

Evolution of Labor Concepts and Feminist Perspectives

Emek Kavramlarının Evrimi ve Feminist Perspektifler

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ÖZET

Bu çalışma, emeğin hane temelli üretimden ücret temelli endüstriyel sistemlere tarihsel evrimini araştırmakta ve modern ekonomilerde işin tanımının nasıl değiştiğini incelemektedir. Ekonomik perspektiften bakıldığında iş, piyasalarda arz ve talebe göre alınıp satılan bir mal veya hizmet olarak algılanmaktadır. Ücretli emeği vurgulayan geleneksel çalışma tanımları, ücretsiz bakım ve ev işlerinin yeterince takdir edilmediğini vurgulayan feminist bakış açıları tarafından sorgulanmaktadır. Kadınların sosyal konumları ve ekonomik güçlenmeleri, toplumsal cinsiyet eşitsizliğini destekleyen bu değersizleştirme nedeniyle kısıtlanmaktadır. Bu araştırma, İstanbul ve İzmir'de kadınların istihdamını ve işgücüne katılımını incelemek için nüfus sayımı tekniği ve kasıtlı örnekleme yöntemini kullanmaktadır. Sonuçlar, kadınların ücretli ve ücretsiz emeğinin aile geçmişi, eğitim ve mesleki ayrışma gibi sosyal, kültürel ve ekonomik faktörlerden etkilendiğini göstermektedir. Bu faktörler aynı zamanda cinsiyete dayalı emek dinamiklerini de ortaya koymaktadır. Çalışma, emeğin yalnızca ücretli istihdamın ötesinde daha geniş bir faaliyet yelpazesini ve toplumsal faydaları içerecek şekilde yeniden tanımlanması gerektiği sonucuna varmaktadır. Değişen küresel ekonomiler bağlamında toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliğini ve kadınların ekonomik olarak güçlendirilmesini ilerletmek için, işgücü tanımları ve düzenlemelerindeki toplumsal cinsiyet eşitsizlikleri ele alınmalıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler:

İşgücü,

Ücretsiz Çalışma,

İşsizlik,

ABSTRACT

The study explores the historical evolution of labour from household-based manufacturing to wage-based industrial systems, examining how the definition of work has changed in modern economies. From an economic perspective, work is perceived as a good or service that is traded in markets based on supply and demand. Traditional definitions of work, which emphasize wage labour, are challenged by feminist viewpoints, which emphasize the underappreciation of unpaid care and domestic work. Women's social standing and economic empowerment are restricted by this devaluation, which upholds gender inequality. To look into women's employment and labour participation in Istanbul and Izmir, Turkey, the research uses a census technique and deliberate sampling. The results show that women's paid and unpaid labour is influenced by social, cultural, and economic factors such as family history, education, and occupational segregation. These factors also reveal gendered labour dynamics. The study concludes that labour must be redefined to encompass not only paid employment but also a wider range of activities and societal benefits. To advance gender equality and women's economic empowerment in the context of changing global economies, gender inequalities in labour definitions and regulations must be addressed.

Keywords:

Labour force,

Unpaid Work,

Unemployment,

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1. INTRODUCTION

Work is often an ordered, intentional, and productive activity that results in payment, usually in the form of money, in today's economy. This method of thinking developed in the 18th century during the Enlightenment, and in the 19th century it was followed by urbanization and industrialization. The home used to be a manufacturing unit that combined reproductive and productive labour before industry advanced. The manufacturing of goods and services, however, fell under the control of industrial units as industrialization advanced. From that point on, homework and copies were kept inside the family and kept apart from pay structures and other institutions that the public was aware of. Jobs are therefore thought to be related to markets and pay. Philosophers in distinct scientific fields provide exceptionally high-quality work. Psychologists describe their work in terms of the needs and desires of the individual. They view employment as a source of intellectual well-being and private fulfilment.

Economists contend that labour is a monetary commodity made up of abstract components of productive labour that are traded on financial markets at a price that is set by supply and demand. Stewart et al. (1980) state that neoliberalism and mainstream economics see labour as an undesirable activity that should only be endured to obtain useful goods, services, and pleasure. One of the earliest debates in the history of sociology as a social science was how to evaluate labour practices in response to the growth of the work system. According to sociologists, working is a social activity complexly entwined with social processes.

Strong, hegemonic opinions about the worth of work, commonly referred to as the "work ethic," influence all forms of labour at the social level. The early work ethic was associated by Max Weber (1958) with the neo-industrialism and capital accumulation movements of the 18th century in Europe and North America, which strongly emphasized labour as a moral necessity. These days, the work ethic is so strong that most people believe that those who are employed, regardless of their job type, have a higher social status than most other non-working groups, such as homemakers, students, retirees, and the unemployed. According to Marx (1964), labour (the process of creating products and services) is an essential human activity that either enables individuals to achieve their full potential or to deceive and disrupt the natural world and its interconnected systems.

Marx, however, contends that since labour only helps to isolate people and turns employment into a survival skill, it has no intrinsic worth for humans under capitalism. It is possible to acquire a social identity by working with (Goldthrope and Lockwood, 1968). Similar evaluations and recommendations about this interpretation were given by Brauner (1964), Gorz (1965), and Mills (1951). The public discourse on work typically limits employment to paid labour and ignores other facets of it.

Wolkowitz (2006) claims that the feminist school of thought challenges this notion of work, which is typically done in order to get money. Second-wave feminism has damaged the relationship between work and income. Kirby (1999) points out that feminist sociologists have long worried about the absence of discipline in the labour force. The argument posits that the definition of work, which was developed via men's experiences, does not incorporate women's actions, efforts, or obligations. An enormous deal made in the US during the neoliberal period has resulted in a rise in the quantity of unpaid labour—particularly from women working from home—being used for welfare, care, and social support. The historical archives indicate how unpaid care, domestic labour, home, caregiving duties, and childrearing are commonplace. Feminist students use their capacity to talk about the benefits of reproductive labour to explain why "domestic and care work" is devalued.

2. METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

The study applied the census approach to ascertain the respondents, having first selected a heterogeneous group through deliberate sampling. All 214 qualified respondents who could be reached in the search area were contacted using the interview schedule, and some typical cases were also chosen for the case study. To obtain a more profound understanding of the experiences and viewpoints of the respondents, focus group talks were arranged in addition to the interview schedule. Participants in these debates were given a forum to freely express their perspectives, and it was possible to find commonalities and differences in viewpoints among the diverse groups. This approach ensured a thorough comprehension of the topics under investigation by adding qualitative, contextually rich narratives to the quantitative data gathered from the interviews. The findings were further validated using a mixed-methods approach that combined quantitative and qualitative studies. While focus groups and case studies provided qualitative data for thematic analysis, interviewees' quantitative data was

statistically evaluated to find trends and patterns. By using three different data sources and methodologies, the research was more credible and reliable, and the conclusions were supported by strong evidence. Specifically, the case studies provided in-depth illustrations of the situations encountered by the participants, highlighting the more general patterns found in the quantitative analysis and enhancing the study's overall scope.

2.1. Area of the Study

This article aims to explore women's traditional work reputations and to increase understanding of the various career routes that influence girls' labour participation and job needs in Istanbul and Izmir. The full show is being held in Turkey's two main cities, Istanbul and Izmir. It is divided into two primary zones, totalling sixty-nine districts. Istanbul is the nation's summer capital due to its summertime tourism, diverse cuisine, and festivals; Izmir, on the other hand, is the nation's summer capital due to its membership in historical museums, heightened industrial activity, and greater employment prospects.

Analyzing the work environment for women in Istanbul and Izmir requires knowledge of these two cities' unique economic and cultural environments. Istanbul, which is well-known for its thriving tourism sector, offers seasonal job opportunities that primarily draw female employees to the service industry. On the other hand, Izmir's strong industrial base and historical relevance provide a wider range of job opportunities, such as administrative, manufacturing, and cultural preservation positions. The contrast between the two cities emphasizes how important it is to design support networks and employment policies that take into account the particular economic factors and job trends in each area.

The employment data in Sultan Ahmet, a well-known neighbourhood in Istanbul, and Çeşme, the most populous district in Izmir, show notable differences in women's participation in the labour market. Even with women's literacy rates slightly higher than men's, and an overall high of 97.4% in Istanbul, women's unemployment is still a major problem, especially in urban areas. Women's unemployment rates in urban areas are greater than in rural areas, at 13.1%, which is a reflection of the difficulties metropolitan women encounter in finding formal, secure employment. These women frequently find themselves employed in the unorganized sector for daily or salary earnings, where benefits and job security are scarce.

The significant socio-economic effects of unemployment on women in these places call for focused measures to remove the obstacles preventing women from entering the labour force. The fact that urban women have greater unemployment rates than rural women points to structural problems with urban labour markets, including childcare accessibility, workplace discrimination, and insufficient vocational training. Policymakers can improve women's job opportunities and advance gender equality in the workforce by comprehending and addressing these variables and fostering more inclusive and supportive workplaces. To increase women's work opportunities and labour force participation in Istanbul and Izmir, this article will discuss these problems and offer solutions.

2.2. Finding and Discussion

It could be particularly challenging for women to have a clear perspective on work and employment. While women's employment involvement is influenced by a multitude of circumstances, men's labour participation is largely governed by economic reasons. Numerous factors related to social, cultural, economic, reproductive, private, and demographic issues affect women's career pathways. Women's labour involvement is significantly shaped by social and cultural norms. Traditional gender roles in many nations force women to put family responsibilities ahead of professional pursuits, which restrict their access to higher education and career prospects. Women are frequently under pressure from cultural norms about childcare and household management to leave the workforce or take part-time, lower-paying positions in order to balance work and family responsibilities. Further limiting their employment opportunities are social perceptions regarding women's employment, which can impact women's professional goals and the kinds of jobs that are considered appropriate for them.

Women's job decisions are influenced by a complicated web of factors, including economic, demographic, and reproductive issues. Women are less likely than men to have stable jobs and to have pay gaps, which deters them from actively participating in the labour market. In addition, women's career paths may be disrupted by reproductive duties like pregnancy and child rearing, which can result in job voids and less prospects for growth. Women's capacity to participate in steady and fulfilling work is further impacted by demographic

variables such as age, marital status, and size of family. For example, younger women might have trouble finding employment because of possible maternity absences, while elderly women might have trouble going back into the workforce after long stretches of care giving. These complex factors underscore the necessity of all-encompassing policies that promote gender equality and economic development by addressing the particular obstacles that women encounter in the workforce.

2.2.1. Feminization of the Labour Force

Labour strain refers to the percentage of the population that is willing to work in a market. Although there have been reports of a significant increase in women's labour force participation over the previous year—a phenomenon referred to as the "feminization of the labour force"—the cost of women's labour force participation has remained notably lower than that of men. Previously, under the heading of economic activity, "domestic and care activity," or work done by women at home, was included in special survey critiques. However, the labour force participation in the study includes women who work as caretakers or domestic helpers who are seeking paid employment. Consequently, of the 214 respondents in total, 96 women (N = 145) and 118 men (N = 115) are employed. Contrary to other research, the equivalent rates of male and female labour force participation are 78% and 56%, respectively. This discrepancy arises from the fact that domestic chores and providing care were removed from the statistics as factors impacting the labour force. This gender-based definition of the labour-force participation cost has significant implications for coverage. The removal of unpaid domestic and care giving work from economic activity is a key methodological flaw in labour statistics, which is highlighted by this redefinition of labour force participation. These are the kinds of tasks that women have historically participated in disproportionately, and which labour market assessments have failed to acknowledge despite their economic significance.

Traditional labour force measures undervalue women's labour and hide the true scope of their economic participation by failing to account for their contributions. This exclusion affects policy decisions that depend on the data, as well as skewing comparison statistics between male and female labour force participation. Because of this, women's perceived economic contribution is reduced, which has an impact on how resources are allocated and support programs that try to address gender discrepancies in the workplace are provided.

The employment pattern reveals that, in contrast to 94% of the men in the sample as a whole, just slightly more than half of the women (67) are employed or involved in "*paid work*". In addition, women feel much less empowered since they are disinterested in taking care of the home and family, and they often start looking for "*paid employment*". Consequently, women in the age range of "30-45" years (38%) and married women (69%), have considerably greater percentages of being in the labour force. This pattern suggests that women's engagement in the labour force is correlated with life stages and marital status, reflecting home labour division and cultural expectations. The greater rates of participation among married women and women in a certain age group indicate that these women are driven to seek employment, frequently in order to supplement the income of their families, by internal household dynamics and external economic constraints. To promote a more inclusive and equal labour market, our findings emphasize the necessity of policies that support women's employment, such as flexible working hours, inexpensive childcare, and recognition of unpaid domestic work.

2.2.2. Feminization of Unpaid Work

Married women in their top years (30–45 and 45–60 years old) participate in the labour force more frequently. Unmarried women (67%) and in the same age group (63%) have greater rates of labour force participation. However, this trend is reversing for males, since married men are more likely than single men to be employed. Compared to married women, young single women experience less stress from taking care of people and managing the home. This allows one to function without any obstacles. The inference that could be made from this was that domestic and care giving work, which motivates many women to establish themselves financially, prevents them from engaging in paid jobs.

Research indicates that paid working married girls engage in less of their private workplace than single women. Having taken on the responsibility of taking care of the home, married women usually look for jobs that offer greater stability and flexibility. Because of the uncertainties and labour issues in the personal sector, they often leave it after marriage. If they are not receiving authority services, they start taking on independent initiatives like starting a small business, sewing, tailoring, and other household chores, or engaging in other activities that can be done from home. This means that the increased frequency compared to earlier does not appear to be for

authority services. They believe that their "*domestic and care work*" is their most essential responsibility, and their work should no longer interfere with it. The "feminization of unpaid work" refers to the fact that many women manage most home duties while holding full-time jobs.

Because of its scale and the way it problematically interacts with significant systemic patterns of power and coercion, unpaid labour is becoming more and more associated with women. First, rather than being dispersed randomly across the labour force, domestic unpaid work is now deeply embedded in the lives of those in positions of authority within the household, reflecting and strengthening them. Second, it is no longer appropriate to view unpaid work as an example of ad hoc, unregulated employment arrangements. It is socially controversial since equal labour is occasionally compensated. There are important consequences associated with the lack of a monetary reward.

In conclusion, as unpaid labour is a fundamental component of human existence and is no longer wholly key to modern capitalism, it merits further study in modern economies. It also contributes to complex patterns of social inequality. How much do men and women make differently? It is probably freeing and empowering for women to work if it increases their capabilities and well-being. If a woman is made to work in pain for meager remuneration, that could only exacerbate her misery. Sexual relations-based occupational segregation has often been blamed for the female wage gap.

As a result, 20% of all responders who fall into the aforementioned high-income group are women, while 80% are men. In comparison, women make up 80% of people in the lower-income group while males make up 20%. Compared to the authority zone, the gender wage difference is more noticeable in the personal zone, where only 5.3% of girls and 22% of men are in the high-income group. In the self-employed sector, where 22% of men and 6% of women fall into the high-income bracket, the gender pay gap is also prevalent (OECD, 2021; TUIK, 2022). As a result, the "*type of job*" obtained and the "*level of pay*" are organized based on gender.

2.2.3. Social, Economic, and Cultural Capital

In addition to gender, a variety of distinct socioeconomic and cultural factors, such as class and family background, have an impact on women's "*labour participation*". Researchers have capital because of their socioeconomic profile, and Bourdieu (2016) did become aware of the cultural, social, and economic capital that has been accumulated over generations; this capital is prudent and beneficial in the long term. As a result, research on women's labour patterns would want to consider her socioeconomic background. The training and occupation of the engineer's father are among the socioeconomic historical details uncovered in this record. Further investigation reveals that Group-I female authorities typically hold positions as officers, professors, lecturers, doctors, engineers, or senior instructors; Group-III female authorities typically hold contractual positions or are supervisory/clerical positions. Most women who are employed daily as wage earners fall into Groups II and III. Girls whose fathers are primarily qualified, that is, "*graduates and above*" are regarded higher in the official quarters than girls whose fathers are less qualified. 30% of the girls whose fathers are "*graduate and above*" work in the private sector, 40% are employed by the government, 3.3% are self-employed, and none are wage workers daily. In a similar vein, girls who have fathers with tutoring skills vary from "*primary to senior secondary*". About sixteen percent work for the government, twenty-five percent are employed by the private sector, four percent are self-employed, and two percent are daily wage workers. Additionally, among women whose fathers lack literacy, 9% are employed by the government, 22% by the commercial sector, 7% by themselves, and 14% by "*daily wage workers*".

In addition to schooling, the father's occupation or categorization function plays a significant role in determining his daughters' work recognition. This information demonstrates that there are women who work for themselves and who occupy similar positions in the authority quarter. Along with girls who work as wage workers daily, 65% of these children have fathers who are also self-employed. The fathers of 78% of these women also work as daily wage workers. Therefore, it may be said that women with higher socioeconomic family backgrounds tend to be in financial positions. The parents' educational accomplishments give them capital that is particular to their character and eventually yields exact financial benefits. But for women without such wealth, the situation will become difficult because they come from low-income families and must bear the triple weight of gender, category, and category.

2.2.4. Education as Human Capital

Academic success has a significant influence on women's engagement in the labour field. It is charming and startling how differently men and women are examined when it comes to the connection between education and employment. 68% of working women have abilities ranging from primary to senior secondary, according to their educational profile, while 2.4% are illiterate. 37% and 48%, respectively, of individuals with professional skills have graduate-level or higher education. Men's educational profiles are as follows: 2.1% are illiterate, 72% have tutoring skills from elementary school to senior secondary school, 43% have any professional credentials, and 53% have completed college or higher (TUIK, 2022; OECD, 2022). The fact that female labour force engagement is higher among graduates and above women suggests a relationship between higher levels of training and higher levels of female labour force involvement. Nonetheless, male labour force participation is higher among those with primary to senior secondary schooling. About 80% more women than males (over 62%) hold advanced degrees (diploma, specialized graduate, and above) in the corporate sector (*government and non-public*). Working women are therefore more competent than their male counterparts. Education will put more women into the workforce, but even with comparable skill sets, women are less likely than men to perform certain types of jobs and to receive remuneration that is based on gender.

The differences in pay and work prospects between the sexes are frequently impacted by the socio-cultural norms that establish gender roles. Regardless of their educational background or career goals, women are typically assigned the majority of domestic and care giving responsibilities in many nations due to traditional attitudes about gender roles. These social norms may restrict women's access to full-time jobs or possibilities for professional growth, which may have an impact on their representation in higher-paying and leadership positions. This situation is common even in fields where women's educational backgrounds are on par with or greater than those of males. For example, women continue to be disproportionately underrepresented in CEO positions and decision-making responsibilities despite the high percentage of women holding higher degrees. In addition to having an impact on individual career paths, this underrepresentation helps to maintain structural gender disparities in the workforce. Moreover, the job picture for women is significantly shaped by economic policies and labour market institutions. Encouraging work-life policies—like paid parental leave, flexible work schedules, and reasonably priced childcare—are essential to empowering women to take on increasing roles in the workforce.

Higher rates of female labour force participation are typically found in nations with more progressive legislation in these areas. On the other hand, the lack of these supportive policies may make it more difficult for women to manage their personal and professional obligations, which may result in a greater rate of female labour dropout. Furthermore, there is still a gender pay disparity in many different industries, with women frequently earning less for doing the same work as men. Factors include discrimination, occupational segregation, and variations in hours worked and work experiences all have an impact on this disparity. It will need extensive legislative changes and a shift in workplace culture toward gender equality to address these discrepancies.

Gender dynamics are further complicated by the interconnectedness of gender with other social categories, including race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic class. Several layers of exclusion and discrimination against women from vulnerable communities often result in compounding disadvantages. It is possible that women from lower socioeconomic origins or women of color may not have as much access to professional networks and high-quality education, which could limit their employment options and hinder their ability to advance in their careers. Taking into account the overlaps between different identities, intersectional methods are crucial to creating inclusive policies and practices that tackle the particular difficulties encountered by various groups of women. Policymakers and organizations may foster more fair and supportive settings that promote the participation and progress of all women in the labour market by recognizing and addressing the complex nature of gender disparity.

To sum up, while academic achievement is a significant factor, it is not the only one that influences women's labour market participation. Women's work prospects and outcomes are influenced by a combination of factors, including intersectional identities, economic policies, labour market structures, and socio-cultural norms. It is essential to take a comprehensive strategy that takes into account all of these variables in order to attain true gender equality in the workforce. This entails encouraging women to pursue higher education, putting supportive workplace policies into place, questioning conventional gender norms, and acknowledging the ways in which women's experiences are impacted by the intersections of their identities. Women may fully achieve

their potential and contribute to economic growth and development in a more inclusive and equitable labour market if coordinated efforts are made at various levels.

3. CONCLUSION

Women's employment popularity in Turkey is statistically hidden due to a gender-based definition of "work". It has been a laborious, contentious, and controversial process to include women in the cutting-edge workforce. Women do a lot of labour in the home, yet most of it is disregarded and unappreciated. Work that is done around the house and for others serves a vital role in developing human potential. Despite this, domestic and care work is still in short supply. This is partly because of economic insurance but also because labour pressure is defined differently in Turkey. Due to their increased engagement in the workforce, women—whom our society has placed primarily in charge of childcare and homework—are finding it difficult to perform in ordinary positions. Their options for careers are frequently limited by this "reproductive work".

They choose a flexible job that no longer conflicts with their household and caring duties. However, in a world where employment opportunities are dwindling and the unemployment rate is higher, it becomes more challenging for girls to find a fulfilling career for themselves, and as a result, they end up unemployed. The shift from traditional artisanal and agricultural economies to industrial and manufacturing sectors has resulted in a reorganization of gender ideas in numerous global domains. The storyline that went along with this shift was that women needed to break free from patriarchal oppression and learn how to function in today's workforce.

Nonetheless, an examination of labour pressure in numerous industrialized, developing, and emerging countries reveals occupational segregation, lower wages, higher rates of unemployment among women, and an abundance of women employed in low-paying positions. In the "paid sphere of work", girls and women from marginalized communities also experience more prejudice than those from privileged backgrounds. Women are becoming increasingly marginalized because of the different forms of discrimination that occur in both paid and unpaid labour.

Additionally, the monetary system's efficacy and adaptability are diminished. The tutorial dialogue should promote discussing unpaid employment, and steps should be taken to include "domestic and care work" in the financial policy framework. It is important to consider how coverage has been organized along gender lines before defining any policies, but the government started to move with new insurance policies and methods to increase the ratio of women's labour pressure and employment.

YAZAR BEYANI / AUTHORS' DECLARATION:

Bu makale Araştırma ve Yayın Etiğine uygundur. Beyan edilecek herhangi bir çıkar çatışması yoktur. Araştırmanın ortaya konulmasında herhangi bir mali destek alınmamıştır. Makale yazım ve intihal/benzerlik açısından kontrol edilmiştir. Makale, "en az iki dış hakem" ve "çift taraflı körleme" yöntemi ile değerlendirilmiştir. Yazar(lar), dergiye imzalı "Telif Devir Formu" belgesi göndermişlerdir. Mevcut çalışma için mevzuat gereği etik izni alınmaya ihtiyaç yoktur. Bu konuda yazarlar tarafından dergiye "Etik İznine Gerek Olmadığına Dair Beyan Formu" gönderilmiştir. Yazar, çalışmanın tüm bölümlerine ve aşamalarına tek başına katkıda bulunmuştur. / This paper complies with Research and Publication Ethics, has no conflict of interest to declare, and has received no financial support. The article has been checked for spelling and plagiarism/similarity. The article was evaluated by "at least two external referees" and "double blinding" method. The author(s) sent a signed "Copyright Transfer Form" to the journal. There is no need to obtain ethical permission for the current study as per the legislation. The "Declaration Form Regarding No Ethics Permission Required" was sent to the journal by the authors on this subject. The author contributed to all sections and stages of the study alone.

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