



Gender and trade:

How are gender provisions in trade agreements perceived by Chilean women exporters?

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Abstract

There is widespread literature that illustrates the link between gender and trade, as it can reveal the different roles of women and men in economic activity. Therefore, trade policy can be a critical instrument for reducing or reinforcing gender inequalities.

Women face different obstacles when integrating into international trade, and while Chile has pioneered the incorporation of gender provisions in its free trade agreements (FTAs) since 1997, there is a lack of information regarding how women exporting from the country perceive the usefulness of these instruments.

This chapter analyses the relationship between trade and gender, focusing on Chile's experience with gender-sensible trade regulation. Through different qualitative methods, this chapter demonstrates that most of the Chilean women exporters are not aware of gender provisions and that they perceive their inclusion as a positive measure to tackle gender inequality. However, they do not observe a significant difference when trading with countries with gender provisions in their FTAs with Chile.

Introduction

Economic policies differently impact men and women due to the different roles they have within the social system. Thus, social relational contexts are key in developing the established gender regimes in which they coexist, leading to sex segregation in jobs, division of labour and gender differences in decision-making positions, among others (Bahri, 2021). Such differences often result in a disadvantaged position for women, as they negatively affect women's autonomy by acting as obstacles to their social and economic development.

Trade used to be perceived as gender neutral. However, multiple studies have demonstrated that trade policy is not gender neutral. This means that if trade policies are designed without taking into account their impact on gender, these policies can increase the existing gender gaps. Gender equality as a priority for policymaking processes enables international trade to play a key role in fostering long-lasting sustainable development, especially when there is gender mainstreaming in trade policy instruments (OECD, 2021a).

While there has been a proliferation of gender provisions in various trade agreements ever since the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community in 1957, the southern hemisphere has shown significant activity in taking into consideration the linkage between gender and trade within its trade policymaking. In fact, the second gender provision ever was negotiated in the Treaty for the Establishment of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS Treaty). The first chapter on trade and gender issues was included

in 1994 in the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), and the first gender-specific chapter in trade agreements took place in the 2016 Chile–Uruguay free trade agreement (FTA) (WTO, 2022).

There are substantial gender-specific policies in South America's main economic integration processes. For example, in the Southern Common Market (Mercosur), established in 1991, and the Pacific Alliance, established in 2011. On the one hand, Mercosur has launched several initiatives such as workshops, awareness-raising campaigns, diagnoses and guides, among others, directed at promoting the participation of women in areas of power and decision-making. For example, the Regional Audiovisual Contest “Parity is Equality” and the “Regional Information Leaflet on Social Security for Domestic Workers in MERCOSUR” are part of this customs union (Dieguez, 2022). On the other hand, through the Paracas Declaration, the Pacific Alliance established the Technical Gender Group in 2015, and developed the “Roadmap for the autonomy and economic empowerment of women in the Pacific Alliance” (SUBREI, 2021)

Chile has based a large part of its economic development strategy on opening markets, promoting exports and attracting foreign direct investment through unilateral, bilateral, multilateral and mega-regional and sectoral thematic agreements. This has led to a significant increase in the number of its FTAs, providing the country with access to 88 per cent of the world's GDP through its 33 FTAs with 65 economies from around the globe. Within this framework, Chile has initiated the inclusion of gender-related provisions into its FTAs with various countries and regional arenas such as the Pacific Alliance and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) (López *et al.*, 2019).

In 2016, the Chile–Uruguay FTA became the first one with a specific gender chapter. As of today, the country has more agreements with gender chapters such as the FTA with Canada (2017), Argentina (2017), Brazil (2018) and Ecuador (2020) and some more in negotiation such as the European Union, the Republic of Korea and Singapore.

This chapter seeks to analyse the Chilean women exporters' perception of the country's gender provisions in its trade agreements. For this purpose, this chapter reviews academic literature regarding trade and gender as well as Chile's experience in integrating a gender perspective in its trade policymaking. Semi-structured interviews with women who export from Chile, representatives from international organizations, academic experts on gender and trade, and representatives of the Chilean public sector were conducted. In total, 20 interviews were carried out.

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The chapter begins by reviewing the relevant literature regarding the linkage between trade and gender. Chile's experience with gender-sensible trade regulation is reviewed, and an overview of the perception of gender provisions in trade agreements perceived by women who export from Chile is presented.

Gender and trade

Traditionally, free and open trade has been approached as a tool to raise the productivity levels of countries and expand employment opportunities for their population while boosting the country's overall development. That is why, for decades, a country's main objective in negotiating trade agreements was to reduce trade barriers by seeking greater access to international markets (Albertoni, 2022). However, while increased trade has led to economic growth in some countries, this has not necessarily translated into social development largely due to income disparity and social inequality and exclusion in the global population (UNCTAD, 2020). This has led countries to reach a consensus, made visible first by the Millennium Development Goals and later by the Sustainable Development Goals, that economic growth alone is not enough to achieve inclusive and effective development.

Thus, trade policy, amongst other instruments, has been increasingly used to advance and promote sustainable development (Bahri, 2021). The focus of these policies has been mainly directed to the promotion of human rights, environmental protection and gender equality.

Through the 1994 Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization, the international community put on the table the search for sustainable development through the protection and preservation of the environment while acting in a compatible manner with the respective trade needs and interests of the countries involved (WTO, 2022). In 2015, both the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development enunciated a direct link between gender, trade and sustainable development. As of today, it is estimated that about 75 per cent of all countries have negotiated trade agreements with human rights provisions.

More precisely, there is a consensus that “when countries trade, women win” (World Bank, 2020). An essential element to consider in analysing the relationship between trade and gender is the distributional outcomes and gender roles in society. Studies indicate that trade policy is not gender neutral; and since trade policies benefit some more than others, the distributional outcomes of trade may vary between women and men, as they play different roles in society, markets and the economy while also enjoying different opportunities. Therefore, trade policy can be more effective in reducing the gender gap by tackling “gender-specific barriers and structural differences in the economic participation of women and men in different sectors” (UNCTAD, 2020).

The interrelationship between trade and gender becomes particularly relevant because, if trade policies are designed without considering their impact on gender dynamics, these policies may exacerbate existing gender gaps. Inclusive trade policymaking is most successful in addressing the gender gap in international trade when it is based on evidence. In this way, sex-disaggregated data are key in assessing the different ways in which trade policy can impact women and men (World Bank, 2021).

Inclusive trade is a critical component to achieving gender parity. It creates more job opportunities for women with higher wages and better working conditions (World Bank and WTO, 2021). However, the impact of trade on men and women depends largely on the societal and economic structure of each country, industry or sector. Given that women and men play different roles in society, markets and the economy, the effects of trade policies are different for each one.

Therefore, women are often more affected by the negative effects of trade liberalization and face more obstacles than men in taking advantage of trade opportunities. This is mainly due to gender biases in education, upbringing, wage inequalities and existing gender gaps in the distribution of resources, as well as unequal access to productive inputs such as credit, property and technology.

Such biases affect women in the multiple roles they play in the economy: as workers, producers, traders, consumers, investors, users of public services and taxpayers (UNCTAD, 2020). Further, they limit women's access to productive resources such as credit, land and inputs, which negatively impacts their productive efficiency.

"Unequal rights before the law also limit women's opportunities and economic empowerment" (Frohmann, 2019). Globally, only 13 per cent of women own agricultural land. In 2022, husbands could legally prevent their wives from working in 18 countries; there was gender differentiation in inheritance rights in 39 countries; and in some countries, wives require their husband's permission to access banking (Bahri, 2021). Inequalities related to the right to own and/or inherit land hinder women's ability to accumulate capital. Further, these inequalities hamper their investment capacity and traps them in low-value activities. "Because they have fewer land rights and limited access to inputs, women become less efficient and produce smaller quantities of crops" (UNCTAD, 2020).

For women in some countries, not having autonomy in accessing their own bank accounts perpetuates and fosters a vicious cycle of inequality. By not having a bank account, women are unable to conduct financial transactions, which limits their ability to develop a credit history that could facilitate their access to capital, keeping women as secondary agents in economic activity (Frohmann, 2019).

Likewise, gender inequality in trade can result in harassment in informal cross-border trading and reduce women's access to means of transport, impacting the speed in which they access markets, and detrimentally affecting their ability to trade in the same way as their male counterparts.

Gender gaps in education play a substantial role in the treatment of women when trading. As reported in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) *Gender Report 2022*, two-thirds of the 771 million adults without basic literacy skills are women (UNESCO, 2022) and, according to the World Bank (2020), while gender gaps in education have decreased significantly in certain regions, it has prevailed in others. For example, over the past decades, women's access to education has increased in Latin America and the Caribbean. However, it is not the same case in Sub-Saharan Africa, where more than one in four young women are illiterate. This results in them having less bargaining power and undermining their potential as traders.

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Moreover, as stated by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), women carry out most of the unpaid (care) work in their household, and motherhood often has negative effects on gender pay gaps and career development. In the case of Chile, it is estimated that as of 2015, women spent 24.7 per cent of their time on domestic chores and unpaid care work while men spent 10.8 per cent (ECLAC, 2021).

Within this frame of reference, trade liberalization can be used as a positive tool for gender equality by contributing to the price reduction of the goods that women generally buy. Female-headed households, especially in developing countries, tend to spend a larger share of income on food, which is usually subject to higher tariffs. Thus, reducing or eliminating import tariffs on those goods could result in women's access to a greater variety of goods and services while increasing their real income (Piermartini, 2021).

It is worth noting that in trade agreements, on the one hand, there are chapters in which countries commit themselves to trade liberalization. On the other hand, in the texts negotiated by the negative list, there are annexes containing the current and future measures in which policies may be excluded from the liberalization commitments. These reservations can be on diverse items such as artisanal fishing, customs agents, cultural industries and minorities, amongst others. In the framework of these reservations, countries can incorporate measures and policies that promote gender equality, non-discrimination and enables the empowerment of women (Frohmann, 2019). Some experts consider it necessary to include gender clauses transversally in all FTA text.

Gender chapters are pivotal and tend to focus on shared commitments, cooperation, training and data collection, albeit the mainstreaming of gender issues in trade agreements themselves can make a positive and substantive difference. For example, it can foster the design and implementation of public policies that maximize opportunities, forward the integration of women into more dynamic economic sectors and mitigate gender disparities (UNCTAD, 2020). This can advance women's participation in international trade, facilitate them with better and more competitive wages, and stimulate women's transition from the informal to the formal economy, allowing for better working conditions.

Two main approaches address the causes and constraints that contribute to women's unequal participation in the workforce and gender wage gaps: the bottom-up approach and the top-down approach. The bottom-up approach requires efforts to change internal legislation and social norms at the national level to reduce barriers to women's empowerment. The top-down approach requires using international law to incentivize change at the national level. In this way, trade policies can influence changes in national laws and policies to shape society, the labour and the economic sectors in a way that reduces some of the barriers to women's equality (Bahri, 2021).

In this context, international trade policy tools can contribute to gender equality through:

- the generation of specific data on trade and gender;
- ex-ante and ex-post assessment of the impact of an agreement on gender gaps;
- civil society participation and expert representation in negotiations;
- measures to adapt to and compensate for the impact of trade on women;
- gender chapters in trade agreements;
- gender mainstreaming in trade disciplines themselves;
- gender-sensitive trade facilitation measures;
- the promotion of women's export entrepreneurship;
- the elimination of legal restrictions and barriers to have access to finance (Frohmann, 2019).

However, trade may have negative effects on some women if the trade policy that is in place does not consider how localized costs related to trade liberalization can negatively affect women's livelihoods (Piermartini, 2021). Adopting an intersectional and gender lens approach means identifying which women are being benefited by trade, in which sectors, and the scale of the businesses that are going to be affected by it. Subsequently, the collection of gender-disaggregated data is crucial to use trade as an instrument for mediating gender equality, increasing equal economic opportunity for all, regardless of sex or gender, and avoiding reinforcing gendered barriers to trade (OECD, 2022a).

The inclusion of gender issues in the multilateral trade agenda can be perceived as a cultural imposition by Western countries, which can cause friction and slow down negotiations on the adoption of trade agreements that refer to it. If not careful, gender mainstreaming in trade policy can also be used as a barrier to trade. Also, criticism has been oriented through trade agreements including gender issues arguing that they can reduce the policy space afforded to national initiatives (Kiratu and Roy, 2010).

Chile's experience with gender-sensible trade regulation

From a welfare-based economy since the 1920s, to an import substitution industrialization in the early 1970s, to the establishment of a neoliberal strategy based on trade liberalization after 1973, to the current export model, Chile has implemented different economic development models to boost its economy in hopes of greater economic development.

As a mainly exporting country, Chile's economy largely depends on its interrelation with other markets and its inclusion in global value chains. To address this, Chile's economic development model has sought to open markets, promote exports and attract foreign direct investment through four levels: unilateral, bilateral, multilateral, and mega-regional and thematic sectoral agreements.

At the unilateral level, Chile has relied on unilateral tariff reductions and export promotion policies. At the bilateral level, the country has implemented economic complementation agreements directed at the search for market access, and FTAs oriented at seeking comprehensive agreements. At the multilateral level, Chile has been an active member of multiple multilateral economic organizations such as the WTO, the OECD, the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI) and APEC. Finally, regarding mega-regional and thematic agreements, Chile is part of the Pacific Alliance, the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement (DEPA), the Global Trade and Gender Arrangement (GTAGA) and has signed the Comprehensive and

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Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). Currently, Chile is part of 32 trade agreements with 65 economies worldwide.

Chile’s trade network is vast. However, the benefits of trade and investment have been narrowly shared due to deep-rooted inequalities in economic conditions and opportunities. Chile still faces problems such as: (i) low taxes and transfers, being one of the lowest among OECD members; (ii) scarcely adequate old-age pensions; and (iii) very low social and economic mobility for the most vulnerable communities (OECD, 2021c). Moreover, there are clear disparities between men and women in accessing economic opportunities, partly due to gender socialization, gender division of labour, occupational stereotypes in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) careers, vertical and horizontal gender inequality in the workplace, and the absence of affordable care in the society (Dunn, 2021).

Chile is a commodity-based, export-driven economy and is profoundly interrelated with patterns of global demand (Santander Trade, 2022). The country’s export basket remains largely dependent on primary resources and deeply concentrated in mining and agricultural products and their derivatives (e.g. lithium carbonate, grapes and copper; Banco Central de Chile, 2022). This results in the country’s economic growth being highly dependent on global trade, making it particularly susceptible to any drastic changes or shocks in the international arena. Adopting public policies designed at diversifying the economy towards new industrial and services sectors could present an opportunity to counterbalance this trend and develop a more resilient economy (Lopez *et al.*, 2020).

The last four years have been particularly harsh for the Chilean economy. In October 2019, the country underwent widespread social unrest accentuating the already existing economic uncertainty. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic led to the sharpest contraction of economic incomes in 40 years, and while it was able to recover quickly in 2021 due to strong policy support, domestic demand and the war in Ukraine caused the country’s inflation to rise around 14 per cent. Additionally, according to the most updated OECD Economic Survey on Chile (OECD, 2022b), growth slow down sharply to around 1.4 per cent in 2022 and is projected to decline 0.1 per cent in 2023.

Chile’s economic gender gaps are based on: (i) the unbalanced role distribution in households; (ii) women tending to perform less qualified work (contributing to them earning lower salaries); (iii) the closure or instability of care systems during the COVID-19 pandemic; and (iv) the fact that the economic sectors most affected by the health crisis were those that employ a greater number of women. To date, women continue to participate less than men in the labour market, work in historically feminized activities and are overrepresented in informal and temporary employment. In fact, out of every ten people working in Chile, six are men and four are women (Mansilla, 2022).

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a major setback in the participation of women in the labour market, reaching 41.2 per cent in June 2020, which meant a ten-year setback (Mansilla, 2022). The participation rates in the labour market were 48.3 per cent for women and 69.6 per cent for men, with a 21.3 per cent gender gap. Even though foreign women participated 24.1 per cent more in the labour market than Chilean women, their labour participation was also lower than that of foreign men in 2021. Nonetheless, among young workers, these gaps are considerably smaller, as the gender gap in labour participation was 9.3 per cent between people from 15 to 29 years old, while among people aged 30 years and older, the gender gap reached 26.1 per cent (Godoy, 2022).

Furthermore, the following factors had a direct impact on delaying women's return to the labour force in Chile:

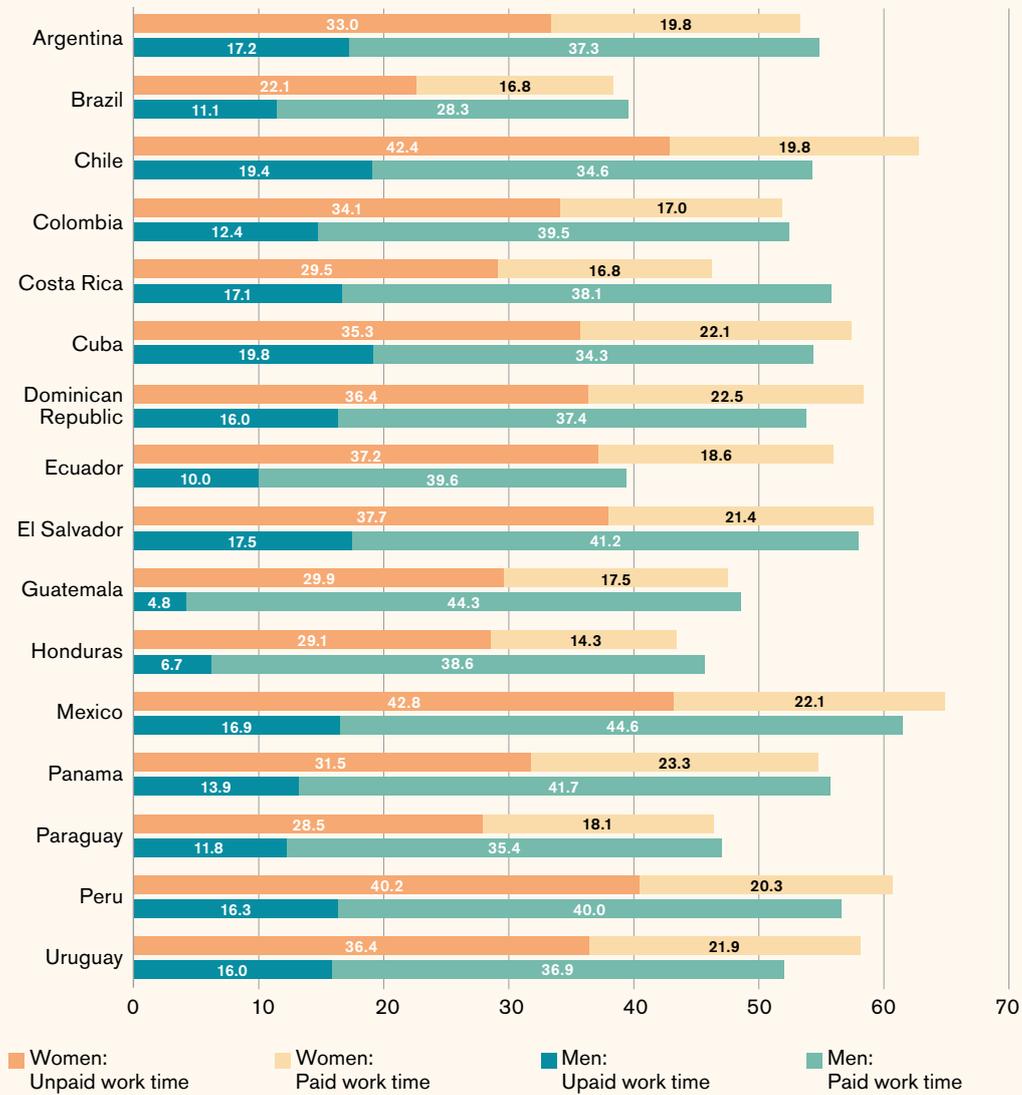
- the implicit costs of being employed during the pandemic (e.g. risk of contagion);
- the implementation of fiscal and monetary policies regarding cash transfers and the 10 per cent early withdrawals of pension funds, the cost reduction strategies adopted at households' level (i.e. learning to live with less).
- the changes in risk perception associated with the loss of income during the pandemic (e.g. women with a prolonged work history were able to meet their basic needs through different strategies, which led to formal, salaried work losing their centrality in obtaining a stable income).
- women taking on caregiving tasks in their households during the pandemic due to lockdown measures such as the closure of nurseries, kindergartens and schools, as well as the implementation of remote education (UNDP/ILO, 2022).

As seen in Figure 1, the amount of time spent on unpaid work by women is more than double the amount spent by men. In fact, during the pandemic, this trend continued and time spent caring for children, cooking and cleaning increased for 54 per cent of women versus only 38 per cent of men.

Regarding gender pay gaps, the proportion of women who earn a low income in Chile is 1.6 times higher than that of men while also being less likely to advance to management (OECD, 2021b). In fact, in 2020, women earned 20.4 per cent less than their male counterparts, 47.1 per cent of women did not have their own income, and three out of ten employed women received an income less than or equal to the minimum wage (INE, 2020).

Despite the significant progress that women in Chile have made in accessing higher education, they remain notably underrepresented in STEM fields. "The future of work is changing. Existing jobs are being modified and new ones are emerging at the frontiers of our economies, which require knowledge and skills in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM)" (Alam and Sanchez Tapia, 2020). In 2019, 44 per cent of Chilean women between 18 to 24 years old attended higher education compared to 38 per cent of men (Kim and Celis, 2022). However, in 2020, only 32 per cent of the people who work in science and technology in Chile were women (Marca Chile, 2021). This results in two types of inequalities, horizontal and vertical; horizontal because of the substantial gaps in women's training for relevant scientific and technological careers in the country, and vertical because this leads to a lack of women in high scientific or professional leadership (Delgado *et al.*, 2021).

Figure 1: Average amount of time devoted to paid and unpaid work by persons over 15 years of age, by sex (hours per week)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, available at <https://oig.cepal.org/en>. For latest available data (average hours per week).

Against this background, complementary national policies regarding women's access to finance, as well as women's participation in information and communications technologies, and in STEM fields are crucial to reverse this trend. Thus, gender provisions in trade agreements oriented at promoting female entrepreneurship, conducting gender-based analysis, and advancing care policies, not only contribute to the fulfillment of international commitments ratified by Chile regarding gender equality, but also foster international cooperation activities aimed at tackling the different needs of women throughout their export process (Otero, 2022).



The ever-changing challenges of international trade have pushed Chile to innovate its trade strategy to make economic strides towards equality through inclusive trade policy. Chile considers the key role of gender equality as a cross-cutting issue in policymaking. This was a positive incentive to include the gender perspective in the development of Chile's trade policy (López *et al.*, 2019).

The increasing incorporation of gender perspective in trade policy, either through general provisions, specific chapters, or by mainstreaming a gender perspective into the trade disciplines themselves, is considered to have a positive impact on women participation in Chilean exports. In 2018, there were 426 companies led by women and in 2020, this number increased to 472. Considering that 93 per cent of the firms' exports go to countries with which Chile has signed FTAs, continuing the development and implementation of comprehensive gender mainstreaming mechanisms in trade agreements, and promoting their use in bilateral, regional, and multilateral negotiations, is essential to the Chilean economy (SUBREI/PROCHILE, 2021).

The first gender provision in Chilean trade agreements can be traced back to 1997 with the Canada–Chile FTA. It included two of said provisions, one concerning the elimination of discrimination in employment and another one related to equal pay (Pavese, 2021). In 2014, with “a progressive agenda with special emphasis on gender equality” (López *et al.*, 2019), Chile continued pioneering the use of trade policy as a way of enhancing its economic growth.

As a result, in 2016 with its FTA with Uruguay, the country became one of the architects of the first-ever specific gender chapter in an FTA worldwide. This chapter served as a template for future gender chapters in its FTAs with Canada (2017), Argentina (2017), Brazil (2018), Ecuador (2020), and current FTA negotiations with Paraguay and the European Union (Otero, 2022). Nonetheless, the inclusion of gender provisions is highly heterogeneous, as it responds to the specific interests and backgrounds of the countries involved at the time of the negotiation.

For example, the ongoing modernization of the trade part of the 2002 Chile–EC Association Agreement proposes setting up an interregional trade and gender committee, oriented at performing functions related to accountability, transparency, advisory, coordination and facilitation of cooperation on joint gender equality strategies that could be incorporated into their cooperation framework (Pavese, 2021). If included, this would be the first time a trade agreement has institutional arrangements oriented at complying with the international commitments of the 2030 Agenda and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, as well as the design of improvement programmes, training and studies, among other aspects, aimed at increasing the participation of women in foreign trade (Hernández, 2022).

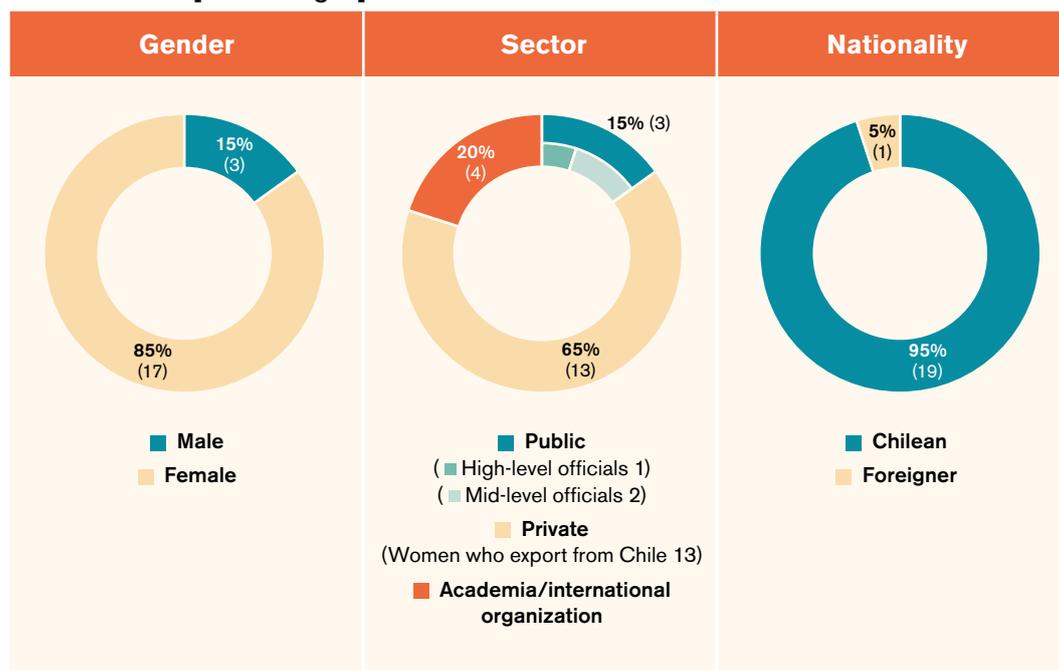
Overview of the perception of gender provisions in trade agreements perceived by women who export from Chile

A qualitative methodological approach was utilized to get an overview of the perception of gender provisions in trade agreements perceived by Chilean women exporters. In total, 20 interviews were carried out (see Table 1 for the interview structure). Table 2 shows that 15 per cent of the participants were male and 85 per cent were female. Among them, there were public officials, women who export from Chile, academic experts on gender and trade, and foreign women exporters.

Table 1: Interview structure

Interviewees	Questions asked
Women who export from Chile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you perceive FTAs? • Do you consider that FTAs have helped you enhance your exporting process? • How do you perceive the inclusion of gender perspective in FTAs? • How do you perceive gender-related barriers when exporting from Chile? • How do you perceive the inclusion of gender provisions in FTAs? • What gender-related barriers does having a gender perspective in trade agreements solve for you? • Have you ever exported to Uruguay, Canada, Argentina and/or Brazil? If so, do you notice any ease or difference between trading with these countries versus others without gender provisions in their FTA with Chile?
Academic experts on gender and trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a linkage between trade and gender? • Can FTAs be used for reasons beyond opening markets? If so, should they? • How do you perceive the inclusion of gender provisions in Chile's FTAs? • What are the main challenges in implementing gender provisions in FTAs?
Public officials that work in gender and trade affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you believe gender and trade are interconnected? If so, how do you perceive such the linkage? • What is your perception on the inclusion of gender provisions in Chile's FTAs? • What are the main challenges in implementing gender provisions in FTAs? • Are you aware of the current effects of Chile's gender provisions in its FTAs? If so, how do you perceive them? • Should Chile continue to incorporate gender provisions in its FTAs?

Table 3: Sample demographics of the 20 interviewees



Results

Chilean women exporters

Results found that 100 per cent of women exporters had previous knowledge of FTAs and had a positive perception of them. This is mostly due to FTAs being largely understood as a boosting component to the internationalization process of their business. Further, they are perceived as necessary tools to improve their access to markets abroad with favorable conditions, such as low or no export tariffs.

Regarding gender perspective, 100 per cent of women exporters reported having a positive perception towards it. Over 80 per cent of them perceive it as a tool for allowing men and women to have an overall equal standing in society, while others were more specific and related it to the core of the development of the necessary public policies to ensure equality among sexes.

Moreover, while Chile has been active in removing trade barriers and facilitating the integration of women into international trade at a bilateral, multilateral and regional level, most women who export from the country are not aware of this. In fact, 75 per cent of women exporters interviewed stated that they did not have a clear understanding of what gender provisions in trade agreements were or had any idea of the possible implications they could have on their business. They do not perceive any difference when exporting as women compared to their male counterparts. This can be interpreted either as a lack of gender discrimination in trading, a normalization of gender discrimination practices in trading or a lack of impact made by gender provisions in addressing possible gender gaps through trade policy, amongst others. Thus, the generalized perception regarding gender provisions in Chilean trade agreements was overwhelmingly neutral mostly due to a lack of awareness of their impact.

Regarding gender-related barriers, 54 per cent of the Chilean women exporters that were interviewed pointed to reducing tariffs as one of the main benefits they perceived in Chile's FTAs. However, while the liberalization of trade can have a gendered effect, women exporters indicated that they perceived similar benefits from other FTAs that did not include gender provisions. The rest reported facing no specific gender-related barriers when trading.

Only three of 13 women who export from Chile that participated in this study indicated having exported to either Uruguay, Canada, Argentina or Brazil. Canada's market was reported as the easiest to access. On the contrary, both Brazil and Argentina were reported as having protectionist policies that detrimentally increased the cost of accessing their market to the extent that it was not profitable.

Academic experts on trade and gender

Two highly distinct approaches to the possible trade and gender linkage were found. While 75 per cent of the academic experts on trade and gender agreed that trade has a direct relation with gender and therefore cannot be neutral to it (and vice versa), the other interviewee indicated a lack of sufficient systematic information that could provide enough evidence to prove that there is indeed a linkage between trade and gender.

The use of FTAs for reasons other than increasing access to the international market was highly contested by one of the academics interviewed. On the one hand, the majority agreed that trade policy is a positive and effective way to promote public policies geared towards global sustainable development. It was argued that by expanding its scope, FTAs can encourage governments to include issues, such as environmental protection, gender equality or human rights, in their foreign policy agenda. On the other hand, it was argued that whilst that might be true, the use of trade policy to influence other national legislation could undermine the democratic principles of free trade. Especially considering that, more often than not, the citizens of the country that is considering joining a FTA, tend not to participate in the decision-making process on trade-related matters.

The use of trade policy for international cooperation and the inclusion of gender provisions in Chile's FTAs was positively perceived by 100 per cent of the interviewees.

The overall main challenges perceived by the interviewees in implementing gender provisions in FTAs were the following:

- the limited level of ambition of gender chapters;
- the lack of homologation of standards regarding women's rights;
- the impossibility of resorting to FTA dispute settlement mechanisms;
- the lack of established indicators able to measure the gender provisions in trade agreement's impact ex ante and ex post implementing the FTA;
- the decision-makers authorities lack general understanding in the matter and the slow development of binding gender provisions in trade agreements.

Public officials

There is a consensus among Chilean public officials that there is indeed a deep interconnection between gender and trade. Thus, the use of FTAs in matters other than increasing access to various markets is widely accepted and positively perceived.

All three in the sample had a positive perception regarding the inclusion of gender provisions in Chile's FTAs. However, there is a lack of awareness regarding the impacts of these. Nonetheless, there was a consensus that their impact will be better perceived in the future rather than presently, largely due to its recent incorporation and proliferation in international trade.

There are two main challenges identified in the implementation of gender provisions in Chilean trade agreements: the limited budget assigned; and the lack of expertise regarding these issues in the decision-making process. To counteract this, one interviewee suggested mandatory permanent training in international trade, gender and negotiation through a private-public partnership.

The effects of Chile's gender provisions in its FTAs are perceived positively, however, among the interviewed, it remains unclear to what degree they are currently effective in tackling gender gaps through trade policy implementation.

Public policies and programmes oriented at promoting the incorporation of women in international trade, such as *Mujer Exporta*, are highly regarded. However, 80 per cent

of the sample suggested intense research and deep cautiousness in their design and implementations to ensure it does not become a barrier to trade. In this context, continuing with the incorporation of gender provisions in Chilean FTAs was positively perceived.

Chile's FTAs with Uruguay, Canada, Argentina and Brazil are positively perceived. However, the effect of the gender provisions in their FTAs remains unclear and is not perceived as significant by 50 per cent of the officials interviewed.

As seen in Box 1, women who exported from Chile were not familiar with gender provisions in trade agreements. However, they perceived them as a viable way to tackle gender inequality and promote their business. There were differing interpretations of the complexity of legislating through trade agreements by the academics that were interviewed, as some perceived that the link between gender and trade had not been demonstrated with sufficient statistics. Also, there was a high concern regarding the possible friction it could cause with countries' sovereignty.

Box 1: Main ideas from interviews regarding the inclusion of gender provisions

Women who export from Chile

- There is no clear differentiation when exporting as a woman from Chile compared to a man nor when exporting to countries with or without gender provisions in their FTA with Chile.
- FTAs are perceived positively as an opportunity to internationalize local businesses without disregarding the local market.
- The gender perspective is perceived positively.
- Gender provisions in trade agreements are not widely understood nor known in the exporting community.
- Brazil and Argentina have policies regarding the textile industry that works as a barrier to accessing their markets.

Academic experts on trade and gender

- There is no complete consensus on the linkage between trade and gender.
- FTAs can be used for reasons beyond opening markets. This can be perceived positively and negatively.
- The inclusion of gender provisions in Chile's FTAs as well as the use of trade policy in international cooperation are perceived positively.
- There are several challenges perceived in implementing gender provisions.

Public officials

- The interconnection between gender and trade is perceived positively as well as the inclusion of gender provisions in Chile's FTAs.
- The limited budget assigned to the matter, and the higher authorities' overall lack of expertise in the issue are perceived as the main challenges.
- Chile's gender provisions in its FTAs are perceived positively as well as the country's trade with Uruguay, Canada, Argentina and Brazil.

Finally, public officials pointed at the restricted budget assigned and lack of expertise in these matters amongst decision-making authorities, as the main challenges to effectively implement gender provisions in trade agreements. More work should be directed to capacity building.

Final remarks

There is extensive literature that accounts for the linkage between trade and gender as evidenced by the differentiated effect it has on both genders attributable to the different roles they occupy in society and the economy. Gender gaps in employment, education and the uneven distribution of care work can be taken as testimony to this.

The liberalization of trade can be used as a tool for promoting economic growth, but it must be designed and implemented cautiously. Ergo, adopting an intersectional and gender lens approach within public policymaking is required to prevent reinforcing gendered barriers to trade.

Chile is an avid participant in bilateral, regional and multilateral efforts aimed at promoting women's equality and empowerment. Its experience with gender-sensible trade regulation can be traced back to the 1990s, and it has championed specific gender chapters in trade agreements since 2016. With the modernization of the trade part of the existing Chile–EC Association Agreement, the most ambitious gender provisions in trade agreements will be implemented.

However, the implementation of gender provisions is just beginning, and their contribution to gender equality through trade can only be assessed in a few more years, as women who export from Chile continue to face barriers that prevent them from enjoying the same benefits derived from trade as men.

This study demonstrates that women who export from the country remain largely unaware of gender provisions in trade agreements, and the potential benefits that can derive from them. This leaves them susceptible to missing out on the opportunities that trade can offer regarding the roles they occupy in society and the economy. Thus, it becomes clear that acknowledging the role of gender equality as a cross-cutting issue in policymaking is not enough if not accompanied by public policies dedicated to keeping the general population interested and informed regarding this issue. The benefits that FTAs could have over the gender gap should have more outreach; this should be a joint task between private, public, academia and international organizations.

There seems to be a blatant disconnection between Chile's actions regarding trade and gender policy at the multilateral level and day-to-day effects perceived by its population. Furthermore, while the general perception of women exporters from Chile regarding gender provisions in trade agreements proved highly positive, the concept itself and its results are widely unknown.

More research could be oriented to develop an adequate traceability system capable of tracking the gender provisions in trade agreements and its effects. Alongside a state-marketed campaign oriented at actively keeping the general public engaged. Designing the support programmes with more collaboration strategies amongst women exporters, so they can share problems and solutions. This could be used to counterbalance the current disconnection between the policies that the country is taking at the international level and the day-to-day life effects on its population.

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