



The Effects Of Globalisation On Women

Sefa ÇETİN*

Abstract: In this paper I will explore the impact of globalization on one segment of the global population, women in the world. Especially, in the less developed and developing countries, women have been affected by globalization. Such as unemployment, long work hours, migration, family breakdown, child labour, political participation are the most significant effects of the new global international economy.

Keywords: Globalization, woman, wage, housing, migration, local politics

Küreselleşmenin Kadınlar Üzerindeki Etkileri

Özet: Bu çalışmada; küreselleşmenin, dünya nüfusunun yarısını oluşturan kadınlar üzerindeki etkileri incelenmiştir. Özellikle az gelişmiş ve gelişmekte olan ülkelerdeki kadın nüfusun küresel ekonomik gelişmelerden etkilenme dereceleri ortaya konulmuştur. İşsizlik, uzun çalışma süreleri, göçlerin yarattığı etkiler, boşanma, çocuk işçiliği, siyasi katılım gibi alanlar yeni uluslararası küresel ekonominin etkilerinin görüldüğü alanlardır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Küreselleşme, kadın, ücret, konut, göç, yerel politika

Introduction

The term 'globalisation' has been associated with key areas of change, which have led to a marked transformation of the world order. At a political level the process of deregulation and liberalization has led to an apparent diminution of state and a general assumption that all states everywhere must become more democratic and secure 'good governance' over their people. At the level of the economy, globalisation has been associated with the trend towards increasing economic liberalization. This has been reflected in freer trade and more deregulated labour, good and financial markets.

At its most expansive, the global 'vision' has been presented as a borderless world, in which national economic boundaries are dissolving, and all countries are integrated into a unified global order. The result is an 'interlinked economy' in which there is a free flow of capital, people, goods, services and information, and where national government is displaced by global governance (Ohmae, 1990).

* Dr., Kütahya Vali Yrd.

Much analysis of the effects of globalisation in especially developing countries has stemmed from influence of the expansion of transnationals and the new international division of labour. Within the literature, there has been a focus on both negative and positive effects, particularly on women. Most studies of the effects of transnational production have tended to concentrate on the specific effects of industrialisation and the increase of the industrial employment for certain groups of women in developing countries. In the early stages transnational expansion was concentrated in 'special economic zones' such as maquiladora in Mexico. Here employment and other regulations were minimal, and many companies employed young unmarried women (Fernandez-Kelly, (1994).

Thus, the advance of globalization throughout both the industrialized and developing countries of the world is undisputed. What is a matter of differing opinion, however, is the impact of globalization on the world economy and on the quality of life experienced by the world's citizens.

In this paper I will explore the impact of globalization on one segment of the global population, women in the world. Women have been affected by globalisation. As much as some women have come to enjoy the benefits of growth and foreign capital investment in their own countries, more women have found no place to earn a living other than in the informal sector. There are also refugees and stateless women. They have multiple roles and are not a homogenous group. In which role are they affected most by globalization? When women as part of a heterogeneous group look at globalization, what they perceive? And how does what they see influence their lives? I will try to find out the answers of these kind of questions through this paper.

The Feminization Of Labour

One of the most significant social effects of the new global international economy has been the enormous numbers of women joining the economically active populations of all countries, both as wage-earning employees and as self-employed workers. Women have, of course, traditionally carried out socially productive work in the household and in childcare, in cultivation of the land and in the paid activities of the man/head of the family. The new factor is that the majority of women in nearly all the industrialized countries and a rapidly rising proportion in the urban economies of the developing countries have joined the employment market, as shown by the evolution of the female employment rate for selected countries between 1970 and 1994, according to the information presented in

Table 1.

Table 1. Women's Economic Activity Rate, Selected Countries

Country	1970	1994
USA	53	65
Canada	47	63
France	53	64
Brazil	27	38
Mexico	21	37
Chile	27	39
Bostwana	61	49
Zimbabwe	56	49
Zaire	65	52

(Index: Males=100)

Source: UNDP (1995)

As it is seen on the table above, in especially developed and also developing countries, women's participation to labour force has been high. That involves mainly because of the world's changing economic, social and cultural structure; changing family structure, changing the perception of life have all contributed to this trend.

Women in almost all countries work more hours than men: taking 100 as the index of male working hours (paid and non-paid), the index for women is 127 for Italy, 111 for France, 112 for Columbia, 106 for the United States, 109 for Indonesia (Borja and Castells, 1997).

In the new type of economy women's employment participation has been considerable. According to Little's statement, in Britain, in 1951 26.9% of women were economically active. By 1971 this figure had risen to 36.5% and by 1991 it stood at 71%. Over 10 million women had a paid job in 1991, representing almost 40% of the economically active population (Little, 1994).

Global companies represent significant power as they control an estimated 70 per cent of the products in international trade and an equivalent proportion of foreign direct investment. As Dunnig points out (1993) that, this increase, in foreign direct investment has been accompanied by different corporate strategies, including the sitting of production itself in countries which suited an array of corporate objectives such as market-seeking, (natural) resources-seeking, efficiency-seeking and strategic asset-seeking. I will take the Thai Women's position as a sample.

On the one hand, foreign direct investment in Thailand, in 1980s, resulted in the greater feminization of the labour market and increased fragmentation of women's work and lives. An important consequence was that women were often simultaneously working in different labour segments, which gave rise to increasing fragmentation of their identities and responsibilities. A special dimension of this process in Thailand was the relatively high degree of temporary migration undertaken by women from the agricultural sector for urban based export oriented manufacturing (Afshar and Barrientos, 1999 p:175). On the other hand, increased influence of multinationals was, to a large extent, linked to greater emphasis on export-oriented industrialization. This export-led pattern of industrialization was also highly urban oriented, with the highest concentration of industry in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area. This region accounted for nearly 75 per cent of value added in manufacturing between 1981 and 1988 (Rimmer, 1995).

Women workers have mostly worked, especially in developing countries, in the informal sector of the urban areas. The informal sector characterized by long hours, bad pay conditions and non-existent organization. In Bangkok in 1984 some 45 per cent of people in employment (Afshar 1999, p:182). Accordingly, the migrant flow accelerated in the 1980s and the early 1990s with Bangkok City continuing to be an important destination. A recent study by (Afshar, 1999) based on 1990 census samples from the National Statistic Office, indicates that part of the increased demand for labour in export-led growth in the 1980s, particularly in Bangkok, was met by female migrants. Between 1985 and 1990 there were 87 male migrants for every 100 female migrants to Bangkok. Large numbers of young female migrants also entered the sex industry in urban areas (Archavanitkul and Quest, 1993) to supply the demands of the growing tourist trade.

Additionally, the rural-urban migration streams have sex ratios that reflect the growing significance of young women (aged 15-25) in the occupational categories of private employees, unpaid family workers and those not in the labour force. As women become older they tend to be excluded from formal occupations and are concentrated in sales and service occupations working as self-employed or as unpaid family workers.

The Wage And Flexible Job

What specific relationship is there between the new type of economy and the mass of influx of women into paid work? Globalization has penetrated the economies of all countries, breaking down the structures of traditional sectors, commercialising life models. Cultural changes in women world-wide have increased women's desire for independence, and this involves a paid job. But even more important than this demand from women has been the offer of work

from companies, government departments and production and distribution circuits. Moreover, what has made women highly desirable workers in the new global information economy is their capacity to provide an equivalent service at a lower wage and under much more insecure working conditions than their male counterparts. For example, despite employment legislation, requiring equal pay for equal work, women are consistently paid less than men. Taking the UK, in 1988, it was calculated that women's wages were still 75% of men's while in 1992 the gross hourly earnings for female industrial workers were 69% of men's (Little, 1994). In the same way, women's non-agricultural wage as a per cent of men's in some countries, 89.0 for Sweden, 75.0 for the USA, 63.0 for Canada, and average 74.9 (Borja and Castells, 1997).

But there is another factor still more important than wage levels: job flexibility. In a changing economy, with constant global interactions and interactions between the local and the global, companies and the employment markets have needed to free themselves from the constraints of a social legislation won through the labour disputes of industrial society. Part-time work, subcontracting, fixed contract work and the process of informalization of the economy are essential mechanisms of the new model of flexible production. In 1991, in Britain, 41.8% of women in employment worked part-time as opposed to just 4.3% of men (Little, 1994).

In spite of this, in general, the impact of globalization on women and work varies from one country to another, and in particular differs between industrialized and developing countries. There are certain generalizations, however, that can be made about how globalization affects women in the workplace. In most cases, globalization expands opportunities for women in the workplace, but it does not remove barriers to advancement, ameliorate the predominance of low paying, menial jobs held by women.

Globalization creates more work. Increased trade and investment between countries creates the dynamic for a more vital, growing economy and thus more jobs. In particular, the growth of industries that produce exports for external markets has a proven record of job creation. When more jobs are available, they are less likely to be filled entirely by men; thus there are increasing opportunities in the marketplace for women to work.

In addition to the above, in some sectors women have much more luck to get a job. For instance, service sector grows disproportionately as a result of globalization. Accordingly, this growth often creates long term benefits for women in the workplace. More jobs in banking and financial services, tourism and recreation, office and commercial services all particularly benefit women. Besides, certain nurturing service sectors such as healthcare and education are perceived as areas in which women have special skills to offer.

Family Breakdown And Child Labour

To adjust economies to global economy, one should explore structural adjustment policies. These policies usually require reduction in health and child-care services. That means that women must assume even greater responsibilities in these areas. Cuts in educational services usually affect negatively on adult literacy classes for women or on the extension of schooling for girls. Where schools are closed and the distance between home and school is increased, girls, who must help with household tasks, have less opportunity for education. Elimination of food subsidies (aid in money, assistance), falling wages and rising prices reduce women's spending power as food providers, and they must daily cope with the pure survival needs of their families.

Long working hours, relatively lower wages, the mass of influx of women into paid work, insecure working conditions in the globalized economies have led to family breakdown. In many countries-developed and developing-divorce rates are rising and fewer couples are getting married (Vicker, 1991). This reminds us the early periods of the industrial revolution and is one of the most important social effects of the new type of economy.

Women And Children

Children are the responsibility of men and women alike and of society as a whole. As market mechanisms have extended throughout the world by the process of globalization, kindergarten, school and child welfare have been subjected to heavy pressure in the world as a whole. The situation is of course more critical still for poor children and for children in the large cities of the developing countries. A major United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) report on urban children, noted a worrying scenario:

The current social transformations and conditions in the world are creating a youth population which is relatively unhealthy, despondent and disturbed, which is growing up with the problems of social adaptation which are more severe than ever. Social decline is chronic in the urban areas of the developing world... Urban children are more likely now than in 1980 to be born into poverty, to be premature, to die in their first year of life, to be underweight at birth, and to have mothers who have received no prenatal care. They are also more likely to have unemployed or severely underemployed parents, to see their parents die or go to prison, to live in a single-parent family, to live in a substandard dwelling, to suffer physical abuse, to live primary school early, to never go to secondary school and still less to university. They are also more likely to work in an exploitative environment, to take drugs, to engage in prostitution, to be exposed to street violence and to suffer armed conflicts (Borja and Castells, 1997)

The number of children living on their own resources in the streets in various countries have been bad for the civilized world. It is estimated that 11 per cent in the Philipinnes, between 2 and 16 per cent in Brazil, 27 per cent in Nairobi, 10 per cent in Mexico, 20 per cent in Honduras, of children live in the streets (Borja and Castells, 1997). Over 50.000 children are abandoned in India every year and 11 million children live on the streets in this country. Furthermore, child prostitution is a widespread and growing phenomenon in many cities in the developing countries, and in some cases, such as Bangkok and Manila, is organized as part of specialized tourist circuits in the new global market for specialized goods and services.

On a general level, there is the survival of non-regulated child labour in large companies, in family businesses and in the services sector of the informal urban economy, in proportions of some 100 million jobs, to take an advantage of the various estimates made. This phenomenon represents a backward step with respect to the labour legislation achieved in the workers' struggles of the early period of industrialization. An ILO estimate of the minimum numbers involved is shown in Table 2 (Borja and Castells, 1997).

Table 2:

Labour Force Participation of Children 10-14 Years Old

Region number (thousands)	% of children	Total
Africa	22.0	16,681
Americas	7.9	4,723
Asia	15.3	49,287
Europe	0.3	90
Oceania	6.9	148
World Total	13.7	70,929

Source: Grootaert and Kanbur (1995)

In the same way, the labour of urban children is an essential part of the survival strategies of the poor in many of the world's cities. Leaving home early, dropping out of school, early pregnancies, addiction to drugs, alcohol or glue, and gang violence, are direct consequences of the premature exposure of still-delicate beings to the daily harshness of our cities. And in recent times the uncontrolled urbanization linked with the new global economy has taken still further the negation of the urban existence of children by forcing them into the productive world of adults in conditions of servitude, or by casting them into the street. The city of children, as present day negation and future promise, is thus one of the most important challenges facing cities worldwide, with different problems and different levels of dramatism according to the levels of development and family

conditions (Borja and Castells, 1997).

Women And Migration

Globalization has also resulted in huge international migratory movements. Almost half of the 80 million international migrants in the whole world are concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East (Borja and Castells, 1997). Some 35 million migrants are to be found in Sub-Saharan Africa, making up 8 per cent of its total population. These migratory movements in Africa are of two types. On the one hand, there is the migration of workers. On the other hand there are extensive migratory movements of refugees from hunger, war and genocide.

As for women's situation, as Pettman states that (1996 p:66) there are now an estimated 17 million refugees outside their home-state borders, in the world, 80 per cent of them women and children. In this case women must work even harder, taking on men's tasks in rural areas, for example, or finding some form of paid employment if the money does not come back. Women seen as without protection might be vulnerable to their husband's male relatives or friends who are supposed to be 'looking after' them, or to bank officials, moneylenders or potential employers.

In some particular migrant labour flows, women are in the overwhelming majority. In Italy 95 per cent of Filipinos are women. Most are domestic workers and child carers. They are part of a global flow of women from poorer states to wealthier ones, from Sri Lanka and the Philippines to Japan, Hong Kong, and oil-rich Middle East states into the US, for example. This labour migration was largely unnoticed until the Gulf War revealed some 400 000 Asean women workers in Kuwait and a further 100,000 in Iraq. There are between 1 and 1.7 million women in the domestic worker from South and South-East Asia alone.

This traffic in women is big business. Recruitment agencies, banks, and airlines profit from it. So do the exporting states, in the form of remittances, an estimated \$3 billion per year to the Philippines for example. This trade contributes to those states' search for hard currency in the face of growing debt pressures, and relieves unemployment at home, too. It is therefore unlikely that the home state will act strongly in support of their citizens' rights when women are subject to abuse in other states; though their own poor record in labour and women's rights is also a factor here.

The trade in women reflects power and wealth relations globally. Those South-East Asian states exporting domestic workers had been an average annual income in 1992 of \$680, while those importing women had an average income of \$10,376. Many migrants move to and take up work in older industrial cities in

Western states, and do work in clothing, textiles, electronics, and information services for example not so different from that which women do in some 'Third World' states. In conditions of urban decay, high unemployment, and cut-backs in public expenditure and services, migrants can easily become scapegoats for other people's troubles. In this way, globalization and migration become targets in politics against 'outsider'. Racism marks the boundaries of national belonging, and immigration and citizenship become major political issues (Baylis and Smith, 1998).

Women And Housing

Women experience more difficulty than men in becoming owner occupiers in their own right. Female-headed households (either women living alone or single mothers) are generally poorer than male-headed household since women continue to earn, on average, significantly less than men and frequently employed on a part time basis-especially when they have child-rearing commitments. Women living alone as a result of divorce often do not have the skills to compete in the job market as they have generally spent their married lives managing a home and family too busy to gain the formal qualifications and skills required for well paid jobs(Little, 1994).

There has been a significant increase in the number of households headed by a woman. It is estimated that one-third of the world's households are headed by women. In urban areas, particularly in Latin America and Africa, the figure exceeds 50 per cent ...and globally, the phenomenon is on the increase(Borja and Castells, 1997). 70 per cent of the world's 1.300 million poor are women (UNDP, 1995). And what is more, the criteria for eligibility for subsidized housing are based on regular income from formal employment, while women's income often comes from casual work and unstable jobs.

Housing policies in societies subject to rapid processes of cultural and demographic change should be adapted to take account of the increasing diversity of types of household: traditional nuclear families, people living alone, adults sharing accomadition, and families composed of a woman or women and children.

Women And Local Politics

The mobilization of women through urban movements could show itself gradually in greater female influence on local politics, though we are still far from equality in this field. Table 3 shows the proportion of women majors and town councillors out of the total respective populations of selected countries. It can be seen that of the countries analysed, in different contexts and with different levels of development, only Norway exceeds 20 per cent of women majors, and

only Russia and New Zeland have some 30 per cent of women town councillors. On average, in the OECD countries only six per cent of majors and 16 per cent of town councillors are women (Borja and Castells, 1995). It would nevertheless seem reasonable to think that only a greater direct presence of women in municipal government bodies could carry forward the construction of a city which, unlike the present day city, would also be a city of women of the globalised world.

Table 3:

Women in Local Politics: Municipalities or Equivalent, Selected Countries:

Country	Female Council Members(1990-1994)(%)	Female Majors (1990-1994)(%)
Industrialized Countries		
France	17	5
Germany	20	-
Japan	3	0
New Zeland	35	13
Norway	28	23
Russian Federation	30	0
United Kingdom	25	-
USA	21	16
European Union	16	5
Nordic Countries	29	17
OECD	16	6
Developing Countries		
Cuba	14	5
Ghana	8	-
Indonesia	12	1
Republic of Korea	1	-
Mexico	-	3
Mozambique	27	-
Nicaragua	13	10
Paraguay	10	5
Philippines	13	8
South Africa	-	6
Thailand	6	7
Venezuela	16	6
Vietnam	22	-

Source: UNDP (1995)

REFERENCES

- Afshar, H. and Barrientos, S. (1999). *Women, Globalization and Fragmentation in the Developing World*. Mcmillian, London.
- Archavanitkul, K and Quest, P. (1993) *Migration and the Commercial Sex Sector in Thailand*.
- Baylis, J., and Smith, S.(1998). *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*. Oxford.
- Borja, J. and Castells, M. (1997) *Local and Global. Managment of Cities in the Information Age*. Earthsan, London.
- Dunning, J. (1993). *Multinational Enterprises and the Global Economy*, Wokingham: Addison-Wesley.
- Fernandez-Kelly, M.P. (1994) 'Making Sense of Gender in the World Economy: Focus on Latin America', Organization .
- Grootaert, C and R Kanbur (1995) 'Child Labor: a review' Policy Research Working Paper 1454, World Bank, Washington, DC
- Rimmer, Peter J. (1995). 'Urbanization Problems in Thailand's Rapidly Industrializing Economy'. New York, St. Martin's Press.
- Ohmae, K. (1990) *The Borderless World, Power and Straregy in the Interlinked Economy*, London: Fontana.
- Vicker, J.(1991). *Women and The World Economic Crisis*. London and New Jersey.
- Pettman, J., J. (1996). *Worlding Women*. London and New York.
- Peterson, V., S., and Runyan, A., S. (1993). *Global Gender Issues*. Oxford.
- Little, J. (1994). *Gender, Planning and The Policy Process*. Pergamon.

