

GLOBALIZATION AND LABOR MARKETS IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD: GENDERED DYNAMICS

SEVIL ACAR¹

ISTANBUL TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

Abstract: This study attempts to identify the evolution of labor markets paying specific attention to female labor in the developing world and to its relationship with recent trends of globalized production, investment and trade. This is an inductive study which uses summarized statistics, tables and figures to provide an understanding of the developing world labor markets in the era of globalization and economic integration.

Key words: Globalization, labor, gender, international trade, investment.

1. Introduction: Globalization and Associated Changes

Since the 1970s the world economy has been going through substantial changes through which new patterns of production, new technologies and new labor control systems have been introduced (Standing, 1999). Globalization has brought major transformations in goods, capital and labor. To begin with, in terms of goods, “production has changed from a linear assembly line (Fordist production) to a networked form of production that depends on outsourcing or subcontracting around the world to different manufacturers” (Bayes, 2005: 7), becoming a more flexible form of production, able to adapt itself to varying conditions related to resources and other factors of production. In this sense, the new form of production is capable of creating or abolishing jobs without any time limit (Bayes, 2005).

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Second, with the deregulation of capital flow restrictions, international capital flows have been moving easily into both developed and developing countries in the form of foreign direct investment, loans and bonds. While this rose the accessibility to different economic opportunities for international capital, it brought together capital's ease of entering and exiting any country that served up high profit possibilities. This ease usually left many developing countries with bankruptcies, current account deficits, and financial crises and eventually with more poverty and lost jobs (Standing, 1999).

Third, in terms of labor, companies have been shifting their location of production to cheap-labor abundant parts of the world mostly because of the cost reduction motive that still continues to drive them. This often means female labor which is usually employed in inhumane and unsafe working conditions and is usually low-paid at very low labor standards.

This paper aims to explore the gender dimensions of globalization and recent production networks (such as free trade areas and export processing zones) in terms of employment and labor standards in light of the data and statistics from UNCTAD, International Labor Organization and International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

2. Recent Developments in World Trade and Investment

The world economy has been going through substantial changes since the 1970s. We have been witnessing to an increased liberal orientation in policy-making, followed by growing volumes of international trade, foreign direct investment (FDI) and other financial flows, and novel forms of economic integration promoted by developments in information technologies (Dejardin, 2008). For instance, the share of inward and outward global FDI stocks in world GDP grew from below 5% in 1980 to around 25% in 2006 (OECD, 2008). The amount of FDI inflows reached 648 billion dollars in 2004 while it was only 59 billion dollars in 1982, while GDP in current prices only more than tripled during the same period (see Table I). By the same token, international trade volume has followed an increasing trend fostered by trade liberalization, namely by the removal of obstacles to trade, by regulations put forward by the World Trade Organization, by easier access to regional or global markets and by decreased costs of transportation, coordination and communication. Exports of goods and non-factor services reached the value of 11 069 billion dollars in 2004 with an annual growth rate of 20,1%. It is striking that the annual growth rate of exports always exceeded the annual growth rate of global output between 1986 and 2004, except the year 2001, in which the September 11 terrorist attacks took place in the US.

Table I: Selected indicators of FDI and international production, 1982-2004
(Billions of dollars and per cent)

Item	Value at current prices (Billions of dollars)				Annual growth rate (Per cent)						
	1982	1990	2003	2004	1986- 1990	1991- 1995	1996- 2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
FDI inflows	59	208	633	648	22.8	21.2	39.7	-40.9	-13.3	-11.7	2.5
FDI outflows	27	239	617	730	25.4	16.4	36.3	-40.0	-12.3	-5.4	18.4
FDI inward stock	628	1 769	7 987	8 902	16.9	9.5	17.3	7.1	8.2	19.1	11.5
FDI outward stock	601	1 785	8 731	9 732	18.0	9.1	17.4	6.8	11.0	19.8	11.5
Cross-border M&As ^a	..	151	297	381	25.9 ^b	24.0	51.5	-48.1	-37.8	-19.6	28.2
Sales of foreign affiliates	2 765	5 727	16 963 ^c	18 677 ^c	15.9	10.6	8.7	-3.0	14.6	18.8 ^c	10.1 ^c
Gross product of foreign affiliates	647	1 476	3 573 ^d	3 911 ^d	17.4	5.3	7.7	-7.1	5.7 ^d	28.4 ^d	9.5
Total assets of foreign affiliates	2 113	5 937	32 186 ^e	36 008 ^e	18.1	12.2	19.4	-5.7	41.1 ^e	3.0 ^e	11.9 ^e
Exports of foreign affiliates	730	1 498	3 073 ^f	3 690 ^f	22.1	7.1	4.8	-3.3 ^f	4.9 ^f	16.1 ^f	20.1 ^f
Employment of foreign affiliates (thousands)	19 579	24 471	53 196 ^g	57 394 ^g	5.4	2.3	9.4	-3.1	10.8 ^g	11.1 ^g	7.9 ^g
GDP (in current prices) ^h	11 758	22 610	36 327	40 671	10.1	5.2	1.3	-0.8	3.9	12.1	12.0
Gross fixed capital formation	2 398	4 905	7 853	8 869	12.6	5.6	1.6	-3.0	0.5	12.9	12.9
Royalties and licence fee receipts	9	30	93	98	21.2	14.3	8.0	-2.9	7.5	12.4	5.0
Exports of goods and non-factor services ^h	2 247	4 261	9 216	11 069	12.7	8.7	3.6	-3.3	4.9	16.1	20.1

Source: UNCTAD (2005), World Investment Report (2005:14)

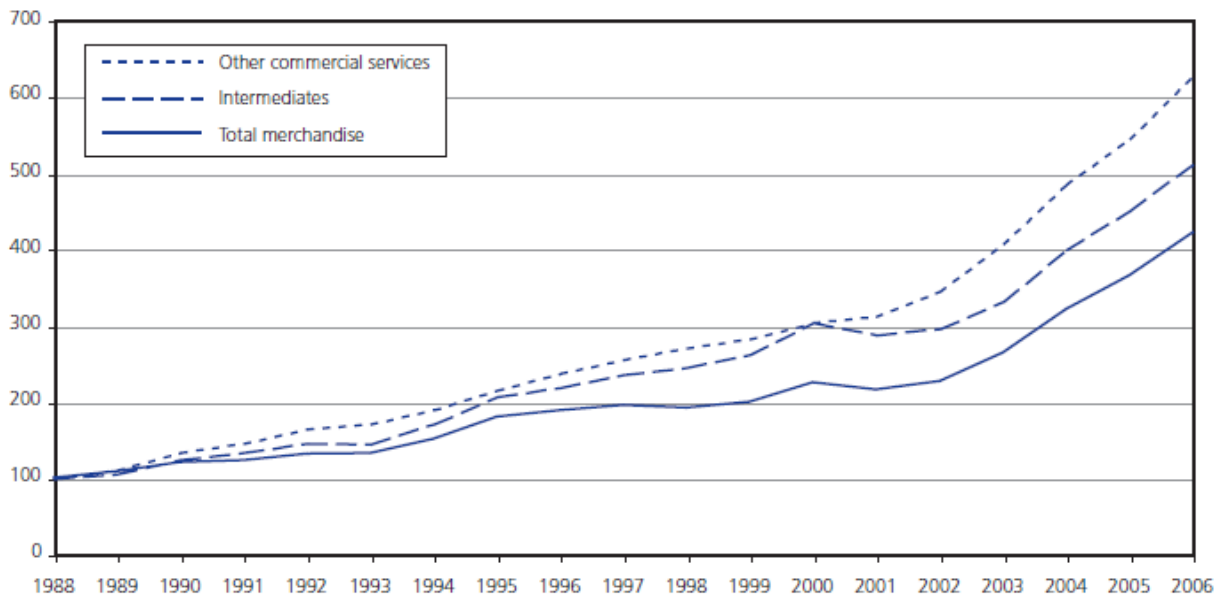
Contributing to these figures, another recent phenomenon has arisen. Following the fast transition of many developing and relatively closed economies to more open trade policies has also increased the participation of those countries in world trade. China and India are two major economies that are changing the face of globalization with their huge populations. The estimates of IMF in World Economic Outlook (2007) show that these two countries led to a fourfold rise in the effective global labor force over the past two decades.

Coe (2007) points out that the changing nature of globalization through technological progress, specifically the sharp reduction of communication and coordination costs, “have allowed the emergence of global supply chains that are increasingly fragmented geographically” (Coe, 2007: 7). Baldwin (2006) characterized this change by defining two “unbundlings” of globalization that are rooted in technological advances followed by diminished cost of trade and increased volume of trade. The first unbundling he mentioned started in the late 19th with the necessity of producing goods close to the point they are consumed. With the second unbundling, accelerating more recently, the need to perform production close to consumption locations came to an end resulting in the spread of factory activities to offshore service sector jobs in their far offices. The second unbundling was also called as fragmentation, offshoring, vertical specialization, and slicing up the value-added chain. In order to survive supply chains, international trade has been rapidly evolving towards the exchange of intermediate inputs rather than in final goods or

commodities. Increasingly, with the help of technological progress, intermediate inputs that were previously non-tradable (like business services) are now becoming tradable. Baldwin depicts a figure of the Japanese automobile and electronics plants in East Asia as an example for the evolution of the second bundling. He highlights how spectacularly the second unbundling rose in East Asia starting from 1985. Japanese manufacturers offshored some of their labor-intensive activities to the nearby countries such as China, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam. The most obvious reason for this was the increased wages in Japan and decreased comparative advantage of Japanese companies in manufacturing (Baldwin, 2006: 23).

Figure I displays the trends in world trade of total merchandise, intermediate goods and other commercial services between 1988 and 2006. What is striking here is that all are at an increasing trend since 1988. The trade in intermediates exceeded five times of its amount in 1988.

Figure I: Trends in world trade of total merchandise, intermediate goods and other commercial services, 1988-2006



Note: Data are normalized at 100 in 1988.

Source: WTO calculations based on UN COMTRADE and WTO statistics database.

Table II exhibits the offshoring shares of the five countries that have the highest and lowest imported inputs in their production. Again, it is noticeable that goods are offshored much more than services across all countries. Offshored services account for less than the half of the goods offshored. It is striking that countries that are smaller in terms of

resources appear to offshore more than larger ones. World Trade Report (2008) shows that countries that are large enough and labor and/or capital abundant take the opportunity of exploiting economies of scale and do not need to offshore part of their inputs. Contrarily, small countries choose to intensify their available resources in a smaller number of stages of production and tend to offshore the rest.

Table II: Goods and service offshoring by country, 2000 (imported inputs as per cent of total inputs)

Goods		Services	
Top five offshoring countries			
Ireland	70.6	Ireland	33.4
Hungary	63.2	Belgium	14.9
Belgium	57.0	Hungary	14.4
Slovak Republic	54.4	Norway	13.4
Austria	52.7	Czech Republic	13.3
Bottom five offshoring countries			
United States	17.8	Australia	3.9
India	12.7	France	2.8
China	12.6	Japan	2.1
Brazil	10.5	China	1.3
Japan	9.2	United States	0.5

Source: World Trade report, 2008. WTO calculations based on OECD Input-Output tables.

Beside global supply chains, another striking phenomenon in the age of globalization is the set up of export processing zones (EPZs) which are defined as “industrial zones with special incentives to attract foreign investors, in which imported products undergo some degree of processing before being exported again” by ILO (2007). These zones have enlarged to technological and scientific parks and can even be a country, a province or a town. EPZs are constructed with different names in different countries such as *maquilas* in Mexico and special economic zones (SEZs) in China. These zones are created with the aims of generating employment, gaining foreign currency, nourishing exports, contributing to the spread of technology and skills, developing underprivileged regions and flourishing the economy as a whole. The number of zones has been increasing rapidly since the 1990s and reached 3500 in 2006 (Figure II). 66 millions of workers were employed in 2006. Female workers account for 60-70% of the zone workforce worldwide, mounting up to 90% in some regions (ILO, 2007; Milberg, 2007).

Figure II: Development of Export Processing Zones

Years	1975	1986	1997	2002	2006
Number of countries with EPZs	25	47	93	116	130
Number of EPZs or similar types of zones	79	176	845	3 000	3 500
Employment (millions)	n.a.	n.a.	22.5	43	66
– of which China	n.a.	n.a.	18	30	40
– of which other countries with figures available	0.8	1.9	4.5	13	26

Source: ILO database on EPZs, 2007

To sum up, world's production has changed both in quantity and in form, depending more on subcontracting or outsourcing and being more flexible, generating new jobs and relocating labor more easily.

3. Labor Markets and Feminization of Labor Force

The increased liberal orientation in policy-making and the recent trends in production, investment and trade patterns have had a significant impact on labor markets, in general, and on gendered dynamics in labor markets, in particular. The world has been experiencing feminization of labor since the 1970s (Standing 1989), which may be explained by various factors such as export-led growth, structural adjustment, economic crises, etc. (Cagatay and Ozler, 1995; Baslevent and Onaran, 2004; Ecevit, 1998).

In 1995, Cagatay and Ozler explain the feminization of the labor force in terms of long-term development and structural adjustment. They point to the U-shaped characteristic of women's labor force participation which is observed along different stages of capitalist development. They underline the dual work burden on women as reproducers and producers which causes the U-shape. They investigate whether changes in the paths of economic development have influenced or brought together the feminization of labor force. Using the data of 165 countries for the years 1985 and 1990 from World Bank resources, they carry out econometric analysis to estimate the female share of the labor force. The variables expected to determine this ratio are demographic factors like fertility, urbanization and female education; Gross National Product (GNP) per capita and other economic variables such as openness, changes in income distribution and degree of economic expansion. The effect of adjustment is included in the model being represented by the involvement of the country in adjustment programs and also by

the effects of these programs reflected on the economic indicators. The findings can be summarized as follows: Being consistent with the theoretical arguments, the female share of the labor force declines as the urban share of population increases (Cagatay and Ozler, 1995: 1888). All structural adjustment variables are found to have significant and positive influence on female share of the labor force. They find out that countries which are more intensively involved in structural adjustment processes have turned to an outward oriented growth policy and have increased their share of exports in their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and experienced a feminization of the labor force. They further find that the worsening of income distribution has a positive impact on feminization.

Cagatay (2001) asserts that men and women are differently affected by trade policies and performance because they are differently located and have different types of command over economic resources. She further stresses that “gender-based inequalities impact differently on trade policy outcomes, depending on the type of economy and sector, with the result that trade liberalization policies may not yield expected results”; and that “gender analysis is essential to the formulation of trade policies that enhance rather than hinder gender equality and human development” (Cagatay, 2001: 5). Similarly, Cagatay and Erturk (2004) argue that globalization have made gender differentiated impacts due to the unequal access to and control over assets and economic resources. They point out that globalization together with economic liberalization has led to losses in livelihoods of many people, especially in poor countries that did not have available resources that could give a hand to these people.

Standing (1999) highlights five labor market implications of global economic changes. First, the increasing selectivity of the state regarding the attribution of welfare benefits has led to “additional worker” effects, that is, to women’s entrance in the labor market during recessionary periods, and to their permanence as a result of a growing sense of income insecurity. Second, increasingly market-regulated economics has “weakened the defense of employment security regulations and customary practices preserving job security” (Standing, 1999: 585). This is reflected in the attempts of firms to easily fire workers or employ workers with decreased standards and rights or even search for cheaper sources of labor overseas. Third, removing or weakening the minimum wage legislations, many countries have decreased the income security of the employed. As a result, low-wage employment became the norm leading to “a substitution of women for men”. Fourth, increasing emphasis on trade liberalization and export-led industrialization has had implications for women's labor force participation especially in less-developed countries. As mentioned above, Standing emphasizes the search of firms for much lower labor costs giving priority to the type of workers who are ready or willing to be employed with low wages:

In industrialized and industrializing countries, firms have turned to forms of labor offering the prospect of minimizing fixed non-wage costs. As a result, they have turned increasingly to casual labor, contract labor, outsourcing, home-working and other forms of subcontracting. As part of this flexibilization, there has been an “informalization” of employment across the world. Although the dichotomy of “formal” and “informal” sectors has always been misleading, a growing proportion of jobs possess what may be called informal characteristics, i.e., without regular wages, benefits, employment protection, and so on. Such forms of employment have been compatible with characteristics presumed to be associated with women workers - irregular labor force participation, willingness to work for low wages, static jobs requiring no accumulation of technical skills and status, etc. The informalization could thus be expected to be a major factor stimulating the growth of female employment across the world. (Standing, 1999: 585)

Fifth, Standing stresses the changing skill and job structures due to the recently introduced production techniques around the world. He remarks two trends concerning the changes in skill and job structures, first being the decline in the share of jobs that require “craft skills learned through apprenticeship or prolonged on-the-job learning” and second being the “skill polarization”. Since it has been conventional to perceive crafts as the field of men, the step-down of them together with the modified character of skill are expected to have affected the gender division of labor. Skill polarization refers to the requirement that a minority of workers dominate specialist skills while a majority “possess minor training, typically imparted through modules of employable skill, in which docility, application, rote learning and related capacities figure prominently” (Standing, 1999: 585). This polarization has brought together greater reliance on external rather than internal labor markets, “since fewer workers are in progressive jobs while more are in static jobs involving little upward mobility or returns to on-the-job continuity”.

This diminishing return to on-the-job continuity has been one reason for resorting to casual or temporary labor, or for job-rotating, and has been a determinant of the tendency to collapse job classifications into more broadly based job clusters, such that workers can be shifted from one set of tasks to another from time to time. This has been a trend in many labor markets, and has represented a growth of job insecurity that has accompanied the growth of income and employment insecurity marking the shift to more flexible labor markets. So, the primary hypothesis is that the growing labor market flexibility and the diverse forms of insecurity have

encouraged greater female labor force participation and employment. (Standing, 1999: 585)

In line with what Standing (1999) proposes above, UNCTAD (2004) addresses that more and more women are likely to be in non-regular or atypical employment, even among wage and salaried workers.

Whereas men are more likely to be hired in core, regular and better-paid positions, women are increasingly being hired in peripheral, insecure, less-valued jobs including home-based, casual or temporary work. These jobs are normally characterized by very low pay, irregular income, little or no job or income security and lack of social protection (UNCTAD, 2004: 5).

Bayes (2005) also summarizes the influences of globalization on women mainly as the feminization of the labor force and changes in the family structure. She also points to the increasing inequalities among women as a consequence of the liberal orientation of the state, the erosion of welfare and income distributions and privatization policies. She also recalls the arguments made by Standing (1999) regarding the feminization of labor.

A report by the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization confirms that globalization has led to serious gender imbalances in some countries. It argues that the level of gender equality prevailing in the norms, institutions and policies of a country at the time of integration into the global economy determines the extent of this imbalance. The report further adds that integration into the global economy affects women from different social groups in a particular country in different ways. What still remains as a fact is that gender inequalities in many developing countries are so deep-rooted and so long-standing that the social cost of globalization continues to fall disproportionately on women. One example is the increase in the amount of imported subsidized agricultural products and consumer goods, leading to declining livelihoods of formerly women producers. Another example is the increased entry of foreign firms that has wiped out women from their lands or displaced them for raw materials essential to their productive activities (World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, 2004: 47). To sum up, economic globalization has had serious and mostly negative implications on women's employment and standards of life.

4. An Examination of the World's Labor Force in Gendered Statistics

The economic activity patterns in recent years show that world employment-to-population ratios are more or less stagnant for both sexes since the year 1998. But there is a huge gap between the female and male employment-to-population rates for the all years recorded below (Table III). For instance, the male employment-to-population ratio was 64,8% in 2007, while the female employment-to-population ratio was only 49,4% in developed economies and the European Union. The gaps are even more striking in Middle East and North Africa. The male employment-to-population ratios were respectively 69% and 68%, whereas the female employment-to-population ratios were only 21,7% and 23,4% in the Middle East and North Africa in 2007. The ratios differ also from region to region noticeably. Middle East has strikingly the lowest female employment-to-population ratio (22%) in 2008, while East Asia has the highest female employment-to-population ratio (67,1%) for the same year. The ratio including both sexes is also the highest in East Asia mounting up to 71,4% in 2008.

Table III: World and regional estimates of employment-to-population ratios

Both sexes	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008*
World	61.8	61.6	61.6	61.5	61.4	61.1	61.1	61.1	61.2	61.4	61.2
Developed Economies and European Union	56.5	56.6	56.8	56.6	56.0	55.9	56.0	56.3	56.8	56.9	56.4
Central and South Eastern Europe (non-EU) & CIS	52.9	51.4	52.3	52.6	52.8	52.6	52.8	53.2	53.2	54.1	54.1
East Asia	74.1	73.8	73.7	73.4	73.1	72.7	72.4	72.0	71.9	71.8	71.4
South-East Asia and the Pacific	66.2	66.8	66.5	66.2	65.8	65.6	65.4	65.5	65.0	65.9	65.8
South Asia	57.9	57.5	57.1	57.4	57.6	56.9	56.4	56.4	56.6	56.3	56.3
Latin America and the Caribbean	57.9	58.2	58.5	58.7	59.0	59.2	60.0	60.4	61.1	61.2	61.2
Middle East	44.5	44.9	45.2	44.7	45.0	44.5	46.1	45.9	46.1	46.4	46.6
North Africa	43.4	43.7	43.1	43.0	43.3	43.7	44.5	44.6	45.3	45.5	45.7
Sub-Saharan Africa	65.2	64.9	64.9	64.8	64.7	64.6	64.9	65.0	65.0	65.2	65.3
Males	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008*
World	74.6	74.4	74.2	74.1	73.9	73.4	73.3	73.3	73.2	73.3	73.1
Developed Economies and European Union	66.0	65.9	66.0	65.5	64.6	64.3	64.3	64.5	65.0	64.8	64.2
Central and South Eastern Europe (non-EU) & CIS	61.7	60.5	61.5	61.5	61.3	60.9	61.5	62.1	62.0	62.9	62.9
East Asia	78.8	78.5	78.3	77.9	77.6	77.1	76.7	76.3	76.0	76.0	75.6
South-East Asia and the Pacific	78.1	78.9	78.5	78.2	78.1	78.1	77.9	77.9	77.4	78.2	78.2
South Asia	80.5	80.0	79.4	79.9	80.2	79.1	78.4	78.2	78.1	78.0	77.7
Latin America and the Caribbean	75.3	75.0	74.8	74.7	74.5	74.5	75.0	74.9	75.3	75.1	74.7
Middle East	68.5	68.6	68.7	68.0	68.0	67.0	69.1	68.7	68.6	69.0	69.0
North Africa	67.0	66.9	66.1	66.0	66.2	66.3	67.2	67.3	67.7	68.0	67.9
Sub-Saharan Africa	75.6	75.5	75.1	75.0	74.8	74.4	74.5	74.4	74.2	74.4	74.3

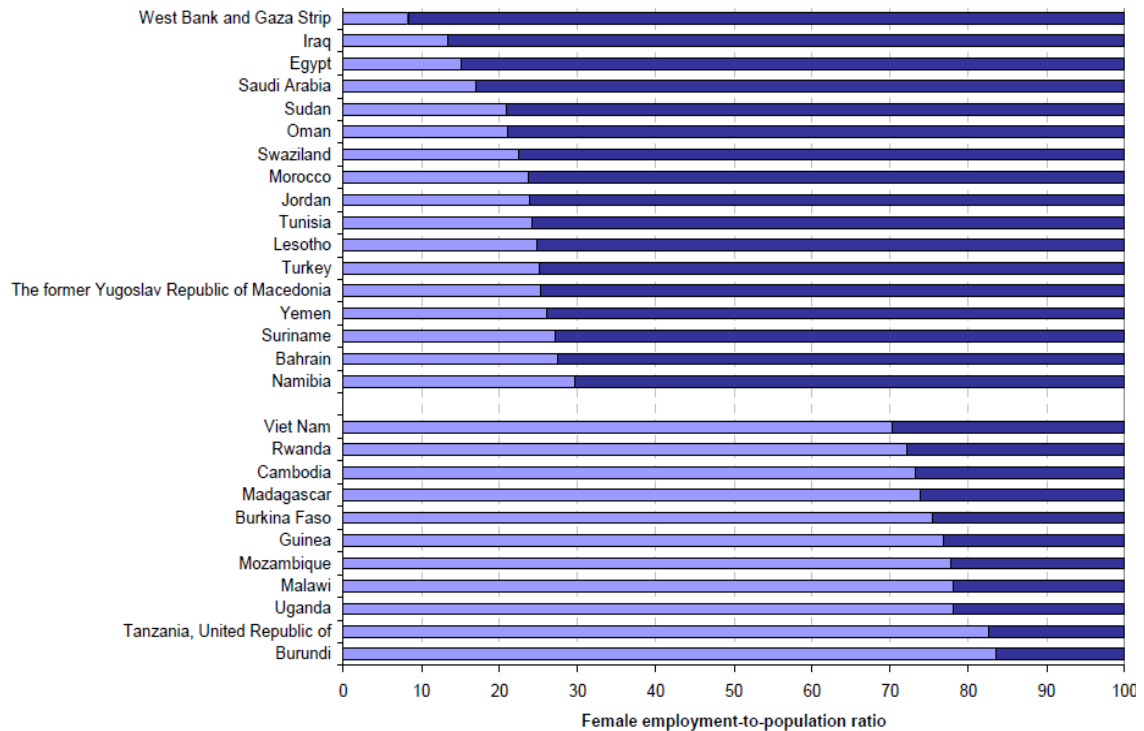
Females	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008*
World	49.0	48.9	49.0	49.0	48.9	48.8	48.9	49.0	49.3	49.4	49.3
Developed Economies and European Union	47.5	47.8	48.1	48.2	47.9	48.0	48.2	48.5	49.1	49.4	49.2
Central and South Eastern Europe (non-EU) & CIS	45.0	43.4	44.1	44.8	45.4	45.2	45.0	45.3	45.3	46.4	46.5
East Asia	69.1	68.9	68.9	68.6	68.4	68.1	67.9	67.6	67.5	67.4	67.1
South-East Asia and the Pacific	54.6	54.8	54.7	54.3	53.7	53.5	53.2	53.5	52.9	53.8	53.7
South Asia	33.8	33.5	33.3	33.4	33.6	33.2	32.9	33.3	33.8	33.5	33.6
Latin America and the Caribbean	41.2	42.1	42.9	43.4	44.2	44.6	45.8	46.6	47.6	48.0	48.3
Middle East	18.0	18.7	19.2	19.1	19.6	19.8	20.7	20.9	21.2	21.7	22.0
North Africa	20.1	20.6	20.4	20.2	20.6	21.3	22.0	22.2	23.1	23.4	23.7
Sub-Saharan Africa	55.3	54.8	55.0	55.0	55.0	55.2	55.7	56.0	56.2	56.4	56.6

Source: ILO Global Employment Trends Model *2008 preliminary estimates.

Among different regions, significant changes in total employment-to-population ratios from 1998 to 2008 have been observed in Latin America and the Caribbean. The total increase in the ratio has been 3,3% in the last ten years. East Asia has experienced a decrease of 3,2% in its male employment-to-population ratio between the same ten years, while a significant 7,1% increase of female employment-to-population ratio in Latin America and the Caribbean has been observed (see Table III).

When we examine the employment-to-population ratios for individual countries in a more detailed way, we notice that there is an important number of countries with very low female employment to population ratios (as low as 30% or even below) and 11 countries with a female employment to population rate of at least 70% (see Figure III). We know that most of the countries with the highest female employment-population rates (Vietnam, Madagascar, Mozambique, Malawi, United Republic of Tanzania and Burundi) and with the lowest female employment-population rates (West Bank and Gaza Strip, Egypt, Sudan, Oman, Morocco, Jordan, Tunisia, Lesotho, Turkey, Yemen and Namibia) have EPZs in the form of small areas, wide areas, industry-specific zones or performance-specific zones (WEPZA website).

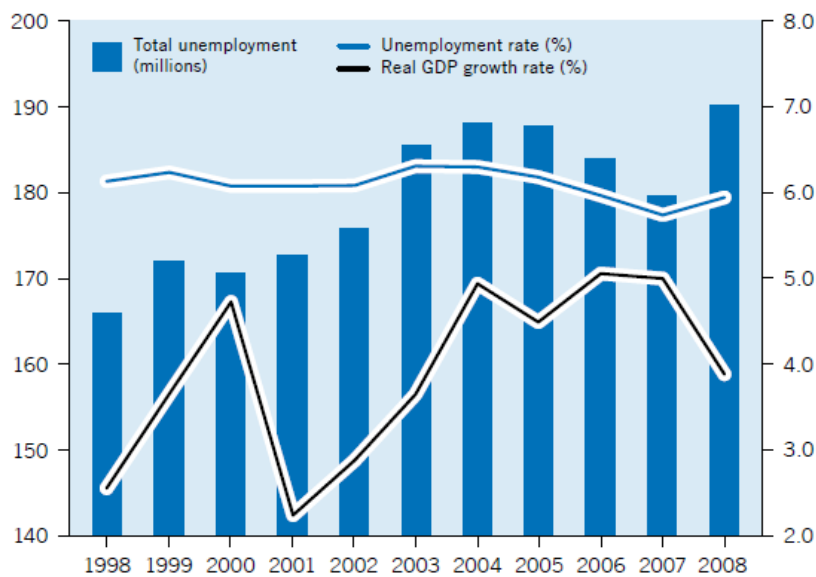
Figure III: Economies with female employment-to-population ratios below 30 per cent or above 70 per cent, 2006



Source: ILO Global Employment Trends Model

As far as the unemployment statistics are concerned, the number of people who were unemployed showed significant changes across years (Figure IV). 165,9 million people in the world were unemployed in 1998 whereas this number reached 190,2 million in 2008. The world unemployment rate seems to be more stagnant around 6% in the last ten years, making an exceptional decline below 6% in 2007.

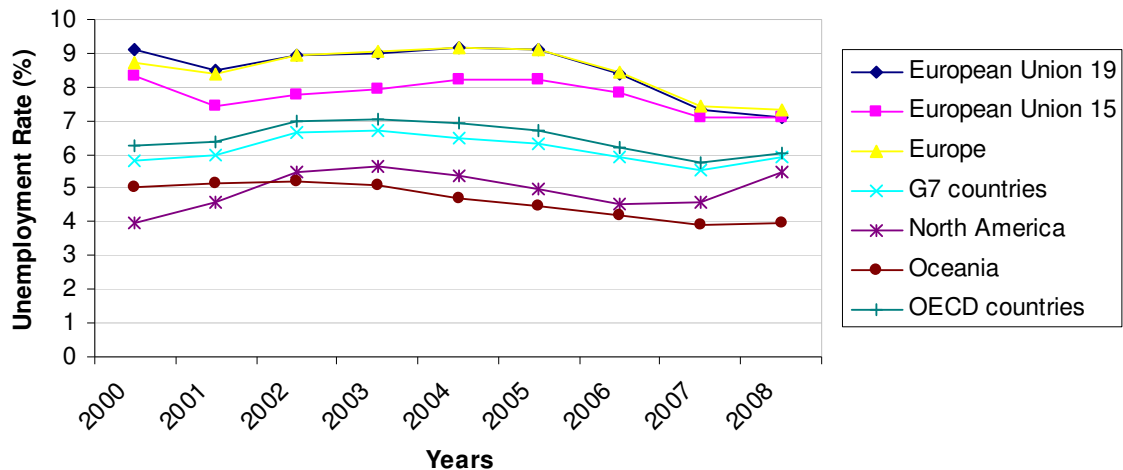
Figure IV: Global unemployment trends, 1998-2008*



Source: ILO Global Employment Trends Model *2008 preliminary estimates.

As demonstrated by the OECD statistics in Figure V, the year 2005 was a turning point for the reported groups of countries at which unemployment rates started to decline. However, this decline was not sustained that long and increases in unemployment rates became observable again in the year 2007, when the signs of the recent financial crisis started to be apparent for the first time.

Figure V: Unemployment Rates by Region (Both sexes, age 15-64)²

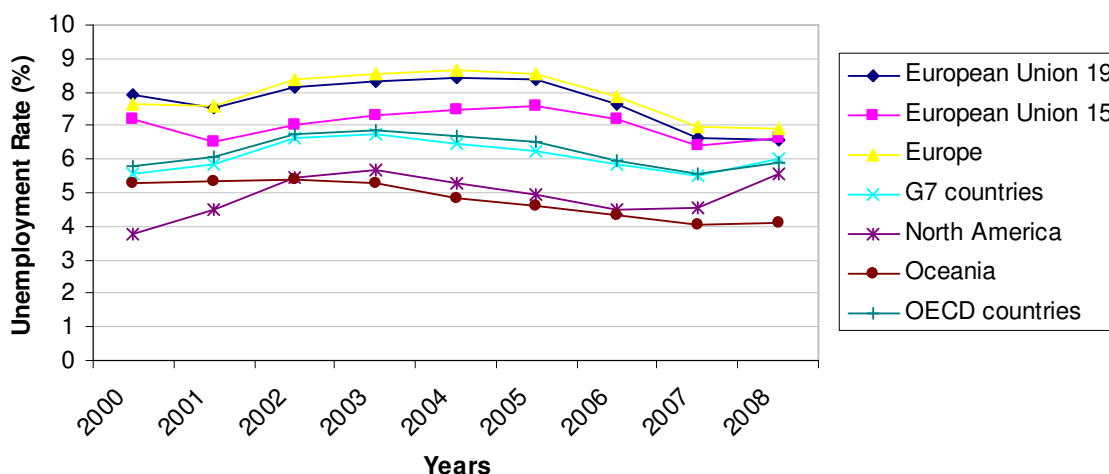


Source: Derived by the author from OECD Labor Statistics

Being much higher than male unemployment rates in more developed regions of the world, female unemployment rates decreased between 2005 and 2007 and then started to climb again apparently in North America, OECD and G-7 countries. The decreasing trend of female unemployment rates continues even after 2007 in European countries. Both male and female unemployment rates are higher in Europe, compared to North America and Oceania at each year between 2000 and 2008 (see Figures VI and VII).

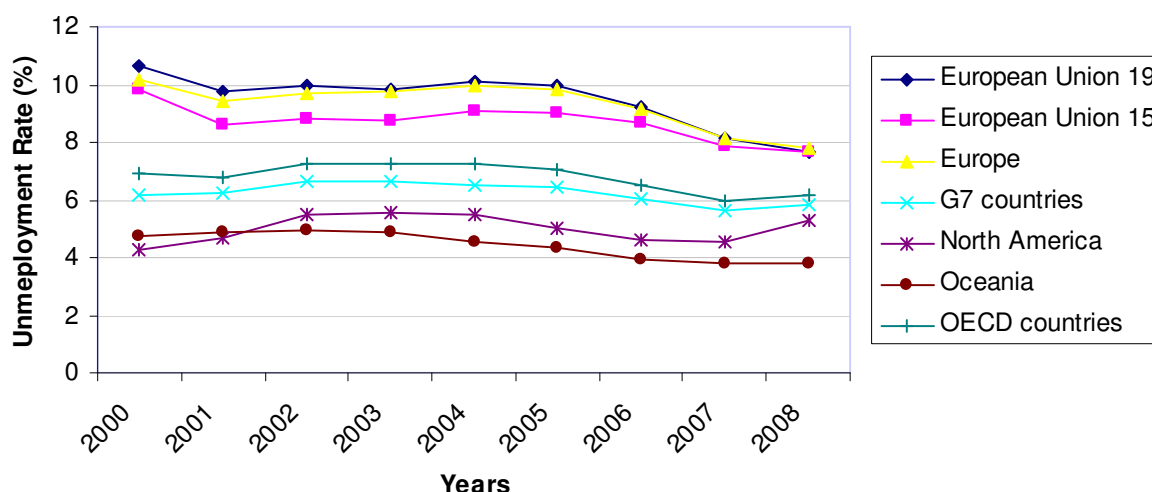
² `EU-15` refers to the 15 countries in the European Union before the expansion on 1 May 2004, when eight central and eastern European countries as well as Cyprus and Malta joined the organization. They are Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland (Republic of), Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and United Kingdom. `EU-19` refers to the 19 member countries, including the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and Hungary.

Figure VI: Unemployment Rates by Region (Men, age 15-64)



Source: Derived by the author from OECD Labor Statistics

Figure VII: Unemployment Rates by Region (Women, age 15-64)



Source: Derived by the author from OECD Labor Statistics

Most of the world's employed population (43,3%) works in the services sector, while 33,5% is employed in agriculture and 23,2% works in the industrial sector in the year 2008. The region that is highly engaged in agriculture is Sub-Saharan Africa. Developed economies and the European Union are relatively more engaged in services sectors. There is a noticeable shift from agriculture to other sectors around the world as a whole and in each individual region beginning from 1998 to the year 2008. This shift seems to be captured mostly by the services sectors. The shift from agriculture to industry and services

is most striking in East Asia between 1998 and 2008. In the Middle East the shift was mainly from agriculture to services (see Table IV).

Table IV: World and Regional Estimates of Employment by Sector

	1998	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008*
Agriculture							
World	40.8	38.7	37.5	36.5	35.5	34.4	33.5
Developed Economies and European Union	5.8	4.6	4.3	4.2	4.0	3.9	3.7
Central and South Eastern Europe (non-EU) & CIS	26.8	22.7	22.1	21.2	20.4	19.5	18.7
East Asia	47.6	46.8	44.6	42.6	40.6	38.6	36.6
South-East Asia and the Pacific	50.1	47.9	46.0	45.7	45.3	44.8	44.3
South Asia	59.5	53.4	52.1	50.8	49.5	48.2	46.9
Latin America and the Caribbean	21.4	19.4	19.3	18.9	18.0	17.1	16.2
Middle East	20.8	19.5	18.8	18.3	17.8	17.3	16.8
North Africa	35.9	34.7	35.3	34.5	33.8	33.1	32.4
Sub-Saharan Africa	67.6	65.4	64.4	64.0	63.4	62.5	61.7
Industry							
World	21.1	20.7	21.1	21.5	22.1	22.7	23.2
Developed Economies and European Union	27.9	25.6	25.3	25.0	25.0	25.0	25.1
Central and South Eastern Europe (non-EU) & CIS	27.7	25.6	25.3	25.5	25.5	25.4	25.3
East Asia	24.4	22.5	23.3	24.5	25.7	27.0	28.3
South-East Asia and the Pacific	15.5	17.4	17.9	18.0	18.4	18.8	19.3
South Asia	15.4	18.7	19.4	20.1	21.0	21.8	22.6
Latin America and the Caribbean	21.8	21.6	21.8	22.2	22.4	22.6	22.9
Middle East	25.4	25.4	25.1	25.0	24.9	24.8	24.8
North Africa	20.0	19.2	19.7	20.8	21.7	22.7	23.6
Sub-Saharan Africa	9.5	9.5	9.7	9.7	9.9	10.1	10.3
Services							
World	38.1	40.7	41.5	41.9	42.4	42.9	43.3
Developed Economies and European Union	66.3	69.8	70.4	70.8	70.9	71.1	71.2
Central and South Eastern Europe (non-EU) & CIS	45.5	51.7	52.6	53.2	54.2	55.1	56.0
East Asia	28.0	30.8	32.1	32.9	33.6	34.4	35.1
South-East Asia and the Pacific	34.4	34.7	36.2	36.2	36.3	36.4	36.4
South Asia	25.1	27.9	28.5	29.0	29.5	30.0	30.4
Latin America and the Caribbean	56.8	59.0	58.9	58.9	59.6	60.3	60.9
Middle East	53.8	55.1	56.0	56.7	57.3	57.9	58.4
North Africa	44.1	46.1	45.1	44.8	44.5	44.2	43.9
Sub-Saharan Africa	22.9	25.1	25.9	26.3	26.7	27.4	28.0

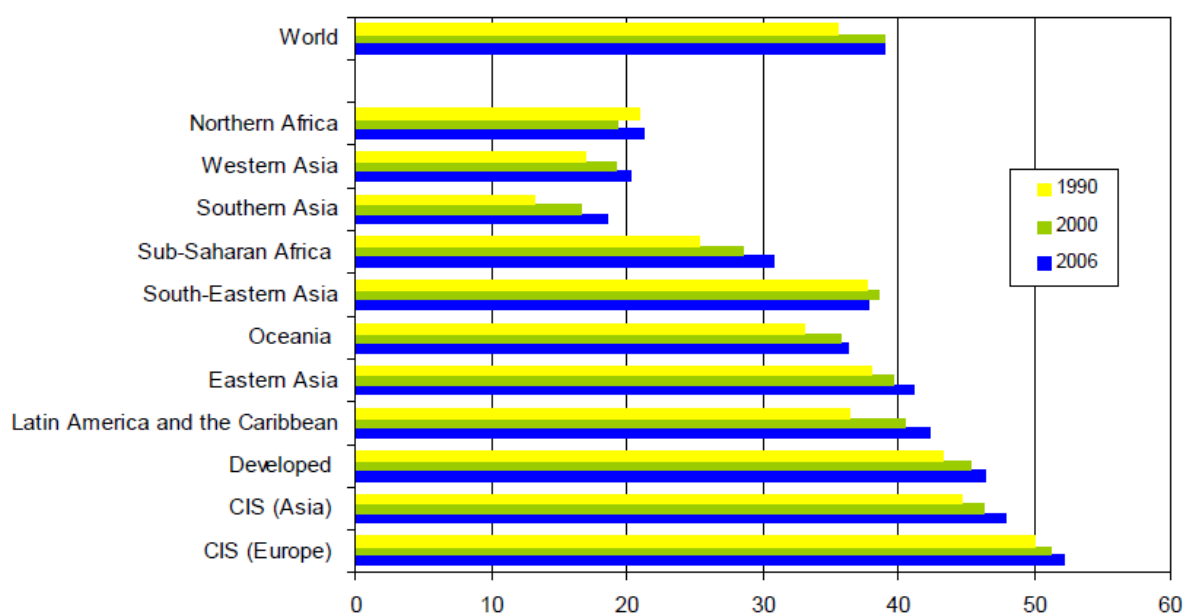
Source: ILO Global Employment Trends *2008 preliminary estimates.

It is worth noting that EPZ employment was found to increase by 217,27% in the Middle East between 2002 and 2006, while the increase was 91,18% in Asia, 157,77% in

Eastern and Central Europe and 104,10% in Sub-Saharan Africa (ILO, 2007). This may be an indicator of the shift from agriculture to other sectors in those regions as well.

If we go through the gender decomposition of employment in different sectors, we observe that nearly 40% of the wage employment in non-agricultural sector in the world is composed of women workers. The female shares of the non-agricultural sector in developed and developing countries such as The Commonwealth of Independent States (Europe and Asia), Latin America and East Asia are both higher and on an increasing trend since 1990, compared to less-developed regions. Female shares rose even in Western Asia, Southern Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and Oceania between 1990 and 2006 (see Figures VIII and IX). Dejardin (2008) explains these trends with the increased demand for woman workers in export industries. The expansion of women's paid employment is most observable in developing countries, but it has been observed even in countries which are known for the traditionally low rates of female labor force participation (e.g. Bangladesh). The figures below demonstrate female shares of wage employment in non-agricultural sectors across regions and selected Asian countries respectively. There have been noticeable increases in women's share of total employment in manufacturing, especially in Sri Lanka since 1995 and in Thailand and Singapore since 2000. The lowest ratio across years between 1980 and 2005 was around 20% in the selected Asian countries.³

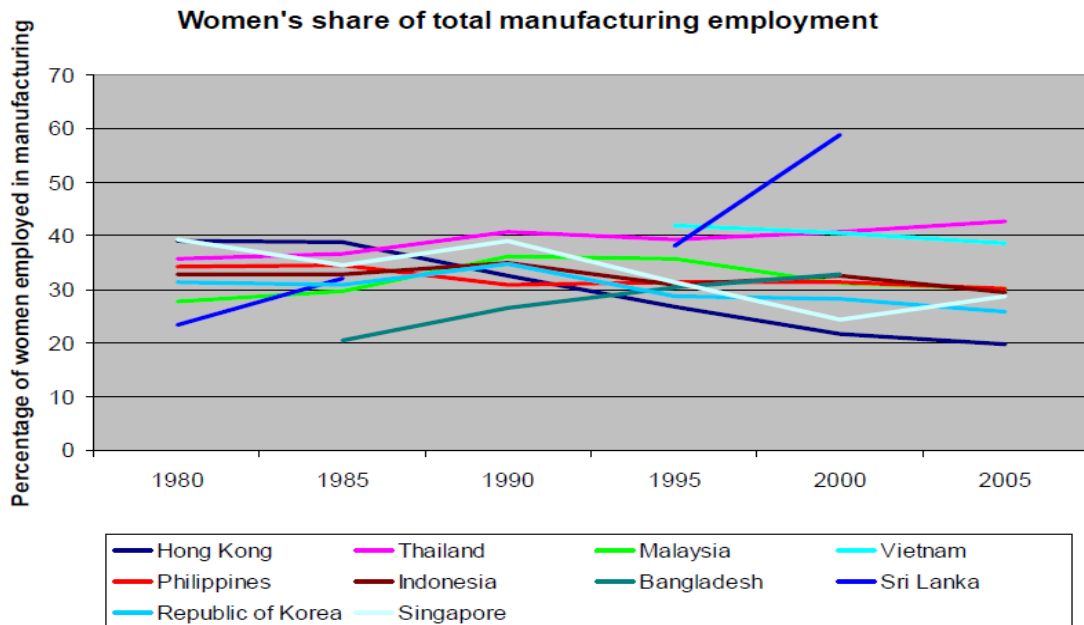
Figure VIII: Female % share of wage employment in non-agricultural sector, by regional group of countries, 1990-2000



Source: Dejardin (2008: 5), derived from ILO Global Employment Trends

³ For further comments on these figures, see Dejardin (2008).

Figure IX: Women’s share of total employment in manufacturing – selected Asian countries, 1980-2005



Source: Dejardin (2008: 5), derived from ILO Global Employment Trends

Primo (2003), Carr and Chen (2002) and Dejardin (2008) address the changing structure of jobs with globalization and argue that exports are becoming more information-based, requiring more skills and specialization such as software development and investment analysis. While these jobs are promising for women and men who have accomplished modest levels of education, and offer higher pay opportunities, most women remain with traditional occupations, such as export manufacturing. The authors convey the idea that these developments help to replicate the gender division of labor. Consistent with this, women are stuck in conventional jobs in banking, telecommunications and insurance sectors, and “in the low-skilled end of the hierarchy: simple, single-tasked jobs such as data-entry, invoicing, payroll administration and routine accounting; and call centre work” (Dejardin, 2008: 6). This kind of low-skilled jobs are mostly intense in the Caribbean, China, India, Malaysia and the Philippines employing women in a majority. For example, in Jamaica, women construct 100% of the data entry workers in “digiports” and in India, similarly, most of the data entry jobs in banking, airlines and insurance firms are occupied by women (Mitter, 2003). On the contrary, in countries such as Brazil, India and Malaysia, women were introduced and welcomed into more skilled jobs like software programming and computer analysis. However, it is noted that many of these women come from more privileged or more advantageous backgrounds and they are less in numbers. It is also another fact that these occupations are usually featured with long

working hours, stringent productivity targets, lack of job security, and limited long-term career prospects (Dejardin, 2008).

Employment rates of women and men differ according to their marital status across countries. Table V presents the employment rates of men and women in selected countries for the year 2006. Except the category of divorced people, men always have higher employment rates than women in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Turkey. Strikingly, divorced women in Bulgaria and Poland have higher employment rates than that of divorced men. Divorced women are more eager to participate in employment compared to never married, married or widowed women. Among the selected countries, Portugal has the highest female employment rate (50.8%) in 2006 while Turkey has the lowest (22.3%).

Table V: Employment Rates (Age 15+) in Selected Countries by Marital Status and Sex, 2006

	Czech							
	Bulgaria	Republic	Greece	Hungary	Poland	Portugal	Spain	Turkey
All marital statuses								
Both sexes	46.7	55.0	48.6	46.8	46.5	57.7	52.8	43.2
Female	42.0	46.1	36.7	40.0	39.6	50.8	42.0	22.3
Male	51.8	64.6	61.2	54.7	54.1	65.1	64.0	64.5
Never married								
Both sexes	41.8	50.2	51.6	46.1	37.6	49.2	59.0	38.4
Female	35.8	41.1	41.0	39.5	32.9	42.7	53.3	27.6
Male	46.1	57.0	59.6	51.4	41.3	54.7	63.6	47.1
Married								
Both sexes	54.8	62.6	52.3	54.2	56.0	65.0	53.8	47.4
Female	52.2	54.5	40.5	49.0	49.2	59.0	41.5	21.8
Male	57.4	70.5	64.3	59.4	62.9	71.1	66.0	72.9
Divorced								
Both sexes	59.6	64.1	65.1	56.1	49.2	68.2	68.5	39.5
Female	60.7	60.4	61.1	55.0	51.0	67.6	66.6	33.5
Male	57.8	70.0	73.1	58.2	45.3	69.4	71.4	53.5
Widowed								
Both sexes	11.4	13.6	8.7	10.2	11.3	20.8	8.4	11.2
Female	11.0	11.9	7.9	9.5	10.7	19.8	7.3	9.6
Male	12.7	21.7	12.8	13.4	14.7	25.6	14.1	21.3

Source: UNECE Statistical Division Database, compiled from national and international (Eurostat) official sources

There is negligible variability across regions regarding the distribution of work contract (in the main job) between temporary and permanent contract. Table VI shows that permanent employment makes the largest share of employment type, while temporary employment is around 14-15%. It is, however, striking that women constitute around half or even more than half of the temporary employment in all regions (Women employees in European OECD countries are exceptional making up slightly lower than half of the temporary employment as a share).

Table VI: Incidence of Permanent Employment (Both sexes and women separately)

		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
EU15	Share of permanent employment	85,35	85,42	85,68	85,81	85,54	85,19	84,61	84,31
	Share of temporary employment	14,65	14,58	14,32	14,19	14,46	14,81	15,39	15,69
	Share of women in temporary employment	48,35	48,7	49,34	49,71	49,47	48,81	49,12	49,78
OECD Europe	Share of permanent employment	85,96	86,21	86,08	85,98	85,54	85,12	84,54	84,17
	Share of temporary employment	14,04	13,79	13,92	14,02	14,46	14,88	15,46	15,83
	Share of women in temporary employment	44,75	45,72	46,97	46,99	46,65	46,57	46,87	47,74
G7 countries	Share of permanent employment	84,97	89,99	85,03	85,2	84,99	89,73	84,74	84,51
	Share of temporary employment	15,03	10,01	14,97	14,8	15,01	10,27	15,26	15,49
	Share of women in temporary employment	55,42	54,62	56,52	56,84	56,63	54,19	55,56	56,06
North America	Share of permanent employment	87,67	94,31	88,27	88,4	87,41	94,81	86,25	86,48
	Share of temporary employment	12,33	5,69	11,73	11,6	12,59	5,19	13,75	13,52
	Share of women in temporary employment	27,11	36,97	26,36	25,69	28,32	49,13	51,92	51,86
OECD countries	Share of permanent employment	84,78	88,9	84,79	84,73	84,66	87,99	83,68	83,12
	Share of temporary employment	15,22	11,1	15,21	15,27	15,34	12,01	16,32	16,88
	Share of women in temporary employment	45,71	46,88	47,02	46,81	47,06	50,65	51,13	51,53

Source: OECD Statistics

Table VII displays employment patterns in terms of job tenure, measured by the length of time workers have been in their current or main job or with their current employer. This information is valuable for estimating the degree of fluidity in the labor market and for identifying the areas of economic activity where the turnover of labor is rapid, or otherwise. Thus far, OECD has collected and reported data for a reduced number of European countries. Among the countries considered, women in Portugal exhibit the longest time of job tenure in years (counting 13 years on average). Men have the longest job tenure in Italy and Luxembourg. Lowest job tenure accounts are encountered in Denmark, Ireland, Spain and the United Kingdom for women and Denmark and Hungary for men on average.

Table VII: Employment by Job Tenure Intervals (average tenure in years)

Country	Women	Men
Austria	10	12
Belgium	12	12
Czech Republic	9	10
Denmark	8	9
Finland	10	11
France	12	12
Germany	10	12
Hungary	10	9
Ireland	8	11
Italy	11	13
Luxembourg	11	13
Netherlands	10	12
Norway	9	10
Poland	11	11
Portugal	13	12
Spain	8	10
Sweden	11	11
Switzerland	9	11
United Kingdom	8	10

Population & Scope
Source: OECD statistics

In what concerns minimum wages across countries, Luxembourg has the highest level of real hourly minimum wage in USD, purchasing power parity mounting up to 8,16 USD per hour in 2005. Slovak Republic, on the other hand, has the lowest with 1, 22 USD among the reported OECD countries. No increasing or decreasing general trends are observed (see Table VIII). Nor is it possible to make inter-country comparisons on wage differentials between men and women due to the lack of adequate or comparable statistics. Nonetheless, gender wage differentials do exist throughout regions or throughout different occupations. ILO (2009) reports that in a considerable number of countries, women's wages coincide with a ratio that is between 70% and 90% of men's wages, with even lower ratios in some Asian and Latin American countries.

Table VIII: Real Hourly Minimum Wages (in USD purchasing power parity)

Country	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Austria	6,98	7,12	7,05	7,00	7,07	7,15	7,29	7,58
Belgium	6,61	6,61	6,54	6,54	6,62	6,59	6,54	6,57
Canada	5,34	5,34	5,25	5,19	5,13	5,05	5,07	5,13
Czech Republic	1,06	1,27	1,62	1,99	2,23	2,43	2,54	2,68
France	6,26	6,33	6,37	6,50	6,58	6,69	6,91	7,20

Greece	3,33	3,35	3,39	3,39	3,45	3,50	3,58	3,66
Hungary	1,16	1,23	1,27	1,83	2,16	2,06	2,06	2,12
Ireland	5,42	5,34	5,36	5,42	5,80	6,05
Japan	3,58	3,66	3,71	3,77	3,83	3,83	3,83	..
Korea	1,87	1,91	2,04	2,25	2,45	2,58	2,77	2,91
Luxembourg	7,42	7,53	7,49	7,75	7,76	7,95	7,98	8,16
Mexico	0,68	0,65	0,66	0,66	0,67	0,67	0,66	0,66
Netherlands	6,54	6,58	6,62	6,74	6,80	6,87	6,83	6,75
New Zealand	4,75	4,75	4,92	4,96	5,00	5,20	5,33	5,50
Poland	1,62	1,61	1,87	1,99	1,96	2,04	2,04	2,04
Portugal	2,62	2,66	2,68	2,71	2,72	2,70	2,71	2,66
Slovak Republic	1,13	1,29	1,27	1,34	1,51	1,54	1,47	1,22
Spain	3,18	3,18	3,12	3,08	3,04	3,00	3,08	3,22
Turkey	2,04	2,10	1,81	1,47	1,64	1,67	2,14	2,24
United Kingdom	5,50	5,65	6,04	6,08	6,33	..
United States	5,44	5,32	5,15	5,00	4,92	4,82	4,69	4,57

Source: OECD Statistics

Table IX displays the numbers and shares of the working poor in total employment. The situation is not gladdening according to both definitions of being a working poor. If we define it as earning less than 1.25 USD a day, the world had 822 millions of working poor in 1997 and 609.5 millions in 2007. These numbers correspond to shares of 32.7% and 20.6% respectively in total employment. More than half of the working population is considered as a working poor in Sub-Saharan Africa according to this definition.

Table IX: Working Poor Indicators, World and Regions

	1997	2002	2007	1997	2002	2007
	(million)	(million)	(million)	Share in total employment (%)	Share in total employment (%)	Share in total employment (%)
USD 1.25 a day working poor						
World	822.0	787.2	609.5	32.7	29.0	20.6
Central and South Eastern Europe (non-EU) & CIS	12.2	10.4	8.2	8.2	6.8	5.1
East Asia	278.5	231.4	84.0	38.4	30.2	10.4
South-East Asia and the Pacific	80.3	66.1	44.7	35.6	26.8	16.4
South Asia	276.6	288.2	278.8	57.2	53.5	47.1
Latin America and the Caribbean	24.9	25.8	16.9	12.9	11.8	6.8
Middle East	3.9	5.0	5.3	9.7	10.1	9.0
North Africa	5.2	6.0	5.9	11.7	11.8	9.8
Sub-Saharan Africa	140.3	134.4	165.6	65.0	62.7	58.3

USD 2 a day working poor						
World	1'361.5	1'350.9	1'201.0	54.2	49.7	40.6
Central and South Eastern Europe (non-EU) & CIS	32.1	27.4	22.6	21.5	17.9	13.9
East Asia	501.9	426.5	265.4	69.2	55.8	33.0
South-East Asia and the Pacific	142.6	145.1	127.0	63.2	58.8	46.6
South Asia	417.6	424.7	479.4	86.3	84.4	80.9
Latin America and the Caribbean	53.7	56.8	40.6	27.8	26.0	16.4
Middle East	10.6	12.9	14.3	25.8	26.1	24.0
North Africa	18.8	18.9	18.2	42.0	37.1	30.2
Sub-Saharan Africa	184.2	208.5	233.5	85.4	84.7	82.2

Source: ILO, Trends Econometric Models, December 2008

The situation is even worse when we take into account the definition of the working poor as the ones that earn less than 2 USD a day. In 2007, 40.6% of the employed people in the world constituted the working poor and a strikingly high majority, as much as 82.2%, of the total employed in Sub-Saharan Africa were considered as the working poor according to this definition.

I now turn back to the labor force in EPZs. Rewarded with special incentives to attract foreign investors, EPZs have engaged in a broad range of activities such as tourist resorts, high-tech industries and financial services. But most of the activity, being concentrated on textiles, clothing and electronics, is still low-tech and requires low-skill labor. Although these zones have created new employment opportunities, especially for young women that would otherwise work in the domestic sector or agriculture, it is not easy to figure out how much these jobs contributed to the net changes in employment. What is more problematic is the difficulty of finding reliable data on the quality, cost and duration of jobs in EPZs. It should be noted that these zones also led to a decrease in the number of jobs in some countries, such as Mexico. There is moreover a high rate of turnover in the zones causing workers to stay usually no more than five years in their jobs (ICFTU, 2004).

Regarding the labor rights in EPZs, the situation is not gladdening. In most of the countries, firms investing in EPZs are exempt from employment legislation and, moreover, national labor laws are not implied in most of the countries (e.g. Dominican Republic, Philippines and Mexico). For instance, six EPZs in Bangladesh are exempt from laws establishing freedom of association and the right to bargain collectively. EPZ workers in Kenya were not allowed to join trade unions until the year 2003. Union activity causes dismissal from jobs and in some cases violence towards workers in many EPZs. It is

further claimed that women are considered less likely to join a union since they are seen as more disciplined, careful and more obedient than men (ICFTU, 2004: 9).

Gender discrimination, lack of health and safety conditions and excessive working hours are the norm in most EPZs. ICFTU Report on Export Processing Zones (2003) has staggering observations and detections about the situation of woman workers in EPZs. The report asserts that women are often subject to various forms of discrimination that influence their day-to day work and career development.

Most EPZ-based companies take no account of the specific needs of women workers, such as suitable working hours, rights during pregnancy, maternity leave or crèche facilities. In some cases, they are forced to resign when reaching the fourth month of pregnancy, or are not allowed to return to work after the child is born. The pregnancy tests imposed by some employers in the *maquilas* of Mexico are a striking example of the serious discrimination suffered by women workers. In the factories located along the US border, women are often forced to show used sanitary towels to prove that they are not pregnant. Pregnant workers are placed under such pressure that they are forced to resign, or are illegally dismissed. (ICFTU, 2003: 11)

The report further exemplifies these conditions in the EPZs of China, Bangladesh, Haiti, Honduras and many other countries with case studies and interviews.

The Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC), "The Manufacture of Poverty: The Untold Story of EPZs in Kenya", reports:

Commonly hired on short-term contracts – or with no contract at all – women work at high speed for low wages, in unhealthy conditions, and they are forced to put in long hours to earn enough just to get by. Most get no sick leave or maternity leave, few are enrolled in health schemes and almost none have savings for the future. The insecurity of these jobs is not only material: they work under threats of sexual harassment. Traditionally, women are the care-givers in the home – raising children and caring for sick and elderly relatives. Women are still forced to play that role even when they have become cash-earners. Doubly burdened, and with little support from their governments or employers to manage, the stress can destroy their own health, break up their family lives and undermine their children's chances of a better future. (KHRC, 2004: 11)

Being firstly established in the 1980s, China has many special economic zones even in the form of cities and millions of workers are employed in these zones. Recalling the documentary film of sweatshop workers “China Blue”, directed by Micha X. Peled (2005), including children at the age of 14-15, millions of woman employees work in factories, usually without occupational safety and health, for long hours, at low wages, often not paid on time, and migrant workers live in poor conditions and without humane treatment.

Although firms investing in EPZs continue to hire women to give them unskilled, repetitive tasks in the highly labor-intensive industries, this state of affairs might change in the future if EPZ production shifts to higher-technology, employing the more skilled male workers in detriment of female workers.

5. Conclusion

The increased liberal orientation of trade policies and the recent trends in production, investment and trade patterns have had a significant impact on the labor markets. Growing labor market flexibility and income insecurity has pushed more women into the labor force (feminization). However, more people are unemployed year by year, although unemployment rates seem to be stagnant around 6% in the last ten years. Female unemployment rates are still higher than that of males. Nevertheless, we should note here that it is not the number of employed women that is of the highest importance, but their working environment, health and safety conditions and the extent to which labor rights are implied.

Increased demand for women in export industries has led to rising female shares of employment in non-agricultural sector. Growth of subcontracting, outsourcing, offshore production and EPZs has demanded more labor force, especially female. Unfortunately, women have no job security, they encounter terrible working conditions, disparities in wages and increased mobility. Wage inequality and poverty still remain as the norm in the era of globalization despite the high levels of output growth, international trade and investment. This brings to mind the question whether recent neoliberal policies and free trade expansion have improved, as promised, people’s lives, or not. If not, what kind of policies do we need for more equitable growth and development?

The problem of non-availability of reliable statistics to compare labor market characteristics such as wages, gender wage gap, work hours and so forth continues to be of crucial importance hindering the possibility of seeing the real picture of the labor market.

While the international community has made a commitment to achieving full employment and decent work for all, this goal seems ever more distant in view of recent trends such as growing unemployment and underemployment, the phenomenon of ‘jobless growth’, the growing ‘casualization’ of employment relations, the promotion of labor flexibility at the expense of welfare security, de-industrialization and the continued decline of peasant agriculture. (Ocampo and Jomo, 2007)

The gender dimensions of these problems thus remain of crucial importance to be further studied.

SEVIL ACAR

Sevil Acar is a PhD student at Marmara University, Turkey. She is currently employed as a teaching assistant at Istanbul Technical University, in the Division of Quantitative Methods. Her research interests include international economics, resource economics, economic growth and development, gender and labor economics. She wrote this article while she was an exchange student at the University of Coimbra, Portugal. Contact: sevil.acar@itu.edu.tr

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