



Gendered Labor in Global Capitalism

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Main Arguments

- Global labour markets are profoundly gendered. Women dominate the lowest-paid, least secure, and most precarious sectors, such as factory work, domestic service, and informal economies.
- Gender ideologies are central to maintaining cheap and flexible labour. These gendered roles are context-specific and intersect with race, class, ethnicity, and nationality, producing a segmented and hierarchized labor force across the globe.
- Mills shows that workers—especially women—are not passive: they engage in complex forms of resistance, negotiation, and contestation, both in the workplace and in their broader social lives

Why is this important?

- The article shows how global labor markets actively construct and exploit gendered subjectivities. Migrant women are often recruited precisely because of stereotyped traits (docility, care-giving), while migrant men face crises of masculinity when unable to fulfill breadwinner roles.

- Mills integrates case studies from across the globe, showing how gender interacts with race, ethnicity, class, and nationality to structure migration experiences differently in each context.
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Questions

- How do gendered assumptions shape both the recruitment and regulation of migrant labor across different sectors of the global economy?
- Mills emphasizes that migration can both reinforce and disrupt traditional gender roles. How do migrant workers, especially women, negotiate autonomy and subordination in transnational labor contexts?
- What does Mills' analysis reveal about the limitations of mainstream development or migration policies (e.g., microcredit, labor flexibilization, remittance-based models) in addressing structural gender inequalities?