Female Labor Force Participation in Turkic Countries: A Study of Azerbaijan and Turkey

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Abstract

Encouraging female labor force participation (FLFP) should be a goal of any country attempting to increase its productive capacity. Understanding the determinants and motivations of labor force participation requires isolating the factors that influence a woman's decision to enter or leave formal employment. In this thesis, I utilize data from the Demographics and Health Surveys to explain the role of social conservatism in promoting or limiting participation in the labor force. I focus on ever-married women in Azerbaijan and Turkey to provide a lens through which to explain the unexpectedly low FLFP of Turkey. Though most prior research attempts to explain Turkey's low FLFP rate by comparisons to other OECD countries, my study looks at Turkey through the context of other Turkic cultures to explore cultural factors driving labor force participation for ever-married women. This study finds a negative correlation between conservatism and the likelihood of participating in the labor force for ever-married women in Azerbaijan, and a larger, positive relationship in Turkey.

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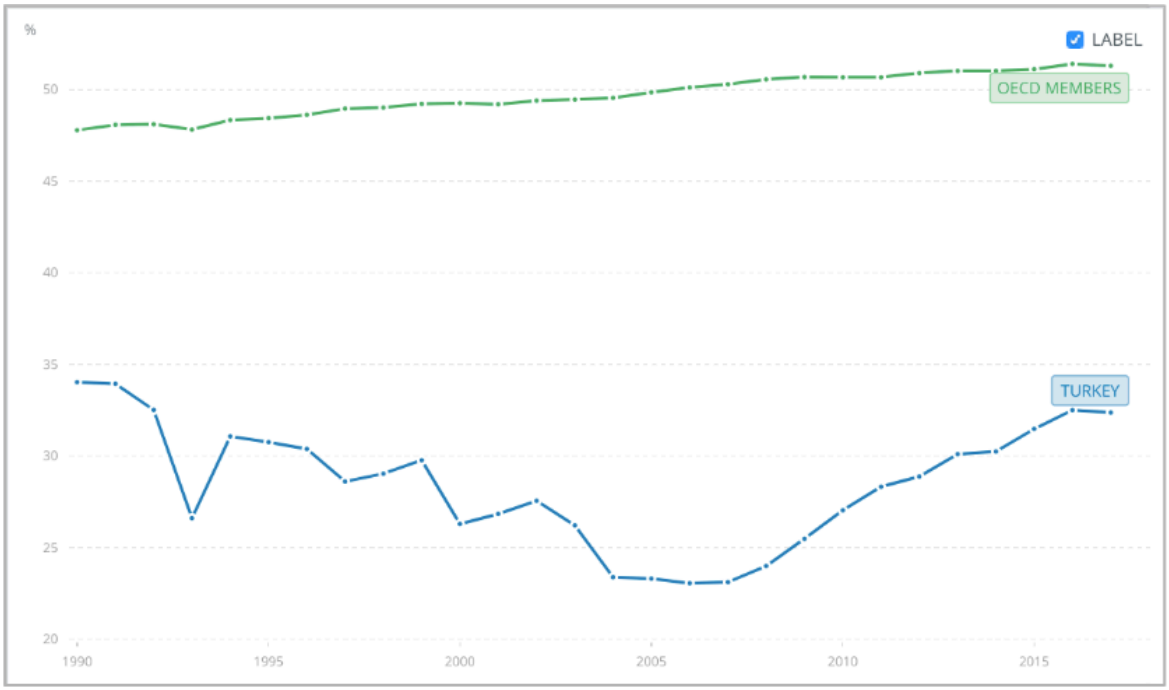
I. Introduction

While most studies on Turkish female labor force participation (FLFP) focus on Turkey in the context of other OECD countries, an alternative approach is to look at the discrepancy between Turkish FLFP and that of other Turkic states. Current research on female LFP rates cross-culturally has traditionally focused on the role of education, religion, or fertility on the decision to participate in the labor force. Though these studies indicate that all three are relevant factors, little has been done to specifically examine the impact of social conservatism on women entering the workforce. Particularly with regard to Turkey, a nation whose large, sophisticated economy belies its unexpectedly low rate of female labor force participation, further research into the cross-cultural determinants of LFP is required. The below chart depicts Turkish FLFP in comparison to the average FLFP rates of OECD countries, demonstrating the stark discrepancy that most research has tried to address.

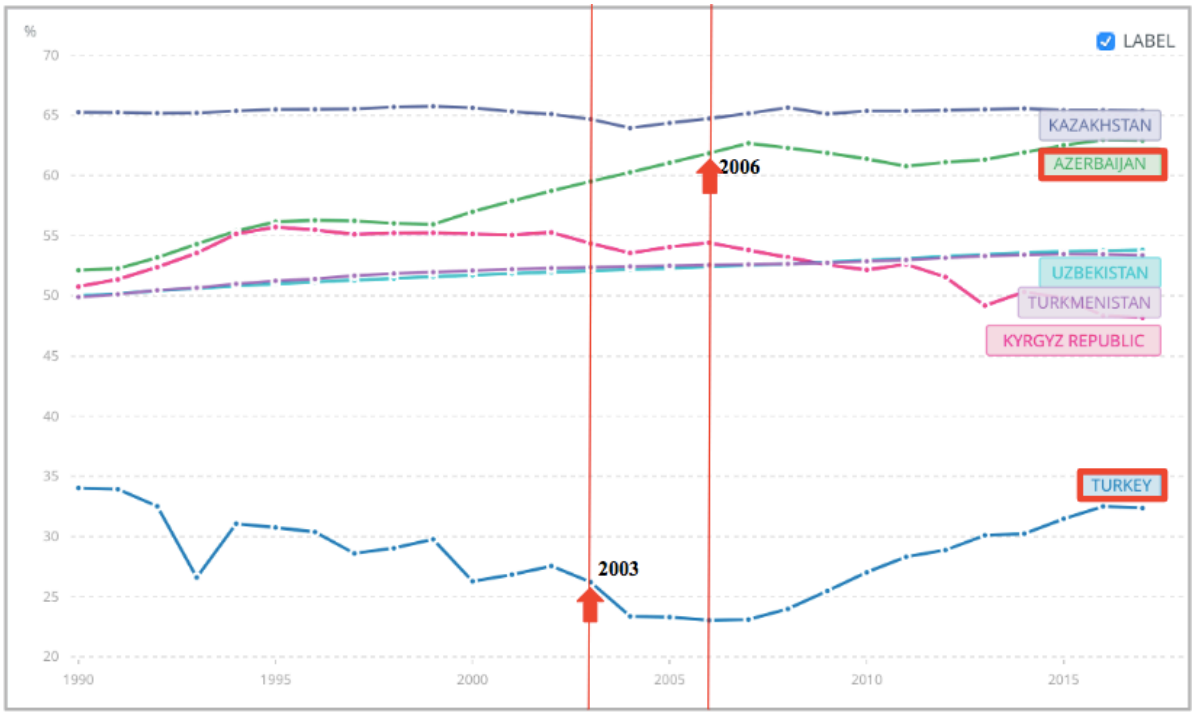
Figure 1: Female Labor Force Participation Rates (Turkey, OECD Members)



Source: World Bank Open Source Data

A more relevant comparison is the discrepancy in FLP rates between Turkey and the other five Turkic countries – Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. In this study, I develop a case study comparison of the role of conservatism in determining female LFP in Turkey and Azerbaijan in order to further our understanding of the factors limiting and driving LFP in both countries. As the below chart demonstrates, Turkish FLFP is significantly lower in comparison to the other Turkic countries, which raises a number of questions regarding the impact of religion or culture on FLFP in Turkey. The years 2003 and 2006 are highlighted as the years of available data for this study.

Figure 2: Female Labor Force Participation Rates Across Turkic Countries



Source: World Bank Open Source Data

The goal of this study is to add to current literature on the lagging state of female LFP rates in Turkey, by providing both analysis of the role of conservatism as a determinant of female LFP in Turkey and Azerbaijan, and by proposing historical explanations for the

discrepancies in LFP rates across Turkic countries. In this study, I focus specifically on social conservatism, which refers to the preservation of traditional values and established institutions, including established norms regarding traditional male/female relationships. Though social conservatism is often correlated with religious or political conservatism, particularly in Turkey, these forms are not interchangeable.

My analysis first covers the historical background and prior literature on the topic in sections II and III, beginning with current definitions and models of female labor force participation trends across developing countries. Much research has focused on the impact of education, traditionalism, fertility, and other factors as determinants of female labor force participation around the world. A country-specific analysis of current research on patterns of female LFP in Azerbaijan and Turkey follows, providing real-world examples of the determinants and models discussed generally. Far more research has been conducted on the current trends of female LFP rates in Turkey than in Azerbaijan, where economic research into gender issues has been limited to a few authors. Thus, my thesis seeks to rectify the dearth of analysis on women in the labor force in Azerbaijan, by providing solid exposition of the role of historical factors in establishing the current relationship between conservatism and LFP in the country.

Section IV explores the challenges to female LFP posed by laws and institutions in developing countries. After examining general legal barriers and incentives to formal employment, this section evaluates how these policies have been enacted and enforced in Azerbaijan and Turkey.

The following sections V and VI describe the datasets and methodology for this analysis, developing the framework through which the impact of conservatism on female labor

force participation rates is established. The analysis is carried out separately for both countries, and the results are combined in proposing specific policies, practices, and traditions of the Soviet regime that caused current discrepancies in LFP rates.

Finally, in sections VII and VIII the results are analyzed and combined in a discussion of the probable impact of the institutions of the Soviet Union in Azerbaijan and early Republican period in Turkey on conservatism in both countries. These sections explore the factors that cause differences in analysis when looking at the regression of conservatism on labor force participation.

II. Historical Background

Despite stark differences between the two eras, some comparisons can be made between the Soviet experience in Azerbaijan (1920-1991) and the Republican period in Turkey (1923-1950), particularly with regards to women's rights. Under both societies, a top-down enforcement of women's liberation involved dramatic, surface-level changes that failed to account for the personal nature of cultural norms. Despite these similarities, differences in institutions and institutional enforcement caused significant changes in society that could provide reasons underlying the current discrepancy in female labor force participation rates between the two countries.

In order to understand the current state of female labor force participation in Azerbaijan and Turkey, an analysis of the historical trends and influences on female entrance into the work force is required. Both eras involved a series of influential reforms that paved the way for women to enter the labor force, by improving access to education, mandating legislation that decreased disparities in the work force, and publishing propaganda related to fertility. This section provides an overview of the history of both the Soviet period in Azerbaijan and the Republican period in Turkey, examining the specific institutions that both directly and indirectly impacted women's decisions to enter the labor force.

A. Soviet Influence on Female Labor Force Participation in Azerbaijan

Pre-Soviet Era

Prior to the formation of the Soviet Union, the area known as Azerbaijan today was part of the Russian Empire, based on treaties established in 1813 and 1828 granting the area north of the Aras River to Russia and south to Iran (Tohidi 1999). The short-lived Azerbaijan Democratic Republic was founded in 1918 following the collapse of the Russian Empire, and lasted two

years until the country was formally absorbed into the USSR as the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic.

During the nation's first brief experiment with independence from 1918 - 1920, there are varying accounts of the status of women socially and economically. A notable accomplishment of the early Parliament was the extension of suffrage to women, making the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic the first majority Muslim nation to give women the right to vote (Huseynov 2018). Much research on the transition process of majority Muslim post-communist nations depicts pre-Soviet periods in these countries as backwards and undeveloped, describing women in Central Asian Muslim republics prior to the Soviet era as "human puppets" (Patnaik 1989), covered by their veils and repressed socially. Most women, and a large number of men, were illiterate during this time, and women were restricted to very few social venues (Heyat 2015).

Yet the extent to which this depiction of women in the pre-Soviet period is accurate in Azerbaijan has been debated. Worldwide during this era, women's movements were beginning to gain steam, and these movements extended to this region as well. Many have noted that due to the discovery of oil in Azerbaijan in 1871, Baku was becoming increasingly more cosmopolitan and outward-facing by the time of the Soviet Union (Heyat 2015). The involvement of women in society was also becoming more commonplace, and thus the decision by the Parliament of 1918 to extend full civil and legal rights to women is contextually less surprising (Heyat 1999). During this period, women in Baku were also beginning to unveil, even before the mass unveiling campaigns of the Soviet period (Heyat 2015). These early steps toward modernization must be considered when establishing the total impact of Soviet reforms on the modern social and economic culture of Azerbaijan.

The Soviet Union

The Soviet period in Azerbaijan began in the spring of 1920. As a major source of oil, Azerbaijan was a significant target for the Soviet Union, which benefited immensely from the country's vast expanses of natural resources and utilized oil from Azerbaijan throughout the USSR. Lasting 70 years, the Soviet period in Azerbaijan was a time of immense change and development. The top-down style of Soviet rule caused rapid changes in society, as old norms and customs were uprooted in favor of communist principles.

Women were particularly impacted by the introduction of Soviet rule. One major goal of the Soviet Union throughout the Central Asian Soviet republics was the integration of women into the workforce, thereby increasing the productive capacity of the USSR as a whole (Iskanian 2003). The productive capacity of an economy is tied to the amount of productive labor supplied, of which female labor can constitute a significant portion. To this end, policies impacting a number of determinants of female labor force participation were enacted and enforced to varying levels. Women in the Soviet Union faced constant pressures and encouragement to enter the labor force. Particularly, pressures to engage in full-time work were high, while opportunities for part-time work or more flexible employment were limited (Kuehnast 2004). By the 1980s, women's participation in the labor force in the Azerbaijan SSR was expected, and taking a job was seen as a requirement (Heyat 2015).

Education in the Soviet Union

The introduction of compulsory primary and later, secondary, levels of education throughout the Soviet Union played perhaps the biggest role in improving the status of women in society. The implementation of universal education both guaranteed women's literacy and provided a public space outside of the home in which female participation was respected and

encouraged (Akiner 1997). By the 1980s, women were well represented in education, and by some standards surpassed men in attainment of higher education (Kuehnast 2004). Access to advanced degrees was granted to women, opening employment possibilities in sectors previously restricted to men. The emphasis on education has lasted into the current period, as studies demonstrate that the long-term consequences of mandatory education during the Soviet period continue to impact education attainment of both sexes in post-communist republics even today (Natkhov 2015).

Female Political Representation in the Soviet Union

An additional policy change involved the implementation of quotas for female lawmakers in the Soviet republics. Priority was placed on proportionate representation of women in government, through a requirement that they comprise at least one-third of the legislative body (Iskanian 2003). High political representation of women is correlated with high female labor force participation, and thus the implementation of the quota system was a likely influence of female decisions to enter the labor force.

Women's Clubs in the Soviet Union

The development of women's clubs throughout the USSR was a particularly innovative way of increasing the human capital of women. These clubs, beginning with the Ali Bayramov Club in Baku in 1922 (Heyat 2015), were a brainchild of the *zhenskii otdel* (known as the *Zhenotdel*), the Women's Department of the Central Committee Secretariat. This department was tasked with improving the status of women and increasing their economic participation in the Soviet Union. Local chapters of the Zhenotdel established women's clubs throughout the Azerbaijan SSR.

These clubs provided vocational training, literacy courses, social outlets, childcare, and a range of other services aimed at improving the wage-earning potential of women (Akiner 1997). Some clubs even offered work placement to women who successfully completed their training, providing economic security directly to women (Heyat 1999). An important aspect of the women's clubs was the ability to congregate outside the home in the public sphere, a rare opportunity prior to 1921 (Akiner 1997). Participation in the clubs was aimed at empowering women to secure some degree of economic independence through productive labor.

Public Unveiling

As mentioned previously, the tradition of veiling for Muslim women in Azerbaijan was already on a slow decline prior to the formation of the Soviet Union. Yet undoubtedly, the policies of the USSR played a major role in accelerating this process. Seen by the Soviet Union as a symbol of religious oppression of women, dismantling the traditional Islamic veil was a priority of governance in the Muslim republics of Central Asia. In 1926, campaigns to promote mass unveiling throughout the Union were carried out (Iskanian 2003). On the International Day of Women in 1927, parades celebrating unveiled women were conducted throughout the Soviet Union, ending with orders to unveil in massive displays (Iskanian 2003).

It is important to note here that the tradition of veiling is not necessarily an indication of conservatism. In many cases, choosing to wear a headscarf can represent freedom of religious expression for women, and may be viewed as an inherently feminist act. In this historical case, the Soviet Union viewed unveiling as a sign of modernity, and looked down upon women who wore the veil, a surface-level shift that did little to alter underlying motives.

In some areas, women were given privileges for discarding the veil and husbands were threatened with penalties for wives who refused to unveil (Akiner 1997). The decline of the veil

reflects the similar decline in religiosity during this period. As an outward symbol of devotion to Islam, the campaign to unveil was equally a campaign to embrace the secularism of the Soviet Union. Public society as a whole was secularized, though religious traditions and values carried on in the private sphere (Iskanian 2003).

Challenges of Female Empowerment in the Soviet Union

Despite these policy changes, various barriers to female employment and economic security persisted. One significant limitation was the under-enforcement of laws equalizing men and women. Though women were guaranteed equal pay by law, it was not uncommon to pay women less than men for the same work (Akiner 1997). Women began to achieve increasing levels of higher education, yet in many cases were still shut out of top positions in the workforce (Heyat 2015). Even in 'feminized' industries, a term which refers to those industries whose workforces were dominated by women during this period, it was uncommon to find women among the higher ranks (Heyat 2015).

One factor impacting the enforcement of legal policies regarding the equality of women in the workplace was the societal emphasis on female responsibility for domestic labor (Iskanian 2003). Though the double burden of domestic labor on women is discussed in more detail later, it is important to understand the employment decision in this context. A 1989 poll found that most women believed that their promotion prospects were significantly hindered by the burden of family responsibilities and childcare (Heyat 2015). Though women were guaranteed extensive paid maternity leave and childcare (often legally guaranteed but practically inaccessible), employers were hesitant to hire workers they perceived as likely to require significant time off for family (Akiner 1997). These factors impacted the ability of women to achieve employment and promotion in the labor market under Soviet policies.

Post-Communist Azerbaijan

After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, Azerbaijan, along with all other post-communist republics, entered a phase of economic, political, and social transition. The period directly following independence, during which the switch to a capitalist economic model was initiated, involved much economic hardship for a majority of the post-communist Turkic nations. The collapse of trade networks and resource scarcity during the 1990s dramatically increased unemployment in the newly formed Republic of Azerbaijan (Moghadam 1999). Women were particularly impacted by this time of economic hardship, and represented a large majority of unemployment (Iskanian 2003). Though the economic recovery of Azerbaijan has taken the better part of the 27 years since its formation, the performance of women has improved steadily.

Even as political representation of women in Azerbaijan has fallen significantly from Soviet quota levels, the economic participation of women has shifted and adjusted. Heyat notes that the "life-improvement strategies" women adopted during the Soviet era, such as "organizational, networking and bartering skills" (2015) were especially useful in helping women enter the labor force and seek out innovative forms of employment. Several authors note that the sectors of female employment in Azerbaijan have shifted as demographics changed after the Soviet period ended. Employers for jobs serving the public, such as waitressing, customer service, or hairdressing, traditionally employed ethnic minorities (typically Russian or Armenian women) during the Soviet era (Heyat 2015, Iskanian 2003). This was due in large part to cultural attitudes surrounding Muslim women interacting with strangers, particularly men (Heyat 2015). After the mass exodus of these populations in the early 1990s, Azerbaijani women took up these positions, propelled by necessity and the rising unemployment of the early post-Soviet period.

Today, women in post-communist Azerbaijan have made exemplary progress in economic equalization, especially when compared to both developing nations and to Muslim-majority countries (Tohidi 1999). Economic recovery has driven much of this progress, as the oil-rich country has experienced extensive foreign investment aiding in the transition process (Heyat 2015).

Despite 70 years of Soviet rule, many of the cultural values and traditions remain strong in Azerbaijan, particularly in rural areas. At the same time, the country has opened up to competing influences – while the influence of Russia is naturally still quite powerful, migration and economic connectivity with Turkey, Iran, and Europe have increasing weight, directly impacting the role of women. As much research indicates, women in Azerbaijan and throughout post-communist Central Asia are torn between tradition and modernity, and are often forced to choose between maintenance of cultural values and the equalizing achievements remaining from the Soviet era (Akiner 1997).

Special Considerations in Azerbaijan

In analyzing the case of Azerbaijan, there are a few differentiating factors that must be noted, beginning with the role of oil in the economy. Azerbaijan's economic progress and level of globalization is inextricably tied to the discovery of oil in 1871. The entrance of the Soviet Union was driven by the vast oil fields in Azerbaijan, which were used to fuel the regime for the next 70 years. The presence of large international petroleum firms, primarily in Baku, has caused a high proportion of foreigners to migrate to Baku, lending the city its international reputation.

The ongoing Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia is also of significance to understanding the economic conditions underlying the female LFP rate. Armenian occupation of the Nagorno-Karabakh region has displaced over 600,000 Azerbaijanis

(UNHCR 2009), creating a situation in which nearly one in seven citizens is a refugee (Tohidi 1999). Government initiatives to provide services and financing to refugees has aided in their transition.

Current Political Climate of Azerbaijan

Heydar Aliyev, a Major-General in the Azerbaijan SSR, was elected President of the newly-independent Republic of Azerbaijan in 1993. He was succeeded by his son, Ilham Aliyev, in 2003, who has continued to lead the country ever since. The Aliyev family has dominated politics in Azerbaijan since independence. Though opposition parties are present and participate in national elections, elections are few and far between, with seven-year presidential terms and five-year parliamentary terms. The Aliyev's party, the majority New Azerbaijan Party, garnered around 47% of the vote in 2015 National Assembly elections, while their closest rivals won only 1.49% (DHS 2006). The legitimacy of elections themselves are also frequently challenged (Kauzlarich & Kramer 2018) by opposition and outside observers.

B. Influences of the Turkish Republican Period on Female Labor Force Participation

The roots of the modern Turkish Republic stretch far back into history, before even the formation of the Ottoman Empire. The area known as Anatolia, encompassed in part by modern Turkey, was dominated by the Seljuks from 1055-1243 before becoming the central part of the Ottoman Empire for almost 600 years (DHS 2003). Stretching from Anatolia to North Africa, the Balkans, and most of the modern Middle East, the Ottoman Empire was the precursor to the modern Turkish Republic. Today, Turkey is an independent nation with strong ties to both Europe and the Middle East in terms of economics, culture, and history (Atabaki 2009). Since the formation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, the issue of women's rights and participation in the labor force has consistently shifted.

Turkish Independence

Under the late Ottoman Empire, some movements were made toward the liberation of women. A review of literature on the role of female labor under the Ottoman Empire reveals that while women were permitted to participate in the formal economy, a majority of female labor was provided by non-Muslim minority women, while Muslim women were often excluded from participation (Atabaki 2009). Those who did participate in formal labor were generally relegated to unskilled tasks, while men were assigned more skilled labor requiring specialization (Atabaki 2009). One example of this is in the textile industries. In *Ottoman Manufacturing in the Age of the Industrial Revolution*, Donald Quataert writes that the domestic cotton and silk workforces predominantly consisted of women (Quataert 2002). The division of industries by gender continued through the Republican period and extends to the Turkish economy in the modern age.

During the War of Independence, female labor became increasingly more essential. The absence of men during the war created a void in employment that required women to move into the labor market (White 2003). The additional departure, whether forced or voluntary, of many non-Muslim minority populations following independence additionally created opportunities for employment for Muslim women. However, as Öztürkmen notes in her analysis of women's movements under the Ottoman and Republican eras, the inclusion of women into the workforce as a result of the wartime shock was short-lived, and women quickly returned to more traditional roles in the household following the conclusion of the war (Öztürkmen 2013).

The modern Turkish Republic was established officially on 29 October 1923, under the leadership of President Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (meaning "father of the Turks") (Hacettepe 2009). Following independence, an impressive number of reforms were quickly implemented in order to mold the fledgling state to fit the six arrows of Kemalism, which included

Republicanism, Nationalism, Populism, Revolutionism, Secularism, and Statism (LA Times, 1991). The role of women in society was directly impacted by reforms with these principles in mind.

The Early Republican Period

In practical terms, the reforms carried out under Atatürk's leadership in the early Republican period were implemented with the overarching goal of establishing Turkey as a secular, modern, and Westernized nation. This required Turkey to break completely from its Ottoman past, which was looked down upon by the new modernizers (Atabaki 2009). Secularization was a primary component of this shift, as the goal was to create the image of a modern Turkish citizen, freed from the 'backward' bonds of Islamic religious tradition and instead 'enlightened' by modernization of the nation (Cook 2007). Under this new conception of Turkishness, bonds of loyalty and affinity were to the state, rather than any religious figure.

Practical reforms with this goal in mind included regulating or banning religious garb for both men and women, changing the language of the call to prayer from Arabic to Turkish, and establishing the *Diyanet*, state-sponsored religious authority tasked with regulating the propagation of religion within the country. The aim of these reforms was to remove Islam from the public sphere within the nation. Private practice of religion was permitted, though discouraged (O'Neil & Bilgin 2013).

One comparative example of state-sponsored infringement on religious activity was the clothing reform. During this period, the state enacted measures to discourage the use of religious garb. In 1934, a law prohibiting men from wearing religion-based clothing in public settings outside of religious institutions was enacted (Human Rights Watch 2004). Women wearing

headscarves were also banned from government buildings and higher education, a ban only recently lifted in 2013 (Al Jazeera 2013).

Further modernizing reforms involved changing the Turkish alphabet from the Arabic script to the Latin alphabet, adopting international time and calendar systems, abolishing religious institutions like dervish lodges and Islamic schools, and mandating universal primary education, among other dramatic changes. These new policies were implemented, accepted, and propagated with impressive speed. After the shift to the Latin alphabet, literacy campaigns throughout the country prompted a quick increase in literacy rates, still seen today (Hacettepe 2009). Literacy improved from around 10 percent of women in 1935 to over 80 percent of women in 2006 (Hacettepe 2009).

Impact on Women

Beyond improvements in education, a number of reforms implemented during the Republican period were aimed directly at formally improving the situation of women. Suffrage was extended to women in 1934, a decision made before many European nations at the time (Turam 2007). Women were permitted to hold public office through changes in legislation, though the number of women in office in Turkey was and remains low. Equality in employment rights, education access, and political participation was formalized under the newly developed constitution, allowing women to at least nominally achieve improvements in status (Ozbay 1999).

Atatürk himself was personally invested in changing the role of women in Turkey, declaring publicly in a number of speeches that modernization of the Turkish state would require a shift in the role of women (Turam 2007). The implementation of a civil code taken from Swiss law in place of Islamic law served to bring Turkey's standards for gender equality into the

modern age (Öztürkmen 2013). However, it has been noted that in some ways, including inheritance policies and rights following divorce, the adoption of the Swiss civil code actually represented a step backwards for the rights of women in Turkey, who had been guaranteed some amount of compensation in both scenarios under Islamic law (White 2003).

Fertility and the State

A significant element of the reforms in the early Republican period involved a formal establishment of the state's position on female fertility. The first few decades after independence were marked by a perceived need to increase population growth in the country, causing the state to formalize policies promoting fertility and encouraging women to have more children (Hacettepe 2009). These policies included monetary and tax incentives, limitations on access to contraceptives, and prohibition of abortion (Hacettepe 2009). As fertility has been shown in the literature to be a significant determinant of female labor force participation (Bloom et al. 2007), policies encouraging women to have more children indirectly impacted incentives to enter the labor force. This mechanism is discussed in further detail in the literature review.

Atatürk himself spearheaded the state formalization of the role of women in the household, by remarking in several public speeches that "a woman's highest duty is motherhood" (White 2003), while simultaneously encouraging female empowerment and participation in the economy. Much focus was on the role of education in providing women with the skills necessary to perform household labor, including childcare, meaning that improvements in access to education often had the adverse effect of decreasing female labor force participation (White 2003). In her analysis of the role of the state on gender roles in the Republican period, researcher Jenny White notes that curricula for women at the time often included emphasis on home economics and the latest 'science' on child rearing techniques (White 2003). Given that

education serves as a formative development experience for young people, curricula for women can be determinative of later major decisions, such as the decision to enter the labor force. Overall, the emphasis on female labor within the household demonstrated a greater societal concern that female employment outside the home would cause a community crisis (White 2003).

Limitations of Reform

A primary criticism of the reforms aimed at empowering women during the Republican period in Turkey was the emphasis on public vs. private displays of empowerment. While state reforms changed the public façade of the female experience in Turkey, little progress was made to formalize equality beyond legislation that, in theory, gave women equal rights with men (Öztürkmen 2013). Legislation regarding the rights to vote and equal pay was formalized, though private decisions that impact attitudes surrounding female empowerment were largely left untouched. While women were theoretically guaranteed equal pay, access to education, and the ability to run for public office, these routes were typically not utilized and the overarching societal conception of the role of women remained steadfast (White 2003).

A second consideration of the role of the state in reforming the status of women in the early Republican era is the urban-rural divide in Turkey. While women in urban centers like Istanbul experienced the full effects of changing gender legislation, reforms were slow to be implemented or encouraged in rural areas (Hacettepe 2009). White notes that at the time, the relatively weak implementation ability of the new state meant that many areas of the country were not directly impacted by reforms due to inaccessibility, meaning that rural women often had limited, if any, access to the new conception of femininity espoused by the state.

Shift to the Multi-Party System and End of the Republican Era

Until the late 1940s, Turkey was governed by a one-party system. The opening of elections in 1946 marked a new era in Turkish politics, in which the creation of opposition parties challenged the reformist Republican period for the first time. Opposition parties enjoyed their first electoral success in 1950, when the Democrat Party won over then-deceased Atatürk's Republican People's Party (DHS 2003). Since this period, elections have remained contested, though the sanctity of Turkish democracy was shaken and called into question by three military interventions in 1960, 1971, and 1980, and an additional "soft coup" in 1997, in which the military gave ultimatums to the ruling political party and which resulted in the resignation of the prime minister.

Of note is that several of these military interventions were predicated by a trend towards Islam in politics, contrary to the secular establishment of the Turkish Republic. In each of the coups or coup attempts, as soon as a governing party strayed too far from the secular roots of the nation, the military, generally with large popular support, stepped in to rectify the discrepancy, removing political leaders and closing Islamic parties by constitutional court when necessary. The coup attempt of 2016 runs counter to these historical examples – though the military allegedly stepped in due to the increasingly Islamic policies of the ruling Justice and Development Party, they failed to garner the widespread popular support and lacked the planning and precision of previous attempts.

This section explores the context of the Turkish military as it impacts political and economic decisions in the country, as well as the diminishing role of the military, and thereby of secularism, following policies enacted since 2002 by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of the Justice and Development Party.

The role of the military in Turkish politics is especially important in understanding the current political regime of Turkey. Throughout Turkish history, the military was seen as the protector of Turkish secularism, a force independent of politics with the power to step in whenever the ruling party stepped out of the lines of the form of secularism defined by Atatürk. Though the role of the military has adapted and been minimized under the current Justice and Development Party, the three successful military interventions in Turkey, along with the failed coup attempt of 2016, demonstrate the power of the military's perceived role in the Turkish psyche.

Economic Development of the Late 20th Century

Economic development in the late 20th century in Turkey was a major factor in the structure and composition of Turkey's modern workforce. Policies adopted by administrations of the 1980s included import substitution and an emphasis on exports that fundamentally altered the composition of Turkey's economy, and thereby impacted the workforce, with special impacts for 'feminized' sectors that predominantly employed women. These changes left lasting impacts on opportunities for female labor that can still be seen in Turkey today.

Over the past century, Turkey has shifted dramatically from a predominantly agrarian society to an industrialized economy (Atasoy 2016). Economic policies implemented by ruling political parties of the 1980s and 1990s drove this shift towards manufacturing that fundamentally changed the composition of the Turkish workforce. Due to liberalizing policies of the 1980s, the focus of Turkish economic growth emphasized exports at the expense of traditional agricultural work (DHS 2003), causing a decrease in the share of agriculture in the economy (Atasoy 2016). Increased foreign investment beginning after the economic stagnation of the late 1970s also contributed to a massive expansion of export manufacturing (DHS 2003).

As noted previously, this tremendous shift from an agrarian economy to an export-centric economic model during these three decades is largely held responsible for the decline in female labor force participation. O'Neil and Bilgin point to the elimination of agricultural jobs traditionally held by women as the primary source of depressed female LFP (2013). However, as this analysis demonstrates when looking at the similar economic history of Azerbaijan, this shift from agriculture to industry was matched in many Turkic countries at roughly the same time.

The development of women's societies and organizations for the promotion of women's welfare in Turkey occurred in parallel with the economic development of this era. Özturkmen notes that in the 1990s and early 2000s, research centers focused on women's issues and resources like the Women's Library and Information Center were created, demonstrating the initial inclusion of discourse on the wellbeing of women in society (259). The creation of these organizations is similar to the creation of women's clubs in Azerbaijan under the Soviet Union – groups dedicated to the inclusion of women in society via opportunities for their public empowerment.

Islamicization and the Modern Era

As discussed previously, the traditional role of the military in Turkish society was to act as the guardian of Turkish secularism, established as a founding principle of the Republic of Turkey by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Despite the nominal commitment to secularism laid out in the country's founding documents, the past few decades in Turkey have witnessed a revival of Islamic parties and governance. The 1997 "soft coup" in Turkey, a quasi-takeover of the government in which the military issued demands to the government and required the resignation of Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, was prompted by fears of Islamic overtones by the then-ruling Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*), a religious conservative party whose successor, the Virtue

Party (*Fazilet Partisi*), was also closed by constitutional court before spawning today's socially conservative Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi,* commonly abbreviated in Turkey as AKP) (Daventry 2016).

The Justice and Development Party (AKP) has been in power in Turkey since the 2002 elections. Though the initial stance of the party was secular and emphasized a break from traditional Islamist parties of the 1980s and 90s, the AKP has in recent years enacted legislation in line with Islamic principles, such as taxes on alcohol sales and consumption, and the lifting of bans on headscarves in public spaces (O'Neil and Bilgin 2013).

European Union Accession

A major factor of economic and political changes since 2002 has been the possibility of Turkey's accession to the European Union. Beginning in 1999, Turkey has been a candidate for accession to the EU, conditioned on a significant number of economic and political reforms to bring the nation in line with EU standards (DHS 2003).

In the 2002 elections, the Justice and Development Party campaigned on a platform that emphasized accession to the EU as a primary goal. To this end, the first eight years of AKP rule were dominated by the narrative that Turkey must reform to enter the EU. This campaign promise proved to be widely popular in Turkey, and was matched by indications from the EU that Turkey was a promising candidate for accession. The promise of EU accession raised public support for the AKP. Structural changes to the country's military, economy, and political hierarchy were carried out under the base assumption that Turkey would thereby be permitted to reap the benefits of EU membership. In order to make the nation compliant with EU demands, a number of political changes that dramatically shifted the structure of the military were undertaken, to the benefit of the AKP. For example, the military itself was placed under civilian

rule in 2003 for the first time since its formation, and the parliament, dominated by the AKP, was able to make significant changes that gave the government oversight of military budgets and planning. These changes served dual purposes: on one hand, the AKP was able to make changes that appeared to bring the military up to EU accession standards, thereby fulfilling campaign promises and building popular support; on the other hand, these changes served to dramatically reduce the influencing power of the Turkish military, thereby securing the AKP's hold on political and economic power (Torrens 2017).

The AKP was also able to remove military representatives from other political boards, fundamentally altering the role of the military in the Turkish state. While these changes were nominally undertaken in order to comply with EU accession standards, they had the additional impact of bringing military hierarchy under civilian control and effectively diminishing the chance that the AKP could be removed by military intervention, by historic precedent. In recent years, President Erdoğan has stepped back from the promise of EU accession itself, demonstrating that these changes were primarily undertaken with the goal of reforming the military without actually acceding into the EU. However, the protracted accession process up to this point predominantly soured the Turkish public on the idea of EU accession, and most believed that it would never occur, so the AKP is generally not blamed for failing to carry out EU accession.

Contemporary Turkey

Since a failed attempt to shut down the AKP via constitutional court in 2008, the AKP's ability to push Islamist policy has only risen, coupled with the dramatic increase in power of the country's president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (Torrens 2017). The failed coup of 2016 and the constitutional referendum of 2017 have also served to increase the power of the country's leader,

by removing political and military opposition and directly expanding the powers of the presidency (Torrens 2017). Since the focus of this analysis is on the decision of women to enter the labor force in the years surrounding the 2003 DHS, I avoid analysis of the current political climate in Turkey in favor of discussion of the current political party's impact on the role of women in politics, economics, and society. In analyzing data from 2003, I consider the political climate of the time: the rising power of the AKP, characterized by slowly increasing public acceptance of political Islam, matched by rising public social conservatism.

C. Comparative Analysis

Little research has been done into the parallel decision-making structures in the Soviet period and Republican era. Undoubtedly, the methods and measures taken by both governments during these periods were extremely different. However, it is essential to highlight some of the key similarities between these regimes.

As noted above, the top-down method of imposing reforms in both regimes was successful at quickly effecting change in the regions, especially in the area of women's rights. By mandating immediate suffrage for women, providing incentives related to the fertility decision, and expanding access to education, women in both societies experienced massive leaps in literacy, education rates, and public participation. However, it is notable that scholars on both eras mention the disconnect between public changes in policies involving women and private beliefs regarding gender roles that were maintained despite outward changes. Additionally, research has focused on the trends in female empowerment prior to both periods, during the pre-Soviet era in Azerbaijan and the late Ottoman period in Turkey, and it is thus impossible to determine what the underlying trend in these elements of female empowerment might have been without the influence of these overarching institutions.

Differences in methods for evoking cultural change can be seen between the Soviet period and Republican era. While scholars note that Atatürk espoused progressive beliefs regarding women, he also maintained a public-private division between the role of the state in determining cultural values. A prime example is given by how the two regimes handled the removal of the Islamic headscarf. While Soviet authorities encouraged women to give up wearing the headscarf by planning burning and unveiling ceremonies and establishing monetary incentives for women who unveiled, Atatürk's ban on the headscarf extended to state buildings and education facilities, but did not attempt to impact directly the private decision to wear the headscarf while at home or in the community. The private-public distinction in policy extends to general policy on women's rights under both regimes. However, it is clear that both governments saw the headscarf only as a symbol of religiosity, and required its removal to promote modernity in each country, a concept that has come into public debate in recent years.

The historical legacy of both countries aids in constructing my hypothesis as to the role of conservatism in Azerbaijan and Turkey. During the Soviet era and Republican period, conservative values and traditional norms were allowed to exist privately in both countries. However, I argue that the role of conservatism in influencing public decisions should be larger in Turkey, where since the Republican era there has been a rise in acceptance for socially conservative political groups, particularly since the 2002 elections of the AKP. With the rise of a conservative government, conservatism in private life might play a larger role in determining decision-making structures. On the other hand, the political elite in Azerbaijan are still solidly tied to their Soviet past, due to the continued empowerment of the Aliyev family. Even the shorter timeframe since independence means that the secular Soviet legacy is felt more deeply in

Azerbaijan, leading to the hypothesis that social conservatism, while privately present in the country, plays a smaller role in determining the public decisions of women.

III. Literature Review

Literature on the determinants of female LFP worldwide is abundant. Most studies focus on the role of a key factor in influencing a woman's decision to enter the labor market, such as religion (Gaddis et al. 2013, Guiso et al. 2002), education (Lincove 2008, Boserup 1970), or fertility (Bloom et al. 2007, Klasen 2017). A number of macroeconomic factors are also significantly tied to female LFP. Further analysis of female LFP in developing countries has led to the commonly-accepted hypothesis of the U-Shaped female LFP model, which states that as a country develops, female LFP first falls, then rises again. Following discussion of research on global trends in female LFP, this section examines country-specific research on gendered decisions to enter the workforce in Azerbaijan and Turkey.

A. Definitions of Labor Force Participation

One limitation to studies of female LFP is the nebulous definition of labor force participation. As mentioned previously, most literature refers to labor force participation as the number of economically active people divided by the total population within a given age group (Bloom et al. 2007). Definitions differ, however, in the specification of 'economically active,' which can in turn skew results in measuring total labor force participation rates. The definition used by the International Labor Organization (ILO) defines economically active people as those who are either employed or actively looking for work.

However, changing definitions over time also constrains data collection and analysis, particularly in studies that make use of time-series data. In 2013, the ILO expanded its definition of work to include some forms of home production for own-use, meaning that in some cases, childcare and at-home labor would mark a woman as economically active. At the same time, however, the ILO narrowed its definition of the labor force to exclude subsistence farmers, or

those who produce only for their own consumption. (Klasen 2017) The simultaneous expansion of the definition of 'work' and narrowing of the definition of 'labor' has two major implications for studies of female labor force participation.

First, a caveat must be made when using ILO data that span years before and after 2013, to acknowledge the difference in definitions and demonstrate which workers might be left out of official statistics due to changes in definitions. Second, Klasen points out that this narrowing of the definition of labor may actually serve to exclude the home labor of women from official statistics, skewing our perception of the real labor force status of women (Klasen 2017).

For the purposes of this analysis, I utilize a narrower definition of LFP based on the questions available in the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) for Azerbaijan and Turkey. The DHS simply records whether a woman is currently employed in the labor force, without the nuance of the above ILO definition, especially with regard to informal labor. This limitation is discussed further in the conclusion.

B. Global Determinants of Female Labor Force Participation

Many studies find that globally, the central determinants of female labor force participation include education, fertility, religion, and cultural norms. I evaluate these determinants of female LFP and then analyze several further macroeconomic factors that impact overall rates of female LFP in developing countries.

Education

The importance of education in determining a woman's decision to enter the labor force has been studied extensively in the literature (Bloom et al. 2007, Klasen 2017, Lincove 2008, Boserup 1970). Increased access to education is tied to increased opportunities in the labor force. As females attain education, the trend is to increase participation in the formal labor force,

increasing female LFP rates (Bloom et al. 2007). In addition, research has noted that female education should be a priority for governments in developing countries due to the increase in overall human capital that occurs through education (Lincove 2008).

However, some studies demonstrate a contradictory decline in female LFP with increased access to education. Lincove argues that school curricula and instructional techniques in developing countries are often tied to improving female home productivity, rather than teaching specific skills valuable in the labor market (Lincove 2008). This creates a U-shaped relationship between education and female labor force participation, in which initially women who attain education are likely to refrain from entering the labor force to specialize in home production, but as the quality of education increases and barriers to female LFP decrease, women utilize opportunities to enter the labor market and attain wages for their educational investment (Lincove 2008).

Increased access to education might negatively skew female LFP measurement due to the increase in time spent attaining education and establishment of set retirement ages (Klasen 2017). As women spend more time achieving higher education, they enter the labor force at later ages, skewing downward statistics on labor force participation for women 15+ (Klasen 2017). In addition, a trend toward retiring earlier due to rising GDP in developing countries may also indicated decreased female LFP rates (Bloom et al. 2007). Gender-specific retirement policies, which allow women to retire and collect retirement benefits earlier than men, may also impact estimates of FLFP. However, the common trend indicated by extensive research is that attainment of education increases female LFP in developing countries to a significant degree (Bloom et al. 2007, Klasen 2017, Lincove 2008, Boserup 1970).

Fertility

An essential component of a woman's decision to enter the labor force is the presence of children in the home. Fertility rates in developing countries are commonly acknowledged in the literature as a significant determinant of female LFP rates (Bloom et al. 2007, Klasen 2017). A study by Bloom et al., on the impact of fertility on female labor force participation in 97 countries over a period from 1960 to 2000, demonstrates the significance of fertility on the decision to enter the labor market. Their results indicate that each subsequent child decreases a mother's likelihood of entering the labor market by 10-15 percentage points for women between 25-39, and by 5-10 percentage points for women between 40-49 (Bloom et al. 2007). Additionally, Bloom et al. estimates an 8 percentage point decrease in paid work for each child born, or roughly four years of paid employment (Bloom et al. 2007).

In addition, the age of children in the home can present a limiting factor for women who would otherwise enter the labor force. Children under five require childcare beyond public education, limiting the mobility of mothers who are typically expected to act as the primary caretaker. Rather than looking solely at the number of children a woman has had, this study controls for fertility by looking separately at the number of children a woman has between the ages of 0-2, 3-5, 6-13, 14-18, and over 19. Separating the ages into these categories allows my regression to isolate the impact of having children in different age groups on labor force decisions.

The intuition behind the relationship between fertility and female LFP is two-fold. First, as the number of children in the home increases, a greater amount of time and effort is required in home production. As this home production is typically associated with female labor in developing countries (Klasen 2017), an increase in the number of children disproportionately removes women from the labor force. Second, exit from the labor market due to childbirth and

raising children lowers the marketable experience and skills available to previously working women, who are now less able to obtain employment at the same wage. The discouragement associated with this effect is likely to prevent many women from reentering the labor force (Bloom et al. 2007), establishing the long-run negative effects of increased fertility on female labor force participation.

Religion and Cultural Norms

The impact of religious belief and religiosity on female labor has been extensively studied (Gaddis et al. 2013, Guiso et al. 2002, Norris 2010). Several studies demonstrate a specific tie between nations in which Islam is predominantly practiced and decreased female labor force participation rates (Guiso et al. 2002). The tie between religion and female LFP is through the increase in conservatism often associated with increased religiosity, which for most religions maintains that women should be primarily concerned with home labor and are not fit for the labor market. However, as noted by Klasen (2017), the existence of highly religious developing economies such as Indonesia and some West African countries in which female labor force participation is not depressed casts doubt on the extent to which religiosity and associated cultural norms are causally linked to decreased female LFP.

Dependency on Oil Exports

One primary macroeconomic determinant of female LFP laid out in the literature is economic dependency on oil exports. Ross (2008) finds that a country's dependency on oil exports as a majority component of GDP can diminish FLP through two mechanisms. First, the increase in GDP associated with high oil reserves increases family earnings, causing an income effect in which women are no longer required to enter the labor force in order to support their families (Ross 2008). Second, Ross argues that dependency on oil exports decreases the

competitiveness of a country's exports of manufactured goods, causing a decline in the production of goods requiring light manufacturing, which is typically associated with female employment in developing countries (Ross 2008).

Economic Shocks

Klasen (2017) points to two forms of economic shocks that can negatively impact female LFP. First, wartime labor has historically significantly increased female access to employment opportunities, as seen in the large jump in female LFP in the United States and United Kingdom during the World Wars. Similar shocks that require increased employment from uncommon sources may provide the stimulus for women to enter the labor market, especially after huge WWII population losses, especially of men, that may have prompted permanent effects in the USSR.

The second shock laid out by Klasen is the presence of Socialist ideology, which impacts female LFP rates by promoting the concept of gender equality through legal changes to education, wage equality, and childcare policies. Moreover, inefficiencies in production historically associated with Socialist economies created persistent labor shortages, requiring the participation of women in labor markets (Klasen 2017). In studying the effect of historical agricultural techniques on gender identity in developing countries, Alesina et al. (2013) additionally finds that the conditional effect of socialism on female labor force participation rates is a positive seven percent (Klasen 2017).

Government Policy

As noted previously, the existence of childcare policies related to provision of childcare services, maternity and paternity leave, wage equality, and guaranteed return employment for mothers is another significant determinant of female labor force participation (Bloom et al. 2007)

Countries with stringent policies regarding maternal employment tend to experience higher rates of LFP. The effects of legislation on the decision to enter the labor force are explored in more depth in section IV, on legal barriers and incentives to LFP.

Economic Growth and Crisis

The relationship between economic growth and female LFP has been extensively studied. Some research has found that female LFP tends to be counter-cyclical, meaning that in times of economic crisis, women enter the labor force, and during economic booms, women leave the labor force (Klasen 2017). The intuition behind this trend involves the income effect, an economic term for the phenomenon in which rising wages cause a decrease in labor supply, as each household now needs to supply less labor in order to maintain its previous levels of consumption (Goldin 1994). Klasen argues that increasing economic growth causes an income effect for women in the economy, whose labor is no longer required in order to maintain consumption patterns (Klasen 2017). On the other hand, during times of economic hardship, female labor may be required in order to maintain consumption patterns or even survive. During these periods, therefore, there should be a corresponding rise in female labor force participation.

Growth of Feminized Sectors

An important consideration in evaluating female labor force participation is the existence of certain sectors within economies that become 'feminized,' or associated with female labor. As noted previously, light manufacturing work in developing economies is often a target for women entering the labor force (Bloom et al. 2007). However, white-collar industries, including health, public service, and education, tend to attract the highest concentration of female labor, particularly amongst educated women (Klasen 2017).

The dependence of these sectors on population growth is one limiting factor of female LFP. Since these occupational sectors typically require population growth in order to expand, decreasing fertility rates associated with economic growth tend to crowd out sectors that are dominated by female labor (Klasen 2017). Without a subsequent broadening of employment opportunities for women, this effect may diminish female LFP.

C. The U-Shaped Model of Female Labor Force Participation

Patterns of female LFP across developing countries have been addressed repeatedly in the literature (Lincove 2008, Bloom et al. 2007, Gaddis et al. 2013, Hazan and Maoz 2001). The U-shaped model of female labor force participation through the path of economic development is most commonly accepted as indicative of trends in LFP.

The U-shape model of female LFP was laid out by Sinha in 1967 and established more thoroughly by Goldin in 1994. This research linked economic growth, measured by per capita GDP growth, to trends in female LFP across developing countries. The hypothesis states that in early stages of economic development, economies tend to be predominantly agricultural. In these agricultural societies, female labor supply is high, since farming is labor-intensive and the decentralized nature of subsistence farming requires female participation (Gaddis et al. 2013).

Through the progression of economic development, the economy shifts to the industrial sector, giving way to a rise in manufacturing employment and significantly decreasing the profitability of farming. This shift toward industry has a depressive effect on female labor force participation. In manufacturing-based economies at the beginning stages of development, female education rates are typically low, and therefore females receive fewer opportunities for wage employment. During this period, cultural norms surrounding the entrance of females into the labor force outside the home may also play a strong role, requiring time to shift. Employment in

agriculture via small, family-owned farms also provides women with the opportunity to combine their home labor in the form of childcare with productive labor on the farm, thereby removing barriers to employment. As farming employment typically allows women to perform home responsibilities along with farm work, the shift toward wage employment outside the home in manufacturing-based economies may also discourage women from seeking outside employment.

In the final stage of the U-shaped model, economic development continues and female labor force participation begins to rise again. This is partly due to the expansion of access to education for women, allowing them to obtain the skills necessary to seek paid employment in a diverse economy. This is also the period in which the white-collar sector begins to dominate, providing a wealth of employment opportunities that may be viewed as more appropriate for women in primarily conservative cultures (Gaddis et al. 2013).

Other contributions to this effect on the last leg of the U shaped model include increased availability of part-time employment, which allows women to balance home labor with market labor, declining fertility that typically accompanies economic development, and increasing awareness of the necessity of maternity leave policies or childcare facilities. Thus, the U-shaped model of female LFP involves an initial high rate of participation, a decline when the developing economy shifts to industrial production, and an increase prompted by the expansion of education and white-collar employment opportunities.

Criticisms of the U-Shaped Model

Despite the convenient nature of a U-shaped trend in female LFP, several notable works criticize the mass applicability of the U for defining female LFP across all developing countries. A primary criticism of the research behind the U-shaped model is that countries were evaluated at their current stage of development, rather than looking at historical trends. Gaddis et al. point

out that between 1980 and 2010, all regions with the exception of Europe and Central Asia experienced significant growth in female LFP, which casts doubt on the total applicability of the U model on all developing economies (Gaddis et al. 2013). This is further corroborated by the subsequent decline in female LFP across middle-income developing countries in East Asia, Central Asia, and Eastern Europe (Klasen 2017), as these countries according to the U model should be experiencing increasing female LFP as they approach economic development. Differences between female LFP across regions also points to a failure to account for economic factors that might impede the U model. Instead, critics of the U model argue that alternatives must be considered in predicting trends in female LFP, including factor endowments, starting positions, and historical shocks such as war or the presence of Socialism (Gaddis et al. 2013).

D. Research on Female Labor Force Participation in Azerbaijan and Turkic Countries

When compared to research on Turkish female labor force participation rates, far less investigation has been conducted into the sources and limitations of female labor force participation in the remaining Turkic countries of Central Asia: Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan (Dirilen-Gümüş). Based on World Bank estimates of female labor force participation rates, Turkey lags far behind its Central Asian counterparts, with a FLFP rate significantly below the others. What explains this gap?

Current State of Female Labor Force Participation in Azerbaijan

Specific research into the structure and determinants of female labor force participation in Azerbaijan has been extremely limited. In comparison to Turkey, Azerbaijan has been given significantly less coverage in research, though many of the determinants of female labor remain the same in both countries. As has been noted in the literature, even research specific to women in post-Soviet economies tends to focus exclusively on Russian and other Slavic women (Heyat

177, Heyat 80). Thus, the importance of understanding the mechanisms behind labor force participation in the Turkic context cannot be understated.

In comparative terms, Azerbaijan has maintained a high level of female labor force participation since the country's independence. Though, as in Turkey, a majority of female labor is agrarian (Tohidi 256), the high rural to urban population in Azerbaijan explains this gap. Education levels have remained high in the post-Soviet period (World Bank), removing barriers to female participation in non-agricultural mechanized sectors.

E. Determinants of Female Labor Participation in Azerbaijan

There are a number of factors that determine a woman's decision to enter the labor force in Azerbaijan, many of them similar to those in Turkey. Education, common cultural values, economic structure, religiosity, and urban-rural dynamics are a few of the most important determinants of female LFP in the country.

Education

As mentioned previously, education levels skyrocketed during the Soviet era and remained quite high during and after the transition period. Education is valued immensely in Azerbaijan, and it is commonly expected that women will attend higher education. Government programs to encourage education, particularly for the internally displaced persons making up a significant portion of the population, have been effective in ensuring a literate populace.

Culture

A major factor driving female LFP in Azerbaijan is cultural norms and values regarding female labor outside the home. The division of home labor was one element of Azeri culture left relatively unaltered during the Soviet period, in which women were still expected to take responsibility for family labor and childcare despite state and social pressure to seek employment

outside the home. Statistics during this period reflect that employed Azeri women in urban centers typically completed domestic duties for three hours a day on weekdays and seven hours a day on weekends, in addition to regular employment outside the home (Heyat 116). Despite public campaigns and legal changes aiming to equalize men and women, Soviet governance did little to encourage a more equal distribution of domestic labor between the sexes, leaving women with a disproportionate "double burden" when they chose to enter the labor force (Heyat 116). The large emphasis in Turkic cultures on hospitality adds an additional burden to women, who are typically expected to provide food and cleaning services for frequent guest visits (Heyat 197)

Family Structure and Female Labor

The focus of most analysis regarding women in Azerbaijan is on the family structure, as Turkic societies tend to place more of an emphasis on strong family bonds than in Western societies (Tohidi 261). While public displays of religion and culture were discouraged and sometimes banned during the Soviet period, these aspects of Azeri life did not disappear. Heyat notes that Azeri women, while maintaining the strides they took in education and the workforce during the Soviet era, are still held to cultural norms and traditions of pre-Soviet Azerbaijan (178).

One manifestation of the role of the family in Azeri life is that decision-making becomes family-oriented. Women in Azerbaijan are traditionally expected to follow the decisions and recommendations of the families, particularly in job selection (Heyat 133). Conversely, as women gain employment, their employment and education status are seen to bring benefits to the family as a whole – a daughter successfully employed brings both material and social gains to the family (Heyat 133). This heavily impacts the choice of profession for many women in Azerbaijan. Many families prefer for daughters to seek employment in fields that do not require

heavy physical labor or are feminized to some degree (Heyat 133). The flexibility of employment is an additional consideration, as women are encouraged to seek jobs that will permit them to meet their family responsibilities as well (Heyat 133).

These decision-making structures are inherently tied to conservatism in Turkic societies. As discussed in section VI on methodology, my study utilizes information on the decision-making power of women in Azerbaijan and Turkey to determine each woman's level of conservatism.

Economic Strategy

Moghadam notes that a common feature of former centrally-planned economies is an emphasis on improving human capital through education and training (37). This strategy was employed during the Soviet period, through education policies, women's clubs, and employment laws that aimed to increase the representation of women in the workforce and thereby increase the productive capacity of the economy. Similarly, Azerbaijan after the Soviet era has maintained an emphasis on improvement of human capital through the education of women, a central determinant of female labor force participation.

Religion

During the Soviet period, religiosity was discouraged in Azerbaijan. Through public unveilings, laws limiting religious function, and propaganda campaigns, the secularization of the Central Asian countries of the Soviet Union had far reaching impacts even after independence. Much research has noted that religion in the Soviet Union became more of a personal commitment, rather than a public entity (Akiner 285, Iskanian 486). Though freedom of religion was formalized after the independence of Azerbaijan, most Azeris still support the separation of religion and state (Akiner 285).

F. Research on Female Labor Force Participation in Turkey

Extensive analysis has been done on the determinants of female labor force participation (LFP) in Turkey. As an OECD member with relatively high economic growth over the past 50 years, Turkey's low female LFP rates are an anomaly. This economic growth was matched by a marked decline in the rate of female entry into the labor force, an event which has been studied from a cultural, religious, and economic perspective.

Much analysis of women in the Turkish labor force includes a discussion of the historical roots of the legacy of female empowerment in Turkey. As discussed in section II, beginning in the Republican period following the end of the Ottoman Empire, Turkey's leader, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, embarked on a series of reforms that aimed to Westernize the country. Many of these reforms directly impacted women, including formalized and legal equality in the realms of politics and education (Ozbay 1999). Women were afforded the right to work, given equal status in schools, and encouraged to participate in the economic development of the young country. By 1955, shortly after the end of single-party rule in Turkey, female labor force participation was around 70 percent (Özsoy 2009). By 1990, this rate had fallen to 34 percent (World Bank 2017). A dramatic shift had taken place, causing women to abstain from entering the labor force even as the country's GDP increased more than five-fold (World Bank 2017).

Reduced female labor force participation has significant implications for the role of women within a given society. This dramatic fall in female LFP has both economic and gendered implications for the future of Turkey. In addition, a major factor in female empowerment is economic independence, which cannot be achieved without entrance into the labor market (Dayıoğlu 1999). Economically speaking, as women make up 50.75% of Turkey's population,

their participation or non-participation in the economy has enormous impacts on national consumption and production (World Bank 2017).

Female Labor Force Participation Rates

Female labor force participation is essential in a developing economy. Özsoy notes that the problem is one of simple math: female labor represents an untapped labor source – the more people participating in formalized labor markets, the more potential output produced, which generates a higher GDP and thereby fuels economic growth (Özsoy 2009). Due to this well-established series, female LFP can be used as a sort of measure of economic well-being for a country.

As discussed previously, development theory typically utilizes a U-shaped model for female LFP (Atasoy 2016). In the early stages of a country's economic development, women actually tend to have high LFP rates, as most countries at this stage are agricultural and require full labor force participation. As countries urbanize, women drop out of the labor force due to industrialization and lack of job opportunities in cities. However, as the economy develops further, opportunities for employment increase and women begin to rejoin the labor market (Atasoy 2016). Most literature on Turkish female LFP argues that Turkey experienced a significant shift toward urbanization beginning in the 1970s, which had a negative impact on female entrance into the labor market (Atasoy 2016, Özsoy 2009, Moghadam 1999, Dayıoğlu 1999). Atasoy explains that Turkey has entered the final stage of this development process, yet female LFP has not begun to reach the final part of the "U" process and remains low (Atasoy 2016).

Another important consideration applicable with regards to the Turkish economy is informal employment, which refers to "economic activities that are outside tax and regulatory

policies," while formal employment encompasses "regular wage and work arrangements at an employer's location or under the employer's supervision or policies, where the wages and income are reported to the government as required by law" (Nightingale 2011). In many developing countries, including Turkey, a large informal sector contributes to the underestimation of labor force participation when informal employment is excluded from official estimates. As women are more likely to engage in informal employment through domestic and single-term services in Turkey (Özsoy 2009), female labor force participation in Turkey is likely unrepresentative of those engaged in informal labor.

Of particular relevance is the unreported nature of household labor, traditionally performed by women in Turkey, which can represent many hours of daily labor but is not reported in official labor statistics. For women with families who choose to enter the labor market, their number of hours worked may at surface appear less than their male counterparts, though hours of household work at home would make these values comparable if counted (Dayıoğlu 1999). Societal attitudes toward the role of women in the home have a significant impact on a woman's decision to enter the labor market.

Turkish Female LFP in Context

To fully understand the issue of low female LFP in Turkey, the downward trend must be contextualized by international and domestic comparison. In most literature on trends in Turkish female LFP, Turkey is compared with other OECD countries (Atasoy 2016, Özsoy 2009). This comparison is natural due to the size of the Turkish economy and the expectation that trends in LFP would remain more or less similar across OECD economies at similar stages in their development. Yet by 2014, Turkish female LFP had experienced a strong downward trend and stood at 30.3 percent, in comparison with the OECD average of 62.6 percent (Atasoy 2016).

Also significant is the comparison of overall trends in female LFP across OECD countries. While Turkish female LFP trended downward till 2004 and has experienced only small increases since then, the female LFP rates of most OECD countries have been rising consistently over the past half century (Atasoy 2016).

I argue that a more relevant comparison by which to contextualize Turkish female LFP is to compare the LFP rates in Central Asian economies, specifically in Turkic societies. As much literature is in agreement on the importance of cultural determinants of female LFP (Atasoy 2016, Özsoy 2009), trends in Turkish female LFP ought to be better understood through the lens of Turkic cultural norms. In context, however, Turkish female LFP is still significantly below that of other Turkic countries including Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan (World Bank 2017). These countries are labeled the "Turkic republics" due to their common background in geography, language, history, and culture, beginning with their common roots in the Oğuz Turk population (Dirilen-Gümüş 2013).

Despite Turkey's advanced economic performance in terms of GDP growth and size of economy, these other Turkic countries have far outpaced Turkey in not only female LFP, but in other social indicators including female literacy (Moghadam 1999). With the analysis of Turkish female LFP in context of culturally-similar Turkic economies, it is clear that there is a significant puzzle associated with the comparatively low rate of female LFP in Turkey. Thus, a case-study comparison with Azerbaijan, which is the Turkic country geographically, linguistically, and culturally closest to Turkey, isolates the impact of conservatism on the decision to enter the labor force.

Finally, a brief discussion of female LFP in comparison with male LFP in Turkey is required. As is covered extensively in the literature, the overall downward trend in LFP in

Turkey impacts both men and women (Atasoy 2016, Özsoy 2009). Both LFP rates follow similar trends over the past half century, though the rates of decline for women and increase for men have been more severe. As my focus is on the gap between male and female LFP rates, rather than the overall economic trend, this issue of concurrent downward trends in Turkish LFP, though interesting, is incidental to my overall argument.

G. Determinants of Female LFP in Turkey

Existing literature on the gap in female LFP in Turkey makes note of a number of cultural, political, and economic factors. The primary determinants of Turkish female LFP are defined through education, urbanization, and culture or the role of traditionalism.

Education

Education is widely considered to be the primary determinant of a woman's decision to enter the labor force (Özsoy 2009, Atasoy 2016, Dayıoğlu 1999). In conjunction with a global trend toward urbanization, participation in the workforce now requires specialized skills, while previously little education was required to work in the dominant agricultural sector (Dayıoğlu 1999). Two arguments are made with regards to the impact of education on Turkish female LFP. First, that an increase in access to education causes women to stay in school longer, postponing their entry into the labor market and contributing to declining LFP among younger populations (Özsoy 2009). Second, disparities in access to education between men and women, particularly in rural areas, cause decreased opportunities to enter the labor market for women (Atasoy 2016). However, in the case of Turkey, neither argument is especially compelling in explaining gaps in female LFP. The first argument on delayed entry to the labor force may explain lower rates of youth labor force engagement, but does little to explain the discrepancy between male and female LFP following education completion. The second argument is strong, but as Turkey has

comparable levels of female education to both OECD countries and to Central Asian Turkic countries, more analysis must be done to explain the far lower female LFP rate (World Bank 2017).

Urbanization

Turkish economic history is a further explanation of the downward trend in female LFP. Most literature points to the shift toward urbanization beginning in the 1970s in Turkey as a major factor in the decrease in LFP (Özsoy 2009, Atasoy 2016, Dayıoğlu 1999). Prior to the 1970s, Turkey was a primarily agrarian society (Moghadam 1999). Agriculture both requires labor from females and permits labor without education. With an increase in industrialization beginning in the 1970s and the corresponding economic transition from a base of rural agriculture to urban industrialism, sectors of the economy shifted in conjunction. The agriculture sector of GDP has decreased steadily since that time, with a matching increase in services (Atasoy 2016). The source of employment for women in the agricultural sector, which primarily consisted of unpaid family labor, was slowly downsized as people began to migrate to urban centers (Özsoy 2009). Yet even today, a large percentage of currently employed women work in the agricultural sector, suggesting that the premise of decreasing agriculture leading to decreased female LFP is valid (Moghadam 1999).

Culture and Traditionalism

Finally, a significant amount of literature is dedicated to the role of culture and societal values as determinants of female LFP (Atasoy 2016). Cultural norms within a society dictate other determinants of labor, including education attainment.

There is significant analysis of the traditional role of the patriarchy in Turkish society and a woman's decision to enter the labor force (Özsoy 2009). It is widely accepted that in Turkish

society, as in Turkic societies throughout Central Asia, males are expected to act as heads of household, and their pressure on women to enter or abstain from the labor force is decisive (Özsoy 2009, Dayıoğlu 1999).

In a global context, the level of conservatism within a country is indicative of female LFP rates. A study from Antecol describes the role of male decisions in determining their female relatives' ability to enter the labor force. Countries with higher emphasis on traditional conservative values may enforce cultural norms that require male permission to work outside the home (Antecol 2003). In Turkey specifically, prior research demonstrates that the role of conservatism is potent even in well-developed areas in which women receive equal education to their male counterparts (Gedikli 2014). This finding is consistent with the notion that culture is a primary factor of female LFP, one that may overpower education level as a determinant of a woman's decision to enter the labor force. The economic dependence of women who do not earn a wage in salaried labor perpetuates a system in which male decisions dominate female LFP rates.

In many cases, women in the labor force are seen as a reserve source of labor (Dayıoğlu 1999). Here, women may enter the labor force but are only encouraged to do so in times of financial stress. During difficult times, women may feel pressure to seek work outside of the home in order to make ends meet for the family. After times of economic uncertainty have passed, pressure to return to the household and focus exclusively on house-keeping increases (Dayıoğlu 1999). In many cases, this pressure to remain in the home may not even come from male members of the household. A study conducted by Atasoy in Turkey using women's responses to statements regarding female labor outside the house and the role of women in the family finds that in many cases, women were actually more likely than men to agree with

statements like “the main job of women is the housework” and “working women are against our tradition” (Atasoy 2016). This internalization of cultural expectations surrounding female labor outside the home demonstrates the extent to which traditional gender roles can permeate society.

A further aspect of culture which has been studied extensively with regards to female LFP is religiosity. Many studies on the role of Islam in economics have developed contradictory conclusions as to the extent of religion’s role in labor supply decisions (Ozbay 1999, Atasoy 2016). Though some studies have concluded that predominantly Muslim societies tend to experience lower female LFP due to traditional Islamic gender segregation (Clark 1991), while others have concluded that conservatism, not Islamic values themselves, are to blame for low participation in labor markets (O’Neil 2013). In any case, as religion and levels of conservatism are closely linked, an examination of the role of cultural norms mandated by religion must be conducted. This study analyzes the role of social conservatism in Azerbaijan and Turkey specifically, by evaluating how conservative beliefs impact the decision to enter the labor force.

Turkey and the Turkic Countries

I propose that trends in Turkish female LFP are poorly understood in the context of other large economies, as has been customary in literature, but rather should be understood in context of other Turkic economies in Central Asia. As most literature concludes that culture and traditionalism play the largest role in determining female entry into labor markets, a cross-cultural comparison of Turkey with other OECD countries will not be effective in targeting factors that have led to the decrease in female LFP.

In particular, the cases of Turkey and Azerbaijan provide a relevant comparison in understanding trends in female labor participation. Both countries share a historical background in the Oğuz Turks of Central Asia, though they have experienced significant historical

differences in the subsequent centuries (Hortaçsu 1999). However, these two countries provide an interesting point of comparison due to the level of cultural affinity between the nations. Often referred to as *kardeş ülkeler* ("brother countries"), a high level of Turkish culture is shared in Azerbaijan, where Turkish news, popular media, and politics are discussed in daily life. Many of the conservative values espoused in some areas of Turkey are similarly promoted in Azerbaijan.

A notable difference in historical development between the two countries provides a salient point of comparison in their economic outcomes. As discussed in section II, while Turkey emerged from the Ottoman Empire and has remained an independent state throughout its history, Azerbaijan experienced Soviet occupation for decades and only recently experienced independence (Hortaçsu 1999). The influence of outside actors (the United States and Europe in the case of Turkey, Russia in the case of Azerbaijan) is likely to have a significant impact on conservatism in economics, and thereby on the level of female labor force participation within both countries.

IV. Legal Barriers and Incentives to Female Labor Force Participation

As discussed in the literature review section, structural barriers and incentives to female labor force participation are common across almost all countries. This section evaluates the barriers and incentives to FLFP that are global in nature, and specifically evaluates how these legal policies are implemented and enforced in Azerbaijan and Turkey. Though labor legislation is not the primary focus of this analysis, an understanding of which policies can be enacted and enforced to impact the private decision to enter the labor force provides context for the results described in section VII.

The legal framework of a country defines the space in which women and men are permitted to work (World Bank 2013). Formalizing the rights and responsibilities of workers and employers within a country can promote or dis-incentivize entry into the labor force for women of all classes. In particular, the labor laws of a given country may, through their implementation, enforcement, or lack thereof, provide monetary or practical incentives for women to provide labor. At the same time, some policies designed to promote the inclusion of women in the labor force might counterintuitively suppress FLFP through the effects on employers, now faced with higher total costs of employing women.

Labor laws in many nations have been designed with the specific objective of incentivizing those who are underrepresented in the labor force, most commonly women. Laws involving maternity or paternity leave, childcare requirements, equal pay, and inheritance are among those that specifically target female LFP.

The International Labor Organization (ILO) has established eight fundamental labor conventions regarding the rights of workers and employers in ratifying countries (ILO 2019). Among others, these eight core tenets of fair labor include equal remuneration for men and

women, anti-discrimination clauses on the basis of race, creed, or sex, and the right to organize (ILO 2019). Implementation of these policies is believed to encourage female participation in the labor force by leveling the playing field between male and female workers.

Azerbaijan has ratified the ILO's eight core labor conventions (Van Klaveren 2010). However, many state-sponsored programs incentivizing female labor disintegrated following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Significant barriers to equality in Azerbaijan remain. Notably, the wage gap in Azerbaijan is remarkably higher than in other countries of the Caucasus, as women earn roughly 50 percent of what their male counterparts earn for the same work, despite equal pay legislation (Khitarishvili 2016).

As discussed in the historical background chapter, women in Turkey were nominally granted equal rights with men in the early Republican period under founder Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (O'Neil & Bilgin 2013). These rights were generally political in nature – the right to vote, right to run for public office – and left much economic inequality unaddressed. While the past decade has seen some improvement in laws regarding gender equality in the workplace, stark inequities in employment remain.

Parental Leave and Childcare Availability

Intuitively, providing maternity or paternity leave to workers seems to serve as a valuable incentive to women looking to enter the labor force. As mentioned in the literature review, the presence of children in the household diminishes the likelihood of a mother entering the labor force, particularly when children are young (Bloom et al. 2007). Policies that mandate a given period of maternity leave following childbirth help women to remain in the workforce and to return to work even after having children (World Bank 2013). The International Labor

Organization established maternity leave as one of its core conventions, specifically calling for at least 12 weeks of paid maternity leave in participating countries (ILO 2019).

However, some research suggests that mandating maternity leave can have the undesired effect of suppressing female LFP (World Bank 2013, Van der Meulen Rodgers 1999). In a country where maternity leave is not mandated but is provided by some employers, women intending to have children are more likely to seek out employment from an employer offering maternity leave, even at the expense of slightly lower wages (Van der Meulen Rodgers 1999). In the case where maternity leave is mandated, employers may also choose to substitute female employees with male employees who will use less or no parental leave (Van der Meulen Rodgers 1999). This is due to the increased cost of female employees to the firm, who must now be paid for time not spent producing benefit for the company.

It is possible for a country to somewhat mitigate this effect through a number of mechanisms, including mandating paternal leave, funding paid maternity leave through social programs, or implementing anti-discrimination laws in hiring. However, issues of enforcement arise in the latter case in many developing countries, where policies regarding hiring discrimination, even when in place, are not necessarily carried out. Government funded maternity leave has been found to be effective to a degree in some developing countries (Gindling and Crummett, 1997). Costa Rica, for example, implemented a program in which the country's Social Security Administration paid for half of mandated maternity leave wages in conjunction with increased enforcement of policies (Van der Meulen Rodgers 1999). While this prevented the expected decrease in female employment, women's wages fell as a result (Van der Meulen Rodgers 1999). This fall in wages could be due to employers lowering women's wages in response to the assumed implicit cost of hiring women (Van der Meulen Rodgers 1999).

Access to childcare is an additional incentive to FLFP for working mothers. Particularly in lower income households, the availability of subsidized or low-cost nurseries provides opportunities for new mothers to return to work shortly after giving birth (Giannelli 2015). The Asian Development Bank points to community-based models for providing childcare, along with education and healthcare services, as a way to incentivize LFP (ADB 2005).

For women in formal employment in Azerbaijan, maternity leave is available under most circumstances. The state has implemented a number of protections for mothers choosing to work, including legislation that bans the employment termination of pregnant women or women with children under the age of three (Van Klaveren 2010). A total of 126 days of paid leave is guaranteed by law to pregnant working women, with a division of 70 days of maternity leave prior to childbirth, and 56 days for the period following childbirth (Van Klaveren 2010). In addition, caretaking relatives other than the mother are granted the right to partially paid leave from employment following the birth up to a period of three years (Van Klaveren 2010).

Azerbaijani law dictates that employers be entirely compensated for the aforementioned paid leave by the State Social Protection Fund (Van Klaveren 2010). This has the effect of mitigating some substitution employers might conduct away from women who are more likely to take maternity leave, though in practice this effect cannot be entirely subdued. Information on the use and enforcement of these maternity and paternity leave benefits is not available.

During the Soviet period, a number of state-sponsored childcare opportunities were established, allowing women to return to work shortly after childbirth. In the time since the fall of the Soviet Union, many of these programs have been dismantled, shifting the responsibilities of early childcare solely onto the mother (ADB 2005). Culturally, women are expected to bear the brunt of childrearing responsibility, so the loss of state-sponsored childcare left women with

additional labor, dis-incentivizing an early return to the labor force (ADB 2005). In a United Nations Development Program (UNDP) report on gender and employment in the South Caucasus, author Tamar Khitarishvili notes that the rate of preschool enrollment for children aged three to five in Azerbaijan is much lower than neighboring post-Soviet states, at about 25 percent (Khitarishvili 2016). This lower figure could be indicative of limited opportunities for low-cost childcare.

In Turkey, laws regarding parental leave are stricter. While women are granted 16 weeks of partially paid maternity leave in the private sector and 16 weeks of fully paid maternity leave in the public sector, only men working in the public sector are granted any form of paternity leave, limited at only three days (Ilkkaracan 2012). With a significant number of women in the informal sector, these limitations are even more tight.

No state-sponsored childcare is guaranteed under Turkish law (Ilkkaracan 2012). In 1953, the Turkish Parliament established a requirement that companies with over 150 female employees provide childcare services to employees with children (Ilkkaracan 2012). However, this law has the effect of both encouraging female employment under the limit of 150, or encouraging employers to seek ways around the requirement, meaning that in practicality, the requirement is rarely enforced (Ilkkaracan 2012). Even in public sector employment, childcare locations have diminished along with economic contractions.

In attempts to increase female labor force participation and education attainment, the national age for beginning primary school was lowered from six to five (Ecevit 2010), though as of 2009, only 61 percent of five year olds were accommodated by public education (Ecevit 2010). Preschool enrollment is similarly low, in the single digits, and skewed upwards by high-income families placing their children in private preschools (Ilkkaracan 2012). Affordable or

subsidized preschool or early childcare is typically unavailable, limiting families who cannot afford private childcare for young children.

Equal Pay and Opportunity Laws

Equal pay laws, which typically require "equal pay for equal work" (Van der Meulen Rodgers 1999) were developed initially to combat the issue of employers lowering wages for women due to expected lower return or societal bias. Most countries have passed legislation mandating equal pay for women performing the same tasks as men. Two issues with these policies emerge in practice, however: the aforementioned issue of enforcement, particularly in developing countries (World Bank 2013), and the segregation of labor by gender in many countries. On the second issue, as mentioned previously, women in the labor force tend to concentrate in specific sectors. In Azerbaijan, for example, women are overrepresented in the services industry and in agriculture.

Equal pay laws, in combination with maternity leave, can serve to stem some of the side effects of mandating leave for women after childbirth. Theoretically, equal pay laws would prevent companies from lowering the wages of women due to the increased cost of mandatory paid maternity leave (Van der Meulen Rodgers 1999). However, in practice, enforcement issues and segregation of labor make this wage gap difficult to combat with equal pay laws.

The seventh convention of the ILO recommends the establishment of equal remuneration laws guaranteeing equal pay for equal work between men and women in ratifying countries (ILO 2019). Azerbaijan has additionally ratified many international documents on gender equality, including the UN Convention on the Political Rights of Women and UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (ADB 2005). Article 25 of the Azerbaijani Constitution establishes equal rights between men and women, and is supplemented

by the Employment Act, which grants equal pay to men and women for the same work (ADB 2005).

While equal opportunity is nominally granted under Azerbaijani law, the high percentage of women participating in the informal sector makes enforcement of these laws impossible. A statistic from 2004, two years prior to the data utilized for this study, states that at least one in six women was employed in the informal sector (Van Klaveren 2010) without an official legal entity sponsoring them, meaning that there are uncertain or no benefits garnered to these women by the above legislation on equal pay.

The first enactment of the Turkish Civil Code in 1937 contained a number of provisions leveling the distribution of labor rights between men and women (Ilkkaracan 2012). In some cases, however, this seemingly gender neutral legislation disadvantaged female workers. For example, state benefits under the social security system are granted only to officially registered labor force participants, excluding the informal sector which is overwhelmingly comprised of women (Ilkkaracan 2012). The further segregation of labor by occupation sector in Turkey also makes equal pay laws less effective in diminishing wage differentials between men and women.

Minimum Wage

One effect of minimum wage laws that is often cited is the subsequent raise in women's wages. Proponents of minimum wage laws point out that in developing countries, female labor is often concentrated at the lower end of employment hierarchies, meaning that women would be those most likely impacted by the imposition of a minimum wage (Van der Meulen Rodgers 1999). This benefit is somewhat mitigated, however, by the potential for firms to decrease their employment due to the added cost of higher wages for workers. In this sense, minimum wages

might decrease overall employment of women, while raising average wages for women still employed in the formal sector.

Legal Guardianship and Head of Household Laws

Laws regarding property ownership and establishing specific genders as the heads of households may also disadvantage women in the labor market. Many countries in the Middle East and Eurasia had or currently have legislation limiting the ability of women to move freely or work outside the home (World Bank 2013). Male relatives or husbands serve as "gatekeepers" to female employment in these cases (World Bank 2013). Additionally, policies involving inheritance may also impact the accumulation of wealth by women. Interestingly, in the past Islamic countries were more likely to implement inheritance policies that incorporated female relatives, while European countries tended to utilize a system of primogeniture in which firstborn male children were given full access to inherited wealth while female children were excluded.

Inheritance law in Azerbaijan is gender-neutral and grants equal property rights to each spouse in the event of death or separation (Van Klaveren 2010). Both spouses retain rights to joint property (Van Klaveren 2010). In terms of capital accumulation, all Azerbaijani citizens have equal right to own land, and women face no restrictions in ownership (Van Klaveren 2010). However, societal norms dictating transfer of wealth and property might contradict these stated policies, granting males more access to immovable wealth. In society as a whole, men are more readily accepted as the traditional head of household, and retain some status in the workplace as a result (Van Klaveren 2010). In many cases, it is still traditionally expected that unmarried women will seek the head of household's permission in beginning a job, limiting their economic independence.

Until 2003, the Turkish Civil Code explicitly labeled men as the head of the household (Ilkkaracan 2012), while women were listed as the household's homemaker. Women were required to obtain permission from male relatives or their husband to enter the labor force, though in practice, scholars have noted that this requirement was rarely enforced (Ilkkaracan 2012). Since 2003 was the year of this change and the year of the DHS data available, at the time of the survey it is likely that any effects of changes to this law had not yet been experienced.

Overarching issues in effective labor law development

The high concentration of women in the informal sector in developing countries poses one of the biggest challenges to effective labor legislation. Policies like mandatory maternity leave, equal pay laws, and minimum wage requirements might diminish the overall employment of women in the labor force by encouraging employers to shift away from female to male employment, while also not impacting women in the informal sector (Van der Meulen Rodgers 1999).

Enforcement of labor laws is an additional challenge to effective labor legislation. As mentioned previously, labor laws will be safely ignored by employers in countries without effective enforcement mechanisms. Establishment of benefits for women in the labor force is only nominally effective without punitive measures taken against non-compliant employers.

Barriers to Female Entrepreneurship

Significant research has been done on limitations to female entrepreneurs in developing countries. The ILO notes that micro, small, and medium sized enterprises are a potential source for expanding employment of women in developing countries (ILO 2017). Entrepreneurship provides women with economic independence and mobility, yet access to the resources necessary for small business development is often limited by gender (ILO 2017). The World

Bank notes that reduced access to capital is a major limitation to women's independence, preventing engagement with the community outside the home (World Bank 2013).

Obtaining access to finance for new businesses is particularly difficult for women in developing countries. Barriers to obtaining capital for starting a small business can be explicit or implicit in nature. Explicitly, financiers in some developing nations are less likely to authorize loans to female entrepreneurs (World Bank 2013). Less obviously, seemingly gender-neutral policies can disadvantage women. For example, collateral requirements for obtaining a loan can be difficult for women to meet, as women are less likely to own immoveable assets due to cultural or legal barriers (World Bank 2013), and may be therefore unable to get capital. The World Bank also notes that when beginning new enterprises, women may face issues borrowing due to past small-scale borrowing that contributes little to the establishment of reliable credit history, making obtaining a loan more difficult as well.

Beyond start-up capital, women may face barriers in business including limited negotiating power in traditional supply chains, limited business-specific financial training, and fewer networks and contacts (ILO 2017). These barriers, though not often openly acknowledged, may pose significant constraints on female entrepreneurship.

While women in Azerbaijan are granted the right to economic independence by law, significant barriers still remain to female entrepreneurship in the country. The aforementioned implicit barriers to obtaining credit are applicable in Azerbaijan, specifically in terms of difficulty meeting collateral requirements due to property ownership and difficulty negotiating with predominantly male lenders (ADB 2005). These constraints make the prospect of entrepreneurship more daunting for women in the country.

V. Data Review

In my analysis of the impact of conservatism on female labor force participation rates, I utilize data from the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) for Azerbaijan and Turkey. The DHS is a household-level survey conducted in countries around the world, measuring various statistics related to health and demographics. Surveys are conducted at a national level with outside aid from the organization. Standard surveys are conducted once every five years, and include questions on a variety of topics encompassing issues of health and wellness, including child health, domestic violence, household and respondent characteristics, maternal health, and women's empowerment.

A. 2006 Azerbaijan Demographic and Health Survey

The 2006 DHS in Azerbaijan surveyed a total of 8,444 women between the ages of 15 and 49 and 2,558 men ages 15 to 59 over a five-month period. The survey was carried out in most of Azerbaijan's 66 rayons, or administrative districts, with the exception of Nakhchivan and the occupied Nagorno-Karabakh region. It was conducted by the State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, with support from USAID and UNICEF.

Respondents for the 2006 DHS were selected in a two-stage sampling selection, in which 318 clusters in Baku and eight regions of Azerbaijan were chosen, and then from these a systematic sampling yielded a sample of 7,619 households across Azerbaijan (DHS 2006). Questionnaires were given at the household and individual level, which included a women's questionnaire and men's questionnaire. Eligible women included those who lived in the household as well as any women who happened to be visiting the selected household on the day of the interview (DHS 2006).

B. 2003 Turkey Demographic and Health Survey

The DHS was conducted in Turkey in 1998, 2003, 2008, 2013, and 2018. Of these years, data have only been made publically available for the years 1998 and 2003. For this study, I selected the results of the 2003 survey in Turkey. This year was selected due to its proximity to the only DHS conducted in Azerbaijan, in 2006.

The 2003 DHS in Turkey surveyed a total of 8,075 ever-married women of reproductive age, between 15 and 49. A total of 10,836 households completed the household questionnaire. The survey was conducted in all regions of Turkey without exception (DHS 2003). The survey was funded by the government of the Republic of Turkey (DHS 2003), and conducted by Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies.

Questionnaires for the 2003 DHS in Turkey were conducted at the household and individual level (DHS 2003). The individual questionnaire, utilized in this analysis, was given to ever-married women between the ages of 15 and 49 in 12 regions encompassing all of Turkey (DHS 2003). A cluster sampling approach was utilized to select participants in the survey, controlling for the population levels of urban and rural settlements (DHS 2003), leading to a representative sample. Using random sampling, 25 households in every settlement of over 10,000 people (urban settlements), 15 households in every settlement of less than 10,000 people (rural settlements), and 12 households in Istanbul metropolitan clusters were selected (DHS 2003). According to the summary of 2003 DHS results, 95 percent of women interviewed were married at the time of the interview (DHS 2003). Average household size was 3.9 for urban areas and 4.5 in rural areas (DHS 2003).

The gap of three years between the 2003 DHS in Turkey and 2006 DHS in Azerbaijan is unlikely to have significant impact on my findings. Due to the nature of the variables utilized,

conservative attitudes and decision to enter the labor force, significant changes are unlikely to have occurred during this short period. In addition, the economic and political conditions in both countries during this time period, discussed in section II, make it unlikely that there was a significant shift in either variable over a three-year span. Cultural attitudes are likely to change at a slow pace, particularly at the regional level, and thus utilizing data from two different years for Azerbaijan and Turkey seems unlikely to significantly impact results. However, based on the historical trends in LFP in both countries depicted in Figure 2, the spread in LFP rates would be lower if data for 2006 were available for both countries.

VI. Methodology

A. Guiding Questions

Based on the discrepancy between FLFP in Turkey and other Turkic countries, the central question guiding my thesis revolves around the impact of conservatism on labor force participation in Azerbaijan and Turkey. Social conservatism was chosen as the variable of interest due to the propensity of prior research on the topic to single out religiosity as a dominant factor in Turkey's lagging female LFP rates. Most research tends to point out the impact of education, wealth, and fertility as determinants of FLFP, but then with regards to Turkey, claim that the country's Muslim majority ultimately diminishes female entrance into the labor force. To explore this claim further, my study seeks to explain to what extent social conservatism impacts female labor force participation for ever-married women in Azerbaijan and Turkey.

Ever-married women refers to women in the sample who have been married at any point in their lives. Within the available data, these women are divided into the following categories based on marital status: married, divorced, widowed, and not living together (DHS 2003). I chose to limit my study to women who have been married due to the limited availability of reliable data on never-married women in Turkey. In addition, due to the nature of my working definition of conservatism, which involves beliefs regarding relationships between men and women and is described in further detail below, focusing on ever-married women provides more context for respondents' answers to questions on these topics. Focusing exclusively on ever-married women also allows me to isolate the impact of conservatism more specifically between the two countries, as my samples from either country are more similar.

The choice to compare Azerbaijan and Turkey was made for a number of reasons. First, the countries share Oğuz Turkic roots, meaning that culturally, the two societies have developed

from a similar background (Dirilen-Gümüş 2013). The two countries currently share a close cultural affinity, and are commonly referred to as *Kardeş Ülkeleri*, or brother countries. In addition, it is common in Azerbaijan to consume Turkish media, news, and entertainment, providing a similar information background between the two countries. The close connection between Azerbaijan and Turkey, as compared to the other Turkic post-communist countries, provides a basis for comparison that isolates the impact of conservatism on FLFP more directly.

The second question for analysis involves analyzing the differences in the impact of conservatism on FLFP between the two countries, along with potential explanations for these differences. This consists of analyzing the magnitude and direction of the impact of conservatism in both countries, and then looking more specifically at the kinds of women who participate or do not participate in the labor force in both Azerbaijan and Turkey. If conservatism impacts women differently in both countries, how did this difference emerge? I hypothesize that the Soviet legacy of Azerbaijan, explored in depth in the historical background chapter, would diminish the role of conservatism in influencing FLFP, while in Turkey, conservatism is likely to have more of an impact.

B. Measuring Female Labor Force Participation and Conservatism

In order to measure the impact of conservatism on the labor force participation of ever-married women, working definitions must be established. Though the definition of labor force participation is established in the literature review section, for the purposes of this analysis the limited nature of available data must be taken into consideration. For this analysis, labor force participation is measured by a binary variable, that takes the value of "1" if the woman is currently working, and "0" if the woman is not currently working. Although this definition excludes the issues in measuring LFP that were established in the literature review, it does

provide a solid dataset from which to measure the impact of conservatism. This is, however, a significant limitation of this study, since true LFP can rarely be relegated to simply a yes or no question.

The form of conservatism of interest in this study is social conservatism. Social conservatism refers to the preservation of traditional values and established institutions, including established norms regarding traditional male/female relationships. Social conservatism, as opposed to political or religious conservatism, was selected in order to analyze claims by other research that religion has become a primary determinant of FLFP in Turkey and other predominantly Muslim countries. In this study, my working definition of conservatism involves beliefs regarding male/female relationships that align with traditional Turkic values. This means that women in Azerbaijan and Turkey who indicate via their survey responses a belief that men should serve as the head of households, or make most decisions within the home, for example, would receive a higher estimated value for conservatism than women who indicate that women should lead decision-making processes within the home.

Due to the nebulous nature of investigating "conservatism," a proxy must be used to generate meaningful results. Simply asking respondents to rate their own level of conservatism would be unlikely to produce accurate data, as survey participants are notoriously incapable of correctly rating their own political values or beliefs and the question itself is too vague for inclusion in the DHS.

A proxy variable for conservatism would be a variable that captures the impact of conservatism, but in a more measurable way. For example, if a certain continuous behavior could be linked directly to the level of conservatism within a given household, measuring the

relationship between that variable and female labor force participation could be assumed to give the impact of conservatism on the labor force participation.

A number of proxies for conservatism were considered prior to the selection of an attitudinal and behavioral index. These included political votes for conservative parties, age at first marriage, and ideal number of children, among others. Ultimately, these proxies were abandoned in favor of an index that utilizes women's responses to questions on male/female relationships to create a value between 0 and 1 that indicates a given woman's estimated level of conservatism.

C. Creating a Conservatism Index

In the social sciences, an index is a composite measure of a variable, combining a number of factors to determine an ultimate value for the given variable (Babbie 2013). In this case, I wanted to assign a value for conservatism level to each woman in the sample that took into account a number of questions regarding traditional male/female relationships. To do so, the index combines respondent's answers to a number of questions related to the central variable of interest, traditional male/female relationships, in order to provide a more complete value for conservatism. The components of this index are weighted equally, as each factor contributes to the overall variable in some way (Babbie 2013), meaning that answers to each question are given equal weight in determining a woman's level of conservatism.

There are four major criteria in selecting items for inclusion in an index (Crossman 2018). Face validity refers to the relation between the item you are considering and the variable of interest (Babbie 2013). Items selected for an index should intuitively measure the variable chosen. As questions about traditional conceptions of male/female relationships seem to intuitively measure levels of conservatism, they are a good candidate for inclusion in the index.

Unidimensionality refers to the concept that each item in an index should measure one dimension of the variable of interest, and items that measure some aspect of the variable indirectly should not be included (Crossman 2018). In this case, each question measures a slightly different aspect of traditional male/female relationships, and so each can be included. The specificity of the variable of interest is the third criterion, and refers to matching the item with how specific or general you're measuring the variable (Babbie 2013). In this index, the more specific questions about traditional views are combined to create a general value for conservatism. Finally, items should have variance, meaning that they are not too restrictive or liberal, and provide meaningful results with a variety of responses (Crossman 2018). For the country-specific indexes laid out below, the variety of questions chosen means that it's likely each index measures conservatism appropriately.

In measuring social conservatism, this study generates an index from attitudinal responses to questions related to conservative beliefs. Respondents to both surveys were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements related to conservative values. These questions covered a range from questions regarding traditional relationships between men and women to questions on family life.

Though identical questions were not asked in both iterations of the DHS, the general theme of such questions remains constant across the surveys. The below chart depicts the questions that were used to create attitudinal indexes in both countries. The term "respondent" refers to each woman who participated in the survey.

Table 1: List of attitudinal and behavioral questions used to determine conservatism

Conservatism Index	
Azerbaijan	*Turkey*
Who has the final say on the respondent's own health care?	Agree or Disagree: Important decisions are made by men
Who has the final say on the respondent's visits to family or relatives?	Agree or Disagree: Men are wiser
Who has the final say on making large household purchases?	Agree or Disagree: Women should not argue
Who has the final say on making household purchases for daily needs?	Agree or Disagree: Better to educate son rather than daughter
Is it justified to beat a wife if she neglects the children?	Is it justified to beat a wife if she neglects the children?
Is it justified to beat a wife if she argues with her husband?	Is it justified to beat a wife if she argues with her husband?
Is it justified to beat a wife if she refuses to have sex with her husband?	Is it justified to beat a wife if she refuses to have sex with her husband?
Is it justified to beat a wife if she burns the food?	Is it justified to beat a wife if she burns the food?

Each of the above questions is answered with either a binary yes/no answer, where "1" is recorded if the woman gives the more traditional or conservative answer, and "0" is given otherwise, or a scale depending on the nature of the question. In both countries, questions were chosen based on their ability to illuminate a woman's conception of three factors: decision-

making structures in the home, power dynamics in the husband-wife relationship, and attitudes towards male/female relationships, all components of the above definition of social conservatism. The first four questions for Azerbaijan are tied to decision-making, and describe how women are empowered or not empowered to make decisions within their homes. The first four questions for Turkey illuminate a woman's attitude toward male/female relationships, and her conceptualization of the role of women in society. Finally, the last four questions in each country relate to power dynamics within husband-wife relationships. The four questions on justifications for wife-beating included in both surveys are not questions on whether or not the husband in each case has actually committed any acts of domestic violence. Instead, these questions showcase how a woman conceives of her own role within a relationship, and thereby helps to flesh out the working definition of social conservatism provided above.

The chosen questions range from the attitudinal (for example, the series of questions on female/male relative weight in the Turkish DHS) to behavioral (for example, the series of questions in the Azerbaijani DHS regarding decision-making power in married households). Using a given woman's responses to the eight questions on conservatism specific to her country, I calculate a value for conservatism that lies between 0 (least conservative) and 1 (most conservative).

Due to the difference in questions creating the conservatism index between countries, a separate analysis is carried out between Azerbaijan and Turkey. This analysis yields the impact of conservatism on female labor force participation in each country. From these two values, I analyze the reasons behind the difference in impact by looking at the history of women's labor in the region, and provide some context to explain why conservatism is more or less impactful in each country.

D. Choosing a Model

To model the results of my study, I chose to use a probit regression model. As opposed to a linear regression model, which is most commonly seen in social science research, a probit model simply yields a result that indicates how likely it is that a given woman will enter the labor force if other variables are held constant. Since the variable for FLFP available in the dataset is a binary variable, meaning that women are either in the labor force (recorded as a "1") or not (recorded as a "0") according to the DHS definition, applying a probit model estimates the probability that a woman will enter the labor force given an established level of conservatism. For this study, the independent variable of interest is social conservatism, since I examine different levels of conservatism to determine the impact on the dependent variable, female labor force participation. The dependent variable is measured for both Turkey and Azerbaijan in the DHS as a 1 if the woman considers herself employed in the labor force, and a 0 if she does not consider herself employed.

The probit regression yields results that are values between 0 and 1, which can be interpreted as the average increase or decrease in the likelihood of participating in the labor force if the level of conservatism for a specific woman is increased or decreased. Full specification of this regression can be found in Appendix A.

In analyzing results, my study looks at the sign, size, and significance of the coefficients that the probit regression yields. The sign of the coefficient on conservatism, for example, determines whether the impact on the likelihood of labor force participation is positive or negative. The size of the coefficient determines the extent to which conservatism impacts LFP in each country. A larger coefficient assumes a larger impact on FLFP, and vice versa. Finally, the

significance of each coefficient is analyzed. The significance of each coefficient is measured by the likelihood that the same result could have been achieved through random chance.

E. Selection of Control Variables

In order to isolate the impact of conservatism on female labor force participation, my study incorporates a number of control variables. Since these controls are also relevant determinants of female LFP and are likely correlated with the independent variable, conservatism, they will skew the results of the analysis if not controlled.

Based on prior literature examining female labor force participation determinants in developing countries, I chose to include controls for the number of years of education, age, and wealth of each woman. In addition, I added control variables for the region (country-specific) in which the respondent lived, and the number of children they had between certain ages – for example, the number of children between the ages of 0 and 2, the number between 3 and 6, etc. The coefficients associated with these controls also yield results as to the impact of education, fertility, and other variables on female labor force participation. Comparing these results to the impact of conservatism on FLFP allows the magnitude of the impact to be further understood. Full results and coefficients for each control variable can be found in Appendix B.

F. Predicted Results

Azerbaijan's extensive Soviet history, described in detail in the Historical Background section, led to the hypothesis that the impact of conservatism on the FLFP of ever-married women would be muted in the study. This is due to Soviet initiatives to push all women into the labor force, regardless of marital status, in order to increase the economic capacity of the state. On the other hand, Turkish history lacks the same push to increase female LFP, as evidenced by the prior comparison between the early Republican era in Turkey with the Soviet period in

Azerbaijan. Thus, I expected that conservatism would have a bigger, negative impact on FLFP in Turkey, and a smaller or non-existent impact on FLFP in Azerbaijan.

As discussed in the historical background section, the political climate of each country, relative to their history, also leads to the hypothesis that conservatism will have a lower overall impact in Azerbaijan than in Turkey. The political establishment in Azerbaijan, helmed by the Aliyev family, is still publicly reminiscent of the country's Soviet legacy. Most adults in Azerbaijan grew up during the Soviet era, and this short timespan since independence is unlikely to have drastically shifted the pressure to distinguish public and private displays of conservatism. In Turkey, on the other hand, the rise of socially conservative parties is likely to increase the influence of conservatism in making the decision to enter the labor force.

VII. Results

The results of the regression of conservatism on female labor force participation in Azerbaijan, and then Turkey, both contradict the above hypothesis and provide interesting results for analysis. As mentioned above, in analyzing the results I examine the sign, size, and significance of the coefficients for conservatism in each country. Instead of using the direct coefficients, however, I utilize the marginal effects of each coefficient to examine the economic implication. Marginal effects yield the amount of change in the likelihood of female LFP that can be attributed to a one-unit change in conservatism. Full marginal and economic effects can be seen in Appendix B.

For the study of ever-married women in Azerbaijan, I find that for a given woman, an increase in conservatism is correlated with a decrease of 9.5 percentage points in the likelihood of participating in the labor force, given that all other variables remain constant. The sign of this coefficient implies that higher levels of conservatism leads to a decrease in the probability of labor force participation, which is consistent with the hypothesis. When compared to the standardized effects across variables (Appendix B), however, conservatism appears to have a larger impact on likelihood of FLFP for ever-married women than education and wealth, which contradicts the hypothesis. Finally, this result is significant, and extremely unlikely to have occurred by chance.

In Turkey, an increase in conservatism is associated with an unexpected increase of 12.1 percentage points in the likelihood of participating in the labor force, given that all other variables remain constant. The sign of the coefficient implies that conservatism is positively correlated with the likelihood of LFP in Turkey, a finding that contradicts the hypothesis and is explored further in the discussion. In comparison to the standardized effects across variables

(Appendix B), conservatism appears to have a larger impact on FLFP than education and wealth. This result is significant, and extremely unlikely to have occurred by chance.

In the second part of the study, I combined the Azerbaijani and Turkish datasets into a single large dataset. For this portion, I created a dummy variable that took the value of "1" for Turkish respondents and "0" for Azerbaijani respondents, in order to further isolate the impact of conservatism. Since the questions for index formation differed between countries, I instead created a merged conservatism index that only incorporated the four questions that were identical between countries. These four questions, all involving women's opinions on when wife-beating is appropriate, are meant to approximate the conservatism index developed earlier in this chapter. My argument is not that domestic violence itself is correlated with conservatism, but rather that these four questions on women's attitudes towards domestic violence establish a baseline for how women conceive relationships between men and women in their societies.

To test whether this second index, comprised only of questions that were common between the surveys, could be used in the merged dataset, I first tested the index in each country separately (Appendix B). Looking at the effect of including either index on the estimated results for control variables education and wealth, there is little difference between using either index, which implies that the two indexes are measuring social conservatism in the same way.

In the merged dataset with a dummy variable for country, all else being equal including estimated conservatism level, an ever-married woman in Turkey at the same level of conservatism as a woman in Azerbaijan is 20.3% more likely to participate in the labor force (Appendix C).

VIII. Discussion

In summary, the empirical experiment above yielded the following overarching results: in Azerbaijan, the proxy for conservatism demonstrates a significant negative impact on the likelihood of female labor force participation, while in Turkey, conservatism appeared to have a significant positive impact on labor force participation for ever-married women. This section discusses these results and posits possible explanations.

In Azerbaijan, the projected negative impact of conservatism on the likelihood of LFP matches the hypothesis that more conservative women are less likely to pursue official labor. This result appears robust, as it was very statistically unlikely to have occurred by random chance. Furthermore, the measured impact of education and wealth on the likelihood of labor force participation match expected values of these impacts from prior literature. My results indicate that as a woman's education level increases, her likelihood of labor force participation increases. This is reflected by current research on the impact of education on LFP, as discussed in section III.

On the other hand, increases in a woman's wealth factor make her less likely to participate in the labor force. This could be because women in less wealthy families feel economic pressure to contribute to their family's finances, overriding any pressure from conservatism to abstain from the labor force. Along this reasoning, married women in the sample were much less likely to work than divorced, widowed, or separated women, suggesting that economic pressures to obtain income are largely responsible for driving some women to participate in the labor force.

Looking at the results of controlling for region in Azerbaijan, it becomes evident that a woman's region also plays a large role in determining her likelihood of entering the labor force.

All else remaining constant, women in Baku, Ganja, and Shaki, are more likely to work than women in other regions. As three of the country's largest cities by population, there is a larger expectation of labor force participation and increased access to job opportunities. This result indicates that governments could look to regional trends in determining legislation that would promote female LFP.

The smaller negative impact of conservatism on FLFP in Azerbaijan is consistent with the country's Soviet legacy. Based on the extent to which Soviet institutions both pressured Eurasian cultures to give up traditional values and pressured women to enter the labor force, as discussed in the historical background section, I would expect that conservatism as a whole would have less of an impact on the labor decision than other factors, which is reflected in the data. The legacy of female productivity espoused through women's clubs, government propaganda, and favorable labor policies during the USSR has impacted the labor decisions of women in Azerbaijan even after independence, which likely explains the smaller impact of conservatism on FLFP when compared to the impact in Turkey.

However, Turkish conservatism was associated with a surprisingly positive increase in the likelihood of female LFP for ever-married women in the sample. Education and wealth had the expected positive and negative effect on LFP, respectively, suggesting that the positive result for conservatism in Turkey is robust. Though still positive, the impact of an increase in education on the chance of LFP in Turkey was less than the impact of the same change in Azerbaijan. Increases in wealth also had a lower negative impact on likelihood of labor force participation in Turkey than in Azerbaijan. These findings, along with the higher absolute value of economic impact of conservatism in Turkey, suggest that in Turkey, conservatism and other factors are probably more determinant of LFP than in Azerbaijan.

With regards to the legacy of the Republican period in Turkey, the overall large impact of conservatism on FLFP, one way or another, is less surprising. Unlike the Soviet regime, which attempted to eradicate traditional values and practices in Eurasia, the Republican period in Turkey emphasized the compatibility of Turkic culture with other elements of modernity, including the rights of women. Though some conservative elements were banned during the Republican period, religious expression has become more accepted in the decades since the 1950s, suggesting that conservatism has been allowed to play a more prominent role in everyday decisions. Therefore, it is unsurprising that the magnitude of the impact is larger than that of Azerbaijan, though the sign is still contrary to expectations laid out by the literature (Atasoy 2016).

The rise in social conservatism and simultaneous increase in FLFP in Turkey since the survey data in 2003 additionally support the conclusion that conservatism has a positive impact on FLFP for ever-married women in Turkey. As discussed in the historical background section, the rise of the AKP in Turkey has been associated with increased levels of public acceptance of social conservatism, as the party is seen to be tacitly in support of Islamic governance. Female LFP has also increased slightly since 2003, as can be seen in Figure 2. Though a number of factors are linked to this increase, the simultaneous increase of public social conservatism and female LFP suggests that these results are robust.

This impact could also be potentially explained through the legal barriers and incentives laid out in section IV. As discussed in that chapter, 2003 marked a turning point in legislation on gender issues in Turkey, the year of this study. This could have impacted LFP that year, though it would unlikely cause dramatic shifts in the data since the timeframe was so short.

Finally, it is also possible that this discrepancy could be explained through different survey techniques between the two countries. The DHS is overseen by one organization, but surveys are carried out by national organizations in each country. It is entirely possible that the definitions of labor force participation used between the two countries could have incorporated different information on the role of informal labor – by either counting or not counting informal labor within the survey results. As informal labor comprises a significant portion of female labor in both countries, this would cause a large discrepancy in results. Without more detailed information on interviews in either country, it is difficult to determine if this could be the source of the surprising positive impact in Turkey.

IX. Conclusion

The results of this study demonstrate that estimated levels of conservatism can have a significant impact on the likelihood of labor force participation for ever-married women. Though this impact is negative in Azerbaijan and positive in Turkey, the fact that the impact exists in both cases means that policymakers should incorporate an understanding of conservatism into policies designed to promote LFP in both countries.

A number of limitations constrain the application of this study. Due to the limited data available from the DHS, the study excluded never-married women from consideration. I would expect that never-married women might display a higher tendency to participate in the labor force than ever-married women, which would impact the final results.

Some DHS countries also carry out a specific Women's Status and Empowerment Module, which contains many questions specific to women's issues within given countries. These questions pertain to many of the issues raised by this thesis, including labor force decisions and questions about specific conservative beliefs. Unfortunately, the Women's Status Module was not carried out in Azerbaijan or Turkey, meaning that the only questions available for inclusion in this study were from the more general DHS. Further research should incorporate more specific questions, if possible.

A substantial limitation of this study was the dichotomous definition of labor force participation used by the DHS. As discussed in the literature review, participation in the labor force is more complicated than a simple yes or no answer, especially in countries with large informal sectors like Azerbaijan and Turkey. The lack of more detailed data for both countries in the DHS limited the accuracy of the results.

In addition, the scope of this study could be expanded to look at more than just two discrete years in both countries. Evaluating how the impact of conservatism on FLFP changes over time would provide an interesting extension to this research. Particularly for Turkey, analyzing the impact of conservatism before and after the 2002 election of the Justice and Development Party could provide different results.

Though this study analyzed laws and policies that directly impact the decision to enter the labor force, a more robust analysis of the difference in economic policy in post-communist Azerbaijan and contemporary Turkey could illuminate a different aspect of female LFP. It is possible that economic policy in Azerbaijan remains similar to its Soviet roots, while Turkey has become more neoliberal in its economic policies. This difference could pose significant implications for labor force participation for both men and women, and is worth further investigation.

Finally, future research on this topic would benefit from exploring in more detail the relationship between conservatism and labor force participation in Turkey, where the positive relationship revealed by the data was surprising. Many other factors may be at play in explaining this relationship. Due to the significant economic benefits that a country can gain from the higher inclusion of women in the labor force, specific research on the role of conservatism in the labor decision could have important economic significance for developing countries.

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Appendix A: Empirical Specification

Equation 1: $FLFP_i = \alpha + \beta Conservatism_i + \gamma \Sigma X_i + \varepsilon_i$

The above empirical specification lays out the components of my analysis. On the left-hand side the dependent variable, female labor force participation for respondent *i,* illuminates the specific impact of conservatism. As discussed above, FLFP is a dichotomous outcome, and thus the probit model yields a value between 0 and 1 that represents the probability of participation in the labor force.

On the right-hand side of the equation, value α represents the intercept of the equation, or in this case, the probability of any particular respondent participating in the labor force given that the value for conservatism is zero, along with all other control variables. This is equivalent to the average labor force participation rate of just the sample in each country. The coefficient for the conservatism proxy, β, yields the increase in probability of LFP as the number of 'conservative' answers to the index questions increases. Increases occur when the respondent answers "Yes" or marks agreement with questions or statements included in the attitudinal index.

ΣX_i is the summation of control variables, and represents the inclusion in the regression of the controls discussed above. In the results section, the coefficient for each individual control is displayed, depicting the actual relationship between each variable and the dependent variable of interest. The variable ε represents the error term.

Using a probit regression model, due to the binary nature of the independent variable, I predict that the probability of FLFP can be estimated by a proxy measuring conservatism, along with a vector *X* representing other controlled determinants of FLFP. Both countries are analyzed together and separately using the above specification, and the resulting estimates for the impact of conservatism on FLFP in both countries are compared.

Appendix B: Marginal and Economic Effects of Conservatism on Female LFP

	(1)		(2)	
Dependent Variable: Female LFP	Azerbaijan		Turkey	
	Marginal	*Economic*	*Marginal*	*Economic*
Conservatism	-.0952966***	-0.0020796196	.1214486***	0.00257077538
	(.0218226)		(.0211676)	
Education	.0329342***	7.2461827e-05	.0240852***	0.00003608203
	(.0022002)		(.0014981)	
Wealth Index	-.0111256**	-5.4265114e-05	-.0417939***	-0.00018012752
	(.0048775)		(.0043099)	
Fertility Controls	*Yes*		*Yes*	
Marital Controls	*Yes*		*Yes*	
Age Controls	*Yes*		*Yes*	
Region Controls	*Yes*		*Yes*	
Observations:	5,769		8,058	

*p<0.1, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01

Standard errors in parentheses

Appendix C: Marginal and Economic Effects of Conservatism in Merged Dataset

Dependent Variable: Female LFP	(3) Merged Datasets		(4) Merged With Conservatism Dummies	
	Marginal	*Economic*	*Marginal*	*Economic*
Country Dummy	.2034168***			
	(.009788)			
AzerConservatism			-.2869307***	-0.00510099659
			(.0177778)	
TurkConservatism			.1963335***	0.00365576903
			(.0186202)	
Conservatism	.0294877**	0.00037286312		
(*Identical Questions*)	(.0126447)			
Education	.0236573***	0.00002773581	.0204375***	0.00002187425
	(.0011724)		(.0010703)	
Wealth Index	-.0255855***	-0.00007743963	-.0185737***	-0.00005391573
	(.0030267)		(.0029028)	
Fertility Controls	*Yes*		*Yes*	
Marital Controls	*Yes*		*Yes*	
Age Controls	*Yes*		*Yes*	
Region Controls	*No*		*No*	
Observations:	13,825		13,825	

*p<0.1, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01

Standard errors in parentheses