

”Characteristics of the Syrian Labour Force”

Findings of the 2003 Unemployment Survey

STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY TO ANALYSE CENSUS AND SURVEY
DATA IN SYRIA Seminar Damascus, 29 January 2007



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المكتب المركزي للإحصاء سورية، دمشق , 2007/1/29



About the survey

- **Cooperation between the ACU & the CBS**
- **Fieldwork between 15 March and 10 April 2003**
- **Representative sample of 30,000 households covering all 14 mohafazat**
- **27,611 households successfully interviewed (= response rate of 92%)**
- **Earlier report by the ACU: “Unemployment map” (2003)**

The process leading up to this report

Three steps:

- 1. A series of workshops held at the CBS during 2004**
 - Theory, hands-on analytical training, discussions
 - Fafo responsible (Geir Øvensen)
 - 25 participants from the CBS, the SPC, Damascus University, Teshreen University, and the ACU
- 2. Analysis material from workshops developed into 2 reports:**
 - Asset index: Fafo paper 2006:1
 - Findings from the 2003 Unemployment survey (internal document)
- 3. "Characteristics of the Syrian Labour Force"**
 - "Findings" shortened and re-written (Pål Sletten): Fafo report 2007:2

Topics to be covered

1. Labour force participation

- How to measure?
- Who are the economically “active”?

2. The economically “inactive”

3. The employed

4. The unemployed

5. The underemployed /underutilized

Labour force participation (LFP)

- How to measure?
- Who are the economically “active”?

The ILO labour force framework

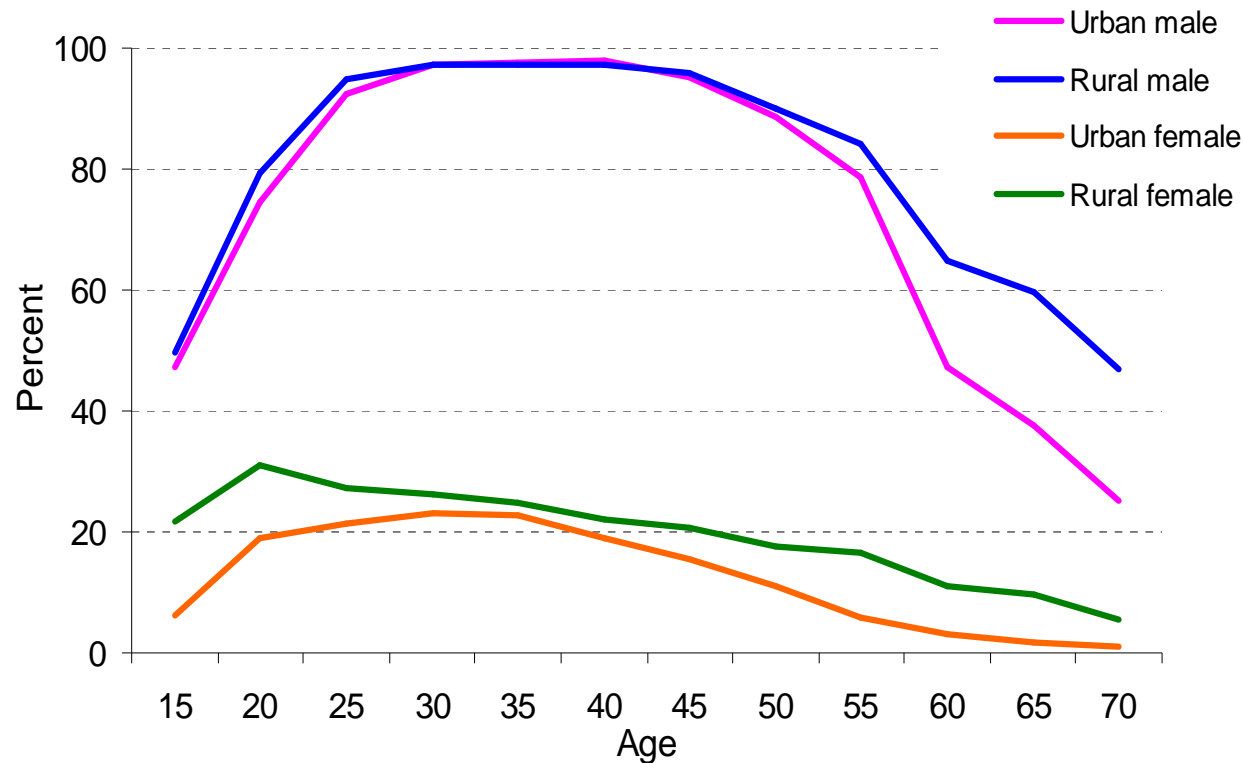
| | | | | |
|---|---|---------------------------|---|--|
| Total population | | | | |
| Working age population 15 years or older | | | | Persons below 15 years |
| Persons included in the labour force (economically "active") | | | Adults not in the labor force | |
| Employed persons | | | Unemployed persons Not employed. Sought, and available for work | i.e. not employed, not unemployed. Did not seek work |
| Full time (≥ 35 hrs per week) | Part time (≤ 34 hrs per week) | Temporarily absent | | |

Overall LFP of 31.5%, but wide gender difference

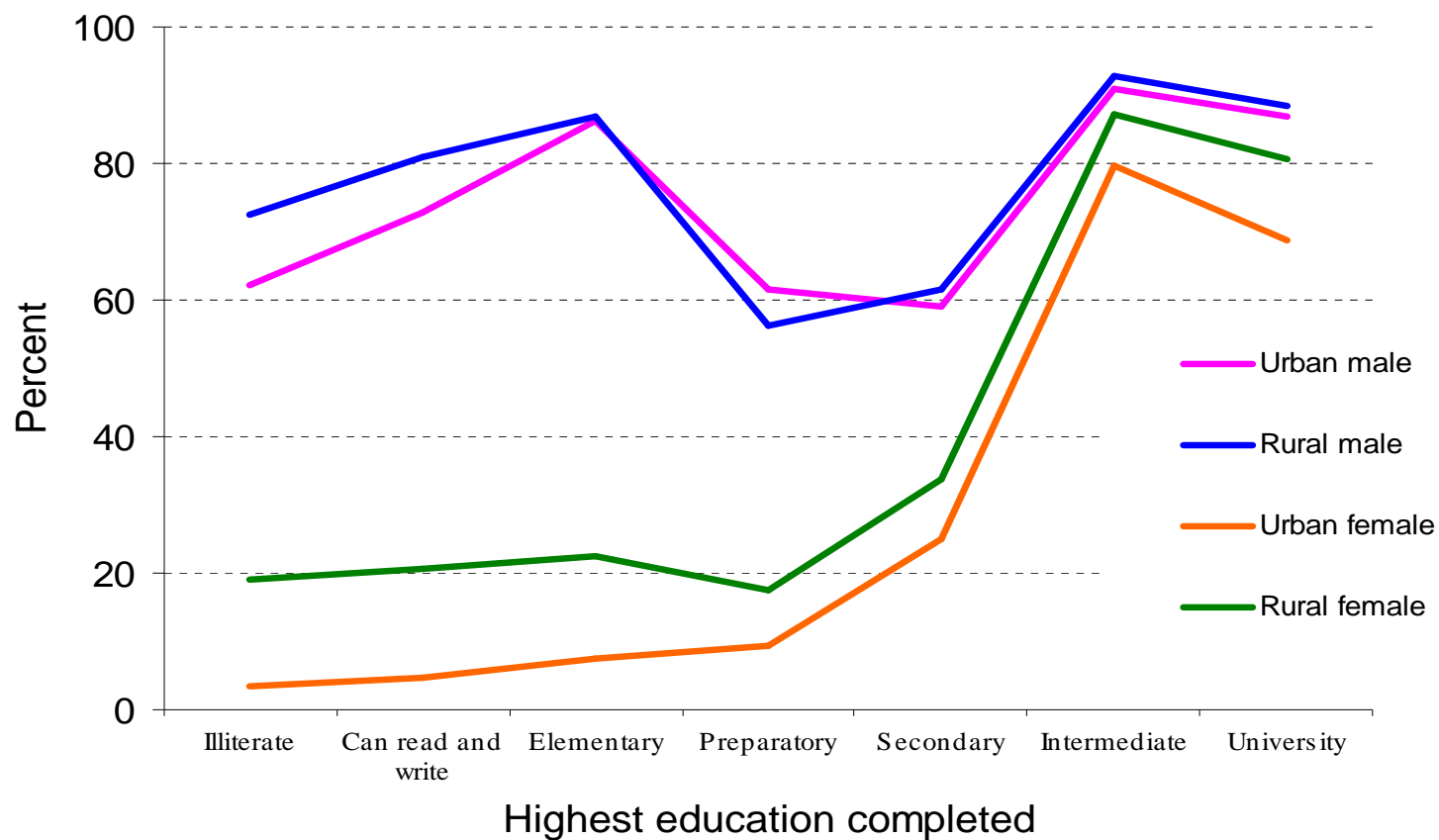
- 77% men in LF
- 19% women in LF

- Marriage almost cuts LFP in half – for women ...
- ... but increases it slightly for men

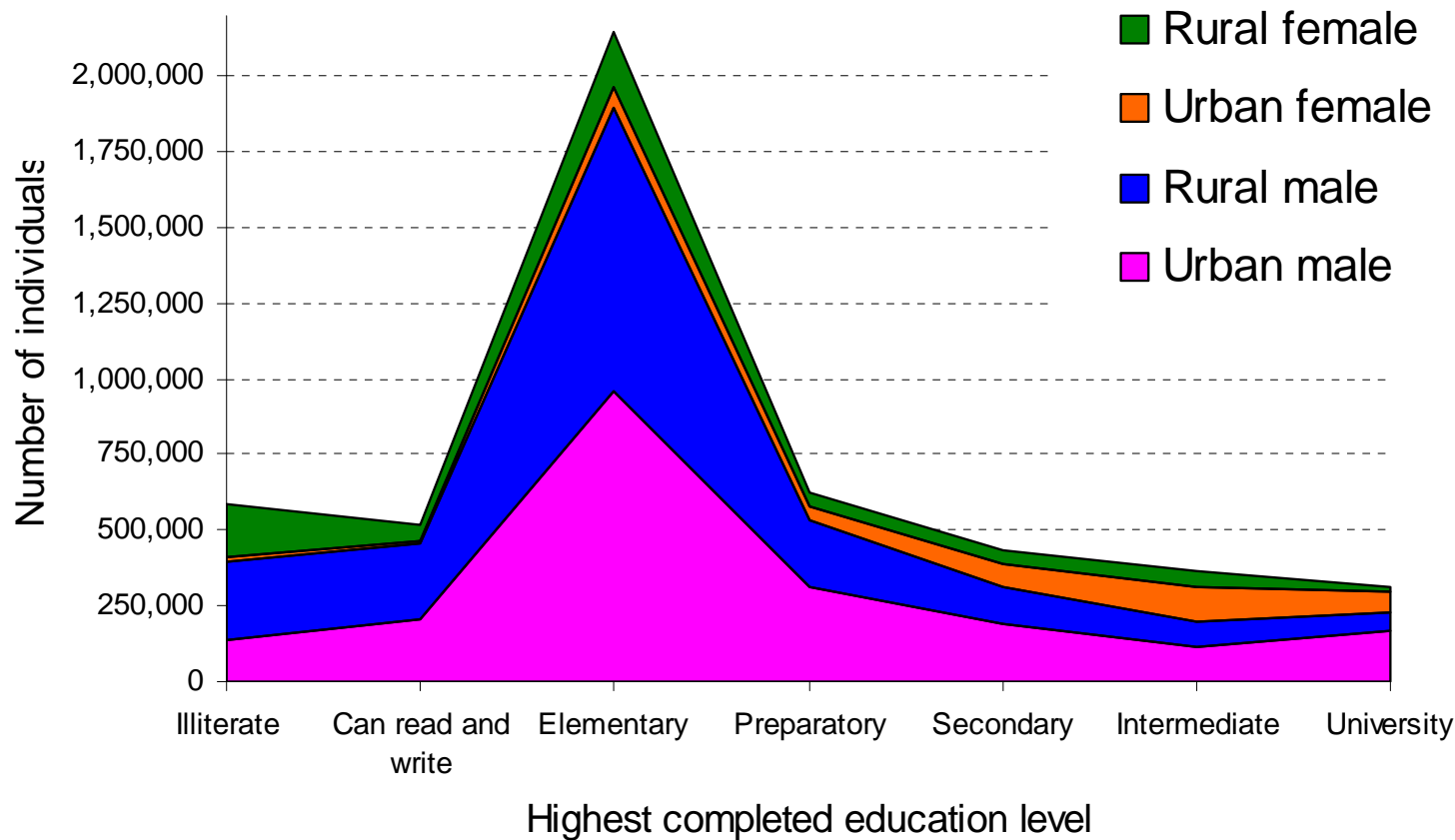
- For women, LFP is higher in Latakia and Tartous than elsewhere



Education with huge impact on women's participation



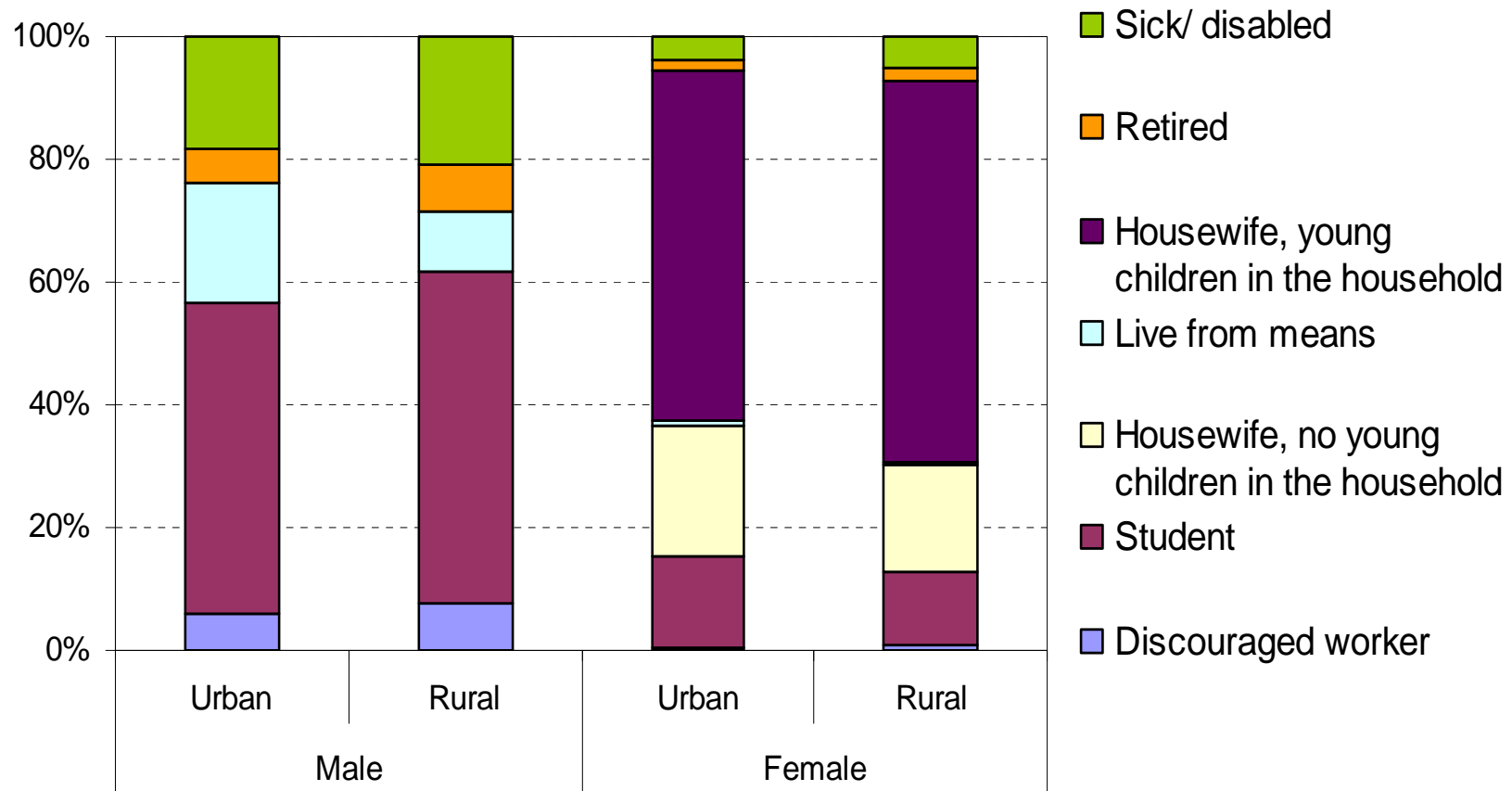
But the vast majority (78%) has less than secondary education



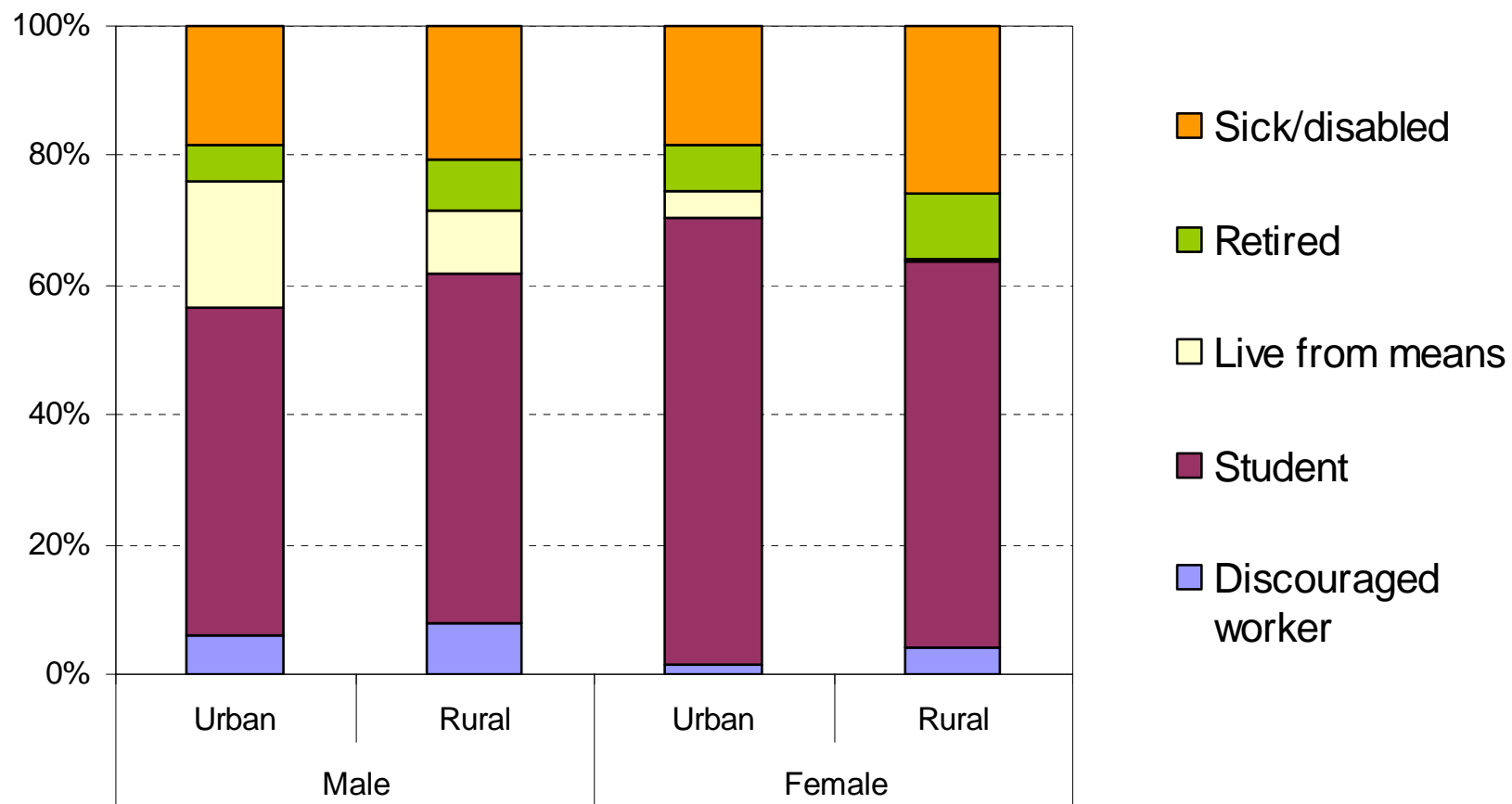
The inactive (outside the labour force)

Some characteristics ...

The largest groups of inactive are, students, housewives, & the chronically ill



Largest groups – corrected picture (housewives removed)



The employed

Some characteristics ...

Sector of employment

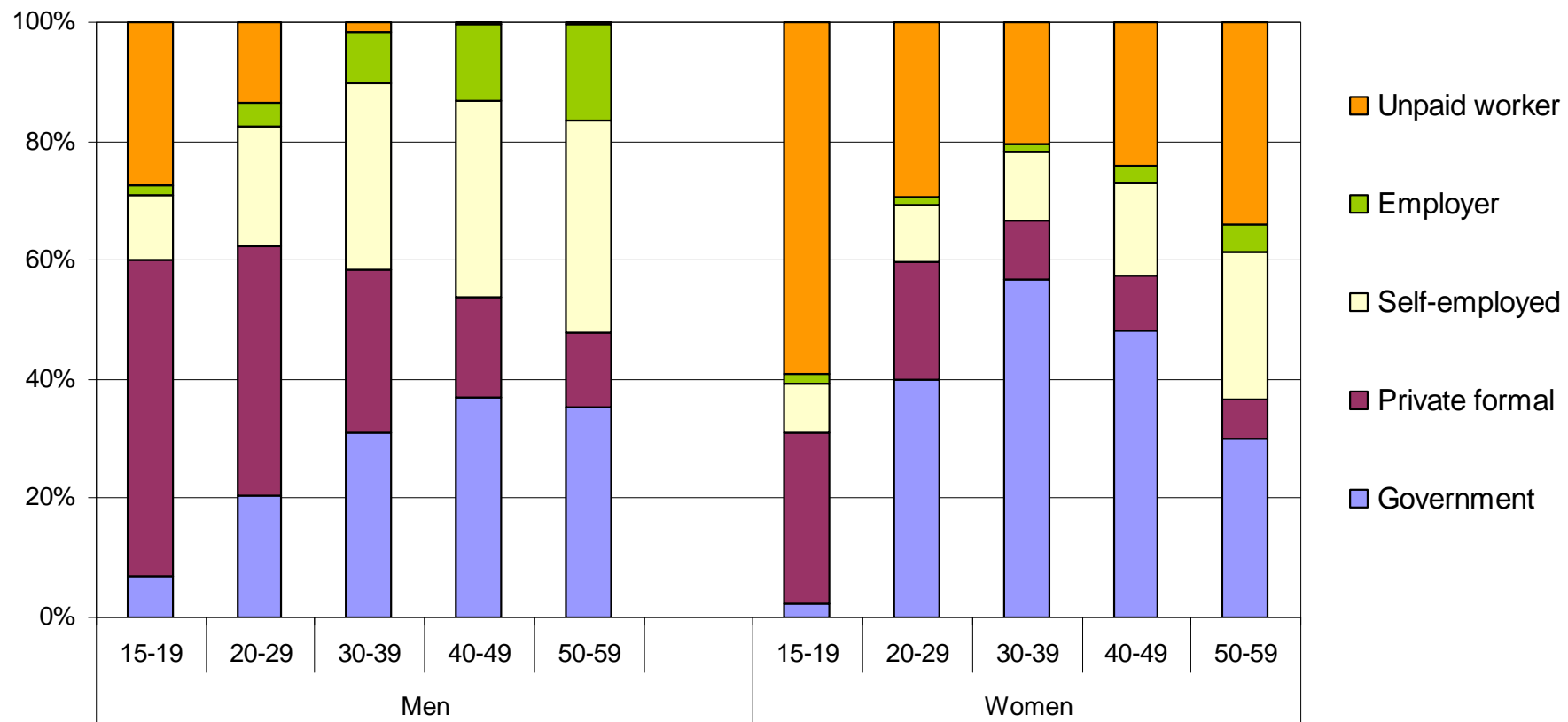
- **37% self-employed or unpaid workers**
- **35% in private sector**
- **28% in public sector**

- **70% of urban women in public sector**
- **63% of rural women are self-employed or unpaid**

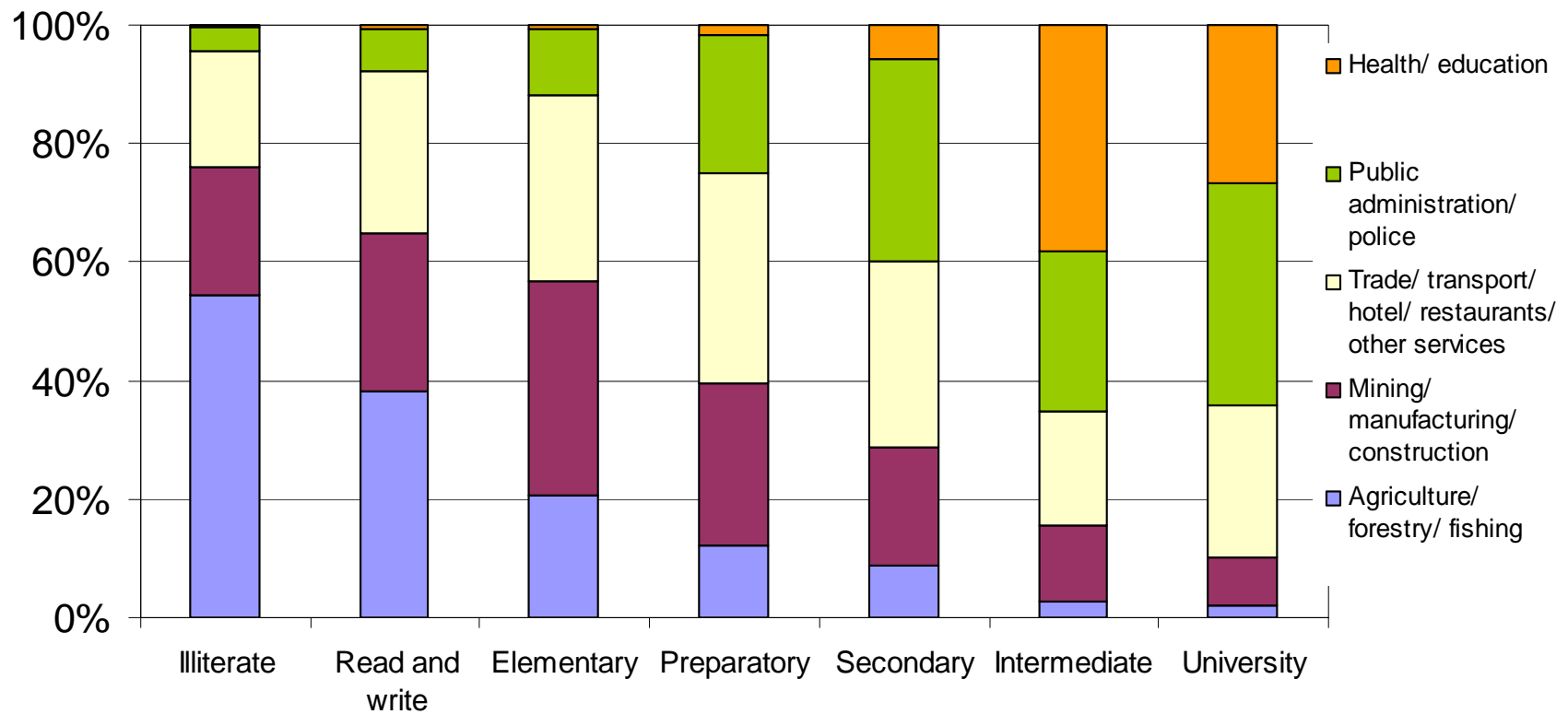
- **Public employment in northern and eastern mohafazat is low**

Public sector employs the middle-aged ...

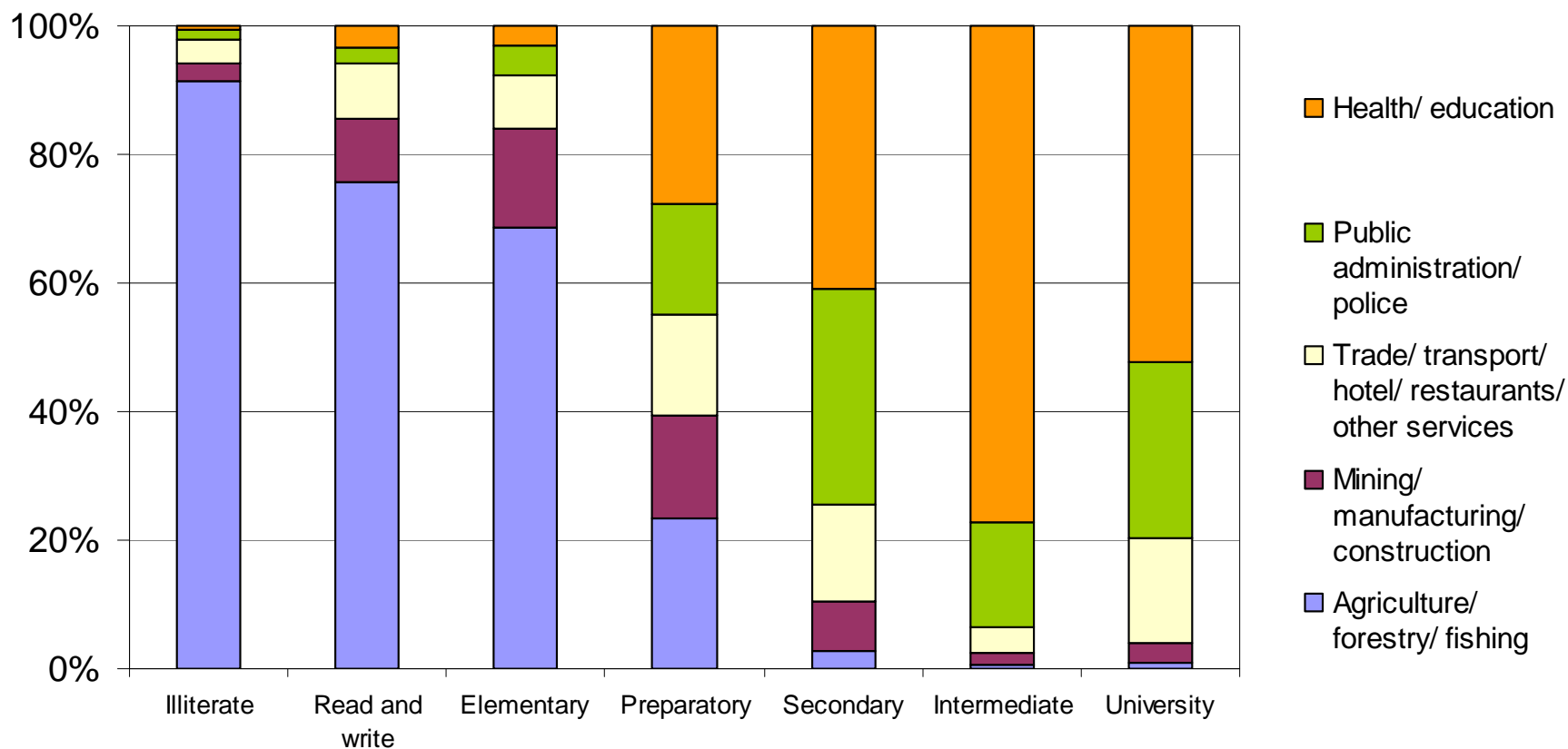
... while private sector employs the young



Education takes men from private to public sector and employment in health & education

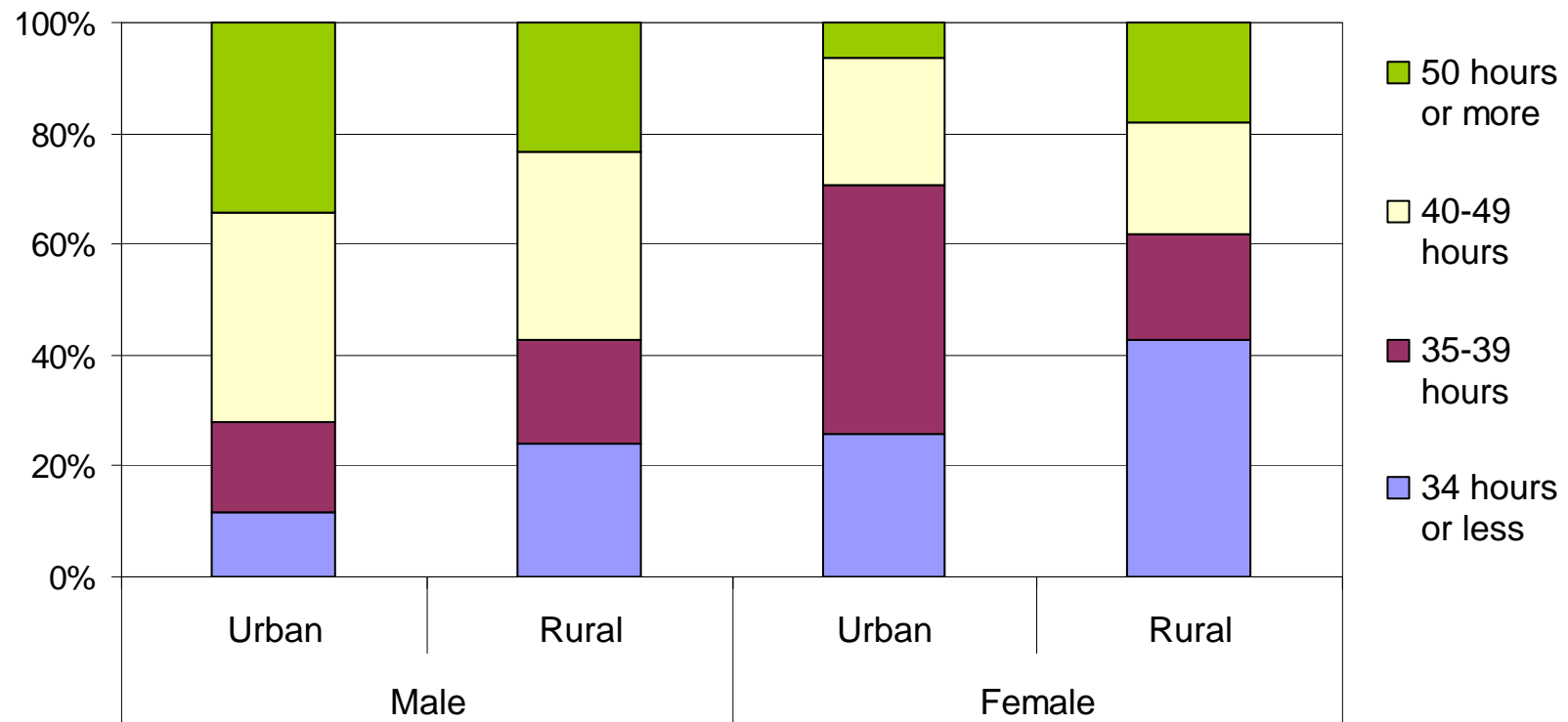


Female labour market clearly segmented



Long work hours not uncommon

- Urban men work longer hours (in main job) than rural men; opposite for women
- 6% hold more than one job



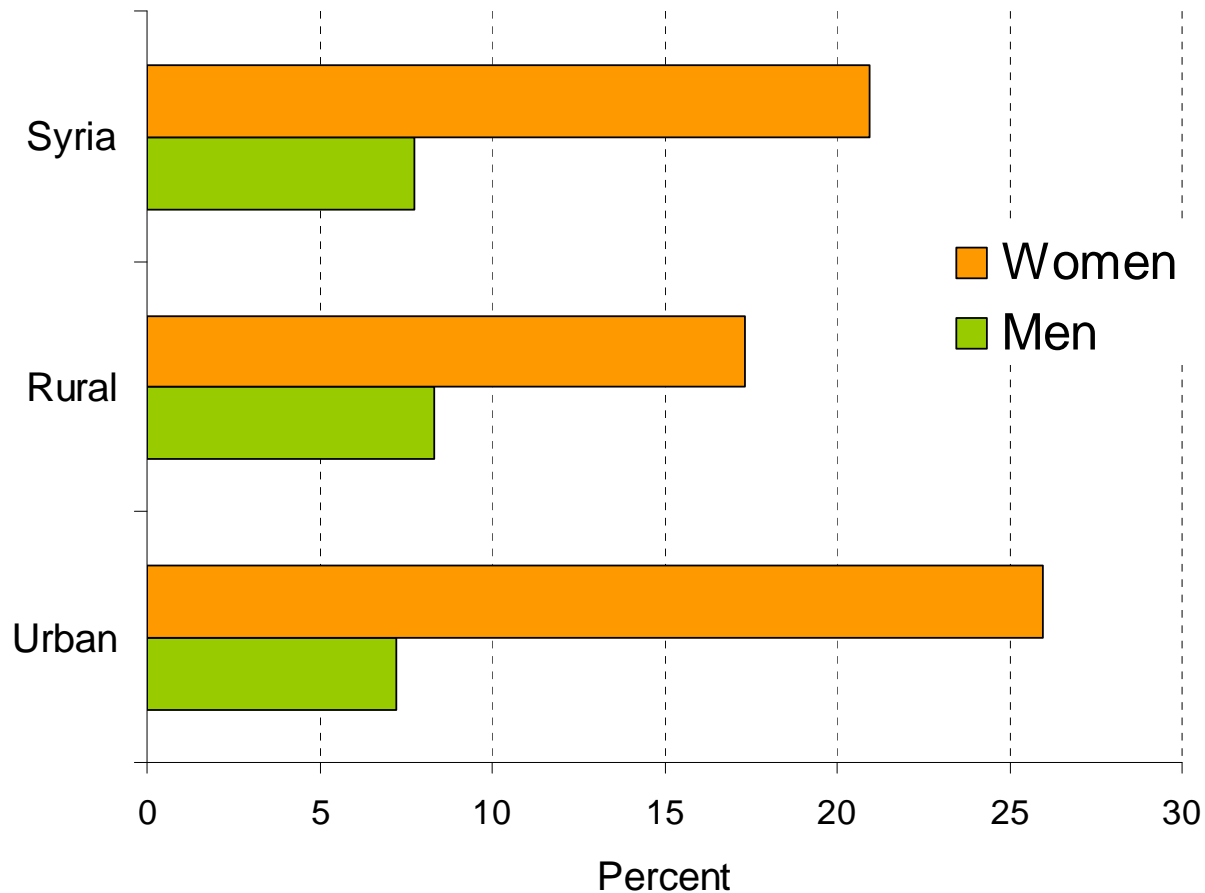
The unemployed

Definition:

Not working one hour last week but actively seeking employment and ready to work

Some characteristics ...

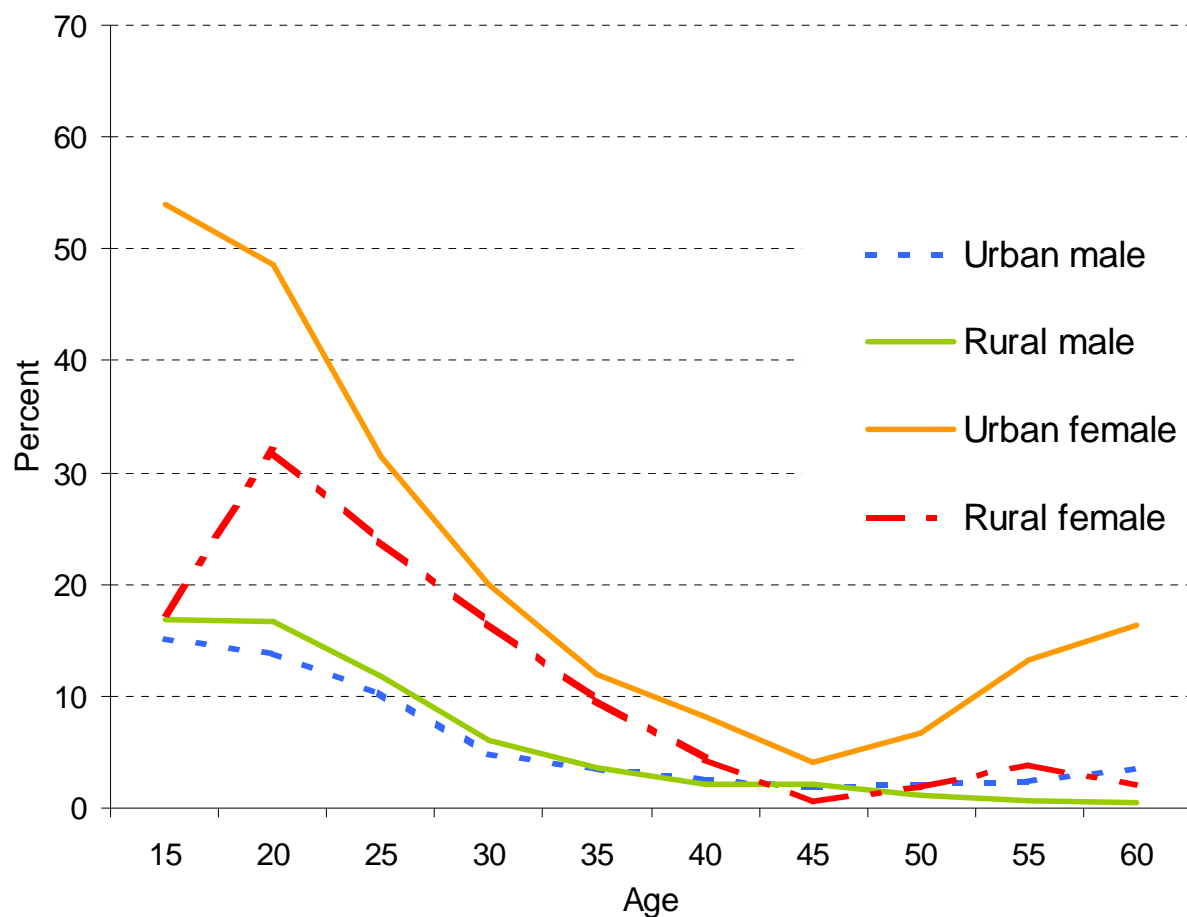
Very high female unemployment



... particularly in urban settings

➤ Overall (ILO) unemployment at 10.3 percent

Highest unemployment among the young

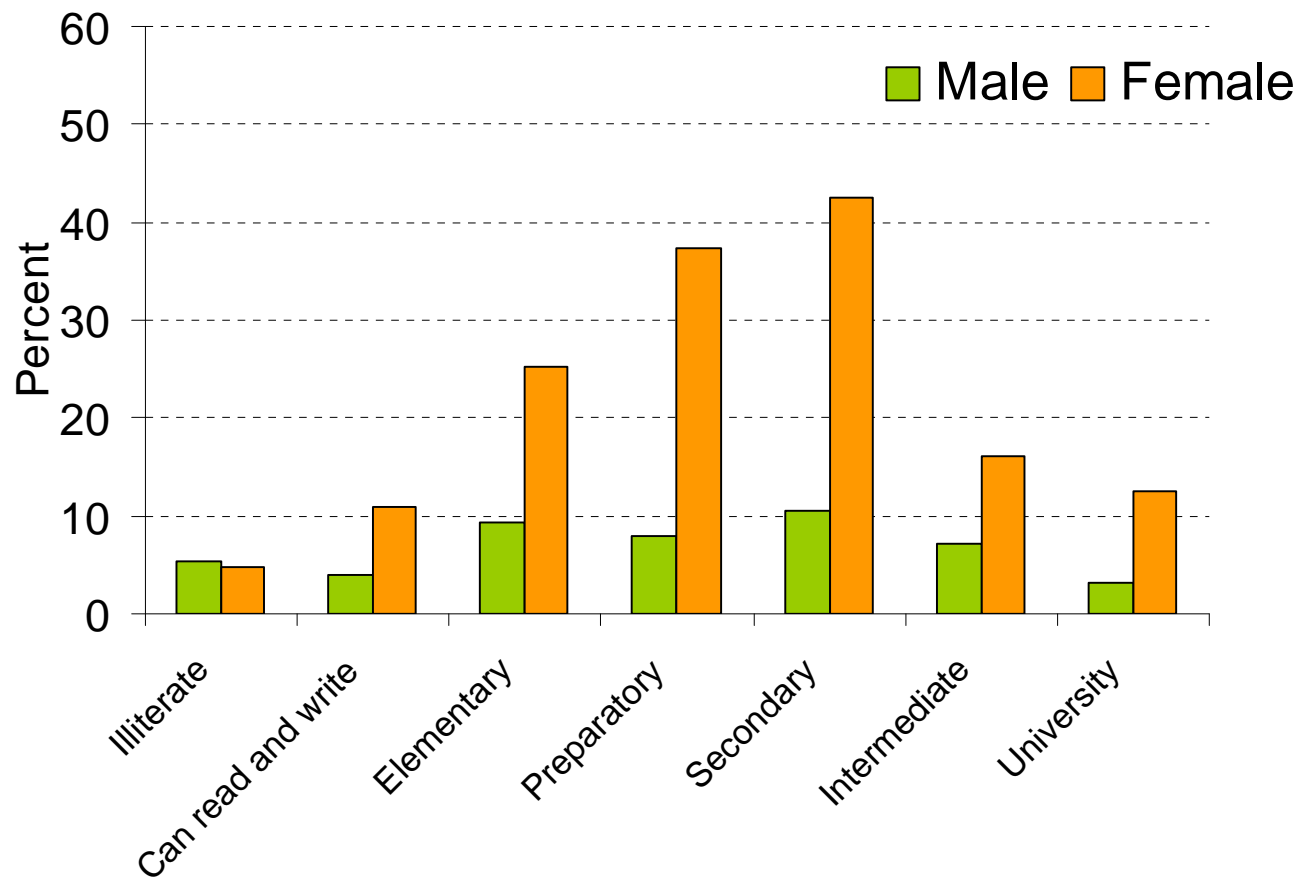


... particularly among (urban) women

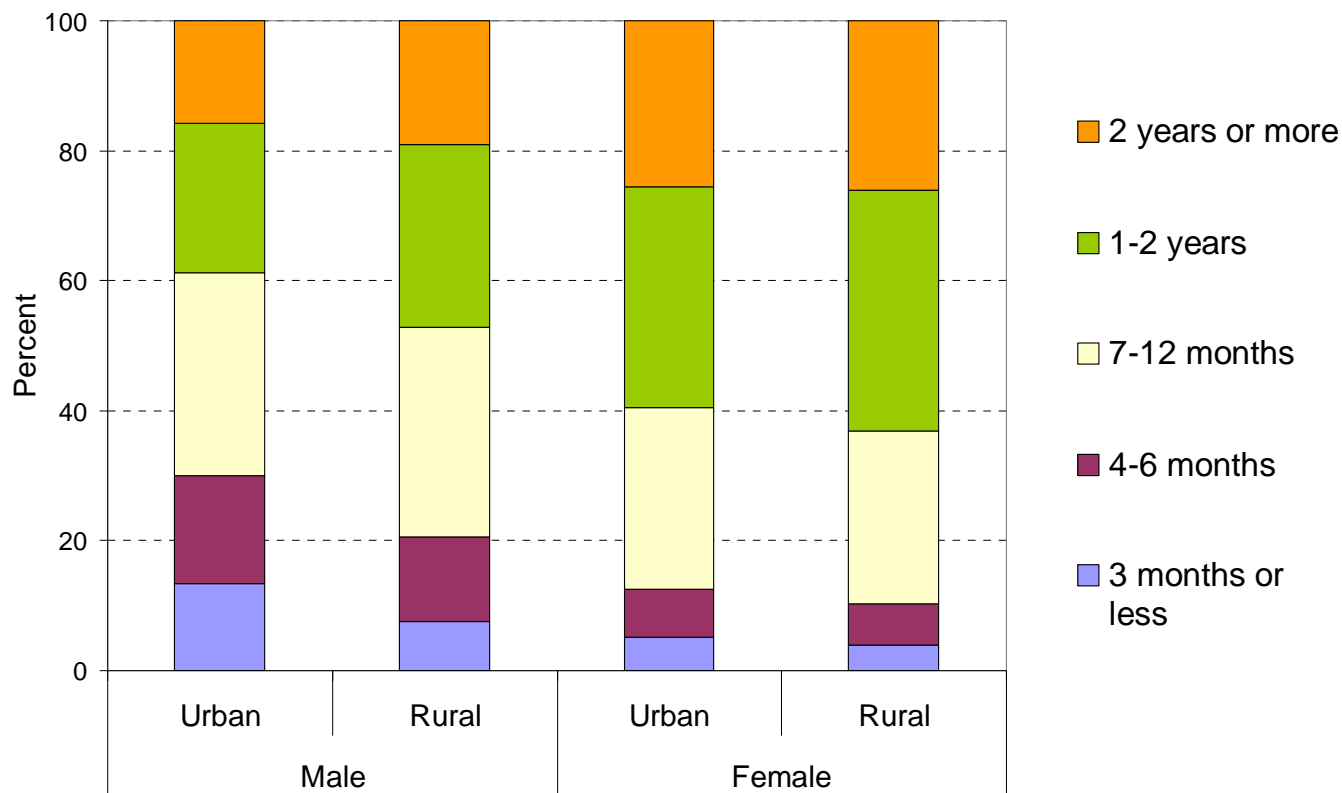
➤ 3 in 5 unemployed < 25 yrs

➤ 200,000 unempl. women;
300,000 unempl. men

Higher education pays off



Almost half the unemployed have sought work for > 1 year



➤ Many first-time job seekers

➤ Of those with previous work-experience, a majority have worked in the private sector

➤ Most prefer public employment (particularly women)

The underutilized (not ILO; developed for this report)

Definition:

The unemployed +

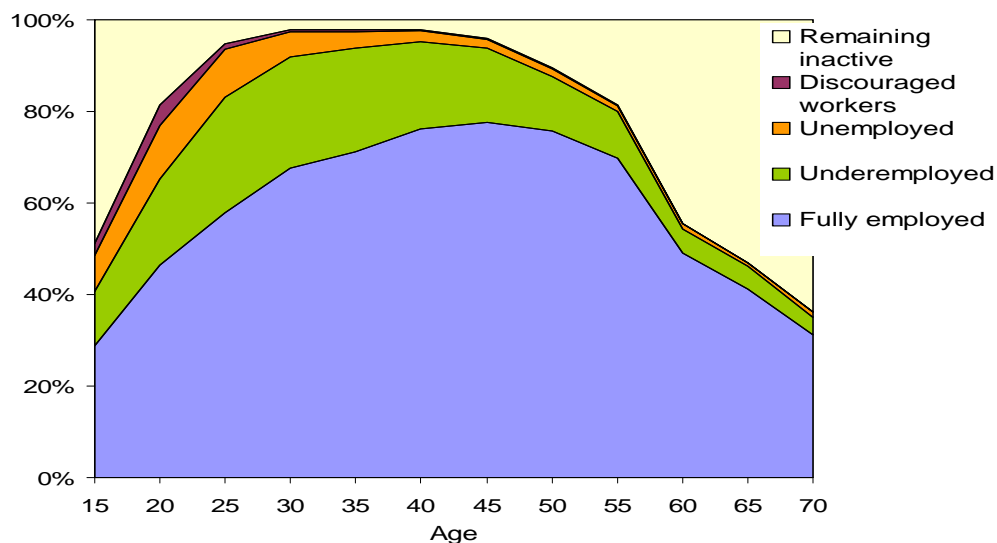
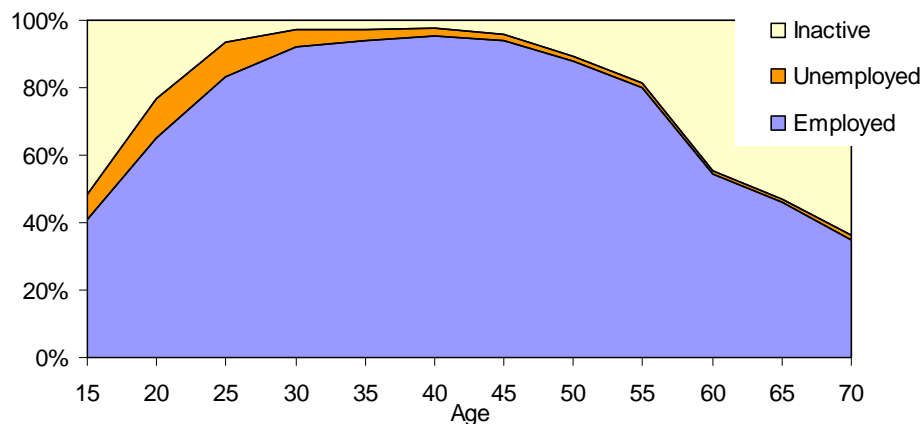
The discouraged (want to work but do not seek work because they believe none is to be found) +

The visibly underemployed (work less than full time and wants to work more) +

The invisibly underemployed (low-productivity jobs + the over-qualified)

Some characteristics ...

> 1.5 million underutilized (a underutilization rate of 31%)



➤ 1.250 million men;
300,000 women

➤ Underemployment
much more prevalent
among middle-aged
men than (complete)
unemployment