

| Editor's Note |

Inclusive Society and the Future of Women's Labor

Are women integrated on an equal basis with men in 21st-century society? Do they receive sufficient legal protection as citizens and have political and economic citizenship? Do they enjoy equal participation in the labor market and have decision-making power within their families? Are they safe from all types of violence including sexual violence, and are they guaranteed the right to sexual self-determination? Do they own reproductive rights, including pregnancy and childbirth? Do they share the responsibility of caring for families, such as raising children and caring for the elderly, with their spouses, community and the state? Are there no disadvantages or discrimination in terms of education, health, and welfare, such as vocational training, housing, or pension policy? These questions include the essential elements for judging the level of an inclusive society from the gender perspective.

This issue seeks to find the answers to these questions, especially focusing on women's labor. Since women began to enter the sphere of wage labor in Western society in the 19th century, they have been fighting against discrimination and inequality. As Professor Walby argues, the explanation that 'women's entry into the public sphere from the private one only shifted from exclusion to separation rather than complete integration' is still persuasive. Women still face inequality in the labor market and work organizations, with the gender wage gap, job segregation by gender, the glass ceiling, and sexual harassment in the workplace. As a result, women make up a much larger share of workers suffering from low skills, low wages, and poverty.

Asian and African countries covered in this issue have been called the "Third World" or "developing countries". The conditions and statuses of working women in these countries are different and have changed drastically, since many countries in Asia and Africa have achieved rapid economic growth, and there have been considerable changes in women's working conditions. However, rapid economic growth does not always improve women's working and living conditions or reduce gender inequality. In addition, wars and large-scale violence that continue in the 21st century are victimizing more women. Many women are still contained in the

private sphere, and even if they enter the labor market, they are doubly burdened with paid work and family care.

In “Coping with Intersecting Vulnerabilities: Syrian Refugee Women Working in Textile Workshops in Istanbul”, Terzi and Korkmaz cover intersecting vulnerabilities of Syrian women refugee workers in Istanbul and the practices they have developed to cope with them. In 2011, Turkey opened its doors to Syrian refugees fleeing the war in their country, and 4 million Syrian refugees arrived, half of whom were women. While they have suffered from language barriers, professional deficiencies, and irregular legal status, women refugee workers are at a greater risk of exploitation, abuse, and violence. Although most Syrian refugee workers earn less than the minimum wage, work very long hours (10-12 hours a day), and are exposed to ill-treatment in the workplace, women workers face gender-based and refugee status-based social exclusion, discrimination, and violence on top of it. Through in-depth interviews with 13 Syrian women working in textile workshops, this study identifies what their practices are in coping with their situation. “Coping” as a “practice” means short-term concrete effects on the daily lives of individuals, not long-term psychological effects, which would be “coping as a strategy”. Their coping practices are actively using social networks, generating additional income, and coping with sexual harassment in the workplace with the help of men in their families.

In “Informal Work from Home: Understanding Vulnerability and Well-being among Women in Kudumbashree Microenterprises”, Varghese and Ranganathan conduct an ethnographic study on the practices of women participating in microfinance programs in Kerala, India. Their question is whether microfinance initiatives work to empower women and redress gender inequalities. Through 30 interviews, they reveal that microfinance initiatives reduce women's vulnerability and provide opportunities for challenge. They find that Kudumbashree tends to privilege women who can make the most of opportunities to work from or near home, providing women the flexibility by allowing them to earn without compromising their everyday family responsibilities, and the advantages of working in an all-woman environment in a familiar neighborhood. However, women are attempting to sustain their work by dealing with challenges in non-confrontational ways. Their focus is not so much on the larger systems, institutions, and policies, but on “what can be done in a given situation.” For example, when talking about the husband's hesitation to “let” them go to work, women often frame this hesitation as one emerging out of care or concern. Women tend to interpret their hus-

bands' opposition to them working as a form of care—that is, they “care” too much for their wives to let them work, a case of benevolent paternalism. Therefore, the authors draw the following conclusions: these women's motive is not to cater to the patriarchy or break patriarchal norms, but to foster upward mobility for themselves and their families, thereby investing in their future and well-being.

In “The Experiences of and Challenges Faced by Nigerian Women Trafficked for Forced Labor: Implications for Faith-based Organizations and Policy Makers”, Uroko and Nwaoga expose the dangers of working conditions in which Nigerian women trafficked to Italy are placed. They interviewed 18 women with four questions: (1) What are the socioeconomic characteristics of potential female Nigerian migrants? (2) What are the challenges and experiences of female Nigerian migrants in transit countries like Libya, Mali, and Niger? (3) What are the challenges and experiences of Nigerian female migrants in Europe, particularly in Italy? (4) Is there any platform that can bring together the efforts of faith-based communities and governmental organizations in this regard? The result shows that Nigerian women are currently being trafficked because of their economic vulnerability in Nigeria. They are being forced to engage in forced labor, especially prostitution. Apart from forced prostitution, Nigerian female migrants are physically assaulted because they have no legal support or backing. Thus the authors claim that there is a need for the local, state, and federal governments of Nigeria to look for ways of empowering their women.

In “Spatial Analysis of the Gender Pay Gap in China: Asymmetries as a Consequence of Development”, Larraz and Xinbo identify the relationship between socioeconomic regional development and the gender wage gap in China. Using data from the Chinese Household Income Project and the China Family Panel Studies, they track down the relationship between the increasing gap observed between men's and women's wages and patterns of regional socioeconomic development. The spatiotemporal analysis from 1995 to 2018 shows that China's gender pay gap depends on development levels. It increases with province size, in terms of GDP and population, and the higher the foreign exchange earnings from international tourism, the smaller the gap. The CFPS data for the year 2018 show that the gender pay gap in China's annual earnings has reached 26.5%. It is a result of the movement toward a free market economy, as market competition and the effects of wage decentralization play a role in shaping gender earnings differentials. With the transformation of China from a planned to a market economy, the state

has less power to intervene in the market. This lack of control may have contributed to the widening of the gender pay gap along with the unequal socioeconomic development experienced by China's provinces. The 1995–2018 spatio-temporal analysis shows that China's gender pay gap differs greatly for each of the provinces analyzed. This is particularly acute in the differences in the southern coastal and the northern interior provinces, and the differences in zones of highest and least economic development.

These four papers suggest what conditions are necessary for women to be equally integrated with men in the field of wage labor. It is to change the social and cultural environment and institutional conditions so that women can expand their subjectivity. These papers remind us of the responsibility of the state and the international community in achieving these goals.

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