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NEOLIBERALISM AND THE PROBLEM OF MIGRANT WORKERS

This article considers the process of neoliberalism and globalization causing international migration, and the status of migrant workers in their countries of residence around the world, including Korea. According to the results of research, first, globalization guarantees maximum movement of capital, whereas human free movement is suppressing as much as possible. The labor market pursued by neoliberalism has focused on the flexibility of labor. The flexibility of the production system and the flexibility of the labor market have forced workers in many parts of the world into a chaotic state suffering from job insecurity, competition, and performance. Migrant workers are subjected to labor exploitation as they are treated with inequality and discrimination compared to local workers in their countries of residence.

Second, under the neoliberalistic economic system, migrant workers are forced to live as wage slaves by the logic of capital’s power, foreign discrimination in residential countries, and the scapegoats of anti-immigration sentiment. Most immigrants are politically, economically, and socially unprotected from their home countries, and are given status as people who will return to their home countries after providing only a certain period of labor. In particular, the guarantee of labor is perfunctory for migrant workers, the de facto workplace cannot be moved, and the migrant workers can be sent out of the country. Third, globalization, driven by deregulation and new technologies based on past laissez-faire ideology, has led to income inequality, in which wealth is concentrated only in certain groups of capitalists.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights declares freedom of migration as one of the fundamental human rights. The Convention on the Rights of Labor Migrants has not yet been signed by countries that actively host labor migrants. OECD countries call for the elimination of the negative aspects of globalization and neoliberalism through improved international standards and norms and international cooperation. For both sending and receiving countries, migration should be planned and modified in such a way as to minimize negative factors and maximize benefits.

Key words: neoliberalism, migrant workers, labor migration, globalization, inequality.

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Неолиберализм мен еңбек мигранттарының маселелері

Бул зерттеуде қалықтардың кошқа-қошқы тұрығының неолиберализм мен жаңанданату үдерісі асқындағы Корея Республикасы мен басқа әдістердегі еңбек мигранттарының өзге сөзі мен жаңадың кез келген әдеттілігін қорғайда. Зерттеу нәтижелерінен сүйенер болса, бірнеше, жаңанданату үдерісінің өзінің қозғалысының мұқтайдығының кеңінен көп болған жаңы мүмкіндіктерін көрсетеді. Неолиберализм қандайдағы негізделген еңбек нарығы еңбек өкемділігі кез келген ала тартады. Өндірістікті қуының еңбек өкемділігі және еңбек нарығының еңбек өкемділігі еңбек мигранттарының алемнің қоғамдық феномен болған бөліктерінде хас жаңадайында қалмай жоғары жаңа олар жеміс және жаңы туысының тұысы, сондай-ақ жоғары басқа өкемділік пен сенімсіздікпен қорғанып қалады. Бұл еңбек мигранттарының қабылдауын әдетінің жаңылық және өкемділік козгап жаңа әдетін құрайды. Еңбек мигранттары еңбек кеңінен қолданылады, әдетінің құрылысы және өкемділік пен сенімсіздікпен қорғанып қалады. Бұл еңбек мигранттарының қабылдауы өкемділік пен сенімсіздіктің қолданылуына қол жатады.

Екіншіден, неолибералдық экономикалық жаңа болым қалықтарының қазықтығына жаңанданату үдерісі экономикалық жаңа болым жаңа қалықтардың қоғамға қатыстықтары болады. Қалықтар өкемділігі жаңа қалықтардың қоғамға қатыстықтары болады. Қалықтар өкемділік және қалықтардың қоғамға қатыстықтары болады. Қалықтар өкемділік және қалықтардың қоғамға қатыстықтары болады. Қалықтар өкемділік және қалықтардың қоғамға қатыстықтары болады.
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In this paper, we analyze the process of neoliberalism and globalization, which has led to international labor migration, and also the status of migrant workers in the countries they reside in, including Korea. According to the research results, first, globalization guarantees the maximum movement of capital, while suppressing the free movement of people to the maximum extent. The labor market, based on neoliberal principles, promotes the idea of flexibility. The flexibility of the production system and the labor market placed migrant workers in a state of chaos in many parts of the world, where they suffer from the lack of job security and high competition, as well as the absence of safety. Migrant workers are exploited in the country of residence, suffering from inequality and discrimination compared to local workers.

Second, in the context of neoliberal economic systems, migrant workers are forced to live as ‘contract workers’, and they become ‘outsiders’ in the local society, as well as objects of anti-migration sentiments. The majority of migrant workers, especially illegal migrant workers politically, economically, and socially are not protected by their countries of origin. Thus, labor protection is formal for migrant workers and they cannot change jobs by their own will. In the worst case, migrant workers, especially illegal migrant workers, may be expelled from the country of residence.

Third, globalization, driven by deregulation and new technologies based on the old ideology of non-intervention, led to income inequality, where wealth is concentrated only in certain groups of capitalists. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaims freedom of migration as one of the basic human rights. The Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers has not been signed by the countries that actively receive migrant workers. The OECD countries suggest eliminating the negative aspects of globalization and neoliberalism by means of improving international standards and norms and international cooperation. For sending and receiving countries, we need to plan and change the migration plan in order to minimize the negative factors and obtain maximum benefits.

**Key words:** neoliberalism, migrant workers, labor migration, globalization, inequality.

### Introduction

Our society is ruled under capitalist principles and we live by adapting within the framework of the institutions’ laws, neoliberalism suggests markets economy principles. Neoliberalism is an idea based on the flow of economic globalization that reconstructed the world’s political and economic systems. Which had been maintained since the Industrial Revolution. The core idea of neoliberalism is the maximization of personal freedom through the guarantee of private property rights, efficient allocation of resources through market mechanisms, and the minimization of state intervention. (Ji 2011, 54). Neoliberalism was justified by the resurgence of liberalism in a country where capitalism matured in the late 1970s, when the government’s tax revenues were reduced by two oil shocks, resulting in the depletion of funds for welfare and social security spending, forcing the public sector to
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shrink. Globalization recognized as a concept such as neoliberalism, refers to a phenomenon in which capital, labor, goods, technology, information, image, and environment are being organized, exchanged, and adjusted beyond the walls of sovereignty and borders. (Lim, 2000).

Neoliberalism emphasizes the market value in all areas as well as in economic aspects. It defines the international system as anarchically and regards the state as the sole rationalist. Thus neoliberalism minimalized the role of government and valued market principles. Neoliberalism was introduced to precise limitations of the distribution of classical liberalism and the pursuit of public interest to create demand through national fiscal policies, etc. Economic policies that guarantee the pursuit of profit-seeking by liberalism. Neoliberalism is a theory aimed at overcoming a crisis in which the vitality of capitalism has fallen while criticizing collectivism and pursuing the maximum profit margin of capital, which was dramatically embodied in the economic policies of the Reagan administration of the United States and British Prime Minister Thatcher in the 1980s. (Min 2011). After neoliberalism, globalization brought the world together into a single market, intensifying competition among companies and workers who were protected by the state, and forced to follow the capitalist economic principles without the protection of the state.

Some scholars argue that the main reasons for the rapid globalization since the 1980s are the market economization of Central and Eastern Europe, the inclusion of the global economy and high growth since China’s entry into the WTO, and the simultaneous liberalization of trade and investment in many countries. (Lee 2017, 62). When the socialist bloc collapsed in the 1990s, large capital was interested in maximizing profits under the liberal democratic system and moved toward the pursuit of monopoly profits on a global level. The share of international trade and direct overseas investment has also increased significantly. However, globalization is a compulsory process of integration into the global economy based on neoliberalism, and the countries and regions involved in this process have revealed oppressive and destructive consequences. In this context, the globalization process is interpreted as the incorporation of the third world into Western culture (Mander 2001, 8-14).

Due to the globalization of wealth, developing countries were overwhelmed by the power of global financial capital and investors in the process of inclusion in neoliberalism. These countries had to restructure their labor flexibility, the opening of financial markets, and the privatization of public corporations under the IMF management system, regardless of their will, to obtain relief financing. Companies in advanced countries used the flexibility of capital to help increase the employment of locals through direct investment in other countries or outsourcing. However, the increase in employment in the local area was only within the limits of the product’s competitive edge to generate capital profit, and when the employment wage rose, factories were relocated and outsourced to other regions in search of low-cost employment costs.

Neoliberalism has become more powerful by capital, and the democratic system is showing signs of retreatments (Moon 2017, 414). Neoliberalism has greatly changed the form and way of life by combining the political and economic changes based on the logic of the “flexible accumulation” structure with the submissive resistance and responses of the public and the public, including the working class, women, and others. (Kang 2009) The acceleration of globalization has led to an increase in inequality worldwide in terms of economy, and developing countries are in crisis. Emphasizing the market-dominated market-liberal economic system, companies sought to maximize profit-seeking, while wages were reduced in the Third World, and women and children were mobilized for hard labor for a living.

Neoliberalism has brought about an era of migration. In developing countries, inequality and unemployment have increased, forcing people to leave their home countries and choose migration. (Park and Yoon 2005, 114). Globalization, along with the development of information and communication, and transportation, is creating a mass migration phenomenon with the global integration process. Because of these phenomena, the logic of capital in the theory of globalization is defined as ‘the movement of goods, services, capital and labor force between countries, i.e. the integration of economic activities through markets’. (Wolf 2004). In Europe in the 19th century, the rate of international capital movement was high, and borders were open to migrants. Nevertheless, the concept of borders at that time remained most distinct in the labor market alone. However, the concept of borders began to blur as labor was freely shifted due to the EU and NAFTA, regional economic integration operating systems for free trade, among geographically adjacent and interested minority countries. (Lim 2000, 7). The increase in labor migration benefits both the outflow of labor and the inflowing countries and is becoming an
important factor in the economic reality of today when labor trade is globalized. According to a U.N. report, the number of migrants is estimated at 272 million as of 2019, up 23 percent from 221 million in 2010, compared with 1 million a year in the 1960s and 1980s and 5 million in the 2000s. Currently, the number of migrants continues to increase due to the increase in refugees, and the percentage of migrants in the world’s population has risen from 2.8 percent in 2010 to 3.5 percent in 2019 (UN DESA, 2019).

Migration used to be directed to Europe and the United States, but currently, only 20% of western countries, including the United States and Europe, are opposed to migrant workers. On the other hand, like East Asia, including China, absorbs labor migrants due to the high growth of the economy, 36 percent of new migrants are moving to Asian countries for job seeking. Looking at current trends, there are about 144 million migrant workers worldwide, it is more than 9 percent from 2013. Migrant workers are employed in high-income and upper-middle-income countries, accounting for about 4.7 percent of the world’s labor force, according to the report by the International Labor Organization. (Expatica, 2018.12.05.). Foreign workers who choose to move across borders are suffering from the race, human rights, employment, exploitation of labor, and wage problems under the neo-liberalistic capitalist system that is solidifying into a low-growth system.

Recently, free trade, one of the national policies representing capitalism, has been put on hold. Britain has left the EU, and other European countries have strict control over international trade and immigration policies. After the election of President Trump of the U.S., the anti-immigrant sentiment against migrants has become stronger as far-right nationalism has been strengthened and far-right political tendencies have expanded around the world. As far-right nationalist forces expand, national unity is emphasized and the need for selective acceptance of immigrants is emphasized. (Hong 2017, 7). However, the era of migration continued due to inequality between rich and poor countries, political environment, demographic pressure, ethnic conflict, and labor migration. (Castle nd Miller 2013, 29-30)

The surge in international immigration is closely related to globalization. However, the internationalization rate of trade and capital is very high, while international population migration is low, and immigration is treated as a secondary. (Park and Yoon 2009). For this reason, many books and articles related to neoliberalism are produced, but there are not many studies related to international migration.

This article consists of research in literature through academic papers, reports issued by each institution, books and newspaper articles, websites, etc. In this article, we look at the process of neoliberalism and globalization causing migration, and the status of migrant workers in their countries of residence around the world, including Korea. The structure of article includes historical trends and the impact of the influence on migration on migration and examines the status and characteristics of migrant workers under neoliberalism. And we’re going to look at the employment, inequality, and countermeasures of migrants in their countries of residence. The introduction explained the factors that led neoliberalism to carry out-migration. In the theoretical background, neoliberalism theory and the introduction process were described. The main point explains the status of migrant workers in migrant countries and the changes in migration policies in inflow countries. It described the anti-immigration sentiment that began with the issue of robbing labor and providing welfare in the inflowing countries and measures to resolve it.

**Theoretical background**

The history of migration began with the history of humanity. Since hundreds of thousands of years ago, migration involves the migration of people between regions in the country in a broad sense, but in a narrow sense refers to the movement of people across borders to other countries. The causes of migration are largely economic factors, demographic factors, national administrative factors, conflicts, environmental factors, cross-border networks, etc. Among them, the wide economic gap between countries and the difference in wages and quality of life are the main factors that produce many migrants. The shortage of labor force resulting from a decrease in the productive population due to low birth rate and aging phenomenon in developed countries requires surplus labor in developing countries and is causing population migration by the mutual needs of population outflow countries and inflow countries. Environmental factors such as earthquakes, industrial accidents, floods, and droughts also cause migration. Poor national administration, corruption in society, and lack of a high-quality education system are factors that promote international migration for a better life, and discrimination based on civil war, conflict, and race, religion, etc. is also factors for cross-border migration. The multinational network of interconnected people catalyzes international migration, promoting the globalization
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and acceleration of migration. (Castle nd Miller 2013, 382-384).

Neoliberal economics began in the 1950s by Hayek and Friedman and Buchanan. After World War II, they appeared in the U.K., the U.S., and other advanced democracies, criticizing the government’s incompetence and corruption in the national economy, human rights abuses by the government, exploitation of private property, distortion of education and culture, and the triggering of war. Those who emphasized the nation’s failure argued for tax reduction, strict monetary management, the prohibition of deficit financing, reduction of government organizations, privatization of public enterprises, reduction of economic regulations, and liberalization of external transactions such as trade and capital transactions, and flexibility of the labor market through reduction of worker protection. (Gyeongje Jeong-ui Silcheon Shimin Yeonhab, 2011). Hayek led the social philosophy of liberalism, Friedman led the economics of neoliberalism in macroeconomics, and Buchanan led the economics of neoliberalism in public economics belonging to microeconomics. Hayek believes that the aggregate demand stimulation policy could increase facility investment by turning the labor and capital used to produce consumer goods into production facilities in the first place, but this would lead to a reverse inflow of labor and resources into the consumer goods production sector where wages and capital prices have risen, eventually reducing investment in production facilities. (Hanguk Eunhaeng, 2018). Friedman saw political freedom as a free market, an unemployment rate of about 10 percent as a minimum mechanism for the market economy, and insisted on pursuing monetary policy without state intervention. (Hangug Cheolhag Sasang-Yeonguho, 2010)

The introduction of neo-liberalistic economic policies was in Britain and the United States around 1980. British Prime Minister Thatcher, who took power from 1979 to 1990, and U.S. President Reagan, who served from 1980 to 1988, implemented economic policies based on neoliberalism. In both countries, the process was rapid to revive the sluggish economy. Under the motto of free defense, the government has reduced profit distribution and increased investment by easing state regulations on the economy, privatizing state-owned enterprises, cutting taxes, incapacitating union power, and reducing social security. (Kang 2011). With the strengthening of U.S. influence, which has become the sole superpower since the fall of the Soviet Union, it has become the dominant trend of today as the U.S. expands neoliberalism in its interest to the world. Analysts say that the rapid progress of neoliberalism around the world is mainly due to market economization due to its inclusion in the global financial market in central and eastern Europe, high growth and trade and investment policies that have been pursued simultaneously in many countries since China joined the WTO in 2001 by adopting a reform and opening line. (Lee 2017).

The flow of globalization to the 20th century greatly increased the movement of goods and labor as well as capital. Trade opening has created positive ripple effects on productivity growth through the spread of new technologies and competition, leading to economic growth and job creation. (Lee 2017). However, since the 1980s, when neoliberalism was in full swing, income inequality, poverty, and social polarization among the world’s citizens were caused by income inequality among countries. In the 1990s, income inequality intensified across the board as the income distribution gap on a global level gradually widened. The gap in living standards and wages between developed and developing countries served as a major factor in the creation of global labor migration in the 21st century. Due to the rising standard of living for people in poor countries, it’s an affordable level, inefficient system of the cost of immigration and conflicts in a failed state, and by the government. A deadly form of climate change according to environmental factors such as cross-border migration of the reason. (King 2017, 196-207).

According to Marx’s “Capital Theory,” ‘labor’ is an activity of interaction between humans and nature, and human labor is a common form of life in all societies, a ‘rational activity’ to realize the purpose of one’s conception, and an activity to meet human needs. (Son 2004, 71-75). In the labor process, labor is the most important factor, and labor creates greater value than its value, the purpose of the capitalist activity is to acquire surplus-value, and Marx sees that surplus-value arises from the labor put into the production process. (Lee 2012, Lee 2017).

In a capitalist society, the scale of the labor movement is greatly influenced by economic conditions and employment policies in the same way as general goods by working hours. In countries affected by the United States, macroeconomic expansion policies based on fiscal deficits and social de-protection resulted in low unemployment, high growth rates, and unfair income distribution. The expansion of free trade due to globalization led to an increase in wages for some skilled workers while
leading to a drop in wages for unskilled workers, resulting in a widening wage gap. (Yoo and Lim 2005, 85). Besides, the working poor working class, which is working but unable to maintain their lives, expanded the number of nonregular workers who were disadvantaged in employment or income, unstable regular workers, and long-term labor. The so-called job destruction and labor destruction situation has expanded. (Shinoda and Sakurai 2014, 53).

Migrant workers have been exploited more than local workers due to discriminatory wages and overtime, which are much lower than local workers’ wage levels. As well, the unstable form of illegal employment has resulted in low wages and long hours of labor that have to endure the risks of industrial disasters, diseases, and unemployment. In reality, even basic human rights were not guaranteed, and institutional violations and exploitation of human rights resulted in neglect and acquiescence. (Jeong 2003, 186-187).

The introduction of neoliberalism and labor migration

1. Changes in population movement and migration policies

Over the 20 years from 1840 to 1860, nearly 4.5 million immigrants moved to the United States in large numbers. The hunger, population surge, and political unrest that emerged in Europe at the time fueled immigration to the United States. Also, during the Civil War, the federal government encouraged immigration from Europe in an attempt to recruit more troops (the website of the Embassy of the United States). Countries that export labors were economic and environmental factors and political disputes and many people joined the migration procession.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Western Europe, especially Germany, was booming, and due to labor shortages, foreign workers were hired from neighboring countries and colonies in Europe from the mid-1950s. France encouraged migrant workers in Catholic countries in the 1950s and hired migrant workers from the former colonies of North Africa (Seol Dong-hoon, 2004). France and Germany each employed 2.5 million migrant workers, or 10 to 12 percent of their workforce, by 1973. Since then, the government has shifted to a passive immigration policy as the economic situation worsened as the capital-based over-facilitated facilities and production capacity increased significantly while demand decreased. (Hangug Yureob Haghoe, 2012).

It is not long in history that the national government that has brought in migrants has begun to officially recognize them. Canada was the first country in the world to adopt a multicultural policy in 1971, and it revised the Immigration Act in 1976 and revised the Multiculturalism Act in 1988 to take the lead in coping with the multicultural phenomenon caused by the influx of immigrants. Then Britain, France, Sweden, and Australia began introducing multiculturalism policies. OECD countries continue to adjust the labor migration system in a way that improves the screening process and favors the necessary areas of proficiency. Many countries have also reformed immigration procedures for migrant investors or created a new system for migrants investing in startup companies. On the other hand, some countries have introduced provisions to limit the family reunion of migrants. In some countries, local governments have strengthened their support for related resources to promote the integration of new migrants. In particular, the countries introduced measures to improve the language ability of migrants, and provided courses on civil values and social norms, and established a system to evaluate and recognize the official job certificates held by migrants. (OECD, 2019)

Until the two oil shocks occurred in 1973 and 1979, Western welfare states had different characteristics in terms of immigration history, demographic characteristics, and social security policy, but many countries in Europe followed the direction of immigration policy agreed upon at the European Union level. (Lee 2017, 73-74). The oil shock that changed the world economy brought about an unprecedented recession, inflation, and recession, which made stable economic growth and full employment no longer guaranteed. As economic growth became difficult, the principle of free competition in the market was valued. As large companies moved their production bases to different parts of the world with low wages due to profit-seeking, they were unable to provide workers with high wages and stable jobs, and the income distribution issue emerged. As the construction boom broke out in the Middle Eastern country, which also accumulated wealth due to rising oil prices in the face of major changes in the aspect of labor migration, many migrants strategically chose the Middle Eastern country in terms of economics.

A series of strikes at automakers in the 1970s and 1980s brought structuralization to production lines by assembling robots on behalf of low-wage workers. Changes in the production structure resulted in the dismissal of numerous foreign
workers, and labor immigration decreased overall. The dissolution of industrial society had a direct effect on migrant workers. Complaints by low-wage foreign workers led to strikes. In the 1980s, a prolonged period of high unemployment in Western Europe brought the migrant problem to the fore as a social problem. Since then, migrants have been excluded from the framework of social integration, and have been cited as a factor of social unrest. (Hangug Yureob Haghoe 2012).

In the 1980s, immigrants from various regions were introduced to Canada by promoting economic immigration, including investment, to secure human resources such as skilled and skilled workers who were lacking in the labor market. In the 1990s, various ethnic groups and races flowed into Canada, and the majority of the immigrants were Asian. (Jeon et.al. 2010, 9). The Cold War ended with the 1989 Malta Declaration by Bush and Gorbachev, and the collapse of the former Soviet Union in 1991 promoted the migration of about 9 million former Soviet citizens from other ethnic states to Russia. On the other hand, migration to the U.S. accounted for 60 percent of the world’s new immigrants, with about 11.6 million people moving to the U.S. About 88% of new immigrants to the United States came from developing countries. (Lee Today, 2018.04.01).

In 1995, advanced capitalist countries, including the United States, founded the World Trade Organization (WTO), an international organization that will lead-free trade, to take advantage of the huge transnational capital and financial capital created by the concentration of capital. Due to fierce competition among capital in powerful countries, it was necessary to resolve trade barriers in each country to expand the sales market for over-produced goods. It has become inevitable for countries around the world to employ neoliberal principles. The World Trade Organization openly called for liberalization of trade in industrial goods and agricultural products and services, lowering tariffs, and liberalizing capital movements, transcending countries’ ideologies, and systems. (Choi 2001, 23-30).

The relationship between capital and labor has also changed due to the internationalization of capital with neoliberalism. Multi-national corporations emphasized the liberalization of trade and the flexibility of production based on investment and financial capital amid the globalization of neoliberalism, saving labor by humans by artificial intelligence and robots and pushing for wage cuts for higher profits. Labor wages have gradually decreased, and the gap between the rich and the poor between the workers and capitalists has widened. The workers were paid lower wages, the rate of union membership dropped, and the bargaining power of labor was drastically reduced. This situation deepened wealth inequality at a global level, resulting in a slowdown in Asia and South America and the financial crisis, and a “globalization of poverty” phenomenon. (Kang 2011). The fixation of neoliberalism shook the lives of blue-collar workers themselves by the roots. (Jo 2016, 61). The latecomers were weakened by the powerful influence of U.S. monopoly financial capital, and the socially weak workers lost their right to survive. Korea also saw significant levels of domestic industry erode as many industries were opened to the public, led by the agricultural market through the Uruguay Round negotiations. After receiving the IMF bailout, some of the state’s holdings were sold overseas through the privatization policy of public corporations. Blocking funding for insolvent companies, banks that have been strategic to insolvent financial institutions have carried out overseas sales and restructuring. Companies carried out layoffs due to restructuring, reduced the number of full-time positions with heavy welfare burdens, and expanded contract and part-time employment.

The United States, Canada, and Western Europe, the traditional labor-importing countries, are still the largest immigrants. Immigrants aged 20 to 64 account for about 17 percent of the U.S. labor market. Following the U.S., Germany, and Russia accept a lot of immigration, and 64 percent of immigrants live in high-income countries. Since 2000, 64 million of the 85 million migrants have migrated to high-income countries, with the average age of these migrants at 39.2. Recently, however, migration between developing countries has been on the rise from developing countries to developed countries. (Migration Policy Institute 2017). In particular, the flow of migration from Asia to Asia is increasing. Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan in Asia have implemented foreign labor inflow policies due to a lack of labor force since the 1970s. Korea and Japan, which advocated monolithic pedigrees, also used the labor force of Asians in the name of technical training in the 1990s as labor shortages occurred during the industrialization process.

In terms of migrant transmission, Asia accounts for a large portion. In 2000, about one-fifth of the world’s total immigrants moved to Asia, but in 2017, it increased to one in four. On the other hand, the percentage of Asian immigrants moving to Europe dropped from 24 percent in 2000 to 19 percent in 2017. (Nihonkeizaishinbun, 2018.04.01.). India is the country that sends out the most immigrants.
and China, Bangladesh, Syria, Pakistan, and the Philippines have sent out large numbers of immigrants. The 10 million Chinese immigrants were the largest in the United States, followed by Hong Kong and Japan. Ahead of the 2020 Olympics, Japan is accepting migrant workers in the construction industry and foreigners in all sectors of the industry, including manufacturing and service industries, due to the aging population. Ahead of the Dubai Expo in 2020, construction workers’ migration to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) also surged. (Bae 2018).

Large-cap shares across the border have reduced the real wage gap between the new and old continents. The influx of unskilled workers from poorer parts of Europe has led to lower wages in the recipient countries. This resulted in lower wages for unskilled workers and job losses in the inflow countries. On the other hand, the outflow countries increased their real wages due to the decrease in labor supply due to large amounts of stock. While the income inequality of immigration countries has been lowered, the income inequality has increased in the inflow countries, and in the countries that have accommodated migrants, anti-immigrant sentiment has deepened due to labor market shocks and cultural conflicts with other ethnic groups. As a result, the incoming countries gradually began to close the door for free immigration. (Lee 2003, 239).

Globalization requires an increase in international immigration from an economic perspective. The globalization of technology enables the strengthening of mobility and communication, and globalization in society promotes movement by deepening inequality. But in politics, international migration is restricted. (Scharenberg, 2006; 박경순 외, 2009:127).

2. The Current Situation of Migrants in Neoliberalism

Before the Industrial Revolution, the biggest driver of globalization was human beings, whose migration was mostly involuntary slave status for utilizing the labor force. In the 18th century, labor migrants from Europe moved mainly to the status of contract workers. On the other hand, in Europe in the 19th century, large-scale population migration occurred when transportation costs fell due to the increase in population caused by the Industrial Revolution and the development of transportation. At this time, immigration was at its peak, and the concentration of the population toward industrial cities became visible.

Migrants in neoliberal systems are usually skilled and have a high level of education for migrants. In most countries, the migration of talented people by highly skilled technology is opening up. They tend to specialize under the fragmented labor market structure, so they also work as teachers and doctors, and with the flourishing IT industry, countries are actively demanding migrant workers in the information technology sector. But most migrant laborers were needed in the low-skilled industrial sector. About 30 percent of college graduates were found to be overeducated compared to their employed jobs. (Yang 2018, 3). The employment of migrants is a type of manual labor, such as the service industry and low-skilled labor, which tend to be concentrated in the 3D industries shunned by local citizens, and the majority of immigrants employed in OECD countries are found to be employed in less than medium-skilled fields. (OECD, 2010). By industry, they are mainly engaged in the service sector, especially the restaurant service and domestic service industries, medical welfare systems such as nurses and physical therapists. Some users tend to prefer migrant workers because they are reliable, cope with long hours of labor and flexible working hours, and work devotedly.

However, the financial crisis that hit Asia in 1997 had a very serious impact on migrant workers. Thailand, as well as Korea, Indonesia, and Malaysia, which were directly hit, were called for transparency through the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the contract system in the labor market was renewed due to the relocation and closure of companies. Countries that were called for extensive improvement in their constitution, such as labor market flexibility, had to change their system with less employment and the official labor sector with informal and unstable employment. The IMF’s harsh restructuring policy has thrown many parts of the world into chaos and created problems of poverty, unemployment, and rising debt. (Roy 2018, 65). In 1997, the Korean government accepted the IMF’s demand for relief financing to overcome the Asian financial crisis, making the labor market more flexible and market-opening. It accepted the privatization of state-owned enterprises. In the labor market, massive layoffs occurred due to labor flexibility, various types of low-wage irregular workers appeared, and inequality in the labor market soared.

The September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States in 2001 and the slowdown in the IT industry have contributed to the world economy’s most volatile factors. The imbalance in the global economy, dependent on the American economy, has spread worldwide through financial, trade,
and investment channels. Countries maintain the principle of protecting the domestic labor market so that all foreign-powered employment, except for those who want to attract overseas talent, will not negatively affect the domestic labor market. (Moon 2016). In the immigrant host-countries, migrants were increasingly perceived as issues of security and safety and exerted influence on migrant workers. Workers in countries that are economically correlated with the U.S. had to have a tough time. This phenomenon has come directly to a harsh reality for migrant workers. A tougher set of policies has been introduced to regulate the entry of migrant workers and reduce costs.

In some countries, massive arrests and repatriation of illegal migrant workers have been implemented. Migrant workers, especially in the Middle East, were hit hard, resulting in repatriation, suspension of employment, and unemployment. Even for migrant workers who were eligible to stay, jobs disappeared, immigrants who had borrowed from their home countries were blocked from returning home, and they were strategic as debt slave workers who could not be protected in their home countries. In Korea, the phenomenon of defining unregistered migrant workers as potential criminals and discriminating against migrant workers has become prominent along with their hatred of migrants. Under the neo-liberalistic capitalist system, migrant workers are not treated equally in welfare, such as health insurance and retirement pensions provided to local workers, and suffer from racial problems, religious and human rights issues, exploitation of labor, and wage issues. Migrant workers are being physically, mentally, or sexually abused, exploited, and suppressed in an environment where freedom is being held. In Korea, most of the foreign migrant workers are short-term residents who ban regulars and permanent residents before entering the country, and are flowing through the employment permit system and industrial training system, which are labor policies that cannot be renewed, most of whom are short-term residents, and are under a structure where they can be fired at any time. South Korea’s employment permit system regulates low-skilled migrant workers and excessively increases employers’ authority over their mobility and legal status, causing wage arrears in public. The problem of low wages for foreign workers seems to lead to the expansion of long-term labor and industrial accidents. During the five years from 2013 to 2017, 31, 09 migrant workers were injured and 471 of them were killed. In particular, the number of migrant workers in the manufacturing and construction sectors is remarkable. (Hanguk Goyong Nodongbu, 2018).

According to the Trafficking in Persons Report released in 2018, Korea is the sending country, transit country, and the destination country of adult men and women and children in sex trafficking and forced labor. Foreign workers in various visa categories are forced to work, and foreign fishermen, especially those on small fishing boats, are found to be heavily exploited. In 2017 alone, 448 reports were filed in connection with human trafficking (562 in 2016), and victims of labor exploitation and human trafficking were punished and deported due to the government’s lack of identification efforts for victims of human trafficking. Foreign workers, especially, labor migrants from Vietnam, China, and Indonesia, are likely to enter Korea with thousands of dollars in debt, which is causing them to become debt slaves. (Hanguk-Inshinmaemae Toechi Kamshiguk, 2018).

3. The problem of globalization: anti-immigration sentiment and countermeasures

Neoliberalism can be seen as a confrontation between capitalists and workers. Capital reduced the number of workers for greater profit and pushed for mechanization and scientific nation for production efficiency. Productivity gains were achieved by high technology, but the wealth generated went to owners and capitalists of high technology. Since the transition to neoliberalism, regulations on global corporate activities have been lifted, and as the country has taken the helm, corporate profit-making and consumption-oriented have become principles. Flexible accumulation seeks the slimming down of enterprises, the weakening of labor, and drives the enterpriseization of the country while seeking the full flexibility of enterprises, labor, and the nation. Within the globalization of finance and the competitive economic system, capital aggressively invested abroad, and neoliberalism saw the cause of the crisis of capital accumulation as the rigidity of the labor market. Capital avoided restrictions coming from the state or labor, and the workers came to promise cooperation. The flexibility of labor by this accumulation strategy of capital made it difficult for workers to be protected by labor unions, and under a system that made it easier to fire workers, the intensity of labor was strengthened with an uneasy status. (Kang 2009). Besides, the development of new technology has brought down workers and migrant workers to flexible and replaceable resources, and the implementation of anti-unionist policies has gradually weakened the union’s power. (Hwang et.al. 2006, 316). This led to
the polarization of the labor market. As a result, the value of labor has been reduced, and the standard of living has been reduced as countless workers have lost their jobs. The long-term recession, the gap between the rich and the poor, and the lack of jobs have attributed the causes of inequality and poverty to immigrants.

Racism and nationalism have sprung up, and there has been a backlash against international organizations that have set basic rules for politics and economy among nations. Even in advanced countries, job security has been reduced, wages have been reduced and inequality has widened, resulting in xenophobia and anti-immigration movements. Racism influenced the just acceptance of discriminatory wages and overtime work by migrant workers, and users tightened control of foreign migrant workers even in low wages and unfavorable working conditions.

Nevertheless, illegal transfers of labor from Africa to European countries continued. As a result, the issue of labor exploitation, such as slavery of migrant workers, was initiated, leading to the emergence of international standards on the status of foreign workers suffering from unfavorable employment relations and labor patterns. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, enacted by the U.N. General Assembly in 1948, recognized human rights equal to human dignity. (Gugga Ingwon Wiwonhoe). The International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention on Migrant Workers in 1949 sets the principle of equal treatment in working relations at the level of international consensus. Under the premise of the right of foreign workers to form labor unions in the employment of workers who are legally staying, it only stipulates the right to join labor unions and enjoy the benefits of collective bargaining. The International Convention on the Compensation for Human Rights (1966) and the ILO Migrant Workers (1975), it was the first agreement to take all necessary measures against the combination of families of foreign workers. The United Nations’ efforts to directly protect foreign workers began in the 1970s with the Declaration of Foreign Human Rights. The origin was the persecution of Indian-Americans in Africa. The ILO’s Supplementary Convention for Migrant Workers, signed in 1975, requires equal treatment of legal workers. The UN Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers, enacted in 1990, proposes to ensure equal treatment of both domestic and foreign nationals and the rights of migrant workers. The purpose of this Convention is a comprehensive international agreement in which a person classified as a migrant worker by the Convention has the right to enjoy human rights regardless of his legal status and that the families of migrant workers have the same right. (Seol 2004, 2-8). The UN Convention prohibits physical punishment or forced labor against migrant workers and requests human labor conditions. However, free entry into the country is negative in granting freedom to migrant workers to family members and career choices to prevent erosion of employment opportunities for their workers, and reluctant to sign the agreement because they are reluctant to treat them on par with local citizens.

As of now, effective and prescriptive protection in the issue of migrant workers is the International Convention 97 involving the International Labor Organization (ILO), which was adopted in 1949. It is an agreement on migrant labor for employment, which contains various regulations that regulate conditions that may arise for those who emigrate for employment purposes and ensure equal treatment of migrant workers. “International Convention 97” stipulates migrant workers’ right to join the union and the right to use legal remedies in criminal and civil lawsuits. Since then, the 143rd Supplementary Convention for Migrant Workers in 1975 and the 1958 Convention on Discrimination Related to Employment and Occupation, also called the Discrimination Treatment Agreement, have significant value as they are directly related to the elimination of discrimination against equal value work and the guarantee of equality (Seol 2004, 20-21).

Other regulations include the 1978 UN Council for the Elimination of Racialism and Racism, which was held in Geneva, with recommendations to ensure equal treatment of migrant workers in retirement pensions and social security, the 1994 Code of Conduct of the United Nations International Council on Population and Development Issues in Cairo, the 1999 Guidelines for Fixed Employment, 2000 Guidelines for Equal Employment, 2002 Guidelines for Dispatched Labor, and 2003 Guidelines. The U.N. acknowledged that international migration is the cause of international migration, including the imbalance in the global economy, poverty, environmental destruction, lack of peace and security, human rights violations, and the degree of change in the judicial democratic system. This calls for the rights of workers in their home countries and countries applying for the relocation.

In reality, however, there is a marked tendency to break UN regulations and conventions for migrant workers, and to move away from human rights protection and toward discipline migration. The
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Factors are the criminal cases of migrant workers, the lack of solidarity of migrant workers, and the indifference of labor-transmission countries. Since most migrant workers have no experience in forming trade unions, migrant workers do not have migrant workers’ organizations that can demand labor rights and guarantees. It is also because most employment countries ban migrant workers from forming unions, and because local union members consider migrant workers as competitors, they are reluctant to support migrant workers’ rights. (J. Niessen, 1993:23).

The time for Korea to join the International Labor Organization (ILO) is December 9, 1991. At that time, the Korean government became the 152nd member when it submitted its acceptance of the ILO charter to the ILO secretary-general after receiving parliamentary approval. Of the 189 ILO conventions, however, only 29 have been ratified by the Korean government. The key agreements that the Korean government has not ratified include the Convention on the Freedom of Association and the Protection of the Right to Unity (No. 87), the Convention on the Application of the Principles of the Right to Unity (No. 98), the Convention on the Prevention of Forced Labor (No. 29), and the Convention on the Abolition of Forced Labor (No. 105). This is because there are conflicts with the nation’s labor union law and the military service law, the National Security Law, the crime of obstruction of business, and domestic laws on assembly and demonstration. (Maeil Nodong Nyuseu, 2016).

It was in 1994 when the movement for the rights of migrant workers began in earnest in Korea. It is the first time that 13 people, including Nepalese migrant workers and Bangladesh migrant workers, who suffered industrial accidents in January 1994, have called for minimum legal protection measures such as payment of unpaid wages and compensation for industrial accidents. Since then, it has become a labor movement that claims labor rights and civil rights. The community of migrant workers is developing beyond Korea to international solidarity with the combination of labor unions and civic groups supporting civil society. (Lee 2017, 72-76). However, it was in 2010 that migrant workers were included in the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, the representative of the labor movement camp. With the struggle of migrant workers and the social ripple effect occurring, the labor movement was a way of aligning with migrant workers’ issues. Such a labor movement in solidarity with migrant workers can be seen as surrogacy or compassionate poetically rather than establishing the self-reliance of migrant workers. (Jeong 2012, 66-83)

Recently in Europe, the rise of immigration in Eastern Europe and the influx of refugees from Africa and the Middle East have led to serious social and political conflicts. In particular, EU member states, especially in Western European countries such as Britain, reached their limits due to the expansion of the EU to Eastern Europe in 2004 and the increasing number of low-wage workers and immigrants from Eastern Europe since the right to freedom of workers’ immigration was extended to Romania and Bulgaria in 2014. Amid the difficult economic conditions of Western European society due to the welfare problems of immigrants, rising unemployment, division, and anxiety have led to anti-immigrant sentiment. (Kim 2015), This immigrant problem was the biggest reason for Britain’s exit from the EU and the eurozone.

Illegal immigration and refugees are an international issue facing the world, and anti-refugee sentiment prevails with 527 Yemenis who came to Jeju en masse in 2018 to apply for refugee status. In the U.S., the biggest issue of controversy is the prevention of illegal immigration from Latin America, which has been chosen to avoid poor economic conditions and violence in its home country. This has also strengthened the anti-immigration policy in the United States. Under the Trump administration, illegal immigration and refugee acceptance became very strict, reducing the annual number of refugees for the second consecutive year and setting the upper limit of refugee acceptance at 30,000. (Yeonhab Nyuseu, 2018). In particular, as most Latin Americans were not recognized as refugees or immigrants and were regarded as illegal immigrants, child isolation of illegal immigrants became a controversial issue throughout the United States. (BBC News, 2018.06.16.). Canada, an inclusive country of immigrant cultures flowing from abroad with the aid of multiculturalism, is also becoming more strict in refugee-related laws, as it collects DNA from immigrants and sends it to a pedigree-identifying company to identify their pedigree and nationality. (BBC News, 2018.08.01)

The British people chose to leave the European Union while enduring economic and security concerns over the future, dominated by “anti-immigrant sentiment.” Most of the people who spearheaded the anti-immigration movement across Europe were workers suffering from unemployment and poverty because they thought immigrants exclusively to foreigners and colored people were the cause of the pain. However, statistics show that migrant workers pay more taxes than they do and that the impact of immigrants on wages is only at
the minimum wage level. Indeed, it was the long-term slump caused by the government’s extreme austerity spending that directly contributed to the deterioration of the British economy. (Chae 2016, 36-53). The rapid expansion of the far-right party’s power in Europe is a degenerative issue of democracy. Despite the long tradition of European democracy, the results of the far-right party’s craze for racism, pureblood and authoritarian political order have emerged. (Bae 2017, 82).

In the early stages of the spread of Corona 19 in 2020, the widespread hatred, discrimination, and negative perceptions of foreigners revealed in the course of coping with infectious diseases worldwide led to claims such as “exemption of Chinese people staying” or “border blockade of foreigners” that had nothing to do with Corona 19. Anaisim that shifted or stigmatized the responsibility of the epidemic to Asian groups deepened social conflicts and justified unfair discrimination against target groups. Such discrimination was an opportunity to recognize discrimination or hatred based on race and nationality in countries that called for coexistence with multiculturalism.

Technological progress has led to increased productivity, but it has not led to higher wages for workers. Complaints about globalization are growing as the income distribution structure in developed countries has worsened, leaving middle and lower classes unable to benefit. The polarization in the labor market and the falling standard of living for most people have begun to debate solutions. According to the “2019 Immigration Status and Employment Survey Results” released by the Korea Statistics Office in December 2017, 20.9 percent of foreigners staying in Korea had non-professional employment visas. Among them, 48.4 percent have stayed in Korea for less than three years. According to the 2019 survey, the number of foreign students employed decreased due to the increase in the eligibility of foreign students to stay in Korea, but 85.1% of foreigners, except for permanent residency (F-5), continued to wish to stay in Korea even after the expiration of their stay.

In Korea, the revised minimum wage law requires the minimum wage to be paid 100 percent even during the probationary period of simple work. However, calls for a reduction in the wages of migrant workers were proposed through the Korea Federation of Small and Medium Business. Article 6 of the Labor Standards Act prohibits discrimination in labor conditions on the grounds of nationality, faith or social status, and Article 111 of the International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention ratified by Korea in December 1998 also stipulates that wages cannot be discriminated against by nationality. The differential application of the minimum wage is being attempted for migrant workers, the weakest link among minimum wage workers. The head of the Korean Migrant Workers’ Union criticized the claim of differential application of the minimum wage for migrant workers as “clear racism.” n Korea, the revised minimum wage law requires the minimum wage to be paid 100 percent even during the probationary period of simple work. However, calls for a reduction in the wages of migrant workers were proposed through the Korea Federation of Small and Medium Business. Article 6 of the Labor Standards Act prohibits discrimination in labor conditions on the grounds of nationality, faith or social status, and Article 111 of the International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention ratified by Korea in December 1998 also stipulates that wages cannot be discriminated against by nationality. The differential application of the minimum wage is being attempted for migrant workers, the weakest link among minimum wage workers. The head of the Korean Migrant Workers’ Union criticized the claim of differential application of the minimum wage for migrant workers as “clear racism.” (Han 2018).

The OECD said that despite the negative effects of globalization, stopping or reversing the flow of globalization is not the right approach and that globalization should be more inclusive. The OECD says that the new globalization needs to be changed to an integrated and low-income approach to enhance contributions and benefits, not a “first-growth-post-distribution” approach, as it calls for addressing inequality and inclusive growth deepening into globalization. To this end, it was suggested that it was important to review, improve, and enforce existing policies at the national and regional levels. (Lee 2017). To reduce economic inequality, education reform is needed, and tax reform is needed so that the tax burden can go from labor to capital. It is necessary to create a new redistribution mechanism to supplement the role of shrinking wages. (Manuel Muñiz, 2017:39).

Conclusion

As transportation costs fell due to the increase in population caused by the industrial revolution and the development of transportation around the world, large-scale population movements took place and concentrated on industrial cities. Hunger, a surge in population, political unrest, ethnic conflicts, and the widening gap between the rich and
the poor have culminated in immigration. In this respect, globalization is more about the movement of capital and labor leading to globalization than trade. Globalization forced the integration of the global economy into the power of capital under neoliberalism. Leaders of many countries around the world believed in neoliberalism, with developing countries overwhelmed by the power of investors and global financial capital, and revealed oppressive and destructive results in the process of being incorporated into neoliberalism.

This neoliberalism and globalization are driving a large number of people into poverty and inequality, defending the interests of large corporations and multinational corporations. The polarization of economic wealth has served as an opportunity to promote the migration of people seeking better lives.

Globalization guarantees maximum movement of capital, whereas human free movement is suppressing as much as possible. The labor market pursued by neoliberalism has focused on the flexibility of labor. The flexibility of the production system and the flexibility of the labor market have forced workers in many parts of the world into a chaotic state suffering from job insecurity, competition, and performance. Migrant workers are subjected to labor exploitation as they are treated with inequality and discrimination compared to local workers in their countries of residence.

Under the neo-liberalistic economic system, migrant workers are forced to live as wage slaves by the logic of capital’s power, foreign discrimination in residential countries, and the scapegoats of anti-immigration sentiment. Most immigrants are politically, economically, and socially unprotected from their home countries, and are given status as people who will return to their home countries after providing only a certain period of labor. In particular, the guarantee of labor is perfunctory for migrant workers; the de facto workplace cannot be moved, and the migrant workers can be sent out of the country. In Korea, labor demand for foreign workers in small and medium-sized enterprises and others has risen due to a shortage of labor force. Recently, the unemployment rate among young people increased and the supply of jobs decreased due to the extension of the retirement age, raising the issue of domestic employment violations and unemployment factors.

Neoliberalism and globalization are inseparable relationships. Globalization, which was promoted as a de-regulation and new technology based on the laissez-faire ideology in the past, has resulted in income inequality in which wealth is concentrated only on certain classes of capitalists. The reason why far-right parties in Europe are now well received by the people is the problem of democracy in neoliberalism. Local people in countries that accepted foreign labor migration thought that the long-term slump caused by the government’s tight budget in each country was also the cause of social and economic suffering caused by immigrants. The far-right party advocates racism, pureblood, and authoritarian political order. The far-right party’s craze can be seen as a result of the deterioration of the nature of democracy despite its long tradition of pursuing public good beyond public good.

The economic policies of capitalism have constantly changed according to historical circumstances. The neo-liberalistic economy, dominated by capital, suffers a majority of workers except for capitalists due to the failure of distribution freely. From this point of view, interventionism, which calls for driving neoliberalism and out the state’s intervention, is emerging again. It is time to form a fair labor market structure, not market dominance by large companies that only value capital.

The resolution of poverty in underdeveloped countries, a major cause of international migration, shows the need to increase the size of aid from developed countries. In particular, the increase in the population of the Islamic State and the African continent will result in the migration of many looking for new opportunities if poverty is resolved and national income increases, as seen in near future Asia. Migration brings the benefits of money transfers and technology transfers to the transmitting country. However, profits from migration are not one-sided. Australia, Canada, and the United States have already recognized that immigration and migrant labor are essential factors for the development of a stable and economically healthy society.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a basic human right that defines freedom of migration. The Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers, a major human rights convention, does not even sign in countries that have brought in migrant workers. The OECD is calling for the improvement of the negative aspects of the globalization of neoliberalism through the improvement of international standards and norms and international cooperation. For both the transmitting and inflowing countries, migration should be planned and modified in a way that minimizes negative factors and maximizes positive benefits. The issue of income distribution among migrant workers has emerged as a social issue that
includes politics and policies of each country that introduced neoliberalism. In particular, unskilled workers have become a major problem in many countries, far from improving human rights. However, some older countries are facing the reality of having to bring in simple household workers and care workers. Currently, Koreans and migrants live in a multicultural era where they have to coexist. Globalization should be developed with an emphasis on the aspect of human respect as a living person living at the same time and space, rather than treating incoming migrants only as labor.

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