

WILLIAM MOSKOFF

## Sex Discrimination, Commuting, and the Role of Women in Rumanian Development

When the Communist Party took power in Rumania in 1944, it inherited a poor, agrarian society. In 1950, before the advent of planning, three-fourths of Rumania's labor force was still in agriculture; only 12 percent of the labor force was in the industrial sector. Per capita income for the country as a whole was the equivalent of thirty dollars and in agriculture it was close to twenty dollars.<sup>1</sup> The new regime did not have to search very far for a general development model. It adopted the Soviet strategy of rapid economic growth through the priority development of heavy industry. Women have played a key role in this process; indeed, it may be argued that they form the linchpin of Rumanian growth strategy. In this paper I construct a model of Rumanian economic development in which women are viewed as the central variable in the growth process. The model developed is a labor market model which emphasizes the role of women in the growth process rather than the more traditional models which focus on such issues as the role of capital investment, or the role of agriculture, or the efficacy of balanced versus unbalanced growth. The paper is divided into two major sections. In the first section, I will show how women are used to achieve stability in the countryside so that the high-priority urban industrial sector is adequately fed. Their presence in the village is assured through labor market controls involving a system of commuting and migration policies. A fundamental conclusion which emerges is that the Rumanian development process has widened the economic and social gap between men and women. In the second major part of the paper, I develop the hypothesis that two overriding factors have supported the asymmetry in the relative progress of men and women: (1) sex discrimination in the labor force, and (2) the force of unchanging tradition in intrafamily relationships.

The operation of the Rumanian labor market reflects the interactions and conflicts between various goals of the state and household sectors. The state attempts to achieve its goals largely through use of administrative rather than pecuniary mechanisms while households accommodate to administrative constraints within a context of trying to maximize pecuniary interests. The primary goal of the state is to achieve rapid economic growth. Rumanian planners have spent the last three decades in a successful effort to alter the composition of

1. *Anuarul statistic al Republicii Socialiste România*, 1975 (Bucharest, 1975), pp. 67 and 76 (hereafter cited as *Anuarul*).

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Table 1. Labor Force Participation Rates of European Women, Ages 20–59, circa 1970 (in percent)

| Country                    | Female Labor Force Participation Rate |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| USSR                       | 81.5                                  |
| Bulgaria                   | 76.6                                  |
| Poland                     | 76.3                                  |
| German Democratic Republic | 76.1                                  |
| Rumania                    | 74.9                                  |
| Czechoslovakia             | 73.4                                  |
| Hungary                    | 61.6                                  |
| Denmark                    | 55.8                                  |
| United Kingdom             | 54.2                                  |
| France                     | 51.2                                  |
| Sweden                     | 49.8                                  |

Source: International Labor Office, *Yearbook of Labor Statistics* (Geneva, 1975).

output. National income grew at an annual average rate of 9.7 percent during the period 1951–74. The value of industrial output in 1974 was seventeen times that of 1950 and the value of construction, fourteen times the 1950 figure.<sup>2</sup> These achievements were largely accomplished by high levels of investment, typically in the neighborhood of 30 percent of national income, and a substantial shift of labor from agriculture to the newly developing industrial and construction sectors located primarily in the urban areas. By 1974 only 40 percent of the labor force remained in agriculture; in industry the figure had risen to 30 percent. Correspondingly, between 1950 and 1974, the share of industry in national income rose from 44 percent to 57 percent, and the share of agriculture in national income declined from 28 percent to 16 percent.<sup>3</sup>

The strategy of extensive development by massive transfers of workers from agriculture to industry and construction was reinforced by the decision to draw women into the full-time labor force in large numbers, especially in agriculture where formerly they had been auxiliary family workers. Table 1 shows that the labor force participation rate of working-age women (ages 20–59) is quite high (74.9 percent). It compares favorably with the high rates found in other bloc countries and is higher than rates found in western and northern Europe.

A definite asymmetric pattern emerges in respect to the structure of female employment in Rumania. Women are dominant in agriculture, constituting 60 percent of the agricultural labor force, as opposed to only about 35 percent of the industrial labor force,<sup>4</sup> the lowest percentage in Eastern Europe. Agriculture absorbs nearly two-thirds of the total female labor force,<sup>5</sup> and the role of women

2. Anuarul, 1975, pp. 51 and 56.

3. Anuarul, 1975, pp. 54 and 67.

4. Tamar Dobrin, "Integrarea femeii în viața social-economică contemporană," *Vîitorul social*, 4, no. 4 (1975): 634–41; Aneta Spornic, *Utilizarea eficientă a resurselor de muncă feminină în România* (Bucharest, 1975), p. 105. Intensive use of women in agriculture is not unique in Rumania. In Czechoslovakia, in 1975, women comprised 55 percent of the agricultural labor force, although in 1974 this figure was as low as 47 percent (*Statistická ročenka ČSSR* [Prague, various years]). In Rumania, the feminization of this sector has been carried to greater lengths than in any other East European country.

5. Constantin Ionescu, *Omul, societatea, socialismul* (Bucharest, 1973), p. 101.

in agriculture has increased relative to that of men. In 1956, for example, there were 115 women for every 100 men in the agricultural work force; in 1966 there were 134 women for every 100 males.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, while the share of women in the total labor force declined by one-tenth of a percentage point (45.3 percent to 45.2 percent) during the same period, the female share of agricultural employment rose by nearly five percentage points (54.1 percent to 58.8 percent).

The intensive use of women in the labor force appears to create a certain amount of conflict with one of the secondary goals of the state, namely, increasing the birthrate. The Rumanian crude birthrate fell from 25 per 1000 in the mid-1950s to a low of about 14 per 1000 in 1966. In 1963, the net reproduction rate fell below the level of population replacement. Already faced with a growing labor shortage, and alarmed by long-run labor force implications, the government banned all but therapeutic abortions and eliminated the availability of all contraceptives. Although these policies were somewhat successful, the Rumanian birthrate in the first half of the 1970s (18–20 per 1000) had only risen to a level in the neighborhood of the birthrates in the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Japan, all of which have abortion on demand as well as easy access to contraceptives.

In Rumania, families use a combination of rhythm, withdrawal, legal (therapeutic) abortions, semilegal abortions (bribing hospital doctors), and illegal abortions in an effort to keep the birthrate down. That the state has been unable to raise the birthrate to higher levels reflects in part the desire of Rumanian families to maximize income. It is not only that children are a financial burden, a more important factor is that it is very difficult for a woman to hold a full-time job and raise children. Because two incomes are necessary to achieve even a modest standard of living in the urban areas, and because Rumanians have aspirations of consuming whatever limited trappings of urbanization and industrialization are made available to them, many women choose not to have children at all or to have only one child. This is especially true of well-educated women; 84 percent of those with a university education have only one child. The dilemma for the state is unambiguous: intensify efforts to raise the birthrate at the potential cost of drawing women out of the productive labor force, or be resigned to a less than desired increase in the labor force of future generations and a high labor force participation rate of women in the short run.<sup>7</sup>

Another major goal of the state is to minimize social overhead capital expenditures. In particular, planners wish to economize on resources going to the urban sector for construction of housing, schools, and medical facilities.<sup>8</sup> This policy has been supported by restricting entry into the large cities through rigid state allocation of jobs and apartments. But the goal of containing the size of large cities conflicts with the needs of managers who demand labor, which

6. Vladimir Trebici, *Populația României și creșterea economică* (Bucharest, 1971), pp. 180, 22, 223.

7. This discussion is drawn from William Moskoff, "Pronatalist Policies in Romania," *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, forthcoming.

8. This thesis has been rigorously developed by Gur Ofer, "Industrial Structure, Urbanization, and the Growth Strategy of Socialist Countries," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, no. 2 (May 1976): 219–44. Using cross-sectional data, he contends that given the level of development in the bloc countries one would expect a higher level of urbanization than actually exists, when market economies are used as a benchmark. From this he concludes that socialist planners have minimized the urban capital/labor ratio.

leads to de facto relaxation of migration policy. Migration policy also conflicts with the household's goal of income maximization. High urban incomes relative to agriculture create a strong pressure to leave agriculture in favor of the cities. From the household's point of view, the cities also offer opportunities in education, culture, and the labor market for their children that are not available in the rural areas.

The competing goals of the state and the household have been resolved overwhelmingly in favor of the state through a system of *navetismul*, or commuting. Because government policies force families to continue to live in the countryside, wives work in the only place they conveniently can, the agricultural labor force. Consequently, women have come to dominate the agricultural work force while men have been drawn into the growing branches of the economy—industry and construction. Commuting thus ensures that the state's growing urban labor force will be fed, but it minimizes the social capital/labor ratio in urban areas. Rumanian planners state that this dual labor market reflects a concern for rational resource allocation in a capital-poor economy which has largely eliminated redundant labor in agriculture. Work in industry and construction is regarded as physically difficult, requiring the strength of men. Work in agriculture is regarded as fit for women, even though it too is extremely onerous and largely unmechanized. As a result, women are found principally in traditionally female industries. The notion that concerns for rational resource allocation guide Rumanian labor planners is unconvincing. Rather, the place of women is clearly being dictated by patterns of sex discrimination in the labor market and by their "choice" of certain jobs because of their obligation to care for their homes and for their children. It is important to recognize that commuting has developed in relation to the role of women in agriculture. While it is the men who do the commuting, it is the role that women play which implicitly allows this to happen. This is the framework within which the role of women in the Rumanian labor market will be analyzed.

The commuting system has maximized income for the rural Rumanian household, given the constraint of labor immobility imposed by migration policies. Without an organized system of labor movement, the Rumanians would have been faced with an urban housing crisis similar to that created in the Soviet Union during the mass migration to the cities which took place in 1928–41 and from which they still suffer today. In 1970 about 1.2 million persons were commuters (*navetisti*) or somewhere between one-fourth and one-fifth of the nonagricultural labor force.<sup>9</sup> The projection for 1980 is that about 1.8 million individuals who live in rural areas will work in urban areas. This would be about one-fifth of the labor force during that year.<sup>10</sup>

The evidence suggests that the commuting phenomenon has been used more intensively in Rumania than in other East European countries. In East Germany, for example, less than 5 percent of the urban labor force commutes to cities from the villages. In Poland about 10 percent of the urban labor force is made up of

9. Ion Blaga, *Repartizarea teritoriala a forțelor de producție în România* (Bucharest, 1974), p. 59.

10. Ion Blaga, "Probleme actuale ale urbanizării în România," *Era socialistă*, no. 14 (1974), p. 34.

commuters. The situation is somewhat different in Hungary where approximately 25 percent of the urban labor force commutes. However, only about one-fifth of these (or 5 percent of the urban labor force) commute on a daily basis. The remainder live in the city all week in rent-free, enterprise-owned housing and return home on weekends.<sup>11</sup>

Of those Rumanians who commute, about 95 percent of the men and 100 percent of the women do so daily. Daily commuters tend to travel short distances, generally being bussed into work from an agricultural cooperative (CAP) by an enterprise in the morning and returned home in the late afternoon. The other commuters travel longer distances and spend more time away from their villages, perhaps two days at a time, and then go home for two days.<sup>12</sup> In addition to the special buses furnished by enterprises, commuting workers use the national railway system, normal intercity bus routes, and CAP trucks for transportation.

The commuting system, which involves the temporary movement of individuals, should be distinguished from the process of permanent migration (*migrația*). The right to move to a city is carefully dispensed to two categories of people. The first group encompasses those who may move to the city for as long as they wish. This group includes: (1) graduates of universities who have been assigned to a major population center; and (2) professionals who have been transferred to a city, for example, skilled technicians. The right to take up residence permanently in a city is conferred especially upon those engaged in branches of the economy or in projects which have high priority in the five-year plan. In these cases, the enterprise is responsible for facilitating the movement of the family to the city. The second broad category comprises persons who have permission to stay temporarily in the city. Typically, these are younger, unskilled workers from villages, who are most often found in construction work. When the particular job ends, they must leave the city.<sup>13</sup>

Before discussing the sex structure of both migrants and commuters, it is important to talk about motivations for leaving the village. The primary attraction of the city is, of course, the higher income associated with work in industry and construction. In 1974, the average monthly income of an industrial worker was 8 percent higher and that of a construction worker 25 percent higher than an agricultural worker's monthly income.<sup>14</sup> Although an 8 percent difference between agricultural and industrial wages is not high, it must be remembered that many cooperative farm workers receive considerably less than the average. The individuals who work on the lowest paying, least stable cooperatives are therefore most likely to migrate. Several Rumanian studies tend to confirm the significant

11. Based on conversations during February 1976 with Dr. Josef Nemeth, agricultural attaché at the Hungarian embassy, Dr. Jerzy Rasinki, agricultural attaché at the Polish embassy, and a commercial officer at the embassy of the German Democratic Republic, all in Washington, D.C. Regrettably, Czechoslovakian data are unclear. Ota Šik says that in the mid-1960s 2,300,000 Czechs commuted to work. This would be about 33 percent of the 1966 labor force. However, I cannot tell whether this is confined to those who commute from villages to cities (see Ota Šik, *Czechoslovakia: The Bureaucratic Economy* [White Plains, N.Y., 1972], p. 93).

12. Interview with Maria Fulea and Marcia Cobianu, Center for Sociological Research, Bucharest, April 29, 1976.

13. Interview with Honorina Cozacu, Center for Sociological Research, Bucharest, April 30, 1976.

14. *Anuarul*, 1975, p. 76.

role of income in internal migration. One study, for example, demonstrated a clear inverse correlation between the level of remuneration in the CAP's and the migration rate. Moreover, the guaranteed nature of incomes in nonagricultural branches was also found to be a strong inducement to leave agriculture.<sup>15</sup>

Noneconomic reasons also affect migration, although to a lesser degree. Working conditions in the nonagricultural sector of the economy, such as the fixed eight-hour workday, are regarded as more appealing than the more erratic and often longer workday in the fields. There is a prestige associated with urban income that is not attached to agricultural earnings, regardless of the level. It is also a common rural view that schooling is superior in the cities and the educational and career opportunities for children are enhanced by living in an urban environment.<sup>16</sup>

There are two categories of women involved in the migration process. The first includes young women who leave the village with some kind of vocational education after finishing ten years of school and women who are university-trained and have been given the right (often earned by passing a special examination) to practice their profession in a major city. Women in this category have the greatest possibility of entering the city as permanent residents. The second category of women who come to the cities are those who are married to men who have been recruited for urban industrial or construction work. Generally they are unskilled, especially if they are 35–40 years of age and older. If these women work, it is usually unskilled work such as house cleaning.<sup>17</sup>

Men and women commuters alike, while not necessarily unskilled, tend to have a lower skill level than those who are permanent migrants. They have learned their jobs through on-the-job training rather than in the more theoretically oriented vocational and technical schools. These individuals are recruited in the villages by the Labor Force Distribution Offices (*Offici de Repartizare a Forței de Muncă*).<sup>18</sup> The importance of the commuting system in a given city is in part a function of the city's economy. The more industries the city has in which women predominate, the less important commuting is as a source of labor. On the other hand, the greater the importance of sectors such as construction, where men predominate, the more likely commuting is to be important.<sup>19</sup> It is also the case that the greater the distance of the rural area from the city, the less likely it is that women will be commuters.<sup>20</sup> The lower degree to which women commute may place some strains on recruiting an adequate number of women workers in female-dominated industries, although there seems to be no direct evidence on this point.

As in any situation in which travel time is involved, there are implicit costs impinging on the individuals and their families. Workers could spend as little as

15. Maria Fulea, "Motivații sociale și economice ale migrației forței de muncă din C.A.P.," *Văitorul social*, 1, no. 1 (1972):160. She also indicated to me that the desire to migrate from state farms to the city is less intense because of the stable and higher income of state farmers.

16. Maria Fulea, "Aspecte ale mobilității populației rurale," *Văitorul social*, 2, no. 3 (1973): 635; Fulea, "Motivații sociale," p. 160; and interview with Fulea and Cobianu, May 11, 1976.

17. Interview with Cozacu, April 31, 1976.

18. Interview with Fulea and Cobianu, April 29, 1976.

19. Interview with Professor Dr. Petre Burloiu, May 6, 1976.

20. Costin Stefanescu, "Probleme sociale și profesionale ale femeilor salariate din localitățile periurbane," in *Statutul social al femeilor salariate* (Bucharest, 1971), p. 134.

an hour a day commuting to work if, for example, they are traveling from a collective farm to work on a construction project on the edge of a city like Bucharest. However, it would not be unusual for a worker to spend three or four hours daily traveling to and from work. In more extreme cases, round-trip travel could easily take up close to eight or ten hours for a worker traveling from the southern to the northern part of the country on a weekly basis or perhaps three times every two weeks, independent of any intracity travel when the worker is on the job.

Both economic and social factors account for the fact that men constitute a clear majority of commuters. The economic impact has to do with the importance of heavy industry and construction in the development strategy. A conscious decision has been made to recruit principally male workers, the justification being that the strength of men is required for these branches.<sup>21</sup> As will be argued in detail below, sex discrimination is operative here.

There are several underlying social forces which create the gap between the number of male and female commuters. A major reason is the dual role that women play as wives and mothers, also treated in detail below. Rumanian women bear the double burden of being full-time workers and having almost sole responsibility for the care of children and home. As a consequence, the large amount of time that many commuters spend traveling to work becomes prohibitive for women relative to the substantial amount of time which has to be spent shopping, cooking, cleaning, and so forth.<sup>22</sup> There are those who regard this as the single most important factor which has kept the percentage of rural working women employed in industry at 7.8 percent while the proportion of urban working women employed as industrial workers is 28.9 percent.<sup>23</sup> Women must stay close to home and cannot commute to industrial jobs. In addition, village women apparently have a greater reluctance than their urban counterparts to use child care facilities such as the nursery (*creș*) for children aged three and under and kindergarten (*grădiniță*) for children three to seven years old. Another concern is that factories have multiple shifts. If a woman is on the second shift, then she will not be home in time to take care of her children, including school-age children. The CAP provides a convenience for mothers because the work hours are flexible. Women can leave the fields at a certain time if they wish to be with their children, whereas the factory regimen obliges them to adhere to a fixed schedule.<sup>24</sup>

The maintenance of a situation where women dominate agriculture and men the nonagricultural sectors helps planners to carry out an urban population policy as well as to conserve scarce capital resources. Unlike the Soviet Union during its early period of rapid growth after the onset of central planning, the Rumanians have not allowed unchecked migration into their large cities. There are limits placed on the influx of population into all large cities which are considered "closed" for one of several reasons. First, the city may be already quite crowded, as in the extreme case of Bucharest. A second reason is that the Rumanians are

21. Interview with Fulea and Cobianu, April 29, 1976.

22. Two studies which empirically document this problem are Francisc Albert, *Dialog cu timpul liber* (Bucharest, 1970), and Constantin Ionescu, "Bugetul de timp al muncitorilor," *Lupta de clasă*, 1967, no. 8, pp. 64–71.

23. Gh. Sebestyen and L. Veiser, "Evoluția procesului de încadrare în muncă a femeilor din România," in *Sociologie în acțiune* (Jassy, 1972), p. 234. The data are from the late sixties.

24. Interview with Fulea and Cobianu, April 29, 1976.

Table 2. *Population Increases for Rumania as a Whole and for Several Major Cities, Selected Periods (in percent)*

| Period  | Rumania | Bucharest | Cluj | Constanța | Timișoara |
|---------|---------|-----------|------|-----------|-----------|
| 1956-66 | 9.2     | 16.1      | 21.9 | 50.8      | 22.5      |
| 1966-69 | 4.7     | 6.7       | 4.9  | 13.1      | 8.6       |
| 1969-74 | 5.1     | 7.4       | 10.5 | 13.9      | 11.2      |

Sources: *Anuarul statistic al Republicii Socialiste România* (Bucharest, various years); *Recensământul populației și locuințelor din 15 martie 1966*, vol. 1 (Bucharest, 1969); *Recensământul populației din 21 februarie 1956*, vol. 1 (Bucharest, n.d.).

planning to develop three to four hundred new town centers by 1990. These new urban settlements will form gravitational centers for surrounding rural areas, the ultimate goal being a leveling of the differences between village and town.<sup>25</sup>

But perhaps the most important reason for the presence of controls is that individuals are prevented from leaving the countryside in numbers that might endanger the level of agricultural output, and hence the food supply of the urban labor-force. We have already seen that wages are higher in the urban sector. This plus other concomitants of urban life attract many Rumanians to the cities. Furthermore, even with a policy of checking migration into the cities, the existing urban centers are still the heart of the industrialization effort and the need for labor has partially modified Rumanian migration policies. This is evident from table 2, which shows that the relative population increase of the large Rumanian cities has been greater than that of the country as a whole. This suggests that, even with controls, the pressures to enter the large cities are very strong. These pressures come not only from villagers who want to move into the cities but probably also from enterprise managers who need labor to fulfill their output plans. But the relaxation of the "closed cities" policy must have official approval; although it is possible to enter these cities on one's own initiative and secure both employment and an apartment, it is highly unlikely to occur. Formal controls are maintained over both labor recruitment and the assignment of housing to new workers.

Were it not for the controls that do exist, however, the pressure on the housing stock and on already dense major cities would be even greater. This is an important consideration, because Rumanian planners appear to give high priority to minimizing social overhead capital expenditures, especially in the area of residential housing. Hence the virtues of the commuting system. Industry and construction can have their needed labor without having to build housing for these workers immediately. Wherever the pace of industrial growth has outstripped the growth of housing construction within the country, the commuting system has taken on clear-cut importance.<sup>26</sup>

The other side of migration controls and commuting is that they force labor to remain in the countryside and, as we have seen, women to play a dominant role in agriculture. A common family model in the agricultural cooperatives is to have

25. *Directives of the Eleventh Congress of the Romanian Communist Party Concerning the 1976-1980 Five-Year Plan and the Guidelines for Romania's Economic and Social Development Over the 1981-1990 Period* (Bucharest, 1975), pp. 72-73.

26. Interview with Burloiu, May 6, 1976.

at least one family member working outside the CAP during the year. It is estimated that there is at least one nonagricultural wage earner in two-thirds of all rural families.<sup>27</sup>

The state believes that the flow of food to the city is better assured by artificially controlling the movement of peasants to the cities. This is necessitated by the planners' decision to invest in industry much more heavily than in agriculture. During the periods 1956–60 and 1966–70, for example, industry received 51 percent and 53 percent of total capital investment, while agriculture received 17 percent and 16 percent of total investment, respectively. In 1974, 55 percent of the total investment went to industry and 14 percent to agriculture. The capital stock per worker in industry is about five times greater than that of an agricultural worker.<sup>28</sup>

To summarize the first part of this paper: Rumania embarked upon a major drive to industrialize with the handicap of limited capital resources. The planners altered the production functions in the economy rather rapidly by favoring the industrial sector. Female labor was substituted for male labor in agriculture to ensure the flow of food to the urban labor force. To ensure the supply of labor to industry and construction, the Rumanians adopted a commuting system plus a migration policy which attempted to admit only that amount of labor into the cities which could be accommodated with housing. The others, the commuters, with few exceptions, return home each evening to their wives who are farming the land. Commuting is efficient in maximizing the ratio of labor to infrastructure investment and thereby allows for the release of capital to industry.

As a result of the commuting system, men have gone to work in the relatively capital-rich industrial sector and continue to learn skills that increase their productivity as well as their incomes. In contrast, women are found in disproportionate numbers in the relatively capital-poor agricultural sector where they continue to practice only unskilled field work. It should be acknowledged that for at least some women, part-time work may be preferred. The more flexible nature of the agriculture workday thus is particularly appealing to those mothers who want to be with their children after school.

The contradictions are equally obvious within agriculture itself. While women comprise almost 65 percent of the highly unmechanized cooperative agriculture sector, they are only 15 percent of the labor force in the highly mechanized state agricultural labor force.<sup>29</sup> In part this may reflect a discriminatory attitude regarding the capacity of women to handle heavy, complex agricultural machinery.

Women's secondary status is reflected as well in the lower social status associated with farm labor in the country. While there is no doubt that the state has formally fulfilled its ideological obligation to allow women to participate as productive workers in the economy, in relative terms women seem to be left be-

27. Manea Manescu, *Raising the Living Standard of the Population—Central Goal of Romania's Socio-Economic Development Strategy* (Bucharest, 1973), p. 17.

28. *Anuarul*, 1970 (Bucharest, 1970) and *Anuarul*, 1975; *Investiții-construcții în RSR* (Bucharest, 1966).

29. Interview with Aneta Spornic, June 7, 1976. In 1972, 80 percent of the agricultural population was in cooperatives and 6 percent in state agricultural units. The remaining 14 percent was in individual households (see Vida Bidilean, "Forța de muncă din agricultura și utilizarea ei rațională," in *Politica economică a Partidului Comunist, Român agricultura* [Bucharest, 1972], p. 125).

Table 3. *Women in the Rumanian Labor Force by Branch of the Economy, 1974* (in percent of total employment)

|  | 1974 |
|--|------|
| Total  | 45.2 |
| Total Industry   | 35.2 |
| Ready-made Clothes Industry                            | 77.3 |
| Textile Industry                                       | 75.7 |
| Soap and Cosmetic Industry                             | 57.7 |
| Hide, Fur, and Shoe Industry                           | 55.2 |
| Food Industry  | 41.8 |
| Machine-Building and Metal-Fabricating Industry        | 20.8 |
| Building Materials Industry                            | 18.1 |
| Nonferrous Metallurgy Industry                         | 13.1 |
| Electric and Thermal Energy Industry                   | 11.8 |
| Ferrous Metallurgy Industry                            | 11.5 |
| Public Health, Social Assistance, and Physical Culture | 72.0 |
| Education, Culture, and Art                            | 63.3 |
| Agriculture  | 60.0 |
| Trade  | 50.8 |
| Telecommunications                                     | 49.0 |
| Science and Science Services                           | 37.2 |
| Administration   | 33.5 |
| Public Utilities                                       | 31.5 |
| Transportation   | 8.8  |
| Construction   | 8.7  |
| Forestry   | 8.6  |

Sources: Aneta Spornic, *Utilizarea eficientă a resurselor de muncă feminină în România* (Bucharest, 1975), pp. 82 and 96; International Labor Office, *Yearbook of Labor Statistics*, 1975.

hind by the development process in Rumania. The gains made by women cannot be dismissed; it is simply that there is an intentional asymmetry in the labor market which operates in the interest of men.

In Rumania, sex discrimination is a function of the long-run objectives of the planners' development strategy. In this section I am concerned with sex discrimination as it is reflected in a balkanized labor market and with the intimately related problem of the "double-burden" of work and domestic responsibility borne by women. There are two basic causes for occupational segregation in a labor market: one is discrimination imposed from without by those who hold control over hiring and promotion practices and who control admission to educational institutions; the other cause is the voluntary choice women have made to enter a certain profession, or enroll in a particular faculty, or not work at all, often because of the differential socialization and societal expectations faced by males and females.

The evaluation of sex discrimination and occupational segregation that follows is based on summary statistics on the participation of women in major occupation groups and within industry, evidence on the double burden for women, including a study conducted at my request in June 1976, and an assessment of more qualitative evidence.

Table 3 presents data on the proportion of women in the Rumanian labor force during 1974 by branch of the economy and for a number of industries. The data show major differences in the distribution of the labor force by

Table 4. *Distribution of Household Tasks in Rumania, 1976* (in percent)

|                          | (1)<br>Husband<br>Only | (2)<br>Husband<br>More<br>than<br>Wife | (3)<br>Husband/<br>Wife<br>Equally | (4)<br>Wife<br>More<br>than<br>Husband | (5)<br>Wife<br>Only | (6)<br>Children | (7)<br>Other<br>Relatives |
|--------------------------|------------------------|--|------------------------------------|--|---------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| <b>DAILY SHOPPING:</b>   |                        |  |                                    |  |                     |                 |                           |
| Employed Women           | 5.6                    | 7.2                                    | 22.6                               | 30.0                                   | 33.8                | 0.5             | 0.0                       |
| Housewives               | 4.3                    | 1.1                                    | 9.6                                | 10.6                                   | 73.4                | 1.1             | 0.0                       |
| <b>MEAL PREPARATION:</b> |                        |  |                                    |  |                     |                 |                           |
| Employed Women           | 0.0                    | 0.0                                    | 5.6                                | 19.0                                   | 73.3                | 0.5             | 1.5                       |
| Housewives               | 0.0                    | 0.0                                    | 3.0                                | 2.0                                    | 94.1                | 1.0             | 0.0                       |
| <b>DISH WASHING:</b>     |                        |  |                                    |  |                     |                 |                           |
| Employed Women           | 0.5                    | 0.0                                    | 19.5                               | 13.9                                   | 64.6                | 0.5             | 1.0                       |
| Housewives               | 0.0                    | 0.0                                    | 5.0                                | 4.0                                    | 90.0                | 1.0             | 0.0                       |
| <b>CLOTHES WASHING:</b>  |                        |  |                                    |  |                     |                 |                           |
| Employed Women           | 1.0                    | 0.0                                    | 8.7                                | 12.3                                   | 76.4                | 0.0             | 1.5                       |
| Housewives               | 1.0                    | 0.0                                    | 5.0                                | 2.0                                    | 92.0                | 0.0             | 0.0                       |
| <b>IRONING:</b>          |                        |  |                                    |  |                     |                 |                           |
| Employed Women           | 0.5                    | 0.0                                    | 6.2                                | 11.3                                   | 80.5                | 0.0             | 1.5                       |
| Housewives               | 0.0                    | 0.0                                    | 6.1                                | 5.1                                    | 87.9                | 1.0             | 0.0                       |
| <b>LARGE CLEANING:</b>   |                        |  |                                    |  |                     |                 |                           |
| Employed Women           | 3.6                    | 12.3                                   | 37.9                               | 18.5                                   | 26.7                | 0.5             | 0.5                       |
| Housewives               | 10.1                   | 6.1                                    | 35.4                               | 10.1                                   | 38.4                | 0.0             | 0.0                       |
| <b>DAILY CLEANING:</b>   |                        |  |                                    |  |                     |                 |                           |
| Employed Women           | 2.1                    | 1.0                                    | 13.3                               | 12.8                                   | 68.2                | 1.0             | 1.5                       |
| Housewives               | 0.0                    | 1.0                                    | 6.1                                | 3.0                                    | 90.0                | 0.0             | 0.0                       |

Source: See note 30 below.

sex. Using the 45.2 percent of the labor force which is female as a benchmark, it is clear that within the industrial sector women are heavily underrepresented in heavy industry and substantially overrepresented in light industry. Similarly, there are relatively few women in construction, forestry, and transportation. They dominate in education, culture, art, public health areas, and agriculture, and are somewhat overrepresented in the trade sector of the economy. Obviously, there is substantial inequality in employment resulting from occupational segregation. It is important to observe that the highest paying branches of the economy are those in which women are underrepresented, in particular, construction, transportation, and science. The lowest paying branches, in contrast, are often predominantly female, for example, agriculture, public health, and retail trade. Occupational segregation represents one blade of a two-edged sword; a complete picture of women's major labor market difficulties can only be gained by considering the "double-burden" of working women.

Table 4 presents the distribution of household tasks according to the locus of personal responsibility. The data are drawn from a study carried out during June 1976 in Bucharest,<sup>30</sup> covering 295 married women of whom 100 were non-

30. The interviews were conducted in June 1976 by a third-year sociology class from the University of Bucharest taught by Dr. Natalie Damian. The questionnaire on which the interviews were based is largely my own instrument and has been incorporated by the Rumanian Center for Sociological Research into a larger study on demographic behavior. A fuller exploration of the issues raised here can be found in William Moskoﬀ, "The Problem of the 'Double-Burden' in Romania," *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, forthcoming.

Table 5. *Household Tasks Usually Taken Care of by Employed Wives in Rumania (1976) and the Soviet Union (1966) (in percent)*

|                  | Rumania | Soviet Union    |
|------------------|---------|-----------------|
| Shopping         | 64.1    | 70              |
| Meal Preparation | 92.3    | 80 <sup>a</sup> |
| Dish Washing     | 78.5    | 64              |
| Daily Cleaning   | 81.0    | 67              |
| Clothes Washing  | 88.7    | 90              |

<sup>a</sup> This figure applies to dinner preparation; 72 percent of Soviet women usually prepare breakfast.

Sources: Rumania: see table 4; Soviet Union: data cited in Elina Haavio-Mannila, "Convergences between East and West: Tradition and Modernity in Sex Roles in Sweden, Finland and the Soviet Union," *Acta Sociologica*, 14, no. 1-2 (1971): 121.

working housewives. All live in bloc housing and have lived in Bucharest for at least five years. The results of the survey are unambiguous; employed women bear an inordinately large share of the tasks involved in maintaining a home.

Working women receive more help from husbands than do full-time housewives but nothing which approaches equality. In particular, working wives receive little or no help in preparing meals, washing and ironing clothes, or daily cleaning. Husbands help somewhat more with the daily shopping, washing dishes, and the more general and infrequent cleaning (for example, washing floors and windows). It must be stressed that no household task in Rumania is easily done. Shopping must be done daily and involves queuing up in several different stores. Moreover, with few aids such as washing machines, dryers, or drip-dry clothing, doing laundry is a lengthy and tiring process. At the end of the 1960s, only 7.3 percent of Rumanian homes had electric refrigerators, 22.6 percent had gas stoves, 9.5 percent had washing machines, 3.2 percent had vacuum cleaners, 23.7 percent had sewing machines, and 38.8 percent had electric irons.<sup>31</sup> Only an insignificant number of women could afford to hire outside assistance to provide relief from all these responsibilities.

The Rumanian experience is not very different from that of women in other countries. It is possible to compare the Rumanian situation, for example, with that in the Soviet Union. A 1966 Soviet study examined the division of household labor in the homes of 430 married female factory workers. If we interpret columns (4) and (5) in table 4 to mean that the task is usually taken care of by the wife, then we can compare the two countries. This is done in table 5. The Rumanian-Soviet comparison shows that Rumanian working wives have somewhat less responsibility for shopping than Soviet women, about the same percentage do the washing, and Rumanian women have greater cooking, dish washing, and daily cleaning responsibilities.

The overriding point to be made is that Rumanian women, and certainly working wives, are probably somewhat worse off than their Soviet counterparts in respect to the domestic loads they must carry. Furthermore, it will probably be some time before egalitarian values are acceptable. A 1968 study which tried to determine whether professional women in Rumania received support from their

31. Albert, *Dialog cu timpul liber*, p. 72.

husbands found that only 35 percent of the husbands valued the professional work of their wives more highly than their wives' housework.<sup>32</sup> A high-ranking Rumanian official has pointed to a number of factors which cause some women to refuse further professional responsibilities or the opportunity to specialize. Rumanian women are seen as having inadequate spare time for professional preparation, as experiencing more fatigue because of all the housework, and as bearing the psychological responsibilities for the children when they are left alone or are sick.<sup>33</sup>

A prima facie case of sex discrimination has now been suggested. Furthermore, the solid evidence of a double burden imposed on working women provides good reason for women opting out of certain career choices. The remainder of this paper is devoted to developing these two themes, detailing in particular the employment effects of managerial attitudes toward women, Rumanian labor law, and job training programs.

The 1948 Rumanian constitution explicitly embodied the principles of women's right to equality in the economy and equal pay for equal work. The 1965 constitution went further and stated that "there is no approval for limiting these rights on the grounds of discrimination based on sex." The penal code formalizes the state's opposition to sex discrimination and makes any such act subject to punishment of three months to one year or a fine of 100–500 lei.<sup>34</sup> One knowledgeable Rumanian claims, however, that he has never heard of any director being punished for sex discrimination in employment.<sup>35</sup>

The existence of sex discrimination is acknowledged within Rumania, even by Communist Party Secretary-General Ceaușescu.<sup>36</sup> It has been admitted in the party press that there are lingering prejudices against women which view them as intellectually incapable of performing leadership functions. Moreover, some men feel that their prestige will suffer if they are supervised by women.<sup>37</sup> Managers are reluctant to hire women for reasons that have become familiar in the West. It has been found that a woman worker will follow her husband to the town where he is working after marriage and factory managers will lose a worker. There is also hesitation to hire women because of their obligations as wives and mothers, which is in part related to the fact that the number of places in nurseries and kindergartens are too small in relation to the demand for such facilities. In 1955 only 18.6 percent of all children three to six years old were in kindergarten, a figure which increased to 41.9 percent in 1974.<sup>38</sup> Also, Rumanian labor law obliges factory managers to find light work for women at the beginning of the fifth month of pregnancy without a reduction in pay. In addition, there is a four-month maternity leave and allowance for nursing and caring for a child which could last another

32. Natalia Popa, "Idealul profesional și probleme vieții de familie," in *Statutul social al femeilor salariate*, p. 145.

33. Spornic, *Utilizarea eficientă a resurselor*, p. 41.

34. Ana Gluvacov, *Afirmarea femeii în viața societății* (Bucharest, 1975), pp. 89–91. Rumania ratified the International Labor Organization equal pay convention in 1955.

35. Interview with Burloiu, May 6, 1976.

36. Nicolae Ceaușescu, "Reportul Comitetului Central al Partidului Comunist Român cu privire la activitatea P.C.R. în perioada dintre Congresul al IX-lea și Congresul al X-lea și sarcinile de viitor ale partidului," August 6, 1969, p. 62.

37. Gheorghe Vasilichi, "Condiția socială a femeii," *Era socialistă*, no. 5 (1973), p. 13.

38. Calculated from *Anuarul*, various years; *Anuarul demografic al RSR* (Bucharest, 1974), p. 23.

year under certain circumstances. Managers find that these statutory benefits for women impede the ability to fulfill and overfulfill output plans because there is no allowance for a reduction in the size of the enterprise's labor force. The fact that managers are able to discriminate against women indicates that there is little difficulty in hiring male workers. As was stressed above, labor controls are malleable.<sup>39</sup> The suggestion that turnover is high among female workers implies that women who want work have little difficulty, in a tight labor market, finding employment in the town to which they move after marriage.<sup>40</sup> Managerial behavior may in fact contribute to higher turnover among women workers. For example, if women are not promoted, the incentive to remain at the enterprise is reduced. Thus, managers' beliefs about sex differences in turnover rates could help determine those differences.

Sex discrimination implicitly receives assistance from the state. A 1975 publication jointly produced by the Ministry of Labor, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the General Union of Trade Unions, and the National Council of Women lists 711 jobs and the percentage of women likely to be hired to fill these jobs in the near future. Four hundred ninety-six, or 70 percent, are jobs in which women are foreseen as being at least half of the workers.<sup>41</sup> Rumanian planners argue that this is not sex discrimination but, rather, an attempt to point out to women those jobs where they have succeeded in the past and where they are likely to do well in the future.<sup>42</sup>

Rumanian labor laws sustain the dual labor market. While several of the laws are categorized as protective, their effect is to restrict entry into a number of occupations.<sup>43</sup> For example, there are restrictions on weight lifting which dictate the maximum allowable weights that a woman may lift under varying conditions. These restrictions are supposed to be enforced independent of an individual female's physical capabilities. Women are not permitted to work at jobs where the air pressure is high or in underground work. Nor can they be employed in jobs where the air temperature is high, where there is intense thermal radiation, or where there is contact with toxic substances. A number of the prohibitions relate to the potential damage to the female's reproductive capabilities or to the effect of certain work environments on a pregnant woman. Whatever sincere concern might exist for protecting the health of women, the state's goal of a higher birthrate is also at stake here. The ultimate effect of the prohibitions is, of course, to perpetuate occupational segregation.

The sex structure of vocational education in Rumania also contributes to the continued channeling of women into certain occupations. The problem must be seen in perspective. Industrial workers are placed in grade 1 or grade 2, roughly equivalent to a definition of unskilled (1) and skilled (2). Women dominate among those in grade 1. While data covering the economy as a whole do not appear

39. In my June 7, 1976 interview with Spornic, she said that sometimes managers do not have a choice of which sex they get; the central allocation obliges them to take what labor they have been assigned.

40. Unfortunately, there are no aggregate labor force turnover data published.

41. *Nomenclatorul meseriilor, specialitatovilor și funcțiilor în care pot fi încadrate femei* (Bucharest, 1975).

42. Interview with Spornic, June 7, 1976.

43. The discussion on labor laws is taken from Mihai Moldoveanu, *Indrumar de legislație a muncii* (Bucharest, 1973), pp. 225–26. Such laws are rapidly being struck down in the United States as being in violation of the civil rights of women.

to be available, there is some fragmentary evidence to support this position. In the *curs de calificare*, a three-to-six-month training program run by enterprises, women represent about 35 percent of all grade 1 workers, which is just about equal to their percentage in the industrial labor force. But they comprise only 9.3 percent of all the grade 2 workers.<sup>44</sup> Thus, in 1972, 76 percent of those able to work but who were unskilled (excluding students) were women, and it is estimated that about 95 percent of those who were unable to find work were women.<sup>45</sup>

The functioning of the various job training programs reveals a great deal about sex discrimination in employment. There are four ways that workers can become skilled: technical schools, vocational schools, courses for becoming skilled, and on-the-job training (OJT). The technical school is unimportant in the training of workers, with less than 1 percent taking this route. Sixteen percent are trained in vocational schools, 28 percent take the three-to-six-month courses mentioned above, and 55 percent go through OJT.<sup>46</sup>

The vocational schools are institutions with the highest degree of theoretical training after the technical schools, and it is the goal of manpower planners to increase the proportion of the skilled labor force which goes to these schools. The schools are run by the industrial ministries and it is here that sex discrimination shows up. Over the past three decades, the percentage of females in vocational schools has fluctuated substantially. Between 1948–49 and 1974–75, the percentage has oscillated between about 13 percent and 27 percent.<sup>47</sup> Most recently it has been on the high side. The fact that there are not more girls in these schools is acknowledged to be partially a result of ministerial and enterprise leadership's refusal to admit more girls into their schools.<sup>48</sup> There is a definite enrollment pattern by ministry. During the 1968–69 school year (when 14 percent of the students were female), almost no girls were enrolled in vocational schools run by the following ministries: electrical energy, mining, petroleum, metallurgy, and machine-building. But 59 percent of those enrolled in the schools of the Ministry of Light Industry and 36.5 percent of those in the Ministry of Food Industry schools were girls, reflecting traditional work patterns.<sup>49</sup>

Graduating from a vocational school is essential to the upward mobility of an industrial worker. The three criteria for admission to a school for foremen are: (1) a diploma from a vocational school, (2) five years as a production worker, and (3) recommendation of the enterprise.<sup>50</sup> Since women are not consistently admitted in large numbers to these schools, they are not likely to get supervisory positions on the factory floor. Moreover, even if a woman has met the first two criteria, she does not always get the enterprise's recommendation. If it comes at all, it is most likely to be in those industries where women predominate, reflecting the initial admission policy of the ministries.<sup>51</sup> Of the almost 11,000 people who went to the foremen schools in 1974, only 363, or 3.4 percent, were women. This

44. Spornic, *Utilizarea eficientă a resurselor*, p. 50.

45. Vasilichi, "Condiția socială a femeii," p. 13.

46. Constantin Ionescu and Oscar Hoffman, *Clasa muncitoare din Republica Socialistă România* (Bucharest, 1974), p. 104.

47. *Anuarul*, 1975, pp. 428–29.

48. Vasilichi, "Condiția socială a femeii," p. 13.

49. Dimitru Vacariu, "Orientarea și pregătirea profesională a forței de muncă feminină," in *Statutul social al femeilor salariate*, pp. 34–35.

50. Interview with Burloiu, May 26, 1976.

51. *Ibid.*

disproportionately low number should not be attributed totally to discrimination by male enterprise directors. Many women decide not to go to foremen school because their domestic responsibilities preclude any additional job obligations. Those who are eligible for the foremen school are typically at the age when family responsibilities are heaviest.<sup>52</sup>

OJT also has a major effect on the economic status of Rumanian women. This type of training provides the lowest level of job preparation; there is no theoretical training involved at all. About 70 percent of all women workers receive their training this way, and this has two implications.<sup>53</sup> First, since wages are correlated with the worker's skill level, those who learned their work through OJT tend to receive the lowest wages. This impacts disproportionately on women. Second, women's upward mobility will be hampered relative to men, because of women's low skill level.<sup>54</sup>

By quantitative measures, the Rumanian development strategy has been a success. A backward, agrarian society is being converted to a modern industrialized nation at a rapid rate. From 1965 to 1975 both the rate of growth of industrial output and total GNP increased more rapidly than in any other country in Eastern Europe.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, per capita income increased at an annual rate of growth of 5.5 percent during the same period.<sup>56</sup> Certainly, all Rumanians have enjoyed the fruits of this growth. However, there has been an unevenness in the demands on men and women in fueling this growth and in sharing its rewards.

Rumanian planners have pursued strong interventionist labor market policies. The effect of their policies has been to segregate the labor force sharply by sex. Theoretically, two alternative routes could have been chosen by planners. First, they could have pursued a hands-off policy. One of the likely outcomes of this, however, would still have been a segregated labor market; certainly this is the experience in the most developed capitalist economies. Planners could have allowed the "neutral" marketplace to allocate men and women among occupations. There is, after all, a strong residual antiwoman attitude among Rumanian males and managers to cite in support of the proposition that the market mechanism would have created occupational segregation.

The second alternative would have been for the planners to take a more activist position on behalf of women. In concrete terms this would have meant a different policy mix, including the elimination of migration controls. At one point, for example, the Ministry of Labor drafted a proposal to force managers to hire more women,<sup>57</sup> but it was never implemented. In addition, more resources would have been needed for child care, public laundries, subsidized dining facilities, and the production of more labor-saving consumer durables. A variant of this would have been a massive effort to alter the socialization process in an attempt to reduce rigid roles in the performance of domestic chores. This has certainly not hap-

52. Spornic, *Utilizarea eficientă a resurselor*, p. 85.

53. Ionescu and Hoffman, *Clasa muncitoare*, p. 104.

54. Interviews with Oscar Hoffman, Center for Sociological Research, Bucharest, May 4, 1976, and with Burloiu, May 6, 1976.

55. Thad P. Alton et al., *Economic Growth in Eastern Europe 1965-1975*, Research Project on National Income in East Central Europe (New York, 1976).

56. *Anuarul*, 1976 (Bucharest, 1976), p. 54.

57. Vasilichi, "Condiția socială a femeii," p. 13.

pened, and in fact planners have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo. If men were to share equally in housework and child care, the time involved might make commuting prohibitive for these men, which would imply a new set of labor market outcomes. From the state's perspective, the results could only be damaging to the cause of industrialization. Conceivably, some men might be unwilling to commute to the cities, at least without a higher wage.<sup>58</sup> Also, the state might have to permit more migration with an accompanying expenditure of resources on urbanization.

The choice made by planners was in behalf of economic growth through a controlled labor market environment. Planners simply could not risk having too many people leave the countryside and simultaneously create overcrowded and underfed urban areas and a slowdown in the growth rate. From their perspective it was important to keep women in the countryside and to use commuting and migration policies to achieve their ends.

In sum, we may ask: Is the role played by women in the Rumanian economy a result of conscious policies designed to have an impact on them and place them in a subordinate situation, or is the outcome a set of unintended consequences resulting from policies designed to address other problems? My own view is that the situation reflects a combination of the two, although it would certainly be difficult to prove that planners deliberately set out to perpetuate existing sex differentials. The absence of women in certain ministerial vocational schools and the underrepresentation of women in administrative posts is suggestive of overt sex discrimination. What is easier to demonstrate, of course, is that women were unintentionally victimized as a byproduct of policies which had more basic intentions, for example, the goal of minimizing investments on social overhead capital. Intentionality aside, it is fair to say that these consequences were not always unwelcome. Managers have often harbored strong antifemale views and there are very few visible male tears shed to lament the problems of women. For planners and administrators, the role of women in the Rumanian economy would seem to have been important far more because their participation was required to fulfill planners' economic goals than because of an ideological obligation to give women a new life.

58. It is possible, of course, that a more equitable division of household labor would persuade more women to commute and hence lessen the problems caused by a greater reluctance of men to do so.