Economic Anthropology 2021; 8: 311–325 DOI:10.1002/sea2.12214

"The machine does it!": Using convenience technologies to analyze care, reproductive labor, gender, and class in urban Morocco

M. Ruth Dike

Department of Anthropology, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY 40506–0027, USA
Corresponding author: M. Ruth Dike; e-mail: mruthdike@uky.edu

Convenience technologies have the ability to change the way people do reproductive labor, or labor associated with caregiving and domestic roles, in their households. Reproductive labor is disproportionately performed by women across the globe and underpins capitalism by creating cheap labor. This article investigates how convenience technology challenges and reinforces gender roles and socioeconomic class for urban Moroccans. Although experiences of "convenience" are highly variable, gender and socioeconomic class influence experiences of convenience technologies. Convenience technologies help urban Moroccan women by opening up reproductive labor to men and children but, simultaneously, hurt urban Moroccan women by devaluing their reproductive labor in relation to men's labor. Convenience technologies reinforce socioeconomic class by supporting a household's reputation and validating urban Moroccans' perceptions of themselves as citizens of a developed nation-state. Besides expressing class, convenience technologies can contribute to a restructuring of women's position within the household. The article analyzes data collected during seventeen months of ethnographic fieldwork in Rabat-Salé, Morocco, from 2018 to 2019. I conducted fifty-three semistructured interviews with married middle- and lower-class Moroccans in Moroccan Arabic, as well as extensive informal participant observation. I analyze the gendered and classed politics of reproductive labor in relation to convenience technologies.

Keywords Convenience Technologies; Gender; Class; Reproductive Labor; Morocco

In mid-August 2019, I met with Amine (forty-three years old)[1] and Ameera (thirty-six years old) for an interview in a café in Salé that was convenient for them. From a middle-class family, Ameera and Amine are both French teachers in Salé, where Amine also organizes an association where I volunteered. When I asked, "Who cleans your clothes most of the time?" Ameera answered, "I do" (August 23, 2019). At the same time, Amine answered, "The washing machine." Then, Ameera added with a chuckle, "Even a washing machine needs someone to make it work." Language, and the way that Moroccan women highlight their agency through language, is important (Sadiqi 2003, xv). Disagreeing with Amine not recognizing running the washing machine as work, Ameera highlights her crucial role. This demonstrates an interesting tension in who claims the labor of convenience technologies and how urban middle-class Moroccans talk about reproductive labor more broadly. Reproductive labor is defined as unpaid and paid labor associated with caregiving and domestic roles including but not limited to cleaning, cooking, and childcare (Smith 2013). Reproductive labor enables the reproduction of households, workers, and therefore a workforce that is crucial to capitalism (Chibnik 2011). However, reproductive labor, which is disproportionately performed by women around the world, is routinely devalued and often left out of government statistics (Chibnik 2011; Kan et al. 2011; Rubin 1975).

In Rabat, Morocco, an increasing number of Moroccan women are now working outside the home in the paid labor force (Alpert 2007; Bouasria 2013), which means more income and less time for reproductive labor. While younger middle-class Moroccan men sometimes help, women still do the vast majority of reproductive labor in

© 2021 by the American Anthropological Association. All rights reserved

and outside the home in Morocco (Bouasria 2013; Newcomb 2017). Can convenience technologies save women time and labor?

This article investigates how convenience technology challenges and reinforces gender roles and socioeconomic class for urban Moroccans. Convenience technologies are technologies designed to make tasks more convenient, easier, less labor intensive, and often less time consuming. The primary focus is washing machines, but I use examples of other convenience technologies to demonstrate that the argument is not limited to one technology. I chose convenience technologies in general, and especially washing machines, because they provide the clearer evidence for the arguments that I make compared to convenience foods. Similar to other contexts (e.g., Ghannam 2013, 93), washing machines have emerged as an ethnographically significant convenience technology because participants said that washing machines meaningfully impact their daily lives.

The first section discusses contributions to the literatures on convenience technologies, convenience-as-care and care work, and reproductive labor in households before discussing data and methods. The data sections answer three main questions: Do convenience technologies save time and labor? How do convenience technologies hurt and help urban Moroccan women? and, How do convenience technologies reinforce class? Experiences of convenience technologies vary from person to person, especially based on gender and socioeconomic class. Convenience technologies help urban Moroccan women by opening up reproductive labor to men and children but, simultaneously, hurt urban Moroccan women by devaluing their reproductive labor and women's labor in relation to men's labor in the kitchen. Convenience technology reinforces socioeconomic class through access and by reinforcing a household's reputation. Convenience technologies also support urban Moroccans' perceptions of themselves as citizens of a developed country.

The Moroccan urban middle classes feel pressure to buy convenience technologies to assert class identity, which is fueled by dual incomes that also create the need to save time and labor doing reproductive labor. Urban Morocco is unique because an important convenience technology, the washing machine, became affordable for most urban middle-class Moroccans at the same time that gender roles are subtly changing (i.e., men doing more reproductive labor than their fathers). In the Moroccan context, convenience technologies contribute to the restructuring of women's and men's position within the household. I am not arguing that if a socioeconomic class is able to afford a new convenience technology, men will suddenly start doing reproductive labor. Rather, I argue that convenience technologies open up reproductive labor to men and children but, concurrently, devalue that reproductive labor in the urban Moroccan context.

Convenience technologies

Convenience technology's advertisements, starting around the 1920s in the United States (Cowan 1983; Graham 1999; Strasser 1982), promised to free women from excessive amounts of time and labor spent on reproductive labor, potentially creating a more egalitarian society. However, the reality is more nuanced. The actual hours of reproductive labor in the United States did not significantly change from 1920 to 1990 because new activities and standards simultaneously increased reproductive labor time (Campanelli 2003, 165).

Although convenience technologies paired with shifting expectations did not dramatically change total hours spent doing reproductive labor in the United States, convenience technologies altered the way in which women do reproductive labor. Because more tasks can be done simultaneously with convenience technologies, Campanelli (2003,166) argues that women doing reproductive labor feel more stress than previous generations. Etienne (1980) argues that Western technologies like fabric factories were detrimental to the lives of Baule women by making them consumers, rather than producers of, cloth, which made them dependent on their husbands for sustenance and prestige. The presence of convenience technologies can have a physical impact on the body. In Montgomery's 2019 ethnography on domestic workers in Morocco, red and cracked hands are associated with women

living in the village without washing machines and other appliances, while soft, white hands are a marker of distinction (Bourdieu 1984), of someone living in the city and of a higher socioeconomic class.

Access to and use of convenience technologies can often have a direct positive correlation to socioeconomic class. Rather than taking a solely subjectivist approach to class, I seek to understand the practices and institutions that produce class (Carrier 2012). I examine local ideas about class and the institutions through which people secure and improve their socioeconomic position. Although the Moroccan middle classes grew from 53% of the population to 58.7% of the population from 2007 to 2014 (Haut-Commissariat au plan and Banque mondiale 2017), the cost of living in urban Morocco has increased significantly since 2010 (Haut-Commissariat Au Plan 2019), while salaries remain relatively stable.

Convenience as care and care work

Besides examining how convenience technologies change the way people do reproductive labor, I conceive of convenience as a possible way to care for one's family. While public health officials demonize convenience foods for causing obesity (Jackson and Viehoff 2016), Meah and Jackson (2017) and Warin et al. (2019) instead conceptualize convenience as a way to care for oneself, loved ones, distant others, and/or the environment. Convenience as care allows researchers to move beyond binary assertions of convenience being good or bad to show the complexities of convenience and care within a specific social context (Warde 1999, 519). While Warin et al. (2019) examine life histories and convenience foods, I conceptualize convenience as care to examine the conveniences' multiple layers of meaning that change significantly based on gender and class.

Like convenience, care is an "ambivalent, contextual and relational" practice (Martin, Myers, and Viseu 2015) happening across various spaces and at different times (Warin et al. 2019, 286). Rather than solely saving time, Carrigan, Szmigin, and Leek (2006) note that convenience technologies, like kitchen appliances, support specific kinds of gendered caring. Care work includes any tasks that provide care to someone else (Lane 2017). I use Folbre's (1995; see also Folbre and Weisskopf 1998) definition of care: to provide services based on personal interaction, motivated at least in part by a concern for the recipient's welfare. Because care work is associated with feminine qualities, it is often devalued and underpaid (Lane 2017). Arguing against a discourse that paying for care work means the care worker does not care for the recipient enough, social scientists reject the dichotomy between caring for a recipient and receiving compensation for care provided (Lane 2017).

Convenience technologies shape the practice and meaning of care work. I examine which convenience technologies are considered appropriate ways to care for one's family through reproductive labor. Not all care work is reproductive labor, but reproductive labor, in that someone is caring for someone else by providing food, direct childcare, and/or a clean house, can be defined as care work. Viewing reproductive labor through the lens of care work gives meaning to reproductive labor by asking when it constitutes appropriate care and how is it valued within a specific context, which lies at the center of femininity and motherhood (Cowan 1983).

Reproductive labor in households

Why is it important to study reproductive labor conducted in and outside of households? Crawford (2008) argues that within rural Morocco, households are the fundamental social unit from which an understanding of larger social processes must start. In this study, participants largely conceive of a household to be a collection of immediate and/or extended family members usually living together in one space, and 74% of participants live in a neolocal residence. Within economic anthropology, reproductive labor is largely conceptualized as the work that reproduces the household as an institution (Chibnik 2011). I examine the ways that convenience technologies are used to reproduce the household by helping feed and clothe its members and maintain the household's reputation.

Within Marxist-feminist theory, the household is viewed as a collection of private property that belongs to the male head of household (Maconachie 2009). Engels and Morgan (1978) reason that unlike proletariat marriages based solely on love-sex, bourgeoise marriages are all based on accumulation of property, which leads to the need for prostitution and the enslavement of women. Engels and Morgan (1978) theorized that with the elimination of class difference and women entering the workforce, the enslavement of women would be eliminated because men would only be concerned with sex-love. Maconachie (2009, 109) notes that despite Engels and Morgan "naturally" assigning women to reproductive labor and men to social reproduction, ethnographic data show women regularly contribute to social production and subsistence activities, albeit often structured by sexual divisions. Because of this, the liberation of women is not only dependent upon emancipation in the public sphere by gaining access to paid employment, but also dependent upon a restructuring of the domestic sphere (Maconachie 2009, 111–12).

Methods and data

During seventeen months of fieldwork living in Rabat, Morocco, I explored how women entering the paid workforce influences the distribution of reproductive labor among middle-class Moroccans in Rabat and Salé (Rabat's nearby sister city). Research included interviewing fifty-three married, adult Moroccan men and women in Moroccan Arabic (*dārija*)[2] as well as extensive participant observation. Using a purposive sampling strategy, I recruited participants through contacts established during preliminary research, volunteering teaching English, and the chain-referral method (Gobo 2008). All twenty-three male participants and most female participants (67%) participated in the paid labor force. Participants' classes ranged, but most participants were middle and upper-middle class. I evaluated socioeconomic class membership through participants' assessments of their class in addition to their education, economic resources, consumption, and job placement (Armbrust 2003; Cohen 2000; de Koning 2009). Participant observation consisted of deep hanging out (Geertz 1998) with participants in their places of work; at homes; and during weddings, Ramadan, holidays, and other special occasions.

Additionally, I lived with four different families for a week each to gain more fine-grained data on exactly who did which kinds of reproductive labor. The families were selected to include two families with the wife participating in the paid labor force and two not, in addition to two families with upper-middle-class backgrounds and two working-class families. I asked each family to treat me as a family member, rather than as a guest, and reinforced this by helping with childcare, cooking, clearing tables, and some cleaning. I also bought groceries or meals for the families as a small thank-you and to partially counteract the financial strain of having an extra person in the house for a week. I chose to spend a week with each family because I wanted to see how the distribution of reproductive labor changed throughout the week from workdays to the weekend. Overall, the participant observation data describing who did which types of reproductive labor support the responses that participants provided in interviews.

I analyzed and coded the fieldnotes and transcriptions for overarching themes that emerged from the data using the grounded theory approach (Charmaz 2014). The analyses included are based on common themes that arose from the data. While I have pulled a snapshot of quotes from interviews and informal interactions, the selected quotes are representative of my other findings. Owning a home, automatic washing machine, or car and employing a household employee often were associated with being middle or upper class in Moroccan society. These additional factors are included in Table 1 to give a better sense of the participants' socioeconomic classes and their social standings in Moroccan society.

Do convenience technologies save time and labor?

This section analyzes whether convenience technologies save time and labor. This is an essential question because advertisements for convenience technologies frequently promise to save time and labor. More importantly, saving

Table 1 List of participants included in the article and corresponding information

Wife and husband pseudonyms[a]	No. inhabitants living in household currently	Ages (wife, husband, children, other family)	Socioeconomic class	Rent or own	Washing machine	Car	Household employee
Ameera (W), Amine, and children	5	36, 43, 13, 9, 4	middle	own	yes (automatic)	yes	yes (4×/year)
Karima (W), Rachid, Madiha, and Khadija	4	61, 65, 28, 25	middle	own (her parent's house)	yes (automatic)	yes	no
Rkia, Noureddine, and children	5	29, 38, 8, 4, 1	lower	own (his parent's house)	yes (semiautomatic)	yes; motorcycle	no
Nadia, husband, and husband's mother	3	29, (?), (?)	lower	own (his mother's house)	yes (mother-in-law's semiautomatic)	yes; motorcycle	no
Hanane (W), husband, and children	5	44, (?), 15, 13, 9	upper middle	own	yes (automatic)	yes	yes (1×/week)
Malika (W), husband, and children	5	43, (?), 14, 13, 10	middle	own	yes (automatic)	yes	no
Boushra (W), Ilyas, and daughter	3	58, 62, 17	upper middle	own	yes (automatic; semiautomatic)	yes	no
Amal (W), Yahia, and sons	5	42, 48, 10, 8, 3	middle	rent	yes (automatic)	yes	yes (4×/week)
Fatiha (W) and husband	2	30, (?)	middle	rent	yes (automatic)	no	no
Iman (W), Abdelhafid, and children	5	42, 41, 12, 9, 6	upper middle	rent	yes (automatic)	yes (2)	yes (daily)
Aziza (W), Hassan, and children	5	39, 60, 19, 18, 11	lower middle	own (his parent's house)	yes (automatic)	no	no

[a] (W) means that the wife is participating in the paid labor force.

women some time and labor that they spend disproportionately doing reproductive labor (Kan et al. 2011) could lead to less inequality between men and women. Specifically, this section finds that while washing machines almost uniformly save urban Moroccan women time and labor, other convenience technologies, such as mixers, could actually increase the amount of time spent doing reproductive labor.

Yes—washing machines

In the early and mid-2000s, owning a washing machine was economically unfeasible for most urban middle-class Moroccans. A significant drop in the price of washing machines in the last ten years in Morocco, due in part to market liberalization (Newcomb 2017), means that most urban Moroccans now have a semiautomatic or automatic washing machine. Middle-class Karima (sixty-one years old), who is a domestic worker for an American family, said that she has had her automatic washing machine for "maybe eight years or more" and that "before having the machine, it took me half a day, but now it is quickly done" (interview, September 23, 2018), stressing time saved.

At Rkia's (twenty-nine years old) house in a working-class neighborhood in Salé, Nadia (twenty-nine years old), Rkia, and I discussed washing clothes in the following interview excerpt (June 19, 2019). My friend Rkia is Nadia's sister-in-law because she is married to Nadia's older brother Noureddine (Table 1). Rkia and Noureddine have three children (ages eight, four, and one), with a fourth on the way. Nadia moved to Casablanca to live with her husband about a year earlier, when they got married, and lives with her mother-in-law and husband there. Neither Nadia nor Rkia participates in the paid labor force. I asked Nadia if she has a washing machine:

NADIA: Yes, my mother-in-law has it, everything in the house is hers [*laughing*].
AUTHOR: Is it automatic?
NADIA: No, it's normal.
AUTHOR: Mine too.
NADIA: You don't have an automatic [washing machine]?
AUTHOR: No, because we do not have water inputs in the apartment we rent.
RKIA: You should bring someone to install it.
AUTHOR: That's OK, I don't have so much time left in Morocco.
RKIA: You're right, you don't have that many clothes either.
AUTHOR: What matters is that I don't wash them with my hands.
RKIA: That's true. We used to wash clothes with our hands for a very long time. Have you ever washed them with your hands?
AUTHOR: Yes, I didn't have a washing machine for a few months last year.
RKIA: It's so hard especially with kids' clothes, you have to do it one by one.
NADIA: Right.
RKIA: You have to wash kids' clothes one by one. You can't put them all in at once like with the washing machine.
AUTHOR: That would take a long time!
NADIA: Right now, I only do laundry every fifteen days or so, not too much.

Rkia grew up in the countryside near the mountains with six sisters and one brother. When she was growing up, she did not have a washing machine. Being in the middle of her six sisters, Rkia was old enough to help with chores, like hand-washing her sisters' and brother's clothes. Nadia also has four younger siblings, and she grew up helping hand-wash clothes. Both Nadia and Rkia stressed the convenience of having a semiautomatic washing machine that saves time and labor. Nadia seemed surprised that I did not have an automatic washing machine, probably due to my positionality as a white American woman living in Rabat, Morocco. Because of their positionality as women over the age of twenty, Karima, Nadia, and Rkia all remember a specific time when they had to wash clothes without

the convenience of a washing machine. Because the majority (57%) of the people with whom I spoke identified as women over the age of twenty, much of the data stress the time- and labor-saving properties of washing machines.

No—mixers

While it is clear that washing machines save time and labor, other convenience technologies led to highly variable results. With stand mixers used for making bread, some participants found them useful, while others never used their mixers. While discussing washing dishes, upper-middle-class Hanane (forty-four years old), who works at a private Salé high school, stated, "Yes, I have a mixer that I bought for 1,600 dhs [~US$176] and I still don't use it. It's more convenient to just do it with my hands instead of waiting for it to make it" (interview, March 13, 2019). Despite spending a relatively large amount on this convenience technology, the mixer did not save Hanane time or labor. On the other hand, middle-class Malika (forty-three years old), who teaches at a public Salé high school, noted that her mixer saved her both time and money:

AUTHOR: Do you make bread at home?
MALIKA: I started making it lately because the bread we buy isn't good enough. I found that we spend 20 dhs [US$2.19] on bread.
AUTHOR: In a week?
MALIKA: No, in a day.
AUTHOR: Five people eat 20 [discs of] bread a day?!
MALIKA: Yes, we consume bread a lot. While I spend 8 dhs [US$0.88] on homemade bread that lasts for three days and it's a lot better than the bread we buy.
AUTHOR: What about time?
MALIKA: I have a mixer, so it doesn't take a lot of time.
AUTHOR: How many times do you make bread in a week?
MALIKA: I make it every three days. (interview, June 20, 2019)

Despite Hanane and Malika both being urban middle-class women in their forties, they experienced and (dis)used convenience technologies differently. While washing machines save Moroccan women time and labor, mixers do not uniformly save time and labor. These findings indicate that the concept of "convenience" is highly subjective. The uses and experiences of convenience technologies are highly variable and experienced differently by different people. The following sections examine how convenience technologies are experienced differently based on gender and class.

How do convenience technologies hurt and help women?

This section examines how gender influences the (dis)use of convenience technologies. Convenience technologies promise to liberate women from time- and labor-consuming tasks, and Marxist-feminists argue that a restructuring of labor in the domestic sphere is necessary for gender equality (Maconachie 2009). But what impacts do convenience technologies actually have on gender roles? This section asks how convenience technologies help and hurt Moroccan women by devaluing reproductive labor, opening up labor to men and children, and facilitating special meals cooked by men.

An "easy" task

I sometimes interviewed married couples together and sometimes separately based on their availability and preference. I interviewed the upper-middle-class couple Boushra (fifty-eight years old) and her husband, Ilyas (sixty-two years old), separately. Boushra teaches at a public middle school, and Ilyas is a college professor. When

I asked Boushra, "Who cleans the clothes most of the time?" she replied, "The washing machine cleans them" (interview, March 23, 2019). Boushra added, "I help it," and laughed. I then followed up, asking, "Does anyone else use the washing machine?" and Boushra replied, "No, just me. I air dry them and fold them." Based on her response, we know that she does all of the laundry in the house for herself, her husband, and their teenage daughter. When I interviewed Boushra's husband, Ilyas, about a month later, his answer was more succinct. I asked the same question: "Who cleans the clothes most of the time?" He simply replied, "The washing machine" (interview, May 5, 2019), without acknowledging his wife's contribution at all. In this example, Ilyas completely ignored (intentionally or not) his wife's reproductive labor. Because of washing machines, the labor involved in doing laundry is now viewed as "easy" in urban Morocco. Convenience technologies contribute to the devaluing of reproductive labor, especially in relation to paid labor, which hurts Moroccan women.

Men doing laundry

At the same time, laundry being "easy" opens this task up to other family members besides mothers, such as older children and husbands. At middle-class Amal (forty-two years old) and Yahia's (forty-eight years old) house, I interviewed Amal's coworker Hanane (forty-four years old), who described herself as "upper middle class." The following interview excerpt (March 13, 2019) demonstrates flexibility in who can do reproductive labor:

AUTHOR: Who cleans your clothes most of the time?
HANANE: The washing machine.
AUTHOR: Who puts the clothes in the machine?
HANANE: Me, my husband, or the kids, no problem.
AMAL, *chiming in*: That's an easy task!
HANANE: Indeed.

In this example, Hanane and Amal agree that putting the clothes in the machine is an "easy task" that can be completed by anyone in the household, including Hanane's three children aged fifteen, thirteen, and nine years. Some urban Moroccan men to whom I spoke were willing to do the laundry because washing machines have made the chore "easy." The Moroccan men who do the laundry tended to be younger (younger than forty-five years) and middle class rather than older (older than fifty-five years) and lower-middle or lower class. Convenience technologies are good for urban Moroccan women because they open the door for men and children to do more reproductive labor. However, doing reproductive labor with convenience technologies does not guarantee that men will do any other reproductive labor.

Men employed multiple techniques to resist doing more reproductive labor. For example, when I asked middle-class Fatiha (thirty years old), "Who cleans your clothes most of the time?" she responded, "He [her husband] does, because it's easy [*laughing*]."

AUTHOR: At least he's doing something.
FATIHA: Yes, he does laundry on the weekend.
AUTHOR: Does this change?
FATIHA: No, it's always him.
AUTHOR: Did you both decide to share the chores?
FATIHA: No, he decided to do laundry.
AUTHOR: Do you ask him to help you more?
FATIHA: Yes, I ask him, but he always says that he's tired.
AUTHOR: Always tired! [*laughing*]

FATIHA: Always! [*laughing*] For instance, I ask him to do dishes when I'm cooking but he says that he's tired and he goes to sleep or watches TV and soccer. (interview, February 15, 2019)

Despite willingly volunteering to do laundry weekly, Fatiha's husband reinforces the idea that reproductive labor is Fatiha's responsibility by refusing to do any other household tasks besides laundry.

My middle-class friend Khadija (twenty-five years old) provided another example. Khadija, her mother, Karima (sixty-one years old), and her sister Madiha (twenty-eight years old) all begged their retired father and husband, Rachid (sixty-five years old), for many months to help with housework in some way after he was retired and had more time around the house. After about a year, they finally convinced him to hang the clothes on the roof to dry and take them down every week. Their mother, Karima, did the laundry in the washing machine downstairs and brought it upstairs for Rachid to put out on the roof every Saturday. This interview took place at Rachid's home while his wife and their two younger daughters laughed and joked:

RACHID: Laundry, they carry them up to the roof and I hang them.
AUTHOR: How many times do you do laundry in a week?
RACHID, *jokingly*: Four or five times in one week.
AUTHOR: That's a lot, you have so many clothes!
KARIMA: He's lying! You do it every Saturday.
RACHID: I'm not going to hang them if you do laundry more than once in a week.
KARIMA: You have many clothes, that's why. (interview, July 11, 2019)

Rachid jokingly stated that he does laundry four or five times a week when he really only did it once a week. There could have been several reasons for Rachid joking about doing laundry more often than he actually did, but his wife, Karima, corrected his statement. Rachid asserted that he would not hang the laundry more than once a week, even if Karima did laundry more than once a week. Although Rachid was joking, he was also putting boundaries around the care work that he was currently doing, announcing to everyone that he would not do *more* housework. While Rachid was caring for his family, he simultaneously resisted the idea that he should be the one hanging the clothes to dry by refusing to do any more laundry. Despite only being four years older than his wife, Rachid's ideas about appropriate care for his family clashed with his wife's and children's ideas about who should be doing reproductive labor. Though Rachid is representative of most of the older urban Moroccan men with whom I spoke, it is also important to note that that families vary widely. Younger and older urban Moroccan husbands had no complaints about doing laundry in some families, while in others, it was extremely rare for a husband to do laundry or any reproductive labor.

While older urban Moroccan men push back against doing reproductive labor, Moroccan women sometimes assert that men should be doing reproductive labor. Later in the interview, Rachid's daughter Madiha commented that "Malak's husband goes into the kitchen. He changes diapers. He helps his wife in everything. This man [her father] is lazy. It is their mind-set. The new generation [of men] helps, not like the old one." Madiha contrasted her father's generation's mind-set to Malak's presumably younger husband "going into the kitchen." Comparing older (over fifty-five years) to younger (under forty-five years) participants' interviews suggests that older participants enact a stricter division of care activities. For most older participants, husbands should care for their family by paying for household expenses and wives should care for their family by performing reproductive labor. This stricter division of care activities also has a direct gendered impact on domestic spaces inside the home: the kitchen is women's space, and men are not welcomed there. After Madiha's comment about generational differences, Rachid said, "Our kitchen fits only one person. She would kick me out of it if I try to help."

AUTHOR: Does she do that? [*To Karima*] Do you do that?
KARIMA, *laughing*: Yes!

AUTHOR: Why?!

KARIMA: I don't like being with him in the kitchen. I leave it when he comes in, our kitchen is very little for two people.

Karima admitted herself that she is not comfortable with her and Rachid being in the kitchen, blaming it on the size of the kitchen. Their kitchen juts out of the main hallway in their apartment and is roughly 7 ft. (2.1 m) wide and 4 ft. (1.2 m) deep. This is a small kitchen, but I saw Karima in the kitchen with Madiha or Khadija regularly during fieldwork. Being comfortable with her daughters in the kitchen with her, but not her husband, displays a gendered division of domestic spaces. Unlike Madiha's cousin Malak, who is much younger than Karima, Karima is not comfortable with her husband regularly "entering the kitchen." Owing to this stricter division of domestic spaces for older participants, Rachid is unlikely to use convenience technologies located in the kitchen (i.e., mixer, pressure cooker, or oven) but has begrudgingly accepted hanging clothes from the washing machine. Convenience technologies help Moroccan women by opening the "easy" task of laundry to men and children. However, men often reject the notion of doing other care work, reinforcing the idea that reproductive labor is mainly the responsibility of women.

Tajine versus the pressure cooker?

Urban Moroccan men agree to do laundry with washing machines because it is now an "easy" task. Inside the kitchen, the opposite happens. Urban Moroccan men will sometimes agree to cook more complicated and special meals specifically because they are not "easy." One such special meal is a tajine, which is very popular and considered by many to be the Moroccan national dish (Dike 2012). A tajine is named after the triangular-shaped earthenware dish in which the ingredients (often some combination of vegetables and meat) are cooked over coals. Both the clay vessel and food dish are called tajine. In the past twenty years, cooking tajines in a clay vessel or in pressure cookers on a gas stove has become more common compared to cooking over a coal fire. Cooking in a pressure cooker can cut the cooking time in half or more. However, some Moroccans express nostalgia for the taste of tajine made over coals, which has a smokier flavor (Dike 2012). During fieldwork, nearly all middle-class participants and friends used pressure cookers to cook tajines, most of the time. Cooking over coals is possible on a terrace or rooftop, things to which most urban Moroccans have access, but does not happen regularly. Like with washing machines, using a convenience technology (the pressure cooker) saves time but hurts women by devaluing their labor for not being the coal-fired, time-consuming tajine. The positive sense of care that frequently accompanies reproductive labor is diminished by using a pressure cooker.

In the following example, Iman (forty-nine years old) explained that her husband, Abdelhafid, occasionally cooks for the family because he has mastered cooking the tajine. He cooks in a clay tajine vessel over the gas stove, roughly once a week on the weekend.

AUTHOR: Does your husband help you in the kitchen?

IMAN: Yes.

AUTHOR: How so?

IMAN: He cooks. He makes snacks to the kids if I'm not home. He makes the tajine. [*laughing*] That's it—he makes tea, coffee, tajine.

AUTHOR: When does he cook?

IMAN: On the weekend, we ask him to make us a tajine because he masters it, or he makes fish sometimes, and I do the rest. I just ask him to make our food when I'm feeling tired. (interview, September 14, 2018)

This one conversation is indicative of a larger trend in the data, namely, that Moroccan women feel the responsibility to care for the family, by doing reproductive labor, most of the time. Iman feels that it is only appropriate to ask her husband, Abdelhafid, to care for the family by cooking when she is "feeling tired," but not on a daily basis, and not including "the rest" of the meal.

Because daily cooking is strictly reproductive, it is a woman's role, while ceremonial meals become a man's role. Even within domestic spaces, Iman and Abdelhafid's example shows that men are more likely to cook special, ceremonial meals (like fish or tajine on the weekend), while women cook utilitarian meals daily (Meah and Jackson 2013). This connects to Ortner's (1997) argument that in many societies, women are associated with reproductive tasks and nature, whereas men are associated with the production of culture. While men are not always associated with ceremonial meals in Morocco (e.g., during Ramadan, women cook), it shows the enduring nature of gender roles (Ortner 1997). I argue that the Moroccan women with whom I spoke are more likely to embrace effective time-saving convenience technologies to cook daily utilitarian meals than men.

This section analyzes how the addition of convenience technologies tends to devalue reproductive labor as an "easy" task, while simultaneously opening the door for men and children to do more reproductive labor. Some men push back on new expectations to do reproductive labor by putting limitations on what they are willing to do, while others do not. Inside the kitchen, when men do cook, it still reinforces their favored status in the household (Meah and Jackson 2013; Ortner 1997). Urban Moroccan women tend to use time-saving practical convenience technologies in the kitchen more often than men. Unlike in the United States, where convenience technologies increase intensity and therefore stress for mothers (Campanelli 2003), an increase in demand on families' time (more paid labor, more extracurricular children's activities, etc.) more significantly contributed to feelings of stress among participants in Morocco. Ultimately, convenience technologies help urban middle-class Moroccan women some by making it more socially acceptable for men and children to do "easy" household tasks but, simultaneously, reinforce unequal gender roles. Similar to Baule women using Western technologies in the factories that devalued women's labor (Etienne 1980), using pressure cookers and washing machines often devalues Moroccan women's labor. Convenience technologies hurt urban Moroccan women by contributing to the devaluing of reproductive labor and women's labor in comparison to men's labor.

How do convenience technologies reinforce class?

The next section examines the ways that convenience technologies reinforce socioeconomic class in urban Morocco. Convenience technologies reinforce socioeconomic class because economic capital determines which classes are able to afford which convenience technologies, which in turn can uphold a household's reputation (Chibnik 2011). Additionally, the (dis)use of convenience technologies can have a physical impact on one's body, with the impact on hands negatively correlating to socioeconomic class. Convenience technologies also reinforce urban Moroccans' identity of themselves as citizens of a developed nation in relation to the larger world.

Class, capital, and reputation

Access to convenience technologies is classed because the technologies cost money and hold symbolic value (Bourdieu 1984). All fifty-three participants, regardless of class, have a semiautomatic or automatic washing machine because they became more affordable in the last ten years. The few participants (15%) who have a dishwasher are upper-middle and middle class. Even Rkia, who classified herself as "lower class," has a semiautomatic washing machine. When Rkia and her husband, Noureddine, moved into an empty three-room apartment in 2015, Noureddine bought a refrigerator, an oven, living room (*sālūn*) furniture, and a washing machine on credit. Noureddine bought these convenience technologies as necessities for his family, despite not having the economic capital to buy with cash.

How do Moroccans define being "middle class"? Boufous and Khariss (2015) argue that the middle class emerged in postindependence Morocco from the bourgeoisie and working classes, including middle functionaries, employees, modern merchants, technicians, teachers, and some skilled laborers who spoke Arabic and French. Participants used the direct translation *middle class* (*ṭabaqa mutawasṭa*) and associated being middle class with being an "employee" (*mūẓaf*) of the Moroccan government with benefits and a pension, in contrast to working-class

or popular (*sh'bī*) people. When asked to define what makes a Moroccan "middle class," participants mentioned the importance of "having the necessities." Across the data set, participants defined middle-class "necessities" as private education, neolocal housing, food, money for private health care, and mobility (having a car and/or taking vacations inside of Morocco). Participants included these main markers of distinction (Bourdieu 1984) but did not mention a household convenience technology like a washing machine. Convenience technologies can serve as an intermediary between the extremes of producing and processing all goods and services by hand (sometimes associated with lower classes) and consuming everything by buying all goods and services (usually associated with higher classes). Convenience technologies can enable the middle classes to produce clean clothes and food at home. Washing machines bridge the gap between producing your own clean clothes by hand and consuming this service by hiring someone else to do it.

Convenience technologies can also reinforce class by upholding the reputation of the household, to reproduce itself as an institution (Chibnik 2011). Being hospitable and generous toward guests is very important in Moroccan culture (Elliot 2020). Because it was Ramadan, Aziza (thirty-nine years old) and Hassan (sixty years old) invited me over for *fṭūr*, or the meal breaking the fast, before the interview in their home. During *fṭūr*, we had mashed potato *brīwāt* (fried snacks), mini vegetable pizzas, *ḥarīra* (soup often served at Ramadan), a white cake with caramel, a chocolate coffee cake, two kinds of *shabākīa* (a fried Moroccan pastry), and three kinds of juice. Aziza used convenience technologies (the blender to make juices and the electric oven to cook cake) to show hospitality and maintain the reputation of her household.

Proudly displaying an expensive convenience technology might also uphold a household's reputation. Participants proudly display or hide convenience technologies for a variety of reasons. Based on my observations, the decision to display or put away small countertop convenience technologies is highly variable, with no clear patterns emerging. Participants could hide a convenience technology due to it being an older model or simply because they have limited counter space. This is a meaningful question because it could show further the symbolic significance of convenience technologies, but no patterns about their display emerged in the data. Having convenience technologies and using them to uphold a household's reputation reinforce socioeconomic class in urban Morocco.

Using your hands

Convenience technologies also reinforce class by physically affecting the body. The amount that someone must use her hands when doing laundry roughly correlates to socioeconomic class in Morocco. The poorest classes cannot afford a washing machine and must hand-wash their own clothes with cold water, and potentially others' clothes as a domestic worker. The lower and lower-middle classes can afford to buy a "normal" (*'ādī*) or semiautomatic washing machine to which they still must manually add cold or warm water, but the machine agitates (and sometimes spins) the clothes for them. The upper-middle and wealthiest classes rarely use their hands for manual labor and can afford to buy an automatic washing machine with cold and hot water running directly into the machine and/or to pay someone else to do their laundry for them. Montgomery (2019, 160) finds that because the domestic workers to whom she spoke have access to their employers' convenience technologies, their hands are more "white and beautiful" compared to the hands of relatives living in the village.

One advertisement that came out during Ramadan in May 2018 (Mio 2018) stressed the importance of reproductive labor's impact on hands. Mio is a brand for the Moroccan-based company Ama Detergents, which sells washing machine detergents and other household cleaners. The video titled "Every Hand Has a Story" begins with the proverb, written in Moroccan Arabic, "Blessed be the hardworking hand." In the video, six Moroccan men are asked to look at black-and-white photos of people's hands and identify to whom the hands belong. The men speculate that the hands belong to people who work with their hands daily: farmers, domestic workers, plumbers, and so on (Mio 2018). Then, the men find out that the hands they are seeing belong to a female family member who cares for them through reproductive labor: their sister, daughter, mother, or wife. After personal reflections,

the women come out to show their hands in person to their shocked brothers, fathers, sons, and husbands. Hamza (twenty-two years old) kisses his sister's hands and says to her, "I'm very sorry. I didn't know these were your hands. I absolutely must help your hands. It's shameful. These hands [pulling out his hands and shaking them up and down] should also be working hard" (Mio 2018). The advertisement concludes with the written words "One hand is not enough. But hand in hand, everything is easier" before a final picture of the Mio brand and "Let's help each other" in Moroccan Arabic. For the video on YouTube, Mio added French and English subtitles.

Mio has similar advertisements showing men doing housework, but this advertisement stresses the importance of the wives, sisters, daughters, and mothers who do reproductive labor and the impact of that labor on their hands. The Moroccan men in the video associate worn and cracked hands with "someone who works on the land, a plumber, a domestic worker, someone doing handiwork"—distinctly lower-class professions. This advertisement demonstrates a rough correlation between those who work with their hands and being part of a lower working class. Having a convenience technology like a washing machine can have a direct impact on someone's hands and signify class.

Living in a developed Morocco

Convenience technologies can also reinforce Moroccans' perception of Morocco's "class standing" in the world order in relation to other countries. Besides making laundry less hands-on, convenience technologies also acquire important symbolic significance in particular social contexts (Miller 2012). For urban Moroccans, the presence of convenience technologies in the home represents modernity and "development." In the following example, I asked lower-middle-class Aziza (thirty-nine years old) about changing Moroccan foodways, and her son Ashraf (nineteen years old) and husband, Hassan (sixty years old), chimed in to comment:

AUTHOR: How have Moroccan foods changed over time?
AZIZA: Now it's different. People make cakes and juice. We didn't have juice before, we used to eat the fruit.
ASHRAF: Didn't you have a blender?
AZIZA: No, we didn't.
ASHRAF: Are you talking about the year 1475?! When was there no blender?
AZIZA: I'm talking about my generation. There wasn't a blender. On the street, you could get juice.
HASSAN: We used to have juice. [*To Aziza*] Which generation are you talking about?
AZIZA: She asked me to talk about the old generation, not now.
HASSAN: Ah, yes! Morocco has developed in the late years.
AZIZA: Blenders existed, but only a few people had them, only some people.
AUTHOR: Rich people?
AZIZA: Right, rich people, not everyone. Now, a blender is given to anyone. Anyone has a pressure cooker. Anyone has an oven. Everyone has everything. Not "there is not." Everything is available now.
AUTHOR: Did you have an oven when you were young?
AZIZA: I just bought the electric oven a year ago.
AUTHOR: No, I mean at your parents' house.
AZIZA: Ah! We had a traditional one.
AUTHOR: What about the pressure cooker?
AZIZA: No, we had a clay pot, and a tajine, of course. (interview, May 12, 2019)

When blenders first appeared on the Moroccan market in the 1970s, not everyone could afford them. As the price went down, these convenience technologies became more affordable and available. Based on Aziza's assessment, convenience technologies like pressure cookers, blenders, and electric ovens used to be status markers for urban upper-class Moroccans (Bourdieu 1984). Today, because "everyone has everything," owning these convenience technologies does not distinguish someone from his or her neighbors. Despite not explicitly being markers of an

upper- or middle-class lifestyle, these convenience technologies are still associated with "development" or modernity. Hassan symbolically associates more access to blenders with "development," which is tied to modernity. In this way, wood/coal-burning stoves, clay pots, and tajines are associated with "tradition," and convenience technologies like blenders, pressure cookers, and electric ovens are associated with being part of a "developed" Morocco. Convenience technologies support urban Moroccans' perceptions of themselves as citizens of a developed nation-state.

This section explored the ways that convenience technologies reinforce socioeconomic class in urban Morocco. Access to convenience technologies is mediated by access to economic capital, and the convenience technologies hold symbolic value (Bourdieu 1984) that can maintain a household's reputation (Chibnik 2011). Convenience technologies can also have an embodied effect, which roughly correlates to socioeconomic class (i.e., soft or rough hands). Finally, convenience technologies also support urban Moroccans' perceptions of themselves as citizens of a developed nation-state within the world hierarchy.

Conclusion

This article analyzes how convenience technology challenges and reinforces gender roles and socioeconomic class for urban Moroccans. Viewing reproductive labor through the lens of care work gives meaning to reproductive labor by asking when reproductive labor constitutes care and how is it valued within a specific context. Convenience technologies sometimes save time and labor. However, the experiences of "convenience" are highly subjective and experienced differently by different people, often due to gender and class. Convenience technologies help urban Moroccan women by enabling men and children to do the "easy" task of laundry. However, convenience technologies also hurt urban Moroccan women by encouraging the persistent devaluing of reproductive labor in the household and women's labor in relation to men's labor in the kitchen (Meah and Jackson 2013; Ortner 1997). In this context, reproductive labor is devalued and dismissed because it is engulfed under care work and gender norms. Convenience technologies reinforce socioeconomic class because they require economic capital to purchase and can support the reputation of a household. Convenience technologies symbolically reinforce Moroccans' perceptions of their standing in the world as citizens of a developed nation-state. Although convenience technologies may be purchased in part to support the reputation of a household, they also have the power to redefine women's position within the household. In urban Morocco, acquiring cultural capital not only affects social mobility but can also reshape meanings of care and gender within a household.

Acknowledgments

I am deeply grateful to the research participants who made this work possible. This research was part of the author's doctoral dissertation fieldwork, possible through generous funding from the US Department of Education, Lambda Alpha, and the University of Kentucky's Department of Anthropology. The article was greatly improved by the important and insightful comments from the anonymous reviewers. I also thank Sarah Lyon, editor Brandon D. Lundy, Anahid Matossian, and Stacie Hatfield for their helpful feedback and suggestions.

Notes

1 The names used for particular individuals in this article are pseudonyms. Biographical details have been slightly altered to protect anonymity. All quotations were originally in Moroccan Arabic. Translations are by the author.

2 All transliterations from Arabic use the system adopted by the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*.

References

Alpert, Rachel. 2007. *Women in Morocco: Participation in the Workforce as an Avenue of Social Mobility*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

Armbrust, Walter. 2003. "Bourgeois Leisure and Egyptian Media Fantasies." In *New Media in the Muslim World*, edited by Dale Eickelman and Jon Anderson, 102–28. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Bouasria, Leila. 2013. *Les ouvrières marocaines en mouvement: Qui paye? Qui fait le ménage? Et qui décide?* Paris: L'Harmattan.

Boufous, Sawssan, and Mohammed Khariss. 2015. "The Moroccan Middle Class from Yesterday to Today: Definition and Evolving." *Business and Economics Journal* 6(3): 1–7.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Campanelli, Giuliana. 2003. " 'Convenience Consumption' and Unpaid Labor Time: Paradoxes or Norms?" In *Unpaid Work and the Economy: A Gender Analysis of the Standards of Living*, edited by Antonella Picchio, 157–70. London: Routledge.

Carrier, James G. 2012. "The Trouble with Class." *European Journal of Sociology* 53(3): 263–84.

Carrigan, Marylyn, Isabelle Szmigin, and Sheena Leek. 2006. "Managing Routine Food Choices in UK Families: The Role of Convenience Consumption." *Appetite* 47(3): 372–83.

Charmaz, Kathy. 2014. *Constructing Grounded Theory*. 2nd ed. London: Sage.

Chibnik, Michael. 2011. *Anthropology, Economics, and Choice*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Cohen, Shana. 2000. "Waiting for a Different Future: Market Reform and the Transformation of the Middle Class in Morocco." PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley.

Cowan, Ruth S. 1983. *More Work for Mother: The Ironies of Household Technology from the Open Hearth to the Microwave*. New York: Basic Books.

Crawford, David. 2008. *Moroccan Households in the World Economy: Labor and Inequality in a Berber Village*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.

de Koning, Anouk. 2009. *Global Dreams: Class, Gender, and Public Space in Cosmopolitan Cairo*. Cairo: American University in Cairo Press.

Dike, Miriam R. 2012. "Exploring Moroccan Identities: The Tension between Traditional and Modern Cuisine in an Urban Context." Honors thesis, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Elliot, Alice. 2020. "Trickster Hospitality: A Moroccan Escalation Act." *History and Anthropology* 31(3): 1–14.

Engels, Friedrich, and Lewis Henry Morgan. 1978. *The origin of the family, private property and the state*. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House.

Etienne, Mona. 1980. "Women and Men, Cloth and Colonization: The Transformation of Production-Distribution Relations among the Baule (Ivory Coast)." In *Women and Colonization: Anthropological Perspectives*, edited by Mona Etienne and Elanor Leacock, 214–38. New York: Praeger.

Folbre, Nancy 1995. "'Holding Hands at Midnight': The Paradox of Caring Labor." *Feminist Economics* 1(1): 73– 92.

Folbre, Nancy, and Thomas Weisskopf. 1998. "Did Father Know Best? Families, Markets and the Supply of Caring Labor." In *Economics, Values, and Organization*, edited by A. Ben-Ner and L. Putterman, 171–205. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Geertz, Clifford. 1998. "Deep Hanging Out." *New York Review of Books* 45(16): 69–72.

Ghannam, Farha. 2013. *Live and Die Like a Man: Gender Dynamics in Urban Egypt*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Gobo, Giampietro. 2008. *Doing Ethnography*. London: Sage.

Graham, Laurel D. 1999. "Domesticating Efficiency: Lillian Gilbreth's Scientific Management of Homemakers, 1924–1930." *Signs* 24(3): 633–75.

Haut-Commissariat au Plan. 2019. "Indice des prix à la consummation (IPC) par grandes divisions." https://www.hcp.ma/Indice-des-prix-a-la-consommation-IPC-par-grandes-divisions_a209.html.

Haut-Commissariat au Plan and Banque mondiale. 2017. "Pauvreté et prospérité partagée au Maroc du troisième millénaire, 2001–2014." https://www.hcp.ma/file/195497/.

Jackson, Peter, and Valerie Viehoff. 2016. "Reframing Convenience Food." *Appetite* 98: 1–11.

Kan, ManYee, Oriel Sullivan, and Jonathan Gershuny. 2011. "Gender Convergence in Domestic Work: Discerning the Effects of Interactional and Institutional Barriers from Large- Scale Data." *Sociology* 45(2): 234–51.

Lane, Carrie M. 2017. "The Work of Care, Caring at Work: An Introduction." *Anthropology of Work Review* 38(1): 3–7.

Maconachie, Moira. 2009. "Engels, Sexual Divisions, and the Family." In *Engels Revisited: Feminist Essays*, edited by Janet Sayers, Mary Evans, and Nanneke Redclift, 98–113. New York: Routledge.

Martin, Aryn, Natasha Myers, and Ana Viseu. 2015. "The Politics of Care in Technoscience." *Social Studies of Science* 45(5): 625–41.

Meah, Angela, and Peter Jackson. 2013. "Crowded Kitchens: The 'Democratisation' of Domesticity?" *Gender, Place, and Culture* 20(5): 578–96.

———. 2017. "Convenience as Care: Culinary Antinomies in Practice." *Environment and Planning A* 49(9): 2065–81.

Miller, Daniel. 2012. *Capitalism: An Ethnographic Approach*. Oxford: Berg.

Mio. 2018. "Kul yad 'andhā qṣa" [Every hand has a story]. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=03vufKnIujk.

Montgomery, Mary. 2019. *Hired Daughters: Domestic Workers among Ordinary Moroccans*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Newcomb, Rachel. 2017. *Everyday Life in Global Morocco*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Ortner, Sherry. 1997. *Making Gender: The Politics and Erotics of Culture*. Boston: Beacon.

Rubin, Gayle. 1975. "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex." In *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, edited by Rayna Reiter, 157–210. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Sadiqi, Fatima. 2003. *Women, Gender, and Language in Morocco*. Leiden, the Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill.

Smith, Vicki. 2013. *Sociology of Work: An Encyclopedia*. London: Sage.

Strasser, Susan. 1982. *Never Done: A History of American Housework*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Warde, Alan. 1999. "Convenience Food: Space and Timing." *British Food Journal* 101(7): 518–27.

Warin, Megan, Bridget Jay, and Tanya Zivkovic. 2019. "'Ready-made' Assumptions: Situating Convenience as Care in the Australian Obesity Debate." *Food and Foodways* 27(4): 273–95.