



Gender in Global and Regional Trade Policy: Contrasting Views and New Research

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Workshop Report

Gender issues are increasingly being raised in the context of international trade but the links between the two concepts and policy areas are as yet insufficiently understood. The aim of this two day CSGR workshop was to bring together a small group of officials, academics, and activists from a variety of geographical and other backgrounds in order to discuss problems of definition, the impact of new research and policy opportunities. Participants included independent researchers and activists from South Africa, Nicaragua and Colombia, representatives from a variety of involved NGOs, academics from Economics, Political Science and Law, and representatives from UK government departments and the Trades Union Congress, the Jamaican High Commission, the European Commission, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the Commonwealth Secretariat. The aim was to establish the field and set a framework rather than focus on the detail of particular trade policy issues.

The workshop was organised in six sessions. An account of each is given in this report and the main emerging issues and points for action are summarised at the end.

Session 1 Defining the Issues

The starting point here was the apparent disconnect between the micro concerns of gender analysis and action, and the more detached and aggregate concerns of trade theory and trade policy. Gender activism works upwards from involvement with women's livelihoods and gender relations towards an engagement with macro processes and regulation. Trade theory is more concerned with overall flows and the longer term and finds difficulty in directing attention down to the micro and in identifying and dealing with the consequences and outcomes of trade processes. This disconnect is further complicated by the distinction between trade theory and trade policy making. While the former is based on abstract assessments, the latter develops through bargaining between organised interests as represented by trade negotiators. Trade policy making can therefore deal with micro issues and special interests but only when they are strongly organised and represented. These distinctions were clarified by the economists present who emphasised the economists' concern with what can be measured and modelled and the nature of bargaining.

Two case studies illustrated these disconnects and also made clear the need for and the difficulties of the linking of the macro to the micro. One examined the effects of trade liberalisation on women in the South African textile and clothing industry, where women's jobs have been lost or casualised as a result of cheap imports.

Another examined the cut flower export industry in Colombia, where women have jobs but in harsh conditions. Two important points emerged from the discussions: first, that the abstract notion of winners and losers in the trade process appears quite differently on the ground, when the losers may be hard pressed women whose work situation affects whole families and communities and for whom alternative strategies are either not available or impractical; and second, the extent to which local developments are now affected by and often dependent upon global processes. Significantly, the Colombian women did not want people to stop buying their flowers but hoped that pressure from consumers and others could be combined with domestic action to improve their conditions and share of value added.

Comments from the discussants and others raised the following issues:

- Trade is a blunt instrument and proper sequencing is needed but ‘politics trumps all’ so the extent to which interests are organised becomes crucial in determining outcomes
- Trade officials in different countries often do not have access to the kind of material outlined in the case studies. What comes over their desks are sectoral problems or overall success stories. They don’t look much at the effect on workers.
- The role of the state is crucial and on the whole the local state cannot cope with the gaps between policy and implementation in trade matters.
- Rules developed by the WTO have gone too far in undermining the ability of states to mediate the effects of trade liberalisation or develop alternatives. The politics around trade liberalisation itself gives too much incentive for trade offs and secret deals.
- There is a danger in lumping all Southern states together. They have different situations and concerns. Bangladesh has different needs to China and India.
- The feminisation of the workforce has implications for households and communities but these consequences are not measured or taken account of.
- Development is proving difficult to incorporate into trade policy making as the Doha Round shows. Gender as a part of this is equally difficult.

Session 2: Approaches to Gender and Trade

As indicated above, the way professionals, activists and those directly involved in trade exchanges approach the gender and trade relationship varies greatly. These variations were further fleshed out in presentations to this session. The professional view was that trade liberalisation was generally beneficial and providing new jobs and growth in poor and rich countries alike but could have short term negative effects in certain sectors. More detailed examination of these impacts was needed. To identify the gender aspects of these would require more reliable data generally, as well gender disaggregated data. Developed countries on the whole saw the widespread adoption of the ILO’s Core Labour Standards (CLS) as an important tool for ensuring gender rights. They were stymied, however, by the refusal of a great many developing countries to accept this as part of trade regulation, seeing it instead as a form of protectionism by the North. The EU believes that CLS should be pursued through incentive-based policies rather than sanctions. It is necessary to look also at the effects of trade liberalisation on women in the North and measures are being taken to encourage re-training and re-skilling. This could be a model for developing countries. Reference was made in this session to a research project being jointly undertaken by

the European Commission and the ILO to estimate the effects of trade on decent work in two countries: the Philippines and Uganda. The aim is to develop decent work indicators that might help predict the impact of trade liberalisation (both negative and positive) and so plan more relevant support to the most vulnerable. A constructive discussion illustrated some of the difficulties inherent in doing such work given the data available.

The activist view was that trade outcomes were not neutral and that the aims and objectives of trade policy needed to be reassessed to produce greater equity and justice. One of the main reasons for inequity was that the care economy upon which the trading system rested, and in which so many women were involved, was not counted or measured and therefore not taken seriously. It was seen as necessary on the whole to preserve the power of governments as the only realistic way of mediating the effects of international trade policy. A case study of the 'Babassu breakers' coop in North-east Brazil (women breaking nuts to produce palm oil) was also given. This showed that a Fairtrade contract from the Body Shop had helped the women keep title to the land, preserve and increase their trade and strengthen their situation within society but had not enabled them to break out of what was still a virtually subsistence level of economic activity. This example showed that it was important to measure well-being and empowerment as well as employment and income when assessing the impact of trading relationships..

The discussant for this session indicated that as an economist he would see the issues in rather different terms. He grouped the points he wanted to make under three heads: legitimacy (was there something genuine to study in the relation between gender and international trade); economic aspects, and questions of governance. On the legitimacy issue, he felt that some gender differences in attitudes were emerging that might affect the operation of the trading system, namely that women had been found to be more protectionist than men, more concerned with security and more risk adverse. On economic aspects, he also felt that there might be an inbuilt bias against women in view of the increasing specialisation now being demanded in economic activity which women were less likely to be able to meet. On governance, he made the distinction between paying lip service to gender - and real power. The main issue was whether increasing openness would break up the bargaining cliques and give more people (including women) a say. Overall, at the moment, he felt gender issues cut across recognised groups and therefore 'rarely become salient' in the trade field. The emphasis in what he said was on monitoring the system as it is and assessing if trends attributable to gender difference are emerging.

Discussion centred largely on the potential of the ILO's CLS (if adopted and implemented) to mitigate unacceptable outcomes in the trade system. The view was expressed that developing countries were becoming more divided on the issue, with some beginning to see advantages in setting a bottom line for competition. There was some evidence that higher labour standards could aid productivity. However, the view was also put forward that any discussion of CLS by developed countries was disingenuous since the trading system put in place at their instigation had as a result of competition caused a severe deterioration in labour standards in countries such as South Africa. To now demand the reintroduction of such standards was 'pure hypocrisy'. Certain participants thought that an insistence on standards for gender equality could also be used to pressurise developing countries. However, people were

urged not to give up on an appropriate formulation for CLS as this existed ‘within a framework that negotiators can use’.

There was also discussion about data collection, what it was for and how it could be used, which led conveniently on to the next session.

Session 3 Lessons from Research

The third session dealt with the state of research in the gender and trade field. It opened with a survey of what we need to know in this area in order to better understand the gender effects of trade policies, and compared this with what we do know. There are clearly many gaps in knowledge. Whether the gender impact of trade is considered to be positive or negative depends very much on the questions being asked and the assumptions in place. For example, is it appropriate for an impact assessment to focus exclusively on market outcomes or do we need a broader analytical framework that includes both the market and the household and the intricate relations between the two? Is well-being defined by employment and income only or should it include other dimensions? Women in general play more roles in society than men and this needs to be taken into account in planning policies and assessing outcomes. The precise questions being asked need to be made clear and then appropriate methodology applied or if necessary developed. As for what we do know, research shows that women have gained from new jobs especially in basic manufacturing but that this has not on the whole led either to a narrowing of the gender wage gap or to a break down of vertical segregation. Informalisation and intensification of jobs has led to strains on the family and household. Overall, there has been an increase in the amount of research being done and in the interest in it. There is a need both for in depth sectoral studies and for more comprehensive impact assessments which can then guide policy.

The second presentation came from Women in the Informal Economy Globalising and Organising (WIEGO) which draws together organisations involved in research, advocacy and campaigning. It is particularly concerned with getting better recognition for informal work worldwide and with the analysis of global value chains (GVCs). Examples were drawn from the Global Access to Trade Expansion (GATE) project which is funded by USAID to undertake impact assessment of the gender effects of trade policy in certain countries. The aim is to get gender analysis incorporated more centrally into trade negotiation. The project tries to take account of the care economy as well as production and is particularly concerned in the GVCs with power analysis. Power analysis involves looking at every stage at who has information, who takes decisions and who creates the processes which affect the distribution of rewards. The point was made that it is only by examining the micro that the macro can be tested and that quite often micro data produced through research contradicts macro figures and assumption.

The third presentation concerned a two year research project in India attempting to map the effects on women of trade liberalisation in selected sectors and states. The aim was to aggregate both positive and negative effects in order to inform policy. The study attempted to correlate export share with a Gender Development Index comprising eight criteria and to measure this against the counter-factual i.e. what would have been the likely opportunities without trade liberalisation - has there been

'betterment'. The sectors showed varying effects with increasing employment but poor conditions in agro-exports and increasing employment at a higher level in tourism and IT. Educated women were better placed to take advantage. The overall conclusion was that export development was on the whole beneficial given the lack of other opportunities but that flanking policies were needed to increase the benefits and distribute the rewards more evenly.

Discussion centred on the following points:

- What is meant by gains for women? Should we not be looking for challenges to patriarchal attitudes rather than just assessing whether women have increased income and employment? This was acknowledged to be a complex issue and again depends on the assumptions of those posing the question. There is a need to distinguish between gains for individuals and gains overall for society.
- Significance of education. There was some debate on this – and diverse experiences were cited. Education in itself does not ensure women's chances to benefit from trade liberalisation as is shown by the high rate of unemployment among educated women in many export-oriented countries such as Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Singapore. In India, however, it was shown that educated women had benefited more than others from export opportunities.
- Availability of data. It was hard to build the necessary models with the present stage of data collection and the current degree of gender disaggregation of data. However, the situation is improving. Household surveys are crucial. India does have gender disaggregated data but it is by no means certain how good it is.
- Detailed research is very important in reconciling the artificially created divide between macro and micro policies. The development of research on GVCs is a way of extending the scope of the macro country-level analysis to processes that involve many countries. Examining trade is actually a way of examining some of the effects of globalisation.
- Where does demand come from for developing research capacity and better tools in this area? The responses showed that demand accrues for diverse reasons and is very contingent. There appears to be a growing interest in giving some substance to gender demands but there is no guarantee that this will be sustained.
- There was considerable discussion as to what the term 'informalisation' means in practice, whether one can draw a precise boundary between formal and informal work and what the trends are in the global market. The definitions in law are different and codes of conduct are an attempt to formalise the informal. In India where the formal labour market is highly regulated informalisation has been an attempt to escape these restraints. But even informal workers receive insurance. In Bangladesh the development of IT is beginning to push the trend back to more formal styles of work. There are many variations and shifts going on and aggregated micro research is needed to keep track of the effects on women.

This session illustrated clearly that prior assumptions are crucial in how research is conducted, evaluated and used, and that even after two decades of pressure, adequate

gender disaggregated statistics do not exist in many sectors/countries. As the scope of what is being studied expands, more complex data is required. The most advanced research seems now to be setting detailed gender and trade studies in a broader context which enables the situation of women involved in international trade processes to be evaluated against other political and social trends.

Session 4 Practical Initiatives

This session examined three very different examples of practical initiatives which had the effect of enhancing the position of women in trade and/or increasing awareness of gender issues. These were: a report on a project to support women in the craft sector in Thailand; an account of gender initiatives in coffee cooperatives in Nicaragua producing for the Fairtrade market; and a discussion of actions undertaken by the Commonwealth Secretariat, in particular the development of a gender and trade training module for officials and others.

The author of the report on Thailand was unable to attend and the content was therefore summarised for the workshop. The report was commissioned by the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum (APEC) as part of their programme to help women exporters. The groups in question were women from the North of Thailand involved in craft work, particularly textiles using local dyes. They had had object lessons on the effect on women of economic crises as a result of the financial crash which hit South East Asia in 1997 and received some support from the Thai government as a result of this. Support from APEC enabled them to band together and meet regularly in order to enhance their techniques and marketing skills and improve their access to health provision and social protection. They now have a centre advising them on marketing and foreign exports. The Japanese are the most reliable buyers of their products but there have been difficulties in expanding beyond that. Overseas buyers wanted them to patent their designs and standardise products but they have found this extremely difficult. They find the global market constraining and difficult for them; they would prefer enhanced involvement in local and regional markets. However, the banding together to exchange information and improve production has been extremely valuable.

The example of the Nicaraguan coffee cooperatives which sell to Fairtrade outlets suggested that where development objectives are part of the trade package this creates a space which makes both gender equity and specific projects for women more likely to develop. Fairtrade certification guarantees a fixed minimum price and more stable contracts. The price includes a social premium of 5 cents per lb which must be used for development purposes. The cooperatives in question, now organised under the umbrella of Cafenica, have flourished over the last ten years, producing high quality coffee which is sought after by European, Japanese and American countries. The cooperatives now produce 15% of Nicaragua's coffee exports, worth approximately \$15m a year. Two gender projects were described in detail. One was in the Soppexca cooperative which had a long tradition of gender awareness and strong female farmers and managers. They have developed Café Hermanas (Sister Coffee), a coffee produced only by women. The scheme is based on women's legal ownership of the land and its produce and it aims to transform the value added chain of coffee buying and selling by involving women producers in the running of the chain. The scheme has been a big success with demand now outstripping supply. The second example

came from the Cecocafen cooperative where there was little gender awareness and no formal policy. Here a small grant from an external donor was taken over by women in the cooperative office and used to start a savings and loan group for women to fund non-coffee activities and encourage diversification. This also has been very successful with 500 women now managing a fund of \$250,000. These projects have been crucial in transforming both the life of the coops and the status of women within the family. Fairtrade from the farmers' perspective is about a quality exchange – the best quality product, grown taking environmental care, delivered on time, in return for a better quality of life for the farmers and their families, including better opportunities for women.

Discussion on this presentation centred on the future of both the cooperatives and the Fairtrade movement and on the attitude of men in the cooperatives to the changing status of women. The relation of the Fairtrade model to both development and gender equity, it was felt, needs to be further explored.

The Commonwealth Secretariat has considerable experience in working on the issues of gender and trade. Initially, the emphasis was on examining the assumption that trade was gender neutral and in trying to establish through reports and case studies the links between the situation of women on the ground and international trade policy. Currently they are trying to establish more of a dialogue with those actually negotiating trade policy and are working on a training module which can be used on a regional basis to establish links between a variety of government representatives (including in particular, trade, development and women's affairs) women's organisations, export promotion bureaus, regional institutions etc. The aim is to establish links and a debate. The content will vary according to the region but core elements include introduction to gender analysis and methodology, introduction to the multilateral trading system, case studies on competitiveness and market access, the gender dimensions of particular agreements together with particular topics of relevance to the region.

In the discussion questions were raised about the effect on participants of the training module and about what approach to officials was most effective. The module has been successfully used and in most cases has created a synergy among those involved. The question of approach was felt to be crucial, particularly the need to be positive. The question was put as to whether trade and gender was off putting as a title for some and whether 'trade and equity' might be better.

Session 5 Economic Partnership Agreements – what are the gender issues?

This session dealt as a case study with Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) currently being negotiated between the European Union (EU) and African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP). The European Commission (EC) is mandated to negotiate for the EU. EPAs are WTO compatible Free Trade Agreements being negotiated by the EC with six regional groupings within the ACP – for the first time they are based on the principle of reciprocity. They have to be completed by the end of 2007 and a review is due at the end of 2006. It is by no means clear to what extent this is also intended to be a development round though EC negotiators have stated that the EPAs must be 'an instrument for development'. Views about the EPAs range from those who believe that the EU is primarily seeking access to developing country

markets to those who believe that reciprocity will increase economic growth and job creation so leading to poverty reduction in the ACP countries. A ‘stop EPAs’ campaign organised by NGOs has led to some visibility and more debate.

Controversial issues include: different definitions of development, the implications of the power imbalance between the EU and ACP, what the 2006 review should cover, the possibility of alternative models, the degree of transparency, and whether the so called ‘Singapore issues’ (trade facilitation, investment, competition policy and government procurement) should be included, given that the last three were dropped from the WTO Doha Round. The EU is negotiating on a strict mandate (drawn up in 2002); the ACP have agreed common guidelines but each regional negotiation is taking place separately. The Cotonou agreement upon which the EPA negotiations are based states that systematic account should be taken of the situation of women and gender in all areas of the agreement. It also states that all parties are committed to respecting the ILO convention on core labour standards, including those on equal pay and elimination of discrimination.

Two papers were presented on the gender aspect of the EPAs. The first, from One World Action, UK, looked at the likely impact of the EPAs on women’s livelihoods in three African countries: Zambia, Mozambique and Namibia. One key export product was studied for each country, and the overall direct and indirect effects, together with the level of participation of women’s organisations, were assessed. Since the negotiations were not yet finished any conclusions had to be speculative. In general, it was felt that the strongest effect was indirect, as a result of the loss of revenue to governments if customs duties were further lowered. This would be likely to affect the level of social services and benefits, with consequences for women and communities. Cheap imports might be beneficial to women consumers but account had to be taken of local jobs and production that could be lost as a result and the effect on food security. Civil society participation in the process was low and promises about openness seem not to have been met. Though gender issues were present in the development plans of all three countries, there was little knowledge of these among trade negotiators and they did not inform the negotiations. One World Action had not joined the ‘stop EPA’ campaign, because its partners had not done so, and was interested in dialogue and consultation on these issues.

The second paper, from Aprodev, Brussels, examined the possibilities of benchmarking as a way of monitoring the results and implementation of the negotiations. This kind of a process allows gender sensitivity to be built in and a variety of gender development indexes now exist which could be used in this context. Such a model would view the results of the negotiations from three aspects:

Market access and fair trade - do the agreements assist in producing secure, stable and resilient long-term economic growth and sustained productivity increases? Do they help to erode the barriers which women can face in entrepreneurial activity and encourage women’s participation in economic activity?

Policy space and trade rules - do the agreements expand women’s and men’s freedoms and opportunities and maximise social cohesion? Will they maintain policy space for government intervention to promote the above?

Developmental resources - do the agreements encourage the use of resources in a sustainable manner? Will they help to support fair shares for women and allow women’s defensive and offensive interests to be supported?

This presentation ended with an account of the EU/West African ‘chicken war’ where exports of cheap frozen chicken carcases are/have been in danger of destroying local poultry markets. While national governments do have measures they can take against such import surges the imbalance of power between the EU and small Southern countries is such that these may not be easy to apply. In the Cameroun it took a citizens’ protest to force the government to take action. These are the kinds of market dynamics which need to be benchmarked and monitored including the gender impact. The key question here is whether EPAs will act to control dumping and thus strengthen local markets - or weaken them.

There being by this stage no representative at the workshop from ACP governments, discussion in this session was conducted between EC and UK representatives, NGOs and academics. Discussion was opened by three discussants. The main points made by the first two representing EC and member state negotiators were: that ACP governments were sovereign and were free to agree or not agree to what was included and discussed in the negotiations; that the timeframe to complete the EPAs before the current trade regime expires at the end of 2007, is now tight; that the EC and member states were sincere in wanting the negotiations to be development friendly but that definitions of development varied; and that the EC has encouraged transparency through promoting consultation with civil society and conducting a thorough Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA). They emphasised that the officials present at the workshop were open to any suggestions that could be made on how to make gender more central.

The third discussant raised issues to do with the relevance of research. Research in this context could help to establish the likely outcomes with regard to revenue loss by comparison with previous examples. When looking at the situation of women it was also important to run not just detailed case studies but to view the overall situation in all sectors and from the point of view of both consumers and producers. This could be a guide for policy makers.

The open discussion which followed raised the following additional points:

- Policy dialogue was vital but was difficult for many ACP countries, as well as for the EU with its multiple government stakeholders
- There was a need for more women’s voices to be heard in the consultation but for them to come forward and participate they needed to have confidence in the process, which was not generally the case at the moment
- Loss of preferences as tariffs come down is a crucial issue and one which is hard to address.
- Singapore issues. It was strongly argued on the one hand that this was a question of policy space for governments. The opening up of procurement, for example, might be of benefit to consumers, though this was never certain, but would be likely to reduce considerably opportunities for the development of local enterprises and service providers. It was argued, on the other hand, that trade facilitation and better rules for procurement and provision of services would actually help local enterprises. There was a difference of views as to whether and why ACP countries were agreeing to discuss these issues, though it was pointed out that they were agreed to be important in the ACP/EU context before they became ‘Singapore issues’ in the Doha Round.

- Core labour standards might be a useful tool, even if not addressing gender issues centrally, but again the issue was where does the demand for CLS come from, and how and why is it formulated?
- ACP governments have to participate in the EPA negotiations in order to get legally binding agreements. Everything But Arms (EBA) concessions are at the moment just a gift from the EU to LDCs and could be ended at any time. It was argued that some ACP governments fear that if they do not cooperate this might affect the aid they receive.
- The question of alternatives to EPAs was discussed since the EU has to provide an alternative structure if requested by an ACP country. Some participants thought that countries might want other options, as the details of the EPAs became clearer. EU participants pointed out that no such request had been received despite a further year being granted for requests to be made.
- There is a question of policy coherence. Development agreements are improving as to procedure but trade negotiations seem to be out of step, particularly with regard to transparency.

One striking point about these latter discussions was that the more closely debate came to the actual EPA negotiations, the more difficult it was to keep the focus on gender. This illustrates both the lack of a common framework – and also the narrow focus of the negotiations.

Session 6 Concluding Session - Opportunities, Tensions, Entry Points

The final session brought together four discussants to comment on the proceedings as a whole and draw conclusions

Discussant 1 (Political Science, University of Warwick)

The main issues to emerge concern how to talk around and over differences, and how to understand the reasons for different assumptions and interests. For example, people have very different ideas about what development means – should it be not just jobs but better jobs, not just development but grounded, sustainable development? Policy-makers require an evidentiary basis for decision-making but it is by no means clear how they choose this evidence. Why is it that gender issues tend to be left out? The same is true of monitoring strategies which down play gender. Is there a filtering mechanism at work? Ideology comes in. We should not go overboard on data – can we capture the whole of life in data frames?

Another important question to arise is how to engage with policy makers and what strategy to adopt. For activists the question is whether to de-link or engage. It is interesting that here the impulse has been to engage. One World Action has not joined the ‘Stop EPA’ campaign. The women producing Colombian cut flowers do not want us to stop buying flowers but for us to become active on their case. Globalisation is making these links thicker. What are we after in pressing gender issues? Small policy shifts or changing bigger structures?

Discussant 2 (UNCTAD, Geneva)

I don't feel we have yet really defined what we mean by gender equality and mainstreaming gender. We need to understand this and then consider how trade can support gender equality – and in what circumstances it can threaten it. The main issues are employment and other opportunities, labour standards, income distribution

both within the household and outside, access to resources and services, and empowerment. In these situations, trade policy (narrowly interpreted as trade liberalisation) can open up opportunities by increasing production and investment; however, it can also increase income inequality by keeping women's wages low, and threaten domestic production and access to basic resources for poor women. Mediating these situations is the responsibility of governments and although standards may be set internationally it is for governments to implement measures on labour standards and gender equality. It is for governments to handle the issue of gender equality fairly and not abuse it as a condition of trade.

Discussant 3 (Economics, University of Warwick)

Gender has not really been mainstreamed into economic analysis – it doesn't directly connect with how markets function, how people and institutions bargain or with the ingredients of the markets. But there are issues that would interest economists, particularly the nature of the jobs that are being created through trade liberalisation and the institutional changes that result, and how gender affects bargaining between agents. Generation of income by women as a result of new employment opportunities will alter bargaining within households and women's greater access to resources may affect bargaining outside. But the liberalisation of services may mean a reduction of resources which is likely to fall disproportionately on women and children. All of these changes are hard to measure. One should also be careful about research methodologies. Ex-post (after the event) analysis, which looks at evidence in terms of what *has* happened, is not necessarily a good guide to the future. Ex-ante (before the event) analysis, which simulates what *might* happen if some policy lever is changed, may also be doubtful because it relies on the ad-hoc characterisation of the economic system. Case studies which combine quantitative and qualitative methods have shown good results.

Discussant 4 (independent researcher, South Africa)

It is difficult to talk meaningfully in a situation where some people know about gender and some about trade and where people have completely different views about what trade liberalisation means. How do we move forward while dealing with uncomfortable truths and questions? When we in the South don't feel the current situation allows for development. Are there both winners and losers? But at micro level, a disaster for one person hits not just one person, but has implications for their family, and their network, and has social implications in terms of education and services. Understandings differ according to where you are. Despite our differences we have been able constructively to engage at the workshop. We won't be able to agree but must continue to find these occasions to talk in order to progress. One day hopefully we will all be speaking the same language and about the same thing – encompassing gender.

Discussion continued around the table. These are some of the points made.

- As an official, I find the gap between gender specialists and trade economists and negotiators frustrating. I have found material which I could use which I didn't know existed. It would be useful if we had data so that we could look, for example, at the ramifications of the gain of a job through trade and the ramifications of a loss. We need simple messages and tools which can be taken to the negotiating table.

- The moment as a feminist economist you add social reproduction (mainly unpaid work in the household) to the model, you challenge all trade models used to predict beneficial outcomes for trade policy. On the other hand, gender is actually the key to achieving more successful outcomes for trade. The price incentive does not work when gender is ignored.
- We have to look across differential impacts from trade policy, for example, on producers and consumers, and make trade offs. Do we have the tools for that?
- Gender equality could actually be an important bargaining tool in the hands of negotiators.
- Global value chains (GVCs) are emblematic of the new global political economy. How can the stakeholders be engaged?
- In all of this we have been considering the current trade system as a given and assuming that openness is a good thing. We should also consider alternatives which might be more gender friendly. At the same time we need to understand that the international system is at the moment heavily assaulting the role of the state, which up to now has been the main supporter of women and the poor.
- There is a dynamism about capitalism and the market in certain circumstances which we need to preserve. The market flows around obstacles and around attempts to regulate it. Can we keep these spaces while creating a fairer system?
- We should be optimistic. Ten years ago no one was talking about gender and trade. Now it is definitely on the agenda.
- We are due for a backlash against globalisation. We need to be ready for that.

Summary and Analysis

There clearly are important links between gender and trade policy – they are after all part of the same system. However, these links are obscured by the different frameworks and discourses used on the two sides and by the distance between micro effects and macro analysis. Revealing these links is becoming increasingly important as a way of making international trade policy more accountable and encouraging a greater concern with outcomes and equity.

Research is one way of linking the two but the effect is limited by a lack of agreement (again because of difficulties about frameworks and discourse) about the purposes of research in this field and the questions to be asked. Nevertheless, much more research is being done and at a more complex level. There seem to be real attempts to produce both case studies and overviews, which can guide policy makers. This is an important way in which macro data and assumptions can be tested. However, there remain severe obstacles to the research getting through and being absorbed at levels where it could be useful. The collection of adequate data remains a serious problem despite years of pressure on the subject.

The issue of the ILO's core labour standards was extensively discussed in these sessions. This is another possible way of linking the micro to the macro. While recognising its importance, there was some scepticism, both because the formulation still pays too little attention to the unpaid work of women, and also because it was difficult to see how such standards could be adopted, given the suspicions that exist within the current trading system. Where such proposals originate and how and why

they are formulated are crucial to whether or not they will be accepted. However, they do have a head start since they are already ‘within the framework’ that negotiators can consider.

The role of the state was a theme that came up directly and by implication throughout the workshop. If trade liberalisation was producing these unacceptable outcomes, then whose responsibility was it to deal with and manage them? Traditionally, this would have been carried out by the national state which would also have had responsibility for implementing labour standards and measures to achieve gender equality. A strong view was expressed at the workshop that WTO rules were going too far in undermining the capacity of the state to act. There was support therefore (but not from everyone) for the demand being made by some Southern countries for greater autonomy for the state and for greater ‘policy space’. This is an important issue for women since the retreat of the state and the advance of the market limits the opportunities that citizens have to make political processes accountable.

The ongoing liberalisation of trade in services and its implications came up at various points in the workshop though the issue was not treated centrally. Given the importance of services to women, as both workers and consumers, this is clearly an area that needs further examination from a gender and trade perspective. The variety of sectors involved, the complexity of the issues, and the contradictory nature of the evidence available make this a difficult topic. It raises again the crucial issue of the role of the state.

It was apparent from the discussions that there is a gender and trade ‘lite’ programme and a gender and trade ‘profound’ programme and that the two are easily confused. Gender ‘lite’ comprises actions at the margins which deal with some of the evident disadvantages which women face in the trade process and begins to introduce gender criteria into the monitoring process; gender ‘profound’ examines why these disadvantages occur in the first place, and at the implications of this for trade theory and trade policy. Gender ‘profound’ raises particularly the issue of social reproduction (primarily the unpaid work of women in the household) and how this can be measured and taken account of at the level of macroeconomics. The question was raised as to what the connection is between the two programmes. Does working on the entry points which gender ‘lite’ allows gradually lead us nearer to achieving the objectives of gender ‘profound’?

One feature of the workshop was that officials and some NGO representatives asked for ‘simple messages’ and research tools which they could pass on to colleagues and use in negotiations. In effect this is asking for insights from one framework to be formulated in terms of the other. This is difficult though not impossible. ‘Do more gender sensitive monitoring of trade processes and outcomes’ was one attempt at a simple message. What is needed for such a transfer is an understanding on each side of the other’s frameworks, and in the longer term the development of a common framework. What would help would be a broadening out of the remit for trade negotiations since (as the EPA example makes clear) the technical nature of the negotiations makes it easy to obscure social implications.

The indefinite suspension of the WTO’s Doha Development Round shows how hard it is for trade policy and trade theory as currently formulated to take on board

development as a central tenet. The nature of the bargaining process, while giving the G20 and the G90 a voice, ends up by promoting national interests above any real sense of the global good. In current circumstances this promotes deadlock rather than consensus. The consequent reversal to bilateral and regional negotiations continues rather than reduces these features.

It is interesting that the Fairtrade movement and alternative trade strategies more generally, do not have this difficulty and in fact make development their central platform. This at its best is on the basis of a ‘quality exchange’: quality of goods, that is goods produced to the highest standards, in exchange for quality of life, that is sustainable and prosperous communities. There is evidence, and this came out at the workshop, that in these kinds of exchanges gender issues are more easily addressed. The implications of this need further study. Alternative trade exists within the trading system and gives an indication of how change might take place.

The discussion on the EPAs suggested that attempts to involve civil society and make for a more open and transparent debate had, for whatever reasons, been unsuccessful. More reassurance needs to be given that the results of such consultations will be taken seriously and have some impact on the actual negotiations. The power imbalance between the EU on the one hand and the ACP on the other is clearly a factor which underlies every aspect of the process – but is given little overt recognition. The debate suggested that much more agreement is needed on what the gender issues are before these can be applied to the more technical negotiations. What would help in the incorporation of gender issues would be a much clearer linking of development to the EPA trade negotiations. It is striking that so late on in the process this is still ambiguous.

Underlying all these discussions were differences at a rather basic level over attitudes to free trade and trade liberalisation. While the proponents of free trade saw the process overall as beneficial, and the problems largely short term, others were more sceptical and looked for solid evidence and discussion about exactly who the winners and losers were. It was strongly stated that trade is a means to an end rather than an end in itself and needs therefore to be managed in a way that helps spread the benefits more broadly and mitigate the disadvantages. While most people at the workshop would accept that open trade is an important part of a functioning global system, and can produce useful change, the process by which trade policy is formulated and takes effect came in for a great deal of criticism. Discussions indicated that dialogue is possible: officials are more concerned than previously about social effects and accountability and NGOs and activists (at least those present at the workshop) are anxious to influence policy rather than speak only to the converted.

Despite its clear delineation of the obstacles to getting gender issues addressed in trade policy, and the distance between the different frameworks involved, the workshop ended on a good note. The disconnect between the two discourses is constructed rather than inherent and therefore capable of change. Useful exchanges and dialogue took place and there was a general willingness to engage with others with different points of view. However, it seems that the occasion for such exchanges is limited and some thought need to be given to how and in what contexts they can be continued.

A great deal of change is taking place in the global system and there is an evident need for the trading system itself to achieve more social legitimacy. Gaining acceptance for both gender ‘lite’ and gender ‘profound’ programmes is a crucial part of this.

A draft for this report was first circulated to participants in July 2006. The current version, and especially the interpretative summary at the end, has been drawn up taking account as far as possible of comments and suggestions received.

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