

Summaries

Claudia Weinkopf, *Marginal Employment in Germany - in the Interest of Women?*

The article begins with a description of the type of employment most prevalent within the informal sector in Germany, that of the marginally employed with salaries under DM 620 per month. Using the most recent statistics, she analyses the group structure in terms of type of activity and economic branch. The author argues that in the light of both the short and long-term interests of the women, the employers' interests seem to win out. She concludes with a critical analysis of the plans of the new government regarding changes in legislation for this sector and comes up with her own suggestions.

Christa Wichterich, *Matroschkas of the Transformation*

In this article, the focus is on the ramification of the breakdown of the socialist centrally-planned system and the introduction of the capitalist market economy in Russia. The author uses the snap-shot method of women from varying backgrounds to illustrate the survival techniques that they have developed as street hawkers in Moscow's Luschniki Park. She concludes with the revelation that, while women have developed coping mechanisms for the sake of their families, it is the men who have suffered most from the dislocation triggered by economic transformation.

Andrea Blumtritt, *Some Thoughts on the Informal Sector from the Point of View of Aymara Women*

Women's participation in the informal sector is usually discussed in view of its economic and political aspects. A careful consideration of the situation of Aymara women living in La Paz, Bolivia, however, allows insight into the inherent potential and possibilities of this sector. The informal sector seems to offer the women similar living and working space as in their rural background, hence reducing the difficulties of adaptation to the new urban context, and at the same time allowing them to use and improve their capacities of learning and working. The chances offered by the informal sector to urban-migrating women seem to be

positive as long as the tension between the rural background and the new urban context is not too large such that the support system of the traditional background continues to alleviate the harsh conditions of the informal sector.

Hyang Huh, *Working at Home in South Korea*

The author describes the downward pressure asserted on sub-contractors in the exporting textile and clothing industries in South Korea as a result of the 1997 Asian crisis. Huh describes the sub-contracting conditions they are subjected to and how the supposed advantages of working at home and having time for the family are negated by the pressures of fulfilling quota and time requirements. She ends with an interview of a seamstress with five years of sub-contracting experience.

Giovanna Campani, *Immigrant Women and Informal Economy*

The impact of international and global migrations on migrant women and on their chances, especially in the southern European labour market, is the topic of discussion here. After considering various approaches to the causes and nature of global migratory movements and how these migrations are related to certain processes of labor market development such as segmentation and sectoral imbalance, the author looks at how immigrant women labour are inserted mainly into informal and service sectors of these labour markets in developed countries. She examines domestic work and the sex industry and how and why certain countries like the Philippines, Thailand, Sri Lanka or Eritrea have become typical countries of specific types of female labour outmigration. The pull factors of this female migration are sought in the economic and structural characteristics of developed and developing countries, which have a gendered aspect as in the flow of new groups of professional women into the national labour market and underdeveloped social, childcare, and nursing services. The examination of the Italian situation shows how certain traditional types of female labour migration have changed due to the existence of a large informal sector in this country, stimulating illegal migration, particularly amongst women. Different levels of institutionalisation and regulation seem to apply to different nationalities in that some groups of migrant women are better organised for self-help and conditions

of work than others. Nevertheless, public "invisibility" is a common characteristic to almost all of the immigrant women working in these sectors.

Marissa Pablo, *Variations on a Theme: Gender and the Division of Work, Life Course and Migration in the Informal Sector - Filipino Women in Germany*

The article starts off with a detailed definition of the informal sector, as opposed to the formal economic sectors, and touches into how it lends meaning to the old equation of men's work being a man's world and women's work, a woman's place. Fleshing out this thesis, the author recounts the 350-year colonial history of the Philippines and focuses on the social construction of the gender aspects of the unfolding division of labour. In a short rundown (similar to Campani's), she enumerates the sectors of the informal economy in the country at present, further illustrating in her recount of the life-events of three Filipino marriage migrants in Germany, the retention of underlying patterns of subjugation despite migration.

Christiane Feldmann, *The Picco Bella - a Model Project with a Service Pool*

The author introduces a model project in the city of Aachen, which strives to provide some 48 full-time jobs in the areas of laundry and cleaning services for socially disadvantaged women previously employed only in the informal sector, the greater part of whom are migrant women. She describes the training program the women undergo and the empowering process it triggers off in them.

Monika Menapace and Alison Woodward, *Moving from Informal to Formal: The Role of Social Enterprise in Women's Employment in Europe*

The term social enterprise builds the basis for this article, in which a Belgian model similar to that of Picco Bella is described. These non-profit organisations endeavor: 1) to provide employment for socially disadvantaged women within the formal sector; 2) to provide services, care, and support for socially disadvantaged groups. Both authors describe the results of a

study done on social cooperatives in Italy involving over 30,000 employees.

Louise Lubala Chirangashane, *Selling Used Shoes - the Struggle for Survival in South Kivu*

Here is a first-hand report on the struggles of a self-help group of women in the informal sector in Zaire. The author starts off by recounting the struggles of an ever increasing number of women to feed themselves and their families, and how some of them came to sell used shoes on the street. She recounts the unfair tactics used by the middle-men, who supply them with shoes originating from Europe. Against these and the pressures likewise being asserted on them by the bureaucrats of the city government, the women begin a labour union within their sector in order to insure a minimum of social security for all their members. Even under the most extreme of circumstances, the will to take control of their own lives characterize these courageous women of Kivu.