

## Labor Market Changes and Gender Polarization in Deindustrializing Societies

Research Program Division 1

SNSF 2023-2027

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### **Research Summary**

This research investigates how structural labor market changes could influence group-based political conflicts by examining gender polarization in South Korea and China. There are growing conversations about the role of social and cultural factors in making sense of the political consequences of structural labor market changes. This is a proposal to investigate how social norms and emotions could explain the relationship. Studies in the US and Western Europe suggest that those workers whose jobs are threatened by automation and offshoring display stronger out-group antagonism such as anti-immigration sentiment. Yet there has been limited research into whether and how structural labor market changes might induce political conflicts in other parts of the world where cultural and social contexts differ.

This project proposes to examine three sets of research questions over the span of 48 months: (1) How do structural labor market changes affect the distribution of “good” jobs?; (2) How does the experience or expectation of having a “good” versus “bad” job affect one’s self-view and emotional experience?; (3) Does the experience or expectation of having a “bad” job explain gender-based antagonism, and do social and cultural norms explain or mediate the relationship? This project uses a mixed-method approach that combines quantitative analyses of panel labor surveys, an original survey, and a survey experiment as well as in-depth fieldwork and interviews. The research team comprises the Principal Investigator, Post-doc Researcher, and Doctoral Researcher.

In 2023, the project has an open call for a doctoral researcher who could lead an independent project within the broader theme of this research. Ideally, the candidate will have worked with one or more related scholarly literatures and be willing to read and develop interdisciplinary theories. Three other points might be helpful in determining if the candidate has the right fit for this project. First, the candidate is expected to have some experience in the research sites (South Korea and China) and preferably previous research experience in these regions. This is to ensure that the candidate is well-equipped to understand and analyze the cultural and social context of these societies. Second, while the project seeks to understand the relationship between jobs and gender polarization through the three sets of research questions listed above, the candidate does not need to be equally interested in all of them. Preferably, the candidate could propose their own research questions that broadly relate to one or more of the research questions. The candidate will be given sufficient flexibility and room for exploration so that an independent PhD project could emerge. Finally, while the project asks a standard political economy question, the candidate is expected to adopt an interdisciplinary approach and engage with sociological or other disciplinary literatures; it is important that the candidate’s research interests go beyond the material aspects of jobs.