

DEMOCRATIZATION AND WOMEN IN MUSLIM SOCIETIES ¹

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Introduction

This paper is organized in three parts. The first part addresses the general characteristics of Muslim societies and more specifically Islam and patriarchy. The second part analyzes modernization and development, these differences, and their relations to women's emancipation. The final part discusses the perspectives of women's position in Muslim societies.

Statement of the Problem: In the latest movement of democratization in developing societies, the so called "Third Wave Democracy,"² Muslim nations have shown minimal, sporadic, or no improvement. Political systems in these societies have remained authoritarian, and patriarchal, as there is a close relation between women's emancipation and democracy.³ Public opinion in the West, characterized by negative stereotypes attribute this problem to Islam;⁴ but it is more complex than this uni-linear relationship. Among the reasons of this difference two factors remain prominent. 1) The lack of development of industrial economy and low productivity, and 2) the conspicuous influence of religion on all social aspects of life. Despite the drastic physical changes that make some of these societies very much modern, socially, there has been very little improvement. This physical change with no improvement is modernization without development.

My thesis in this paper is that the democratization for women in Muslim societies, in addition to religious reform, is heavily dependent upon the growth of the industrial economy, for the reasons that follow. Industrial economic development weakens the patriarchal system, and provides women opportunities to work outside the home. The male dominant structure cannot be altered unless women are placed in a mass employment. Official employment has several direct impacts on women's situation, including encouraging higher attendance in schooling, limiting

the size of family, i.e. transforming it from extended to the nuclear type, establishing a broader social network, and in the long run, reconstructing the societal value system. Of course without state support, the emancipation of women cannot be sustained. Therefore, it is predicted that under appropriate economic development, the current ruling systems will be transformed into a democratic alternative.

Low development of the industrial economy causes low demand for the labor force in general, and no serious demand for the female labor force. Women's work in the traditional economy, even when it is not less than men's share, is informal, therefore, socially unrecognized and unpaid. The political rights of women are hardly realized when she is not equally recognized as citizen. They change when her work for both the family's income and the national economy is officially considered significant. The industrial economy provides a base for such a historical transformation.

The reality of "double shift" or "second shift" of unpaid work on to home front, or as the source of cheaper labor, leads some scholars to view formal employment as another means of further exploiting women.⁵ The effect of women's employment is gradual and long term. Only the upper class and upper middle class can afford not to work out of the home. The reality is that the majority of families depend on the money women earn, and men usually endorse the idea. Therefore, it is not a choice of working and not working, and the issue is not that women are less exploited. There are no alternatives; societies need women's work economically and culturally to improve their situations.

Part I

Muslim Societies and Muslim Women

To preclude essentializing "Muslim women", and to avoid simple categorization of women into groups of Muslim, and non-Muslim, one must recognize the range of diversity among both Muslim societies and Muslim women. For the simple reason of having religion as part of their culture, many women in Muslim societies are identified by their nationalities rather than their religion. Religious commonalities among these nations are weaker than any national and ethnic dissimilarity.

For example, among the many Islamic stereotypes known in the West, female circumcision⁶, and veiling⁷ are considered culturally controversial components of patriarchy. Where as female circumcision is totally unknown in a Muslim society like Iran, veiling is compulsory and relatively popular among urban women. Stereotyping Muslim societies distorts the reality and leads to misjudgment and bias. Patriarchy, and lack of freedom. A patriarchy and lack of freedom vary from place to place, they are common problems in all Muslim societies. This fact leads many to conceive Islam as the sole cause of these problems.⁸

In Muslim societies, socioeconomic change and world realignment during the 20th century have historically affected the situation for women in different ways. More recently, relative industrialization, the integration of economy in the world system, and the social division of labor, significantly affect the status of women. In the political realm, the formation of centralized states, the incorporation of tribes into nations, and the establishment of international ties are significant achievements. Structural development toward major individual relations, including the recognition of women's identity independent from their group affiliation such as family, tribe, or, more directly from a man, father, brother, or husband are the results of industrialization. But Muslim societies are still far behind in the realization of genuine individual democratic rights such as emancipation of women. Currently, Muslim nations have an abysmal record in supporting women's rights, including women's participation in public life.

Women's Status in Oil Exporter States

While none of the Muslim countries is, by definition, industrial, some can afford to buy highly advanced technology using the oil revenues. Some are both economically and technologically underdeveloped; only a few can be classified as moderately semi-industrial. Women's social standing, however, in all of the countries is low, but it is the worst in the rich Gulf States. Thus, it is fair to conclude that being financially well off, with access to modern technology and lavish goods, does not awaken the social conscience of the nation to the

plight of women.

Oil exporters use capital to buy machineries and goods; others can not afford large investment in heavy industry when foreign investment is low. Weak industry makes these societies dependent upon the import of machineries. Low industry causes the migration of male labor force from non oil producing countries to oil producing countries for service jobs, leaving women in the agriculture and traditional labor force.⁹ Historically economic development takes the path from agriculture to industrial production and then services. In these societies, due to lack of industrial development, the labor force shift is from agriculture to service. Both agriculture and service sectors could be revolutionized through industrial development. As often happens in most developing societies when industry is not productive, the growth of the service sector is like a heavy head on weak feet; the economy becomes uneven and fragile.

To paraphrase Valentine Moghadam, the following statement describes the difference between the Middle Eastern and other developing societies. Overall, and unlike Latin America and Southeast Asia, industrialization has been fairly limited in the Middle East region, and this serves among other things, to limit female labor participation. In Latin America industrialization growth was due to large foreign investments, while in Southeast Asia, American and Japanese support was a crucial factor. In the Middle East, import machineries for domestic consumption delayed industrialization. The type of investment in the oil economy has been capital-intensive economy and reduces the use of labor; therefore, female labor participation has been low. ¹⁰

Under the current economic system, the need for women's work is low. Rentier states of oil exporters are the consumers of imported products; thus, there is low demand for women's labor out of home. These states hire men and even women of other nations for low wages. Therefore, structurally, there is less need for their women to work. Socially, non-working wives are valued due to their association with high class. This situation usually satisfies relatively well off patriarchal men, because women remain totally dependent on them. When the economy depends on domestic labor for production, instead of imported goods, the demand for women participation in the market is higher.

Women with incomes are more economically independent, with socially identity and status, and have higher self-esteem. Non working

women of these Muslim societies, despite having more free time, are socially less active, and sexually segregated. Social participation could increase their awareness and raise their demand for civil rights and political freedom.

Is Islam a hindrance to the Emancipation of Women?

To answer this question, we need to understand how deep religion is interwoven into social life. Whether Islam regulates human relations in daily life, or conversely, the structure of society adapts religion, and particularly, does the ruling power employ religion for its goals.

The current Islamic civilization is a synthesis of Islam with the ethnic and national social heritage of the various nations which have stretch from North Africa to South East Asia and China. Various Islamic interpretations are, therefore, influenced by ethnic patterns and by the degree of socioeconomic development of each of these nations and the power of religious institution within the structure of society. Therefore, in various situations, one may find dissimilar or even opposite religious interpretations on women's roles. To clarify this point, two examples are given below. On the role of women, a comparison between the positions of the current religious state, and the secular regime of the former Shah in Iran explains the range of Islamic interpretations in one society, predominantly Shiite Muslim. Or women's positions in the two extreme cases of Saudi Arabia and Turkey display fundamental differences of Islamic interpretations. Whereas in Saudi Arabia the public activities of women such as driving are prohibited, women have been allowed to elevate themselves to the highest political rank of prime ministerial position in Turkey and Pakistan (all predominantly Sunni Muslim). To conclude this introduction, Islamic civilization is a combination of Islamic tenets and various historical cultural patterns from Arabs, Turks, Iranians, Hindu-Pakistanis, and African societies. Women's rights in society are influenced by Islamic civilization, and the socioeconomic development of society.

Patriarchy and Religion

Power is the central theme of the discourse of patriarchy. Religious institutions regard the patriarchal system as more suitable to retain its traditional position, since it justifies male domination in power relations in society. Patriarchy is characteristic of the past and tribal order. It is more prevalent in rural areas, and traditionally dominated religious communities, and finds its legitimization in societies with lower socioeconomic development. Patriarchy positively links to the other patterns of social structure, including the composition of extended family kinship, class position in a broad sense, and the value system. Therefore, the increase of the nuclear family, as the result of the growth of the new middle class, debases patriarchy to a great extent. The size of the household, the participation of women in economy, (which weakens the sexual division of labor within the household, delaying marriage due to economic independency of women), paid employment, and change of the value system are among the most pertinent variables in weakening the patriarchal system.

Like Judaism and Christianity before it, Islam emerged in a patriarchal society, and therefore, adapted the predominant cultural patterns; but unlike others it has been more reluctant to change. Regarding the subordination of women, however, as Fatima Mernissi contends that Islam "is no more repressive than Judaism or Christianity." ¹¹ This convinces some scholars to consider the fact of current various women's rights in different societies as a historical consequence of the socioeconomic process rather than direct religious effect. ¹²

Although, it would be wrong to view Islam as the sole source of patriarchy, it is also a mistake not to include the role of Islam as an ideology and practical instrument in preservation of patriarchy. Actually, it would be a monolithic perception to regard Islam as the sole source of patriarchy, because it would be a reductionism and deterministic view to assume that only patriarchy is the deficiency of socioeconomic development. For example, Valentine Moghadam asserts that patriarchy continues to govern gender relations in Muslim societies because of the persistence of tribal structures and kin-ordered network. ¹³ She concludes that "patriarchy, therefore, should not accord with Islam, but rather should be understood in social-structure and development trends."¹⁴ This is, of course only one face of the reality.

I must add that the independent role of religion has to be realized, whether it is Islam or something else. The persistence of patriarchy in the Middle East is not due merely to the lack of socioeconomic development.

In most circumstances, under any socioeconomic level of growth, once patriarchy, or religion, is objectified as a social reality, it acts as a separate factor, and must not be tailed to socioeconomic component. Nayereh Tohidi correctly writes that "Islamic rules have been selectively applied, emphasized, ignored, or circumvented in accordance with individual or group interests and current realities of each area. Islam has been widely used as a rationale to justify and strengthen patriarchy." 15 When religion is socially interwoven with human relations and the value system of society, it remains persistent through internalization in individual development. Although, socioeconomic development is a significant factor loosening the base of patriarchy, change of patriarchal system is the result of an integration between religion and other components of society. Like the current trend of politicization of Islam in the Middle East that cannot be explained by a single factor such as class, patriarchy is the result of "complex ways in which religious belief and social reality accommodate one another." 16 I would like to echo Deniz Kandiyoti as she suggests that "the subordination of Muslim women can neither be read off solely from Islamic ideology and practice, nor be entirely derived from global processes of socioeconomic-economic transformation." 17 Elsewhere she denotes this conclusion: "In search of an alternative, I present case materials to illustrate in women's strategies and coding mechanisms as a means of capturing the nature of patriarchal system in their cultural, class specific, and temporal concreteness. 18

The current tendency of patriarchy in conservative parts of modern societies in the West is not that, they are still influenced by tribal relations, or that their socioeconomic situation is not developed; but rather the conservative religious view, as a form of interpretation of the Scripture concerning women, justifies these traits. Different situations bring different approaches to Islam, including its approach to women, and various interpretations of Islam have different consequences. The cultural aspect of patriarchy is more resistant and stays far behind material life and technological advancement. That is why a comprehensive multidimensional change is needed to accomplish democracy, and to attain women's equal position. The growth of

industrial economy, not merely capitalism, provides opportunities that along with socioeconomic development and religious reforms confine patriarchy.

As history attests, the degree of social change and the continuity of the three major world religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) that all originated in the same region, (the Middle East) has been subjected to the level of socioeconomic development and cultural peculiarities of the host nations. This difference is indisputable in diverse nations believing in the same religion. Unlike the West, the growth of civilization in Muslim societies is distinct from the developmental process. Western civilization, at least modern Western civilization, equals development, or more accurately industrial development. Cultural clashes began when the developed West, seeking profit, diffused Western culture and the products of consuming society in societies where the majority cannot afford to buy them. This causes less developed societies to be harshly divided into two nations, where the ruling class remains unchanged through the use of force. Despite Samuel Huntington's view,¹⁹ this involve not the clashes of civilizations, but the conflict of interests of two unevenly developed nations. In poor Muslim societies Islam as a means of unity and unified collective identity becomes the political vehicle for achieving economic goals and psychological recognition.

Even though it is complicated, it can be argued that societies with higher technical competency and development in the Middle East have less tie with patriarchy.²⁰ Highly modern states in the Persian Gulf are very patriarchal. Only an authentic industrial development that calls for women's involvement in production could challenge the network of patriarchy. Participation in production is not merely economic, but social and also cultural. Patriarchy is so pervasive and has been integrated into a "modern" social life in the Middle Eastern societies, thus, its eradication needs multidimensional changes.

Part II

Modernization Without Development: Definitions

Two concepts of *modernization and development* need to be separately defined for this study. Modernization means living modern or new, "or simply 'development' in the non-Western world".²¹ The term modernity refers to a historical period of economic, political, social and cultural transformation. The dynamics by which it produced new industrialization and the colonial world can be described as 'modernization'.²² Within all its achievements, modernization has caused suffering for its victims, including the colonization of the less developed world, and the exclusion of women from the public domain.²³

Western civilization is perceived as Western development. Modern living in the non-Western world means conforming to Western standards of life. In Third World circumstances it contradicts domestic life styles. The global economy dominates every society and develops its Western culture. Nations of the developing world seek Western technology while having dual feelings about its culture. because the cost of living modern is not affordable for a great majority of people in the Third World. A small minority of political and economic ruling elite, however, excessively consume modern technology and exaggeratedly show off in accommodating to Western culture. Under such circumstance "clashes of civilizations", or a simple cultural backlash is anticipated. As I will explain below, the case in Muslim societies is more severe and explosive. Western profit seekers heavily rely on the Third World ruling class for the control of its domestic market, ignoring the consequences.

Development means a broad process of economic, technological advancement and social and cultural change. It includes class, state, capital, industrialization, formal education and mass employment of men and women.

In the West, modernization overlaps industrial development and democratization. Parallel to this alteration and consequently, women's suffrage movements would challenge the patriarchal attitude for women's rights. However, this could not be achieved without the liberalization and secularization of state, law of education, establishment of civil rights, respect for individual freedom, and appreciation of independence and individual autonomy.²⁴ These played a significant role for women's movements, feminist consciousness and the emancipation of women. The situation in developing societies is quite different.

Educated intellectuals, and concerned people tried to use the Western model of emancipation of women for Muslim societies without any significant infra-structural development. As these attempts were globally associated with colonialization and the influence of the West, they were simply labeled alien and corrupt and never got a chance to materialize. Particularly, the women's movement was linked to nationalism, identity politics, and a perceived threat of Western domination, therefore, national and democratic movements have pressured them to become the symbols of authenticity and resistance. Women's emancipation could not have a better destiny than democracy, as it would challenge the entire traditional ruling system, including religious institution.

Modernization has been defused via various means, including colonization, and the globalization of markets in the third world. Third World industrial development, with some exceptions, stays abortive, while modernization was exported to societies who could afford its cost. This has been modernization without development". 25 Traditional life styles were challenged by the importation of new technology and also the penetration of Western culture. This caused society to polarize into two distinct parts of "modern" and traditional with a deep conflict that would result in many differences, challenges and confrontations. Also, the cultural difference has emphasized class division. A genuine development could modify this separation.

Do Women Benefit From Modernization?

Third world modernization provided a small group of women with western type of liberation while society overwhelmingly remained bonded to traditional relations. Under a secular state like Turkey and Tunisia, these groups of women have opportunities to enjoy relative equality while in Islamic societies such as Iran and Saudi Arabia, women's behavior is severely controlled and religious authorities legally justify the dominant patriarchy.

Current modernization that is mostly a city centered development has shifted a large number of labor forces from rural areas to cities. The high rate of population growth, and partial and uneven mechanization of agriculture leave a large group of people unemployed.

Also, the import of finished goods, as capital intensive investment, and low productivity do not allow them to compete in the global market, and keeps newly released labor force out of production. This situation along with debt serving also has kept many of these countries exporters' hard currency.²⁶

This transition, at least in short run, has two negative effects on men and women. Men move directly from the agricultural sector to services. Modernization that brings partial industrialization dislodged agricultural workers from the land faster than they could be absorbed into industry. Consequently, they are kept isolated, locked in seasonal service jobs, rather than moving into the industrial sector that is crucial for infrastructure and human development. Also, the cities can neither accommodate, nor provide them proper jobs; most end in low paid temporary jobs or as street peddlers. With the same paces, the illiteracy rate among rural women remains much higher than among men and urban women, and keeps women less prepared for employment.

Many studies show that the trend of modernization in developing societies impairs the emancipation of women. Investigations by Sultana Alam in Bangladesh show that urban development lures men from rural areas to cities in search of work. This presents women with several new problems.

First, men sometimes sell their land and simply abandon their wives and children, who are left with nothing. Many of these men, influenced by "modern" culture, are encouraged to desert less attractive women, specially aged spouses, for women who are younger and more physically attractive. This phenomenon contributes to the world's rising prostitution.

Second, due to this problem the number of poor households headed by women is increasing. Rather than enhancing women's situations, Alam argues, it reduces the social standing of women.

Third, the influence of Western culture emphasizing sexuality through movies and mass media undermines traditional roles of women as wives, sisters, and mothers and redefines women as sex objects.²⁷

On the adverse effects of modernization on women, Nayereh Tohidi argues that Third World development has been male-oriented economic development that led to economic repression of women.²⁸ In her study in the tribal areas of Iran, Erica Friedl, also suggests that modernization restricts women's options more than in a traditional

economic structure. "Village women, once producers of surplus in the local economy, became consumers inspired by an urban lifestyle and dependent on sources of income removed from the village and largely beyond their control."²⁹ This inherent trend of transformation could be less painful if the industrialization of economy, simultaneously, allows for the mechanization of the agrarian sector, integration of women in development, and investment in industrial production and labor intensive economy.

In a society like Afghanistan, where "modernization" has failed to be integrated into society, after almost two decades of chaos and civil war, and power exchange between secular socialist elements highly traditional, fanatic religious groups, the new tribal authority of Taliban guerrillas (religious students!) has finally imposed its severe patriarchal order of society, and pushed women back into the confinement of the home. Conservative Islamists, who label their action authentic Islam, help tribal leaders in Afghanistan to organize the masses into a "victorious march" into Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, in October 96.³⁰ Now with the patriarchal system in power, the task of the emancipation of women is less likely to be achieved, because, tribal authority finds a new opportunity for re-institutionalizing patriarchy.

Modernization of Muslim Societies

External attempts to modernize Third World countries, in general, and Muslim nations in particular, have actually sustained underdevelopment. In most severe cases, it has created backlashes and adverse reactions of "grasping the roots" by deprived masses, and politically excluded elites. In Muslim societies, this root is "Islamic fundamentalism". It works like a political tool to legitimize the movement, and as a sign of national unity and identity for the mobilization of masses against the ruling class. Because modernization without development is a superficial change that divides society by culture and national identity as well as social class, this type of "modernization" only benefits a small portion of upper layer of society. Therefore, it socially aggravates the extremely economically fragmented society and provokes political conflict. Cultural adaptations based on a Western ethnocentric outlook, usually associated with colonialistic and

imperialistic experiences in economically disappointed societies, find no accommodation and acceptance. Socially Muslim societies consider such adaptation as the Judo-Christian penetration and "take shelter in their past and erect it as a rampart--cultural hudud (boundaries) to exorcise colonial violence.,,31

In modernization without development, which is the case in many Muslim societies, religious institutions remain more isolated, therefore, religious belief acts as the means of unity and identity of "non modern".32 The animosity and resentment caused traditional people to shelter under religion and religious authority. This trend postpones political liberation and endangers women's emancipation.

As Val Moghadam correctly states, the austerity required by debts serving and structural adjustment, social disparity, and political repression have tended to de-legitimize "Western-style" system and revive questions of cultural identity, including renewed calls for greater control over female mobility. It is in this context of economic failures and political delegitimation that Islamist movements are presenting themselves, with specific implications of the legal status and social positions of women."33 The struggle for women's emancipation has proven that under a repressive state, the women's movement is attached to the general national effort for liberation and that women's rights have been considered secondary. Only independent women's organizations can represent women's rights. Even under statization women's emancipation in some secular Muslim societies has been seen as token and an instrument of the state policy. Therefore, under a democratic system, women must be organized and unionized for self education and institutional change.

Imposed modernization has put the liberation of women at stake. Algeria and a more recent case in Afghanistan are two examples, one in opposition and the second one now in power have ordered rigid codes of behavior for women. Religious fanatics of any type view women as objects that men own and must control and hide from the eyes of "strangers". The imposition of a strict dress code by the Taliban group in Afghanistan, has proved this by imposing new laws depriving women from public activities.

The socially constructed reality of the motherland in Muslim societies negatively effects women's position in the modernization process. As in any culture, mostly traditional, the defense of the

homeland, birth place, is called the defense of motherland. That means, homeland is as sacred as a mother. Here, women are associated with the homeland and nation, and the protection of women from aliens, equals defense of the nation. This homeland could be a country, a village or a home.³⁴

In modern time, the ruled groups in Muslim societies perceive modernization, without their participation and exclusion of their interests, a conspiracy of the West to dominate their land and resources by corrupting their women. In other words, modernization has intended to corrupt women and leave the country defenseless as women's "purity" symbolizes "unoccupied" and resistance, whereas, "westernized women" are labeled as immoral and corrupt. This perception cannot be replaced or changed by modern culture, but by inclusion of these people in the process.

Domestication of conflicts of civilizations or simply the backlash of imposed or imported civilization, not only defers democracy, but also generates internal confrontation between traditionalist and religious conservatives in Muslim militancy (fundamentalism) on the one side, and "modernists", nationalists, and democrats on the other. Occasionally, religious fanaticism, nationalist organizations and democratic parties develop alliances, all against the foreign enemy and its ally the ruling power. When this happens, the scramble of the diverse political groups for tactical reasons, with different agendas, provides a better opportunity for more reactionary groups to gain power by manipulating people's religiosity. Besides, it creates a wider gap between the West and Muslim nations; consequently, it contributes to the "clashes of civilizations" and deteriorates the situation of women.

Part III

Women's Situation in Perspective: A Conclusion

Like democratization, women's emancipation in the Middle East should be gradual, if it is to be achieved and sustained. After a long delay in democratic change, and having the negative experiences of colonialization and, "modernization" in the Muslim societies, a sudden change in women's position, like in Afghanistan during the "socialist"

government, could probably cause a backlash. In Algeria, after the failure of an austerity program, and massive pressures, abrupt democratization opened the floodgates to an Islamic fundamentalism that foremost would target women's basic rights. Then, society entered a continuous civil war with an unknown future.³⁵ Algeria is an example of a society without industrial development, the creation of socioeconomic bases for civil society, and the institutionalization of women's position in the social structure. This shortage is a common characteristic of many other Muslim societies that have potential for similar occurrences.

Most of the regimes in the Middle East are authoritarian, repressive, and corrupt, and their legitimacies under question.³⁶ Further delay in a democratic change keeps the entire region explosive, and enables Islamic militant groups to mobilize masses, expand their networks, and establish themselves as the only alternative for real change. As a few experiences, including the latest one in Afghanistan have shown, repression of women is on the top of the agenda of these groups when reaching for power. Therefore, to avoid an abysmal alternative, the worst must go. The gate must be opened gradually to religiously moderate political opponents, so that the reform process and democratization could digest the opposition without losing the order and social control of society. Democracy, for most, needs law and order. The flood of revolutionary change in these countries will wash away the institutional order required for democratization. As Graham Fuller correctly suggests, "democratic process in the Middle East will benefit when religious parties become the norm and not revolutionary."³⁷ Again, Iran and Algeria have been examples of deferred reforms and sudden change, and *yet* the worst case in Afghanistan is the result of much misunderstanding of the role of religion in society, including American miscalculation.

There is a positive, but indirect link between development, modernization and women's status. Emancipation of women is much more than the sole economic development. The growth of the industrial economy does not equate to the democratization of women's situation. It is a matter of cultural change. But, nothing can be more effective than the change in mode of production that transforms stubborn social attitudes into more appropriate forms. The industrial economy increases the demand for labor, specially skilled labor. Before long, women

usually provide cheap labor to manufacturers with greater flexibility. In the long run, the severe exploitation of women increases self awareness. Many changes will follow this development. A report about the Bangladeshi garment industry shows that "female workers in garment factories have come to play an important role in the social transformation of Bangladeshi society. Kabeer illustrates how economic imperatives and cultural considerations combine to affect women's choices in breaking out of the confines of the traditional female role, while at the same time enabling women to redefine these cultural models in terms considered more appropriate to 'keeping step with the rhythm of change'."38 Women's participation in production will allow them social mobility, and in general, the development of the middle class. Below I will discuss the role of the middle class in this process.

New Middle Class and Formal Education

Following the globalization of economy, the trend in Muslim societies is toward the development of the new middle class.³⁹ Rapid technological advancement, the global division of labor, the movements of population from rural areas to urban, and increasing enlargement of cities, followed by demographic alteration, signify the middle class as the core of economic and political transformation in the Third World. In this regard, middle class women become more aware of their role in society that will alter the traditional domination of patriarchy. The emancipation of women depends on a sustained democratic system.

Generally speaking, a durable economy is made by: Industrialization, secularization, reasonable income for all, a large modern middle class, culture of democracy, education and the construction of a civil society in which democracy can be consolidated.⁴⁰

Middle class women are less dependent on the family or marriage for survival. Social participation has created women to be more vocal in public affairs. The industrial economy promotes and expands new middle class women. A woman of the middle class is characterized by modern life style and finds a new approach toward life. **With economic growth of the middle class based on educational occupational and individual achievement, it finds legitimate demand for political participation that is not solely economic, but a conscious social, cultural, rational**

and psychological recognition.

Education. Education creates less sex segregation and female seclusion and changes the structure of the family. Education and technical training are more needed in an industrial economy. The institutionalization of the industrial economy challenges the old system and supports the establishment of a constitutional state.

In an industrial economic relationship, individuals can afford to exchange a new identity for achieved economic privileges. With the massive strength of this desire, a repressive government has less choice to ignore this call. Education has been the most effective factor supporting democracy. By increasing access to public education, for multiple reasons, people's consciousness will grow concerning the role of education in their lives. The economic and political achievements of the new middle class mainly come from its educational and technical competence. For economic and cultural reasons, and protection of its rights of citizenship, educated people become strong supporters of democracy. The following cases are only few examples of many.

As Jose Maravall indicates, in Spain five years after the dictatorship had ended, educational inequalities were associated with 25 percentage points of difference in support for democracy.⁴¹ The figure was 28 percentage points in Brazil.⁴² In Poland, 77 percent with secondary education and 48 percent with primary education thought that democracy was the superior form of government.⁴³

People in the middle class value formal education by experiencing it as a certain vehicle of higher revenue and sociopolitical elevation. Through industrial development education becomes more available and pervasive. Therefore, development provides women more education by which they are offered paid employment. The question of how development affects women depends, to a great extent, on the nature of the state and on its economic and sociopolitical understanding. Women's access to education, training, and employment opportunities, the existence of labor protection codes, policies that allow women to combine jobs and household responsibilities are a few developmental steps which could be obtained and sustained in a democratic society.⁴⁴

Education also assists the growth of the new middle class toward the consolidation of civil society. The value system of the middle class eventually weakens patriarchy and promotes women independent identity and more egalitarianism within the family relationship.

Civil society. Formation of civil society is crucial for the accommodation of any achievement in democratization of women. Forming labor unions, women's organizations for different causes, community groups, and playing a role in the political process are steps toward the accommodation of women's rights. Feminist concerns and women's movements have raised more general conscience about women's issues and have formed women's organizations dealing with various issues of literacy, education, employment, the law, and the like. **As much as economic development is crucial for democracy, political openness is important for civil society. But if the economy stagnates, then political openness is doomed to failure, and so is the civil society.**

Besides the above stated macro changes, a series of micro changes is also significant to democratization of women's situations, and will be achieved as the direct consequences of industrialization. Here are a few examples.

1. Self-realization. This characteristic can be achieved through social psychological and cognitive development.
2. Societal recognition. With the mass employment of women, society acknowledges women's role in economic development, therefore, women are individually recognized as significant, an achievement when attained is irreversible.
3. The family provides multi-functions to its members and is the last institution to accept changes. Specifically, in the Third World the family is more important than the individual. Women, however, gradually become valued not only as mother or wife, but as actors, financial resources and social players, the way that men become superior and more valuable. Following the acceptance of the new position of women in the economy, structural change is inevitable.
 - a) Women bear fewer children. By being in the work market, she cannot afford to raise many children. She experiences a new life style which forces her into this situation. Besides its effect on family, society benefits as the rate of population decreases.
 - b) More egalitarian relationships become the rule of the game at home between husband and wife, and parents and children.
4. Change in social status as women rise to higher economic positions is seen.

ENDNOTES

1. This Paper was presented at the Mediterranean Conference XVIII held in Istanbul, July 8-11, 1996.
2. The "Third Wave Democracy" began in 1974, with the collapse of Salazar/Caetano dictatorship in Portugal, adding 78 new societies to the democratic world. According to Samuel Huntington, the first wave that began in 1828 ended in 1922; and the second wave began in 1926 and ended in 1964. The total result, after the "reverse waves", was 39 democracies out of 142 countries in 1974, and 117 democracies out of 192 countries in 1996
3. In the latest development of democratization, Latin America was the first in the early 1980s, followed by some East Asian cases in the mid and late 1980s, and much of Africa with the onset of the 1990s. The Middle East, by comparison, has not yet genuinely begun the process.
4. For details, for example see Fawzi EI-Solh, Camilli a and Mabro, Judy. (eds), "Introduction: Islam and Muslim Women", in *Muslim Women's Choices: Religious Belief and Social Reality*, BERG Providence/Oxford, 1994.
5. Presser, Harriet B. "The Homework Gender Gap." *Population Today*, Vo1.21, No.7/8, July-August 1993.
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 21. For meanings and differences of modern, modernity, and modernization see: Cahoon, . Lawrence, 1996, (ed), *From Modernism to Postmodernism: An Anthology*, p. 11, Blackwell Publishers Ltd., Oxford, LTK.
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 25. Jacobs, Norman. *The Korean Road to Modernization and Development*, University of Illinois Press, 1985.
 26. See Payer, C. *Lend and Lost: Foreign Credit and Third World Development*, London, Zed Books, 1991.
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28. Tohidi, Nayereh. op. cit., 1994.
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30. Halliday, Fred. "Kabul's Patriarchy With Guns", The Nation, Vol. 263, No. 15, Nov. 11, 1996. Also see Dahlburg, John-Thor, "Strict Taliban Dress Code Hems In Afghan Women", Los Angeles Times, Nov. 23, 1996.
31. Merni'ssi, Fatima 1992, Islam and Democracy, Fear of the Modern World, Translated by: Mary Jo Lakeland, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1992, p.42.
32. Now it has been a cliché to divide Muslim people into three groups of "modernist, traditionalist and fundamentalist" without considering the economic and political status of society. This division simply ignores the fact that fundamentalist movements under a politically repressive system, are led by elite rivals so called modernists. Many political contenders use "fundamentalism" as a means to reach to power, and present Islamization of society as their achievement.
33. Moghadam, Valentine M. op. cit., 1992.
34. Beliefs and practices of patriarchy still influence the process of change in Muslim societies. For example, extreme tribal cases of "blood price" and "honor killing", even though rarely preserved and exercised, illustrate the pressures on women. On the other side, as in tribal relation, when a man of the rival tribe is killed during a tribal dispute, a woman must carry the duty to compensate the blood (blood price) by proving herself as a bride to a man of the tribe of the enemy. Only the offer of this highly valued "commodity" (woman), that represents a total submission, could satisfy the tribe of the murdered, and heal the deep wound. In the case of "honor killing", male family members brutally kill the women of their own if she engages in "illegitimate" sexual relation. This action is a sign of incapability of the men defending their territories - the women. The brave of bloodshed (sister, mother, daughter) cleans this doubt.
35. For a good informative and analytical source for Algerian crisis see a collection of articles in Merip Report. No. 192, Vol. 25, No.1, January-February 1995.
36. Diamond, Larry. "Is the Third Wave Over?" Journal of Democracy, Vol. 7, No.3, Johns Hopkins University Press, July 1996.
37. Fuller, E. Graham, "Keep Islamists in the Fold", Los Angeles Times, October, 16, 1996.
38. Cited in Fawzi El-Solh Camillia & Mabro Judy. (eds) op. cit., P. 24, 1994.
39. The new middle class, unlike the traditional one as part of traditional economy, is the result of industrial development. By its massive participation in economy, a demand for social and political participation in decision making, as cases in South Korea and Eastern European countries showed, will increase which cannot be ignored.

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For Detailed process see Alamdari, Kazem, "Is Democracy a Prerequisite of Economic Growth?", Michigan Sociological Review, Nov. 8, Fall 1994.

40. The situations of the few cases of democracy in the developing societies such as India, Costa

Rica, Jamaica, and Botswana cannot be found everywhere. For Details see K. Alamdari, "Is

Democracy Prerequisite of Economic Growth?", Michigan Sociological Review, No.8,1994.

41. Maria Maravall, Jose, cited in Adam Przeworski, *Sustainable Democracy*, Cambridge University Press, 1995.

42. Alvaro Moises, Jose. 1990, Cited in Adam Przeworski, op. cit., 1995.

43. CBOS (Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej), Various issues, Cited in Adam Przeworski, op. cit., 1995.

44. Kandiyoti, Deniz writes: "These variations find concrete expression in the degree of access that women have to education, paid employment, social benefits, and political participation". Islam and Patriarchy, op. cit., 1991, p. 38.