

RESEARCH PROPOSAL FOR MIDDLE EAST RESEARCH COMPETITION

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL SECURITY REFORM

ON WOMEN'S LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION IN TURKEY

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Objectives

The objective of this research is to examine how recent social security reform in Turkey affects women's participation in the labor force. In Turkey, women's low rate of participation in the labor force has been a structural problem, which persistently remained below 30% for the last decade (TUIK 2007). Although the rate is relatively improved in the rural context, with 32.7 % in 2006, due to women's employment as unpaid family labor, in the urban setting it becomes worse than the average (20.4 % in 2006). Outside of the fact that women's persistent exclusion from the labor force is a loss of economic value, it creates an excessive burden on the social security system by distorting the dependency ratio and expanding poor relief for women outside the labor force. Among several policies that may be useful to promote women's employment is provision of certain social security plans and social services such as maternal leave, childcare and child support. However, the recent social security reform in Turkey aims to reduce the financial burden of the social security system for the state rather than promoting employment in general and women's employment in particular. In this context, the main research question here is to what extent is the recent social security reform in Turkey reciprocal to the unique gender-related features of the labor market? In other words, what does the reform offer women, incentives to work or to stay home? What kind of gender-specific policies are included in the reform and what do these policies imply for women's labor force participation?

A brief overview of the recent social security reform in Turkey indicates that the primary motivation of the reform is financial rather than social. The reform package includes an

institutional reorganization of the social security system, according to which the three separate social security institutions and their separate pension systems are integrated under the new Social Security Institution (<http://www.sgk.gov.tr>). This institutional integration is accompanied by a separation of social security tasks, pension system on one side and health care on the other. In this way, the pension system will be free of the costs of health care provision and health care will be organized with respect to neo-liberal principles of universal health care at a bare minimum. Finally, the reform relies heavily on privatization of social security in both pension provision and health care, through the promotion of private pension system and keeping the universal health care provision at a minimum level. Although the social security system is an instrument towards public good and is central in shaping labor force participation, in the case of Turkey its social utility lags behind the financial concerns. However, the current reform, with its financial focus, is only a short-term cure for the efficiency and the economic cost of the system. My first hypothesis in this research is based on the assumption that social security provision has direct impact on women's labor force participation (Esping- Andersen 1990, Esping-Andersen 1999, O'Connor, Orloff and Shaver 1999, Sainsbury 1996). More specifically in the case of Turkey, if the recent social security reform in Turkey includes a gender-related approach towards social security, it will influence women's labor force participation, which in turn will improve the social security system financially and socially. Therefore, in addition to the conventional arguments of the gender and development discourse that explain women's low rates of labor force participation with structural limitations of patriarchy and lack of education, the lack of a well-developed social security system that offers women the necessary incentives to work also influence the persistent exclusion of women from the labor market. A long term, sustainable improvement in the social security system can be achieved by increasing women's employment, especially in the formal sector. This entails more than an institutional restructuring and separation of tasks; it requires

measures that are more responsive to demographic changes in society and to the shifts in the industrial structure that occur with globalization. In addition, a sustainable reform also has to address the specific problems of the labor market such as informal employment, increasing share of non-standard work in the labor market, and most importantly low levels of labor force participation, especially for women.

My second hypothesis in the research is that the neo-liberal approach towards social security provision, which in fact complements the structural adjustment process and export oriented economic structure in Turkey, will increase the financial cost of the system rather than diminish it. One simple reason for this is that the reforms do not promote employment and that the structural unemployment in the country continuously generates excessive poverty, which can only be cured by the economic intervention of the state. Following the structural adjustment measures and export oriented industrialization that began in 1980s, the industrial restructuring in Turkey resulted in the growth of the secondary labor market, in other words, of low skill low income jobs, employed under the rubric of flexible specialization (Cam 2002). Turkey's integration to the global economy as a new source of cheap labor and a new market for the consumption culture of the Western life style has exacerbated new forms of poverty and deepened the lines of inequality. On a macro level, the constant increase in the external debt was an aggregate indicator of Turkey's fragile position in the world economy. The continuous deterioration of economic well-being in the country requires the implementation of radical measures towards more production, more employment and an improvement in institutional mechanisms of redistribution. However, despite the congruence of the neo-liberal reform approach and export oriented economy, the social consequences in terms of women's lack of participation in the labor force and increasing poverty create a vicious circle of need for first deregulation and then regulation again (Cagatay and Berik 1994). In this sense, the neo-liberal

political economy approach of the state seeking minimal intrusion in the market mechanism can work only until the threshold of massive poverty among the working poor and the unemployed.

Theoretical Framework

Globalization and Feminization of Global Labor Force

Participation of women in the labor force has been problematic since the earlier stages of industrial production. In general, the problem of female labor has been discussed in relation to economic development (Tinker 1990), on the basis of productivity, inequality, and provision of particular benefits for women, especially regarding maternal issues. The gendered division of labor in various economic settings has deepened the problems women encounter due to their participation in the labor force. In addition, women's second shift at home, in the form of unpaid domestic labor, has been a central problem pertaining to the extension of the gendered division of labor from the workplace to the household. However, globalization gave a new twist to the already skewed structure of employment in terms of subordination of female labor and gendered division of labor. The concentration of manufacturing industries in the less developed parts of the world creates more employment opportunities for women, but also more exploitation due to flexibility, informalization, and casualization (Munck 2002). Women in less developed parts of the world become the primary source of cheap labor (Elson and Pearson 1981). The adaptability of women to new and non-standard forms of employment, such as home-based work, temporary and informal jobs as well as piecemeal work and part-time jobs make them the core target of global capital; hence increase their vulnerability against the market.

Globalization and feminization of the global labor force will help me establish the contemporary context, which renders women's labor force participation at the center of debate. It is important to regard the positive and negative sides of globalization for women, namely that it means greater employment opportunities for women, yet not under sustainable circumstances.

Gender and the Welfare State

The welfare state as a model emerged and developed in the advanced capitalist countries following the industrialization and massive proletarianization processes. Esping-Andersen in his well cited work has categorized different types of welfare states under three main categories, liberal, conservative and social democratic (Esping-Andersen 1990). However, major critique of welfare states themselves and analysis on welfare states was based on gender, in terms of the household production, gendered division of labor at home and women's unpaid work. From these critiques a new set of literature on gender and the welfare state has emerged, focusing mainly on the impact of welfare regimes on women in terms of employment and social protection (Sainsbury 1999).

Although this literature mainly focuses on the welfare regimes of the early industrialized, advanced capitalist countries, its significance for this research can be explained along two lines. First of all, by adopting the conceptual instruments of this critical line of thinking it will be possible to analyze the impact of social security provision on women's labor force participation in developing countries. The relationship, the scope of provision does not have to be the same, yet the same concepts can be valid in both settings at a certain level of abstraction. Second, within the global context, the widespread acceptance of neo-liberal economic policy in both advanced capitalist and developing countries overrides the social and economic differences; hence a conceptual framework aiming to explain this type of a socio-economic relationship may be valid in both advanced capitalist and developing country settings.

Gender and Development

The discourse on gender and development initially emerged as a critique of the development paradigm, due to the need for greater emphasis on gender-based issues of inequality (Safa 1996), subordination of women, gendered division of labor at work and in the household

(Kardam and Toksoz 2004), domestic labor and patriarchy. Most importantly, a focus on gender-based inequalities underlined that women need to become an integral part of economic development, with equal access to resources, employment opportunities, and benefits of economic development (Boserup 1970). Subordination of women and their exclusion from the development process can be observed in various ways. First, informal labor and reproductive work of women remain invisible, and their economic contribution is ignored. Second, patriarchy especially prevalent in several developing countries maintain traditional structures that subordinate women, keep them at home doing domestic tasks (Kandiyoti 1988). Third, subordination of women is aggravated in the developing world because they are the most vulnerable subjects of underdevelopment (Fernandez-Kelly 1994). Finally, under the contemporary setting of globalization, women are the hardest hit by the rising inequality.

Gender and development is the most comprehensive area of study for the purposes of this research, in the way that it deals with women's role in economic development and focuses on developing countries. Within gender and development, greater emphasis will be put on women's employment and how it represents a viable, sustainable development alternative. In relation to this emphasis, I plan to make an analytical intervention in this research by combining this development discourse with the gender and the welfare state literature. As mentioned above, literature on gender and the welfare state mainly focus on the welfare regimes of early industrialized countries. However, this literature holds important conceptual tools that may have explanatory value in the case of developing countries. By juxtaposing the gender and development relationship with these conceptual tools, I argue that welfare policy in developing countries is also important instruments towards women's employment and gender equality.

Poverty and Social Exclusion

The scholarly interest on poverty and social exclusion has intensified after the process of globalization, as the neo-liberal political economy of globalization has deepened the lines of inequality within and between societies. Under these circumstances, those lacking access to employment opportunities in the market are gradually pushed to the margins, both socially and economically (Percy-Smith 2001). Outside of the market economy, the reluctance of governments towards welfare provision and social protection resulted in an expansion of poverty and social exclusion (Munck 2004). Although this research does not directly focus on issues of social exclusion and poverty, it touches upon the relationship between the lack of labor force participation of women and poverty, in the way that the former will result in poverty and/or exclusion either on an individual or on a household basis. This causal link forces the governments to interfere either ahead of time through promoting women's labor force participation or later, through poverty reduction and welfare provision. Finally, a brief evaluation, a cost-benefit analysis of promoting women's employment through social security provision versus fighting poverty and exclusion through social protection will emphasize the main argument of this research, that sustainable employment options for women as opposed to poverty reduction policies will be less costly in the long run.

Selective Literature Review

First of all, globalization literature will be a good starting point to establish the social and economic context in which this research agenda will be erected upon. With globalization, flexible specialization as the new mode of production enabled capital to move its production sites to the remotest corners of the world and still maintain low production costs (Standing 1999). The most important factor for this was the availability of cheap labor in the developing world, especially female labor. Female labor is exclusively beneficial for capital under these circumstances not

only because it is cheaper but also it is more adaptive to non-standard forms of employment in a flexible manner (Standing 1989). Employment of significant portions of the labor force, particularly female labor force in export manufacturing leads to disruption of traditional work structures, both waged and unwaged ones (Sassen 1988). Also, the cultural detachment from the community becomes a challenge to the existing social structure. But most importantly, the massive move to wage labor and proletarianization, especially of female laborers, is a definitive transformation for a contemporary understanding of working class formation.

Second, the feminist critique of welfare policies will make up one dimension of the conceptual framework. Conventional study of social security provision is challenged by the new variables of this feminist critique, which I hope to make use of in my research. Over the last two decades feminist critiques of the welfare state generated a valuable set of literature. This literature is important in terms of disentangling the reciprocal relationship between gender and welfare regimes as well as in the way it produced a comparative approach on the relations of state, market and the family. Borchorst provides an informative periodization of the feminist critiques on the welfare state and marks the importance of the comparative approach that broadened the research in both cross-national and interdisciplinary manners (Borchorst 2000: 121-122). The first wave of this literature was based on the British/American state theory that brought up the very basic problems of the welfare state discourse in terms of patriarchy, state's role in the subordination of women and capitalism and patriarchy worked together in maintaining women's lower position at work and in the household (Hartman 1981). The second wave of the literature, pioneered by Scandinavian scholars looked at equality policies, class cooperation, care giving and redistributive policies and concluded that the compulsory dependence of women on the state caused a weakening of the family patriarchy only to reinforce the social patriarchy under the rule of the state (Borchorst 2000: 103).

Intensification of the feminist critiques later on established important challenges to the welfare state paradigm. Most importantly the need for a comparative approach of different countries with different welfare regimes, the use of interdisciplinary perspectives and emphasis on new variables fundamental for a comprehensive analysis of gender and welfare regime relations yielded a new theoretical framework for further research. Orloff's often cited work is central for the analysis of my research, in which additional variables such as the role of the family, gender stratification, access to paid work and autonomy of households were added to analysis (Orloff 1993). As a result, conceptualization of such variables questions pertaining to what kind of welfare policies affect gender and how social construction of gender is shaped not only by the social forces at work but also by the institutional mechanisms of the state.

In her study on gender equality in the labor market, Gornick conducts a cross-national analysis of fifteen countries in order to expose the extent of variation between and within the three welfare state types based on Esping-Andersen's (1990) typology (Gornick 1999). While she shows that variation between welfare regime types is greater than variation within each type, she states critical indicators of gender gaps in the labor market, which are significant not only for the fifteen countries under focus but also for many other cases including Turkey. These indicators are;

“women are still less likely to be employed than are men;
employed women are less likely to hold full-time jobs than are employed men;
women and men are employed in different industries and in different occupations and, within those in different jobs (...);
women receive lower hourly wages than do men (...), the gender gap in annual earnings is even greater;
women contribute the majority of household labour (...)” (Gornick 1999: 214)

Although the welfare state is exclusively a Western model, feminist critiques of the welfare state not only improved the scholarly understanding of the welfare state but also contributed to the analysis of gender issues at large. The question of the impact of welfare regime on gender is not an issue limited to the welfare states of advanced capitalist countries. In the

developing world as well, welfare policies, whether on retirement or health care or security at work, have been instrumental in determining women's positions at work as well as in the household. The impact of welfare provision on women's participation in the labor force has long been debated within the context of welfare states. However, the same causal mechanism operates within the context of developing countries also. That is why Orloff's variables for analysis of the welfare state and Gornick's indicators of the gender gap are central for this research.

In the light of previous research covered so far, I suggest that the feminist critique of the welfare state literature provides important tools for analyzing women's economic activity, whether it's home-based work or labor force participation or simply their role within the household division of labor. However, in order to benefit from these conceptual and analytical tools for comparative research beyond the advanced capitalist countries, we need to contextualize them with respect to the unique circumstances and experiences of women in the developing world. More specifically, the fact that majority of the women in the developing world are employed on an informal basis, they access temporary employment due to changes in world demand and flexibility, they are in many places unpaid family laborers (not only due to sexual division of labor in the household but also through the household enterprise of their "self-employed" partners), they engage in home-based work, and overall, they have a low level of participation in the labor force with only very limited access to formal, secure employment.

Third, literature on gender and development, particularly studies on developing countries will emphasize the importance of women's labor force participation, especially with respect to its contribution in the development process (Gunduz-Hosgor 2001, Goldin 1995). In an interesting article, Moghadam compares Iran, Turkey and Tunisia in terms of the ways in which women have integrated in the development process in their countries and the specific social and economic policies towards women. She comes up with the conclusion that although economic

liberalization, especially through export-oriented growth generates new employment opportunities to be taken up by women, these opportunities are mainly low skill low income positions that take advantage of cheap female labor, therefore do not contribute to women's welfare. In addition, the weakening of labor policies and state's resignation from maintaining labor standards also has an impact on women's employment and welfare, especially in the public sector. "A weakening of government commitment to labour standards and women-friendly social benefits and a shrinking public sector may reverse the favourable conditions for women workers in public enterprises." (Moghadam 1996: 265).

Although, not a central component of the research agenda, the potential increase in poverty due to low rates of labor force participation of women requires reference to the issue of poverty and social exclusion. Deepening poverty in Turkey has been the subject of an extensive research by Bugra and Keyder (Bugra and Keyder 2003). Accordingly, the deepening of social inequality and new forms of poverty cannot be resolved by the self-regulating market and require the active participation of the state through various forms of social protection. The problem of poverty is more severe for women, especially given the impact of patriarchy and unequal access to social and economic structures.

"In many ways, the women of the working class and urban poor have been the "shock absorbers" of neoliberal economic policies. [...] Structural adjustment causes women to bear most of the responsibility of coping with increased prices and shrinking incomes, since in most instances they are responsible for household budgeting and maintenance. [...] Structural adjustment policies and other forms of neoliberalism are said to be a major factor behind the "feminization of poverty" (Moghadam, 1997).

Finally and most importantly, the existing literature on labor force participation of women is a valuable guideline for this research. Labor force participation of women is in fact and integral part of the gender and development literature (Standing 1978, Pampel and Tanaka 1986). The fact that low rates of women's labor force participation has been a more common experience in

the developing world resulted in greater number of empirical studies on these areas (Assaad and El-Hamidi 2001, Eltigani 1990, Connelly, DeGraff and Levison 1996). Women's low rates of labor force participation have been stated as a structural problem in the introduction of this proposal. In fact, scholarly interest on the issue composed a sizeable set of literature, especially in economics. However, a common perspective shaping the scholarly interest focused on the contribution of women's employment on economic development (Tansel 2002). Part of this research focuses exclusively on the urban labor market and dynamics determining women's entry in the labor market (Ozar and Gunluk-Senesen 1998). In relation to urban labor market and female labor force participation, Istanbul has been the most popular field area, especially due to high levels of industrialization and urbanization, as well as rural to urban migration intensifying in Istanbul (Cinar 1994, Eraydin and Erendil 1999, White 1994, Yukseker 2003). Research on Istanbul is central for this research as it will serve to be a blueprint for the field research; however, the purpose here is to move beyond the well-established analysis on Istanbul and search for new variables, other than demographics and migration. Certain demographic variables such as age, education (Acar 2004, Kasnakoglu and Dayioglu 1996) and marital status (Gunduz-Hosgor and Smits 2006) determine the scope and ways of entry to the labor market.

Methodology

Methodologically speaking, I seek to find out a relationship between my two variables; (a) provision of social security services and (b) labor force participation of women. I argue that if the social security system offers women the right kind of incentives, women will be more inclined to participate in the labor force, either working or seeking work. However, the current social security reform in Turkey does not include the necessary gender related policies to deal with the structural exclusion of women from the labor market, therefore does not result in an

amelioration of women's labor force participation rate. I will divide my sample into three groups; i) women who work and are active recipients of social security, ii) women who are dependents, receiving social security from family, and iii) women who are excluded from the social security system. In other words, women receiving some sort of social security will be my experimental group and those excluded from the system will be my control group. Difference between the three groups will indicate the existence or the lack of a causal relationship between the social security system and labor force participation of women. In relation to my second hypothesis, by looking at the standard of living and income levels for all three groups, I will investigate the impact of non-participation in the labor force on economic well-being and poverty.

An important limitation of the research is reaching out to a variety of respondents for all three groups of inquiry, and to make the sample as representative as possible. For this reason I plan to extend the field work into six months. In addition, in order to reach a greater number of respondents, I plan to employ an assistant from Ege University for this research during the field work. My sample group in these cities will be women of legal working age, mainly over 15 years old, excluded from the social security system, women who work informally or on a casual basis, who do home-based work informally, unpaid family workers, women who are not working and not seeking employment. Finding subjects who are willing to provide detailed information will not be an easy task. In addition to my personal network of subjects, I plan to benefit from the local branches of government agents such as the Social Security Institute and ISKUR, the Labor Office and the Solidarity Fund. For example, women seeking help from the Solidarity Fund are potentially excluded from the labor market. ISKUR will provide data on women who are seeking employment at different times. A follow up on such applications will also introduce me to new subjects. Most importantly, local branch of the Social Security Institute will provide information on women who are dependents, not seeking work and who voluntarily pay their premiums for a

future retirement plan. Given the difficulty of finding a compact set of subjects, I seek to use the snowball method to reach my subjects. In this way, I will expand the number of my subjects in the most informative way.

In addition to the theoretical objectives of this research, one major contribution I seek to establish in this research is to juxtapose the macro-level data on social security system, labor market and female employment and the micro-level data collected through surveys and interviews in the fieldwork, in order to establish a more comprehensive account of the relationship between female employment and social security.

A major methodological dilemma in social sciences is whether to benefit from the general scope of macro-level analysis or from the depth of micro-level focus. An intermediary solution has been the compromise at the meso-level, which can be utilized only in certain contexts. In this research, the meso-level may only be used if a certain province or a city, or a specific group of women is under focus. However that may only be a limitation for the purpose of this research. Therefore, I believe that a comparative and reciprocal analysis of macro-level data with micro-level data will enrich the objectives and results of the research.

For macro-level data I will use secondary sources and statistical information available through various governmental, non-governmental, national and international sources. The Household Labour Force Survey of the Turkish Statistical Institute provides aggregate data on the labor market, labor force participation and the demographic distribution of the aggregate data with respect to age, gender, rural and urban population, education and cross-province distribution. Second, information from the Turkish Labor Office provides time-series data on policies towards the promotion of labor force participation such as training programs, special programs for marginal groups such as the disabled, as well as consulting services. Third, the Social Security Institute in Turkey will provide aggregate data on the insured, pensioners,

dependents and dependency rate both as time-series data as well as cross-sector and cross-province data. In addition to these three main sources of macro-level data, reports from the OECD –i.e. OECD Employment Outlook- and the ILO will be useful in providing international data for comparative purposes, which will be significant to underline the severity of women's marginal stance in the labor market.

However more important will be the micro-level data which I seek to collect through a field work conducted in three different cities in Turkey. I choose to conduct field work in Izmir, Denizli and Bursa as all three have industrial production to a significant extent and all three have industries that are known to be for female employment. The case of textile industry is especially important because it is a major area of employment for women. However factors such as migration, industrial variation, occupational structures and structure of the labor market may show variation in each case, therefore a comparative perspective will be an analytical challenge worth undertaking.

An important note of clarification is necessary for the exclusion of Istanbul as a field site. Istanbul has always been the most important commercial center in the country. However, there has been a growing flow of production from metropolitan Istanbul to the periphery in the last two decades. One reason for this is the changing role of Istanbul in the national context, from being a production center to a business center, revival of the city's image as a global city (Keyder 1999). This implies greater concentration of services in Istanbul and movement of production either to the vicinity or to the periphery. Therefore, Istanbul proves to be a more appropriate field for research on women working as skilled labor in business services. As for the semi-skilled and unskilled female workers who make up a greater portion of the female workforce, periphery will provide more fertile grounds for research.

I plan to collect survey data and conduct interviews at the same time and I believe that best way to do this is through semi-structured interviews where simple demographic questions will be followed by open ended questions that give the subjects the opportunity to focus their answers and provide anecdotal data if they deem necessary. Among women, my main inquiry will be on their reasons of non-participation in the labor force, and factors which may motivate them to work –whether child care, maternal leave, housing or some other stimulating factor. Local agents will be especially important in directing me towards specific settlements in each field area where the lack of labor force participation among women is an endemic problem. These are generally known as more conservative, lower middle-class districts or migrant settlements.

Implications for Public Policy and For Further Research

Efforts of reforming the social security system in Turkey have intensified in the last ten years. In addition, Turkey's emphasis on legal reforms on the verge of its accession to the European Union indicate that the country is going through a transition period in terms of its political, social and economic restructuring. I believe that my research will shed light on public policy in they way that it deals with the structural problems of informal employment and women's exclusion from the labor market. I plan to make my research results as widely circulated as possible in order to expand its use for public policy.

Second, the results of this research will put forth a clear statement of the structural features of the social security system and its impact on the labor market. By clarifying the dynamics of this relationship the research may open up new venues of policy development through public-private partnerships. By seeking ways of expanding the formal sector and by promoting female employment, private sector may find a new source of labor that is flexible and sustainable and the state may benefit from additional premiums and improvements in the

dependency ratio. Consequently, the result is not only a win-win situation for public and private sectors but more importantly a win-win-win situation where labor, capital and the state wins concomitantly. I believe that pilot projects developed on these principles may also expand the utility of this research.

Finally, despite the fact that this research is mainly concerned with the Turkish context, women's low rates of labor force participation is a common problem in several developing countries. By finding international partners to carry this research to another level of comparative analysis, I hope to address these issues on a global scale. In fact, developing countries share important structural similarities, especially in terms of their integration with the global economy and their roles as suppliers of labor to the global market. Therefore, a comparative analysis of these issues would be a task worth undergoing.

Write-up and Dissemination of Research Results

Following the first half of the research period, I plan to expose my preliminary results in upcoming international conferences and publish in the form of research notes and/or articles in reputable academic journals. My membership in two of the Research Committees of International Sociological Association, namely RC26 Sociotechnics, Sociological Practice and RC30 Sociology of Work, will provide me the necessary connections for these objectives. I firstly plan to publish these results in English in order to reach a larger academic circuit and hopefully engage in further comparative research.

More importantly, in the last six months of the research I plan to gather the preliminary critique of the existing literature, all of my data, and the comparative analysis of the three cases into a book. While publishing in English helps to circulate the research agenda internationally, I believe that publishing in Turkish will be an academic contribution at least as important, as it will hopefully inspire new ideas for further research. I'm confident that I will be able to collect my

research agenda into a coherent body of academic work to serve further academic research on the issue.

Ethics and Confidentiality Statement

My interviews will include an introductory statement of confidentiality towards anonymous respondents and disclosure of personal and institutional information of the researcher and the research assistant employed. In the case of official records used and information received from officials in various institutions, necessary references will be given. In general, the research will provide references for the sources employed and will be cautious of plagiarism.

Institutional Support for the Research

The primary source of institutional support for my research will be Ege University. In addition to the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences where I work at, Center for Research on Women's Problems within Ege University will also help to expand my research network and make the necessary connections for data collection. Secondary institutional support will come from the local branches of Turkish Labor Office, ISKUR, in each city under focus. Aggregate data will be gathered from Turkish Statistical Institute, TUIK, State Planning Organization, DPT, and Social Security Institute, SGK. Last but not the least, General Directorate on the Status of Women of the Turkish Republic Prime Ministry will be an important source of information for my research. Gender indicators on women's employment, social security, occupational distribution and demographic variables on gender from the Directorate will be a primary source of aggregate data and an analytical basis on which the rest of the research will be erected.

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APPENDIX 1 ABSTRACT

This research aims to investigate the relationship between the recent social security reform in Turkey and women's low rates of labor force participation. It is possible to regard social security as an integral part of labor policy. The scope of the health care, the length of maternal leave, the childcare provided to female workers as well as the availability of other benefits will also shed light on whether women are promoted to work or not. My first hypothesis is that the recent social security reform in Turkey does not introduce the necessary incentives to promote women's labor force participation, therefore contributes to patriarchy and lack of education, which are the established factors of the persistent exclusion of women from the labor market. The financial resolution the recent reforms offers is by no means sustainable. My second hypothesis is that the neo-liberal approach towards social security provision will turn out to be more costly than cost-efficient in the long run, because it does not promote employment, production and efficiency in the market towards more economic growth. Women's employment in developing countries has generally been studied within the gender and development framework, whereas for the advanced capitalist countries the causal relationship between welfare regimes and women's employment has been an exclusive field of inquiry. One major contribution of this research is that given the similarities between the neo-liberal approaches of governments in advanced capitalist and developing countries, the conceptual tools used for the advanced capitalist countries may have significant analytical value for the developing world. The research will bring macro-level data from secondary sources and micro-level data from the field work conducted in three cities in Turkey, namely Bursa, Denizli and Izmir. The methodological contribution of the research is to bring together macro and micro level analyses and seek a general scope with significant analytical depth. Finally, an ultimate objective of this research is to

suggest some policy options that may be included in the social security reform to enhance women's participation in the labor market.