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WOMEN, INDUSTRIALIZATION AND STATE POLICY IN CUBA

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with the Federation of Cuban Women

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ABSTRACT

This paper evaluates the impact of paid employment on Cuban women in the post-revolutionary period. The increase in women's labor force participation during this period has been substantial, and is considered a key element of Cuba's revolutionary policy. The study was conducted on a small sample of women textile workers in 1986 in collaboration with the Federation of Cuban Women, and examined changes at the level of the household, the workplace, and participation in mass organizations. The study concludes that, while there have been important gains for Cuban women at all three levels as a result of paid employment, they still face ideological and material obstacles to full equality. These obstacles stem from women's strong identification with their domestic role, which is reinforced by policies at the workplace and at the state level that do not respond adequately to the needs of women workers and continue to treat them as secondary workers in comparison to men.

RESUMEN

Este artículo evalúa el impacto del trabajo asalariado sobre las mujeres cubanas durante el período post-revolucionario. La participación femenina en la fuerza de trabajo se ha incrementado en gran medida; tal incremento ha sido un elemento clave de la política revolucionaria cubana. La presente investigación se llevó a cabo sobre una muestra reducida de trabajadores textiles durante 1986 en colaboración con la Federación de mujeres cubanas, examinándose los cambios ocurridos a nivel doméstico, en el lugar de trabajo, y con respecto a la participación en organizaciones de masa. La investigación arroja como conclusión que si bien han habido logros importantes para las mujeres cubanas en los tres niveles mencionados como consecuencia del trabajo asalariado, todavía enfrentan obstáculos ideológicos y estructurales para lograr una igualdad más plena. Estos obstáculos surgen de la fuerte identificación que las mujeres tienen con su rol doméstico, el cual es reforzado por políticas en las fábricas y políticas del estado que no responden adecuadamente a las necesidades de las mujeres trabajadoras, y que continúan tratándolas como trabajadores secundarios en comparación a la mano de obra masculina.

The Cuban Revolution in 1959 brought an end to U.S. domination and fundamental changes to the socio-economic structure of the island, which have been described at length elsewhere (e.g. Dominguez 1978; Mesa-Lago 1981; Brudenius 1984). These included the promotion of equality for women, which became a key element of revolutionary policy. Cuban state policy has instituted at least five basic changes relating to women in the post-revolutionary period: 1) an increase in female participation in the labor force and advancement of women to technical and managerial positions; 2) rising educational levels for women, including the elimination of illiteracy and a significant increase in the number of women professionals and technicians; 3) the establishment of social services to alleviate women's domestic load such as day care centers, lunchrooms for students and workers, laundries, housing, transportation, and boarding schools; 4) the development of mass organizations where women have actively participated, such as the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR), the Feminine Front of the Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC), and the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) which is specifically for women; and 5) the approval of the Family Code in 1975, which established the rights and duties of husband and wife regarding children and household responsibilities.

This paper will attempt to evaluate the impact of these changes on a small sample of women textile workers in Cuba. The focus will be on women's participation in the labor force, which has increased rapidly in the post-revolutionary period, from 13 percent in 1953 to 38.3 percent in 1987. Under socialism, paid employment is seen as the key to women's equality, because it is supposed to raise their class consciousness and reduce their isolation within the home and their dependence on a male wage. However, some argue that paid employment may merely increase women's burden and reinforce their subordination by locking them into dead-end, poorly paid jobs. This study is an exploratory attempt to examine both the negative and positive consequences of paid industrial employment on Cuban women in the post-revolutionary period.

Though there have been other studies on Cuban women's labor force participation, both by Cuban[1] and non-Cuban authors, based largely on census data, this is the first attempt to analyze with primary data qualitative changes in the lives of Cuban women resulting from paid employment in the post-revolutionary period. The study was initiated in May 1986 by the Federation of Cuban Women in collaboration with the author who has conducted similar studies on women workers in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. It was hoped that comparisons among these three countries might indicate the differential impact of industrial employment on

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[1] Cuban studies on the changes among women in the post-revolutionary period have been carried out by the Federation of Cuban Women; the Center for Demographic Studies and the Development Studies Group of the University of Havana; and the Center for Sociological and Psychological Research of the Cuban Academy of Sciences.

women in a socialist country such as Cuba and capitalist countries such as Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. The comparison is made more valid by the fact that all three countries share a similar historical and cultural background of Spanish colonialism and economic and political domination by the U.S. in the twentieth century. However, this paper is devoted largely to an analysis of the Cuban data.

This study also attempts to address some of the criticism made by feminists of state policy toward women in socialist states generally and particularly in Cuba (Molyneux 1981; Benglesdorf 1985; Nazzari 1983; Osmond 1985; Smith and Padula 1988). Critics charge socialist states with a productionist bias, which emphasizes economic changes such as increasing labor force participation to the neglect of women's reproductive role. Cuba and other socialist states have attempted to socialize women's domestic role through day care centers and other support services provided by the state, but these are expensive and never fill total demand. As a result, many working women remain burdened with a "double day," especially onerous in a less developed society where domestic tasks are even more time-consuming. The Cuban state recognized this problem as a prime factor in the high turnover and absenteeism of employed women in the early years of the revolution, and attempted to address it through the Family Code adopted in 1975. The Cuban Family Code is unique in socialist societies in requiring men and women to share household tasks and child-rearing as well as financial responsibility.

Critics have also charged that high rates of female labor force participation in socialist societies arise out of necessity as well as principle; that is, women are employed to meet the state's need for their labor power rather than for their own liberation. Undoubtedly there was a need for women's labor force participation in the earlier stages of the Cuban revolution, but toward the end of the seventies, this need appeared to lessen and there was even fear of lack of sufficient employment for women (Nazzari 1983: 260).

However, the percentage of Cuban women in the labor force continues to grow, propelled not so much by the state, but by women themselves. Women were motivated by state policies such as the greater availability of consumer goods made available through the SDPE, the new management and planning system introduced in the late seventies. Rising educational and occupational opportunities for women also played a part, since the seventies were the period in which women began to make substantial advances into higher level technical and managerial jobs (Larguía and Dumoulin 1986).

The increasing rate of female labor force participation also undermines Nazzari's (1983) argument that the shift from moral to material incentives in Cuba in the seventies hinders women's employment opportunities. Nazzari argues that this shift requires firms to become more cost effective and therefore less likely to hire and promote women who require more support services than men and may also be subject to higher rates of turnover and absenteeism. Most of the cost

of these support services such as day care and maternity leave are now born by the state, but as we shall see, there continue to be material as well as ideological constraints that hinder women's advancement in industrial employment in Cuba.

Our analysis of the impact of paid employment on women's status in Cuba will not be limited to the workplace, but will also examine changes at the level of the household and in political participation, particularly in mass organizations. Our data demonstrate that there have been significant gains for Cuban women in the post-revolutionary period at all three levels, resulting from women's increased labor force incorporation. However, Cuban women still face strong obstacles to full equality, which we shall examine in this paper. The obstacles are both material and ideological, or as Vilma Espín (1986) noted in an article on women's equality in Cuba, "objective" and "subjective." They stem from women's strong identification with their reproductive role and the burden of their domestic duties. They also stem from policies at the workplace and at the state level that fail to fully address women's needs and continue to regard women as secondary workers in comparison to men.

Methodology

The study focuses on the textile industry, because it provided greater comparability with the previous studies on women garment workers in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic and because of its importance as a source of industrial employment for women in Cuba in the post-revolutionary period. In the mid-eighties, there were 13 textile factories in Cuba with a total labor force of 32,886, of whom 46.2 percent were women. Since we were interested in comparing the pre- and post-revolutionary period, we deliberately chose the oldest textile factory in the island, Ariguanabo, which was started with North American capital in 1931, and which as early as the 1940s employed more than 4,000 workers, almost all men. The factory was nationalized in 1960, and underwent an extensive process of modernization, which boosted productivity considerably.[2] It is located in the province of Havana about 30 kilometers from the capital.

A study of one factory cannot attempt to be representative of the entire female industrial labor force in Cuba. This is why this study must be considered exploratory and its results interpreted with great caution. However, Ariguanabo has certain characteristics that make it particularly worthy of study. For example, in the pre-revolutionary period Ariguanabo had an almost exclusively male labor force. Women did not begin to enter the factory in massive numbers

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[2] Due to the blockade following the revolution, the lack of parts to replace machinery produced a total stagnation in the textile industry, requiring modernization as well as the establishment of eight new plants. Although these measures more than tripled textile production, in 1987 the textile plants were still not working at full capacity due to the high rates of turnover and absenteeism to be discussed later.

until 1973, but since that time their percentage has steadily increased, so that at the time of this study in 1986, they represented approximately 33 percent of the labor force. A year later, following a change in the shift hours from eight to six hours which resulted in additional workers being hired, Ariguanabo had a total of 5,211 workers, with women representing 35.6 percent (Table 1). Women are well represented in all occupational categories except for management, a point we shall return to later.

TABLE 1

Total Workers in Ariguanabo Factory, September 1987

Occupational Category	Men	Women	Total
Production Workers	2985	1610	4595
Administrative Workers	45	114	159
Technicians	103	101	204
Service Workers	60	24	84
Management (dirigentes)	162	7	169
Total	3355	1856	5211

Source: Factory records.

In selecting the sample, administrative, service, and managerial employees were eliminated, in order to focus on workers and technicians directly involved in production. A total of 168 respondents were chosen at random from a sample of 1,289 women workers stratified according to age. All of the women in the sample were production workers except for 14 women working as *técnicos* or technicians. Since we were interested in

obtaining an adequate sample of women workers with employment experience in the pre-revolutionary period, we oversampled women over 50 years of age, of whom there were only 93 in the factory in 1986. A 50 percent sample of these women plus a 10 percent sample of women 50 or younger gave us a total sample of 168 women. There were 33 cases of substitution for respondents who could not be located.

The interviews were conducted in workers' homes by the Cuban collaborators in this report, who are professional staff of the Federation of Cuban Women. The author trained this special research team in interview techniques, and assisted them in adapting the interview schedule used in the study of Puerto Rican garment workers to the Cuban situation, after careful pre-testing with randomly selected women workers from Ariguanabo. For example, we found it useful to obtain educational and employment information for both the pre- and post-revolutionary period, in order to obtain an accurate measure of the changes that had occurred. In addition, questions were asked about participation in several Cuban mass organizations that do not exist in Puerto Rico. The interview schedule, which lasted about two hours, covered their work situation, their family life, political attitudes and participation in mass organizations. In addition, a year after the completion of the survey the author, with the assistance of the Cuban collaborators, conducted in-depth interviews with a sub-sample of 18 women to obtain more qualitative information. This data is not analyzed here, although there is reference to some of the interviews. We also had several lengthy interviews with representatives of management and the union in Ariguanabo to obtain data and to discuss the results of the study, and some of this information is included here.

In analyzing the data, it turned out that the sample divided almost equally between three age groups: 17 to 29; 30-44 and 45 and over (Table 2). However, since the latter category includes the women over 50 who were overrepresented, the sample does not reflect an accurate breakdown of the ages of women employed in Ariguanabo,the majority of whom were under 30. It would have been preferable to keep this over 50 category separate rather than lumping them with women 45 and over, but it is impossible to redo the analysis at this time. At any rate, we are concerned less with a representative sample of women workers in the factory than with how these ages, which represent different stages in the life cycle, are correlated with differences in household composition, attitudes toward work, and political participation.

TABLE 2

Ariguanabo Sample of Women Workers Stratified by Age

Age	Number in Sample	Percentage
17-29	61	36.3
30-44	45	26.8
45 and over	62*	36.9
Total	168**	100.0

* This age category is overrepresented because we sampled 50% of those 50 and over.
** Includes production workers and 14 technicians.

Household Composition and Authority Patterns

In analyzing the household composition of our respondents, we examined the data both in terms of age and marital status. As can be seen in Table 3, the two variables are closely correlated, except for female heads of household, who tend to cluster among younger and older women. Age gives us a perspective on generational differences, and has the added advantage that the age groups in the sample are fairly evenly distributed. However, marital status is also important for, as we shall see, it helps determine how women dispose of their earnings and the impact of their contribution on household authority patterns.

The area around Ariguanabo has experienced considerable population growth in the post-revolutionary period, due partly to industrial development. In our sample of women workers, 45 percent were born in the area of Ariguanabo, while the remainder came from other areas, some from as far away as Oriente. Only 20 percent were born in a city, while the rest are about equally divided between those who were born in a provincial town or rural area. Over half of the migrant women arrived in the area under the age of 20, some brought by their parents, while others arrived as adults, often to work in Ariguanabo or in other factories nearby. Another large textile factory located only a few kilometers from Ariguanabo was opened in 1965 as part of the revolution's import substitution strategy. Still, half the sample population has lived in their present residence for over ten years, a few for their entire lives. So, though Ariguanabo is close to Havana, we are dealing with a fairly stable, not highly urbanized population.

TABLE 3

Marital Status by Age in Ariguanabo Sample

Age		Married*	Female head of Household**	Single	Total
17-29		44.3	36.1	19.7	100
30-44		73.3	22.2	4.4	100
45 and over		53.2	43.5	3.2	100
Total	N	93	59	16	168
	%	55.4	35.1	9.5	100

* Includes legally married and in consensual union.

** Includes separated, divorced, and widows, whether or not living alone as head of household. Percentages above or under 100 are due to rounding.

Population growth has contributed to a severe housing shortage, which is evident in the fact that 38 percent of our sample households have five or more members. Still, 42 percent of our sample households own their own homes, while most of the remainder are acquiring their houses through their jobs as *viviendas vinculadas*, by paying monthly installments for up to 20 years, which are applied to the purchase price. Families living in *viviendas vinculadas* can only keep these homes while they are working at the factory. All of their homes are quite well equipped, with 68 percent having a washing machine and refrigerator (Table 4) while almost all have a television and radio. However, the women interviewed cite housing as their most important domestic problem, along with a lack of water caused by drought and population growth in the area.

In an attempt to provide more housing for its workers, in 1974 Ariguanabo opened an apartment housing complex called Pueblo Textil, which in 1985 housed 346 families. Though the Pueblo Textil is located close to the factory and the apartments are very modern and well equipped, some residents feel isolated because they are not located in a town and lack shops and other amenities, although efforts are now being made to provide these. For example, the plant management has recently installed a medical clinic as well as a taxi service to take people into town on emergencies. Most workers live in Bauta, the nearest town, while some come from as far away as Havana. Ariguanabo has its own busses, which transport workers to the various towns in which they live.

TABLE 4

Household Possessions by Marital Status in Ariguanabo Sample

Marital Status		Possession of Refrigerator and Washing Machine*			
		Washing Machine and Refrigerator	Refrigerator Only	No Refrigerator or Washing Machine	Total
Married		73.1	15.1	11.8	100
Female Head		61.0	15.3	23.7	100
Single		62.5	0	37.5	100
Total	N	114	23	31	168
	%	67.8	13.7	18.5	100

* These possessions were selected as among the most discriminatory. Ninety percent of the households had a radio and television.

Younger Women Workers

Almost half of the total female labor force in Ariguanabo is under 30.[3] Born after 1956, they represent the new generation of Cuban women workers raised in the post-revolutionary society. In our sample, over half of these young women workers live in large families of five and more persons (Table 5). This reflects the fact that they are often part of their parental or in-laws' households, even though less than 20 percent of these younger women are single (Table 3). Co-residence is also reflected in the fact that over half of them live in three generation households (Table 6), which often include their own children in the case of married women or female heads of household.[4] Over two-fifths of our entire sample live in three generation households, reflecting largely the severe housing shortage in Cuba.[5]

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[3] By January 1989 the percentage of women under 30 had increased to 54.5 percent. The total number of women had increased to 2,106 out of a labor force of 5,639, representing 37.3 percent of the whole.

[4] The term "female head of household" includes all separated, divorced and widowed women, even if they are not the head of the household in which they are living.

[5] In Cuba as a whole, according to the 1981 census, extended families represent 32.5 percent of all private households and contain an average of 5.3 persons compared to 3.8 persons in basic nuclear families. Extended families became more predominant in the 1970s, especially in urban areas where they are associated with the housing shortage (Academy of Sciences, p. 22).

TABLE 5

Number of Persons in Household by Woman's Age in Ariguanabo Sample

		Number of Persons in Household			
Age		**1**	**2-4**	**5+**	**Total**
17-29		4.9	37.7	57.4	100
30-44		8.9	68.9	22.2	100
45 and over		24.2	45.2	30.6	100
Total	N	22	82	64	168
	%	13.1	48.8	38.1	100

TABLE 6

Number of Generations in Household by Age in Ariguanabo Sample

		Number of Generations in Households			
Age		**1**	**2**	**3**	**Total**
17-29		8.2	39.3	52.4*	100
30-44		6.7	64.4	28.9	100
45 and over		24.2	37.1	38.7	100
Total	N	23	76	69	168
	%	13.7	45.2	41.1	100

* Includes 6 households with 4 generations.

Extended families often have the highest incomes because of the large number of wage earners per household.[6] Five or more persons are working in nearly one-fourth of these younger women's households, again reflecting their large size, and the high number of adults (Table 7). Single women contribute less of their salaries to the household than married women, among whom the great majority spend all of their salaries on household expenses (Table 8). Sometimes single women pay their parents or mother a fixed amount and reserve the rest for their own

[6] Unfortunately, data on total family income was not collected.

expenses, as well as saving towards a home of their own. Younger women have the highest level of savings, with 72 percent with savings of 700 pesos or more, which is more than three months wages.

TABLE 7

Number of Persons Working in Household by Woman's Age in Ariguanabo Sample

Age		1	2	3	4	5 or more	Total
17-29		13.1	27.9	16.4	18.0	24.6	100
30-44		8.9	62.2	11.1	13.3	4.4	100
45 and over		16.1	29.0	19.4	22.6	12.9	100
Total	N	22	63	27	31	25	168
	%	13.1	37.5	16	18.5	14.9	100

TABLE 8

Woman's Contribution to Household Expense by Marital Status in Ariguanabo Sample

	Percentage of Woman's Salary Contributed to Household Expenses			
Marital Status	**All**	**50% or More**	**Less than 50%**	**Total**
Married	65.6	26.9	7.5	100
Female head	50.8	30.5	18.6	100
Single	25.0	25.0	50.0	100
Total N	95	47	26	168
%	56.5	28.0	15.5	100

When younger women continue to live with their parents or in-laws, it is most often the latter who make the decisions at home and administer the expenses. Thus these younger women are clearly subordinate members of the household, even if they are married and have children of their own. Over 40 percent of them continue to consult about personal problems with their mothers, although many are now married or separated. In half the cases, their mothers or mothers-in-law take care of their children when they work, which is one advantage of three-

generation households. Over two-thirds of these young women have only one child, but they are clearly still of child-bearing age (Table 9). Household chores are also shared with their mothers or mothers-in-law.

TABLE 9

Number of Children by Women's Age in Ariguanabo Sample

	Number of Children					
Age	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5 or more**	**Total**
17-29	67.6	29.7	2.7	--	--	100
20-44	30.0	45.0	20.0	2.5	2.5	100
45 and over	18.2	23.6	29.1	14.5	14.5	100
Total N	47	42	25	9	9	132*
%	35.6	31.8	19	6.8	6.8	100

* Excludes those women who have not had children.

Despite the Family Code, it is evident that in these working-class families, men do not share in household tasks nor do women put much pressure on them to do so, even though they are also employed. This is especially true in three-generation households where there are several women around to share household responsibilities. Three-generation families also increase the influence of the older generation, who generally hold the authority in the household and maintain more traditional values. Thus, extended families tend to maintain a more traditional sexual division of labor in the household than smaller nuclear families, where the husband is under more pressure to share in household responsibilities.

Younger women have higher educational levels than older women, reflecting the educational advances of the post-revolutionary period (Table 10).[7] Three-fourths of these younger women have gone to secondary school (seventh to ninth grade) while most of the remainder have gone on for additional education. One of the principal reasons these women left school was because of marriage or pregnancy. Nearly two-thirds of these younger women married and had their first child under the age of 20, and 28.6 percent have been married more than once.

[7] Between 1977/78 and 1986/87, the percentage of Cuban women enrolled in sixth to ninth grade (*enseñanza media*) increased from 36 to 48.7 percent, while those enrolled in post-secondary education (*enseñanza superior*) increased from 3.9 percent to 11.8 percent (*Integración económica de la mujer cubana a las actividades socio-económicas y políticas,* FMC, p. 35).

Contrary to common demographic patterns, increased educational and occupational possibilities have not increased the age of marriage and pregnancy for these women who, like the older women in the sample, continue to marry and have children at an early age.[8] In fact, it could be argued that early marriage and pregnancy is a prime factor in limiting their further educational and occupational advancement, although none of the women in our sample have left work permanently because of this. Few of them are studying now because they claim their work schedules do not permit it. In the in-depth interviews, one young woman told us how she had to interrupt her studies, and even give up a scholarship to the Soviet Union, because of an unplanned pregnancy.

TABLE 10

Educational Level by Woman's Age in Ariguanabo Sample

	Educational Level			
Age	**Primary Grade 1-6**	**Secondary Grade 7-9**	**Grade 10 or more**	**Total**
17-29	6.6	75.4	18.0	100
30-44	35.6	48.9	15.6	100
45 and over	74.2	19.4	6.5	100
Total N	66	80	22	168
%	39.3	47.6	13.1	100

Middle-Aged Married Women

Smaller households are found among middle-aged women aged 30 to 44, 69 percent of whose households consist of two to four persons (Table 5). Nearly three-fourths of these women are married (Table 3) and live largely in nuclear families of two generations with their husbands and children (Table 6). Few middle-aged women have more than three children (Table 7), reflecting the overall decline in fertility in Cuba in the post-revolutionary period. From l975 to 1986, the gross reproduction rate (daughters born per woman) decreased from 1.3 to .83, an extremely low figure for Latin America and comparable to that of many advanced industrial countries. However, the rate of decline has been lower in younger age groups, reflecting a relatively high rate of teenage pregnancies (*Integración económica de la mujer cubana*…, p. 16).

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[8] In a recent extensive study of fertility and employment in three areas of Cuba, the average of marriage was under 20 for all groups except for working women in Havana (S. Catasús et al. 1988: 72)

Nearly half of these middle-aged women have themselves obtained a secondary education (Table 10), which in most cases was completed after the revolution, since many left school earlier in the pre-revolutionary period. A principal reason for leaving school the first time was marriage or pregnancy, as among younger women, but an equal number cited economic need, reflecting the poor economic conditions in the pre-revolutionary period. Currently many are not studying because their work in the factory will not permit it. They have to work rotating shifts and this conflicts with any regularly scheduled activities. It seems that the desire to study also wanes with age and the burden of domestic and work responsibilities.

Paid employment appears to have an impact on authority patterns, since more than half of these married women maintain that they make decisions jointly with their husbands, and only a few maintain that the husband makes them alone (Table 11). This constitutes a real change from a traditional patriarchal pattern common to previous Cuban working-class households, and probably reflects the importance of women working and contributing to the household. Over half of these married women also administer expenses jointly, and both husband and wife contribute heavily to household expenses. The great majority of married women contribute all of their salary to the household (Table 6), as do an almost equal number of their husbands. In more than half the households, one or more persons in addition to the husband and wife are working, usually grown children or other relatives. These married couples have the best equipped houses (Table 4) and nearly half have savings of over 700 pesos.

Almost none of the husbands have asked their wives to stop working, which represents another radical change from the pre-revolutionary period. Married women tend to discuss problems with their husbands, although a good number also turn to their mothers or non-relatives such as a neighbor or friend. Most married women say they quarrel with their husbands, but few have considered divorce.

Despite the fact that authority is now shared, the wife continues to do most of the household work, with some help from her mother or mother-in-law in cases where they are still living together. The only household tasks in which the husband actively participates are paying the bills, doing the shopping, and taking out the garbage. In short, the sexual division of labor has remained quite traditional despite an apparent change in authority patterns. The only households where husbands appear to take a greater role in household tasks are younger, better educated couples who are living alone and could not count on relatives to help.

TABLE 11

Who Makes Decisions in Household by Marital Status in Ariguanabo Sample

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Who Makes Decisions

Marital Status		Respondent	Husband	Both	Other*	Total
Married		12.9	17.2	52.7	17.2	100
Female-head		49.2	--	1.7	49.2	100
Single		18.8	--	6.2	75.0	100
Total	N	44	16	51	57	168
	%	26.2	9.5	30.4	33.9	100

* Usually refers to parents or in-laws.

Older Women Workers

Women 45 and over were adults at the time of the revolution and thus have fully experienced the changes it brought. This is most evident in the occupational changes to be discussed in the next section and in improved educational levels. Before the revolution, more than half these older women in our sample had never completed primary school (sixth grade) and 6.5 percent were illiterate (which is much lower than the percentage of illiteracy among the total female population in Cuba in the 1953 census). After the revolution, illiteracy was eliminated, and nearly three-fourths had completed primary school, while nearly one-fifth had gone to secondary school. Half of them reported that they had to leave school as children because of economic problems. Like middle-aged women, 60 percent continued their education after the revolution, but many are not studying now because they think they are too old, or are not well, etc.

Older women have the highest percentage of female-headed households, although 53 percent are married (Table 3). They often continue to reside with their children and grandchildren in three-generation households (Table 6). This explains why over 30 percent of these older women's households have five or more members (Table 5) and why 35 percent of these households have four or more persons working in the household (Table 7). On the other hand, nearly one-fourth of the women in this older group live alone, reducing the average number of workers per household. Although the highest number of children are found in this older age group (Table 9), most of them are already grown and have moved off on their own.

If they are married, older women tend to share decisions and the administration of household expenses with their husbands. Husbands tend to contribute the least in household expenses in this older age group, with 48.5 percent giving all their salary and 42.4 percent half or more. In comparison, 66 percent of the women in this older generation give all their salaries to the household. They sometimes turn to their husband to discuss their problems but more often to their own children (who are now grown) or other friends and neighbors.

Female-Headed Households

Female-headed households deserve separate consideration because they constitute 35 percent of the sample and illustrate the problem of marital instability, which is quite high in contemporary Cuba.[9] Most are separated or divorced, although a few are widows, particularly in the older age group. Female-headed households in our sample are divided into this older group (45.8 percent), who are usually the heads of their households, and the younger group under 30 (37.3 percent), who often live with and are subordinate to their parents. Only a few of the younger female heads of household live alone. Decision-making in female-headed households reflects this bipolar age distribution. Older women who head their own households make the major decisions, while younger women living with their parents or in-laws defer to them. Three generation families constitute 55.9 percent of female-headed households, and are found both among younger women living with their parents, and older women living with children and grandchildren. One of our respondents was a divorced grandmother who lived with her five children and grandchildren in a household totalling 26 persons. Over 40 percent of these female-headed households contain five or more members.

Despite the large size of their households, however, female-headed households have less earning power, with 62 percent having only one or two persons working in the household. They also have higher dependency ratios than married women, since 82 percent of female-headed households have young children under 18 in the household, substantially higher than the 51 percent among married women. Among older female heads, many of these may be grandchildren. Nevertheless, 61 percent of the households are equipped with washing machines and refrigerators (Table 4) and over two-thirds have savings of more than 700 pesos. Half of these households also own their own homes, compared to 40.9 percent of married women's households.

Despite their low earning power, a smaller percentage of women who are female heads of household give all their salaries to the household than married women (Table 8). Those contributing less are generally younger women living with their parents, to whom they give a monthly allowance for food and housing, while they pay their other expenses for themselves and their children on their own. Some of these women receive a pension as widows while divorced or separated women should receive child support from the fathers of their children. However, many single mothers do not receive child support, and in some cases prefer to support their children on

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[9] Divorce rates increased rapidly in the post-revolutionary period and reached a high of 3.2 per thousand in 1986. In part this reflects the greater economic autonomy that the revolution has provided women. As a result, the percentage of female-headed households in Cuba has increased from 9.6 percent in 1953 to 19.7 percent in 1981. ((*Integración económica de la mujer cubana*… p. 20-21). The predominance of female-headed households among older women generally may explain their higher percentage in this sample. (Academy of Sciences, p.17).

their own because this limits the authority fathers have over their children. Female-headed households in Cuba do not receive special welfare payments from the state as in the United States or Puerto Rico, although female heads are given preference in employment and enjoy the other subsidies in education, health, etc. that the state provides. Given the high divorce rate, it could be argued that the Cuban state wishes to avoid encouraging the formation of female-headed households.

One of the principal reasons behind the formation of female-headed households appears to be early pregnancy. While age at marriage did not differ greatly, 57.4 percent female-headed households had their first child under 20 compared to 42.1 percent of married women (Table 12). These women are generally too young for the responsibility of motherhood, and often leave the primary responsibility to their own mothers, with whom they are still living. Household chores are also divided between themselves and their mothers or other female relatives in the home. In effect, these younger women continue to live as children in their parents' homes, although they may have children of their own. The parents continue to make the decisions in the house, and many of these younger women turn to their mothers for personal problems. Older women who head households, however, have to assume much of the economic and decision-making responsibility themselves, although they may turn to neighbors and friends for advice.

To summarize, it is evident that age and marital status have a marked effect on the household, including family size, number of persons working in the household, number of children, as well as household decisions and chores. It would appear that as women work, they are assuming more authority in the household, as evidenced by the number of married women who share decisions and household expenses with their husbands. On the other hand, the age at marriage and particularly the age at which women have their first child has remained very young, and helps account for the relatively high rate of marital instability. Thirty percent of all the women have been married more than once, while among female-headed households, the rate is 39 percent.

TABLE 12

Woman's Age at Birth of First Child by Marital Status in Ariguanabo Sample

	Woman's Age at Birth of First Child			
Marital Status	**Less than 20**	**20-25**	**More than 25**	**Total**
Married	42.1	42.1	15.8	100
Female-headed Household	57.4	27.8	14.8	100

Single		100.0	--	--	100
Total	N	65	47	20	132*
	%	49.2	35.6	15.2	100

* Excludes those women who have not had children.

Marital instability also helps explain the high percentage of three-generation households, since most young, unwed mothers remain in their parents' homes.[10] However, some young, married couples are also forced to double up because of the severe housing shortage. Three generation families generally increase the number of workers in the household, adding to the family income and assisting in carrying out household chores. However, they also tend to maintain traditional patriarchal patterns in which women are held responsible for most of the domestic work. They may also contribute to marital instability because of the pressure of living in close quarters with parents or in-laws.

The dramatic increase in educational levels among younger women and their children is one of the most notable effects of the revolution. This can also be seen by comparing the educational level of our respondents with that of their children. Among those children who have completed their schooling, more than half the daughters and over two-fifths of the sons have gone beyond secondary school, including some who have gone to the university. This has resulted in higher occupational attainments, with a number of sons and daughters entering managerial and especially technical fields (Table 13). We shall examine changes in occupational status among the working women in our sample in the next section.

TABLE 13

Occupational Category of Sons and Daughters* in Ariguanabo Sample

Occupational Category	Sons	Daughters
Managers	3.6	2.5
AdministrativeWork	3.6	12.7
Technicians	20.0	22.8
Factory Work	40.0	20.3
Service Work	10.8	12.7
Housewives	--	18.9
Other	22.0	10.1

[10] The study by the Academy of Sciences (p. 21) notes that "incomplete" families have a greater tendency to live in extended families. While incomplete families may include households headed solely by a man (without a wife), these are very uncommon.

Total	N	55	79
	%	100.0	100.0

* Represents only sons and daughters who have completed their schooling.

Occupational History and Mobility

Women workers in capitalist countries are commonly regarded as a secondary labor force, and their needs are not given the same priority as those of men, who are still viewed as the principal breadwinners. As a result, women industrial workers are utilized primarily as a cheap labor reserve and kept in dead-end, unskilled jobs with high rates of turnover and poor pay (e.g. Humphrey 1987). We shall see how this situation compares with that in Ariguanabo.

Possibilities for Advancement

In Cuba as a whole women have made significant occupational advances in the post-revolutionary period, as can be seen in the marked shift out of unskilled service occupations into higher level technical and professional jobs. In 1986, women were most heavily represented in fields such as education, public health, and finance and insurance, while they represented less than 30 percent of all workers in industry (Table 14). Forty percent of the women who entered the labor force between 1976 and 1980 were technical, skilled or professional personnel (Pérez-Stable: 1987: 61), and this trend continued in the 1980s. By 1986 women constituted more than half of all technicians in Cuba but still represented a relatively low percentage of managers (Table 15).

TABLE 14

Cuban National Occupational Profile by Gender and Sector, 1986

Sector	Percent of Gender		Percentage in Each Sector	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Industry	22.6	33.2	29.5	70.5
Construction	3.6	13.7		
Agriculture and Cattle Raising	5.9	12.6	14.0	86.0
Forestry	.4	1.3	17.4	82.6
Transportation	3.0	8.1	18.5	81.5
Communications	1.1	.7	47.5	52.5
Commerce	14.8	9.4	49.0	51.0
Other Productive Activity	.6	.6	39.3	60.7
Personal and Commercial				

Services	4.0	3.4	41.9	58.1
Science and Technology	1.1	.7	48.0	52.0
Education	21.1	6.3	67.2	32.8
Culture and Art	1.4	1.1	43.3	56.7
Public Health and Social Assistance	12.2	3.3	69.5	30.5
Finance and Insurance	1.1	.3	69.7	30.3
Administration	6.0	4.6	44.7	55.3
Other Non-Productive Activity	1.1	.7	47.1	52.9
Total	100.0	100.0	38.0	62.0

Source: *Integración económica de la mujer cubana a las actividades socio-económicas y políticas*, FMC, p. 27.

In 1987 approximately 88 percent of the labor force in Ariguanabo consisted of production workers, while the remainder were distributed into administrative, technical, service, and management positions (Table 1). As we noted earlier, Ariguanabo in the pre-revolutionary period had an almost exclusively male labor force. Only 150 women were employed, representing about 5 percent of the labor force. In fact, the workers were considered a labor aristocracy because of their high level of skill and pay. Women did not work in the factory in massive numbers until 1973, when 800 women were employed. This was also the period in which women began entering the labor force in larger numbers in Cuba as a whole. Since then, the number and percentage of female workers in Ariguanabo has increased steadily, from 31.5 percent in 1980 to 37.3 percent in January, 1989.

TABLE 15

Cuban National Occupational Profile by Gender and Occupational Category, 1986

Occupational Category	Percent of Gender		Percentage in Occupational Sector	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Workers	25.4	65.9	19.1	80.9
Technicians	30.0	14.2	56.4	43.6
Administrators	17.0	2.2	82.9	17.1
Service	22.2	8.3	62.1	37.9
Managers	5.4	9.4	26.2	73.8
Total	100.0	100.0	38.0	62.0

Source: *Integración económica de la mujer cubana a las actividades socio-económicas y políticas,* FMC, p. 24.

The increasing number of female workers in the Cuban textile industries represents a reversal of most employment patterns in this industry in Latin America, in which the percentage of women has declined with technological advances (Saffioti 1986). Ariguanabo has also undergone considerable modernization in the post-revolutionary period, both in terms of physical plant and machinery, but this has not led to the displacement of women. In fact, management complains of labor turnover due partly to alternative opportunities for employment in the area, such as another textile factory, a dairy and other agricultural work. Turnover is also attributed to rising educational levels, which prepare young people for higher level jobs. It is possible that the greater employment alternatives for men in the region have led Ariguanabo to recruit more women. Many older men who were working in the pre-revolutionary period also retired in the 1970s.

The increasing number of women workers also represents a conscious strategy on the part of the Cuban government to encourage female employment. In 1980 the state adopted a kind of affirmative action policy (Resolution 511 of the Comité Estatal de Trabajo y Seguro Social) whereby in each workplace certain jobs would be declared *puestos preferentes* (preferential positions) for women. The decision as to the number and type of jobs for women is made by the management and union officials in each workplace in consultation with the Federation of Cuban Women, and is supposed to be approved in a worker assembly. According to data provided by management, at the time of our study, almost half of the jobs in Ariguanabo had been declared *puestos preferentes* (preferential positions) for women, but about 35 percent of these were actually occupied by men. The number of women in technical, administrative and service jobs generally met the designated goals, but women fell short in certain production jobs and particularly in management. In 1987, only 7 out of 169 *dirigentes* (managers) in Ariguanabo were women (Table 1), though a majority of these positions had been declared preferential for women.

One reason for women's lack of advancement into supervisory positions in Ariguanabo is the way female production workers are inserted into the labor process. The most numerous jobs for women as production workers are as winders, spinners and weavers, to the extent that there are comparatively few men left in either of the former two occupations, which may result in a possible new form of occupational segregation. There are no women working as mechanics, who have the best chances for promotion because they are more aware of all phases of the production process. They also earn more and often become heads of sections or shifts or one of the new integrated brigades. While there are no female heads of shifts or sections, 13 of the 94 heads of brigade are women, but the latter are not considered management positions.

While women themselves have shown little interest in becoming mechanics, management has also made little effort to train them. It is evident that management is still

governed by traditional sexist principles that underestimate a woman's physical ability and magnify her concern for her appearance (e.g. greasy hands). As the plant director noted: *"Las manos de una mujer no son iguales que las de un hombre, para cortar cana, para la mecánica, para andar con el martillo, muchas cosas las pueden hacer y las están haciendo las mujeres"* (The hands of a women are not the same as those of a man, to cut cane, for mechanics, to work with a hammer; women can do many things and are doing many things). Yet women do other dirty jobs in Ariguanabo such as cleaning or oiling machines. By state law (Resolution 512) women are also barred from certain jobs that the Ministry of Labor maintains present health hazards, particularly to women's reproductive functions. This policy has been strongly contested by the Federation of Cuban Women and the number of such positions closed to women has been sharply reduced (Pérez-Stable 1987: 61).[11]

One policy under consideration is placing qualified technicians or university graduates in these management positions. In Ariguanabo, in 1987 women comprised more than half of the technicians or *técnicos* at the factory, and about one-third of the engineers, all of whom have received advanced degrees, often in the Soviet Union or other East European countries. But this still would not give women in lower level positions an opportunity to advance.

The primary reason given by women in our sample for why women are not promoted is that management prefers men, and several of the younger and middle-aged women say that women are not valued. This indicates that some women are conscious of gender discrimination in the factory, although many also claim that their domestic duties do not permit them to obtain the training and devote the time to work in higher positions. Here we can see the negative effects of the heavy household responsibilities that these working women bear. Younger women are generally more optimistic about advancement in the factory (Table 16), since they are better educated, and have fewer household responsibilities. Many of the older women feel they are not qualified for supervisory positions or are simply not interested.

TABLE 16

Woman's Perceived Possibilities of Job Advancement by Age in Ariguanabo Sample

	Woman's Perceived Possibilities of Job Advancement			
Age	**Positive**	**Negative**	**N**	**Total**

[11] Resolution 40 reduced the number of positions closed to women, but maintained the principle of prohibition. The concern is largely with women's fertility and therefore at present in the Labor Code the prohibition applies only to pregnant or fertile women. The prohibited jobs include those requiring heavy manual labor and other health hazards.

17-29		52.9	47.1	51	100
30-44		30.5	69.5	46	100
45 and over		23.0	77.0	61	100
Total	N	55	103	158*	
	%	34.8	65.2		100

* Respondents who answered “don’t know” were not included.

Educational level would not appear to be a barrier to advancement, since the educational level of women in Ariguanabo is equal or superior to that of men. According to data provided by the factory, at the end of 1985, the percentage of women at the pre-university level and especially at the technical level was higher than that of men, while the percentage with just primary education was much lower (Table 17). However, women have not been employed at the factory for the same length of time, since most of them entered in the seventies. Though data on length of time employed was collected on only about half our sample, among these respondents over 65 percent has been employed ten years or less.[12]

TABLE 17

Educational Level of All Men and Women Workers in Ariguanabo Factory 1985

	Men		Women	
	N	%	N	%
Primary	377	22.8	49	3.8
Secondary	872	52.7	611	47.6
Technical Education	74	4.5	185	14.4
Pre-University	293	17.7	415	32.3
University Education	39	2.3	24	1.9
Total	1655	100.0	1284	100.0

Source: Factory records.

Another fundamental factor explaining women's lack of advancement in Ariguanabo is shift work. Shifts change weekly, so that workers are always working different hours. While shifts are necessary in order to use the expensive physical plant to full capacity, it poses more of a problem to women who already have heavy domestic responsibilities. Shifts have recently been reduced from eight to six hours, which reduces the strain for most women. Nevertheless, rotating shifts make it difficult to attend regularly scheduled classes for advanced training, and sometimes also union meetings and other events. While over half the women who rotate shifts say it does not create problems for them, they also cite shifts as a primary cause of absenteeism and one of

[12] Unfortunately, data on length of time employed in Ariguanabo was inadvertently omitted from the interview schedule, but was collected on 81 respondents on which this estimate is based. Since we overrepresented older women workers in our sample, the average length of time all women workers in Ariguanabo have worked is probably lower.

the things they like least about working in the factory. One young separated women living alone with her nine-year old son leaves him sleeping alone in the house when she works nights.

Support services

Ariguanabo provides workers with a full array of support services that far surpass those found among industrial workers in other world areas (e.g. Safa 1989; Humphrey 1987). These include transportation to and from work, a day care center, medical facilities, maternity leave, prepared lunches, housing, and recreational facilities including a baseball field, community center, and dances. Nevertheless, it would seem that some of the facilities offered by the factory such as the lunchroom and the day care center are better suited to the needs of white-collar workers in administrative, service or even technical jobs than to production workers who rotate shifts.

The day care center, for example, is open from 6 A.M. to 6 P.M., and cannot accommodate women working shifts. Almost 30 percent of our respondents sent their children to the day care center, particularly among middle-aged women, while more of the younger women rely on their mothers to take care of their children. While this reflects the fact that younger women are more likely to live with their mothers, it may also reflect the scarcity of day care facilities in recent years. Over 80 percent of our sample think more day care centers are needed, even older women with grown children. In 1975 day care centers were projected to expand to 150,00 children capacity, but by 1980, the number had only reached 90,000. (Pérez-Stable 1987: 63). However, as part of the rectification campaign started in 1986, day care centers have received renewed emphasis, particularly in Havana where 54 were completed in 1987 with plans for the construction of 50 more in 1988 (Smith and Padula 1988: 49). At the end of 1988, there were a total of 210 day care centers in Cuba with a capacity for 129,817 children.

Management recognizes that day care is a problem for working mothers, but has not found an adequate solution. They maintain that an experimental study was conducted on 24 hour day care centers several years ago, but apparently mothers preferred to leave their children sleeping at home. While undoubtedly this is a strong tradition in Cuban families, it is possible that it has now changed with the greater percentage of mothers working. The factory management also attempts to place women with young children on fixed shifts, but has not been able to accommodate demand. A total of 1,400 persons or about one-fourth the labor force are on fixed shifts. (Table 18). However, men still predominate on fixed shifts, and only half of the 400 women on fixed shifts work in production. Most of the 20 percent of our sample who do not rotate shifts are technicians and other specialized personnel.

TABLE 18

Type of Shift Work of All Men and Women Workers in Ariguanabo Factory 1989

Type of Shift Work	Women N	Women %	Men N	Men %	Total N	Total %
Fixed Shift	400	18.9	1000	28.3	1400	24.8
Rotating Shift	1706	81.1	2533	71.7	4239	75.2
Total	2106	100.0	3533	100.0	5639	100.0

Source: Factory records.

Nearly half the women workers in our sample complain about the working hours at the factory, which includes not only shift work but work on Saturdays. This has improved somewhat since the shift was shortened in 1988 to six hours, but they also have to work under greater pressure in order to fulfill their quotas, which at the time of the study in 1986 were still being adjusted to the shorter hours.[13] They also complain about the working conditions, including the lunchroom facilities and the lack of ventilation, as well as the noise which is common to textile factories. There is a lunchroom for all the workers, but many women do not like the food nor the facilities. The hours in which the lunchroom is open also do not accommodate the needs of most workers who rotate shifts. Most of these workers prefer to eat at home before leaving for work, and only have a snack during work which is brought to them in the factory.

The state now provides women with maternity leave, although this was formerly a responsibility of individual firms. Women workers receive paid maternity leave for eighteen weeks and can take off another year without pay. Pregnant women are taken off shift work in their third month of pregnancy, and may go on maternity leave at seven months. However, once they resume working, they must also work shifts, although as stated previously, some attempts are being made to accommodate them on fixed shifts.

Labor Turnover and Absenteeism

Labor turnover may be problem in a socialist society since the incentive to work is not as great where services such as health and education are provided free of charge, thus workers are not forced to seek paid employment to meet all their needs. In Cuba, turnover was particularly prevalent among women in the early years of the revolution, since women faced the added

[13] According to management, when the working day was reduced from eight to six hours, norms were increased 9 or 10 percent an hour to help make up this loss. In addition, the 30 minute rest period was reduced to 10 minutes.

burden of housework and child care. This is one reason why working women were provided with additional support services as well as material incentives to make paid employment more attractive.

In the late seventies, the Cuban state placed a greater emphasis on material incentives, particularly with the new management and planning system or SDPE, designed in part to cope with problems of work discipline and underproductivity. Previously, under the system of moral incentives, workers were paid a flat daily rate, and there were no material incentives for working harder or better. Now work norms have been installed which workers must fulfill, and if they exceed these norms they may receive bonuses or *primas*, although these were reduced in many areas with the rectification campaign after 1986 (Zimbalist 1989: 81).

Since the factory is now open six days a week with four six hour shifts, it is producing more than previously with three eight hour shifts working five and a half days. In addition, 700 new workers were employed. In 1988, Ariguanabo surpassed its quota for the third year in a row, producing 62 million square meters of woven cloth. Nevertheless, management claims that they still need to improve efficiency, which now stands at about 70 percent, especially in weaving. Part of the problem is due to a high rate of turnover, which with the shift to six hours, has recently been reduced from 30 to 25 percent. The majority of those leaving are new recruits who quit before they have working six months. This represents a heavy investment in training for about 1,200 people annually. To counter this problem, management is placing more emphasis on stability as a criteria for recruitment, seeking people who are not only qualified but demonstrate responsibility. They are also trying to reward good workers, especially in highly skilled jobs for which it is difficult to recruit, by placing them on fixed shifts and providing them with housing and other amenities. *Escalafones* or pay scales based on seniority may also be relaxed to reward particularly productive workers. However, nearly three-fourths of our sample says that pay scales are respected in the factory. Cuban state law requires that men and women working at the same job receive the same rate of pay.

In Ariguanabo the percentage of women workers named as *obreras destacadas* (outstanding workers) has increased steadily, and in 1986 constituted over 20 percent. Almost 70 percent of the women interviewed have received material or moral incentives as rewards for good performance on the job, which is measured by such things as lack of absenteeism, consistently fulfilling their quotas, doing volunteer work, etc. Most of these incentives have consisted of diplomas as vanguard workers, or gifts such as household appliances, money, or paid trips within Cuba. Housing is also an incentive and, as noted earlier, is being used to stabilize the labor force. However, only one of our respondents has received housing as an incentive, despite the clear need among married women and single mothers doubled up with their parents or in-laws. It would seem that men in highly skilled jobs still receive preference in housing.

The need to stabilize the labor force in order to cut costs and boost productivity apparently takes precedence over meeting women's special demands, although it could be argued that turnover among women workers reflects inadequate attention to their needs. Management says turnover is higher among the young, many of whom are women, but it is not clear that female turnover rates are higher than male. Management claims that some youth are undisciplined and do not need to work because they live at home and can depend on their parents. However, in our sample, there is a strong commitment to work among these young women, even when they are living at home. Over 80 percent of our sample say they prefer to work whether they need the money or not.

Women often suffer higher levels of absenteeism because they must take off work for family reasons, because their children are ill or need to be taken to the clinic. Until recently, only women could accompany sick children in the hospital, but with pressure from the FMC, this regulation has recently been changed to include men. In our sample, illness (personal and familial), the lack of day care, and shift work are cited by women as the primary reasons for absenteeism. Illness or family problems are also the main reasons these women have taken leaves from their work in the factory in the past, although 30 percent claim that they have never taken leave. Although moral and material sanctions may be applied, management claims that it is very difficult to fire anyone from their job in the factory despite repeated absences.

Reasons for Working and Occupational History

Working-class women generally work because of economic need, in contrast to the middle classes where personal achievement may be the primary goal. Similarly in Cuba more than half of our respondents cite economic need as the principal reason for their present employment (Table 19). However, in Cuba women's employment is not the basis for family survival, as we have found in our studies of women garment workers in the Dominican Republic and even Puerto Rico (Safa 1989). The pressure to earn money increases in female heads of household, particularly when they are sole wage-earners, and explains why in our Cuban sample, a higher percentage of women in these households say that they work because of economic need than among single or married women. However, most of our Cuban respondents work to improve their standard of living through the purchase of increased consumer goods or to help meet the rising cost of living, which also accelerated under the SDPE. Many also indicate that their primary reason for working is that they prefer it to staying home, or that they consider their work useful to society (Table 19), a value stressed in socialist society.

TABLE 19

Reasons for Working at Present by Marital Status in Ariguanabo Sample

Reasons for Working					
Marital Status	**Useful to Society**	**Economic Need**	**Prefers to Work**	**Other**	**Total**
Married	24.6	41.8	26.9	6.7	100
Female Head 12.2	73.0	9.5	5.4	100	
Single	--	52.9	35.3	11.8	100
Total N	42	119	49	12	225*
%	18.7	52.9	21.8	6.6	100

* Based on multiple responses so total exceeds number of respondents.

Age and marital status have an impact on women's roles in the workplace as well as in the household. For most of the younger women, this is their first job and they started working between the ages of 17 and 19, when they finished school (Table 20). Many of the older women, however, started working before they were 17, and nearly all for economic need, reflecting the poor conditions in the pre-revolutionary period. Over 20 percent of these older women got their factory jobs through the Federation of Cuban Women, though most women obtain their jobs through personal contacts. The middle-aged and older women who were over 20 when they started working generally were not gainfully employed in the pre-revolutionary period.

While 85 percent of the women sampled earned from 85 to 99 pesos a month when they first started working in the factory, 65 percent now earn more than 200 pesos a month, reflecting wage increases. This is a relatively high wage for Cuba, where the average monthly wage in 1986 was 188 pesos (Anuario Estadístico de Cuba 1986: 198). Most of the women in our sample prefer piecework to being paid a fixed hourly wage because they can earn more. Efficient production workers can often earn more than women in administrative positions, particularly clerical jobs that are paid a fixed hourly wage.

TABLE 20

Age at Which Started Working by Woman's Age in Ariguanabo Sample

	Age at Which Started Working			
Age	**Less than 17**	**17-19**	**20 or More**	**Total**

17-29		9.9	63.9	26.2	100
30-44		24.4	20.0	55.6	100
45 and Over		41.9	12.9	45.2	100
Total	N	43	56	69	168
	%	25.6	33.3	41.1	100

We noted earlier the sectoral shift of Cuban women out of unskilled service jobs into higher level technical and professional occupations. This change is evident when we look at the first occupations of the women over 30 in our sample (Table 21). Most of these middle-aged and older women first worked in agricultural work or in domestic service and other service jobs, work that was extremely strenuous and poorly paid. In the last census before the revolution (1953), one-fourth of all employed women were in domestic service (Larguía and Dumoulin 1986: 346) which is still the most numerous occupation for women in most of Latin America. Domestic servants in Cuba were trained after the revolution for more skilled jobs, and today they no longer exist as an occupational group.

Changes can also be seen in the occupational history of the parents of these women in our sample. In the pre-revolutionary period, nearly 42 percent of their fathers were agricultural workers while another 25 percent were factory workers, which increased to 46 percent for those fathers living and working after the revolution. The most startling change, however, is in the level of employment, since 32 percent of fathers were unemployed much of the time in the pre-revolutionary period, while after the revolution, almost all of those not retired or deceased were employed full-time. The changes among women of this older generation were not so dramatic, with the percentage of housewives being reduced from 62 to 53 percent.

TABLE 21

First Job of Respondents by Age in Ariguanabo Sample

		First Job						
Age		**Ariguanabo Factory**	**Other Factory**	**Agriculture**	**Service**	**Other**	**N**	**%**
17-29		72.1	8.2	3.3	4.9	11.5	61	100
30-44		33.3	8.9	20.0	22.2	15.5	45	100
45 or more		19.4	11.3	21.0	27.4	20.9	62	100
Total	N	71	16	24	30	27	168	
	%	42.39.5	14.3	17.8	16.1		100	

Sixty percent of the husbands of the women interviewed are also factory workers, and 58 percent of them work in Ariguanabo, primarily also as production workers. Husbands have similar educational levels to their wives, although more of them have gone beyond secondary school. Many of them also started to work before they were 17, most often as factory or agricultural workers. In some cases they met working in the factory, and many women also have fathers, brothers, sisters or other relatives who are currently or were previously employed in Ariguanabo, reinforcing the strong sense of a worker community in the area. When husband and wife both work in Ariguanabo, they often work different shifts in order to share child care responsibilities. This policy is promoted by management to encourage men to share more in child care, and also relieves the demand for day care facilities.

It is clear from the data (Table 8) that women are making a major contribution to the household economy and are not merely supplementary wage earners. In fact, in our sample 45 percent of the husbands earn 200 or more a month compared to 68 percent of their wives (Table 22), which suggests that most of these women are not in less skilled jobs than their husbands. As a result, the number of cases where the wife earns more than her husband far outnumbers those where the husband earns more than his wife. This is even more surprising, when one considers their similarity in educational levels. However, this is not representative of the factory as a whole, in which men are generally better represented in skilled and managerial jobs which pay more. In addition, men earn more by working longer hours and double shifts, which is more difficult for women with domestic responsibilities.

TABLE 22

Salary Level of Respondent by Salary Level of Husband in Ariguanabo Sample

	Salary Level of Husband					
Salary Level of Respondent*	**Less Than 150 pesos** N	**150-199 pesos** N	**200 or more pesos** N	**Don't Know** N	**Total** N	%
Less than 150 pesos	1	1	9	2	13	14.0
150-199 pesos	5	4	7	1	17	18.3
200 or more pesos	16	17	26	4	63	67.7
Total N	22	22	42	7	93	
%	23.7	23.7	45.1	7.5		100.0

* Note that number refers to actual number of cases rather than percentage. Includes only married respondents.

Attitudes toward the Job and Union

Despite the strain of the double day, most women like their jobs, because they find work stable and interesting, they like their fellow workers, and they think their work is useful to society. The contribution that individual work makes to the collective good is emphasized in Cuba as part of the socialist ethic, and workers are expected to contribute extra unpaid work on occasional Sundays, and do other forms of volunteer labor. Among the positive changes workers cite in the factory are the establishment of the integrated brigades, higher salaries, and new machinery, most of which is imported from the Soviet Union. The integrated brigades were established in the Cuban agricultural and industrial sector to improve the quality and quantity of production through forming a stable group of workers who draw up their own work plan, receive bonuses and may eventually become responsible for their own finances. (Codina 1987: 133-4). The brigades represent another important step in the effort to decentralize production and to increase worker incentives and worker participation, but still cover only a small percentage of workers nationally (Zimbalist 1989: 87).

Almost all the women plan to continue working indefinitely, unlike most women in the pre-revolutionary period who did not work after marriage. Most of them plan to work until retirement (55 for women in Cuba) and only one woman said she plans to quit when she marries. This indicates that they have adopted a strong commitment to work, which reflects both the economic advantages of working and their internalization of a strong work ethic which is reinforced by state policy.

Women also feel that paid employment has improved their self-concept. Over 90 percent of the women interviewed feel that work has had a positive impact on them, that it has made them feel more independent, experienced, and capable. Work has also contributed to a change in attitude toward the family. Three-fourths of our sample are in favor of women working even if they have young children, which again suggests a major change from the pre-revolutionary period. Almost all agree that education is equally important for boys and girls, which is reflected in the high educational attainment of their sons and especially daughters. They hope their children will study and have better jobs. Nearly 70 percent do not want their sons and daughters to work in a factory, though older women have a slightly more favorable attitude. Of those children already working, twice as many sons as daughters have continued as factory workers, although the percentages who have moved into managerial or technical fields is very similar (Table 13).

The increasing percentage of women in the labor force, the high proportion in technical or professional positions, their relatively high wage levels and their strong commitment to work contradicts Nazzari's (1983: 260) assertion that women in Cuba are used as a labor reserve. However, it could be argued that union and management continue to undervalue women workers

because of their failure to address women's needs adequately. We have already discussed the shortage of day care and other facilities and the problems of advancement for women in the factory. These are problems that the union should address. Women are well represented in the union, which is part of the Confederation of Cuban Workers, or CTC. There are 473 union *supervisores* or delegates, of whom women constitute 37.4 percent (equal to their percentage in the factory labor force). A woman administrator also heads the Frente Feminino or Feminine Front of the union. Despite this strong female representation, the male head of the CTC union at the factory said he saw no need for a separate Frente Femenino and thought that the needs of women could be attended to through a single integrated union. It would appear that the Frente Femenino is not responding adequately to working women's needs in Ariguanabo. Women complain that they are not listened to in union meetings, and there is considerable dissatisfaction with the union, particularly among older women.

However, nearly 61 percent of the sample feel that the union has improved the work situation for women, particularly in regard to recent changes regarding shorter shifts, better working conditions, and the renovation of the day care center. When asked to choose who has done more for working women, more women indicate the union than management or the Communist Party. (Representatives of the Party as well as the CTC and Frente Femenino and management sit on the *Junta Directiva* or executive board of the factory). Still most women present their problems at work to management rather than the union or the party, since management is the normal route for worker complaints in Cuba. Only if management does not satisfactorily address these problems would be they be presented to the union or the party.

Part of the problem may also lie in the power of union vs. management. In her study of the role of unions at the Cuban workplace, Fuller (1986) indicates that since 1970 unions have more autonomy, but that it is commonly acknowledged that they still serve primarily to transmit orders downward rather than serving as vehicles through which workers can voice their complaints and suggestions. Unions are expected to play a non-antagonistic counterpart role as management overseers, but Fuller reports that workers complain that some managers thwart the union in this role. Management has also been given greater power over worker discipline, with the passage of a law in 1980 restricting the rights of work councils to settle grievances. This law reflected problems of worker discipline, noted earlier, and also the need for tighter control with the institution of a new management and planning system, the SDPE, in the late seventies (Fuller 1987: 146-7).

This new management system may have made it more difficult to address women's needs. The SDPE put firms under increased pressure to reduce costs and show a profit, which could make firms more reluctant to hire women workers who require special support services and may experience higher rates of turnover and absenteeism, as Nazzari (1983: 262) claims.

However, as we have seen, the percentage of women employed in Ariguanabo has increased steadily, perhaps aided by the fact that the cost of services such as maternity leave were transferred to the state. The SDPE also cut state supported services for women, as is shown by the slowdown in the construction of day care centers until recently. Housing construction diminished under the SDPE and the volunteer microbrigades that assisted in construction were abolished, but they have recently been reinstated. The new emphasis on stabilization of the labor force in Ariguanabo may also weaken support for the needs of women production workers, particularly if priority is given to highly skilled jobs in which men predominate.

Undoubtedly, the provision of special support services has made Cuban women more expensive to employ then men, which contrasts sharply with capitalist countries such as Puerto Rico or the Dominican Republic where women constitute a cheap labor reserve (Safa 1989). It would seem that if women are provided with adequate support services to reduce the burden of a double day, they lose their advantage as a source of cheap labor, although in Puerto Rico as well, some of these services are provided by the state. Despite their cost advantage, however, the sex discrimination which women are subject to in these capitalist countries is far worse than in Cuba, in terms of wage levels, stability of employment, and even possibilities of advancement. In Brazil, for example, married women are seldom hired for factory employment, or may be dismissed when they become pregnant, in order to avoid absenteeism and the payment of maternity leave (Humphrey 1987: 78-85). Thus, while the Cuban women workers here may be undervalued in comparison with men, they receive far more support from the state than women workers in capitalist countries.

Political Participation and Consciousness

The mass organizations created under socialism are a primary vehicle for expressing democratic participation. They are a vehicle through which people can voice their decisions as well as a mechanism by which the socialist state can mobilize specific groups in support of the revolution. Critics of the Cuban revolution have generally emphasized the mobilizing function, but Fuller (1986) argues that unions are much stronger and more active in defense of workers rights than they were during the first decade of the revolution. Similarly, Lutjens (1987) in her study of Poder Popular or Popular Power emphasizes the important shift toward greater decentralization and participation that has taken place with the institutionalization of the Cuban revolution in the 1970s. Our data do not lend themselves to a systematic evaluation of this debate. But we can try to measure the extent to which working women are participating in mass organizations and whether they perceive these organizations have done anything for them.

There are various mass organizations at the neighborhood level (the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution or CDR), at the workplace (the Confederation of Cuban Workers or CTC), and representing special interests such as the FMC or Federation of Cuban Women. Almost all the women interviewed belong to these three organizations, but their participation varies (Table 23). They report the highest degree of regular attendance at union meetings, which may reflect the growing importance they attach to their work activity. Participation in all three organizations is quite high considering the time pressures and heavy responsibilities these women are already facing. In addition, over half the women have held office in one of these organizations, especially the FMC and CDR, but the number of those currently holding office is considerably smaller (Table 23). Younger women have a particularly poor record of holding office: 70.5 percent of them currently hold no office and 57.4 percent of them never have. While this might indicate a waning interest in participation among mass organizations among the young, it is more likely that they have not acquired the requisite years of experience. The FMC has also adopted a policy of encouraging younger women to assume professional leadership positions in the organization, which has resulted in a substantial increase in professional cadres of women under 28 from 1985 to 1988 (Table 24). The average age of these professional women is 31.5 at the municipal level, and 45.6 at the national level (FMC 1988).

TABLE 23

Women's Current Participaton in Mass Organizations in Ariguanabo Sample

	Level of Participation				
	Participate Regularly	**Participate Occasionally**	**Don't Participate**	**Total**	**Hold Office**
CDR	42.8	56.0	1.2	100	11.9
CTC	87.5	10.1	2.4	100	10.7
FMC	41.7	56.5	1.8	100	14.3

Table 24

Professional Cadres in the FMC by Age

27 and under	**28-35**	**36-45**	**46-55**	**Over 55**	**Total**

1985	16	29	39	15	1	100
1988	34	34	25	6.7	.3	100

Source: FMC Statistical Office.

When asked which organization had done the most for working women, the overwhelming response in our sample was the FMC, the mass organization working most directly with women. The major accomplishments of the FMC are seen to be day care and employment, both of which functions of the FMC have now passed to other government ministries. Day care continues to be seen by far as the most important benefit the FMC could provide for working women, followed by employment and support services for the home (such as laundries, special shopping hours for working women, etc.) (Table 25). Although these services are undoubtedly important to working women, the emphasis on day care and support services conveys an image of the FMC as a service organization designed primarily to tend to women's domestic needs.

TABLE 25

Perceived Achievements and Desired Objectives of FMC in Ariguanabo Sample

	Respondents' Perceived Achievements	Respondents' Desired Objectives
Day Care	43.5	64.9
Employment	44.6	29.8
Self-Attainment	26.8	14.9
Support Services for Home	8.3	25.0
Equality	30.4	16.7
Health	15.5	1.8
Children's Education	22.0	9.5
Ideological and Political Advancement	16.7	10.7
Other**	22.6	21.5
Total N	390*	335*

* Because of multiple responses, the number of responses total more than the total number or respondents. However, the percentages are calculated on the basis of 168 respondents.

** Includes legislation, sports and cultural activities, and others.

The FMC did play a major role in the initial incorporation of women into the labor force in the 1970s, but as the number of working women grew, its role has been limited largely to housewives. In 1974, responsibility for working women was taken over by the Frente Femenino of the CTC, although there are joint FMC and CTC commissions to coordinate policies on women and work. This shift in focus to housewives may have contributed to the FMC's current identification with more domestic needs. However, at the national level, 42 percent of the members of the FMC are working women, as compared to 37 percent housewives (*Integración económica de la mujer cubana*…, p. 53) which suggests that working women constitute an important constituency of the organization.

The FMC also carries out important ideological work designed to raise women's consciousness through lectures, reading and other activities. However, in our sample this ideological task is apparently given less emphasis, although 30 percent of the women list equality as a major accomplishment of the organization, while a substantial number also note its work in ideological and political advancement (Table 25). Similarly, while the women in our sample gave overwhelming approval to the Family Code, they have done little in their own lives to implement it. It would seem that as in capitalist societies, working-class women are concerned primarily with women's immediate, practical needs rather than with strategic gender interests such as gender equality (Cf. Molyneux 1986).

Equality is also seen by women as one of the major accomplishments of the revolution, along with employment. As one of the older women remarked: "*Antes eramos esclavas*" (We used to be slaves). All of the women interviewed agree that the revolution has improved women's status, and cite as well the accomplishments in education and greater attention to children. Most women in our sample are quite optimistic, with 85 percent saying their lives have improved over those of their parents, while all feel that their children will live even better.

Much of Cuba's progress is attributed to the Communist Party, whom most of our respondents feel has shown a concern for the needs of working women. However, 69 percent did not know the platform for women approved at the Third Party Congress in 1986. Over 90 percent of our respondents recognized Vilma Espín as head of the FMC, a position she has occupied since it was founded in 1960, but only 15 percent recognized her as a newly elected full member of the Politburo. Almost all of our respondents watch television and listen to the radio, and the majority also read newspapers and magazines, so they should be well informed. Presumably party members would be better informed, but only 11.9 percent of the women interviewed belong to the Cuban Communist Party, while another 9.5 percent belong to the U.J.C. or the Union of Communist Youth (for persons under 30). Membership in these political organizations is only by nomination and is based primarily on performance in the workplace. The party pledged in 1980 to increase membership to reflect women's labor force participation, and women accounted for 22 percent of party membership in 1984-5 (Pérez-Stable 1987: 56).

The primary organization for resolving neighborhood problems is Poder Popular, which was started in 1976 in an effort to decentralize decision-making and increase popular participation. It is an elective body with assemblies at the local, provincial, and national levels. Women have generally had a poor representation in these assemblies (Ibid.: 55) although their representation has increased substantially in recent years at all levels. Only one of our respondents has held office in Poder Popular, but nearly half the women said they attend the meetings regularly. Poder Popular is seen as the main resource for solving neighborhood problems such as housing or lack of water, both cited by women as major problems in Ariguanabo. However, 35 percent of our

respondents report that they do not go to anyone with these neighborhood problems, which suggests that many feel these problems are not being adequately addressed.

In her analysis of Poder Popular, Lutjens (1987: 770) argues that it has been effective in decentralizing problem identification and increasing local participation in decision-making. Her analysis of community participation through Poder Popular in the Cuban schools shows that policy-making is centralized, but she maintains that local participation cannot be judged solely on the basis of opposition to central policy, since in Cuba consensus between the center and local levels on overall goals is so high. In part, such consensus is achieved through extensive discussion of new laws and mechanisms of governance such as Poder Popular at the local and provincial level before they are formally adopted in party congresses.

Certainly our respondents show overwhelming approval for the advances made after the revolution, not only by women but by the entire society. Their support of the revolution is indicated by their participation in mass organizations and Poder Popular, and by their approval of the Family Code and other achievements of the Communist Party and the Federation for Cuban Women. But as we have shown, some women also feel that some issues such as day care, housing, and support services for women have not been adequately addressed, at either the workplace or neighborhood level. Undoubtedly the need for such services has increased with the increasing incorporation of women into the labor force, and Cuba's present economic constraints have not allowed supply to keep up with demand (Pérez-Stable 1987: 63). We shall summarize the implications of increasing female labor force incorporation for state policy in Cuba in our conclusion.

Conclusions

Certainly the incorporation of women into the labor force has been a key element of Cuba's development policy, as in most socialist countries. According to the classic theory of "scientific socialism," female paid employment not only provides the country with needed labor power, but integrates women into the revolutionary process and raises their consciousness by reducing their isolation in the home and imbuing them with new collective values (Kruks, Rapp and Young 1989: 9).

The data in this paper provide us with some evidence of the degree to which this policy has succeeded. Most studies on women in Cuba note that there has been an impressive growth of women's participation in the Cuban labor force and a marked shift in their sectoral distribution. Here we can begin to see the impact of these changes at the household level. Women are clearly making an important contribution to the family, and this is leading, in some cases, to more egalitarian relationships between husband and wife. Female employment has added to the family income, and in most cases their homes are well equipped and they have substantial savings. Women have a strong commitment to work, and no longer expect to stop working and rely on their husbands' wages when they marry or have children. They expect their children to study and work at better jobs than they have, and this applies equally to boys and girls. All of this implies a fundamental change in women's roles from the pre-revolutionary period.

While paid employment has given women a new sense of self-esteem, it has not substantially altered the traditional division of labor in the household. Despite the Family Code and the massive incorporation of women into the labor force, men's household role has changed little. The only families that approach the ideal conceptualized in the Family Code are younger nuclear families who are relatively independent of their kin, and where the husband and especially the wife are better educated and often in technical or supervisory positions. While men accept the idea that their wives work, and probably also welcome the added income, most of them do not share in the housework or child care, nor do their wives appear to encourage them. In part, this stems from the high percentage of three-generation households in our sample, which reinforces traditional patterns of authority and domestic labor. Additional women in the extended family may provide working mothers with important assistance in child-care and other household tasks, but they discourage men from taking more responsibility.

This leaves working women with a heavy burden of domestic responsibilities, especially if they have young children. This is the prime reason our respondents constantly reiterate the urgent demand for day care along with other support services for working women. It is interesting that these women look to the state to provide these services rather than expecting their

husbands to take more responsibility, as mandated by the Family Code. This may emanate from all of the services the state has provided for women, which has led them to look to the state to solve their problems rather than requiring more from their husbands. Most women in our sample seem to identify gender equality with more opportunities for employment and greater services from the state rather than with a transformation of gender roles at the household level.

In Cuba, women's demands are supposed to be channeled through the Federation of Cuban Women and other organizations such as the Frente Femenino of the CTC created by the state to promote women's equality. Contrary to the rest of Latin America, where autonomous grassroots women's movements have grown significantly in recent years, in Cuba women struggle within and not against the state to press their demands. The theme of working women has been amply discussed at the congresses of the FMC and the Communist Party, indicating that the struggle for women's equality is not confined to women. Vilma Espín, President of the FMC, has spoken out strongly on many occasions on issues such as job discrimination against women and the sharing of household and child care responsibilities. Espín (1986: 61) has also criticized women for not being more conscious of these issues, noting that women (and men) often speak of men "helping" with the household chores when they should speak of "sharing." Espín adds: "*Las costumbres arraigadas no pueden justificar actuaciones incorrectas. Tales tradiciones, tales atrasos deben ser enfrentados con valentía, y hacer prevalecer la razón sobre semejantes injusticias que atentan contra los principios de la revolucion*" (Deepseated customs do not justify incorrect actions. Such traditions, such delays must be confronted with courage, to make reason prevail over all such injustices that weaken the principles of the revolution).

Despite these efforts, it is clear that the struggle for gender equality is not completely won in Cuba, due largely to women's continued identification with their domestic role. Although women now see paid employment as a lifelong commitment, which does not cease with marriage or motherhood, they continue to identify as mothers first and as workers second. Even one of the female managers in Ariguanabo argues: "*Aquí nosotras mismas las mujeres nos discriminamos un poco, yo te lo digo, a punto de que ya yo soy dirigente y no sé que, pero en un momento determinado con mis hijos, mira primero mis hijos y primero es mi casa, primero es esto*" (Here women themselves discriminate against each other a little, I tell you; to the point that I am a manager and I don't know, but at a certain point, with my children, look—my children first and first my house, that is first). As long as women continue to view paid employment as of lesser importance than their domestic role, they are likely to continue to assume major responsibility for household tasks, which weakens their possibilities of achieving equality with men in the workplace.

But part of the reason for women's continued identification with their domestic role stems from policies at the workplace that reinforce women's secondary status as workers. While there

have been efforts in Ariguanabo to recruit and promote women through the creation of *puestos preferentes*, training programs, and the hiring of women technicians and engineers, the women we interviewed complain that they do not have equal chances for advancement and that their needs in terms of support services are not adequately addressed. Undoubtedly this reflects the need to cut costs with the implementation of the new economic management and planning system in the late seventies, which intensified the shift from moral to material incentives. Nazzari (1983) predicted that this shift would have a negative effect on female employment, but the percentage of women in the Cuban labor force continues to climb, attracted by the new opportunities for employment and the availability of consumer goods as well as apparent increases in the cost of living.

Undoubtedly, the high rates of turnover and the pressure to achieve greater productivity have made the management in Ariguanabo give top priority to the stabilization of the labor force. However, I would argue that paying greater attention to women's needs may be an additional way of stabilizing the labor force, which has not been given sufficient attention. For example, giving women with children who are currently doubled up with relatives greater preference in housing or placing more women with young children on fixed shifts would ease many of their problems. The ideological constraints on women's advancement also need to be addressed. Women are relatively recent recruits to the labor force in the factory, which has a strong male worker tradition. I think this has led union and management to undervalue women workers in comparison to men. Women production workers appear to be recruited primarily for lower level jobs, and are not given certain jobs like mechanics that offer the best salaries and the most possibilities for advancement. Sex discrimination is not intentional, but stems from looking at women workers as having less physical and mechanical ability than men. As in recent studies of women industrial workers in other Latin American countries such as Brazil, Chile, or Nicaragua, gender is integrated into the hierarchical structure of production (cf. Humphrey 1987; Galvez and Todaro 1988; Pérez, Martínez and Widmair 1989).

Management may also be responding to negative reactions from male workers who are threatened by the continued increase in women workers in Ariguanablo. As Humphrey (1987: 198) points out in his study of industrial workers in São Paulo, where the proportion of women workers also grew rapidly in the seventies, male workers try to defend their superior status in the factory by barring women from more prestigious jobs and by devaluing the work women do. While we have no direct evidence that this is happening in Ariguanabo, it could be one factor in management's protection of male privileges in terms of access to higher level jobs and other incentives.

Socialist states should be in a better position to combat sex discrimination on the job because they do not have to face resistance from the private sector. Certainly there has not been

a lack of political will on the part of the state in Cuba to promote women's equality in the workplace, but the state is faced with competing demands. Under socialism,there is a constant tension between productivity and equity, between an increase in output such as industry and the provision of social services. The same tension is evident with regard to the family. While the Cuban state applauds the increasing economic autonomy of women, it is distressed by the rising divorce rates and an increasing percentage of teenage pregnancies. Thus, the state adopts policies that emphasize women's reproductive role, such as barring women from certain hazardous jobs, which in turn reinforce a traditional divison of labor. According to Benglesdorf (1985) even the Family Code, though designed to share responsibility within the household, is also aimed at strengthening the family, and relieving the state from the burden of total socialization. A major reason for socialist support for the family is the state's lack of resources to meet all the needs of social reproduction. In socialist as well as capitalist societies, the contribution which the family makes to social reproduction greatly alleviates the role of the state in this regard.

Nevertheless, socialist states take far more responsibility for social reproduction than capitalist states, and this can be illustrated by briefly comparing Cuba's policy toward women workers with that of Puerto Rico and especially the Dominican Republic. In these countries as well, women's labor force participation has increased substantially due to the growth of export-led industrialization, but in contrast to Cuba, women's work is often the basis of the family's survival (Safa 1989). Women are making a critical contribution to the household, which has become even more important with increases in the cost of living and cuts in government services brought on by the recent economic crisis. In the export processing zones of the Dominican Republic, there are no unions and workers are poorly paid and lack job security and even adequate medical attention. In Puerto Rico, where the garment workers we studied are unionized, working conditions are much better, and the state, as in Cuba, provides extensive health and educational programs. But Puerto Rican workers are in constant fear of losing their jobs as plants threaten to move to cheaper wage locations elsewhere, as many have done already, and both the union and the state are powerless to stop them. Because of the strength of the private sector in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, which in the case of export processing zones consists largely of U.S. multinationals, the state can do far less for workers than in Cuba.

In all three countries, women workers must combat a cultural legacy of sex discrimination, but the Cuban state has done more to support women in this struggle than either Puerto Rico or the Dominican Republic. However, while Cuba has made clear gains, major ideological as well as material obstacles to women's equality remain. Ideological obstacles are more difficult to overcome, in capitalist or socialist societies, because they are embedded in a culturally defined sexual division of labor, which continues to emphasize women's reproductive role, despite their

increasing importance in the labor force. This is not to deny the validity of financial and other material constraints in the drive for women's equality in Cuba. But the ideological recognition of women as workers equal to men is vital to their continued integration into the revolutionary process.

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