

DETERMINANTS OF FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN THE LABOR FORCE
AND FAMILY STRUCTURE IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

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categories. The upper class was oversampled to insure a sufficiently large representation. A weight factor was calculated to correct this over-representation and was added to each record. This factor enables the Diagnos sample to be expanded to the 1974 total population of the Dominican Republic as estimated by projections from the 1970 National Census (additional information on Diagnos can be found in Marx, 1978; Ugalde, 1979). For the study of the role of women in the labor force we selected randomly a 2,000 household subsample which when expanded by the weight factor provides information on 744,794 persons. The reliability of Diagnos was checked by comparing the frequencies of some basic socio-demographic variables with the 1970 Census and the World Fertility Study that was conducted in the Dominican Republic in 1975. Table 1 presents the female age distribution of the 1970 Census and of our 2,000 household subsample from Diagnos. As can be observed, the Table suggests a small decline in fertility which is consistent with the changes that took place in the four-year interval. Table 2 shows a remarkable similarity between Diagnos and the World Fertility Survey. Table 3 compares educational levels from Diagnos and the Census, the small differences probably result from the smaller percentage of the category "unspecified" in Diagnos. The female population in the Dominican Republic was 50.6% of the total according to Diagnos and 50.1 according to the Census; 22.8% of the Dominican population resided in the National District in 1974 against 20.4% in 1970, a difference that is in agreement with the large rural-urban migration flow. On the basis of the comparisons with other data and the internal consistency that we have found in Diagnos we feel confident in affirming that Diagnos' sampling, interviewing and recording is reasonably accurate and is as reliable as other major surveys and censuses in the region.

WOMEN IN THE LABOR FORCE: EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Before attempting to analyse the nature of women's participation in the labor force it is necessary to determine the extent of their participation. We encountered a methodological problem in our efforts to establish the number of women in the active labor force. As a concept, the eight to five, Monday through Friday job, generally away from home which is the basis for studies of labor force participation in industrial nations has limited application in developing countries, particularly in the study of female occupation in these countries. For example, it is common to find in developing nations

women who are self-employed in or away from home or who are non-salaried family workers in cottage industries. This type of work has no schedule, when women are not working in these activities they are taking care of household chores. Our Western definition of "active in the labor force" does not fit the reality in which these women live and work. The term "double day" has been introduced to explain the working reality of women, but the use of this expression implies a double occupation and our point is that the distinction between two occupations might be only in the mind of the researcher and not in the subject's. Women do distinguish among the different activities they perform sewing, basket making, cooking, attending the mini-store, cleaning, taking care of children, carding or working in the fields. Whether in their minds multiple activities mean multiple occupations is a different story. It could be argued that women are only partially or seasonally employed in these activities and that their main or primary occupation is the care of the household. However, the concept of fulltime and part-time employment, which in industrial societies is defined as a 40-hour, or fraction there of, work week, might not be very meaningful in a rural setting or in the poor urban neighborhoods of the Third World. It may be incorrect to say that women are employed part-time in agriculture or in cottage industries or that these are their secondary occupations because at times they work more than 40 hours in these activities or more hours than in household chores and still their identification is as mothers, spouses and the household, particularly if their work is not remunerated. It should be remembered that in rural areas cottage industries are frequently family efforts, that we cannot talk about personal income but family income, and that individual members are not remunerated.

These conceptual difficulties were found in the Dominican Census and in Diagnos (one could add that they are prevalent in the censuses of most countries of the Third World). Table 4 presents the breakdown by sexes of the occupational status of the population seven years of age and older. In the Dominican Republic 26,755 women indicated that they had remunerated work of any type (8%) or were without jobs (2%). However, when asked about the type of occupation 41,804 women named an activity or an increase of 15,509. The increase can probably be explained by our assumption that a large percentage of women are self-employed and/or work for a number of hours in cottage industries or in agricultural activities, which at times are and at times are

not remunerated, a situation that in our Western terminology we have decided to call underemployment/subemployment/part-time employment. Why we decide to call fully employed an anesthesiologist who works two or three hours a day but underemployed a woman who cards for four or five hours a day six days per week and/or attends the mini-window store (tiendecitas) whenever there is a customer is anybody's guess. It can be suggested that the large number of women (about 35% in the active labor force) who are classified under the category of "not well-defined occupations" in the 1970 Dominican Census (Oficina Nacional de Estadística, 1980) responds to the difficulty or impossibility of translating activities into occupations.

Our data from Diagnos do not allow us to overcome the above problem. After much pondering we arrived at the conclusion that at the present stage of knowledge it is deceiving to attempt to understand the female occupational structure of rural areas with census and survey data. Ideally one possible breakdown of the occupational situation should be as presented in Table 5. We would like to suggest that the categories used in most censuses in the Americas "remunerated work of any type" and "household chores" are not mutually exclusive and should not be used in the same breakdown. At the same time, the category "family worker without pay" should be included. A more accurate understanding of the extent of female participation in the labor force requires information in the multiple activities that women carry out, and probably, the separation of the concept of work in the active labor force from the concept of monetary rewards. In order to minimize the problem we decided to analyse only the occupational structure of women in Santo Domingo, which has the more 'modern' occupational structure in the country. As shown in Table 4, the figures for unemployment are more realistic for Santo Domingo than for the country.

We are using three categories for the occupational situation: active in the labor force, household chores, and inactive in the labor force. Although we believe that household chores should be included in the active labor force, we have decided to keep them apart for purposes of comparability with other studies. We define "the active labor force" as the total of persons who declare to have remunerated work of any type, or to be without jobs (unemployed) and to be looking for jobs for the first time. This definition has been forced upon us, and unfortunately excludes the category "non-paid family worker," a serious limitation that should make us take with

a great amount of caution our findings. Unemployment rate is the percentage of persons without work and looking for the first job in the active labor force (which as indicated above does not include persons occupied in household chores).

A second problem that we encountered in the study of the extent of women's participation in the labor force refers to the selection of the denominator. Most censuses in Latin America and the Caribbean region have chosen population 12 years of age and above as the denominator. Obviously, this is an arbitrary decision. We have decided to choose population 7 years of age and above, for child labor is a reality in many countries of the Third World. Figure 1 presents the percentage of persons with remunerated work in Santo Domingo by sex and by age groups. As can be seen the female curve peaks earlier than the male one and by age 65, a very small percentage of women continue to have remunerated work, while the majority of men continue to do so. This situation probably reflects the limited social security and retirement pension in the Dominican Republic. Lack of education and tradition are probably the reasons why women do not enter the labor market at a later age after completion of the reproductive cycle and once their child rearing obligations are over. Figure 2 presents the transformation of the female occupational situation with aging. As in many other societies unemployment is particularly serious in the young age groups and among the elderly. Figure 3 illustrates this point.

Most young men and women (age 7-14) who are not in school are also without jobs. Then unemployment rapidly decreases for both sexes and remains steady until the age of 64. After this, it increases moderately for men and dramatically for women.

The percentage of persons with remunerated work in the total population by sex and by educational levels is presented in Figure 4. Among males only university graduate training has a noticeable impact on having remunerated work, for women the correlation between levels of education and remunerated work is high and while the difference between having no education at all and up to eight years of schooling is not very pronounced, the employability of women increases rapidly with high school and college education to the point that women with university graduate training have higher rates of employment than men. The unemployment rates by level of education and by sex are presented in Figure 5. Among males unemployment begins to decrease

after high school and continues to decrease as education increases. The situation is slightly different for women, with the exception of the small peak for those with college education, the more education the lower the rate of unemployment. Table 6 shows the unemployment rates by other selected socio-demographic characteristics by sex. It should be kept in mind that for women the overall unemployment rate in Santo Domingo was 39 while for males it was 30. For both sexes unemployment is more prevalent among those persons who are single, undoubtedly marital status and age are correlated and it is necessary to control for age in order to assess the independent influence of marital status. Female heads of households have considerably lower rates of unemployment rates than female spouses, in fact, female heads of households have even lower unemployment rates than males. It can be suggested that the social and economic difficulties that they encounter predispose them to be aggressive and find relatively more secure employment. It is no surprise that unemployment rates are correlated with social class for both sexes. It is perhaps surprising that women who were born in Santo Domingo have higher rates of unemployment --the difference is rather large-- than migrant women. However, this finding is consistent with the migration literature in Latin America, according to which many migrants have jobs before deciding to migrate or within a few months after arrival (Jelin, 1976; Cornelius, 1975; Ugalde, 1974). In the specific case of women, many of the rural migrants are young women who are brought from the villages to work as maids in middle and upper class homes. Finally, Table 6 shows that, with the exception of women without children, unemployment rates increase with the number of children. The high unemployment rate for women without children probably reflects their low age and the very high rates of unemployment among the young. Again it is necessary to control for age to assess the independent effect of having no children on unemployment.

Summarizing, young and single women, and if married, spouses, from lower socio-economic strata, with less than a high school education, non-migrants, and with large families, tend to have the highest rates of unemployment. The only category in which women have a substantial lower rate of unemployment than men is those who are heads of households. This is of particular interest, for it should be noticed (see Table 7) that women of lower socio-economic strata tend to head families more than in the upper classes.

THE DIVISION OF LABOR

In most societies there is a clear division of labor by sex (Featherman and Hauser, 1976; Nilson, 1974; Treiman and Terrell, 1975). This is the case of Santo Domingo as shown in Table 8. Women tend to concentrate in teaching, health and office work, and in services; about 74 percent of women are employed in these categories but only 32 percent of men. However, the division of labor is even higher than what these figures suggest. The use of a broad classification of occupations, found in most census publications in Latin America and the Caribbean region and upon which many studies of female employment are based, hides the true dimension of the division of labor and sex discrimination. This is particularly the case for longitudinal studies that look at the transformation of the labor force and are based on census data. After looking at the three digit alpha-numeric classification of occupations it can be suggested that many women who are classified under the categories of retail workers, sales, machine operators, office workers, and industrial and manufacturing are perhaps occupied in cleaning and other service work. In Diagnos we found a relatively large number of women who within each of the above general categories are classified in the category "other." For example, within the industrial and manufacturing category code number 8 in the 1960 Revised COTA classification that was used in most Latin American censuses in 1970 and in Diagnos, there are 35 subclassifications. In our case we found that 57 percent of female employment was classified under code number 816 or "workers in occupations related to diverse industrial and manufacturing enterprises" that in our opinion disguises many women in janitorial work. It is more prestigious for a woman to say that she works in an office or in a factory than to say that she scrubs floors. Similarly, in the Dominican census of 1970 over 30 percent of women in the active labor force were classified in non-specific occupations.

The study of the three-digit alpha numeric classification of female occupation in Diagnos also uncovers the fact that most work done by women is an extension of their traditional household work; to say it differently, the division of labor in the active labor force is a reflection of the division of labor in the household. For example, in the health occupations, characteristically women are nurses, auxiliary nurses and midwives whose main activity is the caring of people, feeding, cleaning and following the

orders of their male superiors (physicians). Teaching kinder and primary school provides work for the majority of female educators, this work can be considered to be the "modern" counterpart of the traditional socialization role assigned to women at home. It has been said that many women in offices do janitorial and service work to facilitate the job of men. The large majority of the rest (secretaries, receptionists) are also at the service of their male bosses. In the Latin American office setting secretaries spend a good deal of their time making appointments or reservations, serving coffee, placing telephone calls, cleaning desks, all the activities that could be classified as service work. The service sector occupies the largest number of women. As expected in Santo Domingo like in other Latin American cities (Jelin, 1979; Chaney and Schmint, 1976), most women in this sector are classified in subcategories such as maids, cooks, waitresses, laundry, washing and ironing, or in personal care such as beauticians and hair-dressers, all of which are extensions of the traditional responsibilities at home. By way of contrast, men who are in the service sector are predominantly in the police and security services, custodians, photographers, barbers and in recreational services. Finally, practically all women under the category of machine operators and artisans are seamstresses and dress-makers which are also extensions of their traditional household chores.

Socio-demographic determinants of female occupation. Table 9 presents five socio-demographic variables that might influence the selection of an occupation for women. Illiteracy restricts the selection of occupations to services, machine operators and artisans, office workers (this confirms our assumption that some female office workers are in janitorial services) and retail workers (also in janitorial services). A slightly higher percentage of married women than single women are in the high status occupations (professionals, businesses, administrators), and a considerably smaller percentage in the service sector. In most societies, to some extent occupation determines the social class for men, but for women the class is given by her spouse or by her family and her occupation has little influence in determining her class. On the contrary, it is class that determines the types of occupations that are proper for women (Chase, 1975; Tyree and Treas, 1974). In Santo Domingo, social class appears to be an important determinant of the type of occupation. Upper classes tend to prefer health and other professions, managerial positions,

and surprisingly a large number are also in office jobs. Our analysis does not allow us to confirm it, but we would like to suggest that upper class women in office jobs include positions of confidence in banking and in family businesses, and executive secretarial positions. The middle class enjoys the largest choice of occupations, but more than any other class it prefers teaching, indeed it can be said that teaching is a middle class occupation par excellence. Low classes are very reduced in the selection of occupations (80% are in services, machine operators and artisans, and office work). Undoubtedly, rural-urban migration in the Dominican Republic and low class are correlated and it is difficult to assess the influence of rural migration on the selection of a job without controlling for class. The differences between natives and migrants to Santo Domingo from other cities is minimal, a higher percentage of natives go into teaching and higher percentage of urban migrants go into service jobs, otherwise the influence of the independent variable urban migration is unimportant. The position of women in the household has an intriguing influence on the choice of some occupations. A larger percentage of female heads of household goes into teaching, service work and machine operation and artisans, while spouses are in the health and managerial occupations, office and manufacturing. Some of the differences probably disappear when class is controlled, unfortunately our small (n) does not allow for such a control.

By the way of summary, and given the importance of the service sector in female employment, we can say that single women, and if married, heads of households, who are illiterate, from lower class extraction, and born in the countryside, tend to find jobs in services.

CHARACTERISTICS OF WOMEN IN THE ACTIVE LABOR FORCE

The last question we want to discuss is the correlates of female participation in the labor force. We would like to understand why some women decide to enter into the labor force and others decide to busy themselves with household chores. Table 9 presents nine socio-demographic variables that in various degrees influence the decision. As could be expected women who have no family responsibilities have higher percentages in the labor force than married ones. Similarly, there is a correlation between the number of live births and participation in the labor force, the larger the number of children the less the likelihood of participation. The position of women

in the household also affects the degree of participation, women who head the household and consequently carry the economic burden of maintaining it tend to be active in the labor force in larger percentages than spouses, an interesting finding considering that these women are more predominant in the lower socio-economic strata and that the lower the social class the lower the percentage of participation. Previous findings and the association between social class and participation allow us to make the following comment: in the Dominican Republic the participation of ^{upper class} women in the active labor force reinforces social stratification (we are not blaming the upper class woman who decides to participate for the stratification, her participation simply reinforces an undesirable social situation, the blame lies elsewhere). Upper class women tend to occupy selected jobs (see Table 9), few of them have the financial burden of the home (see Table 6), more than half of them are in the active labor force, they tend to be highly educated, and there is a correlation between levels of education and lower rates of unemployment. Consequently, the majority of upper class households have two substantial salaries, and thus the distance between the wealthy and the poor is enlarged. Furthermore, upper class women can easily and inexpensively free themselves of many household chores by hiring maids as a result they do not need to make the adjustments between family and occupation roles that low income women need to make (Youssef, 1974; Saffioti, 1975). Education strongly influences participation, particularly for those women with high school, and even more for the relatively few with college education. Given the high correlation that exists between social class and educational achievement it will be necessary to control for class in order to assess the independent influence of education. Finally migration exercises a small influence, migrants tend to have slightly lower rates of participation than natives.

Figure 1. Persons with Remunerated Work by Sex and Age Groups in Percentages. Santo Domingo, 1974.

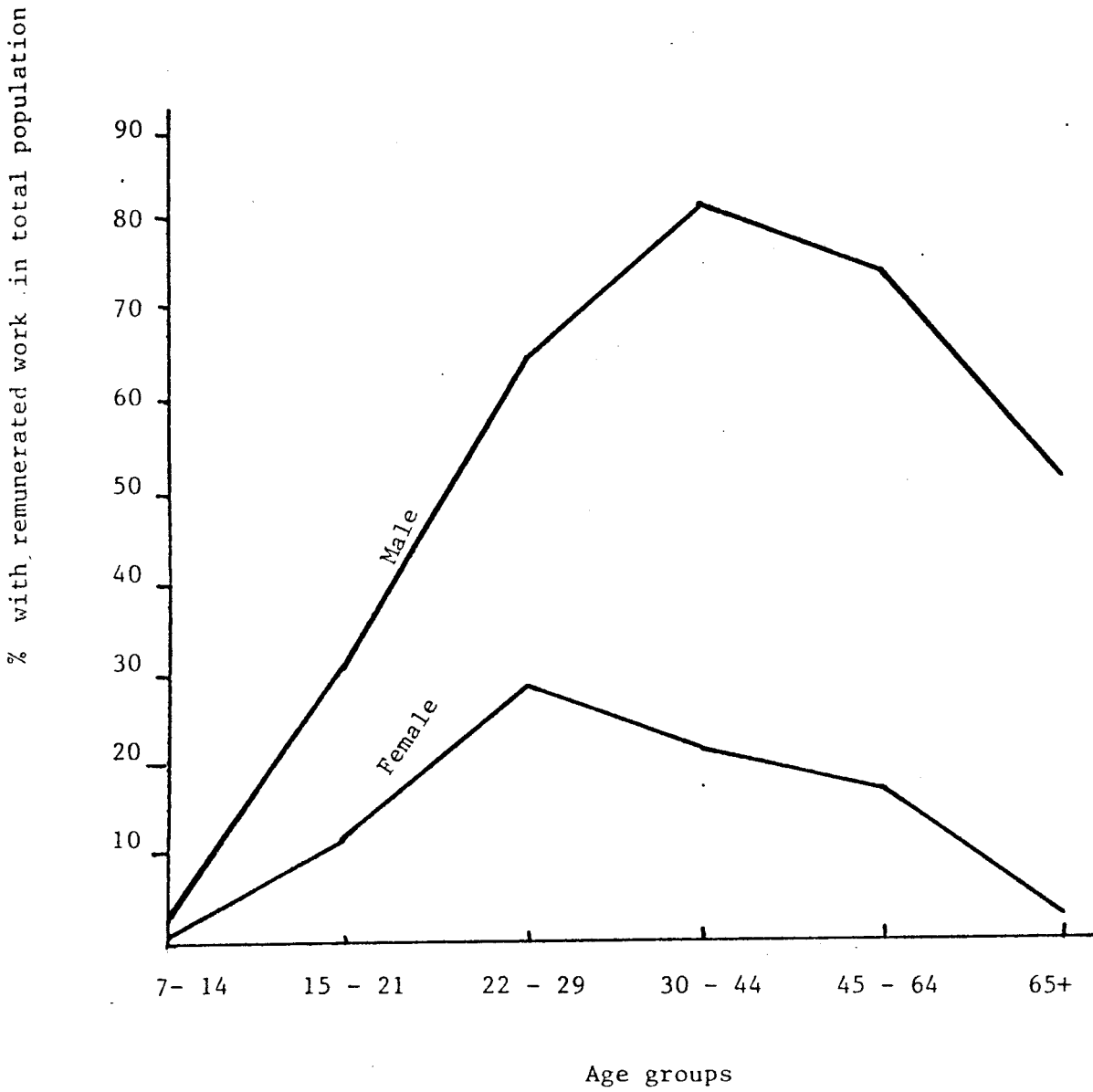


Figure 2. Transformation of the Occupational Situation with Aging for Females 7 years and Older. Santo Domingo, 1974.

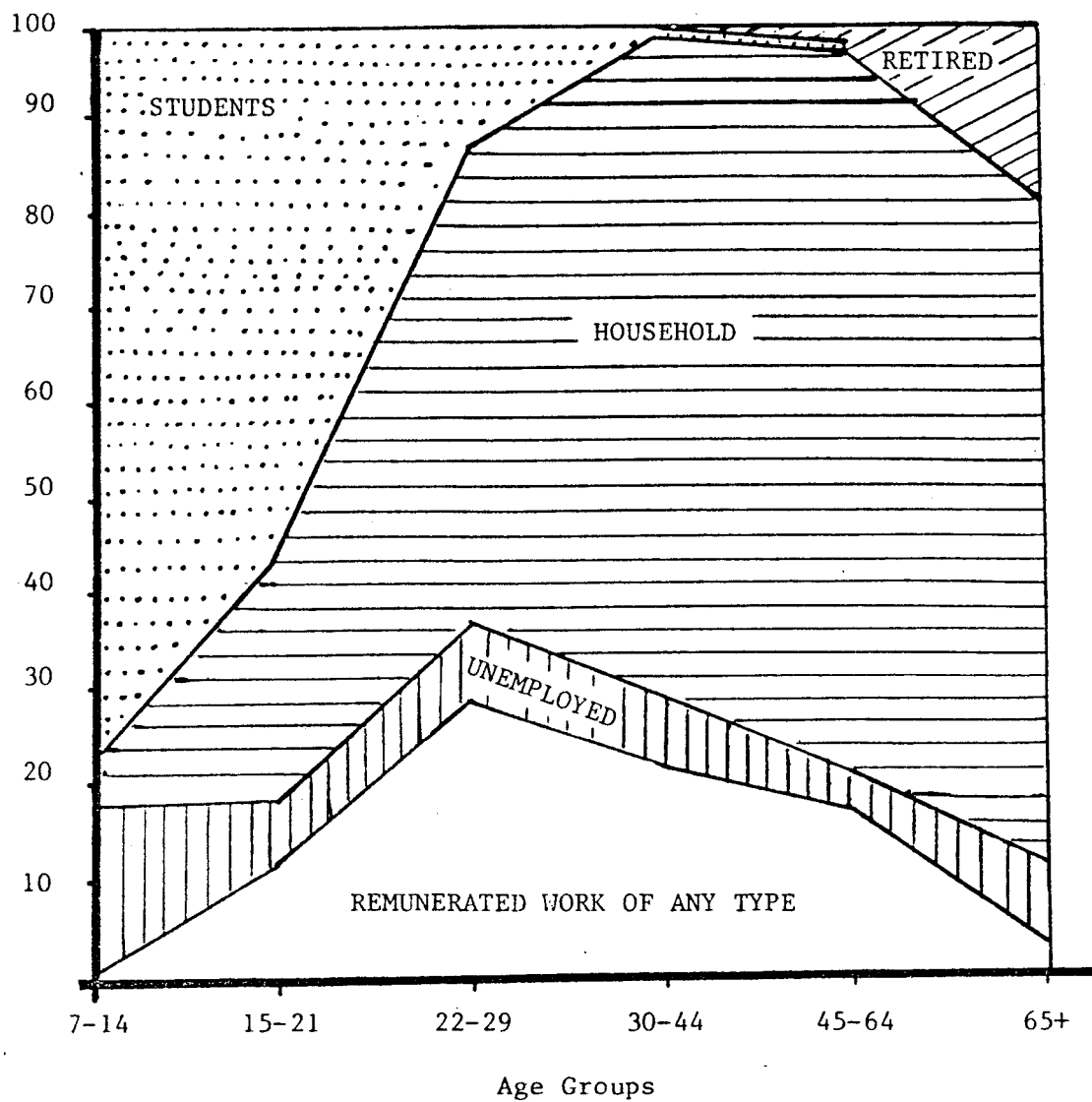


Figure 3. % Unemployment in the active labor force by age groups and sex, Santo Domingo, 1974

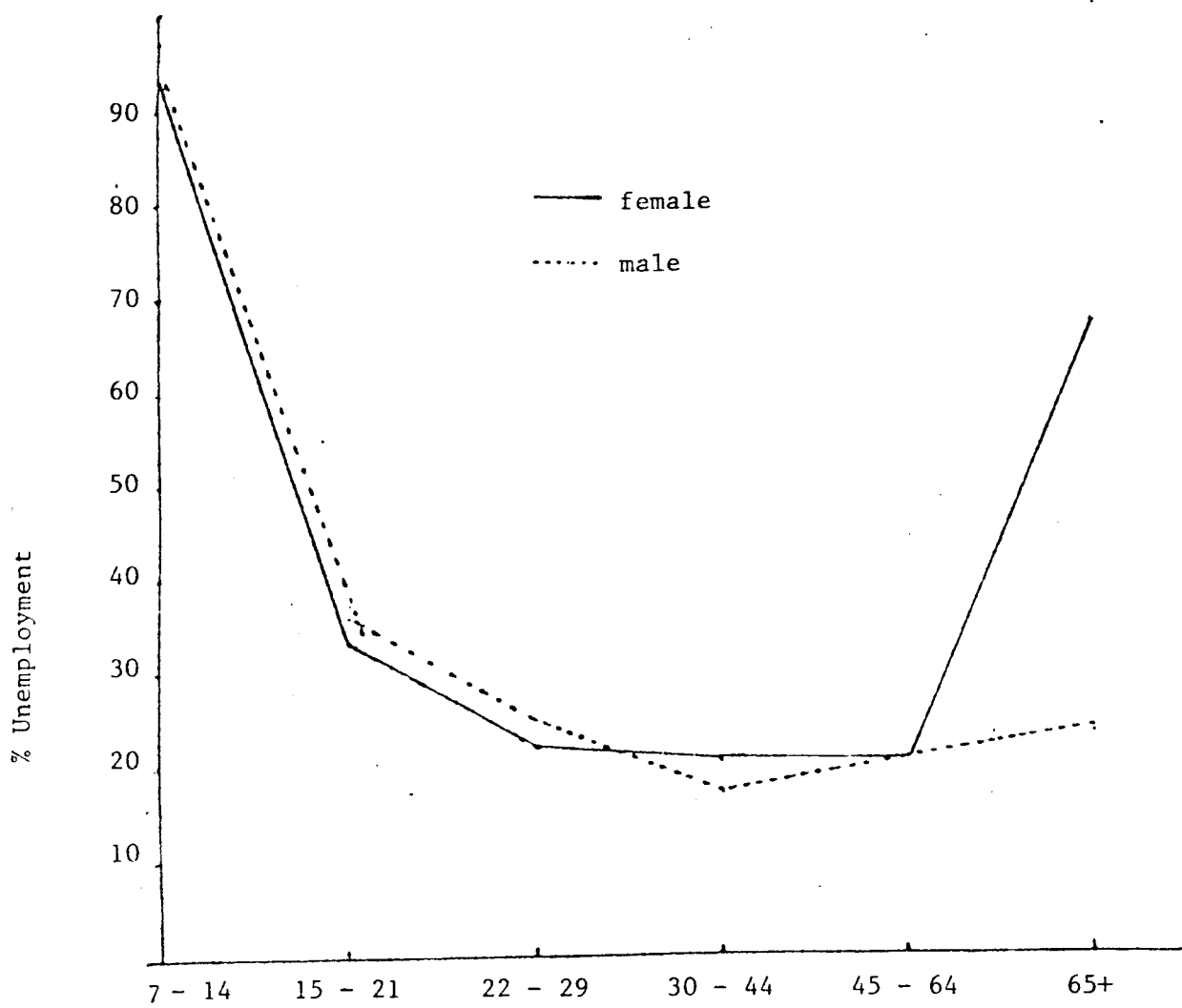


Figure 4. Employment in Santo Domingo by Education and Sex, 1974

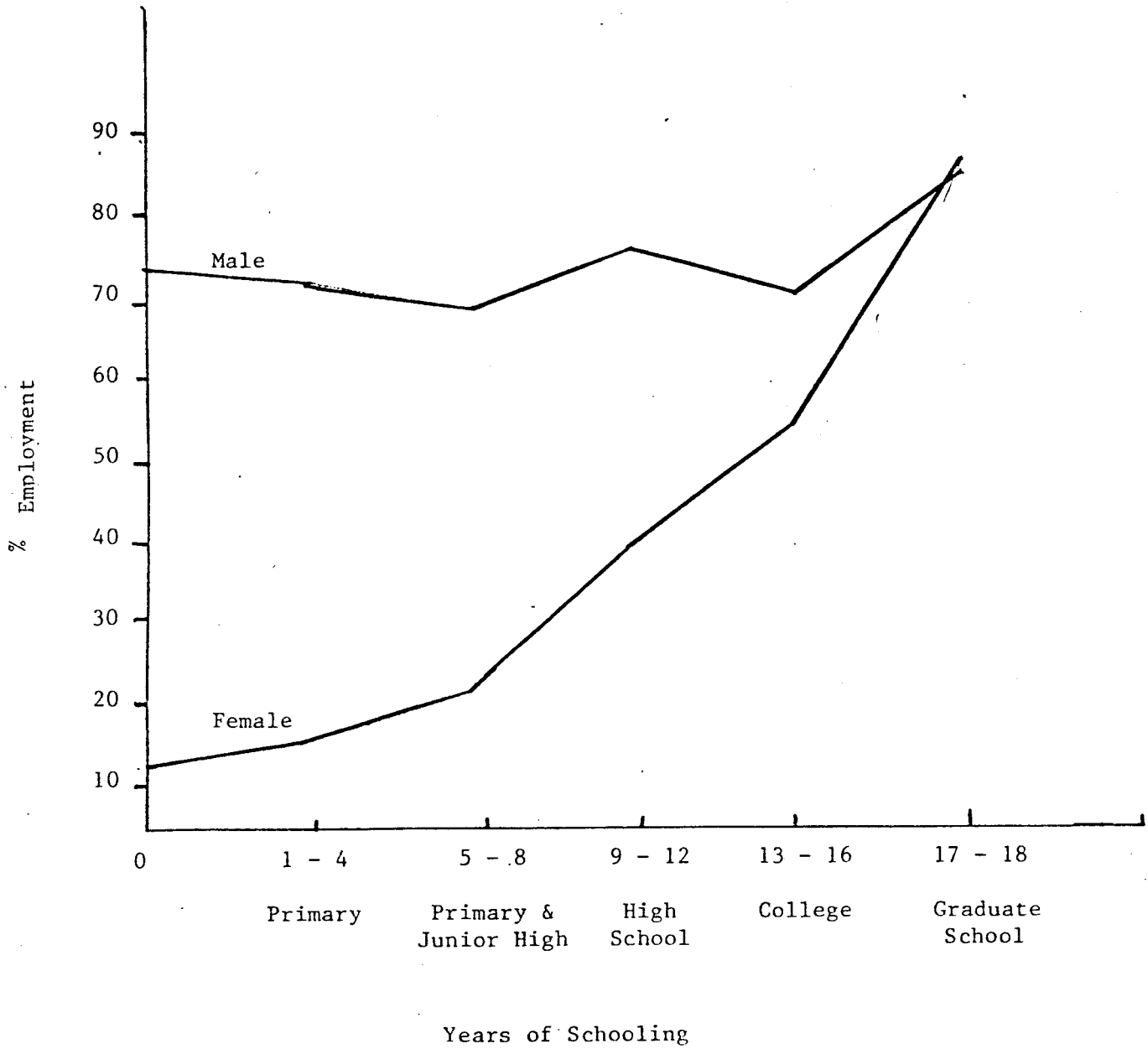


Figure 5. % Unemployment in the active labor force by levels of education and sex.
Santo Domingo, 1974

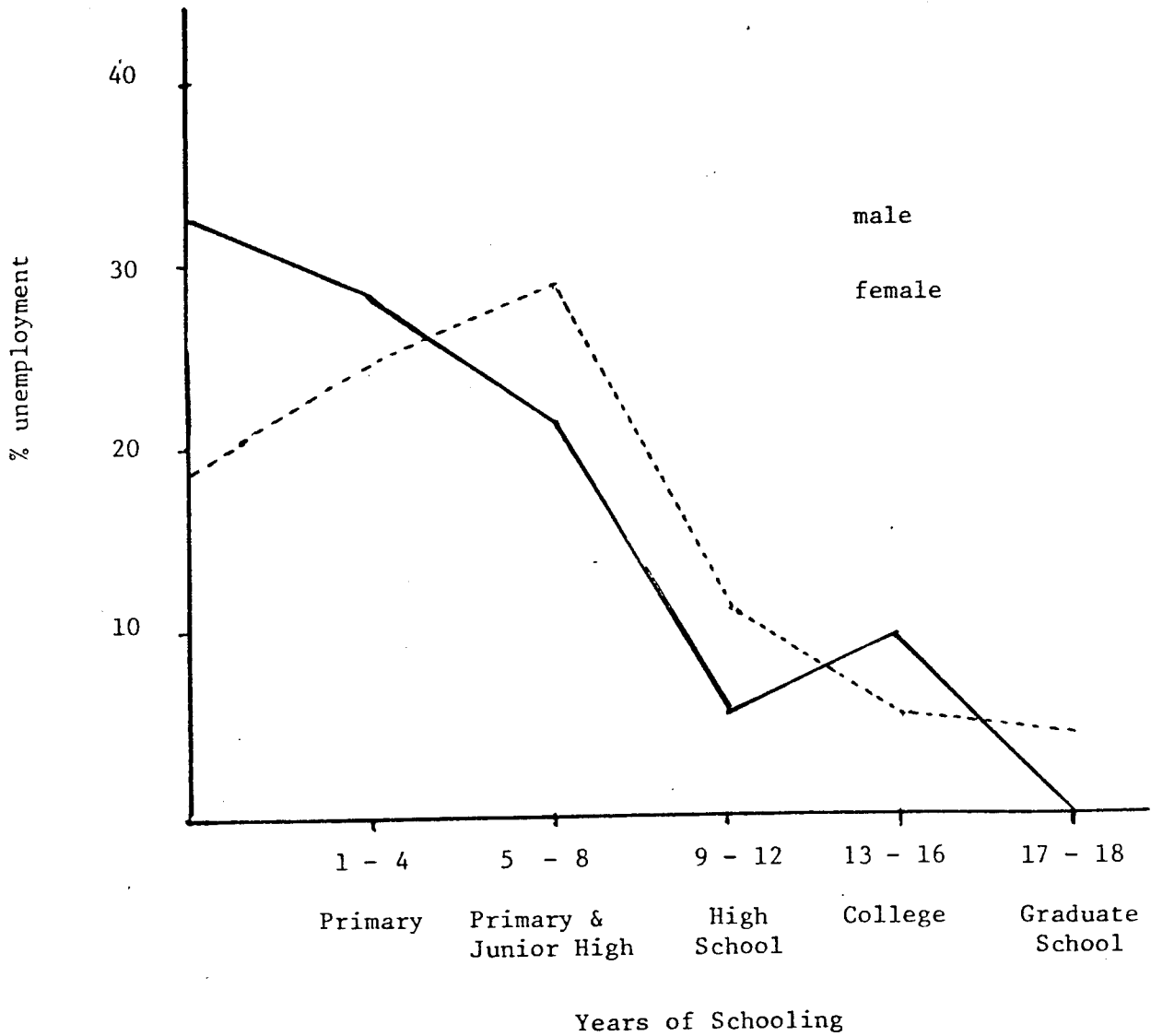


Table 1 . Female Age Distribution, Dominican Republic 1970 and 1974.

<u>Age groups</u>	<u>Census 1970</u>	<u>Diagnos 1974</u>
0-4	16.8	15.2
5-9	16.2	13.9
10-14	14.1	13.2
15-19	11.7	11.9
20-24	8.6	9.4
25-29	6.4	6.8
30-34	5.3	4.9
35-39	5.2	5.8
40-44	4.1	4.0
45-49	2.9	3.3
50-54	2.5	2.8
55-59	1.4	1.8
60-64	1.7	2.7
65-69	0.9	1.4
70-74	1.0	1.3
75-79	0.4	0.5
80-84	0.4	0.3
85+	0.4	0.5

Table 2 . Female Age Distribution, Selected Age Groups from Diagnos and World Fertility Study 1975, Dominican Republic.

Age groups	Diagnos 1974		World Fertility Study 1975	
	%	absolute	%	absolute
15-19	25.9	(44569)	26.9	(839)
20-24	20.4	(35176)	21.2	(661)
25-29	14.7	(25238)	14.7	(459)
30-34	10.7	(18468)	10.6	(331)
35-39*	12.5	(21467)	11.4	(354)
40-44	8.8	(15170)	7.7	(239)
45-49	7.1	(12147)	7.4	(232)
	100.1	(172235)	99.9	(3115)

*Guzman (1979:54) indicates "...in the distribution by age groups it was found that there is a concentration of women in the 35-39 age group, as a result of transference of women from adjacent groups. This mis-reporting, apparent throughout the entire analysis of the data seems to have been caused by older women reporting a lower age (especifically those aged 40-44) ..." This observation from the World Fertility Study in the Dominican Republic is verified by Diagnos. We also noted that both male and female adults tend to lower their age and round it to the next lower multiple of ten (20, 30, etc.). As a result in the frequency distribution these ages are considerably higher than preceding and following ages.

Table 3. Levels of Education in the Dominican Republic 1970 and 1974 for Persons Five Years of Age and Above

Levels of Education	Diagnos 1974 %	Census 1970 %
None	33	32
Preprimary and primary	47	48
Intermidiate	9	6
Secondary	8	4
College	2	1
Unspecified	<u>1</u>	<u>9</u>
	100	100

Table 4. Previous Week Occupational Situation for Population Seven Years and Older by Sex. Dominican Republic and Santo Domingo, Diagos, 1974.

<u>Occupational Situation</u>	<u>Dominican Republic</u>		<u>Santó Domingo</u>	
	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
	%	%	%	%
Active Labor Force				
-Had remunerated work of any type	57	8	44	15
-Without work (unemployed) and looking for first job	6	2	19	9
Household Chores	1	57	1	42
Non-Active				
-Student	34	32	34	33
-Retired, invalid, recluse, and profit income	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
	100	100	100	100
(n)	(244958)	(272887)	(73006)	(66029)

Table 5. Alternative Breakdown of Occupational Situation for the Study of Employment in Third World Countries.

Active Labor Force

- Have remunerated work of any type
- Without work (unemployed) and looking for first job
- Family Worker without paid
 - household chores only
 - household chores and other work
 - other work than household chores

Non-Active

- Student
- Retired, invalid, recluse, and profit income

Table 6. Unemployment Rates for Males and Females by Selected Socio-Demographic Characteristics. Santo Domingo, 1974.

Marital status		single	married and free-union			
female		46	26			
male		46	19			
Age	7-14	15-21	22-29	30-44	45-64	65+ ,
female	94	33	23	21	21	67
male	94	35	25	17	21	23
Position in household		head	spouse or companion			
female		12	24			
male		18	no cases			
Social Class		upper	middle	lower		
female		17	24	51		
male		16	21	41		
Migrant status		rural migrant	urban migrant	no migrant		
female		29	22	56		
male		32	21	35		
Total live births (women age 12-50 only)		0	1-3	4-7	8+	
		52	21	28	55	

Table 7. Females by Location in the Household and Social Class (percentages). Dominican Republic 1974.

Location	Social Class			Rural	Total
	Urban				
	Lower	Middle	Upper		
Head	37	28	18	21	27
Spouse	31	56	81	43	43
Companion	32	16	1	35	30
(n)	(38693)	(24776	(2197)	(72971)	(138637)

Table 8. Female and Male employment in Santo Domingo, 1974. a)

<u>Occupational Categories</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>
	%	%
Business and professionals b)	3	6
Health occupations	5	1
Teaching	11	2
Military	0	4
Managers and administrators	3	4
Retail operators	2	7
Sales persons	4	6
Office workers	16	19
Service workers	42	10
Transportation	0	12
Construction	0	14
Machine operators and artisans	10	13
Industrial and manufacturing workers	4	3
	<u>100</u>	<u>101</u>
(n)	(14417)	(43700)

a) includes only persons who declared specific occupations (unspecified occupations are excluded)

b) does not include health professionals and teachers

Table 9. Female Occupational Categories by Selected Socio-Demographic Characteristics. Santo Domingo, 1974 (percentages).

Occupational categories	Household position		Literacy		Marital status		Social Class			Migration status		
	Head	Spouse	Yes	No	Single	Married	Up	Mi	Lo	No	Rural	Urban
Business and professionals	4	4	3	0	2	5	16	3	2	5	3	5
Health occupations	1	9	6	0	4	5	13	4	5	7	1	6
Teaching	13	8	15	0	12	11	11	21	4	18	6	11
Managers and administrators	1	7	4	0	0	5	13	1	0	1	1	3
Retail operators	3	5	3	5	1	4	0	3	2	0	1	1
Sales persons	6	5	5	0	3	6	0	7	2	4	8	2
Office workers	8	21	21	7	16	16	47	22	8	28	3	29
Service workers	42	24	28	72	50	33	0	27	61	28	61	35
Machine operators and artisans	20	10	11	16	10	10	0	10	11	4	12	3
Industrial and manufacturing	3	8	4	0	1	6	0	3	6	3	3	5
	<u>101</u>	<u>101</u>	<u>99</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>101</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>101</u>	<u>101</u>	<u>99</u>	<u>99</u>	<u>100</u>
(n) (in 000)	(3.5)	(4.8)	(9.6)	(1.6)	(7.5)	(6.9)	(1)	(6.1)	(5.5)	(2.6)	(4)	(4.2)

Table 10. Comparing Women who Are Active or Have Been Active (retired) in the Labor Force and Women who Attend Household Chores by Selected Socio-Demographic Characteristics (percentages). Santo Domingo, 1974.

		Socio-demographic characteristics							
		Marital Status		Single		Married and free union			
Active			26			19			
Household chores			74			81			
		Total life births		0	1-3	4-7	8+		
Active		53	33	28	21				
Household chores		47	67	72	79				
		Position in household		Head		Spouse or companion			
Active			37			23			
Household chores			63			77			
		Social class		Upper		Middle		Lower	
Active			54		41		38		
Household chores			46		59		62		
		Literacy		Yes		No			
Active			34			25			
Household chores			66			75			
		Years of education		None	1-4	5-8	9-12	13-16	17-18
Active		24	23	31	56	84	93		
Household chores		76	77	69	44	16	7		
		Age		15-21	22-29	30-44	45-64	65+	
Active		41	42	29	23	30			
Household chores		59	58	71	77	70			
		Migrants to Santo Domingo		Yes		No			
				rural	urban				
Active				34	36	40			
Household chores				66	64	60			

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