

Female Labor Participation in Jordan

Nicolas Nassar

nen06@mail.aub.edu

Female participation in the labor force has been a compelling issue throughout the history. It is also a very dynamic topic in all countries independent of that development level. It's because, the place of women in work life can be considered as brand-new subject compared to that of men in all societies. Female labor force participation is an important driver (and outcome) of growth and development. Women participate in the labor force in developing countries because of poverty and as a coping mechanism in response to shocks. The participation of women is the outcome of various economic and social factors. In our paper we seek to talk about female labor force participation in the Arab World by focusing on two main models which are the home production model (consists of time spent between work and home production) as well as the work-leisure model (consists of time spent between work and leisure) and more specifically in Jordan which according to the World Bank, has "the lowest female labor force participation of a country not at war."

To start off our essay, we're going to tackle our first model which is the home production model by saying that people are faced with two decisions: whether to go to work or spend time at home production. This decision mainly depends on the hourly wage rate they are earning at their jobs. In fact, from the formula ($M_A = W_A * T_L$) in which M_A indicates the labor force participation, W_A the wage obtained, and T_L the time spent at work, we notice that the hourly wage rate has a positive relationship with time spent at work since the more someone is paid at work, he will substitute more of his time spent on home production by time at work.

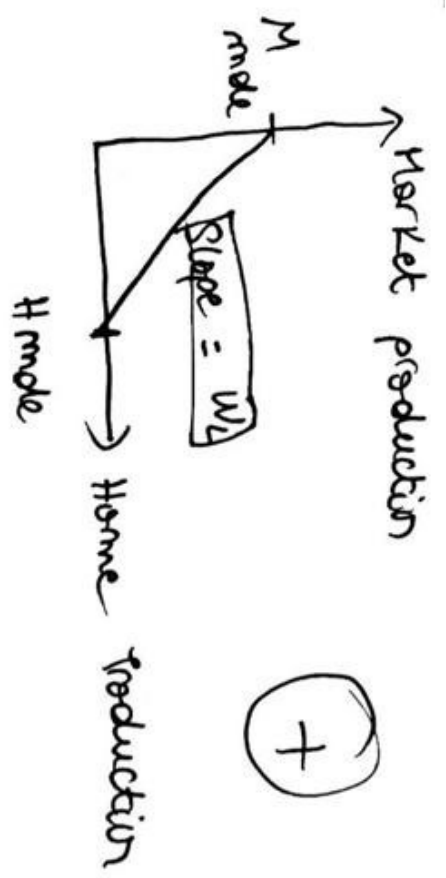
In Jordan, the gender pay gap stands at around 28% with an average hourly wage of JD 1.6 for women vs. JD 2.1 per hour for men as well as an average of 27,189 JOD yearly for men and 17,929 JOD yearly for women. From this data, we can most accurately say that in a household, men are keener to spend more time at work than women (higher wage rates) and for women to spend more time at home production (lower wage rates).

Digging deeper into the distribution of tasks in Jordanian households, according to a World Bank document, men's contribution to household chores in Jordan are the following: 16% for taking the children to school, 12% responsible for cleaning and laundry, 21% responsible for cooking, and 41% responsible for feeding the children.

From the data above, we can fairly say that for all the household chores women contribute at least for 60% which reinforces the insight we found in which we determined which

specialization is the most likely at a household that says that women spend more time at home production than men who spend more time at work.

Furthermore, looking at the model from a theoretical approach if average wages were to be equal for men, and women we would notice that when plotting the home production against labor market participation (figure 1 inserted below) would result in identical graphs for both genders (identical slope W_L).



(+)

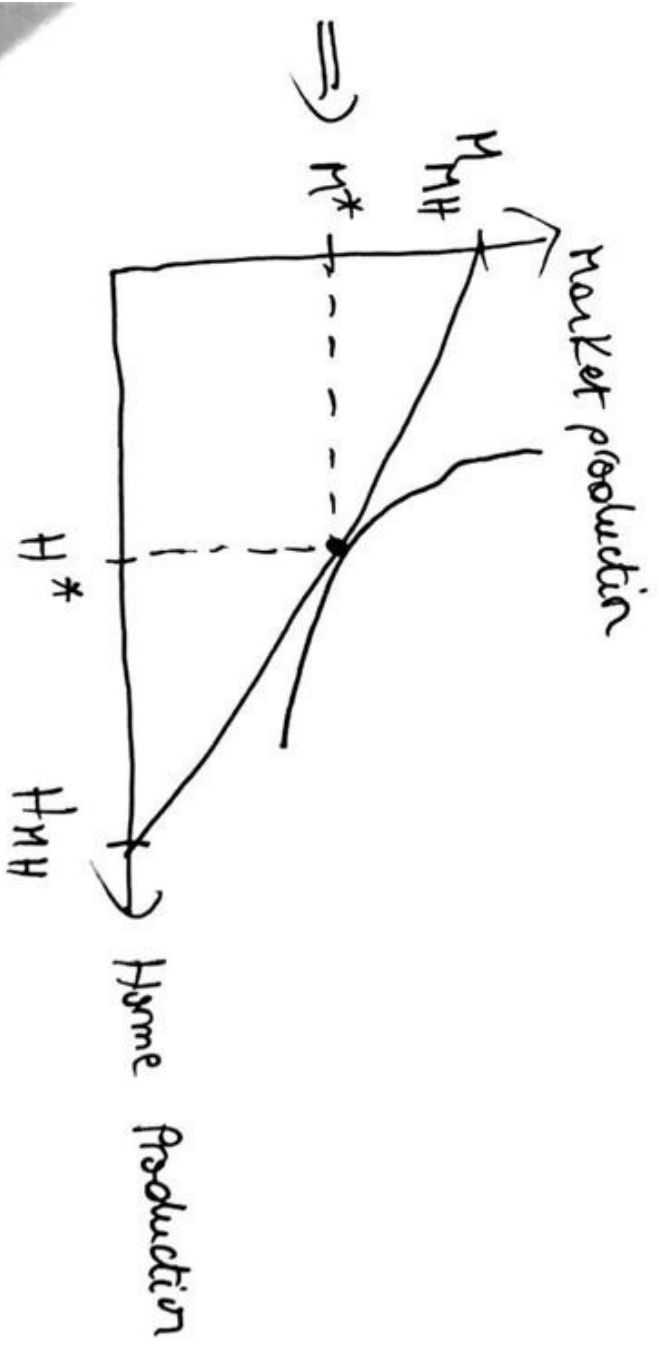
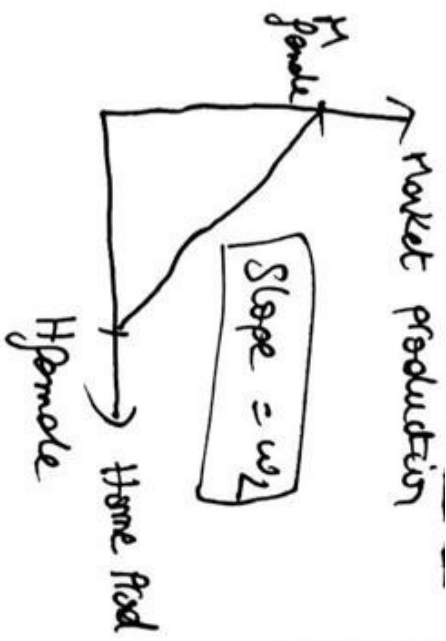


Figure 1 corresponds to the home production model for a household with equal wage distribution between genders.

As we can see in the figure above, there is no relative efficiency that can separate both genders into one being more specialized than the other. In consequence, as a final decision on who should focus on labor market specialization and who should stick to home production, it mainly depends on the individual's personal preferences. We can also say that there is not a situation where both individuals are active in both market and home sectors.

We will now move on to our second model which is the leisure-work model, in which people are faced to two decisions: whether to spend time at work or spend time at leisure.

Without assuming any differences in preferences for labor vs leisure for men and women, and for individuals with different T's we can say that the higher the T, the higher the time available of an individual to spend on leisure or work. This decision depends on various factors that will not permit us to determine which sector the individual will devote his time into.

Using the data found earlier about the gender difference in the wage, we can say that the leisure-work model suggests that a higher wage rate will cause an increase in time spent at work, therefore a decrease in time spent at leisure (W increase \rightarrow H increase and L decrease).

Furthermore, let us considerate an elimination of the gender wage gap to see if the results of both our models would differ in some way.

In fact, we can say that in both models no direct kind of specialization would be presented, and it would actually depend on the individual's preferences and his personal indifference curves on which sector to spend his time into.

If a change in household preferences were to happen this would increase the individual's preference to work but the relations and specialization of this individual would remain unchanged and would not get affected by that change.

To sum up everything we just discussed in our essay, we can say that we studied the effects of female labor participation in Jordan in our two different models that are the leisure-work model and the home production model by studying many factors mentioned throughout the entirety of our essay.

REFERENCES:

- 1) **Key issues and trends. (n.d.). Retrieved March 29, 2021, from <https://unevoc.unesco.org/yem/Female+unemployment+in+Jordan+YEM+Blog&context=>**
- 2) **Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Understanding How Gender Norms in MNA Impact Female Employment Outcomes. Retrieved March 30, 2021. GSU11 MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA**
<http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/859411541448063088/pdf/ACS25170-PUBLIC-FULL-REPORT-Jordan-Social-Norms-June-1-2018-with-titlepg.pdf>