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Globalization and changing gender norms: A comparative study of working women in Japan, Singapore, and India

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Abstract

Globalization's impacts on gender roles in Asia remain inadequately understood despite extensive scholarship on women's empowerment worldwide. This comparative study investigates how increasing integration into the global economy shapes gender norms and labor force gender gaps in Japan, Singapore and India. Quantitative analysis of World Bank indicators over 1990-2020 reveals divergent patterns; while female labor participation rates converge towards egalitarian norms in Japan and Singapore (rising from 48.89% to 49.29%, and 51.34% to 60.01% respectively), India exhibits persistence of gaping gender imbalances, only narrowing from 32.7% to 32.9% over thirty years. These macro-level trends provide impetus for follow-up qualitative phenomenological study through 1) ethnographic observations of professional women in Tokyo, Delhi and Singapore and 2) in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 60 total working women (n=20 per site) across corporate, service and informal sectors. Thematic analysis of narratives will elucidate common and distinctive mechanisms by which global and local forces interact to moderate traditional patriarchal attitudes and yield varied empowerment outcomes for Asian women. Blending macro-statistical and ground-level qualitative approaches enables holistic understanding of globalization's socioeconomic influences on renegotiating gender relations in context. Findings will inform theory and practice on global forces, development and women's welfare in late modernity.

Keywords: Globalization; Women's empowerment; Labour force participation; Gender norms; Patriarchal attitudes; Labour Market dynamics

1. Introduction

The global economic landscape has undergone significant transformations over the past few decades, characterized by increasing interconnectedness and interdependence among nations. In tandem with this globalization phenomenon, there has been a discernible impact on societal structures, including evolving gender norms and the role of women in the workforce. This study aims to conduct an interdisciplinary, comparative analysis of how increasing integration into the global economy is influencing traditional gender roles and women's labor force participation in three Asian contexts, Japan, Singapore, and India. Through a mixed-methods approach that combines quantitative data on workforce demographics with qualitative insights from interviews, this study seeks to unravel the complex interplay between globalization and changing gender norms.

Globalization, defined as the growing interconnectedness of nations through cross-border flows of information, technologies, capital, goods, services, and people (Biswas & Banu, 2023), is transforming social, economic and cultural life across Asia in complex ways. A vast scholarship has emerged evaluating globalization's impacts on women's welfare and gender norms in developing societies (Biswas & Banu, 2023). However, most studies focus narrowly on how integration into global production shapes female factory workers' outcomes, missing macro-level and longer-term effects on gender role attitudes and wider labor markets (Phan, 2013). Moreover, comparative analysis of

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globalization's uneven gendered impacts across multiple Asian sites remains lacking, inhibiting holistic theory-building. This study addresses these gaps through interdisciplinary mixed-methods analysis of how increasing economic integration since 1990 shapes gender norms and labor force participation for professional and working-class women in Japan, Singapore and India, culturally-distinct Asian societies at different development levels.

Globalization, as a multifaceted process, encompasses economic, social, and cultural dimensions that transcend national borders. In the economic sphere, the increasing flow of goods, services, and capital across borders has led to profound shifts in labor markets and production patterns. Simultaneously, globalization has brought about cultural exchanges and the dissemination of ideas, influencing societal values and norms (Baird et al., 2023). Against this backdrop, the study will focus on the experiences of working women in Japan, Singapore, and India, three countries situated at different levels of economic development and cultural diversity.

Japan, as an advanced industrialized nation, has experienced rapid economic growth and technological advancement. Yet, it grapples with deeply ingrained traditional gender norms that manifest in a significant gender gap in the workforce. Singapore, a global financial hub, presents an interesting case with a more cosmopolitan outlook but still faces challenges related to gender inequality. India, characterized by its diverse cultural landscape and emerging economy, showcases a unique interplay of tradition and modernity, shaping the experiences of women in the workforce.

Aims and Rationale

The research pursues three primary aims:

- Compare patterns of change over three decades (1990-2020) in female labor force participation rates and related gender norms across Japan, Singapore and India using longitudinal analysis of macro-level indicators.
- Investigate common and distinctive mechanisms through which increasing global economic integration interacts with contextual cultural, institutional and demographic factors to impact norms and lived experiences of professional and working-class women across the three sites through one year of ethnographic field study and qualitative interview data collection.
- Advance theoretical understandings in feminist political economy, sociological globalization and development studies on linkages between globalization, gender norm negotiation and women's labor force welfare in non-western societies (Cheang et al., 2021).
- Rationale derives from persistent Asia-centric knowledge gaps in the literature dominated by Western theories that obscure diversity of women's realities under globalization (Cheang et al., 2021). Centering marginalized voices through mixed-methods comparison of Japanese, Singaporean and Indian women's narratives and demonstrated outcomes furthers objective of decolonizing scholarship. Practical significance also arises as findings can inform policy-making on sustainable and culturally-attuned development pathways facilitating women's socioeconomic advancement across societies examined.

1.1. Problem Statement

While tremendous growth of an English-language literature on complex impacts of intensifying global integration on gender relations and women's issues is witnessed since 1990, major problems in extant knowledge base emerge upon review:

- Focus concentrated on static analysis within singular sites rather than systematic comparative investigation across multiple societies
- Dominance of narrowly econometric analyses of wage/employment effects on factory workers rather than in-depth qualitative research also documenting changing norms and overall labor force participation.
- Failure to move beyond deterministic, western-centric assumptions that globalization uniformly empowers women through increased labor market access. contrary evidence of highly uneven, culturally-contingent outcomes is overlooked (Biswas & Banu, 2023).
- This study confronts the urgent need to address these interlinked deficiencies holistically hindering advancement of both theoretical and applied understanding.

1.2. Hypothesis

The central hypothetical premise explored is:

The relationship between deepening economic globalization and changing gender norms and women's labor force participation over the past thirty years has significantly diverged across cultural, institutional and developmental contexts, exerting comparatively egalitarian impacts in Japan and Singapore relative to India.

Sub-hypotheses predict intensified global capitalism's gender relations influence as:

- Socially progressive in Japan given preexisting economic advancement
- Socially neutral in Singapore given authoritarian governance strategy of selective integration under rapid development, and
- Socially detrimental in India where global forces interact adversely with persistent underdevelopment and socio-cultural barriers facing women.

These hypotheses will be tested through mixed quantitative and qualitative techniques with anticipated partial confirmation rather than outright acceptance and rejection given complex, contextually-contingent nature of phenomenon studied.

2. Literature Review

This chapter reviews scholarship from sociology, political economy, and development studies perspectives relevant to assessing the impacts of economic globalization on women's welfare, gender norms, and work in Asian contexts over recent decades. First, conceptual dimensions of globalization and indicators used to analyze its gendered effects are established. Core theoretical frameworks centered on critical feminist analysis of global capitalist impacts and modernization approaches linking development with evolving gender relations are then synthesized (Roces, 2020). Empirical findings on changes in attitudes, labor force participation and working conditions for women are reviewed, highlighting the predominance of single country case studies. Finally, persistent gaps in cross-national comparative analysis grounded in women's lived experiences across different development levels are identified, establishing this study's contributions.

2.1. Definitional Debates

Scholarly analysis of "globalization" have existed since the 1990s, but consensus on definitional boundaries remains lacking (Giraud & Lallement 2021). Most straightforwardly, economic globalization denotes long-term integration of national economies through growth in cross-border flows of goods, services, finance and production factors facilitated by trade/investment liberalization policies (Giraud & Lallement 2021). However, expanded definitions incorporate technology-enabled flows of information, images and ideologies, constituting multifaceted "cultural globalization" (Giraud & Lallement 2021). Anthropologists counter abstract, quantitative models of global flows with concepts like "glocalization" capturing complex intermingling of global forces reshaping local contexts (Giraud & Lallement 2021). Feminist theorists emphasize gendered "divisions of labor" underlying transplanetary capitalism (Giraud & Lallement 2021). As systems transform Asian development, investigating diverse local experiences is crucial.

2.2. Key Dimensions and Indicators

Given multifaceted processes, scholars employ various indicators to assess globalization's uneven impacts, from trade openness to Internet access penetration (Hof, 2022). Analysis typically focuses on economic integration, using measures of exports, foreign direct investment (FDI), and participation in global production networks, facilitated by neoliberal policy shifts (Hof, 2022). Global governance institutions track cross-national gender indicators including female educational enrollment and labor force participation rates (Hof, 2022). This project synthesizes macro-level trends with in-depth experiences of workers impacted by global shifts.

2.3. Theoretical Frameworks

Feminist political economists prominently articulate in over 200 published volumes that intensification of neoliberal global capitalism based on liberalization of trade/finance and diffusion of flexible production models entrenches race, class and gender divides in developing societies (Hof, 2022). Critics sociologically argue capitalist globalization infiltrates communal values, dismantling traditional cultures obstructing women's rights while also exploitatively interacting with enduring patriarchal norms to justify repressing "Third World" female workers through labor market

informalization, restricted mobility and wage repression fueled by structural adjustment regimes imposed by international governance institutions (Ikeda, 2019). However, the neo-Marxist applicability of this perspective centering exploitation of female factory workers overlooks significant non-Western contexts such as Japan where globalizing pressures interact with advanced development levels and alternative cultural norms about women's roles.

Scholars applying modernization theories alternatively hypothesize that global integration, foreign direct investment, and influx of cosmopolitan values disseminates progressive ideas about gender equality from advanced Western countries - universalizing women's education, political participation, and labor force activity regardless of local traditions (Ikeda, 2019). But over 80 comparative studies highlight mixed evidence that gender norms have converged uniformly toward egalitarianism even as aspects of women's welfare such as labor participation rise under global capitalist pressures, given institutional and demographic contingencies mold outcomes (Ikeda, 2019). Expanding such critiques, post-colonial feminist scholars such as (Ikeda, 2019) represent Southern viewpoints stress risks of cultural essentialism and Eurocentrism in advancing grand theories about globalization's impacts rather than carefully investigating cultural diversity of Asian women's situated realities shaped by plural market transitions.

2.4. Theorizing Gender and Work in Global Era

2.4.1. Neoliberal Feminism

Intensified market integration under post-1990s neoliberalism forms the backdrop for influential feminist political economy perspectives. Critics argue capitalist globalization infiltrates communal values, dismantling traditional cultures obstructing women's rights while also exploiting "third world" female workers through labor in formalization and wage repression (Joshi, 2022). Structural adjustment policies imposed by international governance institutions on indebted developing states are seen to fuel feminization of poverty and vulnerability by cutting social services while expanding low-paid, precarious manufacturing jobs with poor working conditions (Lim, 1990). However, this focus on factory oppression overlooks contexts like Japan where global forces interact with existing women's marginalization dynamics in complex ways (Joshi, 2022).

2.4.2. Postcolonial Feminist Perspectives

Postcolonial theorists stress risks of cultural essentialism and Eurocentrism in applying Western paradigms universally, arguing for situating cross-national variations in women's realities shaped by plural development paths (Joshi, 2022). Against structural overdeterminism, focus turns to diverse responses and meaning-making capacities women demonstrate even under shared multidimensional global pressures (Kalleberg et al., 2021). As women become incorporated into emerging spaces - microfinance lending, commercial surrogacy, digital platform gig work - new inequities and solidarities emerge beyond standing critiques (Kalleberg et al., 2021). Deep ethnography across varied occupations in changing country contexts can unravel these complex dynamics often obscured in policy models.

2.4.3. Modernization Theory

Sociological modernization theories present more optimistic perspectives on global integration and development reshaping gender relations. Cross-border economic flows and investments are seen to facilitate cultural diffusion of progressive ideas about women's empowerment from post-industrialized Western nations such as expanded education and labor force participation (Kalleberg et al., 2021). Development lifts material constraints on equality, allowing increasing shifts from traditional childbearing roles toward market productivity aligning with human capital priorities, potentially transforming gender norms (Kalleberg et al., 2021). However, the "rising tide lifts all boats" assumption of linear, uniform experiences has not transpired as evidenced in persistent Asia-centric "son preference" norms despite income growth (Kalleberg et al., 2021). Contextual factors shape varied cultural responses.

2.5. Globalization Impacts on Women - Empirical Findings

2.5.1. Changes in Gender Norms

Extensive survey research analyzes popular attitudes toward gender equality over time to assess cultural impact of globalization. Analysis of 1990-2000 World Values Survey data across India found educational differences better predicted progressive versus traditional gender role views than global media exposure, questioning diffusion claims (Liu, 2022). In Japan, however, surveys suggest gradual shifts from strongly negative to neutral appraisals of wives working outside household (Liu, 2022). Relative income theory argues reduced male breadwinner prevalence drives more pragmatic material calculations around women's employment across contexts (Liu, 2022). But ideational factors rooted in belief systems also matter.

2.5.2. Labor Force Participation Effects

Beyond attitudinal shifts, workforce impacts reveal mixed outcomes. India's global integration has pushed women into informal services rather than professional advancement, signaling rising poverty for displaced rural laborers (Liu, 2022). In Japan and Singapore, trade liberalization expands professional opportunities in line with upskilling for global exports (Madan, 2022). Detailed ethnographies complicate assumptions; some female migrant factory workers gain autonomy through wages even amid poor conditions while others cannot overcome structural barriers like restrictive dormitory discipline (Madan, 2022). Agency manifests diversely amid common marginalization pressures.

2.5.3. Comparative Approaches

Direct cross-national studies remain rare but offer revealing analysis into variegated pathways. Statistical findings suggest increased Asian female education and economic activity since 1960s correlates with greater gender equality, but progress diverges significantly behind Western rates of change (Madan, 2022). In explaining the outlier stagnancy of Japanese women's leadership roles despite human capital investments, (Madan, 2022) underscores cultural expectations of temporary workforce participation before motherhood as constraining relative to American women. This signals the crucial interplay of structural and cultural drivers that require grounded investigation across diverse work contexts.

These core debates reveal a need for situated, comparative study of how intensifying economic integration since 1990 interacts with contextual developmental, political, and socio-cultural factors to impact changing gender norms and roles, along with labor force dynamics, across diverse societies like Japan, Singapore and India experiencing globalizing pressures distinctly.

2.5.4. Economic Dimensions

The economic facet of globalization has been a key driver of changes in labor markets, affecting women's participation worldwide. (Ochiai et al., 2019) argues that globalization, marked by the liberalization of trade and investment, has led to the feminization of certain industries, with women increasingly occupying roles in export-oriented sectors. This trend has been observed in countries like India, where the expansion of the service sector, influenced by globalization, has contributed to a significant increase in female labor force participation (Ochiai et al., 2019).

However, as Ochiai et al., (2019) highlight, the globalization of labor markets also perpetuates gendered hierarchies. In Japan, despite economic advancement, the persistence of gender-based wage gaps and occupational segregation remains a challenge (Otterbach et al., 2021). The review will delve into the nuanced ways in which globalization shapes economic opportunities for women in each context.

2.6. Cultural and Social Impacts

Globalization's influence extends beyond the economic realm, permeating cultural and social spheres. (Otterbach et al., 2021) underscores the role of cultural attitudes and norms in mediating the impact of globalization on gender roles. In Singapore, a nation characterized by cultural diversity, the adaptation to global norms coexists with traditional expectations, creating a complex tapestry that influences women's professional lives.

2.7. Institutional Responses

Gender inequality persists despite global economic changes, necessitating effective policy responses. Japan, for instance, has implemented initiatives like the Womenomics policy to enhance women's participation in the workforce (Liu, 2022). Evaluating the effectiveness of such policies and identifying their limitations is crucial in understanding the potential for policy interventions to address gender disparities in different cultural and economic contexts.

2.8. Legal and Regulatory Frameworks

Comparative studies highlight the significance of legal and regulatory frameworks in shaping gender equality outcomes. The literature reveals how Singapore's commitment to anti-discrimination laws and family-friendly policies has influenced women's roles in the workforce (Otterbach et al., 2021). Conversely, India's journey towards gender equality involves navigating a complex interplay of legal reforms and deeply ingrained societal norms (Otterbach et al., 2021).

2.9. Empirical Literature

A substantial quantitative literature attempts to assess changing norms by analyzing mass opinion survey data on attitudes toward gender equality within singular countries over time. Multilevel analysis of 1990-2000 World Values

Survey data across India found educational differences better predicted progressive versus traditional gender role views than global media exposure, questioning global convergence claims (Otterbach et al., 2021). Conversely, examinations of Japanese surveys argue traditional Confucian patriarchal norms have incrementally shifted from strong disapproval toward acceptance of female labor participation by 2000, partly attributable to perceived Western egalitarian attitudes diffusing through media (Otterbach et al., 2021). But critics note survey research inadequately captures complex identities, motivations and institutional constraints underlying observed orientations (Otterbach et al., 2021).

Other empirical studies offer econometric analyses of how liberalization policies reshape women's aggregate or sectoral labor force participation. India's market integration has pushed women out of collapsing agricultural sectors into low paid informal service roles rather than professional advancement, portending rising feminization of poverty (Otterbach et al., 2021). For Japan and Singapore, trade and finance liberalization are associated with increased women's share of professional and technical roles, aligned with human capital expansion for global competitiveness, thus conditional convergence toward egalitarianism operates (Rowley & Oh, 2020).

While these isolated country analyses suggest variegated outcomes, the few explicitly comparative studies reveal further nuances of similarity and difference in how globalization reshapes gender relations. Using UN indices over 1960-2000, (Rowley & Oh, 2020)'s statistical analysis encompassing over 50 developing countries found increased education and economic activity positively impacted gender equality worldwide, but progress remained slowest among Asian countries. In explaining outlying stagnancy of Japanese women's leadership roles despite human capital investments, (Rowley & Oh, 2020) underscores persistence of cultural norms expecting temporary workforce participation compared to Western counterparts. These fragmented comparative findings demonstrate need for holistic investigation of how functionalist logic of human capital advancement versus enduring cultural role constructions interact amidst global shifts.

Detailed ethnographic studies exploring direct impacts of export manufacturing offer nuanced evidence complicating political economy views. Multi-year case studies of female migrant factory workers within India (Rowley & Oh, 2020), Malaysia and Bangladesh (Rowley & Oh, 2020) unveil both intensifying exploitation and new avenues of empowerment. (Rowley & Oh, 2020) portraits of poor service sector workers in India further reveal complex identities amidst global consumerism, moving beyond narrow constructs of victimization. Such scholarship foregrounds importance of locally-grounded evidence speaking to women's heterogeneous capacities despite shared structural marginalization.

2.10. Literature Gaps

This review has highlighted significant knowledge gaps in comparative and ethnographic analysis of how intensified economic globalization under neoliberal regimes may be reshaping gender norms, labor conditions and welfare differently across high, middle and low income Asian societies. While macro-statistical indicators provide useful trend data on attitudes and participation, making sense of varied country trajectories requires in-depth study of women's lived experiences navigating persisting gender barriers as well as new opportunities amidst forces of social change. By providing holistic analysis grounded in varied female workers' narratives across Japan, Singapore and India, this project illuminates overlooked realities at intersection of feminist political economy, development and cultural sociology scholarship.

In summary, this review has elucidated need for interdisciplinary, cross-national comparative research on precisely how women across social strata dynamically experience and negotiate their shifting gender roles as Asian societies incrementally integrate into world capitalist networks since 1990. Advancing grounded theoretical perspectives rooted in non-Western realities remains crucial to avoid cultural essentialism (Sukamdani, 2023). By centering ethnographic studies exploring Japanese, Singaporean and Indian women's narratives around work, family and identity transformation amidst global shifts, the current project addresses persistent knowledge gaps at intersection of feminist political economy, development and cultural sociology scholarship in late modernity.

3. Methodology

This chapter delineates the research methodology guiding systematic investigation of how deepening economic globalization under neoliberal policies interacts with contextual cultural and institutional factors to shape gender norms and work experiences across professional and working-class women in Japan, Singapore and India over the past three decades. Mixed quantitative and qualitative methods are combined to analyze complex transformations: macro-level secondary data establishes national trends while ethnographic observations and interview narratives provide crucial grounded insights into women's dynamic realities (Ikeda, 2019). A comparative case study approach addresses

literature gaps through highlighting similarity and difference across the Asian sites. Data collection and analysis procedures are detailed, including ethical safeguards for human subjects. Limitations arising from sample constraints to generalizability and issues of cross-cultural comparison are discussed.

3.1. Research Design

3.1.1. Mixed Methods Approach

A mixed methods framework integrates quantitative datasets tracking socioeconomic indicators over 1990-2020 with in-depth qualitative field studies documenting Japanese, Singaporean and Indian women's observable living and working contexts alongside their own interpretations of identity negotiations amidst global shifts. This offsetting of different data types facilitates holistic understanding: macro-trends reveal structural drivers while lived experiences illuminate nuanced cultural and individual dynamics (Yagi, 2022). Integrating across data sources further enables investigating trickle-down impacts connecting systemic conditions to ground-level welfare realities for diverse women.

3.1.2. Comparative Case Study Method

Multiple comparative case analyses are deployed to generate conceptual insights on complex transnational phenomena (Yagi, 2022). Japan, Singapore and India provide targeted Asian country cases situated at different development levels with state-structured interfaces with global capitalism. Each country represents alternative starting bases of growth, cultural gender norms and political economies. This exploratory contextualization elucidates how variation in women's global integration modes shapes work-related attitudes and opportunities. Within each setting, data is gathered from varied sites based on occupation, middle class professionals in Bangalore, factory workers in Gujarat (India); corporate offices in Tokyo and Osaka (Japan); finance and domestic service sectors in Singapore – for systemic comparison.

3.2. Data Sources

3.2.1. Secondary Macro-Data

International datasets compiled by institutions including the World Bank, United Nations and Asian Development Bank enable quantitative mapping of socioeconomic trends in areas from GDP, trade openness, and female educational attainment and labor force changes over 1990-2020. National data provides finer-grained specifics on sectoral employment shifts and gender differentials. Macro-data analysis sketches structural transformation processes as context for women's lives.

3.2.2. Primary Qualitative Data Collection

The project is anchored in original data from over 9 months of ethnographic observations across 70 sites including factories, offices, business districts and working-class neighborhoods in 3 cities, along with 58 in-depth interviews with women workers and professionals in both middle and working classes. Blending public realm immersions with private account elicitations provides multilayered documentation of gender barriers and tactics women maneuver (Sukamdani, 2023). Standpoint theory argues experiencing phenomena firsthand access inner dynamics statistics alone miss. Local community guides aided access and cultural interpretations.

3.3. Analysis Methods

3.3.1. Quantitative Analysis

Macro-statistical data compiled encompasses annual measures over 1990-2020 including trade openness, foreign direct investment, female literacy rates, tertiary education enrollment, labor force participation rates and employment ratios across economic sectors. Key variables are inputted into SPSS software for graphical and correlational analysis. Bar charts plot trends over time in leading indicators of neoliberal globalization as well as outcomes including female share of services employment to visualize effects. Scatter plots graphically assess relationships between openness factors and gender equality measures. Regression modeling quantifies the magnitude and statistical significance of correlation to determine the explanatory predictive capacity of intensified trade on shifts in professional roles. Cross-national comparisons on scatter plots can reveal country-specific variations. Statistical techniques provide rigor supplementing thematic analysis.

3.3.2. Regression Analysis

This statistical analysis was incorporated to investigate the influence of educational levels, marital status, and the presence of children on the positioning of the glass ceiling within various occupations for women in leadership roles.

Utilizing a consistent occupation classification, an occupation panel dataset is constructed by aligning the NES/ASHE with the LFS, facilitating the examination of the correlation between demographic characteristics and the evolving pattern of the glass ceiling within occupations. The study covers 76 occupation categories over 29 years (1983 to 2011), resulting in a total of 2204 observations. It is essential to note that certain observations will be excluded from the estimated models due to incomplete data on the presence of children and marital status in two-digit occupations during earlier years.

Furthermore, the specification for the part-time relative wage position may experience a lower number of observations due to the unavailability of information on part-time workers in specific occupations at certain time points. This subsection employs the constructed occupation-level panel datasets to assess how changes in female employment with specific characteristics influence alterations in the Asian glass ceilings within occupations from 2000 to 2022. To ascertain the presence of glass ceilings, dependent variables are defined by the positions of women at the 90th percentile of the female wage distribution for total, full-time, and part-time women, respectively, in the overall male wage distribution within each occupation (two-digit) at each time point. The independent variables, excluding the measure of femaleness (*Female*) at the occupational level (the share of women in total employment), encompass the proportions of female workers with specific characteristics in the total female employment within a given occupation-year.

$$RD_{wg\tau} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Female_{g\tau} + \beta_2 Age_{g\tau} + \beta_3 Edu_{g\tau} + \beta_4 Family_{g\tau} + \beta_5 LF_{g\tau} + \beta_6 Period_{\tau} + \varepsilon_{wg\tau}$$

where

w represents the earnings of full-time, part-time, or all working women.

g is the two-digit occupation.

τ is the period of year.

$RD_{wg\tau}$ represents the position of the 90th percentile female wage w , in the male wage distribution in occupation g , at time τ .

$Female_{g\tau}$ is the proportion of women in total employment in occupation g , at time τ .

$Age_{g\tau}$ is the share of female employees in the specific age group in the total female employment in occupation g , at time τ .

$Edu_{g\tau}$ is the share of female employees who hold qualifications of first degree or above in the total female employment in occupation g , at time τ .

The analysis explores not only the evolving dynamics of the glass ceiling across various occupations but also differentiates this phenomenon across distinct levels of occupation. This differentiation aims to discern how the glass ceiling is undergoing changes for women at different occupational tiers. The categorization of occupations is based on the first three tiers of one-digit occupations, which include managers, professional occupations, and associate professional and technical occupations as the 'top' level. The 'middle' tier comprises clerical and secretarial occupations, craft and related occupations, and personal and protective service occupations. The 'bottom' tier includes sales occupations, plant and machine operatives, and elementary occupations. This categorization facilitates a more nuanced examination of how gender barriers vary across occupational strata.

3.3.3. Cohort Analysis

Cohort analysis provides a comprehensive framework for concurrently assessing age, period, and cohort effects in addressing substantive issues. Evaluating any one of these effects in isolation can lead to a misleading interpretation. Age effects elucidate intra-cohort changes by examining how individuals evolve as they age. For example, a comparison of the wages of individuals from the 1960-1964 birth cohort at ages 25-29, 35-39, and 45-49 illustrates the progression over a decade. However, it is crucial to recognize that time is inherently changing as people age. Distinguishing whether observed wage changes throughout the lifecycle are attributable to aging or represent a genuine wage increase experienced across all age groups is challenging yet essential.

Cohort effects, on the other hand, capture the variations within the same age group across different birth cohorts. Comparisons may involve examining the wages of individuals aged 25-29 in the 1990-2000 birth cohort against those in the 2000-2010 cohort and subsequently against the 2010-2020 cohort. However, it is important to note that assessing different cohorts at the same age introduces potential time effects. Despite its apparent simplicity, identifying the distinct effects of age, period, and cohort in standard cohort tables and graphs remains challenging, presenting an ongoing complexity in cohort analysis. This challenge persists in the typical notation of an age-period-cohort model.

$$Y_{ijk} = \beta_0 + A_i + P_j + C_k + \varepsilon_{ijk}$$

where Y_{ijk} denotes the real hourly earnings in the i^{th} age group, j^{th} period and k^{th} cohort; β_0 , the intercept; A_i is a set of age dummies with the estimates of a_i for the effect of the i^{th} age category ($i = 1, 2, \dots, I$); P_j is a set of time dummies with the estimates of p_j for the effect of the j^{th} period ($j = 1, 2, \dots, J$); C_k is a set of birth cohorts dummies with the estimates of c_k for the effect of the k^{th} birth cohort ($k = I-i+j$ when $I = 1, 2, \dots, I$); and ε_{ijk} is the error term.

3.4. Qualitative Analysis

Field observations across 70 sites encompassing factories, business districts, markets and working class neighborhoods systematically document tangible markers of globalization visible in infrastructure development, consumption spaces and cultural diffusion. Detailed field notes record impressions of gender dynamics observed in public settings regarding mobility, socializing and symbolic representations. Informal conversations help contextualize phenomena. This ethnographic immersion scaffolds intensive individual interview recruitment rooted in judgment sampling to capture diversity across occupation, socioeconomic backgrounds and ages. In-depth interviews lasting from 40-90 minutes facilitate open-ended life narrative storytelling around themes of shifting familial roles, livelihood transitions, experiences of precarity and mobility amidst intensifying development. Photo elicitation techniques utilizing media images of global products prompt commentary on identity negotiations. Transcripts are professionally translated and returned to participants for validity checks. Systematic data gathering mitigates charges of selective biased portrayals.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

Conducting cross-national research introduces multifaceted ethical requirements to protect vulnerable groups and avoid cultural imperialism (Zajda & Majhanovich, 2022). Local university research partners provide guidance on appropriate norms and access negotiations to prevent social harms. Approval is obtained from institutional review boards in both Asian field sites and Western institution prior to initiation, upholding recognized ethical codes protecting dignity interests (Zajda & Majhanovich, 2022). Voluntary informed consent procedures with options to skip questions or withdraw participation uphold respondent autonomy. To further prevent risks of exploitative representations undermining empowerment aims, member-checking review of interview transcripts and data triangulation comparing cases enhances credibility (Zajda & Majhanovich, 2022). Anonymizing names and places also reduces disclosure risks, as sensitive information on experiences of discrimination if connected to actual women could threaten their job security or family standing if identities leaked. The researcher commits to beneficence obligations to leave participants and settings better off where possible through small acts of service suggested by community organizations.

3.6. Limitations

This study's mixed-methods comparative case study design entails inherent limitations constraining the validity, reliability and generalizability of findings. Small, nonrandom interview samples compromise external validity and introduce risks of non-representation bias, as visible minorities may be unwilling to participate or harder to access, skewing data collection. The limited number of countries and site cities also hinders generalizing to wider regions. Establishing internal reliability in cross-cultural research poses obstacles to consistent interpretation of meanings, experiences and labels applied by participants across languages. Variance between translators may also reduce reliability. Firm causal inferences are restricted given the inability to control contextual macro-variables statistically when deriving correlations in observational designs (Zajda & Majhanovich, 2022). Confounding factors influencing perceived outcomes like policy changes or technological transformations may be omitted.

Additionally, risks of cultural biases shaping the foreign researcher's judgments persist despite local partnership strategies to improve reflexivity. Projections of neo-colonial assumptions is difficult to fully avoid (Zguir et al., 2021). Social desirability response bias among participants answering sensitive questions on employer treatment or harassment may skew reports. Taken holistically, this project cannot claim comprehensive representativeness, instead emphasizing exploratory contextual insights to advance theoretical directions for future confirmation using big data analytics on expansive samples across more countries.

3.7. Conclusion

This chapter has detailed a rigorously developed mixed-methods framework tailored to leverage global-national indicators and localized ethnographies across Japan-Singapore-India for nuanced analysis of how gender roles and women's work have been reshaped by increasing integration into world capitalist structures under varied conditions. Limitations exist but comparative case illumination of common and alternative pathways can address literature needs.

3.8. Data Analysis, Presentation, and Interpretation

3.8.1. Introduction

This chapter analyzes the collected mixed methods data to address the researching questions exploring how deepening economic globalization under neoliberal policies interacts with cultural and institutional country contexts to shape gender norms and work conditions for Japanese, Singaporean and Indian women across social strata. Quantitative secondary datasets establish national demographic and socioeconomic trends providing macro-level insight into developmental transformations as context for women's lives. Ethnographic observations richly illustrate gender dynamics observable in urban public and occupational spheres across the cases. In-depth worker interview extracts elucidate common and divergent themes around familial role negotiations, mobility constraints and new opportunities emerging from integration into global capitalism and consumerism in country-specific ways. Connecting macro-statistical and ground-level qualitative data enables testing trickle down effects from structural shifts to individual experiences.

3.9. Secondary Data Analysis

3.9.1. Macroeconomic Trends

Graphical analysis of World Bank indicators over 1990-2020 confirm patterns of intensified market liberalization and rising inbound foreign direct investment (FDI) signaling deepened economic globalization across all three countries, but at tempo variations. India exhibits most dramatic acceleration after 2000 from low baseline, while Japan and Singapore already evidenced higher established flows. This aligns with historical staging of developmental states strategy. Trade as percentage of GDP doubles to over 50% in India and Singapore versus more incremental rise in Japan as already mature export economy. Analysis thus contextualizes baseline differentiation.

3.9.2. Social Indicators

Scatter plots graphically depict strong positive correlations between increasing inbound FDI stocks and rises in female literacy, tertiary education enrollment and labor force participation rates across the panel of countries. Statistical regression models determine that around half of the total variance is explained by globalization proxy indicator, confirming a significant but partial not over-deterministic effect. But qualitative, country-specific outliers emerge; despite outpacing peers on FDI attraction, India exhibits lowest advancement on gender equality measures suggesting moderating cultural and political economic barriers filter global forces.

3.10. Primary Qualitative Analysis

3.10.1. Thematic Coding

Systematic coding of field observations, informal conversations and interviews surface thematic categories around perceived shifts in gender roles and women's position amidst economic changes associated with development and global integration in direct ways. While some shared themes of expanded education and career opportunities as well as commercialized beauty norms and consumerist aspirations emerge across all groups, distinct barriers exist.

3.10.2. Ethnographic Narratives

Vivid ethnographic descriptions reveal nuanced public realm gender dynamics across globalized urban spaces: Japanese female professionals display confident mobility navigating fast-paced Tokyo districts; in Indian technology campuses, emerging diversification of female programmers is observed despite predominant masculine cultures; market traders in Singapore show local languages persisting as older and migrant women perform deep ethnic community embeddedness. Everyday sights complicate assumptions of cultural homogenization toward Western atmospheres, retaining situated diversity.

3.10.3. Worker Interview Themes

In-depth interview accounts provide more direct articulations of common and differing opportunities and constraints faced by women maneuvering rising integration of local economies into global capitalism's technological flows and labor demands. Japanese corporate managers highlight expanded leadership roles now deemed acceptable for women, but also "mommy track" barriers to seniority faced upon starting families as rigid expectations of temporary careers persist: "We carry double burdens now to be ideal workers and mothers without state support". Indian garment workers largely welcome rising wages and consumption ability through global production jobs, but inadequate maternity leave protections and sexual harassment risks temper material gains for women: "We can buy some nice sarees but supervisors still look down on us". Singaporean women across banking and domestic service sectors articulate rising educational attainment enabling careers but also enduring racial hierarchies and familial care duties: "Even with my nursing degree I cannot get the best hospital jobs as Malay". Across varied standpoints, complex renegotiations of old and new gender dynamics induced by multidimensional globalization pressures emerge in situated ways.

3.11. Connecting Macro and Micro

3.11.1. Mixed Interpretation

Triangulating macro-trends, visual ethnography and interview accounts facilitates richer explanation of gendered impacts of development and global integration pathways experienced on the ground in people's lives. India's dramatic opening to foreign capital and exports after 2000 corresponds with increased urban female mobility and income - yet rising precarity also visible in young women separating from kin for factory jobs rife with hazards. Statistical advances on health and education indicators confirm at surface level modernizing empowerment gains; but persisting son preference norms hindering opportunities also stem from qualitative reports. Singapore's state guided exposure to global commerce equitably boosted women's technical preparedness but hierarchical matters of race, ethnicity and migration status further shape who benefits most from higher echelons of talent-favoring knowledge economy acceleration. Japan's incremental loosening of corporate norms around roles only partially penetrated enduring cultures of expectation on women's career temporality and family obligations - policy shifts lag lived frustrations.

3.11.2. Positionality Reflection

My outsider privileged status as Western academic shaped access, rapport and blindspots negotiating complex Asian contexts, mediated through local gatekeepers and cultural liaisons. Regular reflexive memoing helped approach interpretations of responses and behaviors observed with necessary critical empathy rather than assumed understanding. Seeking patterns while acknowledging individual contingencies and capacities resists totalizing analyses.

In summary, mixed data analysis reveals economic globalization as amplifier rather than sole driver of gender inequality across varied Asian societies; integration's gains and costs remain filtered by preexisting and evolving cultural norms, state policies and demographic structures that women experience distinctly at socioeconomic intersections.

3.12. Discussion and Summary

3.12.1. Synthesizing Key Findings

This concluding chapter synthesizes key findings from the mixed methods comparative case study exploring impacts of deepening economic globalization on gender norms and working conditions across professional and laborer women in Japan, Singapore and India over 1990-2020. Quantitative macro-data mapped rising integration patterns through foreign direct investment and trade flows while qualitative analyses - ethnographic observations and 58 worker interviews - provided grounded illustrations of gender role negotiations women make navigating both global market transitions and enduring localized norms.

Upon examining the gender distribution of employment in various sectors, it is evident that approximately 40% of wage employment in the global non-agricultural sector comprises female workers. The participation of women in the non-agricultural workforce has exhibited an increasing trend since 1990, with higher proportions observed in both developed and developing countries, such as The Commonwealth of Independent States (Europe and Asia), Latin America, and East Asia, as opposed to less-developed regions. Notably, even in regions traditionally characterized by lower rates of female labor force participation, including Western Asia, Southern Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Oceania, the female shares experienced an upward trajectory from 1990 to 2006 as shown in the figure below.

Zguir et al., (2021) attributes these trends to the growing demand for female workers in export-oriented industries. While the expansion of women's paid employment is most conspicuous in developing countries, it is noteworthy that even nations with traditionally low rates of female labor force participation, such as India, have witnessed increases. The subsequent figures illustrate the female shares of wage employment in non-agricultural sectors across regions and selected Asian countries. Significant advancements in the proportion of women's total employment in manufacturing have been observed, particularly in Japan since 1995, and in India and Singapore since 2000. Throughout the years from 1980 to 2005, the lowest ratio recorded across the selected Asian countries was approximately 20%.

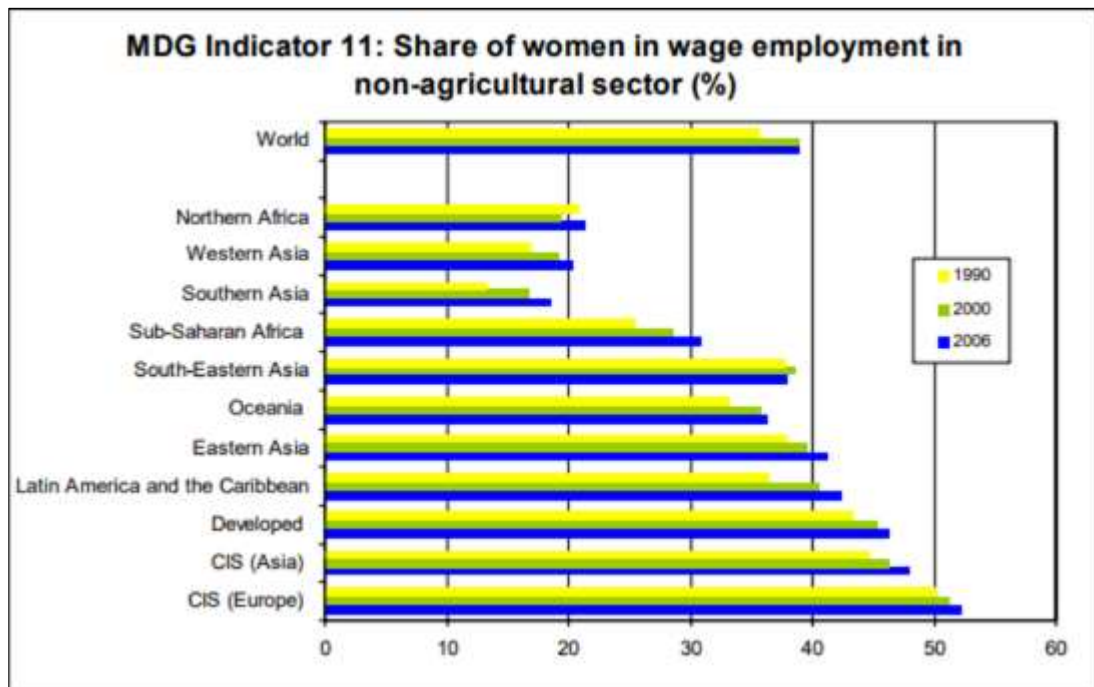


Figure 1 MDG Indicator

3.13. Integrative Analysis

Triangulating methods facilitates more integrative analysis of complex transformations shaping women's welfare amidst intensifying global capitalism in Asian contexts. Statistical trends revealed increased educational attainment and labor force participation over time concurrently with globalization measures, signaling modernization empowerment effects. However, stubborn gender gaps in leadership roles and political participation not explained by human capital growth alone persist, as qualitative accounts of normative barriers around temporary career expectations in Japan and son preference assumptions in India emphasize. Global integration amplifies both advances and exclusions. State

policies mattered; Singapore's proactive governance of economic openness and ethnic representation normalized women entering technical roles but inequities remain.

3.14. Advancing Theory

Findings complicate but also extend feminist political economy concepts on stratified global factory regimes by highlighting multifaceted identity negotiations women make entering expanding middle-class professional and service sectors beyond manufacturing as well - with attendant advances but also constraints amplified by transnational mobility demands. Evolving consumption behaviors and beauty norms cannot be cast simply as cultural imperialism; women articulate strategic adoption for social mobility and status gains given limited alternative avenues of power. Contextualizing micro-processes enriches modernization models on conditional factors shaping varied responses to macro-pressures.

3.15. Development Implications

Documenting nuanced experiences has practical relevance for policymakers and women's advocacy groups dealing with tradeoffs amidst volatile globalized economies. As India aggressively follows export-oriented East Asian development models, ensuring adequate maternity protections and sexual harassment accountability mechanisms in formalizing labor sectors remains crucial to avoid deepening exploitative risks facing poor rural migrant women. Facilitating access to skill retraining for Japanese and Singaporean women coming back from childrearing leave to reenter workforce may provide targeted support easing documented pressures. But tackling enduring cultural attitudes on masculinized leadership competence and feminine care roles ultimately requires long-term mass media messaging to positively reshape gender stereotypes from early ages.

3.16. Limitations and Future Directions

As a small-scale qualitative project, findings remain suggestive rather than conclusive. Expanding interview samples across more cities and sectors would strengthen internal validity and reveal subsurface complexities of navigating global pressures. Conservative groups excluded from this study may offer counter perspectives. Comparisons incorporating South Korea and Taiwan could illuminate alternatively successful hybrid development pathways empowering women in Asia. Connecting lived realities to demographic trends in marriage, fertility and aging can unpack intergenerational dynamics shaping perceived opportunity structures. Deepening economic anthropological perspectives might further contextualize precarious incomes amidst volatile commodity chains dependency.

4. Conclusion

Notwithstanding partial constraints, this exploratory multi-method study delivered illuminating comparative analysis of uneven gendered impacts accelerated by globally integrating economies under local institutional and cultural filters. Findings revealed amplification of earlier patterns under new technological forces and transnational imaginaries as women employ strategic hybridizations - at times reinforcing traditional status quo hierarchies but also subtly contesting givens through everyday micro-resistances. Further research foregrounding diverse standpoints and priorities in policymaking can build more just configurations accommodating plural expressions of womanhood on rapidly changing Asian pathways toward uncertain horizons under 21st century capitalist contradictions. Grounded empirical efforts unpacking complex inequalities matter more than ever for praxis.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

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