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power rely on a multicultural imaginary and discourse in order to adjust core state institutions and narratives to new discursive, capital and state conditions, not to transform them (p. 583.). Her challenge converges with Trigger's and Rowse's suggestion for an indigenous formulation of citizenship, one that the volume's contributors do not articulate but suggest.

Mexican Rural Development and the Plumed Serpent: Technology and Maya Cosmology in the Tropical Forest of Campeche, Mexico, by Betty Bernice Faust (1998), Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey. xxviii, 190 pp. Reviewed by Edward F. Fischer, Department of Anthropology, Vanderbilt University.

Middle Eastern Women and the Invisible Economy, Richard A. Lobban, Jr., editor (1998), Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida. 303 pp.

Reviewed by Paula Holmes-Eber, Department of Anthropology and Middle East Center University of Washington, Seattle WA.

Richard Lobban's edited volume, *Middle Eastern Women and the Invisible Economy*, presents a collection of fourteen articles on a critically important, yet regrettably, severely neglected topic in gender and Middle Eastern studies: the role of women in the informal, or invisible, economy. While studies of women's survival strategies and economic participation outside of the formal sector have burgeoned in other regions of the world, (see for example, Beneria and Roldan 1990; Collins and Gimenez 1990; Chant 1991 and Smith, Wallerstein and Evers 1984), research on Middle Eastern women's formal and informal economic activities has, until recently, been all but non-existent.

Historically and statistically, Middle Eastern women's participation in the formal labor force has lagged significantly behind all other regions of the world (Moghadam 1993). Muslim women's lack of visible participation in "public" and measurable economic arenas reinforces the perception that they are excluded from, and lack interest in economic affairs. Most research about women in the Middle East has thus tended to focus upon such topics as women's legal status, gender roles and ideals, or women and Islam, rather than examining women's actual economic, social and political behavior. Indeed, as Homa Hoodfar wryly observes, "It [is] as though Muslims, and in particular Middle Eastern people live in the realm of ideology and religion while the rest of the world live[s] within the economic structure" (1997: 15).

Hence, the articles in Lobban's book, split among four separate sections an "Strategies for survival: women at the margins"; "Women and work: the invisible economy of Egypt"; "Methods and measures: the invisible economy of Tunisia"; and "Locations and linkages in the invisible economy" offer a welcome and long overdue examination of the many creative ways that women in the Middle East earn, save and dispose of their own incomes, outside of the formal, measurable economic structure. As Early's, Lobban's, and Berry-Chickhaoui's articles illustrate, women often

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supplement their household's incomes through petty commodity trading, selling articles at weekly markets and acting as the middle-woman in transporting goods between rural and urban areas. Butler, Michael, and Jennings describe the innovative ways that women create home-based industries including bread baking and cheese-making, poultry raising, handicrafts production, and hosting tourist visits in local homes all of which allow Muslim women to earn incomes while remaining within the domestic domain. Inhorn reveals the important roles that women play in the informal medical system as midwives and ethnomedical specialists, providing services that rural and lower class women would prefer not to receive from men. The chapters by Early, and Singerman demonstrate the economic power that women with wide networks can wield in linking individuals to goods and services, speedily and effectively navigating the morass of political red tape in Egypt. Finally, Middle Eastern women's unpaid labor in agricultural production, as contributors to household enterprises (such the preparation of wool for husbands to weave), and as providers of services which are repaid in goods rather than money (example the use of an oven which is then paid for in bread) is discussed in the articles by Larson, Ali and Ferchiou.

An important theme running through many of the essays in the book is women's independent management and disposal of the income they receive from their work. Savings groups or clubs which enable women to obtain credit and to save for major expenses like wedding celebrations and building a house are described in a number of studies (e.g., Early, Jennings, Singerman). And as Jennings, Early, Ali and Hoodfar argue, Middle Eastern women often independently fund major purchases, as well as the education of their children or the health care of loved ones through the income obtained from their "invisible" economic activities.

The chapters include discussions of rural, urban and nomadic women primarily of the unskilled, lower and working classes. While most of the studies focus on Muslim women, Joseph's article provides a contrasting view of a Lebanese Christian woman. Seven of the fourteen articles are based on research in Egypt; two discuss women in the Sudan; one article describes a Lebanese woman and a fourth examines the economic roles of Yemeni women. I was delighted to find that three of the articles were on Tunisian women a subject that has been almost completely ignored in English language publications, despite Tunisia's revolutionary laws regarding the status of women and work.

Surprisingly, given the recent spurt of publications on Turkish women's informal and formal participation in the international garment and handwork industries (see, for example, White 1994), there are no articles on women's informal economic activities in Turkey. Not so surprising is the absence of articles on women in the oil rich countries such as Saudi Arabia Kuwait, and Oman. While their omission could be taken to indicate that, due to their greater wealth, women in these areas do not participate in the informal economy, I suspect that the absence of studies more likely reflects the dwindling research on women in the Arabian peninsula in the past few years.

Although Lobban's book is an important first step in recognizing and articulating Middle Eastern women's informal economic activities, and the essays provide a coherent and provocative description of the heretofore neglected economic world of these women, *Middle Eastern Women and the Invisible Economy* is probably more suitable as an introductory and exploratory text on the issue, rather than as a definitive scholarly analysis of the question. Regrettably, with the exception of Hoodfar's chapter, neither the introduction, nor the subsequent articles make any reference to the rapidly growing literature on women in the informal economy in other areas of the world, such as Latin America and the Caribbean, where the topic is much more developed theoretically and empirically. While the Middle Eastern case is perhaps unique in certain respects, requiring new definitions and perspectives, the lack of theoretical grounding leaves a number of the authors grappling with concepts and terms, description unable to rise above mere description.

To its credit, several of the book's chapters (for example Inhorn, Early, Berry-Chickhaoui and Jennings) are excellent micro-ethnographies providing the rich thick detail upon which later theoretical work can be built. And the articles by Larson, Hoodfar and Singerman--which contrast women's and men's informal activities, and examine the relationship between women's

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participation in the informal economy and the macro-context of the formal political and economic spheres--offer the more comparative theoretical analysis necessary for explanatory rather than merely descriptive research. *Middle Eastern Women and the Invisible Economy* is thus an interesting introductory text to a complex issue; suitable for classroom use and for providing scholars with a new and more accurate perspective on Middle Eastern women's economic roles and activities.

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The Populist Paradox: Interest Group Influence and The Promise of Direct Legislation (1999), by Elisabeth R. Gerber. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, xii, 171 pp.

Reviewed by Luther P. Gerlach, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities (Emeritus).

Elisabeth Gerber introduces her fine essay by summarizing a classic political dilemma: