any significant extent are around house repairs, shopping and controlling the weekly budget, though some men do more if their wives are sick or working. 100% women do domestic work even if they are in full time paid employment and as one man said, 'a woman is everything in the house... sometimes a man barely comes home and she should be able to take care of everything while he is gone.'⁴⁰

In the context of scarce employment, men see their employment as more important than women's (57%) while fewer women agree (31%), although about 75% of women and men said women should have the right to work outside the home, which the authors found encouraging. But men in Lebanon are likely to resist the notion of women taking on leadership and those women that do participate actively get criticised for their perceived neglect of home and family duties. However, more women accept the idea of women in public life now.

There is no research in Lebanon about whether opening up job markets and opportunities to women could change attitudes and encourage women to go out to work, or what would enable women to share their domestic workloads and find ways to alleviate the burden of them in the home in order to go out.

37 Ibid., p.146

38 Ibid., p.156

39 Ibid., p.163

40 Ibid., p.170

There are very limited interrogations into how to shift attitudes and behaviour around the highly gendered division of labour, and much of the literature and policy documents simply repeat as a mantra that conservative social norms demand that women stay at home. There have been few serious efforts to create specific opportunities or policies to grow jobs for women. While laws have been passed to ensure that women have improved rights to access labour market and work under good terms and conditions that provide them support, security and protection as yet, these appear poorly implemented. No papers were found about ways to alleviate women's burden at home, for example, what kind of childcare support could work best for different women in different parts of Lebanon. There appears to be limited finance or political will to raise these debates to date.

4.2. Morocco⁴¹

The context is politically different in Morocco. There is clear reporting on the position of women and men in the economic, political, social and cultural spheres; the country has been a leader in time use surveys; women's rights on certain issues are well defined in the Constitution, and the laws designed to increase women's equality are reported on by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Solidarity. Economically Morocco has been a fast-growing economy though slowing now, with the noticeable growth of jobs within the country in manufacturing, especially in free trade zones, and recognition of the importance of and support to the informal sector in the country⁴². However, like other countries in MENA, there are high levels of outmigration especially for men, and as a result there are many women headed households that impact on and change the traditionally accepted roles for women. Despite this political context, education levels remain very low for girls. The results from changes in the constitution and law have been somewhat disappointing in their implementation and it is proving hard to get women into paid work and reduce their time spent in the home working.

The data sources

The international databases show that Morocco is falling in the gender indexes to 133rd out of 142 countries in 2014, and it ranks 135th in the economic participation of women. It ranks 116 out of 128 countries for the efficiency of women's economic empowerment policies and measures, although it ranks

41 Several references used for this section are in French. The quotes extracted from these documents have been translated by the author of the present report when needed, in which case the pages mentioned are those where the quotes and citations can be found in French.

42 The National Initiative for Human Development (INDH) was launched by the King in May 2005 and ran from 2006-2010. It is considered to be the big initiative of his reign focusing on both an anti-poverty and anti-exclusion campaign and a reform of modes of governance. It was expected to boost informal employment. The reform of the Family Code of 2004 especially was important in this context.

high for a MENA country in relation to promotion women's rights because of recent constitutional and legal changes.

Morocco has taken seriously the issues of women's work and undertaken three specific time use surveys (1997, 2012 and 2016) to increase the understanding of the roles women play within the household, in the informal sector and in formal sector employment. These surveys explore where and how participants' time is spent (over a 24-hours period) and in 2016, men's time use was also included in order to make comparisons between women and men. The work of the researchers involved generating comprehensive lists of tasks and work and looking across all work, paid and unpaid.

The time use surveys set out to:

- Measure the amount of time spent in different activities carried out by women (men were added in 2016);
- Provide data on the socioeconomic and demographic context in which they undertake these various activities;
- Highlight gender inequalities and differences between population groups in terms of time allocation and welfare.

These surveys looked a time allocation and time spent on the detailed lists and categories of women's work⁴³, later also men's work. The overall summary of findings of the 2012 TUS showed women devoting 5 hours a day to domestic work. In contrast men spend an average of 43 minutes a day on these tasks - 39 minutes in urban areas and 50 minutes in rural areas; 13% of men devote only 11 minutes a day to household activities.

As is found in the wider MENA region, 'gender gaps in paid and unpaid work are the most pronounced in the world.... women devote longer hours to unpaid work and much less time to paid work than men compared to most other parts of the world.'⁴⁴

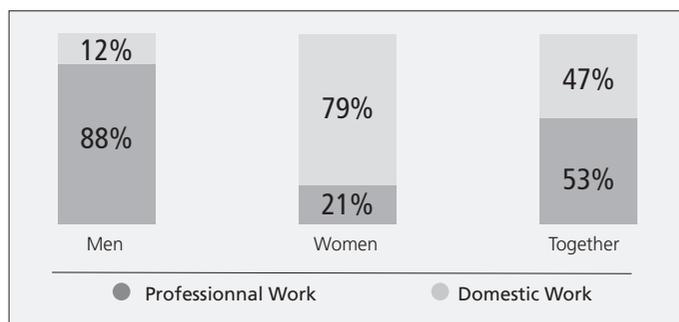


Figure 2. Gender gaps around paid and domestic work in Morocco ⁴⁵

43 Charmes J., 2015. *Time Use across the world: findings of a world compilation of time-use surveys*. UNDP Human Development Report Office, New York. This report explains the definitions and categories of work usually used in time use surveys but stressed the difficulties of comparisons across countries and some of the methodological challenges, which Morocco is addressing in their work.

44 UNDP, 2014. *Op. cit*, pp.18-20

45 Haut Commissariat au Plan, 2014: *Le Budget – Temps ou l'Enquête Nationale sur l'Emploi du Temps au Maroc 2011/2012 : Principaux Résultats des l'Enquête Emploi Temps*, Octobre 2014, Présentation PowerPoint, Royaume du Maroc, p.28

The first results of the 2012 time use survey show that the division of labour within the household is still largely shaped by family and tradition, with men as the breadwinner (88% in 2012) and women as supporting the household and family through domestic work and childcare, as well as informal work in agriculture or food processing that contribute to household income but not hers (79% in 2012). Only 38% of women are literate, though rates are improving for younger women and girls.

The results of the 2016 time use survey are still to be published and it has not been possible to find reports presenting even a summary of this data as yet.

Other data sources used in this research include a number of reports from the Government based on household and other surveys; studies on women's labour force participation; one on women's situation in relation to poverty; and several on the changing legal and policy landscape around gender inequality and women's rights.

The data collected and discussed are sometimes contradictory, with different numbers appearing in different reports; for example some sources quote 95% of women in Morocco engaged in heavy domestic work rather than 79%, perhaps because many women in paid work are also undertaking domestic duties. The data have been used in this report as carefully as possible.

Division of labour and the factors that uphold this in Morocco

'Morocco, while pursuing strategies to promote competitiveness and modernisation for effective entry into the global economy, still has entire sectors of production and services which are more characteristic of developing countries. The continued existence of a significant informal economy goes hand in hand with the survival, outside the modern economy, of social structures dominated by family networks, which have a big role in organising informal economic activities and in determining both the modes of access to them and the explicit or tacit rules governing them.'⁴⁶

There are several papers exploring different factors that may be contributing to some changes in the distribution of household work. One study that used the 2007 household surveys and interviews to look at the impact of male outmigration on women's work, which is usually expected to lead to a significant rise in women going out to work, found that for women whose husbands migrate but send no remittances their labour participation outside the home only increases very little. They put this down to the poor wages and work conditions open to women but also to Morocco being a society with strict gender roles, 'the need to replace migrants' work may therefore result in an increase in women's unpaid family work, as they might have to compensate for the lost labour while continuing to assume their domestic role'....⁴⁷

46 Walther, R., 2006. *Vocational training in the informal sector: report on Morocco field survey*. Agence Française de Développement, Paris, France. Working paper 16. p.5

47 David, A. and Lenoël, A., 2016. *International emigration and the labour market outcomes of women staying behind: the case of Morocco*, Research Papers, AFD, n° 2016-23, Mai, p.6

Morikawa⁴⁸ found other disincentives to women going out to work in her study: laws often discourage women from seeking work or doing well in work through male control of women's movements and needing male permission before they can act. Similar findings were seen in Egypt in a similar study where they found that migration-induced substitution effect is likely limited in societies characterised by strict gender roles. In this respect, the labour market response to migration in Morocco may be rather similar to the Egyptian case described by Binzel and Assaad.⁴⁹ In Egypt, female labour supply is relatively inelastic to changes in the labour supply of male household members. They argue that if changes occur, they are most likely to affect unpaid family and subsistence work, as they are less subject to restrictive social norms and are easier to combine with domestic work and childcare duties.⁵⁰

For those receiving remittances there is no incentive to go out to work and they continue to work within the home. However, this work expands as women often have to compensate for the lack of male labour, especially in poorer rural areas, and they take on new unpaid roles in e.g. agriculture.

While some argue that 'the traditional family model, whereby women enter the workforce early, quit their job at the time of marriage, and return to work after the children are brought up, is no longer necessarily observed'⁵¹ because of changes in education levels, whether a woman is urban or rural, and new laws, the overall trends around women's participation in the work force are clear. The social norms around women's work within the home remain strong and a paper on female labour force participation showed that while many women see going out to work as a route to autonomy and income, many also place a very high value on their traditional roles as mothers, and see their role as 'good wives and mothers' as most important:

'When women become mothers, there are two types of countries: one which values the "formal" work of mothers as much as their "informal" work at home, and the other which perceives "formal" work by mothers negatively by assuming children would suffer from it. In the latter type of countries, including Morocco and Jordan, the value of housewives is highly regarded, which could lead young women to internalize these values and to more of them becoming housewives in these societies, unless there are other factors coming into play.'⁵²

Another study that explored the correlation between women and poverty in Morocco directly linked their poverty to vulnerability and exclusion, and came to different conclusions, which highlights the diversity of women's

48 Morikawa, Y. 2015. *The Opportunities and challenges for female labour force participation in Morocco*. Global Economy and Development a Brooking, Working paper 86, July 2015.

49 Binzel, C. and Assaad, R. (2011). *Egyptian men working abroad: labour supply responses by women left behind*. Labour Economics, Vol, 80, S1, pp.98-114

50 David and Lenoël, *Op. cit.*, p.6

51 *Ibid.*, p.2

52 Morikawa, *Op. cit.*, p.20

experiences depending on their household composition, wealth, migration and education status, and whether they are rural and urban. While gender inequality is recognised as a real challenge the paper argues that the links to poverty are poorly understood in Morocco, and concluded that women's poverty is caused in part by the heavy domestic burdens they carry, which increased during the 1990s because of structural adjustment measures that had added to women's domestic burdens. As services were cut, women had to devise survival strategies for their families and had to use their own unpaid labour to make up for the lack of government services and support. The time and energy required prevented women leaving the home and increased their care work: 'economic recession and restructuring have not only resulted in public expenditure cuts but also, and indirectly, in increased pressure on the traditional support system and safety network within the family unit'⁵³. Poor rural women are especially affected by the heavy domestic workloads: 'Poverty has many faces and dimensions. Its dominant face in Morocco is becoming increasingly female, rural, illiterate and unskilled'⁵⁴ and this is directly linked to the social and cultural norms as well as legal constraints for women.

Law and policies shaping women's position and status

'In recent years, Moroccan women have benefited from several institutional and societal reforms, guaranteeing them more and more extensive rights and promoting their emancipation and their contribution to the country's development. As a result, a fairly important presence of the latter took place in the political, economic and social arenas. However, quantitatively, their presence in the labour market has hardly benefited from these normally favourable developments; on the contrary, it has even regressed in recent years'.⁵⁵

There is a consensus that Morocco has introduced a number of policies and laws in recent years to address women's inequalities and increase their rights, and that they collect data on issues such as women's participation in work through time use and household surveys. . However, there is also broad agreement that change for women in the home and the workplace is coming very slowly.

The 2014 CESE Government report ⁵⁶ on increasing gender equality drew several conclusions about the progress of women in relation to paid work

53 Skalli, L. 2009. *Women and Poverty in Morocco: The Many Faces of Social Exclusion*. Feminist Review, No. 69, The Realm of the Possible: Middle Eastern Women in Political and Social Spaces (Winter, 2001), pp. 73-89, Palgrave Macmillan Journals, p.83

54 Ibid., p.73

55 Royaume du Maroc, Haut-Commissariat au Plan, 2013. *Femmes Marocaines et Marché du Travail : Caractéristiques et Evolution*, p.3

56 Conseil Economique, Social et Environnemental, 2014 : *Promotion de l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes dans la vie économique, sociale, culturelle et politique : Les discriminations à l'égard des femmes dans la vie économique : réalités et recommandations*. Rapport du CESE, Royaume de Maroc.- http://www.cese.ma/Documents/PDF/Auto-saisines/AS-18-2014-discriminations-a-l_égard-des-femmes-dans-la-vie-economique/Rapport-AS-18-2014-VF.pdf

and concluded that despite the fact that constitutional and normative reforms have been introduced and made some progress in increasing equality, women's participation in development remains low. The first and most worrying finding of this report is that women's economic participation has declined in recent years and the participation rate of women has decreased from 28.1% in 2000 to 25.1% in 2013. 'At the same time, the number of housewives grew faster than the working-age female population'⁵⁷. This is seen to be partly down to the norms around domestic and care work but also the very poor conditions women face at work:

'Several observers agree that women remain concentrated in activities that are not very rewarding in the labour market. They are victims of wage discrimination. Those who have pursued their education are more prone to be unemployed. Private companies very poorly abide by the commitments contained in the Labour Code. The civil service remains at the leadership level male dominated and women's access to decision-making positions is very limited.'⁵⁸

Several documents covering the Morocco case link together women's rights and access to paid work, their status within the household, and their employment opportunities and see how these combine to keep women out of paid work and in the home. A paper by Zirari⁵⁹ picks up on the issue of the reform of the Personal Status Code (*Mudawana*) through The Family Code 2004, which was a deliberate move to modernize women's status and position in society and the result of a long struggle by human rights and women's rights advocates. This challenged the 1958 code that has a 'conception of hierarchization of roles subjecting women to the authority of their husbands.'⁶⁰ The family code established concepts of consensus and reciprocity of rights and duties between men and women, including around issues as controversial as inheritance, abortion, and violence against women. For years women and the family had been seen as sacrosanct and previous attempts at reform had failed. Women were relegated to the private sphere, expected to be submissive and excluded from public and political life. The author claims that the new code and the fierce debates around it have met with some success in changing attitudes to and opportunities for women. However she notes the many challenges:

'Even if the Constitution establishes the principle of equality and thus guarantees the exercise of public liberties for women and men, the field of responsibility and decision-making is more favourable to men and the participation of women in economics and politics remains low. Various causes can account for this backwardness, in particular the persistence of sexist

57 Ibid., p.15

58 Ibid., p.15

59 Zirari, H. 2010. *Women's rights in Morocco: assessment and perspectives*. Culture and Society, Development and CoOperation, Panorama, pp. 264 -270

60 Ibid., p.265

stereotypes, discrimination in terms of access to resources and the weakness of social structures that could remedy the difficulties encountered by women in striking a work-life balance.⁶¹

Zirari concludes that inequality and discrimination are still the reality for many women, especially those who have access to few resources, are often illiterate, vulnerable to poverty through divorce, becoming widows or head of households because of men migrating, and those subject to conjugal and domestic violence. Women in Morocco have one of the lowest percentages of women in employment and 'unpaid work for women is an overwhelming wide-spread phenomenon'⁶² still, affecting 84% in the rural areas. Change is very slow.

Theresa Gonzales Santos⁶³ has also looked at family law and the tensions between Islamic law governing family life and the constitutional law governing public life, tensions which affect women's lives very directly, in relation to their right to work and their value within the domestic sphere. She noted that in spite of many changes, the constitutional law still states that everyone is responsible for providing their own needs, except a wife, who will be taken care of by her husband. Patriarchal attitudes continue to deny these women and their daughters' access to the law, resources, adequate health services, housing and social welfare⁶⁴. Young girls continue to miss out on education in poor communities because of their traditional household chores, including water and fuel collection. In poor rural areas nearly 2/3 of women's work is unrecognized and free, and simply defined as 'family help'. This includes unpaid labour in crafts or on farms, in addition to a domestic workload of about 6 hours a day, caused by the lack of amenities, poor water and electricity supplies, poor housing and sanitation.

A study on male migration mentioned the fact that women had access to work in the Free Trade Zone which, although poorly paid and with poor conditions, did in theory allow those women with no access to remittances from men who have migrated, and who are experiencing poverty, to access a regular income. However, while women's unpaid work rose, their access to paid employment barely increased, partly because the pay and conditions were so poor:

'We found that having a migrant in the household increases women's labour participation, while receiving remittances decreases it. While migration increases women's probability of being an unpaid family worker, it has no impact on their probability of having income-generating activities. The qualitative fieldwork indicates that while traditional attitudes are an

61 Ibid., p.266

62 Ibid., p.269

63 Gonzales Santos, T. 2013. *The Exploitation of Women in Northern Africa: The Case of Morocco*, World Journal of Islamic History and Civilization, 3 (4): 170-178, 2013, IDOSI Publications.

64 Skalli, L., 2009, *Op. cit.* p.76

important factor in women's low levels of engagement in paid activities, the most compelling reason behind this situation lies in the lack of good job opportunities for women'.⁶⁵

Their willingness to do this paid work, in fact, was also seriously affected by traditional community attitudes to women going out to work. Being seen to walk to the factory signalled that you were poor and your husband was unable to keep you, so working there carried a real social stigma. This could over-ride their need for an income for some women, even though they were poor.

In spite of modernisation changes in law and some policies, patriarchal attitudes are slow to shift and the family is expected to pick up the pieces to alleviate impoverishment. This results in continuing and often intensifying heavy unpaid domestic workloads for women, who have only limited access to low paid labour intensive activities in the informal sector.

It is clear in Morocco that the causes of women's continued heavy unpaid care roles are complex and go beyond simply attributing women's position and status in the home to traditional attitudes and beliefs – though clearly these remain very important. Other factors include poverty; migration and shifts in family roles when the men are away; the lack of government provision forcing women to make up for the lack of access to services and basic amenities for families; and the nature of the economic opportunities for women, which are often poor. Laws and policies are critical but do not enable changes in all these other factors so progress is slow, although differences are seen, in the few studies identified, between attitudes and behaviour in rural and urban areas, areas of high migration, and areas with new economic opportunities.

Changing attitudes and ideology

However, while conservative laws and views remain, there are some significant shifts in attitudes and behaviour taking place in Morocco that contrast with some of the other countries in the study. For example the study of Morocco in 'Images of MENA'⁶⁶, found that men are more open to women working outside the home and to their participation in political and public life. More than three-quarters interviewed support educational equality for boys and girls, and more than half believed in equal rights to work for married women and men. For their part, a majority of women challenged norms that restrict their roles to the domestic sphere, and they are more strongly in favour of their right to work and to occupy positions of public leadership.

While this represents a huge and important shift in attitudes, because traditional attitudes are one major cause of keeping women in their homes across MENA, women in or out of work continue to carry the load when it

65 David and Lenoel, 2016, *Op. Cit*, p. 3

66 El-Feki,S., Hellman, B. and Barkers, G. Eds. 2017, *Op.cit*.

comes to doing the housework, while men continue to make most of the household decisions, either on their own or jointly with their wives. These patterns are set in childhood, with men and women often following the models established by their parents. Interestingly, both men and women reported having more power and control over household decisions than the other gender acknowledges and men would like to be more involved in family life⁶⁷. This wish of men to be more involved with their children was repeated in several studies and suggests that the traditional division of labour within the home is problematic for some men as well as women.

While the study found people more liberal around women's work, they are still conservative around domestic roles with 70% men seeing women's key roles as within the home, although only 50% of women agreed. The study showed women challenging many stereotypes and wanting more freedoms, while lack of employment opportunities for the men is shifting their power somewhat and many feel life is changing. More women are making their own way in the world and feel less weak and dependent on male authority than in the past. Some men are starting to question the old ways:

'I used to ask myself why I went to school and my sisters stayed at home to do the housework and be taught how to be housewives, how to bake bread. They were preparing them for a role, for the day a man arrived to take them as wives, and he would do the same in his house, make them into simple housewives.' Man, 26 years old, unemployed, Rabat.⁶⁸

Expectations are changing for some women, and women who head households, whose husbands migrate or live near Free Trade Zones, are seeing some changes in roles and responsibilities. Urban attitudes and behaviour are more open to women getting paid work. The legal changes around personal status and rights have led to a slowly changing national conversation around women's growing autonomy in some parts of the country and there is a commitment to improving women's rights. Some changes in attitudes among women and men around women's right to work and participate outside the home have been observed. However, many traditional attitudes are slow to change especially around the role of wives and around housework, and poor women especially have to work long hours every day within the family to provide the services and support that the Government is failing to supply. Some of the papers discussing the subject in Morocco (e.g. the presentation of the VAW and TUS surveys paper⁶⁹), and indeed in some of the other MENA countries, consider violence against women as leading to their low status, limited mobility and lack of access to public life in the region.

67 Ibid., p. 92

68 Ibid., p. 108

69 High Commission for Planning (HCP), Morocco, 2014: VAW and TUS surveys in Morocco. *Inter-regional WorkshOp on Good Practices in Gender Statistics*, 5 – 7 November 2014, INEGI, Aguascalientes, Mexico <https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/VAW%20and%20TUS%20surveys%20in%20Morocco.pdf>

Violence holds women in positions of subservience in the family, and fear of violence outside the home keeps them to the private sphere. This is acknowledged as a critical issue and one that does contribute to women staying out of public life, however, it is beyond the scope of this research to explore this in any detail.

In contradistinction to this though, the data from Morocco (and from Egypt for example) show other reasons for the continued conservatism around women's position in the society, which keeps them within the home and tied to care work. Some feedback from women in these studies raises the issue of why women continue to be attached to traditional concepts of women's roles as wives and mothers. While their lack of earning power puts them in a dependent position, many talk of the pride they take in their work and of wanting to be seen as 'a good wife' or 'a good woman'. They get pleasure from their children, and indeed some men expressed a real interest in being more involved in childcare. There is still a high status and value placed on women's role and performance within the home and a woman going out to work is still seen as a source of shame to some, especially where working women are associated with poverty.

4.3. Egypt

The context in Egypt is fast changing and sometimes contradictory because of the upheaval of the Arab spring and subsequent political and economic shifts in the country. The break with a long-standing government led to upheaval, conflict and violence, and a reversion to fundamentalism for some and protest for others. There have been major political disruptions that have impacted on the economy dramatically. Labour markets are shrinking along with the dramatic decline in the economy, opportunities are few and the public sector, where educated women in Egypt have traditionally found good long-term employment, has continued to contract. When opening up the Egyptian economy in 1950s and 60s Nasser promised women with degrees jobs in the public sector, a sector that carried good terms and conditions for them and many found employment there. The opportunities offered included good maternity and childcare provisions and flexible working, not available in the private sector. This led to highly educated women in Egypt finding work in ways they did not in many other MENA countries. The opportunities for women to work outside the home in the formal government sector have been declining steeply, as have jobs in the private sector, which anyway never offered the same kind of benefits and has always been far less attractive for women. The rise in conflict and the lack of security on the streets has also curtailed the opportunities for women outside the home, making it harder for those who want to work to get the agreement of their families, as has the rise in religious fundamentalism.

The data sources

The international indices generally include Egypt, and the World Economic Forum gender gap report of 2012 ranked Egypt 126/135 on the gap between male and female opportunities and achievements and 130/135 in women's labour force participation- which was 24% for women and 79% for males⁷⁰. This trend has been long term and a previous WEF report found that Egypt scored lowest on women's economic opportunities, coming 120 out of 128 countries⁷¹. In 2017 the scores were a little better with women's economic participation and opportunity ranked at 108 out of 144, and Egypt being ranked 134 out of 144 overall for the gender gap between women and men.⁷² This low participation directly affects economic growth: a 5% labour force increase of women can lead to a 1.3% increase in GDP⁷³, and the indexes note that very low rates of female participation have an adverse effect on GDP.

The Labour Market Surveys in Egypt (the last one was in 2012) show a slowing or drop in women's economic participation in the formal labour market in spite of rising education levels for women. Using the Egypt Labour Market Panel survey (ELMPS) 2012 as point of reference⁷⁴, the figures clearly show continuing low workplace participation by women. Trends from the surveys in 1998, 2006 and 2012 provide most of the data for the paper presented by Rana Hendy, and male employment figures are double those of women throughout the period. There is, at the same time, a major increase in women's educational attainment yet low labour market activity continues, contrary to expectations. In Egypt the figures clearly show that increasing a women's education is not enough to raise their participation in the paid workforce; other factors are also very important. On the supply side the issues identified in the ELMPS include family circumstances, fertility, time use, and women's preferences, and on the demand side are a shrinking public sector and discrimination against women in the private sector. There is a lack of jobs for women, and from the international and national data it is clear that Egypt remains a largely traditional society with a gendered allocation of time within households: men continue to do the market work, and work in formal and informal employment, while the family is run by women.

Unpaid housework is excluded from most measurements of work in Egypt because it is not seen as an economic activity or having an economic value. Women at home are considered as housewives (as seen earlier) and their work

70 World Economic Forum, 2012: *The Global Gender Gap Report* - http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GenderGap_Report_2012.pdf

71 Assaad, R. and El-Hamidi, F. (n.d.), *Women in the Egyptian Labour Market: an analysis of developments, 1988-2006*. Population Council, Cairo Egypt. (PowerPoint Presentation, Unpublished document).

72 World Economic Forum, 2017: *Op.Cit.*

73 Hendy, R. 2015. *Women's participation in the Egyptian labour market (1998-2012)*. Economic Research Forum, Giza, Egypt, Working paper series no 907, May 2015

74 Ibid.

is not given economic value. Consequently, there is a serious lack of data on care work. The first time use trial to measure women's engagement in care work was only undertaken in Egypt in 2010 by the Economic Research Forum (ERF) and this was the first time that women's work at home was allocated any economic value:

'Despite the wealth of studies on Egyptian women in the labour market; at the level of economic analysis, there is immense rarity of studies which address majoring in valuation of housework within the family. This in part is due to the limited and recent availability of specific data on time use. The study published by the Economic Research Forum, rethinking time allocation of Egyptian women is probably the first one published on the subject.'⁷⁵

Those undertaking the time use studies have highlighted the real challenges in both measuring unpaid work and estimating the monetary value of this work, which is very diverse and varies in frequency and intensity. The second Egypt time use study in 2012 tried to address these challenges and ERF reworked their methodology⁷⁶. They found that overall unmarried women work 20.8 hours in the home, married women with no children 32.5 hours, and women with children 51.7 hours – hours that are well beyond those for a normal working week in paid employment. These studies go into detail about women's place in the household and how this affects their unpaid care work, something that international data of course aggregates.

The 2012 study also looked at male and female time use in detail in 12,000 families, many of which were involved in farming activities and animal and poultry breeding for the family consumption, including cutting grass, harvesting, making cheese and butter. They also looked at shopping for the family, transporting family members to their activities, construction or maintenance work in the family house, domestic activities including food preparation, washing dishes and bowls, laundry and ironing, cleaning the house, fetching water, collecting firewood for the oven or any other purposes, dedicated care for children, the elderly and the sick, and caring for children and the elderly along with other activities at the same time. The report is meticulous in highlighting where the data are clear and strong and where problems still remain. It provides good information on the nature of care and domestic unpaid work in Egypt and how work is split between women and men in different kinds of households.

The present research drew on several other studies in addition to the quantitative data and several studies were found on women's participation in the workforce, analyses of the ERF time use surveys, women's education and the lack of a link to employment, and some attitude and behaviour

75 El-Antary, S. 2016. *Op. cit* p.21

76 The ERF reports provide detailed analysis of the complexities of this kind of measurement and the difficulties of getting accurate data given that much unpaid work is done concurrently or only at certain times of the year. They also note the problems of comparisons because definitions and measurements vary a lot.

surveys carried out within Egyptian Universities and research organisations. No detailed case studies of women's care work were found but that may well be because they are in the grey literature or written in Arabic.

The division of labour

The European Training Foundation undertook a project in 2009 in the region⁷⁷ aimed at promoting sustainable gender equality policies in Egypt, Tunisia and Jordan in the areas of education, training and employment, taking into consideration the specific local socio-economic context. This research found that a common norm is that women should stay out of the labour market at times of high unemployment, ceding their places in the labour force to men. This has continued in spite of increasing literacy rates for women and the decrease in the differences between women and men around literacy: indeed women now take 49% of the places in tertiary education, yet are still very under-represented in employment.

The project looked at transition to work and found that the women's role in the family is central to this finding and that men remain the 'provider of money'. Women in Egypt were found to be in the worst position compared to Tunisia and Jordan (however figures found for Jordan suggest these are now lower) with labour participation rates the lowest and unemployment rates the highest – however definitions and calculations of unemployment are problematic. Women in employment are often confined to the lowest paid jobs in administration.

El Mahdi⁷⁸ uses data from Egypt Labour Market Survey (ELMS) 1998 to explore labour market trends and the reasons for them:

'There is a regular trend of increasing informality in the Egyptian labour market especially for the female labour force, which now finds it more difficult to access the private sector except through becoming informally self-employed or an employer. This coincides with the privatisation process and the male bias evident in private sector employment'⁷⁹

The trend also shows a move away from agricultural activities, from almost 50% in 1976 to 31% in 1996, yet this is a sector where many women found paid work in the past. The author finds significant gender differences in both the formal and informal sectors, although women have especially high rates of unemployment in the formal sector compared to men. They 'face open discrimination in hiring in the private sector' and contribute (along with children) as unpaid family workers in over a fifth of the micro and small businesses.

77 EurOpean Training Foundation, 2009. *Women and work in Egypt: case study of tourism and ICT sectors*. ETF

78 El Mahdi, A. 2002. *Op.Cit*

79 *Ibid.*, p.7

The Population Council analysis of women in the labour force by Assaad and El-Hamidi showed that:

- Marital status has a strong impact on the kind of work women are able to perform. Married women are almost exclusively in the public sector
- The majority of unmarried women who work do so in order to save money - probably for marriage
- The desire and confidence in ability to work after marriage depends on the sector of work, but is rising for private sector

This report clearly shows the major influence of marriage and household responsibilities on women's progress in the labour market.⁸⁰

Other research in Egypt confirms there are major differences between women and men and their opportunities in different sectors: women's employment is determined by their marital status and the sector in which they work, and while they can work as married women if they are in the public sector, it is harder for them to work in the private sector after marriage; few women once married continue their employment. In the private sector the hours are longer, jobs more insecure, benefits fewer, and there is a gender pay gap; the acceptability of women in the private sector is lower. After the revolution especially, women were discouraged from working and many withdrew from the labour market.

The sector where women once found good employment was in the public sector, following the policy of President Nasser to guarantee female graduates employment. The impact of this policy was significant in Egypt, but the effects are disappearing now as there are no longer such guarantees and the jobs in the public sector are diminishing. Male attitudes to women at work affect their recruitment, training and promotion, and being confined to poorly paid or low status jobs leads to women withdrawing from the market, and men remain defined as the breadwinner and provider.

In addition, it is very clear from the 2012 ERF study⁸¹ that women have substantial domestic burdens, which include agriculture for household consumption and multiple tasks on the farm and with the animals. Overall, unpaid housework was 30.25 hours for women and 4.19 hours for men (1-2 less hours in urban settings but still reflecting the same high differential). The higher hours in rural areas for women are spent on collecting water, firewood and fuel. Mothers primarily care for children, though this can be spread between other women in the household and their daughters in some households.

Women and men often share shopping and agriculture for home consumption (35% men and 62% women) with women doing chickens, sheep, cattle and

80 Assaad, R. and El-Hamidi F. (n.d.), *Op. Cit.*, p.24

81 As presented by El-Antary, S., 2016, *Op. Cit*

diary production and men doing much of the agriculture. Many women also work unpaid in the informal sector, which is where up to 70% of rural women work. However, reciprocal labour among women on their farms makes their overall labour hard to assess; this work is called 'companionship work' and takes place between many different women on a need basis. The many ways in which women work within and between households and the multiplicity of the tasks they undertake make the measurements challenging and standard approaches do not really capture the myriad aspects of women's unpaid work. This comes through very clearly in these Egypt studies.

Undoubtedly, women's unpaid household and care work rises on marriage and as family size increases: 'domestic work is a full-time job for women, between 43 and 45 hours, with higher hours for ever married and employed women'⁸². Care work is especially a heavy burden for ever married women and impacts directly on their relaxation and leisure time, the time they have for securing paid work or participating in activities outside the home.

Uneducated women in the urban areas, especially Cairo, and poor women in the slums or rural areas face different challenges in relation to accessing work outside the home. They are expected to perform all the 'female roles' within the house while richer women are able to pay for domestic help (delegating their roles to other women). Poorer women have to do the entire domestic and care work themselves, plus attend to the added burdens that have arisen as a result of a poorly functioning public services sector where water, electricity, waste disposal, healthcare, and education are often expensive and under stress⁸³. The demands on poorer women are high at home and their opportunities relatively few for paid work outside the home; these are key factors that keep them primarily focused on their roles and responsibilities as mothers, wives, carers and family supporters.

As elsewhere, while women contribute significantly to family survival and well-being this remains largely unrecognized or valued by the state, communities and families, despite its importance to the welfare of the community as a whole.⁸⁴ The participation of all women in economic and care activities within the home is largely taken for granted or unrecognized, even by women themselves. The time it takes is underestimated and it is not prestigious work; this negatively impacts women's social status and their ability to participate in decision making as well as ensuring that their needs are not excluded from policies and national debates.

The value of unpaid work as it is currently counted in Egypt is 34.8% of GDP, all but 4.6% of that is from women. 4.4% men and 88.6% women accept

82 Hendy,R. 2015, *Op. Cit* p.6

83 These differences undoubtedly exist in all four countries, but research was found around this issue primarily in Egypt.

84 El-Antary, S.,2016, *Op.Cit*

housework as a role they should play; child care was seen as an acceptable task by 4-5% men and 32% women.⁸⁵

The challenges of measurement of and allocating monetary value to unpaid work were the subject of a workshop organized by CDRTA in Egypt in 2016⁸⁶. The research and data discussed there by researchers and activists reflected these trends: women work longer hours than men, and middle class women – even those at work - work long hours in the home. Poorer women with many children may go out to find paid work to make ends meet but these ‘women constantly try to reconcile work obligations with childcare requirements’⁸⁷. Whether women are employed or not their domestic and care work obligations must be met. Without learning where women put their energy, use their time and create value, the speakers argued that it is impossible to understand what women are doing, the many barriers they face and what would enable them to engage more productively in all areas of work.

As well as raising the issue of calculating housework value and its impact on the private and public spheres, this workshop stressed the need to pay attention to the conditions of work, including labour law and social insurance, and the personal status laws, which impact greatly on women’s lives. Discriminatory personal status laws and practices at work were key factors contributing to women’s exclusion from paid employment, and paying attention to where laws and behaviour impede women’s equality outside the home is critical for understanding women’s current position and status. An attorney participating in the workshop said:

‘Even if the husband allows his wife to work, she faces other issues related to law and public customs. She assumes the responsibility of the whole family, the husband and the children, since it is her responsibility alone. She is in charge of the household work, and in order to work outside the house, the condition for her to be able to do so is to reconcile her job outside the house with her household work that she does entirely without the participation of the man. It is actually considered that if men helped in the household work, this would diminish their manliness and be considered as having waived a right given to them by law, custom and society. Hence, it is difficult for women to improve their performance, innovation, and professional promotion, as they carry the burden of being responsible for all the family members and for satisfying everyone without thinking about their own needs’.⁸⁸

In Egypt, as elsewhere across MENA, there is a growing concern about the low contribution of women to GDP and recognition of the need to involve them more in economic life, in order to raise the national economic base

85 Ibid., p.66

86 Egyptian Association for Comprehensive Development and New Woman Research Centre, 2016. *Workshop on Household Work and Women’s Economic Empowerment*, CRTDA Workshop Report, Cairo, Unpublished document.

87 Ibid.

88 Ibid., p.7

and address growing poverty. Yet, while women continue to be seen as dependents within households and responsible for all the care work, this continues to justify their subordinate status and the low wages they are paid when they do go out to work. Their domestic work is not valued: according to the System of National Accounts (SNAs), prepared by the United Nations (and used in different countries) unpaid housework includes many of the paid labour activities in the community, e.g. domestic services, child and geriatric care, some nursing activities, yet, contrary to the paid services, unpaid housework is not included within the GDP.

Other studies in Egypt also confirm that women's work is substantially unacknowledged and their participation in economic activities underestimated. The discussions go beyond attributing women's roles and low status in the home simply to cultural and traditional values and several studies link it directly to women's lack of access to income, the harsh conditions of work they find, especially in the private formal and informal sectors, the lack of recognition of the value of the work they do unpaid within the home and family run business and farms, and the wider legal and policy framework that continues to define women within the private sphere.

El-Antary reviewed in her research⁸⁹ many authors on women's work and highlighted that women are being exploited by doing long hours of essential work - urban women include market work in their unpaid labour while for rural women much of their work is subsistence labour - but this is seen as 'their role' and ignored by both economists and policy makers as well as being unpaid.

Ideology that upholds the division of labour: exploring attitudes and changing ideologies

In spite of these studies around the division of labour and the barriers to women accessing decent paid work, the official explanation of the decreasing participation of women in the labour force is that Egyptian women are reluctant to work and prefer to "stay at home to care for their families after marriage". But many women say in different studies (already referenced) that it is male disapproval and oppression in marriage that prevent them working, as well as no maternity leave and no child care provision, women having lower wages than men and no insurance.

The research for the Images project⁹⁰ found that overall men remain resistant to women working outside the home, and to their participation in aspects of political and public life. However, two-thirds or more of men surveyed support educational equality for boys and girls and equal pay for equal work, and reported that they would be willing to work with female colleagues should women gain access to the workplace. It was very clear that they want women

89 El-Antary, S., 2016, *Op.Cit*

90 El-Feki, S., Hellman, B. and Barkers, G. , 2017, *Op. cit.*

to continue to carry the load when it comes to housework, while men make most of the household decisions. These patterns begin in childhood, with men and women often following the models established by their parents and male attitudes in these areas are slow to shift in Egypt.

In spite of the significant gap around who does the daily care giving, men said they would like to do more, 'with over 60 per cent of men interviewed saying they spend too little time with their children because of work, and nearly half do participate in some aspects of childcare. Almost half of the men and women contacted reported being in favour of paid parental leave for fathers'.⁹¹

There was a strong consensus that a woman's most important role is to take care of the home and cook for the family. 'A man should have the final word about decisions in the home and changing diapers, giving baths to children, and feeding children should all be the mother's responsibility'⁹². "A man is a man, a woman is a woman, I work hard and do my part. I need to go home and find things ready; don't ask me to do anything extra. I'm the man!" (Man, 61 years old, Minya)⁹³. A young woman in the same town said that femininity is being a woman at home. There she is queen of the home and of food and drink. She was told her role as a woman is to care for her husband and children.

Around 60 per cent of men recalled enjoying more free time than their sisters because they were not expected to perform household chores, and that was the responsibility of the girls in the family⁹⁴. Few respondents saw their fathers carry out any household chores, and this is a pattern repeated by the sons. When recalling their fathers' or other male relatives' participation in household chores, fewer than a third of male respondents said the men of the house ever cooked or cleaned. They continue to make most of the household decision around education, marriage and investments. The highly gendered division of labour in the homes of boys and girls continues in their lives as husbands and wives; the pattern is transmitted from one generation to the other.

There were few signs of a major shift in attitudes around the strict gender roles and responsibilities for women and men in the Images project study. However, men who are more educated, and the minority whose wives work full time, were more likely to report undertaking domestic chores, as were those whose fathers were more involved in domestic tasks, as well as those who themselves engaged in such housework as children⁹⁵. There were also some differences in attitudes between men based on factors such as migration, education and location. Men are largely very traditional in relation to women in the home, but attitudes and behaviour are changing where women continue to work

91 Ibid., p.42

92 Ibid., p.49

93 Ibid., p.72

94 Ibid., p.58

95 Ibid., p.71

after marriage, or when men migrate, and they do vary according to levels of education and where people live.

4.4. Jordan

'The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is a developing Middle Eastern country located in the Arabian Desert between the West Bank, Syria, Iraq, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. The population is 90% Muslim and 10% Christian. Nearly 50% of the population are Palestinian, having come as refugees from the land that is now Israel. During the Gulf War crisis, 300,000 Iraqi and Kuwaiti refugees arrived in the country'.⁹⁶ To this refugee influx has been added Syrian refugees since 2011. It is a land of vast desert with few natural resources where political, tribal and religious influences all impact on the cultural values of the modern state, set up by the British in 1921, and the wider society.

Very little data was found on the topic of women and work in Jordan so the research drew on a range of newspaper articles and blogs to supplement the picture of women in the world of work and care work in Jordan. The issues of the data quality and sources were discussed in the first section of the present report, while the division of labour in the society and households, and the ideology that uphold these are presented together hereinafter.

Data sources and the quality of the data around why women do not participate actively in employment

This issue does not appear to be a priority for research or of much interest to Government policy, and the laws that have been put in place appear to be poorly implemented. Although it is the case that Jordan has introduced some progressive laws around improving working conditions for women, Jordan has the lowest female participation in the labour force of the four countries in this study, at about 14-15%. However, some feel this is a major underestimate and in a study of measurement of women's participation in the Kingdom⁹⁷ it was noted that many involved think women's economic participation is in fact under-reported. The Department of Statistics itself suggest the number may be nearer 40%. The data also exclude the many women working in informal employment, which is ignored and often uncounted. This includes those working as self-employed, where data from micro-finance organisations suggests many women are working, with estimates of over 60% of women. The statistics are, however, sparse and poor.

Jordan is a low to middle income country yet it ranks 138 out of 144 countries in the 2017 WEF Gender gap report for women's economic participation and

96 Miller, J. and Petro-Bustas, W., 2002. *Context of Care for Jordanian Women* Journal of Transactional Nursing. Vol. 13, No.3, July 2002, pp.228-236, Sage publications.

97 Al Budirate, A., 2009. *Jordanian experience in measuring employment in the informal sector*. Global Forum on Gender Statistics, Department of Statistics, The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

opportunity, and 142 for women's labour force participation – the third worst country in the world. It is however ranked 51 for girls and women's education. There is little correlation between increased education and increasing women's employment in Jordan and it ranks 135 out of 144 overall on the gender gap. According to the WEF Gender Gap report there are no non-discrimination laws, no inheritance rights for girls, limited access to land for women and no quotas for political representation.

The HDR index 2016 lists Jordan as ranking 86 – partly because it has ratified CEDAW and established a National Commission for Women and the indicators for women's education and health are improving significantly - but it ranks at 111 out of 188 countries for gender inequality indices.

The division of labour and the attitudes and ideology upholding this

The SIGI index 2014 reported that for the MENA region overall, women spend seven times more time on unpaid care work than men, reflecting social norms on their domestic responsibilities within the family⁹⁸ :

'Women's participation in the formal labour market is low. Moreover women are still not equal to men before the law. There have been several reforms of the Personal Status Law (the latest reform took place in 2010). Despite some progressive amendments such as increasing the legal age of marriage to 18 ... women's agency continues to be limited by provisions of the male legal guardianship (*wilaya*) over women in the Jordanian Personal Status Law.'⁹⁹

Added to this is son bias, which is high in Jordan, low resources and assets- especially because very few women inherit- and restricted physical integrity, linked to women being viewed as dependents of men. The reasons given for low economic participation include these factors but also include others.

Women's work is mainly in the home and not the paid labour force, formal or informal, according to the statistics used in Jordan. In relation to the demand side, the pull factors into employment, it would seem there are few incentives for women. While Government reforms, including a national strategy for women 2012-15, have been enacted, they have failed to significantly shift women's involvement in the economy for a number of reasons:

- The lack of growth in public sector employment, which is the most attractive sector for women
- No focus on job creation for women or investment in that
- Many jobs that are created go to expatriate workers, especially in property and construction

98 OECD, Development Center, 2014. *Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) 2014 Synthesis Report*. - <https://www.oecd.org/dev/development-gender/BrochureSIGI2015-web.pdf>, p.43

99 OECD, Development Center, 2014. *SIGI Gender Index, Country Profile, Jordan*. - <https://www.genderindex.org/wp-content/uploads/files/datasheets/JO.pdf>, p.1

- Wages are low and lower for women – there is no equal pay legislation - and work conditions are poor
- Key rights are often not given to women for example annual leave or sick leave. Little or no attention is paid to their need for child care flexibility¹⁰⁰.

Some argue that the low rates are actually related to the few progressive labour laws that have been introduced as they make demands on employers that they prefer to avoid by engaging men. Others have highlighted problems at work such as inappropriate questioning, harassment, and women are often excluded from training and promotion opportunities. Also, women are often confined to lower level jobs with little chance of promotion.

Jordanian Labour Law does not distinguish between men and women but lacks any prohibitions on gender discrimination and does not enforce equal pay. The benefits allocated to women around maternity and breast-feeding appear to deter employers from recruiting women, especially in the private sector where these are seen as extra costs.

Alongside the limited laws for improving women's conditions of work, Jordan's Social Security laws are based on the premise of women being dependents and not economic actors, so women receive fewer benefits and they receive them as dependents of their husbands. Many labour laws do not specifically address gender issues and so women's specific needs are overlooked.

On the supply side, the gender division of labour within the household is rigid and many women remain responsible for all family care, even if they are working and earning at a high level. This means many women are not looking for work and even if they are, while education is rising for women often this is in the humanities and areas where there are few job openings, unemployment is high for women, even with degrees.¹⁰¹

Women's work remains largely defined as a 'secondary matter' and the focus is on women's responsibilities for children, homes and family care, and traditional gender norms are tight.

'Women are the primary caregivers in the family, and many participants described women as caring more for their family than for themselves. Caring for their families and teaching their children religious values were described as key elements in the health and well-being of women'.¹⁰²

Women are a key element in upholding family honour according to this study and men are to care for their family by protecting women; they have respect and a sense of responsibility for women. Reputations are critical as also found in this study, and preventing the family from shame is a strong imperative as it is important to maintain strong families.

100 Phoenix Centre for Economics and Informatics Studies, 2014. *Promoting efforts aiming at increasing the economic participation of Jordanian women*, Policy Paper, Amman, Jordan

101 Ibid.

102 Miller, J. and Petro-Bustas, W., 2002, *Op.cit*, p.32

A recent radio broadcast on women and work said that Jordan, with one of the region's highest literacy rates for women, has one of the lowest rates of female participation in the workforce — between 12 and 15 per cent in the formal sector. If you count the informal sector, running street stalls and such, the total is closer to 25 per cent — still startlingly low¹⁰³. There is high unemployment for all in Jordan and even higher for the 2.5 million out of 10 million who are refugees, many recently arrived. There are clear prejudices against hiring women even those without families, pay is unequal, and the underlying assumption is that if women work they will leave to marry 'because that is their primary role in life.' There is no help for women with childcare, transport or to combat sexual harassment, and 'few Jordanian women get much help at home from their husbands....all the home and child care duties are on the shoulders of women.'¹⁰⁴

This programme noted that there is an influx of conservative Islamic doctrines and ideas and 'young men these days are often more sexist than their fathers were', although the young woman at the heart of the interview said that laws are changing for the better for women, and women need to take part in the society actively and not tolerate discrimination. Jordan needs to avoid a backlash as the modern trends confront conservative ones; 'I don't see this as a fight between men and women. I see it as a fight between modern men and women, and conservative men and women. It's a fight between the past and the future.'¹⁰⁵

A UN Women/REACH report¹⁰⁶, found that the overwhelming majority of women residing in Jordan are currently not in employment, with only 6% of women from Syria working and 20% of Jordanian women employed (the exact numbers are very uncertain in all studies). The majority of unemployed women, both Syrian and Jordanian, would like to work if they had the opportunities, although most are not looking for work. There is a gap between their wish to work and seeking work:

'A large majority of women (76%) believe there are obstacles to women's employment. Women primarily reported societal and structural obstacles including cultural and religious pressures and the lack of suitable job opportunities that meet women's qualifications.'¹⁰⁷

Regarding the obstacles to women's employment, 43% of women reported social pressures, while 35% cited childcare and 32% said household responsibilities kept them from seeking work; the lack of suitable opportunities

103 Magistad, M.K., 2017. *Why do so few women work for pay in Jordan?* Radio program, March 8, 2017 <https://www.pri.org/stories/2017-03-08/why-do-so-few-women-work-pay-jordan>

104 Ibid.

105 Ibid.

106 UN Women/REACH, 2016. *Women and Employment in Jordan: Summary of Assessment Findings*. - http://www.reachresourcecentre.info/system/files/resource-documents/reach_jor_situation_overview_un_women_livelihoods_two_pager_october_2016_0.pdf

107 Ibid., p.1

(42%) and low pay (36%) were also cited.¹⁰⁸ Syrian refugee women said they would prefer to work from home unlike Jordanian women, reflecting possibly the limitation of their resources to get support for childcare or transport.

A recent World Bank blog post entitled 'How to open doors for more women to work in Jordan'¹⁰⁹ noted that Jordan's rate of economic participation of women has actually declined in the past two years and this article quotes 13.2% of women working, according to the higher Population Council and the Jordanian National Commission for Women (however other sources may speak of around 20% of women working, as seen earlier). The lack of work friendly environment for mothers, low wage, the lack of reliable cheap transport, and the few allowances women get combine with the social norms and family responsibilities to keep them out of the job market. There is a campaign to provide a more work friendly environment for women called 'Sadaqa' (Friendliness) which focuses on, among other things, day care facilities for children, showing the critical significance of family responsibilities in keeping women out of paid employment.

These kinds of findings are repeated in many such publications, albeit with different statistical data¹¹⁰, and there is broad agreement that the lives of Jordanian women are constrained by gender-related bias, restrictive social norms, and a discriminatory legal framework.¹¹¹ While women are living longer and are more educated, they have made few gains in terms of economic participation and agency. There are many documents in Jordan saying this and advocating what needs to change according to this article but there is no comprehensive strategy to address the issues of revamping laws and no budgets for this work. Women still have to focus on balancing family demands with paid work, and within the household there are many impediments, including the status of women vis-à-vis the head of household, marriage and divorce procedures, inheritance and children. Women need a male guardian for many transactions. The recommendations in this paper focus on laws and employment conditions but rather overlook the way women are tied so tightly into the domestic and private sphere and all the work that that requires from them.¹¹²

108 Ibid., p.2

109 Nimri, N., 2016. *How to Open the doors for more women to work in Jordan*, Voices and Views: Middle East and North Africa, The World Bank Blog, 03/07/2016 - <http://blogs.worldbank.org/arabvoices/employment-of-women-in-jordan>

110 The inconsistencies in the figures used, even within one institution such as the World Bank is bewildering and often there is no reference to where the statistics presented come from. It makes it very hard to really understand even the basics around women's participation in the workforce in Jordan.

111 THE WORLD BANK, 2014. *Women in Jordan- limited economic participation and continued inequality*. -<http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2014/04/17/women-in-jordan---limited-economic-participation-and-continued-inequality>

112 Ibid.

Mehtap, S., Jayyousi, Y., Gammoh, N., and Al Haj, A. ¹¹³ looked in more detail at the attitudes of women in relation to their lack of economic participation in the workforce and their roles at home. This exploratory study aimed to compile a profile of the non-working Jordanian females to gauge their perceptions of certain socio-economic factors that affect female participation in the labour force. It also attempted to measure their degree of satisfaction with staying at home. Out of the 145 non-working women surveyed the majority were married with children, university graduates without any work experience and with a household income of over 1,000 JOD. In general these women acknowledged that there were strong socio-economic factors deterring them from engaging in the work force and that if they were to work it would be for reasons of self-actualization, preferably within the public sector. There were few significant differences in perceptions between those sampled.

However, respondents said they believed that gender stereotypes should not be an obstacle to working and they were against men being given preferential treatment for positions. Many were not really aware of new women friendly labour laws. The majority of women were not satisfied with staying at home, and the study called for action to amend labour laws, and to help break down gender stereotypes and cultural taboos within Jordanian society that keep women at home.

Women's participation in economic activity remains extremely low in Jordan. There is limited evidence that women, maybe especially graduates, are not happy with this situation and would like to find work opportunities, but to date little has been done to focus on the specific needs of getting women into work and providing decent work with good conditions for them, or tackling their heavy domestic workloads and family position, although the Government is aware of the need to involve more women in the economy in order to improve their economic performance:

'Both women and men acknowledge that a lack of work-family balance and access to care, including childcare, care of the disabled and the elderly and housekeeping are major obstacles facing women at work. National development plans in our region have generally overlooked the care economy as a productive economic sector. However, shifting dynamics in the Arab states demand change. Governments in our region need to focus more on care work, both as an area of employment growth as well as a means of supporting women's equal opportunities in the world of work'¹¹⁴.

113 Mehtap, S., Jayyousi, Y., Gammoh, N., Al Haj, A. 2016. *Factors Affecting Women's Participation in the Jordanian Workforce*. International Journal of Social Science and Humanity, Vol 6. No 10, October 2016, pp.790-793.

114 Jaradat, R. 2018. *DevelOping the care economy can boost employment, equality for Arab women*. The Jordan Times, March 7, 2018.

Section 5:

Multi-country studies across MENA: supporting evidence for this study

A study by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development¹¹⁵ looked at enhancing women's voice, agency and participation in the economy in five countries: Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey:

'Countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region have struggled to translate considerable reductions in gender gaps with respect to education – as well as health – into equal participation in aspects of social and economic life; the World Bank (2012) has dubbed this the "MENA Paradox"¹¹⁶.

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development stressed:

- The very low participation rates of women in MENA in formal and informal employment, way below global averages and often well under 30%;
- There are significant numbers of women in the region whose work is mainly unpaid and within the home or family;
- The rise in female education is happening but there is a lack of a commensurate rise of women in formal or informal employment, unlike patterns found in other regions

This European Bank report shows near gender parity on enrolment in primary school and improving ratios for secondary and tertiary education in Egypt, Morocco and Jordan (Lebanon was not included in the study) but persistently low and even declining labour force participation rate in these same countries; for Jordan 15% of women only are in the recorded workforce. Egypt has reached 25% in the past but current rates are declining from around 15% in 2008/9 to less than 15% in 2013. In Morocco there was a peak of 28% in 2004 but this is now around 25% in 2013. Figures for Lebanon suggest that between 22% and 27% of women are in the workforce.¹¹⁷ Women are largely confined to work in the civil service and health and education sectors, very few women work as employers and those in informal employment are largely in agriculture. However, it is important to note that 'women's work in agriculture and in the informal sector continues to be ill-captured and underestimated in survey' in this region.¹¹⁸

The report found that 'women devote six to eight times more time to household chores and one to two hours to total work than men'¹¹⁹. This was based on time use surveys available at the time, and only one case study

115 European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), 2015. *Enhancing women's voice, agency and participation in the economy. Studies in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey*. <http://www.ebrd.com/enhancing-womens-voice-agency-and-participation-egypt-and-turkey>

116 Ibid., p.7

117 Wallace, T. 2016. *Op. cit.*, p.28

118 European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), 2015, *Op. cit.*, p.27

119 Ibid., p.29

country, Morocco, was included in this study. However, the findings apply widely across the countries in this report too and show the high levels of domestic work for women and the expectations around their roles within the households, especially after marriage. Other issues highlighted as affecting women's participation in the labour force were the gender pay gap, ranging from 11% in Jordan, 14% in Egypt to 28% in Tunisia. In Morocco the only data was for public sector employment where women earn 80% of male earnings.¹²⁰

Other issues found to be of direct relevance to women's low participation in paid work were the laws governing marriage, divorce and children, inheritance laws and access to assets including credit, and freedom from the risk of violence:

'Evidence from the EBRD's gender gaps analysis in its Strategic Gender Initiative (SGI) shows that legal frameworks related to economic activities and participation (for example labour codes and regulatory frameworks) can appear gender neutral but mask the inequalities, discrimination and social barriers that exist in practice in the Bank's countries of operations'.¹²¹

Furthermore, existing laws tend to give different treatment to women's and men's economic and social rights in countries where legal pluralism (national laws as well as personal status as well as religious and traditional laws) prevails. 'As a result, multiple legal frameworks may coexist, although not necessarily in harmony. Interactions between plural legal frameworks and social norms impact on women's ability and power to make decisions and pursue opportunities (*empowerment*), to speak up and be heard in the household and in society (*voice*), to make certain choices or act in the interests of the things they value (*agency*) and be equal contributors to economic and social life (*participation*)'.¹²²

The authors of the report found that the region is also 'characterised by the heaviest burden and the highest gender gap for unpaid work (household chores and care work) resulting in a large time deficit 'preventing involvement in income-generating activities' and they confirmed that women's unemployment 'has been steadily increasing over the past few years'. They found working women clustered in lower-paid positions in the public sector (i.e. civil service jobs), which tend to offer stability, more paid family leave and finance and credit options. 'The public sector also tends to have working hours that may facilitate better work and life balance'.¹²³

'The entrepreneurial sector in all five countries is underdeveloped and women face more difficulties than men in accessing financial resources and

120 Ibid., p.30

121 Ibid., p.7

122 Ibid., p.7

123 Ibid., p.8

information to start their businesses; in some cases cited by informants, women have been denied access altogether'.¹²⁴

This low level of labour force participation persists despite high levels of literacy and health indicators in all the countries, suggesting 'that there are other factors affecting women's economic agency and participation. In particular, all five countries involved in the study have considerable legal restrictions on women's labour rights and, to some extent, legal restrictions on civil rights'.¹²⁵

This study stresses especially the legal and constitutional barriers for women, alongside the strong traditional norms. Each country has ratified the CEDAW but also has registered different reservations around several key issues affecting women, including marriage and family laws, freedom of movement, and social security. For some countries:

'more conservative interpretations of *Sharia* or tradition take primacy (especially when it comes to the practice of the law), while other legal frameworks, including international commitments such as CEDAW, may be viewed as inferior to this religious "framework"'.¹²⁶

It is to be noted that the report does not address differences between Islamic confessions or address Christianity as a conservative force with similar consequences for women's participation in the labour market.

The research and feedback from informants revealed that women in all five countries face major discrimination over land and property ownership, inheritance rights, civil registry access and access to information. 'The low level of women's labour force participation especially affects choice in accessing and controlling resources, including over incomes and associated employment benefits'.¹²⁷ Property and inheritance rights in these countries can be more or less effective for women, depending on the ways that plural legal systems interact. Rights might be recognised by statutory laws, but might also be limited, interpreted or even negated by customary laws that still permeate statutory laws or their application by the judicial system.

All five countries mentioned in the report have a high prevalence of violence against women both in private (including physical, psychological, sexual and economic violence) and public spaces (including harassment and rape). Some countries have made incremental advancements towards necessary legal reforms; but none in our sample have national programmes aimed at combating violence against women. This study highlights many other areas that negatively impact on women and their ability to access paid work and which require their time to be spent in the home.

124 Ibid., p.8

125 Ibid., p.8

126 Ibid., p.9

127 Ibid., p.9

Another source of data for the wider MENA region is a report from 2013, prepared for the Governance and Social Development Resource Centre of the Department of International Development of the United Kingdom,¹²⁸ which looks at the constraints and opportunities to promote women's economic participation, focusing especially on access to finance, the care economy, workplace practices and legal frameworks, especially around family law (marriage, divorce, property, inheritance, mobility and citizenship). It focused on finding examples of positive initiatives to support women in Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia, Morocco and Occupied Palestinian Territories. Again a wide range of barriers for women across all these countries were identified, going beyond simply reiterating 'social and cultural norms' as the cause of low economic participation, though these were clearly important.

The key factors they highlighted were:

- The demands of the care economy: Time spent on these care activities is considered a major constraint on women engaging in formal work in particular.
- Disincentives to working in the private sector after marriage: work in the private sector is considered incompatible with women's household responsibilities.
- Constraints on access to quality education: Quantitative studies from a number of countries show that the relationship between level of educational attainment and labour force participation is not linear, but in fact may be U-shaped.
- Cultural perceptions of women's domestic role: Surveys across the region have highlighted negative attitudes towards women taking up employment; woman's role is in the home; women can suffer discrimination in the workforce because of such norms.
- Limited labour market mobility: limited labour market mobility contributes to women's high levels of unemployment. The contraction of the public sector affects women negatively as this was a sector where they found 'decent work' in the past. There is concern about the increasing 'informalisation' of women's work.
- Discriminatory labour laws and practices: Across the region, labour laws prohibit women from undertaking work that is deemed dangerous, arduous, or detrimental to women's health or morals. Maternity leave entitlements are often inadequate; however they might be considered a disincentive for employers in the private sector
- Limited access to information, networks and markets: Prominent barriers that affect women's entrepreneurship include absence of financial support, inadequate knowledge to collaborate, and lack of access to technology, support and information

128 McLoughlin, C. (2013). *Women's economic role in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) (GSDRC Helpdesk Research Report)*, Birmingham, UK: Governance and Social Development Resource Centre, University of Birmingham - <https://www.gov.uk/dfid-research-outputs/women-s-economic-role-in-the-middle-east-and-north-africa-mena-gsdrc-helpdesk-research-report>

- Weak implementation of laws to protect women's rights: customary practices can prevent women from exercising their legal rights and doing business. Inheritance laws often make it difficult for women to obtain loans to start businesses. Labour laws that give equal rights to women are often violated, unimplemented or unclear.
- Limited access to capital and finance: Women entrepreneurs face significant barriers to accessing credit, due to conservative lending policies
- Restrictions on women's mobility and freedom of association: Lack of safe, reliable transportation is a significant constraint on women's ability to work. 'Codes of modesty' that require women to seek the permission of husbands to obtain a passport or travel can also impede women's mobility.
- The double disadvantage of young women: Young women can be 'doubly disadvantaged', facing barriers both as women and as new labour market entrants.¹²⁹

In her report, the author especially stressed that:

'Several studies note that the demands of household duties, coupled with the often limited availability of childcare, are a significant barrier to women's economic activity in MENA. Across the region, unpaid care work, which largely goes unrecognized in public policy, consumes women's time and energy (ILO 2011b). In many countries in the region, the lack of adequate and affordable social services means the burden of caring for the young, elderly and the sick falls mainly on women (ILO 2008).'¹³⁰

A World Bank report on these issues in 2010 focused more on the social and traditional norms that keep women's participation outside the home low, saying that 'cultural stereotyping' casts women in a domestic role, with men as the main wage earner, and these norms are widely held to be some of the most important barriers to women's economic participation in the region¹³¹. A widely cited World Bank survey, undertaken in three capital cities of the region – Amman, Cairo and Sana'a – 'indicated that a negative male attitude towards women working outside the home was the most significant reason for poor female representation in the work force.'¹³²

These reports do also pay attention to the different inter-related and structural barriers that prevent women accessing or staying in paid work, including the poor state of the economies in these countries and the weak legal frameworks governing labour.

129 Ibid., pp.2-3

130 Ibid., p.10

131 The World Bank, 2010. *Bridging the Gap: Improving Capabilities and Expanding Opportunities for Women in the Middle East and North Africa Region*. - <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTMENA/Resources/Gender-pub.pdf>

132 Mcloughlin, C. (2013), *Op. cit.*, p.11

Section 6:

The research and policy implications arising from this review of women's care work

The research and analysis around women's care work and their limitations

As many quotes above show, which are repeated across the majority of the admittedly small literature on women's care work in MENA, the main focus in addressing care work has been framed around social and cultural norms. It is individual, family and community norms – often upheld by religion- that determine that women in MENA, more than any other region of the world, remain predominantly in the home doing unpaid housework and unpaid work in informal family businesses and farms. This in turn means they lack the time, the energy and resources, and the mobility to access paid work, in the informal sector but especially in formal paid employment.

However, many parts of the world also have rigid social norms around the division of labour within the home and yet more women are able to undertake paid work. In an attempt to go further, other factors inhibiting women in the region from leaving home to work have been identified from the literature, which show several important things:

- **The factors are not universal and they do vary between countries**, regions within countries, rural and urban populations, educated and uneducated families, younger and older women. The household norms and hierarchies norms are affected by migration patterns, education levels, and by the experience of women who do go out to work and continue work beyond marriage. Educated urban women often have different expectations compared to rural illiterate women, for example; wealthy women can buy in domestic labour to do their chores; while the poorest girls may not get to school because of the burden of domestic and care work in the home where they have to support their mothers.
- The few studies undertaken on attitudes towards the gendered division of labour and women's inequality, along with some blogs and newspaper articles, show that **for some, attitudes are shifting**. There is a growing acceptance in some countries - in theory anyway - of women going out to work and of the need for equality in education. While attitudes do appear slowest to change around domestic and care work as well as the need for sharing care work more equally between women and men, change is happening nevertheless and needs to be better understood and analysed.
- **The statistics available are weak and largely generalised so do not capture these differences**, which are shown only in some of the qualitative work. This work is critical because it starts to create a much more diverse and complex picture of what, where and to whom social norms apply; trends and changes; and some significant differences between the view and beliefs of women and men, and between women of different classes, locations or wealth and education status.

- **There is a strong sub-text in many reports that the roots of these norms lie in religion, and the focus is on Islam and the personal status laws** around marriage, divorce, childcare, inheritance and women's dependency on men. This picture is stereotypical and static and does not really explore what is changing or how best to promote debate and new thinking in these areas.
- **The discourse that focuses only on social and traditional norms fails to properly grapple with other critical issues affecting women's position in the home** including changing government law and new constitutions laws that are passed that challenge or deepen religious laws and norms; the reality of the employment markets and the laws governing women's participation in these; the lack of linking women staying at home with discriminatory laws around paid work that keep a gender pay gap, do not provide maternity and other provisions, give women less access to social security, and fail to provide safe transport to work.
- **The discourse is rarely linked to wider issues**, such as meeting the MDGs, and now the SDGs, around alleviating poverty through upholding women's rights to decent work; or to women's rights, including the right to education, health and to control their own mobility.
- **The discussion is also weakly connected to issues such as how economic austerity, government contraction of public services, lack of banking and credit facilities** keep women working in the home, both because of the many tasks they have to do without government support around e.g. water, electricity, fuel, childcare, good health support..., and the barriers that prevent them accessing outside opportunities because of the lack of resources targeted for women.

The realities that keep so women within the home, carrying domestic and care work for many hours every day, shape and uphold the traditional social norms around the division of labour, are in fact more dynamic and diverse across the MENA region than much literature acknowledges, and the causes are many and varied. These realities are also changing and contradictory forces are at play: some that are upholding and deepening traditional views of women's place and roles in society, limiting their mobility, and requiring them to continue to be homemakers and servers of their husbands; others that are leading some men to accept changing roles for women and their right to go out to work, while some women are expressing a growing demand for access to paid work, to secure their rights and participate more in both home and public life, and decision-making.

The discourse around the importance of social norms and women's work within the home in the region is pervasive but over-simplified, although it is fair to say that changes in attitudes to care work are seemingly slower to shift than other attitudes, but that is true globally and women around the world still carry the brunt of housework and childcare, albeit with the help of

many technological devices and much greater public and private provision for childcare and elderly support, both within and outside of the home.

Unfortunately economic turmoil, the influx of refugees, and the rise of different fundamentalisms mean that the political contexts in some countries are worsening and pushing women back into the home because of the shrinking job market and the decline in public sector work - which was traditionally an employer of women; growing insecurity and lack of safety in some countries or regions within countries; and increasing levels of poverty and vulnerability among the poorest. As the collapse of many public services grows, women now even more have to work at home to fill the gaps left by poor amenities, costly or low grade health care and education, and lack of facilities for care for children or the elderly and sick. Poverty is also driving many women out into 'poor quality work' (especially in Morocco where men have migrated and new opportunities exist in Free Trade Zones), something viewed as shameful in some communities, and which women have to do alongside all their domestic and care responsibilities. These issues are critical to explore, alongside the different definitions and measurements of care work and the focus on social norms that dominate both the literature and the debates, if understanding of women's lives is to increase and the reasons for their low and falling participation in work outside the home are to be addressed.

From this perspective, some issues that emerge from this research, and have major implications for both future research and for policy, need to be taken into consideration.

6.1. The paucity of the data available and the lack of links between different studies

The lack of good statistical data on women's work, especially women's care work, is clear and has been raised repeatedly. There is little certainty about many of the figures used, which vary between publications; data collection is erratic and very slow to be analysed. There is a serious paucity of studies through time use of women's unpaid care work, and there is still confusion around definitions and methods for collecting data. Limited money has been invested in research and consequently it is hard to know how many women work only in the unpaid and care work sectors in each country and region, how many combine this with informal paid work, and how many and which women are also working in paid formal employment.

There needs to be more systematic collection of quantitative data by Government officials and more engagement of the research community in supporting the broad statistics with details studies of different women in different contexts. This is essential for understanding better who does 'buck' the traditional social norms and expectations and how; and who is tied to

unpaid housework and how they survive, especially in contexts of deep poverty.

Studies of women's work within the home need to be better linked to opportunities and barriers to women's paid work, to issues of poverty and survival, and to women's rights, which are not much discussed in most of the literature. MENA countries have signed conventions on women's right to decent work, to education, to protection and yet work in these areas is strangely delinked from discussions about unpaid house work and care work that enable or prevent women leaving home to find paid work, or to engage in political participation or development.

The SDGs have been agreed to across MENA and addressing poverty is critical there, yet poverty studies are almost never linked to studies of women's domestic and care obligations in the home and how these act as a barrier to women participating in income generating work, or in women's wider development. Only one or two reports even referred to these issues, yet they are so important to keeping women in the home and also to preventing the development of new attitudes and approaches to addressing women's work and poverty. At the same time many do acknowledge that women out of the workplace have less status, less rights, less mobility and are often found among the poorest families.

6.2. This study clearly shows that what is counted is worth more than what is not

There is a clear correlation between the sectors where more data is available and policy activity. The most legal and policy work has taken place around women's engagement in formal paid employment, and so this is where more laws have been passed, more data is gathered, and more discussion takes place about the barriers facing women and their opportunities. This report shows clearly there are many other factors beyond 'social norms' that shape and influence women's positions at work and in the home, with the state of the economy and labour market and the related labour laws being critical for these issues. With the shrinking of the public sector (where women have found good work in the past, especially in Egypt) and the overall weakness of the economies (with the possible exception of Morocco) offering few decent jobs for the large workforces in each country, both male and female, women are clearly discriminated against. If there are few laws in some countries that uphold women's right to work, overall the policy and legal context discriminates against women, from pay levels to childcare support, and this greatly contributes to keeping them at home and out of the workforce. Discrimination in recruiting women persists, especially in the private sector, and many of the available jobs for women are in lower paid work and often end on marriage.

Women get pushed into the informal sector where work is unregulated, unprotected and often dangerous or insecure as well as low paid. The hours are long and the pay low. This is not 'decent work' and the terms and conditions of informal work do not take their care roles into account. To date, legislation across MENA - although it varies by country- has not really tackled job creation or looked to improve conditions for women at work. As elsewhere in the world, women have the primary responsibility for child and elderly care and in order to take employment they have to find ways to meet those obligations. Without either support from employers or from the Government they are simply not able to go to work and have to stay at home to keep the household going.

The lack of data on the care work and domestic work women do means that it is not flagged as important for policy work, and little has been done to date to see how best to introduce systems for childcare in communities or workplaces, financial support for carers, or new technologies for help with heavy domestic work, and the expectation continues that women will do this work alongside any other work they have. There are few debates about men sharing domestic tasks or enabling women to work flexibly to combine their paid and unpaid responsibilities, and there appears little urgency to find ways to enable women to enter the workforce even though GDP is often low and poverty is a real scourge for many. It does seem that what is not counted is not seen or valued.

6.3. MENA is different from other regions but also more diverse than often portrayed and discussed

The region has many unique features, not least being that it is the region where women barely participate in the formal economy, with figures ranging from 13 to 25%. Many elements of CEDAW have not been ratified, especially those around women and personal status laws, and in most countries traditional or new personal status laws define women as dependent on men, who can control where they go and what they do, and expect women to do all the household and care work while they make the decisions and control the purse. It is also unique in bucking the trend that by educating more women more women will enter the workforce. Education for women is rising across MENA but women's participation in the workforce is static or even falling in recent years. There are a lack of jobs and a lack of legislation to enable women to get jobs and remain in them after marriage.

The personal status laws in place in three of the four countries under study do give women a dependent and inferior status, and in Lebanon this is complicated by the reality that these laws are different for each of the 18 confessions in the country- all but a handful of which remain traditional in

their approach to women's position and status and do not recognise women's rights outside the household.

Yet, this is a region experiencing great unrest, a huge influx of refugees and from some areas high male migration out. These are major challenges for Governments who lack the resources to keep services running, and as education, health, social welfare, waste management, water supplies drop so the burdens on women to keep households and communities functioning increase. Apart from Morocco, little time is spent on looking at ways to support women within or outside of the home, and the benefits they receive are less than the men and often nothing if they are in informal or unpaid work.

Morocco has taken a different approach and enacted laws upholding women's rights and changing the personal status laws through a new Family Code. While this is bringing some change, change is slow. However the research showed that conversations are changing, women are making more demands on men and the State in some areas, and new attitudes towards women's education and women's right to work are developing. While new laws have been passed also in Jordan they are inadequate and do not make any specific attempts to address women's needs at work - laws governing work are not gender specific.

The social and cultural attitudes found within the different countries, religions and regions, families and communities, do largely endorse traditional home-bound roles and responsibilities for women, keeping them as dependents, and in a lower status in relation to men. However, it is critical to acknowledge that changes are taking place, women and men often take divergent views, and these are not a static set of beliefs; they also vary between communities and between countries, with for example, Morocco moving to more national and progressive codes, while Egypt is becoming more traditional during a time of political change and severe economic decline.

There are many positive aspects to care work, especially child rearing, that both women and men talk about in some of the qualitative studies. It is interesting that some men are now wanting to spend more time with their children as found in the Egypt and Moroccan IMAGES study¹³³, while in Jordan new waves of fundamentalism are making some young men less interested and engaged than their fathers. Children do bring pleasure and women take pride in their work as family support, in being wealthy enough not to have to go out to work, and in the enjoyment of their children. In one Jordan study, women identified strongly with concepts of 'a good woman' as a woman who fears God and upholds the family. This includes not just care and support but also upholding concepts of family honour, preventing shame, and the need for the family to be respected. Elements of these run through many of the different studies, though are not explored in any detail.

133 El-Feki, S., Hellman, B. and Barkers, G., 2017, *Op. cit.*

Issues such as violence against women, while mentioned, are not explored, and there is little work to date linking women's place and status within the home and sexual and domestic violence against women in their households. Again this contrasts with the spotlight placed on these issues in many other areas of the world. The factors keeping women within the home can be positive as well as negative, and while some men would like more involvement in childcare and feel they miss time with their children, a theme that needs more exploration is the issue of violence against women. It is recognised that this is critical to women's well-being, their security and confidence and whether they are able to leave the confines of their home at all, yet in studies of women's domestic and care work it is hardly mentioned.

6. 4. *The reports are full of recommendations, most of which have not been taken up*

The key findings of this research are clear: unpaid care work is critical to every family, community and society, but it is largely unrecognized and so poorly addressed in national policy debates. It is poorly defined, terms and concepts are used inconsistently, and time use surveys are rare and sporadic. The scale of the work being done, and its monetary value, remains sketchily understood. The recommendations that follow are for more data collection, better methods and analysis, and more studies. While there is a peppering of new reports, time use studies, and more limited surveys around the problems identified remain absent to different degrees across the region.

The factors constraining women in the home and preventing them joining the workforce are largely identified as those of individual behaviour and attitudes, and social norms between women and men. Yet these are rarely analysed in any detail, and there are few studies that show how far they are changing, as attitudes and behaviour change across each country due to rising education, male out-migration, the refugee influx, economic austerity and the realities of poverty. Instead, the recommendations are focused around changing male attitudes to work inside the home and for more laws or policies that enable women to go out into public spaces. There has been little work found that looks at options for supporting women's care work in the home, including new technologies for washing, cooking and cleaning, childcare support through benefits, allowances or crèches, or how community approaches to care can be developed. The predominant assumptions appear to be that this work has to be done, and women are there to do it, whether they also do paid work or not, and little attention has been paid to how women's burdens are indeed rising in the home with cuts to key government services and austerity.

Only Morocco has started to tackle the challenges for women (within the household) raised by personal status laws that define and keep women as male dependents, with fewer rights to inheritance, divorce, children, and

where their position and role is defined more by traditional norms than national civic Family Codes. This is changing some of the assumptions and conversations around women's roles, responsibilities and rights, and opening up the population to new debates and ways of thinking. Elsewhere, domestic life remains largely dominated by personal status laws, and this keeps the status quo largely unchallenged and un-debated, except by a few.

The lack of jobs in the economies and the lack of 'decent work', with mainly low paid insecure work, clearly affects women's lack of access to good jobs, and this contributes to keeping them in the home. While many laws have been passed in each country around issues such as recruitment procedures, training and promotion, the opening or closing of new work opportunities, few have specifically targeted women's experiences of working outside the home; and it is still the norm that women are expected to leave work on marriage - with the exception of some public sector jobs. Women remain clustered in low paid administrative jobs and their rising education is not 'buying' them better and more prestigious jobs in many cases. Yet there appears to be little time or work focused on how to promote job creation for women with different levels of education, or to ensure that the terms and conditions of work take account of their maternity and care roles, in consequence little is changing for women. On the contrary, fewer women are working in Lebanon and Jordan than before. Much is written about the procedures needed to ensure women get access to good jobs and have the right to stay, to be promoted and to have senior positions, but again it is not clear how far the multitude of recommendations have been taken up or even discussed widely. There is insufficient attention paid to how recommendations are in fact followed up, what is done and what remains to be done, but in this field the lack of focus on women's needs in paid employment is clear.

Section 7: Looking forward

This initial research needs building on urgently because poverty is rife and growing in some countries, and GDP needs boosting in each MENA country: women being largely confined to unpaid care work this contributes to the low overall performance of economies in the region. In addition, many women themselves wish to access their rights to work and decision-making within the family; attitudes are changing and there are some women wishing to challenge the barriers that keep them at home and unequal to men within the home and the wider society. Enabling women to better exercise their right to decent work is a matter of national as well as personal interest and the burden of heavy care work is certainly a major barrier that can contribute greatly to women's poverty and marginalisation.

Looking more holistically at the work contexts for women would enable a more nuanced and informed debate about what would enable change to come about most easily - work on attitudes and behaviour with the family, changes in key laws around family and work, political commitment to job creation and improving the terms and conditions of work for women; or what? What seems more critical now is that the issues raised here are discussed, debated, and challenged, especially the easy presumption that women should do all home based work, which few are even questioning, even women themselves. These issues need to be explored through a more coherence lens of:

- What approaches might work in each country to stimulate a debate that challenges the entrenched thinking that women should work in the home and raise the family and that men are the breadwinners - something which in practice is certainly breaking down in contexts of conflict, poverty, and global economic shifts;
- How this heavy domestic work affects women's rights in each country;
- What policies could be developed to help to ease the burden and costs of domestic and care work and reduce the time spent by women on this work;
- How the State can provide more support to families for unpaid care work;
- What is the impact on national and household levels of poverty of so many women only doing unpaid and onerous home based work;
- How paid work can be developed and regulated in ways that enable women, or women and men, to combine the demands of the household and bringing up the next generation with the important need to earn an income;

- How Governments can move towards national laws governing the lives of women and men rooted in a civil code and rights and limit the power of different personal status laws enshrining women's inequality into the future;
- How women can be represented and included in these kinds of debates¹³⁴.

134 Some of these approaches are well discussed in a recent GADN paper: GADN Fact Sheet, 2017: *Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work: Recommendations to governments*. CSW, ActionAid, London. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/536c4ee8e4b0b60bc6ca7c74/t/5890687c1e5b6ccc19c08fbf/1485858948129/GADN+factsheet+CSW+2017.pdf>

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