

Impact of Women Wage Segregation on Economic Growth: Evidence from Brazil, Egypt and Jordan

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Abstract

This research analysis studies and outlines the statistical data regarding the female labor force the female labor trends in three countries, Egypt, Jordan & Brazil. The three countries chosen provide a diverse comparative analysis with Egypt being the lowest developed country and Brazil being the highest developed country; this assists in the decision making or policy making procedure in reaching a macro economic framework with the least amount of errors and inaccurate forecasts. The paper then analyzes and compares these labor trends whilst investigating the severity of wage segregation and wage discrimination in the countries thus the effects it has on the gender gap in the labor force; this is how we reach an efficient regulatory policy framework. Nevertheless, the aim of this research is to provide policies and reforms effective immediately for a future that will enhance female labor participation rates. Statistically, we want to increase the female labor force participation rates (FLFPR) especially in the MENA region countries. Conceptually, we want to reach solutions for the female labor force in each of the stated countries as to implement and adopt policies in which foster women participation and decrease wage segregation.

Keywords

Feminization, Wage Segregation, Economic Growth

1. Introduction

“Labor was the first price, the original purchase - money that was paid for all things” – Adam Smith

This quote focus on labor and it viewed labor as a commodity or one of the most important inputs of factors of production. To simply discriminate against a certain type of labor, is to simply refute the fundamentals of capitalism; fundamental that created a vision. The vision of industrialization and globalization entitles wealth amongst all, and each person shall earn as much as they work. So to simply prohibit or discriminate against an entire gender, is to simply contradict the very own fundamentals of capitalism and “The Wealth of Nations”. The comparative analysis provided is diverse and each country can be viewed as stages of female labor development; we list a brief on the female labor force in each country below from least developed to most developed.

All the data compiled is meant to offer a broader understanding of the female labor force and the crucial importance of their participation while emphasizing on the obsolete problem of occupational segregation. The large majority of the literature provided on the matter was for the increase of female labor participants, while a small group of economists managed to provide reasonable data on a few disadvantages to the increase in female participants; a debate which is elaborated in the paper. As we previously mentioned, the three countries chosen provide a diverse comparative analysis with Egypt being the lowest developed country and Brazil being the highest developed countries.

Since Egypt and Jordan are in the MENA region, many researchers state that women’s participation in the economy, as integral part of their empowerment, is a major challenge facing the MENA-region, since women’s labor market participation (LMP) is among the lowest in the world in these countries [1]; In fact, in the Arab Human Development Reports, women’s empowerment is mentioned as one of the

main targets of human development in the Arab World. It is no secret that women's labor participation plays a vital role in the economic structure of a country, and an important aspect of the general "women's empowerment" movement concerns their economic participation. From here we suspect there is a correlation between economic growth, and female labor participation. We obtain dynamic indicators in order to obtain economic factuality when we set forth our policies in section VII.

2. Literature Review

"Women are the Arab world's unutilized and unrecognized human reserve," (Azzam, Abu Nasr & Loring 1985)

The urgency of acknowledging insight on the restrictions and incentives for women to enter the labor force in the MENA region, the theories and empirical analyses on the topic is very limited – as opposed to the plentiful studies on Western countries. Theoretically, it seems that women's labor market participation (LMP) is determined at levels that focus on one type of factor, such as: examining cultural surroundings, or analyzing the economic opportunities and social needs. However, we don't see that women's LMP should be determined according to this level, but rather we should examine the economic and political factors that influence women's LMP as well. Nonetheless, informative literature underline that ramifications with gender inequality are not only to enhance the lives of girls and women, but more generally for human development, labor markets, productivity, and GDP growth [2].

Indeed, the empirical & statistical evidence shows that women living in the Middle Eastern and North African region do have a lower LMP than women living in Europe [3]. For example, Moghadam states that in the Middle Eastern countries, only Israel and Turkey come close to other Asian countries and Latin American countries with their 30-40% total female labor force participation (FLFP), while it is the highest in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union where FLFP reach 90% [4]. Moghadam's statement is supported by the majority of the literature, such as Chamlouet. al, as they mention that women from more conservative societies tend to participate less in the labor market, than women living in less conservative societies; this impacts the country's FLFP at an aggregate level, especially with migration rates increasing. Therefore, taking into consideration the determinants of female labor supply is vital to establish the basis of our analysis.

2.1. Determinants of Female Labor-Force Participation

Generally, the determinants of FLFP can also be analyzed by looking at the indices of the Human Development Index (HDI). However, since two of our case studies are in the MENA region, we have found other constraints that play a large impact on shaping women's thoughts when it comes to working. Especially in these countries, cultural constraints emerging from social traditions and religious traditions play a

large hidden role.

*The general determinants of FLFP can be identified as:

- Educational Attainment.

-Labor Market: Employment/Non employment benefits, labor shortages, business opportunities, and state's efforts in creating jobs

- The Costs of Living

- Resource endowments

*Underlying & Hidden Determinants:

- Political stability/instability: State Infrastructure

Moghadam, offers an articulate explanation regarding point #5 and the role of state infrastructures by mentioning:

"...The North African woman of today usually dreams of having a steady, wage-paying job with social security, health and retirement benefits; these women don't look to a man any longer for their survival, but to the State. [4]"

Moghadam's statement can hardly be refuted, and along with the majority of the literature, FLFP is highly dependent on its state efforts to integrate them in the markets. Nonetheless a widespread misbelieve that has emerged in the Middle Eastern countries is that factory work is not suitable for women; misbelieve that is less adapted in countries such as Brazil and developed countries. To later explain, had the world countries been female-led as export-led they would've been more developed now [4]. In fact, due to these countries' "import-substitution" policies and partial reliance on oil wealth, industries in the Middle East have failed to make progress comparable to India, Brazil, Hong Kong and Singapore. States are also the main factors behind the gender wage gap, with enough political power to adapt reforms that are pro female laborers.

2.2. The Gender Wage Gap

The topic of gender gaps in employment has an increasing effect on economic growth between countries and regions. The topic is severely relevant to policymakers, especially in the MENA region. The general determinants that can explain the high existence of a gender wage gap in the MENA region is due to high levels of illiteracy and obsolete cultural norms in some countries, wage setters may discriminate against female labor. However, a non-linear explanation is that low FLFP has been greatly related to kin-ordered patriarchal family structures [5]. In other words, our studies have found that researchers acknowledged that religious and cultural norms adapted from 1970s-1990s in this region have clearly identified men as the main breadwinners and females as dependents on the man [5].

Moghadam has another opinion on this, and says that not only have cultural and religious norms shaped the FLFP, but at the time the boom of the oil industry in the late 1970s actually reinforced this patriarchal gender contract. Recall Moghadam's study paper where he mentions that especially in the MENA region factory work is only allowed for men; this explains how the boom of "oil" in these countries had a negative effect on FLFP [4]. However, other researchers argue that the labor force market in the 1970s and 1980s was highly demand driven, and at the time the demand structure

for labor was male-dominated [6]. In simpler words, female jobs got defeminized while employment growth occurred in male-dominant sectors.

A very important study conducted McKinsey Global Institute in 2015 measures the distance each country has travelled towards gender parity. The score is set at 1.00 being the highest and 0.00 being the lowest. They use 15 dynamic indicators in their Gender Parity Score (GPS) to try and establish the closest links to I) Social gender equality, II)

Attitudes & Beliefs about the role of women, and III) Gender equality in work. The Institution finally identifies ten “impact zones” that highlight the need for immediate action; they also provide a policy framework in how to handle the gap issue and find that the results would effectively move more than 75% of women affected by gender inequality and occupational segregation towards gender parity. The ten “impact zones can be illustrated in figure 1 presented below:

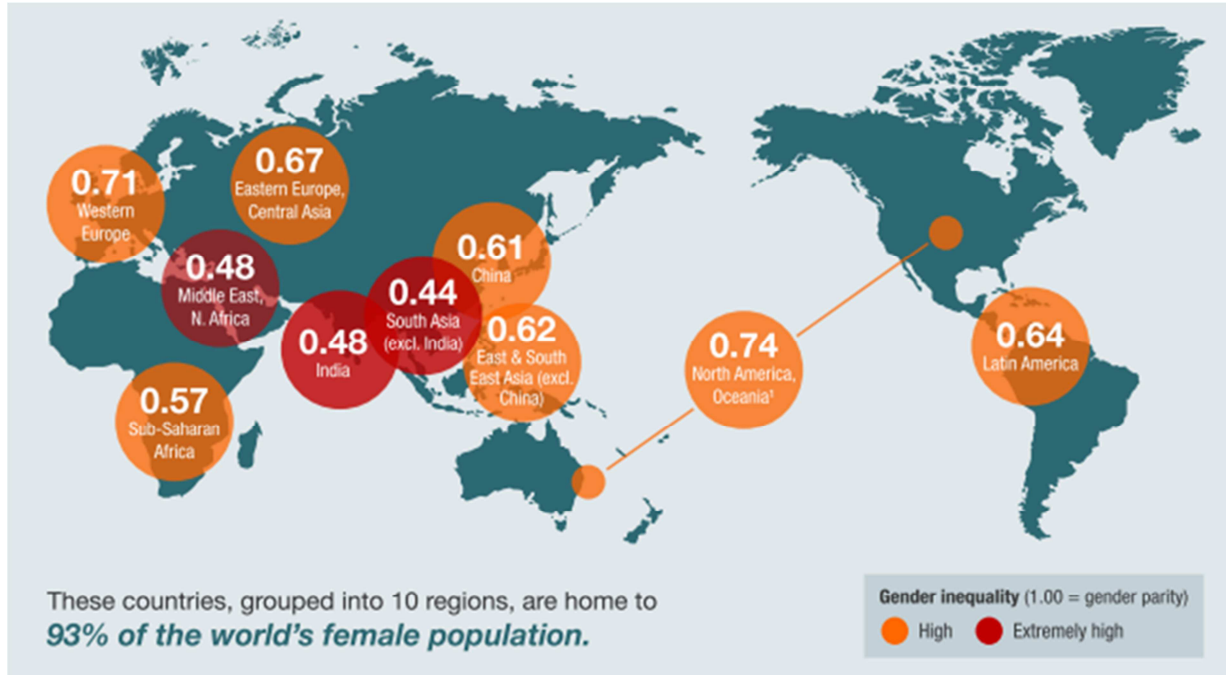


Figure 1. Gender Parity Score: Ten “Impact Zones”.

Source: McKinsey Global Institute (2015): The Power of Parity

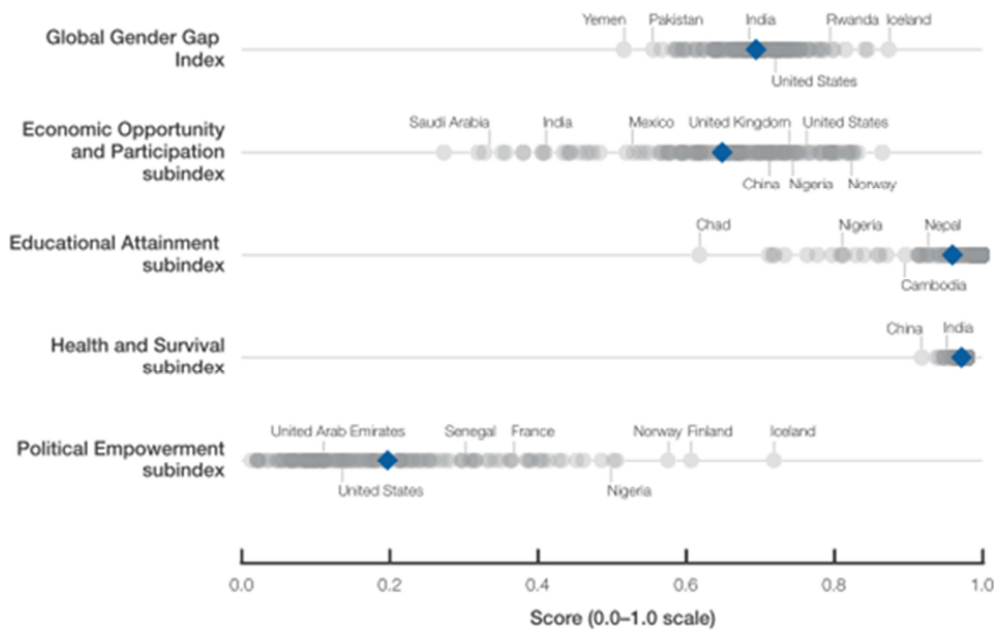


Figure 2. Range of Scores, Global Gender Gap Index (2016) [14].

Source: World Economic Forum Gender Report 2016

The GPS points to 95 countries grouped into 10 regions, with South Asia excluding India being the lowest in gender equality. Nonetheless, these 10 impact zones are home to 93% of the world's female population. Gender inequality is not only a pressing moral issue, but also a severe economic challenge. If women – who account for half the world's population – do not achieve their full economic potential, the global economy will suffer. Nonetheless, economists continue to state that these 10 regions need immediate work in precisely four areas to accelerate its development: I) Education Levels, II) Financial & Digital Inclusion, III) Legal Protection, and IV) Unpaid care work.

In addition to McKinsey Global Institute's GPS, The World Economic Forum also conducts an annual gender gap report; the report consists of 4 indices that consist of 14 sub indices – similar to the Human Development Index – and ultimately give a score of 1.00 (Gender parity) and 0.00 (Gender inequality) similarly to McKinsey's GPS. The 4 indices are grouped into: I) Economic Participation and Opportunity sub index, II) Educational Attainment sub index, III) Health & Survival sub index, and IV) Political Empowerment sub index. The WEF's 2016 Annual Report findings were:

2.3. FLFP Expectations

Expectations play a drastic role in this situation; feminization is a movement that desperately needs real action supported with economic and political factuality. The most important question we should be asking is "Will economic growth occur when FLFP is at full utilization?"

McKinsey Institute answers this question by stating "in a full-potential scenario in which women play an identical role in the labor markets to men's, as much as \$28 trillion or 26% could be added to the global annual GDP by 2025" They offer another solution and state that if all countries in a specific region were to match the progress of the best gender parity performer in the same region, annual GDP could be boosted to \$12 trillion by 2025.

We follow the assumptions McKinsey Institute based their "full-potential scenario" and "best-in-region scenario" expectations on which are:

- (1) Gaps in relative productivity between men and women within industries and service sectors are fully bridged.
- (2) Agricultural Employment is equal for men and women.
- (3) The transitioning from agricultural sector to industries and service sectors for women is equal to the ratio of female employment in industry relative to services in the business-as-usual scenario.
- (4) Employment rate by gender gap is fully bridged.
- (5) Convergence of all countries (especially in 10 impact zones) exists. As previously stated, each country

aspires to the progress of the best performing country in the region.

*Implications of the scenarios on the overall structure of GDP:

Due to the bridging of the gender gap in both scenarios, more job opportunities need to enter the labor market. For all regions, this represents an expansion of service-sector GDP, due to both the increase in employment & services and a shift of employment of women to more productive service sector jobs. The new supply of labor will lead to the creation of 240 million incremental jobs in the "best-in-region scenario". The largest number of jobs will need to be created in India (68 million), while developed countries like Western Europe and North America will need 10-15 million jobs [2]. Needless to say, this might be a challenging implication for societies trying to move towards gender parity however with the creation of new jobs, our GDP will start to increase. Regardless, we don't find it as an implication but rather as an "urgent goal".

As we previously stated, the new supply of labor would lead to a higher demand on jobs, and a higher demand of employment on all sectors. In figure 3, we see that in the best-in-region scenario by 2025 the world would need a MINIMUM of 240 million extra jobs than if it were business-as-usual scenario. This implies many things. First, the world is on its way towards increased incremental job creation and by 2025 – under the condition of movement towards gender parity –the normal rate (business-as-usual scenario) will reach an increase of 363 million jobs. Had countries adapted a "full-potential" scenario where all female laborers participate and global FLFP rates start to reach 90-100%, the creation of 1,081 million jobs would be a reality by 2025.

This is a fascinating phenomenon.

Higher Gender Parity/Equality → Increased Job Creation → Increased Production in all Industries → Increased Exports/Imports → Mass Increases in GDP → Increased Gains from Trade → Higher Disposable Income → Enhanced Welfare Economics → Extinction of Easterlin Paradox

Eventually, the extinction of Easterlin's Paradox will be made possible; In other words, if we viewed happiness the same way Easterlin did, then global happiness (absolutely GLOBAL: all countries and all regions) will have reached its maximum achievable level of happiness.

In our analysis, we discovered there are no objectives worthy enough if they don't include happiness. Feminization is a humane movement this have an economic implications and results would bring absolute global economic/political/cultural change it would eventually bring happiness – which is the most important [10].

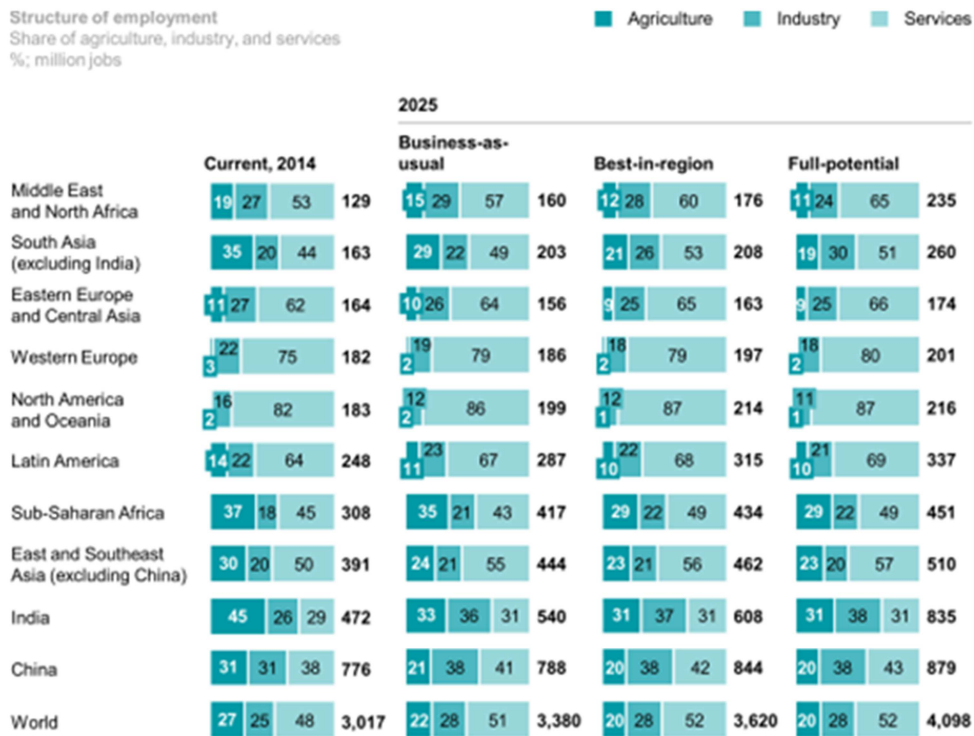


Figure 3. Expectations of Job Creations.

Source: McKinsey Global Institute Gender Gap Report 2016

3. Feminization & Occupational Segregation: A Comparative Analysis

The comparative analysis provided is diverse and each country can be viewed as stages of FLFP development; we list a brief on the female labor force in each country below from least developed to most developed.

3.1. The Case of Egypt

There are many problems that emerge in the female labor force in Egypt ranging from gender discrimination, low education levels, little to nonexistent employment benefits and incentives. According to the World Economic Forum’s Gender Gap report in 2012, Egypt ranked number 126th out of 135 countries on the gender gap index, and scored number 130th in total labor participation rate [5]. As presented in Table 1 below, the female employment rate from the total labor force was 23.07%.

Table 1. Female Labor Force (as % of total labor force).

Year	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
Percentage	23.07%	23.00%	23.12%	23.09%	23.10%	22.50%	22.40%	23.08%

Source: www.data.worldbank.org/indicator

*The highest recorded rate of participation was in 2007 at 23.69% followed by 23.63% in 1994.

*The lowest recorded rate of participation was 2002 at 20.97% followed by 21.93% in 1998.

It has been argued that cultural factors play an important role in explaining the gendered labor outcomes in Egypt, thus it is important to understand whether or not the Egyptian FLFP has changed following the 2011 revolution while also understanding the reasons behind women’s low LFP.

A recent study conducted by Tsani as cited in Hendy shows that for every increase by 5% in FLFP leads to a cumulative 1.3% increase in GDP (from 2015 to 2030) in the case of Egypt [5]. Indeed, in section VII we find an inverse relation between decrease in female unemployment and increase in GDP, however it is still necessary to analyze the determinants & dynamics of the female labor market in

Egypt to understand where countries (who correspond with Egypt’s development level) have gone wrong, and what can be enhanced.

Furthermore, Assaad and El-Hamid conducted an investigative analysis on the Egypt Labor Market Survey (1988, 1998, and 2006) and conclude that the declining labor force participation of women is primarily by the contraction of the public sector hiring [6]. During the Nasser era, all high school & higher education degree holders were promised state-sector jobs regardless of their gender; this naturally increased FLFP. However, in the 1990s guaranteed state employment was suspended and women stopped aspiring to

have a governmental career. On the other hand, the private sector employment rose however it did not meet the decline in the public sector. After the suspension of the state-promised jobs, the informal sector started to increase especially in the private sector; meanwhile Assaad and El Hamid continue to state that other determinants of female employment rely greatly on the sector of employment, and

women’s marital status. They explain the relation that exists between the two factors and found that women who worked in the public sector continued to work even after their marriage however those employed in the private sector quit in the beginning of their marriage [6]. Figure 4 presented below shows the FLFP and how marital status affects their careers.

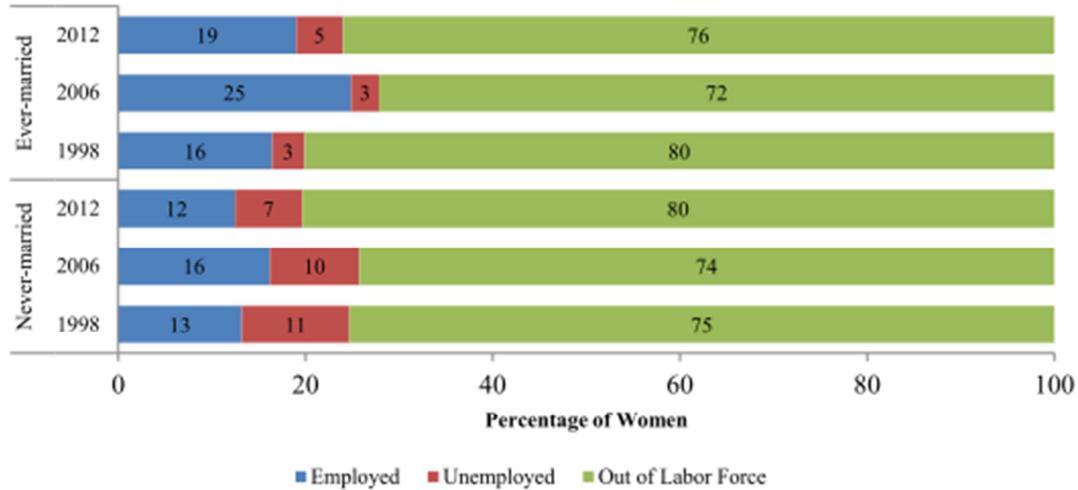


Figure 4. Women's Labor Market by Marital Status.

Source: Hendy, R. (2015)

For example, here we can see that in 1998 16% of ever-married women were employed compared to only 13% of never-married women, while at the same time only 3% of the ever-married women were unemployed compared to the 11% share of never-married women; this signifies the motivation for female laborers to earn promised state-sector jobs. Both groups witnessed an increase in employment till 2006 where it reached 25% for married women, and 16% for never-married women. Although the share in the labor force was larger in 1998 for never-married females, these figures have reversed in 2006 and 2012. According to Hendy she offers a broader understanding behind each sector employment.

She requested for more analytical explanation for each sector’s demanded employment by females. It is clear that the FLFP is highly correlated in Egypt with culture, traditions, and norms showing significant linkages to governmental/state-sector employment rather than entrepreneurship or private sector employment.

Nevertheless, Hendy along with many others continue to illustrate the main reasons behind the decrease in employment by females as a result of the weak state

infrastructure, or the insufficient efforts by the state to provide the FLFP employment in the right sector. Of course, education levels play an imminent role especially when we see that only 3% of never-married females working as an employer or self-employed in 2012 post the revolution. This indicates that the lack of the entrepreneurial mindset and the lack of motivation between the female labor market.

3.2. The Case of Jordan

It is crucial that when examining the statistics we also examine the population size. Jordan has a small population of 9.5 million with 40% of the labor force is female. Although Jordan seems to show positive health and educational indicators, its female labor participation rate seems to be fairly low and at times stagnant [7]. After analyzing the data below, we discovered a linear chart pattern throughout 1990-2000. Later we discovered a continuation rectangle pattern throughout 2000-2003 (see figure 1 below). Nevertheless Jordan has a relatively low female to male ratio in the labor force, and shows indications of stagnant employment rates.

Table 2. Female Labor Force (as % of total labor force).

Year	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
Percentage	17.65%	17.53%	17.52%	17.44%	17.38%	18.07%	18.12%	17.87%

Source: www.data.worldbank.org/indicator

*The highest recorded rate of participation was in 2011 at 18.121% followed by 18.073% in 2012.

* The lowest recorded rate of participation was in 1990 at 12.302% followed by 12.471 in 1991.

In the case of Jordan, the low FLFP rates are a paradox especially with higher numbers of females attaining better

health care and education. Hendy et. al answer this paradox by explaining that the decline of participation in educated

women is due to the continued curbing and deterioration of the opportunity structure (Economic Opportunity & Structure according to MGI's GPS) since the 1980s [8]; this is very similar to the case of Egypt.

Jordan's FLFP rates are among the lowest in the world, with the World Bank ranking Jordan the 5th lowest female participation rate among 185 countries after countries such as: Syria, Iraq, Algeria, and the West Bank & Gaza. In the case of Jordan, women look upon education as not a necessity but as a way to find employment in the future, and due to the deterioration opportunity structure, more and more women are dropping out [8]. Unlike Egypt, Jordanian females have the option to attain education – especially secondary levels of education – however educated women primarily work in the health and education sectors, both in which are highly dominant by public sector employment [11].

Nevertheless, Jordanian women are similar in this case to Egyptian women in looking to obtain a governmental job, which is seen as more family friendly. Although the private sector employment has been steadily growing in Jordan, these growth rates are not sustainable; they are temporary, precarious and generally perceived to be inhospitable to women [8].

To sum up Jordan's female labor market dynamics in a few words, “the constraints of women's participation in employment in Jordan is due to the “gender system by which the interplay between cultural and family-level factors and

those associated with state jobs and state employers actually shape the female labor's job searching and employment strategies” [8]. So the failure of the government to operate a strong public sector or provide more state-promised employment has indeed brought FLFP to staggering levels, and explains the rapid increase that Jordan has witnessed in mid-1970s to early 1990s where state policies were in favor of increase employment for educated women in the public sector.

3.3. The Case of Brazil

One of the main reasons we chose Brazil as the third country to conduct the analysis on, was due to the empowerment of women and fairly high female labor participation rate. Although Brazil does not abide by similar cultures and norms such as the two Mediterranean countries, Brazil has experienced high levels of corruption especially in their last presidential impeachment of Dilma Rousseff; Brazil's first female president. Surprisingly, Dilma Rousseff was also the first democratically elected female president that got impeached in the world. All political and social factors is later elaborated in the research [13]. We discovered an almost perfect linear pattern for female participation rates in Brazil from 1990-2017 with a steady increase of approximately 0.5% every year. There is the exception of 2010 where participation rates dropped almost 0.4%; a drop that is not significant in comparison to other countries.

Table 3. Female labor participation (as % of total labor force).

Year	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
Percentage	42.94%	42.92%	42.77%	42.45%	42.35%	42.34%	42.18%	42.54%

Source: www.data.worldbank.org/indicator

*The highest recorded rate of participation was in 2017 at 42.939% followed by 2009 at 42.897%

*The lowest recorded rate of participation was in 1990, at 34.457% followed by 35% in 1991.

4. Policies & Reforms

It is indeed the main objective of this study to provide a policy framework that is based on the trials and errors of the three countries so that any developing – developed country can achieve successful and efficient reforms that eventually lead to economic growth. We divide the points of altering four categories:

Table 4. Sectors and Policies in urgent need of altering.

Country	Education	Health	Labor Market Dynamics	Economic Opportunities & Structure for Participation
A. Egypt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Public education system urgently needs to be altered with clear employment incentives behind placement tests. *Basic education attainment as % of female labor force has plummeted from 2015 by 4.2% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Increased health care for maternity *Enhancement of overall health care system for women. *Increased awareness in rural areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Increase female employment benefits especially in the private sector. *Equal Gender-Pay for all public and private firms to eliminate high levels of existing sex discrimination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Increased long term benefits for private-sector employees * Eliminate the “declining hours of domestic work” over time especially for never-married women [5]. *Relaxation of economic opportunities in the public sector for female employees
B. Jordan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Increased entrepreneurial, feminization curriculums in primary & secondary education. *Promising of high quality private sector jobs when education attained. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *No need for urgent altering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Increased female employment benefits. *Decreasing high protective legislation on women's working conditions & maternity leave (this has already led to employers discrimination against women) *Social Insurance legislation that treats women as dependents rather than independent workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Elimination of Gender-system (decreasing the power of employers to shape women's employment strategies. *Increase of maternity leaves like public sector in 1970-1990.

Country	Education	Health	Labor Market Dynamics	Economic Opportunities & Structure for Participation
C. Brazil	<p>*Urgent need to offer diverse education to females (Entrepreneurial, self-employment and business drivers)</p> <p>*Brazil has 60% of females in the construction industry as they have 9 more years on men in educational attainment.</p>	<p>*World Health Organization's recommendation: 6 months of breastfeeding; this highlights maternity leaves be 120 days</p>	<p>*The constitution of 1988: I) Decreasing number of restrictions and fees employers pay to hire individuals.</p> <p>II) Women maternity leaves increased from 90 days to 120 days. Fully paid. (THIS MUST BE ADAPTED BY OTHER COUNTRIES)</p> <p>*Decrease high excessive regulations on labor market.</p> <p>*Increase employment benefits to decrease informal market [9].</p>	<p>*Urgent adaptation of equal pay. Brazil GINI Index: 0.513 (2015).</p> <p>*Relaxation of job requirements. Brazil has high level of female participation rates with a large % working both in formal & informal markets to sustain a flow of disposable income.</p>

5. Conclusion

As economists, it is crucial for us to understand the importance of eliminating wage & occupational segregation while understanding the problems that arise from high female unemployment rates socially, economically and politically. It is also vital to understand the significance level behind the enhanced policymaking, and overall better economic welfare each of the three countries could experience. Our theory is empirically based on trial and error, which is why taking a sample of three countries with different levels of development, can provide a dynamic and unbiased macroeconomic framework that can benefit the countries in the long run.

We urge readers to grasp the severity of the situation. According to a study conducted by McKinsey Global Institute in 2015, if women participated equally in the economy global GDP could increase \$28 trillion by 2025. This would be enough to eradicate global poverty for many years. In fact, the UN estimate that the total sum needed to eradicate world poverty, world hunger, and provide sustainability for the drop in hunger is \$267 billion per year. With an increase in the global GDP by \$28 trillion this would eradicate poverty for 100 years. \$267 billion also amounts to 0.3% of the current global GDP. McKinsey Institute also conducted a research on the highest levels of female unemployment in the world, dividing them into 10 "impact zones" with urgent need of feminization development. Nevertheless, occupational segregation is a moral contradiction to the economic development, and thus the global feminization movement should also highlight the economic gains and opportunities in which our economies are lacking.

The policies we provide are policies in need of urgent altering and are seen as a policy framework in this study for developing and even in some cases developed countries. Our sample of Brazil, Jordan, and Egypt offer different determinants of FLFP and different trends in female employment. We found that in countries such as the MENA region, cultural and religious norms have had substantially high effects on the decision making or job hunting that females perform, while in countries such as Brazil and Latin America female employment is dominant, with many female laborers working in both the formal and informal sectors to provide a sustainable flow of disposable income. Nevertheless all countries have shown indicators of high regulation and stifled economic opportunities in the labor

market dynamics and the structure of the state. Due to high levels of education in Brazil, female laborers were actually found to be dominant by 60% in sectors such as Construction, highlighting their continuous participation in education enrollment. Countries in the MENA region can learn from policies such as the Constitution of 1988 in Brazil while Brazil can also learn to decrease their regulatory process of hiring and firing in sectors such as education & health like Jordan.

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