

# Gender Segregated Labor Market and Work-Life Preferences: Evidence from Turkey

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## Abstract

Recent drastic changes in demand for and supply of labor have given rise to efficient labor market transformations, notably in the status of gender stereotypes in advanced countries. An important question remains: Why are women's roles in the labor market still lagging in terms of the distribution of resources and wages in developing countries? Given that wage inequality and gender segregation in occupations continues, those issues require further discussion from the viewpoint of gender inequality. While similar transformations have taken place in Turkey, aggregate data indicates that female employment and labor force participation still need special consideration. The framework of socio-cultural and economic factors that determines gender-based division, both in the labor market and households, causes women generally lag behind men at all levels in Turkey. The limited number of jobs available for women, long working hours, heavy working conditions, low wages and women's lack of work skills are some of the factors keeping women out of the labor market. Despite recent amendments to legislation aimed at preventing gender inequality, it is still not possible to see female employment increasing due to and the strict conservative patriarchal values that characterize Turkish society. Further investments are needed in fields such as the active labor market and life-long learning in order to increase female employment. Reducing informal employment while promoting high quality and productive jobs is all crucial for addressing the problems of female unemployment in Turkey.

**Keywords:** Female employment, gender inequality, discrimination, Turkey.

**JEL Classification:** I21, J13, J21, J24.

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## Özet

# Cinsiyet Temelli Olarak Ayırılmış İşgücü Piyasası ve Çalışma Yaşamı Tercihleri: Türkiye’den Kanıt

İşgücü arz ve talebinde son dönemde yaşanan esaslı değişiklikler başta gelişmiş ülkelerde toplumsal cinsiyet kalıplarındaki statü değişiklikleri olmak üzere etkin işgücü piyasalarında kayda değer dönüşümlere yol açmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, buradaki ayırt edici soru şudur: gelişmekte olan ülkelerde kadınların işgücü piyasasındaki rolleri neden hala kaynak dağılımı ve ücretler açısından geri kalmaya devam etmektedir? Mesleklerdeki süregiden ücret eşitsizliğini ve cinsiyet ayrımcılığını göz önüne aldığımızda, bu sorunların toplumsal cinsiyet eşitsizliği bakış açısından yeni tartışmalarla ele alınması gerekliliği ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bu dönüşümler benzer şekilde Türkiye’de de yaşanmaktadır. Ancak, toplulaştırılmış verilerden anlaşıldığı kadarıyla kadın istihdamını ve işgücüne katılım oranını özel bir dikkat gerektirmektedir. Sosyokültürel çerçeve ile ekonomik faktörlerin hem işgücü piyasasındaki hem de evdeki cinsiyet temelli ayrışmayı belirlemesi nedeniyle, kadınlar genellikle tüm düzeylerde erkeklerin gerisinde kalmaktadır. Kadınların çalışabileceği işlerin yetersiz olması, uzun çalışma saatleri, ağır çalışma koşulları düşük ücretler ve çalışma hayatındaki beceri yoksunluğu da yine kadınları işgücü piyasasının dışına iten faktörler arasında yer almaktadır. Toplumsal cinsiyet eşitsizliğinin önlenmesine yönelik olarak son dönemde yapılan mevzuat değişikliklerine rağmen, Tür toplumunu karakterize eden baskıcı ve muhafazakâr ataerkil değerler sebebiyle kadın istihdamında bir iyileşmeden söz etmek mümkün olmamaktadır. Bu nedenle, kadın istihdamının artırılması için aktif işgücü piyasası ve hayat boyu öğrenme gibi alanlarda yeni yatırımlara ihtiyaç vardır. Kadın istihdamına ilişkin sorunların üzerine gidilebilmesi için kayıt dışı istihdamın azaltılması ve kaliteli ve üretken işlerin teşvik edilmesi hayati önemdedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kadın istihdamı, cinsiyet eşitsizliği, ayrımcılık, Türkiye.

**JEL Sınıflaması:** I21, J13, J21, J24.

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## 1. Introduction

Labor market inequality has become recognized as a questioning field of era from both theoretical and methodological perspective and is an important question in economic, public policy and sociology. While labor laws have undertaken many specific tasks in brining visibility to the problems women face within labor market, equal human capital formations and equal work related endowments (Becker 1971) are still required. Gender-segregated labor market is still prevailing in Turkey although it has adopted several equalitarian policies and reforms like Equal Opportunities Act (2004), Sex discrimination Act (2003), Equal Treatment

in Employment and Occupation Directive (2003). However, legal regulations are not enough to solve discrimination problem against women. Yet too often there is disconnection between studies that examine labor market with gender discrimination and those that focus on the dimensions of social and economic phenomena in work life at regional and national level. Additionally, economists who focus on different world regions or disciplinary subfields are not always communicating in single significant results. Therefore it will be better to handle this subject from economic, social and political aspects.

The purpose of this article is to identify existing debates around women's problems by allowing for a better understanding of what should be done to prevent discrimination against women in the working life and/or at least, the possibility of minimizing them. Therefore, the paper is constituted in six domains to analyze women's economic and social stratification in the society. Each section tries to explain gender-segregated labor market from its own perspective and attitude: (2) gender inequality women face in Turkey; (3) the patriarchal values and gender role division in the society; (4) women's appointments with Gender Equality National Action Plans; (5) educational policies regarding equality and its effect on female labor force participation and (6) policies, efforts and regulations that are undertaken so far and the conceptual gender equality plans that has to be enhanced either economically or socially. It can be concluded that gender-segregated labor market needs to be remarked more systematic attention from both policy makers and researchers to overcome the problem itself.

## **II. Gender equality under inequality**

States are evaluating labor reforms that include employment models and labor relations for preventing gender segregation to reduce its impact on economic efficiency. Labor administration is an important factor in all sectors in both developed and developing countries, with the main issues being to improve job creation and encourage labor activation policies in order to raise living standards and provide employment opportunities, particularly for targeted groups like women and disabled people. These goals are expected to meet with the implementations of the countries to offset many of the development agendas of the countries.

Prevailing economic theory views employment as a tool of private and public investment alongside money supply, credit availability, interest rates, wage rates, labor productivity, innovation, migration, and demographic and cultural trends. Any change in these factors is directly correlated with employment. Even though the relationship is a prediction, the parameters do not contact a theory with employment. Giarini and Liedtke (1997) develops a new evidence to the classical view of economics as the system of models indeed are evaluated due to pre-determined laws which results in a static equilibrium. Therefore, it is important to understand why the old theories have failed and how to develop a feasible and efficient alternative. Unemployment is closely related with income inequality, social productivity and technological innovation. Low levels of unemployment are related with lower levels of income inequality in concurrence with higher levels of economic growth, education and opportunities to access health (Natarajan, 2010).

When the progress of unemployment problem<sup>2</sup> is evaluated throughout years in a comparative perspective, it is clearly observed that the most undesired level of unemployment was experienced during 1960s. Thus, the unemployment problem triggered a cultural revolution among classes in the societies. Developed countries came together to solve the problem and governments agreed on establishing an agricultural collective system. Hence they decided to transfer well-educated female to work in these territories (ILO, 2012). What is expected for the post-2015 period is a more complicated unemployment problem. By 2020, the total working-age population of the world will increase over 64 per cent. The surplus in rural labor must be offset with non-agricultural jobs. As a result, migration will start from rural to urban which will bring more problems to the working class in urban areas. Their living standards will start to decline in association with their decreasing income and it will be more difficult to find jobs with minimum social security.

It is obvious that Turkey's recent economic growth has not been matched by employment creation; rather, unemployment has remained a major problem, with insufficient employment opportunities for both adults and young cohorts. This is a common issue shared by countries that have suffered from high inflation rates, continuous financial crisis, mistrust in macroeconomic stability and low levels of foreign direct investment. Female employment is a crucial component for improving a country's macroeconomic stability. The financial

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<sup>2</sup> The unemployment rate in a developing country may reflect the experience of educated middle-class urban workers or the rates of attrition of workers in casual employment of short duration (Majid, 2012).

crises that have occurred almost every five years have damaged Turkey's economic growth and stability. Even when a recovery plan is successfully implemented, another crisis appears to undo it. Consequently, unemployment rates have not been able to fall as far as expected. In Turkey, as with many OECD countries, the policies and regulations developed to decrease unemployment have tended to disregard young cohorts. While it is already hard for young people to find jobs, especially during a recession, it is even worse when they lack experience and education. For instance, although Turkey has increased mandatory schooling to eight years, child labor is still a major problem in the informal labor market. Policies must be developed to overcome this challenge.

In recent years, the increase in the growth of Turkey's working-age population has outstripped economic growth, which has been a key factor in both young and women employment. While young people need better education in order to find suitable jobs, it should not be ignored that already educated people cannot find jobs, especially in urban areas. Without stable employment and positive prospects, it is quite understandable why many working class females cannot find a job for themselves despite being willing to work. Turkey should develop more effective strategies and give priority to investing in human capital. Since women's employment ratios are lower than men's, active labour market policies for targeted groups must be emphasized.

`More women in politics work life and education` does not only mean the increase in the number of females in these areas but also transforming their social, communal and political life into more acceptable forms. Hence, gender equality in its universal form will lead up to eliminating limits, creating new opportunities as well as challenging the substantial problems (Oztan, 2004).

### **III. Focus on women in Turkey: patriarchy**

In a predominantly capitalist world, employment is vital for solving both economic and social problems, with female participation being essential for both sustained economic growth and social stability. This paper considers the critical economic, political, cultural and social reasons why female employment is lower in Turkey than other developing countries. Many papers in the literature about female employment have paid close attention to analyzing how rising female employment affects the economic success of countries. This study also

provides policies that female labors face and focuses on the importance of women's presence in the labor market.

Over the last two decades, feminists and other activists have been trying to promote the importance of women in the labor market, launching many campaigns and events with the help of governments, non-governmental organizations and trades unions. Their main aim is to integrate women into the labor market, which they believe will increase their economic independence. Esping-Andersen, for example, defines this emancipatory transaction as "de-familiarization" (Orloff, 1993). In some countries, however, traditional conservative interpretations of gender roles threaten economic, political and social stability. Turkey's low levels of female employment are the result of the unchanged patriarchal and traditional division of gender roles, both regionally and nationally. In general, housework is accepted as being unpaid family work without any financial equivalence. That is, women's work is accepted as inferior and worthless (Toksöz, 2007), part of the informal sector since there is no wage, social insurance or benefits.

The factors responsible for reducing female labor participation rate are not restricted with women's domestic liabilities. Primary reasons also include women's low level of education as compared to men, and inadequate public support. Furthermore, women are left housebound due to another manifestation of the existing male-dominant social structure; i.e., conservatism and accompanying pressure. Typical examples of this phenomenon include preventing female children from going to school and women from taking part in public sphere. On the other hand, the women who are able to overcome male-dominant pressure and to appear in public sphere usually find themselves in the burden of coping with sexual harassment in working life. The fact that services such as transportation, illumination and security are lacking in workplaces also negatively affects female labor participation when it comes to jobs requiring night shift work.

Being observed in almost all areas of social policy, conservatism reveals itself in family-centered policies, which repeatedly underline divinity of maternity and marriage, discourses recommending women to take back their traditional roles in house, and regulations intervening in women's decisions on their own bodies, notably the decision to make child. Social policies being built up not in consideration of the quality of woman and man but in a family-centered manner indicates that the most fundamental point concerning women employment are still passed over. Undoubtedly that such a point of view not only affects the

policies oriented to women employment but will also significantly affect social assistance programs aimed the deserving poor groups.

**Table 1** Reasons why women are not in the labor force, 2012.

	Urban		Rural	
	thousand	As of %	thousand	As of %
Female not in the labor force	14068	100	5512	100
Not seeking a job	735	5,2	317	5,8
Working seasonally	16	0,1	34	0,6
Domestic work/housewife	8743	62,1	3249	58,9
Education/Training	1667	11,9	486	8,8
Retired	760	5,4	76	1,4
Disabled/old	1034	7,4	1147	20,8
Other	1113	7,9	203	3,7

Source: TUIK (2013)

In the beginning of 1980s, Turkey decided to adopt a new strategic international policy and replaced import-substituting industrialization with market oriented economic model that led economic deregulations, privatization and urbanization associated with liberalization of trade. So with a new economic tendency towards minimal state policy, Turkish government leaves the economy to private sectors by the policies that favor the capitalist company owners. That is to say, the economic transfer from import industrialization to export oriented industrialization has been started. The liberalization in the economy provides new opportunities for female employees, but since the quality of jobs mitigate with low-wage policies, long working hours, inconvenient working places, less and less women want to be in the labor market. Consequently, the privatization causes an increase in male employment by inducing women to be out of the labor force.

In the late 90s, Labor Act no: 4857 was introduced which regulates part time work, on call work, temporary and permanent employment contracts. It was very welcomed by females but flexibilization of labor markets emerges the second primary policy towards women employment. Flexibilization is pronounced as an adaptation to the changes in labor markets, technology and structure of production; and concordantly it is asserted that inflexible labor market would suffer from high rate of unemployment. It is also argued that "an employment-

friendly strategy” against “jobless growth” would be achieved primarily by removing rigidities in labor markets. It is clearly seen that central objective of Turkey must be to decrease labor costs and popularize modes of flexible employment. Diagnosing the fundamental problem of the Turkish labor market as “rigidity”, offers flexible mode of working and job security should be provided.

In this context, it is projected to legalize flexible modes of working such as part time working, fixed term employment, temporary working by way of private employment offices, remote working, on-call working, home-working, work sharing, and working under flexible time model, and to take all these modes of working in the scope of social security. It is also planned to legitimate these sorts of working as a remedy for high rate of women and youth employment; but in fact it is targeted to extend flexible employment to cover the entire labor market. Even if flexible modes of employment are taken in the scope of social security, it is hard to benefit from advantages provided under social security system as amount of premium is too high and period of payment is too long. What’s worse, even if such premiums are paid, benefits are considerably limited and far from being adequate. Even under the existing conditions where flexible employment has not yet been so popularized, women are not allowed to have social security based on their jobs<sup>3</sup>. This disadvantageous position of women remains one of the basic problems requiring betterment. Transition to flexible employment may make this problem more widespread and deepened. As a result, sectors involving intensive female labor<sup>4</sup> fail to offer long-term jobs due to improper and heavy working conditions<sup>5</sup>.

On the other hand, the gap between the ratio of male and female employment shows that the social and cultural factors somehow affect the decision of employers and restrains the female labor force participation in a weird way. Although patriarchal attitudes towards the employment of women are one of the challenges, the working conditions that are set up by the demander’s do not lean towards accommodating women in the labor market (Bugra and Yakut-Cakar, 2010).

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<sup>3</sup> Women are covered by social security due to their spouses by 68.4%, parents by 12.9%, and children by 2.7% (Elveren, 2008).

<sup>4</sup> Most important examples include some sub-sectors of manufacturing such as textile and garment, and finance sector. See Dedeoglu (2012) for a comprehensive analysis of the Turkish textile industry and modes of female employment in this sector.

<sup>5</sup> See Toksöz (2013) for and extensive assessment of youth and women employment.



**Table 2** Distribution of economic activity by sex and years (numbers in 000s).

	Total employment				Female				Male			
	1995	2000	2005	2012	1995	2000	2005	2012	1995	2000	2005	2012
Total	20912	21580	20067	24823	5977	5800	5108	7311	14935	15780	14959	17512
Agriculture	9526	7769	5154	6097	4576	3508	2367	2872	4950	4261	2787	3225
Share of Agriculture	45,6	36	25,6	24,6	76,6	60,5	46,3	39,2	33,2	27,1	18,6	18,5
Industry	4861	5174	5290	6460	834	763	846	1089	4027	4411	4444	5371
Share of Industry	23,2	24	26,4	26	13,9	13,2	16,6	14,9	26,9	27,9	29,7	30,6
Service	6525	8637	9623	12266	567	1529	1895	3350	5958	7108	7728	8916
Share of Service	52,2	40	48	49,4	9,5	26,3	37,1	45,9	39,9	45	51,7	50,9

Source: TUIK (2000, 2006 and 2013)

Table 2 shows that total employment expanded by only 3,911,000 over 17 years. Concerning female employment specifically agricultural employment declined dramatically by 1,704,000, a decrease of 37.4 percent. Conversely, women's share of service sector employment increased to 45.9 percent from 9.5 percent, while their share of industrial employment changed little. This indicates that the share of female service sector employment, especially in banking, insurance and private teaching institutions where women can find better qualified jobs, has increased around the world. New job opportunities in an expanding service sector thus encouraged Turkish female workers to enter the labor force.

In countries where the agricultural sector is the major of employment sector for both men and women, the female labor force is very low outside it. That is, female labor force participation is influenced by various demographic, cultural and social factors, including women's responsibilities and decision-making mechanisms in the family (Tzannatos, 1999). Female workers in Turkey face a similar situation and those women who generally work in rural areas find themselves excluded from the production process in the urban areas when they migrate there. This is because of both a lack of suitable job opportunities and encouragement to join the labor market due to existing patriarchal attitudes (Gülçubuk, Şengül, Aluftekin, Kızılaslan and Kılıç, 2005).

#### IV. Women in Turkish Labor Market

While implementing development policies, governments should closely investigate effects on female employment to gain better productivity, growth and stability (Kirton, 2012a). In both developing and advanced countries, governments have limited power to supply sufficient suitable jobs, especially for young people. As the OECD stated in 2008, female unemployment is a critical concern, and more closely affected by economic conditions than male unemployment rates, which tend to decline in relation to age. Women are more likely to engage in temporary, unpaid, risky or informal work activities, which discourage them from joining the labor market. Nevertheless, more and more women are trying to find jobs every year, which is likely to create socio-economic problems in the coming decades (ILO, 2012b).

The latest forecasts from the ILO and OECD indicate that there will be a weak growth in economic activity in 2015 as well. This will maintain slow employment growth with unemployment unable to fall in the short run. Because of the cyclical unemployment in Turkey, more people are being laid off. Moreover, since the share of long-term unemployment in total unemployment has risen above its pre-crisis level, the situation is even worse for young people (ILO, 2013). Therefore, well-designed labour policies with strong social protection must be applied, accompanied by macroeconomic policies to encourage the growth of formal and productive employment. Rather than improving, labor market conditions have deteriorated. The current increase in the female unemployment since 2008 has been caused by a lack of demand following the economic crisis. Hence, strength of the recovery must be underlined and linked to the set of principles designed to be equally applicable (ILO and OECD, 2013).

Gender Equality National Action Plan (2008-2013) points to the need for popularizing microloans as a strategy and action plan aimed at improving female poverty. Even though microloans pretend to encourage women entrepreneurship and to strengthen women's social standing<sup>6</sup>, they act as micro-size policy tools rather than those aimed at solution of macroeconomic problems such as poverty or inequalities in loan market.

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<sup>6</sup> For the period 2008-2010, YTL 219 million was allocated to promote youth and women employment to ensure discount in employer's social security premium; and according to Labor Law No 5763 adopted in May 2008, employer's contribution for social security is reduced by 100% for the first year and at decreasing rates for subsequent years if he/she hires a women who has never taken part in labor market. The latest financial package of 2009 extended the applicable period of this law up to 2015.

Supporting women entrepreneurs can be seen as an alternative way of increasing women employment, while it is one of the tools having minimal chance in terms of getting favorable results. Naturally, all the programs for women entrepreneurs are not limited to the activities carried out at home. It should be noted that programs to ensure women's participation in economic life out of the house also exists (KEIG, 2008). But, as a matter of fact, unlike regular secured jobs, entrepreneurship requires risk-taking and competitive actions in the market. Considering inexperienced profile of women in business life, it seems to be impossible for them to overcome such a huge burden, notably to carry it to a stepping-stone that may allow women to change their social standing, putting aside rarely-seen success stories.

It is possible to observe similar tendencies in Turkish Employment Organization's assessment on "Promoting Woman's Employment Operation". This project seems to be directing women to "feminine jobs", maintaining gender-based discrimination in labor market. It is essential to launch transformative policies and practices in order to break stratified structure, which leads women to be held by low-wage and less influential "feminine jobs". Hiring young women is seemingly associated with the ideology of 'housewife' and qualifications gained from domestic works. Generally speaking, those referred to as "feminine jobs" are based on needlework and knitting, which also proliferates the use of female labor. On the other hand, it can be safely argued that fragmentation of labor process; i.e., some sub-activities being transferred to small workshops, and even home-centric production being an inseparable part of factory production, facilitates women employment.

Starting from early 2000s, women's labor force participation rate has been decreasing noticeably. One of the reasons responsible for such decrease is internal migration from rural to urban. However, employment possibilities generated in cities are far from absorbing this huge female and, of course, male labor force. Therefore, women, in the first place have problems with supplying their labor force. Another dimension of this issue is related with needing and using women's labor force. It is clearly observable that the paradigms concerning women employment and use of women labor force have changed during 2000s. Beginning with early 2000s, emphasis on social state has been lessened and therefore some other concepts have become prominent.

## **V. Female labor force participation and effects of education**

There are a number of reasons why women might have lower rates of labor market participation, which include economic, cultural and social factors. While the shift to a service economy has increased the share of female employees over time in every country, the speed of this transformation has varied significantly. Countries with higher rates of tertiarization also have higher rates of female labor market participation (Castells, 1997). On the other hand, in countries where the bulk of unpaid work is carried out by women, their labor market participation has remained relatively low (Esping-Andersen, 2002). Women generally have the main responsibility for childcare, household work, elderly care and other forms of non-market activities. In traditional societies, where the division of labor is more gendered, women tend to stay at home or only work in family enterprises. This gender division of labor also affects social policies so that in countries with limited public provision of child and elderly care female employment is restricted further (Bettio and Plantenga, 2004). These structural inequalities are intensified in crisis situations when women tend to withdraw from the labor market in greater numbers. Another dimension of gender inequality in the labor market is society's generally lower investment in female education. In the literature, it has been found that, while in the majority of developing countries the gender gap declines over time, girls still have less schooling than boys (King and Hill, 1993). This has important labor market consequences since education is an important determinant of earnings as well as productivity. The lower the level of schooling the higher the risk of being employed in the informal sector or left out of the labor market completely. In addition, discrimination and segregation in the labour market pushes women to select only certain professions and train for them, which aggravate educational differences between the genders in the long run. Jobs in business and finance are only accessible for women if they have a certain level of education. Therefore, as women's education level increases, employment rates increase. In addition, education not only raises women's wages and makes it easier for them to find jobs but also ensures them greater legal rights whether in work or daily life (Toksöz, 2007).

**Table 3** Schooling ratio by level of education.

	Total Enrolments	Female	Male
Primary education	98,86	98,92	98,81
Middle education	93,09	92,98	93,19
High school	70,06	69,31	90,77
Higer education	38,5	38,4	38,61

Source: TUIK (2013)

As Table 3 shows above, Turkey does not yet provide universal educational level even at primary level. In 2012, 1.1 percent of girls and 1.2 percent of males do not even attend primary school. School enrolment rates then drop significantly at high school and higher education levels, and at each level male enrolment rates are much lower than male rates.

Social and political institutions along with trades unions in Turkey have failed to use their legitimacy to empower women in the labor market. Following the establishment of the modern Turkish Republic in 1923, sex equality in social, economic and cultural life was supported by government policies aiming at westernization,. The major aim was to modernize women and provide more opportunities to them at every stage of the lifespan. However, the transformation from patriarchy to a modern world is not easy. Long-held cultural values, norms and religious beliefs have a huge impact on attitudes. Practices concerning divorce, bride shortage, polygamy, dowry abuse and female fetus abortions, which were generally accepted in Muslim families as informal laws in Turkey at that time, were made illegal by Turkey's republican reformers and confine anyone who still does these above impacts. If those challenges are overcome, there would be a significant social and economic change for women which are defined as Islamic reform in the degree of state feminism in the literature. The reforms started by M. K. Atatürk in 1923 are still continuing. Before 2002, political parties preferred to implement liberal economic policies. However, after 2002, the new government of the Justice and Development Party introduced a number of very conservative social and economic policies, as if no reforms had been made to promote women in the labor market. For instance, various policies focus on the issue of limiting women to the home to look after children since childcare facilities in Turkey are very limited and expensive. Therefore, working from home could be more convenient for women than working outside. However, this has been presented as a family-centered social policy rather an economically liberating one. More women are forced to work in the informal sector due to discriminatory

attitudes of employers or their own families. Similarly, the social security system takes an exclusionary approach that indicates that the aim of policies is not to promote women's participation in the labor force but to force them out of the labor market. Although labor market laws (Act 4857) have been changed in regards to negotiations with the European Union, they are not implemented correctly by employers so women are forced to work from home.

The low level of female employment is also caused by the lack of social services such as care facilities for children, especially pre-school facilities and difficulties in finding careers for older or disabled people. Instead, family members, mostly women, who are forced to provide this care as part of their family responsibilities, look them after. Most of them are not even aware of the social care services that social welfare states should provide to dependent people. However, opportunities for older and disabled groups are very limited in Turkey and the current government is not providing the resources needed to provide more facilities for these groups. Thus, women are condemned to caring for others in their families as if it is their obligation, which precludes from other opportunities like employment outside the home.

## **VI. What should we do instead?**

Given that the labor market policies have differential impacts on individuals, they need to be carefully designed to contribute to the female in each country. For instance, unskilled and less educated young employees are expected to be negatively since their entrance into the labour markets would be much more limited (Dolado, Jansen and Jimenez, 2005). Employment protection, as a result, can harm such workers and generate exclusions in the labor market. Moreover, the discrepancy between the protection for regular and temporary employment can be explanatory for the rise in unusual jobs. Indeed, most of the programmes over the years are undertaken in the area of temporary employment, which enabled the firms to avoid the hefty regulations by resorting to unusual jobs. As a result, a dualized labour market structure would emerge with high turnover and frequent unemployment spells coexisting with long tenures and job security for different groups (Blanchard and Landier, 2002). Thus, the developing countries with highly dualized labor markets should be careful about implementing regulatory frameworks such as employment protection legislation. Female cohorts might need additional flexibility as they can be regarded as the outsiders.

Turkish society underwent tremendous economic, socio-cultural and political transformations in the past decades. New work ethics, lifestyles and policies to promote gender equality were introduced. It became a period of transition for women. Yes, higher education for girls became more wide spread, at least in the urban areas. However, women preferred to study literature, home science, social work, the arts, social sciences and teaching. Though women began to join the professions in 1920s, till the fifties, only a handful took up sciences. By 1970s women began to join engineering, journalism, media and management in large numbers. They started to participate more in politics and the administrative services. A significant number of women were also employed in jobs such as advocacy, medicine and architecture. Women's study centers got established in the 1970s. These profound changes during the twentieth century altered the old ways of life that defined women and men's roles in society. There were new structural and institutional patterns generated by modernization. Family structure, household organizations and lifestyles were gradually modified. Thus, the identity of Turkish women underwent dramatic and drastic changes in the past century. Woman is firmly 'placed' in the house within the unenacted laws and patriarchy is strongly manifested in the institution of the family, especially in rural areas. In a typical Turkish situation, a girl belongs to the father till marriage, and then to the husband. As a result, a woman's connection to her house is defined in terms of her relationship to a male person, especially in a marriage. Therefore, the forces that created the modifications included reduction in the number of children and more importantly-acceptance of women's employment outside of home. Women experienced an inner urge for freedom, self-expression, and self-development. Further education fuelled a desire in women for being in the mainstream and gaining recognition. Nevertheless, then and even now, women are primarily considered caretakers of children and managers of household activities. Workingwomen have to take care of house, employment and children simultaneously.

It should be pointed out here that what has happened in Turkey to balance the women's position between household responsibilities and work duties are much different from the policies implemented in the West in the 1980s. In contrast, through several smaller and regionalized events, women in turkey have dealt with a number of issues to improve their social status. There has been a silent growth in awareness of women's rights in the country. So Turkish women's movements in the last quarter of the twentieth century has tried to resolve many challenges of equity, identity, ideology, society, culture, power and

responsibility. Towards the turn of the twenty-first century, things have been started to change for women, especially after the negotiations with EU and the bilateral agreement with UNDP. Hence, the mainstream discourses have been at the top of the government's agenda and new strategies have been obtained to change the traditional attitudes towards women.

Since the 1990s, special emphasis has been given to creating more long-term jobs by providing subsidies and decreasing taxes for entrepreneurs. The government premeditates employments strategies by pointing to the objectives and the targets to follow. In order to increase employment the government has introduced annual action plans and policies that emphasize employability, entrepreneurship and equal opportunities. These three items have their own goals within them. Employability aims to support long-term employment for workers, especially women, and to use labor market policies in order to decrease female unemployment. Entrepreneurship aims to regulate tax breaks, subsidies and risk compensation for new businesses. If these two strands are implemented together, the last instrument, equal opportunities, follows. In order to raise the participation of women in the labor market, another policy that can be pursued is to harmonize family and work life through employment incentives. Rigid policies and disincentives must also be dealt with if the government is serious about treating informal employment as a real problem. Therefore, the Turkish government embarks upon reconciling the family and working life of women with the help of flexible forms of employment. However, while implementing this policy, the government has overlooked one point: gender inequality. Since the informal sector is growing unexpectedly, measures that ease women's access to the formal labor market deviates from its own path that results in gender-based division of work. Consequently, Turkey is suffering the consequences of implementing flexible forms of employment as its core employment strategy.

In Turkey, women's labor market participation rates have increased and the ratio of housewife has decreased among the women who are not in the labor market. Although this is a steady but slow increase in the ratio of women's labor force participation, Turkey still falls far behind many developed countries. Education, promoting women's employment, childcare assistance as well as paternity leave is crucial components for the development of integrated policies in order to remove the obstacles of women's participation in economic life (Uysal, 2012). On the other hand, to encourage female labor force participation, to reduce gender inequality and develop gender mainstreaming in Turkey, the project of "Promoting Woman's



Employment” by İş-Kur was implemented. The major aim of this project is to increase the employability of women in pilot areas of 43 provinces, to provide access in finding better jobs and to reduce the barriers in women's labor force participation. İş-kur sets significant targets in their 2013-2017 strategic plans in order to enhance women's employment. Job replacement rate of women is 27.9 percent now and the aim is to increase this ratio up to 34 percent in 2017 by raising 2 percent in each year. Therefore, the essential points comes out as enabling women to be active in social life, strengthening women's entrepreneurial dimensions and increasing their employability in the labor market.

## **VII. Conclusion**

There are a number of reasons why women might have lower rates of labor market participation, including economic, cultural and social factors. While the shift to a service economy has increased female employment rates in every country, the speed of this transformation has varied significantly. For example, countries with higher rates of tertiarization have higher rates of female labor market participation. This is partly due to the low skill requirements of service jobs and partly due to increased labor demand. On the other hand, in Turkey, since women carry out the bulk of unpaid work, such as childcare, household work, elderly care and other forms of non-market activities,, labor market participation has remained relatively low. Since the division of labor in Turkey is more gendered, women tend to stay at home or only work in family enterprises. This gender division of labor also affects social policies. For example, female employment is restricted further in Turkey due to limited public provision of child and elderly care. Turkish women’s lower levels of educational attainment, patriarchalism and traditional family rules, unequal power distribution in the family structure, the burden of domestic work, social discrimination against widows and female divorcees, the lack of efficient wage opportunities, gender-based occupational segregation, the results of privatization, lack of sufficient employment opportunities, as well as conservative ideologies are the main reasons for the low levels of female employment. These structural and social inequalities are intensified in crisis situations when women tend to withdraw from the labor market in greater numbers.

Turkey’s reformed education system is supposed to increase the number of students that complete the minimum school level. However, the problem is that prime-aged young

migrants should be enhanced more to complement their education in terms of employability. The policy of education followed by labor market policies would likely reduce young people's unemployment levels. Such remedial actions on young education to increase Turkey's currently low level of human capital and experience would improve the chances of the young generation as well as productivity and living standards. The major aim of the state authorities should be to implement appropriate labor market policies and programs that target young workers and then to monitor the system to determine whether it is working effectively or not.

The other leading dimension is globalization. Undoubtedly, globalization has affected Turkey inclusively. This process witnesses such a huge transformation in both world history and world geography that our country could not escape from its effects. A concrete example could be given, which is so close to Turkey's position: illegal employment. Even though women in labor market are invited to the jobs requiring unskilled labor, they were able to work in domestic jobs; but they were asking themselves the following questions: can we work? Should we work? Do our families permit us? How much money can we earn? These questions were interfered with huge migration waves initiated by foreign, and of course unregistered workers. This was obviously an outcome of globalization and simultaneously of mobilizing women labor, which is now mobilizing all over the world.

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