WOMEN, WORK AND PROTECTIVE LABOR LEGISLATION

IN TAIWAN

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Abstract

Protective labor legislation is legislation that imposes restrictions on women’s employment for the purpose of protecting them. In this thesis, I explore the relationship among Taiwanese protective labor legislation, industrialization development and working-class women’s status, and analyze the merits of such legislation.

I argue that protective labor legislation is fundamentally flawed as it serves to keep Taiwanese working-class women out of mainstream labor market, define them as a special social category, and reinforce gender stereotypes. Thus, protective labor legislation should be significantly revised. However, given that Taiwanese working-class women have been socialized in the norms of hard work, responsibility, compliance and subordination, I argue that protective labor legislation should be altered to be a non-gender oriented health and safety program that can encompass individuals’ reproductive needs and take individuals’ relationship with others into consideration.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................................................................. 1

II. THEEmergence of Working-Class Women in Taiwan’s Political and Economic Arenas ......................................................... 3
   A. Evolution of the Historical Formation of Women’s Status in the Workplace .................................................. 3
      i. Women and Work during the period of Japanese Colonization (1895 – 1945) ........................................ 4
      ii. Women and Work in Industrializing Taiwan (The Postwar Period) .................................................... 6
      iii. Patriarchy and the Formation of Factory Women as a New Social Group ................................... 11
   B. Women and Work in Industrialized Taiwan ............................................................................................ 15
      i. Women and Work in Modern Taiwan ........................................................................................................ 15
      ii. Women’s Status in Low-Level Labor Sector ........................................................................................... 20
   C. Remarks on Legal Experiences of the United States and Japan .................................................................... 61
   D. Differential Treatment, Gender Equality and Power Structure .................................................................. 42

III. COMPARATIVE LEGAL EXPERIENCES ............................................................................................................. 49
   A. US Solutions ............................................................................................................................................ 49
      i. American Legal History of Protective Labor Laws and Fetal Protection ............................................. 49
         1. Working-hours Legislation for Women .................................................................................................. 49
         2. Minimum Wage Laws ......................................................................................................................... 51
      ii. Title VII and Protective Labor Legislation ........................................................................................... 52
      iii. Johnson Controls – Discrimination Against Potentially Pregnant Workers .................................... 53
   B. Japanese Solutions .................................................................................................................................... 54
      i. Historical Background of Protective Labor Legislation ........................................................................ 54
      ii. Current Protective Labor Legislation in Japan .................................................................................... 56
         1. Limitation on Women Workers’ Overtime and Rest-day Work ......................................................... 56
         2. The Ban on Night Work ....................................................................................................................... 58
         3. The Ban on Underground Work .......................................................................................................... 59
         4. Pre-Childbirth and Post-Childbirth Protections .............................................................................. 60
   C. Remarks on Legal Experiences of the United States and Japan .................................................................. 61
      i. A Comparison of Protective Labor Legislation in Japan and Taiwan – Is Japanese Model Suitable for Taiwan? .................................................. 61
      ii. Remarks on US Solutions – Comparing with Taiwan’s Legal Experiences .................................. 64

IV. A Better Strategy to Revise the Law Regarding Protective Labor Legislation ......................................................... 70
   A. Sociocultural Construction of Taiwanese Women .................................................................................. 70
   B. Women’s Voice – Women’s Self Perception of Their Work and Lives ................................................. 79
C. HOW SHOULD THE LAW BE? .............................................................................................................. 84
   i. Alter Sex-based Protectionism to Safety and Health Regulation ................................................... 87
      1. From Gender-specific Protectionism to a Non-gender Approach ............................................. 87
      2. Why are Safety and Health Regulations Needed? – Market Rhetoric versus Government Regulation .... 89
      3. Democratic Solution -- A joint labor-manager health-and safety committee ............................... 95

D. PROPOSAL FOR THE OCCUPATIONAL EQUALITY LAW ................................................................ 98
   i. The Need of an Occupational Equality Law ............................................................................. 98

V. CONCLUSION ................................................................................................................................... 100