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This article assesses the contribution women make to the social reproduction of working class families in Puerto Rico, a society which has undergone rapid industrialization, migration and urbanization in the period since 1940. The first part of this paper will attempt to explain this phenomenon through an analysis of the role of women in the industrialization process in Puerto Rico. In the second part we shall move to a micro-level of analysis in order to understand the impact which women's earnings have on the household economy. Both levels of analysis are necessary if we are to understand the role of women in the social reproduction of working class families in a developing society like Puerto Rico.

By now the role women play in the social reproduction of working class families through the maintenance and reproduction of the labor force is fairly well acknowledged. However, the contribution they make in terms of paid employment still tends to be minimized. Women of working class families still tend to be seen as supplementary wage earners, dependent on men as the primary breadwinners. This "supplementary" role has been used to justify the continued inequality in wages for men and women, as well as occupational segregation in low-paying, unskilled jobs in the manufacturing, clerical and service sectors.

Industrialization and migration have intensified the demand for female labor and women's role in social reproduction. Puerto Rico fostered an export-led industrialization based initially on labor-intensive industries such as garment and food processing, which increased the demand for cheap, unskilled female labor. This provided jobs for women, but not for men, who were rapidly being displaced from labor in the stagnant agricultural sector. As a result,

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men migrated to the cities and increasingly to the United States in search of employment, while women remained behind in factory jobs. This helps explain why, despite rapid industrialization and economic growth in the '50s and '60s, Puerto Rico was also experiencing heavy out-migration, especially male.

Critics of export-based industrialization as a development model have tended to ignore the crucial role played by female labor in this process, both in Puerto Rico and elsewhere. While women have long been recognized as a source of cheap labor for industrial capitalism, even in advanced capitalist societies (Safa 1981), in developing societies they may be forced to carry an even heavier burden due to the peculiarities of development under dependent capitalism. Their role in social reproduction is not limited to being a supplementary wage earner, but they may be required to bear the major responsibility for the household, replacing the man as primary breadwinner. To understand the forces which shape the role of women in social reproduction under dependent capitalism, it is first necessary to analyze the major determinants of female employment in a developing society like Puerto Rico, which include the following:

1) the model of economic growth and how this affects the demand for male and female labor.

2) the rates of out-migration for men and women, and how these are affected by employment patterns.

3) the role of the state in providing incentives to particular types of industry and foreign investment, and its increasingly crucial role in supporting the social reproduction of working class families through transfer payments such as social security, food stamps, welfare, unemployment insurance, etc.

4) the labor recruitment strategies of industrial firms, as they search for new sources of cheap labor, particularly among women.

All of these factors, as we shall see, have affected the rate of female employment in Puerto Rico, which increased from 22.1 percent in 1960 to 27.8 percent in 1980, while the rate of male employment has fallen (Depto. de Trabajo 1981:2). While this is still lower than the U.S., the increase in women's employment is notable in an era of growing unemployment and economic crisis.

WOMEN AND THE INDUSTRIALIZATION PROGRAM IN PUERTO RICO

The demand for female labor was critically affected by the growth and subsequent stagnation of the industrialization program in Puerto Rico, started in the 1940s. Known as Operation Bootstrap, the industrialization program was designed by the Commonwealth government to alleviate high unemployment brought about primarily by the stagnation of the rural plantation economy heavily dependent on sugar cane, coffee, and other export crops. It offered foreign investors, 90 percent of whom came from the U.S. (U.S. Department of Commerce, Vol. 1:21), tax holidays of ten years and more, infrastructure such as plants, roads, running water and electricity, and above all, an abundant supply of cheap labor.

Women provided much of this labor, though this fact has largely been ignored in the extensive research on the Puerto Rican economy. Many of the earlier industries were labor-intensive, such as apparel, textiles and food, all of which employ a high percentage of women. In the 1960s there was a concerted effort on the part of the Commonwealth government to encourage more capital-intensive plants to the islands, such as petrochemicals, pharmaceuticals, electrical machinery and instruments, in an attempt to avoid the high instability and low wages associated with labor intensive employment. While this effort was partially successful, the labor-intensive garment industry remains by far the largest industrial source of employment on the island. In 1957, with nearly 20,000 employees, it represented 25.6 percent of total manufacturing employment in Puerto Rico; in 1977, with 36,200 employees, it still stood at 25.1 percent. "The employment provided in 1977 was 2.7 times that of electrical machinery, 3 times that of instruments, and almost 4 times that of pharmaceuticals not withstanding the rapid growth in employment in those industries after 1967" (U.S. Department of Commerce, Vol. II:31).

Industrialization transformed Puerto Rico from an agrarian to an urban manufacturing economy. In 1940, manufacturing contributed 12 percent of total net income and agriculture, 31 percent; in 1980, the shares were 47.1 percent and 4.4 percent. In 1940, agriculture provided employment to 44.7 percent of the labor force and manufacturing to 10.9 percent; in 1980, agriculture had declined to 5.2 percent while manufacturing had risen to 19 percent (Dietz, 1982:5).

It is evident that the increases in manufacturing employment could not compensate for the enormous declines in agricultural employment over this period. Even during the 1950s and 1960s, with rapid industrialization and heavy outmigration, unemployment remained at 10 to 12 percent of the labor

force. After the 1973–75 recession, unemployment in Puerto Rico reached about 20 percent, with the sharpest drops occurring in construction and manufacturing (U.S. Department of Commerce, Vol. 1:40).

As a result, the labor force participation rate for men in Puerto Rico has declined sharply, from 80 percent in 1950 to 60 percent in 1975. Many of these men are discouraged workers, who withdrew from the labor force rather than continuing to seek employment. For women, however, the labor force participation rate has remained relatively stable, falling from 30 percent in 1950 to 26.1 percent in 1976 (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1979, Vol. II:591–2).

Unemployment rates for men have risen more rapidly than for women, and in 1980 stood at 19.6 percent and 12.3 percent respectively. This largely reflects the fact that the industrialization process and other changes in the occupational structure of Puerto Rico have tended to favor women over men. More than half the new jobs created between 1960 and 1980 went to women (Departamento de Trabajo, 1981:2).

Industrialization in Puerto Rico tended to create more jobs for women than for men, and in 1980 their participation in the manufacturing sector was approximately equal (*Ibid*:3). Even some of the new capital-intensive industries such as pharmaceuticals employ large numbers of women. Jobs have also opened up for women in service and white collar jobs, particularly in the burgeoning government bureaucracy, where women represent over half the labor force (*Ibid*:4). At the same time, men have suffered from the sharp declines in agriculture and later in construction, traditional sectors of male employment. Here we see how macro-level changes in the economy affect the demand for female and male labor.

Women have not been totally exempt from the effects of growing unemployment in Puerto Rico, but they have been less affected than men due to their concentration in sex-typed "female" occupations. As in the U.S. during the great depression (*cf.* Milkman 1976:76), these "female" occupations in clerical, service and certain manufacturing jobs have suffered less contraction than male blue-collar jobs in the same period. Nevertheless, employment has declined in the garment industry, the leading industrial employer of women on the island since the 1950s. The garment industry never fully recovered from the recession of the '70s, when employment fell from 40,300 workers in 1973 to 33,900 workers in 1980 (Departamento de Trabajo 1981: Table 1).

Part of this decline is also due to competition from cheaper wage earners in Asia (*e.g.*, Hong Kong, Korea, Singapore) as well as in Latin America and other areas of the Caribbean (Safa 1981). With an average hourly wage of $3.39 an hour in 1980, Puerto Rico has lost its competitive advantage vis-à-vis these other developing countries. If President Reagan's proposed Caribbean Basin Initiative succeeds, this movement of production abroad is likely to be accelerated, since much of the program is based on incentives to export-

TABLE 1

TOTAL NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES AND INTERVIEW SAMPLE SIZES BY LENGTH OF EMPLOYMENT IN THREE PUERTO RICAN GARMENT PLANTS

Factory		No. employed more than 10 yrs.*	No. employed under 10 yrs.	Total
Factory 1				
	Total	90	38	128
	Sample	23	8	31
Factory 2				
	Total	66	218	284
	Sample	16	43	61
Factory 3				
	Total	44	271	315
	Sample	11	54	65
	Total Sample	52	107	157

*Note that long-term employees were selected on the basis of a 25% sample, compared to 20% for short-term employees. This was done deliberately in order to provide a sufficient number of long-term employees.

based industrialization. There is also some evidence of a twin-plant syndrome developing between Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, with the cheaper, less skilled operations being performed in free trade zones like La Romana in the Dominican Republic, to be shipped to Puerto Rico for final processing. Such a twin plant syndrome has proved eminently successful along the Mexican border (Fernandez Kelly 1980).

Though wages in the garment industry in Puerto Rico are much higher than in these other areas, they are still considerably lower than in the U.S. In 1977, the wage differential was $1.07 an hour, or 69 percent of the U.S. average hourly wage (U.S. Department of Commerce, Vol. II:257). The goal of the Fair Labor Standards Act was to bring all industries in Puerto Rico up to the U.S. minimum wage, by January 1981, whereas previously they were set specifically for each industry. As in the U.S. the garment industry is the lowest paid industry on the island, with an average annual salary per worker in 1977 of $4,885 (*Ibid.*, Vol. 11:46). Given the living costs in Puerto Rico, this is scarcely enough to support a single person, no less a family.

Heavy out-migration rates starting in 1950 also affected men more than women, particularly in certain regions such as the western part of the island studied here (Monk 1981). Out-migration is directly related to the lack of employment opportunities, which affected men more than women. Because of the possibility of factory employment, a lower proportion of women who remain are unemployed than is the case with local men (Monk 1981:41). In our sample of women workers conducted in the western region, 90 percent say it is easier for a woman to find a job than for a man, and over 60 percent have siblings and husbands who have migrated to the U.S. Many critics of Puerto Rico's industrialization program have noted that without migration, official unemployment rates would have been much higher (*cf.* Dietz 1979:28).

Growing unemployment has led to increasing reliance on Federal transfer payments to sustain the Puerto Rican economy. With the collapse of Operation Bootstrap, Puerto Rico has become a prime example of an advanced welfare state, with heavy reliance on social security, veterans benefits, unemployment insurance, food stamps, etc. In 1976, the net injection into Puerto Rico reached $2,182.9 million, or about $900 per Puerto Rican resident (Dietz 1979:28). Because of low wages, even the working poor are eligible for food stamps, and it is estimated that almost 70 percent of the population now receives some benefits under this program, which in 1977 cost the federal government $802.1 million. (Ibid.:29). Though seen as a subsidy to the poor, food stamps and other income transfer payments may also be seen as a subsidy to low wage industries like apparel which otherwise would leave the island. Federal transfer payments to the island accelerated rapidly after 1970, and had grown to 28 percent of personal income by 1977 (*Ibid.*:69).

Clearly the Puerto Rican economy is in deep trouble. And, the crisis has placed an even greater burden on women. The high rate of male unemployment and male outmigration has left many families without a primary breadwinner, and women are often forced to assume this role. We shall look at the impact of female wage earnings on the household economy in the next section.

WOMEN GARMENT WORKERS AND THE HOUSEHOLD ECONOMY

To understand the role of female employment in social reproduction, it is necessary not only to look at the determinants of female employment, but at the impact of their earnings at the household level. The data presented here were collected in 1980 on a sample of 157 women working in three different branches of the same garment firm in Puerto Rico. This firm was chosen because a study had already been conducted among women in the oldest plant and headquarters of this firm in New Jersey, and therefore offered interesting

possibilities of comparison. However, our analysis here will focus on the Puerto Rican sample, with a brief comparison with New Jersey in the conclusion.

We chose to study women garment workers because many of them have been employed since the earliest plants opened in the 1950s and therefore present a unique opportunity for examining the long-term effects of female employment on women. Because of our interest in long-term employment, the sample was chosen on the basis of length of time employed. Approximately one-third of the 157 women interviewed were long-term employees, who had been working for the company ten years or more, starting between 1950 and 1969. The remainder of the sample were short-term employees, who had worked for the company ten years or less, being employed since 1970 (Table 1). It was felt that ten years was a sufficent time for the effects of long-term employment to be evident. Because of the older age of many of the women in our sample, they cannot be considered representative of working women in Puerto Rico or even of garment workers.

However, upon analysis it appeared that length of employment did not appear to be a critical determinant of any crucial variables in this sample of working women. In fact, length of employment is highly correlated with other demographic factors such as age, marital status, and rural-urban residence, which appear to be far stronger determinants of differences in this sample than length of employment. Thus, short-term employees tend to be predominantly young, single, rural women, while long-term employees tend to be older, urban, married or formerly married women (Table 2). If we break the sample into three age groups, under 30, 30–44, and 45 and older, we can see that we are dealing with a full developmental cycle, from single girls still living with their parent(s), to middle-aged women married and living with their husbands and children, to older women, 65 percent of whom are still married and 35 percent of whom are formerly married. These stages of the life cycle appear to be a major determinant of the role women play in the social reproduction of these working class households.

Life cycle affects women's role in social reproduction at two levels. First, life cycle is a major factor in labor recruitment policies and thus strongly affects who is hired for particular jobs. Secondly, it also affects the way in which women regard their earnings and the contributions they make toward the household economy. The importance of their contribution must be measured against the contributions of other household members as well as other sources of income such as transfer payments, which also vary over the life cycle. We shall begin with labor recruitment policies and then look at the differences between younger and older women workers.

It is clear that labor recruitment policies in the apparel industry have favored younger workers in recent years. Thus, in our analysis of an island-wide sample in the I.L.G.W.U. (International Ladies Garment Workers Union),

TABLE 2

LENGTH OF EMPLOYMENT BY RURAL/URBAN RESIDENCE, AGE AND MARITAL STATUS

Selected Characteristic	Length of Employment			
	Over 10 Yrs.		Under 10 Yrs.	
	No.	%	No.	%
Age:				
Under 30 Yrs.	1	1.9	68	64.8
Aged 30-44	22	42.3	29	27.6
Over 45	29	55.8	8	7.6
Total	52	100.0	105	100.0
Rural/Urban Residence:				
Residing in Rural Setting	17	32.7	70	67.3
Residing in Urban Setting	35	66.7	35	33.3
Total	52	100.0	105	100.0
Marital Status:				
Married	38	73.1	67	63.8
Formerly married	13	25.0	12	12.0
Single	1	1.9	26	24.7
Total	52	100.0	105	100.0

almost 78 percent of the workers were recruited in the last five years and over 40 percent are under 30 (Table 3). According to the 1970 Census, the median age of women workers in the apparel industry is 29.6 compared to 32.4 for all women workers. The preference for younger women is also evident by examining demographic differences in the three plants in which this study was conducted (Table 4). The oldest employees are concentrated in the oldest plant (Factory 1) that has been operating since 1952 in Mayaguez, a major city on the west coast of Puerto Rico. As might be expected, most of the women working in this plant are urban residents, and only one in the sample is single. In the newer plants (Factory 2 and 3) however, there is a much higher percentage of young, single workers, especially in Factory 3. Though opened at about the same time (in 1964 and 1965 respectively), the higher percentage of middle-aged women in Factory 2 is due primarily to transfers from Factory 1, because of a slowdown in production in the latter plant. Since these plants are

TABLE 3

AGE BY LENGTH OF EMPLOYMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL LADIES GARMENT WORKERS UNION

Age	Length of Employment									
	Under 5 Yrs.		5–10 Yrs.		10–15 Yrs.		15–20 Yrs.		Over 20 Yrs.	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Under 30	186	40.9	22	19.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	
30–44	215	47.3	62	55.4	12	75.0	1	33.3	0	
45 and over	54	11.9	28	25.0	4	25.0	2	66.7	1	—
Total	455	100	112	100	16	100	3	100	2	100

TABLE 4
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF INTERVIEW SAMPLES IN THREE PUERTO RICAN PLANTS

Demographic Characteristic	Factory 1		Factory 2		Factory 3	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Age:						
Under 30 yrs.	4	12.9	25	41.0	40	61.5
Aged 30-44	11	35.5	24	39.3	16	24.6
Over 45	16	51.6	12	19.7	9	13.8
Total	31	100.0	61	100.0	65	100.0
Marital Status:						
Married	20	64.5	44	72.1	41	63.1
Formerly married	10	32.3	8	13.1	7	10.8
Single	1	3.2	9	14.8	17	26.2
Total	31	100.0	61	100.0	65	100.0
Rural/Urban Residence						
Residing in Rural Setting	2	6.5	35	57.4	50	76.9
Residing in Urban Setting	29	93.5	26	42.6	15	23.1
Total	31	100.0	61	100.0	65	100.0
TOTAL NUMBER: 157						

located in rural towns a few miles from the city, we might expect that their employees are primarily rural. Many of these women garment workers come from outlying areas, rather than from the rural towns.

Why does management prefer these young, single, rural workers? Facile explanations of nimble fingers or visual acuity are clearly not sufficient. It has often been noted that younger women constitute a more docile labor force. Management says older women complain more and are not so productive as younger women. Why should this be so? What helps account for the difference in attitude, if any, between younger and older women workers? Can this partially be explained by their role in social reproduction?

Young, Single Women Workers

The young, single women in this sample tend to be members of large rural households, consisting in over 80 percent of the cases of four to over seven

persons (Table 5). As a result, there are often three to five persons working in each household, usually also in factory employment. The effects of this multiple wage-earning strategy can be seen in the relatively high family incomes among these single women, where over 40 percent of the households have annual incomes over $14,000 (Table 6). On a per capita basis, however, incomes are considerably lower. Thus, in households where the daughter lives

TABLE 5
MARITAL STATUS BY NUMBER OF PERSONS IN RESIDENCE

No. of Persons in Residence	Marital Status					
	Married		Formerly Married		Single	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1, 2, or 3 Persons	38	36.2	13	52.0	5	18.5
4, 5, or 6 Persons	63	60.0	11	44.0	11	40.7
7 or more Persons	4	3.8	1	4.0	11	40.7
Total	105	100.0	25	100.0	27	100.0
TOTAL NUMBER = 157						

TABLE 6
MARITAL STATUS BY TOTAL ANNUAL FAMILY INCOME

Annual Family Income	Marital Status					
	Married		Formerly Married		Single	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
$5,000 to 7,999	8	7.6	13	52.0	4	14.8
$8,000 to 9,999	11	10.5	4	16.0	6	22.2
$10,000 to 11,999	27	25.7	1	4.0	4	14.8
$12,000 to 13,999	33	31.4	4	16.0	2	7.4
$14,000 and over	26	24.8	3	12.0	11	40.7
Total	105	100.0	25	100.0	27	100.0
TOTAL NUMBER = 157						

with her parents and siblings and contributes to the family income, per capita income never runs over $6,500 annually. Still, this is easier than supporting even a small household on this income, as we shall see many older, formerly married women do.

The decline in agricultural employment is clearly evident in the case of these rural households. Ninety percent of our sample say it is easier for a woman to find a job than for a man. Their fathers often worked as agricultural laborers in sugar cane or coffee cultivation, before the decline in this activity brought about by low wages (compared to other sectors), hurricanes, etc. Now, most of these men are too old to work, and live off their children's earnings and social security, food stamps, and other supplementary sources of income. In our sample, the households of young, single women receive a larger share of non-wage source of income than older married or formerly married women (Table 7). The high percentage of households receiving food stamps among these young, single women is probably due to the size of the family, particularly the number of young children. "Other" sources of income include rental of houses or land, still a prevalent practice in the rural area. Very few rural families cultivate any land, even for subsistence purposes.

These rural peasant households are still strongly patriarchal, despite the man's loss of earning potential. Women see work as a way of contributing to the family income, rather than as a way of establishing their own independence. Although they may keep part of their salary for their own expenses and savings, no women in this sample contribute less than 40 percent of the total family income, and in a fourth of the households where the daughter is working, she is the sole support of her parents and siblings (Table 8). Older women bear an even heavier financial responsibility in the household. Among female-headed households, all of the women living alone, and over half of the women

TABLE 7
OTHER SOURCES OF INCOME BY AGE

Other source of Income	Under 30		Age 30-44		Over 45	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
None	32	46.4	35	68.6	27	73.0
Social Security	6	8.7	5	9.8	5	13.5
Food Stamps	18	26.1	9	17.6	2	5.4
Other	13	18.8	2	3.9	3	8.1
Total	69	100	51	100	37	100

TABLE 8

PERCENTAGE OF FAMILY INCOME CONTRIBUTED BY THE FACTORY WOMAN BY FAMILY TYPE*

Type of Family	Percentage of Family Income 40–50		50–60		60–70		70–80		80–90		100		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Nuclear or Subnuclear:														
Woman alone	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	100.0	5	100
Woman and her husband	7	41.3	6	35.4	1	5.9	1	5.9	1	5.9	1	5.9	17	100
Woman, husband and children	29	46.4	21	32.8	5	7.8	5	7.8	1	1.6	3	4.7	64	100
Woman and children alone	1	9.1	1	9.1	1	9.1	2	18.2	0	0.0	6	54.6	11	100
Extended:														
Woman, husband, children, and other relatives	2	18.2	1	9.1	1	9.1	4	36.4	0	0.0	3	27.3	11	100
Woman head, children, and other relatives	4	80.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	20.0	5	100
Daughter, parents, and siblings	4	25.2	4	25.2	1	6.3	3	18.8	0	0.0	4	25.2	16	100
Daughter, parents, siblings, and other relatives	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100

*These figures represent a comparison of women's earnings with total family income and may not represent the actual contribution made by these women.

living only with their children are the sole source of support for their families. Most married women contribute 40 to 60 percent of the total family income. No wonder most of these women say their families could not afford to have them stop working.

In these large, rural households, tasks are shared among all members, following a strict sexual division of labor. Young working girls, however, are often relieved of major housework responsibilities by their mother, who does the cooking, cleaning, etc. Parents generally pay the household expenses out of the pooled income of their children's earnings. Judging by their possessions, these families are not poor. Most families have cars (now a necessity in the rural area), washing machines, televisions, and even stereos. Many of these consumer goods are purchased on the installment plan, and over 80 percent of our respondents have debts ranging from under $100 to over $200 per month. Very few families have savings.

Newly married couples often start out in the parental home until they have money to buy or build a home of their own. As they marry, rural women transfer parental authority to their husbands, who are still considered the boss in the household. Husbands often pay the bills and the wife may turn her paycheck over to her husband. Nevertheless, husbands tend to help out around the house and share important decisions with their wives.

These rural households are part of a tightly knit network of kin and neighbors, who help each other out in many ways, including child care, house building, shopping, etc. Nearly all (96%) women under 30 have relatives living nearby, owing to a kin-based settlement pattern in the rural areas. Relatives frequently travel to work together in the same car, sharing expenses, and over 60 percent of the women working in Factory 2 and 3 have relatives working in the same factory. The first hired usually tries to secure employment for her relatives, but management has recently tried to discourage this ostensibly because it contributes to greater absenteeism.

Most of these young women were hired in the last five years, and this is often their first job. Most started working between the ages of 18 and 20, after completing all or most of high school. They are very satisfied with their jobs and with their salaries, which average between $120–129 weekly. (There is no salary increase with length of employment, but some earn considerably more, depending on piece work.) They have a strong work ethic, and do not complain about production cutbacks, problems with the union or management, etc.

If they lost this job, most of these young women would look for another job rather than staying home, because they need the money. Many of the younger, married women are now renting and are working to help buy or build their own home (still a tradition in rural areas, with one room added at a time). Most of these young women consider themselves working class

(Table 9) reflecting their rural peasant origins. Nevertheless, they have strong hopes their children will be middle-class and do not want their children, especially their daughters, to work in factories. They generally think it has been easier for them to advance than for their parents, and think it will be easier still for their children.

Older Married and Formerly Married Women

Older married and formerly married women tend to be far less cheerful and optimistic. Many of them are employed in the old Factory 1, which has experienced severe curtailments in production and employment in recent years, and has now closed. At the time of my last visit in January of 1981, there were only 36 operators working, compared to 128 in 1980 when we chose the sample, and over 300 when the plant was at its peak. Management blames the curtailment on the unpopularity of styles in the plant and the lack of training of the women to produce other styles. However, the fact that women workers from this plant are offered the possibility of transferring to one of the newer plants where these styles are produced tends to belie this argument. Despite a rather extensive building rehabilitation program three years earlier, supported by the Puerto Rican government, management also complains about the poor conditions of the plant, which has been subjected to floods, robberies, etc. Management gradually eliminated production from this plant entirely, retaining the building for offices and a storehouse, and moving all employees to the newer plants which still enjoy several years of tax exemption.

TABLE 9
CLASS IDENTIFICATION BY AGE

Class	Age					
	Under 30 Yrs.		30–44 Yrs.		Over 45	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Middle	12	17.4	20	39.2	19	51.4
Working	49	71.0	26	51.0	15	40.5
Poor	8	11.6	5	9.8	3	8.1
Total	69	100.0	51	100.0	37	100.0
TOTAL NUMBER = 157						

Women workers in Factory 1 are not happy about having to travel several miles to a nearby town to work, but many are forced to, because they are not eligible for unemployment or retirement, if they stop working now. Such a move is considered reorganization, rather than a plant closing, which would entitle them to unemployment compensation. Most of these women feel they are now too old to find another job, especially outside the garment industry, in which some of them have worked for nearly thirty years. They are very worried about job stability and security, and dissatisfied with the promises that management and the union have made them. Most of them feel conditions in Factory 1 have worsened in recent years, and are unlikely to get better. They complain strongly about production cutbacks, the union's medical plan, and other problems.

Older women are also in a more precarious economic situation, particularly if they are no longer married. Most formerly married women are divorced or separated from their husbands, and over half live in small households of one to three persons (Table 5), either alone, with their children or other relatives. This limits the number of wage earners per family, and as we have seen, many of the formerly married women depend entirely on their own salary for a living (Table 8). Since family income is highly dependent on the number of persons working per family (Table 10), over half of these formerly married women have the lowest incomes of $5,000 to $8,000 annually (Table 6).

However, older women who are married and whose husbands also contribute to the family often enjoy incomes as high as $12,000 to over $14,000 annually (Table 6). Many of these men make over $175 a week, and may be employed as managers or lower-level professionals. Married women generally contribute from 40 to 60 percent of the household income.

Most of these older women live in the city and are clearly more isolated than their younger, rural counterparts. Not only do they live in smaller households, but they have fewer kin living nearby, and tend not to socialize so frequently with neighbors or fellow workers than rural women. They often do all the household chores themselves, including paying the bills, and are very worried about inflation, which is eating up their meager incomes. In terms of savings, debts and household possessions, these older women are no worse off than the younger women, except for some of the formerly married. In fact, a higher percentage of older women identify as middle class (Table 9) but, these are generally the married women noted above with higher incomes. Class identification in Puerto Rico is highly dependent on family income.

Nearly 80 percent of these older women have only a primary school education, which they admit has limited their possibilities of advancement. Although they believe strongly in education and have encouraged their children to finish high school and even go on to college, many say it is getting harder

TABLE 10

TOTAL ANNUAL FAMILY INCOME BY NUMBER OF PERSONS WORKING

Number of Persons Working	Annual Family Income									
	$5,000-7,999		$8,000-9,999		$10,000-11,999		$12,000-13,999		$14,000 and over	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Only 1	15	60.0	6	28.6	4	12.5	1	2.6	3	7.5
2 Persons	6	24.0	13	61.9	25	78.1	31	79.5	27	67.5
3 or more Persons	4	16.0	2	9.5	3	9.4	7	17.9	10	25.0
Total	25	100.0	21	100.0	32	100.0	39	100.0	40	100.0

TOTAL NUMBER = 157

for their children to advance, due to inflation and unemployment. Many of the older women think factory work is good for women but, like rural women, they would not like to see their daughters work in factories.

CONCLUSIONS

From this brief comparison, it is easy to see why management might prefer young, single women as workers over the older, married and formerly married women. Young women are better educated, they work harder and they complain less. As single women, they are not likely to be burdened with household or childcare responsibilities, which can lead to fatigue or even absenteeism on the job. Many come from strong patriarchal rural traditions, where they readily transfer the authority of their fathers or husbands to the company manager, whose word is seldom questioned. They are aware of problems in the plant such as production cutbacks, but they have not been as affected by this as the women in Factory 1, and they are more confident that they can find another job if they should be laid off, or given very little work. In fact, many of the younger women think they could obtain better paying factory jobs in electronics or a pharmaceutical company, while older women feel closed off from this possibility due to lack of education or experience. For younger women, their primary concern is not job stability but money. They need money for their parents, if they are still living at home, and for their future plans, which include a husband, children, and a new home.

In contrast, older women are more demanding. They have worked longer and have little opportunity of obtaining another job outside the garment industry. Therefore they are very concerned with job stability, and feel extremely threatened by production slowdowns and the possibility of the closure of Factory 1. This could tend to make them more docile, but apparently among these older women, work has contributed to their sense of self-worth and independence, and to a breakdown of the patriarchal tradition still prevalent in the rural area. Thus, they are more likely to question management's authority and to argue for their rights than the younger, rural women.

Older women have more at stake in their jobs. In the case of formerly married women, often their entire livelihood depends upon their continued employment, since they are the sole source of income in the household. Married women at least share this responsibility with their husbands, and single women generally share it with a relatively large number of siblings. Thus, the contribution working women make to the household economy in Puerto Rican working class families varies with age and marital status. Not only do older married and formerly married women carry a heavier financial burden, but they assume a large share of household responsibilities.

There are other distinct advantages to management in hiring young, single workers. They do not have to pay maternity benefits (which are quite generous through the I.L.G.W.U.) nor retirement benefits to women who are forced to retire before completing ten years on the job. The union benefits from this as well, since the larger the number of older workers, the greater the drain on the retirement fund. At the same time, by shifting production to the newer plants, management can take advantage of several more years of tax exemption, which has already expired at the older plant.

Since the Puerto Rican model of economic growth through export-led industrialization has been followed by so many developing countries, particularly the small economies of the Caribbean, the lessons from the Puerto Rican experience are certainly applicable elsewhere. This is particularly true now that the Caribbean Basin Initiative is advocating an extension of the Puerto Rican model of export-led industrialization for the rest of the region. As Sassen-Koob argues elsewhere in this issue, this type of industrialization may actually be fostering emigration from Third World countries, even under conditions of high economic growth. The evidence presented in this article demonstrates how export-led industrialization contributed to male migration from Puerto Rico, but as women lose their factory jobs, it may lead to increased female migration as well. This is particularly true now that many of the factory jobs stimulated by Operation Bootstrap are being eliminated, and relocated elsewhere. While other Caribbean countries may be benefitting currently from this relocation, this type of export-led industrialization may also lead to increasing emigration from these countries, despite high rates of economic growth. Proponents of the Caribbean Basin Initiative should be aware of the contradictions inherent in this type of development model.

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