

Stream Title: Globalization, Women Workers and Feminization of Poverty

Stream outline:

Noreen Saher
Institute of Management and Organisational Behavior
Vienna University of Economics
Althanstrasse 51 Vienna, Austria
Tel.: +43-1-31336-5027
Email: noreen.saher@wu.ac.at

Dr. Astrid Podsiadlowski
Institute for Integration and Social Efficacy (ISW)
Rijksuniversiteit Groningen
Grote Kruijsstraat 1
Groningen, the Netherlands
Tel.: +43-1-31336-5039
astrid.podsiadlowski@wu.ac.at

Dr. Astrid Reichel
Institute of Management and Organisational Behavior
Vienna University of Economics
Althanstrasse 51 Vienna, Austria
Tel.: +43-1-31336-5027
Email: astrid.reichel@wu.ac.at

This stream calls attention to gender perspective on globalization to explore effects of current structural adjustments and welfare state restructuring on women workers within personal and professional domains in developing as well as developed countries. A key feature of economic and cultural globalization is the spread of neoliberal forms of governance (Gill 1995; Mishra 1999), characterized by an international shift in the direction of increased marketization, a redrawing of the public-private distinction, valorization of possessive individualism and shift in state expenditure (Kingfisher 2002).

Various authors agree that it is women who “have borne the brunt of restructuring – economically, socially, physically” (Sparr 1995: 18). While globalization has increased the number of women at the workplace, the sexual division of labor has been further strengthened rather than eliminated (Gurstein 2003). More jobs for women potentially help them to earn and control income and to break away from the hold of patriarchal structure. However, work available to women is badly paid that contribute to feminization of poverty. In addition women face more social pressure as reactive movement like fundamentalism including gender role become feisty in developing countries (Moghadam 1999). The process of female proletarianization, which to some has called the marginalization of women (Mies 1986), has taken place in the developing world (Moghadam 1999). This prodigy causes cultural consequences and sometimes initiates gender conflict both at work place and beyond that. For example in the Middle Eastern countries, it is witnessed that active participation of women in economic activities is complemented by pressures on them to conform to veiling and spatial and

functional segregation. In South Asian countries women have to create adjustment between economic growth and preserving honor of their family which is associated with women segregation (Kabeer 1998).

While globalization leads to structural adjustment in developing countries we see a process of welfare state restructuring in more developed countries (Sahlins 1972). In the west economic globalization has introduced market-oriented neo-liberalism at the domestic level accompanied by a reduction of welfare. The prevailing gender division of labor is particularly relevant in the context welfare state restructuring and women's poverty. The public realm of paid work depends on women's work in the private sphere (Jaggar 1983). Especially women must negotiate the gap between public and private sphere and therewith contradictions between market and non-market structures in a globalized world by engaging in part-time work, home work and casual labor. Restructuring high lightens the tensions between market and non market domains because it depends on unpaid domestic labor, the invisibility of labor and on the ability and willingness to take on more and more work, whether it is paid or not. Unpaid domestic work for the most part is done by women. While women's labor force participation has been rising for decades, the increase in men's share of domestic work and childcare remains relatively unchanged on a modest level (Blossfeld and Drobnic 2001; Gershuny 2000). When because of a spread of neo-liberalism the state disengages from welfare and individualization is stressed access to paid work becomes a problem especially for poorer women. They tend to only get work that is marginal in terms of pay, benefits, and status. Since they do not have the resources to pay third parties for domestic work this is combined with additional pressure domestically (Floro 2003). "Restructuring in western welfare states ... is thus a gendered phenomenon, with specifically gendered impacts on poverty rates" (Kingfisher 2002: 9).

Although globalization describes worldwide developments and we see similarities in its effect there is heterogeneity not only between developed and developing countries but also within these groups. The nation state plays a pivotal role in the orchestration of globalization as well as in the everyday lives of the poor. In this stream we are looking for contributions that deal with the feminization of poverty in developing as well as developed countries.

We invite both, papers that highlight developments found across different contexts and comparative studies that focus on differences between states. On a lower level of analysis contributions that pay attention to how organizations in their gender related human resource policies and practices are also welcomed. The stream is open to empirical as well as theoretical contributions.

Suggested themes:

State reaction to globalization

Creation of national gender politics

Gender effects of structural adjustment or restructuring

Paradoxical socio-economic pressures on women

Organizational gender politics

Biases against women at the work place

Women and non-standard work arrangements

Power relation

Keywords: women workers, gender disparities, biases against women at work place, globalization, structural adjustment, state restructuring, non-standard work arrangements

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