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"Globalization, Employment and Women's Empowerment"

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Globalization, Employment and Women's Empowerment

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to provide a an overall assessment of how globalization, which is taken here to mean greater openness of economies to international trade and capital mobility, in diverse regional contexts since the early 1980s has impacted on the growth of real economies and their capacity to create employment. More specifically, the paper attempts to trace how these policies have impacted on women's access to employment and their enjoyment of social rights. While there has been significant criticism of the way in which neo-liberal stabilization and structural adjustment policies have impacted on poor women in much of the developing world, the debate on the impacts of trade liberalization on female employment has been far more sanguine. In fact, one argument that is frequently made in favor of globalization, and trade liberalization in particular, is that it has brought about higher rates of employment in developing countries as the locus of manufacturing has shifted from the North to the South, and that within developing countries women have emerged unequivocally as the winners. This argument is questioned in this paper.

A related argument, often implicit in the literature on globalization and female employment, which we scrutinize in this paper, is about the interlinkages between female employment and social policy. Given the fact that poor women in many developing countries enjoyed few social rights even prior to the neo-liberal era—during the so-called 'golden age' of capitalism—critics argue that it is meaningless to condemn 'globalization' for creating jobs for women that have few social rights attached to them. In other words, given that women were deprived of social rights even when developing country governments pursued various models of import substitution industrialization (ISI) which essentially created jobs for a male 'labour aristocracy', and that the existing systems of social protection were frequently biased in favour of men who were assumed to be the 'breadwinners' while women were considered to be their 'dependents', there has been no regression or reversal of rights as far as women are concerned.

It is argued here that while it is crucial to recognize the shortcomings of Keynesian thinking that dominated development policy, and the ISI strategies that fell short of their objectives in several important respects (especially from a gender perspective), a constructive approach would have been to extend their achievements and to change their less successful interventions so as to make them perform better, rather than to reverse their gains. Instead what we are witnessing today with the new direction of public policy is that poor women in many developing countries are being deprived 'of even the prospect of the progressive realisation of a non-discriminatory system of decent jobs and public services and broad-based social security systems' (Elson 2001, p.14). Today, employment objectives, the creation of decent jobs and broad-based, redistributive social security systems are no longer the objectives of public policy in most countries. These concerns have now been relegated to the realm of 'safety nets', and small-enterprise and informal-sector specific programs, which very often lead to blanket exemptions from paying taxes and from observing environmental and labour regulations, thereby undermining the social policy agenda (Tendler 2000).

1. Explaining Globalization

A great deal has been written about globalization in recent years. The orthodox globalist position argues that there has been a sea-change in the nature, magnitude and reach of cross-border flows of products, people, capital and money in the last two decades of the twentieth century, forging a genuinely globalized economy in which territorial boundedness and geographical proximity have declining importance for economic accumulation. The tidal wave of free trade, open markets, capital flows and high technology, globalization enthusiasts argue, will translate into higher rates of economic growth and improvements in people's standard of living. The orthodox position further posits the gradual demise of the state's domestic power over policy issues and a concomitant convergence in economic and social policies across diverse national entities. Given the overwhelming force of these globalizing forces, the verdict is that sooner or later all national policies must, and will, succumb to the market-based logic and converge towards the neo-liberal American model of capitalism.

This position has been seriously questioned by a significant range of analytically-nuanced and empirically-based studies.[1] While it is impossible for this paper to summarize in any detail the many points of contention that have been raised by these critics, it will highlight some of the more fundamental qualifications they have made. To do so we first look at the broad facts of globalization and note a number of reservations that have been entered in relation to the orthodox claims about the nature of the changes underway (section 1.1). The objections here are summarised in response to three key questions: Is the current period of globalization historically unprecedented? Have world trade, production and investment flows become all-encompassing—in other words, genuinely global—as the orthodox position claims? To what extent and in what ways have national states become powerless over policy issues?

Next (in section 1.2) we look at the more controversial question concerning the presumed impacts of globalization on economic growth, poverty and human welfare. The key question we will be exploring can be stated thus: are free flows of capital and an ever more open trading system conducive to economic growth and equitable development? What impacts have these trends had on gender equality?

1.1 The facts about globalization

First, from a historical point of view, as far as trade and capital flows are concerned, many of the studies cited in footnote 1 concur that the present period of globalization

[1] See Hirst and Thompson (1994), Weiss (1997), Helleiner (2000) and Jomo (2001), UNRISD (2000), Rodrik (1999, 2001) amongst others. Section 1.1 draws heavily on Jomo (2001) and Weiss (1997).

is by no means unprecedented (Hirst and Thompson 1994). In fact, the process of international economic integration from the 1880 until 1913, most observers agree, surpassed many of the contemporary indices of globalization, albeit perhaps not at the same pace.[2] For example, OECD share of export trade to GDP in 1913 may have exceeded the level reached in 1973, and by 1991 the share did not enormously exceed that for 1913 (17.9 percent in 1991 compared to 16 percent in 1913, (cited in Weiss 1997)).[3] Looking at the more contemporary era, while there is no doubt that both tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade have been significantly lowered in recent years—in East Asia and Latin America, for example, they were around twice as high in 1964-73 than they were in 1990—world exports were expanding far more rapidly between 1964 and 1973 than in the subsequent, trade-liberal, era.[4]

This should not, however, be taken to suggest that there is nothing new about contemporary globalization: there are monumental changes taking place and the crucial role of technological change, particularly in communications, transport and information processing cannot be overemphasized (Jomo 2001). Today what happens in one part of the world carries far greater impact on other parts of humanity and does so much more quickly than was once the case; *the global financial market is arguably the most dramatic manifestation of this change* (Helleiner 2000).

Second, while the orthodox globalist position predicts an all-encompassing tendency in world trade, production and investment, in fact these flows have remained *highly concentrated*, largely within the rich OECD countries and only *some* developing countries, while *most* developing countries have not integrated into the so-called 'global' economy. In the case of FDI (foreign direct investment), for example, there are currently four FDI clusters (Köhler 2001): the European Union; North America (with US as lead FDI investor and host, and including Canada and Mexico); a group of countries in East and Southeast Asia comprised of China, Hong Kong, Republic of Korea, Singapore and Malaysia; and the Mercosur members Brazil and Argentina. Together these four clusters accounted for 90 percent of all FDI inflows in 2000 (Köhler 2001).

It is in the finance sector that the reality of a *global* market seems indisputable. Since the removal of the gold standard in 1971 and the subsequent liberalization of exchange controls, international capital flows have reached spectacular levels. However, just like FDI flows, financial flows have also been highly concentrated and uneven, with over three quarters of portfolio investment going to only ten or so developing countries—the so-called 'emerging markets' (UNDESA 1999). Still, there have been important changes as far as a wider range of developing countries are

[2] Interestingly, in late nineteenth century much larger flows of migrant labour moved across international borders than they do today; the US and other parts of the New World (Argentina, Australia and Canada), for example, were host to millions of immigrants from the labour-surplus economies of Europe (Ireland, Italy, Denmark, Norway and Sweden in particular).

[3] As Robert Wade (1996) explains, there are structural reasons for expecting these shares to decline further given the sectoral shift within the OECD countries from manufacturing to services, since the latter are less trade-intensive.

[4] It will become clear when we look at economic growth rates that the earlier period showed much higher rates of economic growth than the last 20 years. Thus it seems likely that faster growth led to more trade, rather than the other way around UNRISD (2000). Thus, increasing liberalization of trade apparently has had no stimulating effect either on the growth of world exports or on the growth of world GDP (Ghose, 2000).

concerned. Official financial flows, for example, which until the early 1980s accounted for the bulk of international capital flows to the developing world are now being overtaken by private flows (with the exception of sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East where the former continue to predominate) (UNDESA 1999).

Financial liberalization is also one of the most controversial components of external liberalization (a point to which we shall return below). As persistent financial crises over the past two decades or so have shown, premature liberalization in the context of weak financial regulation has turned out to be a recipe for macroeconomic and social disaster (Cornia 2001). There is a groundswell of opinion (among academics and policy analysts) urging the regulation of short-term capital flows, for both economic and social reasons. However, international action to regulate short-term capital flows and reduce their volatility is blocked by powerful financial interest groups that benefit from high capital mobility. In the absence of global regulation, most policymakers agree that domestic monetary policies and banking regulations ought to focus on the strengthening of prudential regulation and controlling destabilizing short-term capital flows (Cornia 2001).

Third, the extent to which national states have actually become powerless as a result of external liberalization (especially financial liberalization) since the 1980s—an argument that is advanced by both advocates and critics of globalization—is a complex question because state capacity is so highly contingent. What is beyond doubt is that in the context of financial liberalization, the choices in *macroeconomic* policymaking have been narrowed; deflationary and fiscally conservative policies have become the norm (e.g. high interest rates, tight monetary policies, and fiscal restraint).[5] Many observers rightly believe that it has become extremely difficult for governments to adopt expansionary policies and to determine macroeconomic policy through an open social dialogue in which different interest groups can meaningfully participate. This option has been effectively foreclosed by fear of pre-emptive exercise of the 'exit' option by financial institutions attributed to the openness of capital markets (Elson 2000).

While this is an important area of concern and one to which we shall return further below, there are nevertheless a number of provisos that need to be taken into account. One important qualification is that for *many* developing countries the exigencies of globalization are expressed not only through the spontaneous workings of the market, but also (and sometimes largely) through policies imposed on them by the Bretton Woods Institutions (Mkandawire 1999). This does not mean that they have more room for policy maneuver than what the above-mentioned scenario would seem to indicate. What it underlines is the *different sources* of constraint under which they operate, and the extent to which the international financial and trade institutions, though their 'policy conditionalities' (rather than the 'invisible hand' of the global market), constitute the most immediate force of globalization.

A different argument, raised especially by scholars working on East Asia, is that 'there is much more to governing the economy than macroeconomic policy' (Weiss

[5] One obvious example is the Maastricht Treaty whose criteria of no more than 3% public debt to GDP has put a straitjacket on EU governments in terms of expansionary measures. Conversely, in the aftermath of the September 11 events the US seems to be going back to deficit spending.

1997, p.18). Industrial policy, they argue, continues to play a large role in the Asia region even though by its very nature '*the very capacity for industrial policy is one that requires the state to constantly adapt its tools and tasks*' (Weiss 1997, p.19). The point to emphasize is that 'because state capacities differ, the ability to exploit the opportunities of international economic change—rather than simply succumb to its pressures—will be much more marked in some countries than others' (Weiss 1997, p.26). In the aftermath of the Asian crisis, for example, the state in South Korea has once again taken charge of reorganizing social and market institutions and is refocusing its goals (which may well include the liberalization of the domestic economy) (Woo-Cumings forthcoming), while the real challenge for a country like Thailand is to 'overhaul it bureaucracy', which among other things, would mean increasing pay to improve its capacity to govern the economy (Weiss 1997, p.5).

Finally, the orthodox globalist claim of 'the powerless state' has also been applied to the social policy field. The argument is that the competition triggered by capital mobility—the 'footloose' nature of multinational corporations—tends to erode social norms and national regulations, by encouraging downward bidding among countries simultaneously aiming to attract FDI. This is presumed to reduce tax revenues, social insurance and other social expenditures, and to erode labour and environmental standards—a scenario that is commonly referred to as 'social dumping' or 'race to the welfare bottom'. This is a controversial proposition and various objections have been raised in response to it.

First, regarding the role and significance of 'footloose' capital, while in some sectors of production—where profits largely depend on the reduction of wage-costs—capital can simply take a 'random walk' in the global market and use the threat of exit, both the importance of cost-reduction as the driving force behind capital mobility and the extent of global capital mobility may have been exaggerated (Weiss 1997). There are structural reasons why companies may wish to nurture a strong 'home' or regional base rather than 'go global'.[6] Moreover, as was noted earlier, the great bulk of global FDI is located in the high-wage (and in some cases, high-tax) countries rather than in low-wage developing countries. The world's largest recipient of multinational investment is not low-wage India, Bangladesh or Tanzania, but high-wage U.S. itself, and low wages and low labour standards are not an attraction, and can be a deterrent, to most FDI (Singh and Zammit 2000a).

Interestingly, a country like China which is by far the single largest recipient of FDI inflows in the developing world, both in absolute terms and also in relation to national income, maintains a non-convertible currency, state control over its banking system and a broadly 'gradualist' strategy that violates some of the key elements of IMF/World Bank prescription for 'successful integration'. It is also important to underline the specificities of FDI flows into China: much of China's success in attracting FDI is probably owed to its linguistic, cultural and sentimental attraction for Hong Kong and Overseas Chinese businessmen (Davin 2001). Still, the availability of 'cheap labour' with work discipline and a descent basic education and nutritional standard has no doubt been important in attracting such investment. But even here what is noteworthy about China's industrial trajectory, like that of Taiwan's (PoC)

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[6] For an elaboration of the argument as to why MNCs do not by and large invest where wages and taxes are lowest see Weiss (1997)

and Republic of Korea's a decade or two earlier, is the extent to which global industrial competitiveness has been underpinned by the highly redistributive agrarian transitions that were carried out prior to the industrial take-off, which have effectively acted as a wage subsidy (Hart 2001).[7] The extent to which China can continue to capitalize on the benefits of earlier redistributions and investments in human capabilities, however, may be eroding very fast as the impacts of domestic liberalization (of both land and welfare) lead to increasing inequality and the erosion of human capabilities (Croll 1999).

Second, in opposition to the 'social dumping' thesis, others argue that external economic openness in fact requires the strengthening of mechanisms for social protection—the 'social compensation' thesis. An important lesson from Europe, according to these analysts, is that more open economies (compared with the virtually self-sufficient continent of the USA) require greater social protection (Gough 2001). The historical record shows that some of the more successful open economies or trading nations—including the Nordic countries and the Netherlands—have had comprehensive social policies. Such policies have not only facilitated the creation of human capital through education (training) and better health, but have also made the costs of greater openness more politically acceptable (Mkandawire 2001). It is further argued that despite the initial fears that globalization would lead to a reversal of some of the social gains that were made in the institutionalised welfare states, driving them down towards the 'lowest common welfare denominator', these have not been by and large substantiated (with the exception of New Zealand and United Kingdom where there have been some policy reversals). Instead, the evidence points towards the continued dominance of national institutional traditions of interest representation and political consensus-building as important parameters that continue to shape growth, employment and welfare objectives (Esping-Andersen 1996).

Beyond the institutionalised welfare states, the 'compensation' thesis has also been advanced based on econometric analyses drawing on large data-sets from a wide range of countries (including many developing and transition countries). One reliable study of this genre documents a positive and robust association between an economy's exposure to foreign trade and the size of its government (Rodrik 1999). The most plausible explanation for this association is that government expenditures are used to provide social insurance against external risk. In other words, social protection may be the only alternative to trade protection, if social disintegration is to be avoided. *The implication is that a globalized world requires more social protection.* However, it is important to bear in mind that these quantitative analyses are highly sensitive to definitions of 'social spending'. One concrete example from a comparative research project on social policy carried out by the ILO can help illustrate this point. Alber and Standing (2000) found that based on ILO statistics Chilean social expenditure ratio almost doubled between 1980 and 1992. Thus,

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[7] The point made by Gillian Hart (2001) is that redistributive land reforms in Taiwan (PoC), Republic of Korea and China, despite all their crucial differences, have lowered the money wage while maintaining the social wage, and thereby contributed substantially to industrial competitiveness. She contrasts the East Asian trajectories with South Africa's turbulent agrarian legacy, where by contrast Apartheid policies of land dispossession have, in her opinion, produced a detrimental impact on capital accumulation in the industrial sector and its global competitiveness. For a similar argument, but based on a comparative analysis of Latin America and East Asias agrarian trajectories see Cristobal Kay (2001).

according to the ILO statistics, Chile appears as an 'overproportionate welfare spender with expansionist social policies' (Alber and Standing 2000, p.108). However, based on in-depth information on institutional changes, and data on central government expenditures provided by the UN Economic Commission on Latin America and the Caribbean, Stephen Kay (2000), who was a member of the ILO research team, depicts Chile quite differently. According to his analysis, which is cited in Alber and Standing's introduction, Chile is the country 'with the most radical liberal welfare reforms in Latin America, furthermore, his statistical data show Chile as curbing its social spending ratio between 1980 and 1996' (Alber and Standing 2000, p.108). The point to underline is the sensitivity of quantitative outcomes to definitions of 'social spending', and hence the importance of cross-checking different data sources and 'triangulating' quantitative methods with qualitative or institutional analyses of social policy.

Which of these competing hypotheses—'social dumping' or 'social compensation'—fits better with the facts as far as developing and transition countries are concerned? While a convincing answer to this question would require far more comprehensive comparative empirical research than what is currently available, what is clear even from the existing studies of social policy is the *absence* of a uniform response to the pressures of globalization, which would conform to the idea of social dumping. The above-mentioned ILO project, for example, found certain 'regional clusters' as well as cross-country diversity even within these regional groupings. It is worth citing their conclusions here:

> Southern European and most East Asian countries appear on a trail following the developmental path of the European welfare state pioneers; while Eastern European and Latin American countries are torn between institutionalist European and residualist American models to a degree which makes their future more uncertain. … The basic message of our studies is, then, that there is marked heterogeneity in recent welfare policy developments with an astounding degree of country-specific variations (Alber and Standing 2000, p.112)

The findings of the ILO research project, summarised above, are broadly consistent with the fine-grained country level research emerging from East Asia (Kwon 2000) (Gough 2000) and Latin America (Huber 1996) (Huber and Stephens 2000). Ironically the region with a history of extensive social policies (with enterprise-based entitlements to welfare under communism)—Eastern Europe—also appears to be the one where there have been more policy reversals, even though the authors (Deacon 2000a) (Alber and Standing 2000) find the notion of social dumping in response to globalization inadequate when it comes to describing the social policy reforms undertaken in the region. They argue that while there has been some privatisation (e.g. education, housing), the social expenditure ratio increased rather than declined in most countries, various taxes (payroll, corporate, and personal income) have been raised, and a good number of countries in the region appear to be moving towards different varieties of Western European welfare state model (rather than a residualist, liberal model)—the outcomes having been largely dependent on political battles in which supranational and national actors were intertwined in various coalitions (Deacon 2000a).

These findings, however, do not take into account how social policy reforms have impacted specifically on different strata of women in Eastern Europe. In the case of Poland, for example, which is considered by the ILO study to be moving towards an ‘institutionalised welfare state model’, women have seen numerous reversals of their social rights with detrimental consequences for their labour force participation and autonomy (Heinen and Portet 2001). A striking number of legal and policy changes that have been implemented since the transition to democracy have effectively stripped women of what in Poland are called their ‘special privileges’, such as paid leave to take care of sick children. Furthermore, the restoration of democracy has coincided with a significant erosion of social rights that primarily benefited women. Severe cuts in the state budget have dealt a heavy blow to public infrastructure for infant care and childcare. Given these two sets of policy changes, it is not surprising that women’s official labour force participation rate has fallen, while they constitute a disproportionate share of the unemployed. At the same time with the introduction of market principles many other social benefits (pensions, health insurance, and so on) that used to be universal rights associated with socialist versions of citizenship have been increasingly linked to formal labour force participation, which although not directly discriminating against women, indirectly places many women at a disadvantage by strengthening the so-called ‘male breadwinner bias’ of social policy.

We will return to this theme further below when we re-visit social policies and consider how they are gendered. But what we need to retain from this short description is that the objectives pursued through social policy embody and reinforce diverse values and objectives, which may be politically contested, and which may become outdated as societies evolve and social norms and values undergo change. The post-war concept of full employment that underpinned European welfare states was often limited to the male breadwinner population. In these contexts social policy and industrial relations often worked in tandem. The family’s dependence on the male wage and male entitlements, together with trade union struggles for a ‘family wage’, contributed in many contexts, especially in continental Europe, to keeping women confined to full-time care work and dependent on the male wage and its concomitant entitlements.

As Elson and Cagatay (Elson and Cagatay 2000) remind us, the ‘male breadwinner bias’ constructs the ownership of rights to make claims on the state for social benefits (access to services, cash transfers, pensions) around a norm of full-time, life-long working-age participation in the market-based labour force. Those whose participation does not fit this norm typically have lesser rights, which they can frequently only exercise as dependents on those who do fit the norm. The result has been the exclusion of many women from entitlements, making them dependent upon men, especially during periods of their lives when they are intensively involved in taking care of children and elders, and when they themselves become old.

This should not come as a surprise because welfare systems construct and are constructed on notions of who is and who is not a full citizen (Mackintosh 2000). Hence, they exclude and stratify, by ‘race’, gender and social class. Welfare systems are thus the bearers of broader social relations of inequality. However, they are also a political stage for the constitution and contestation of notions of ‘the public’, and are thus important building blocks of legitimate democratic states (Mackintosh 2000).

To end this section, we can conclude that while the current period of globalization may not be without historical precedent, and while world trade, production and investment, have remained *geographically concentrated* rather than being genuinely global, there has nevertheless been a clearly discernible trend toward global economic liberalization (compared to the previous three decades). This has involved liberalization of the international trade in goods and services on the one hand, and the flows of international capital (foreign direct investment, portfolio equity investment, borrowings, etc.) on the other. The extent to which external liberalization has weakened the national state and led to 'social dumping' are complex questions given the *diversity* both in state capacity as well as in institutional and political forces that mediate the forces of globalization. While there is increasing convergence in macro-economic policies, the same cannot be said about industrial and social policies which continue to be shaped by national institutional characteristics and histories, as well as political alliances and dynamics which are increasingly intertwined with clashes of interests and ideas among influential supranational actors (EU, IFIs, UN, and so on).

1.2 Globalization and economic growth

Globalization advocates premise their arguments for increasing external liberalization on the beneficial outcomes—in terms of economic growth, employment and human welfare—expected to flow from greater openness. But globalization enthusiasts have to confront a number of awkward questions. In this section we look at the evidence on economic growth in the current era of globalization.

A comparison of regional growth rates for the period 1960-1980, when developing countries were pursuing *dirigiste* policies (import substitution industrialization, or ISI, for example), with those for the 1980-2000 period, when they were enticed to open up to world markets, raises a number of important questions. In Latin America, for example, GDP per capita grew by 75% from 1960-1980, whereas in the subsequent period (1980-2000) it has only risen by 6 percent; the equivalent figures for sub-Saharan Africa are 36% and 15% respectively (Weisbrot et al. 2000). In fact, the only region that shows higher growth rates in the latter period is East Asia, which grew faster from 1980 to 1998 than in the previous two decades—explained by China's quadrupling of GDP over the last 18 years (Weisbrot et al. 2000). But as was noted earlier, China has taken a far more gradualist approach to liberalization than is routinely advocated by the international financial and trade institutions. The lessons that may be legitimately drawn from the Chinese experience will not therefore provide categorical support for all-out global integration along the lines advocated by these mainstream institutions.[8]

This disappointing growth performance is enough to raise some serious questions about the policies that are advocated, and often imposed, on developing and transition countries—where the 'social costs' are often justified in terms of higher growth rates. Clearly, the evidence cited above leaves a gaping hole in that argument. Having said this, how can the disappointing growth record of the past two decades be explained? The literature suggests two main causes: first, that the neo-liberal macro-economic agenda has a strong '*deflationary bias'* which has, predictably, led to low rates of

[8] China's approach to liberalization shares many important features with past Northeast Asian 'outward oriented' industrialization (Rodrik 2001; Wade 2001). The long-running debate on East Asian industrialization has been truly extensive; See Wade (2000) and Jomo (2001) for an up-to-date assessment of that debate.

growth.[9] And, second, that the disruptions caused by *financial liberalization* have had a devastating impact on the growth of real economies. We will look at these two factors in turn.

As is now widely appreciated the debt crises of the early 1980s, in turn induced by US-led deflationary policies, provided a critical opportunity for Washington to try to impose a series of new policy regimes on indebted developing countries through the international financial institutions (Jomo 2001). This new macro-economic policy agenda included fiscal restraint, open trade and capital accounts, and privatization, all of which reflect an acceptance of price stability as the primary concern of macroeconomic policy (described in some circles as the 'Washington Consensus'). In other words, the main targets of macro-economic policy have been low inflation and balanced budgets, regardless of the implications for social development—and indeed, as we have seen, for growth.

These items are seen by many observers as central to the policy agenda of finance capital—a narrow but powerful interest group (distinct from industrial capital) that has moved to a position of dominance since the mid-1970s (Patnaik 1999).[10] As one observer puts it:

> Financiers are creditors, and creditors wish above all to prevent inflation which erodes their returns; they wish to maintain high real interest rates, and they want complete freedom to move their finance in and out of countries in the search of the highest profits. *Deflationary economic policies combined with removal of all national barriers to the free movement of finance capital*, thus form the core of the policy agenda of finance capital. (Patnaik 2001, p.1)

Yet, macroeconomic policies that are 'sound', in terms of balancing the budget and keeping inflation low, can be quite detrimental if they destroy jobs, livelihoods and human capabilities (Elson 2000). Many independent economists have raised serious questions about the cherished 'fundamentals' of orthodox macroeconomic policy that have been applied in countries as diverse as Russia, Brazil and Indonesia with pronounced contractionary consequences. They urge a serious re-thinking of these 'fundamentals'. Orthodox economists, for example argue, on the basis of simple regressions, that low inflation is a significant contributor to growth, while high inflation is costly for the real economy. But critics contend that the relationship is spurious: governments whose economies are already in trouble tend to over-expand their money supply which leads to inflation; but in these cases it is poor economic performance that leads to inflation, not the other way around (Weisbrot et al. 2000, p.7).[11]

What constitutes a 'sound' or 'prudent' macro-economic policy then becomes an open question with no single optimal set of policies as the correct answer. What is a sustainable budgetary deficit? Above what rates does inflation become costly for an

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[9] Deflationary bias 'refers to the way in which governments are constrained by pressures from financial markets to cut spending and maintain low interest rates, keeping employment and output growth below their potential' (Elson 2000).

[10] On the rise to dominance of finance capital see Patnaik (1999); on the influence of Wall Street on the US Treasury and the IMF in the context of the Asian financial crisis see Wade and Veneroso (1998).

[11] As Cornia (2000) and Weisbrot et al. (2000) explain the relation between moderate rates of inflation (i.e. inflation rates below 40%) and growth is one of the most heavily researched topics in economics and most of the studies have been inconclusive.

economy? Rather than a single unique answer to many of these questions, there is instead a range of alternative development paths, each deriving from different combinations of a large number of relevant factors (Cornia 2000). While this seems to be nothing more than a truism, the implications in term of development *policy* can be powerful. And yet changing the macro-economic agenda will require more than clear analytical vision and strong empirical evidence. The economic agenda that devastates the livelihoods of large numbers of people is very beneficial to some groups; it serves 'the interests of financial institutions and those who own large amounts of money, preserving the value of their wealth and enabling them to augment it freely' (Elson 2001, p.22).

A related factor that has contributed to the disappointing growth record over the past two decades is the much higher frequency of financial crises. The world economy has been experiencing a much higher frequency of financial instability in the 1980s and 1990s than in the post-World War II period up to the early 1970s (Wade 2001). These persistent 'booms in busts' have been in response to the much greater cross-border capital flows relative to GDP compared to previous decades, at least for the OECD countries and the developing countries known as 'emerging markets'. It is for the latter group of countries that the strains caused by financial crises have been particularly high given the weakness of their financial systems. For example, in the case of the Mexican crisis of 1994, uncontrolled capital flight led to the devaluation of the currency and the collapse of the economy that could only be halted by a $50 billion rescue package from the US. While the financial crisis was short-lived for investors, it had far-reaching effects on the Mexican banking system, interest rates and prospects for longer-term economic recovery; it has also meant increased vulnerability and slow (or negative) growth for other countries in the region that have become highly dependent on short-term foreign investment (UNRISD 2000, p.7).

There is now little serious disagreement that the East Asian economic crises since mid-1997 began as currency and liquidity crises. It is also increasingly clear that the crises were caused by the undermining of previous systems of international and national economic governance due to deregulation and other developments associated with financial liberalization. In other words, the subversion of effective financial governance at both international and national levels created conditions contributing to the crises (Jomo, 2001). As is now well known, the drastically tight monetary policies (interest rates as high as 80% in Indonesia) and fiscal austerity measures that were 'advised' by the IMF to Asian governments in response to the financial crisis led to massive job losses and surges in poverty. In other words, what was initially a 'relatively tractable liquidity problem was thus turned into a massive solvency crisis with enormous losses in employment and output' (Singh and Zammit 2000b, p.1255).

It has also been persuasively argued that financial crises in developing countries, and the fact that these crises are followed by long periods of negative or slightly positive growth, while the rich countries continue to grow even during their banking-cum-currency crises (which are in any case less frequent) have contributed to the rising global inequality (see Wade 2001, for an elaboration of this claim) And within countries (be it in East Asia, Eastern Europe or Latin America) it is arguable that financial crises have exacerbated gender inequalities as women have often born the brunt of managing household adjustment to these crises (Francisco and Sen 2000) (Singh and Zammit 2000b). According to regional studies from Asia, the most immediate and felt impact of the crisis was in the area of social reproduction (increases in prices and availability of basic food items), as well as medium-term impacts in terms of the intensification of women's labour force participation in low-paying work in the services and informal sectors (including prostitution and domestic work) due to pressures of family survival and from limited opportunities provided by economic systems with marked sector-based gender preference (Francisco and Sen 2000).

This section of the paper has considered some of the plausible explanations for the relatively slow rates of economic growth in the 1980s and 1990s. But we know that economic growth is not in itself sufficient to achieve social goals. What matters—if the benefits are to be widely shared—is the quality of growth: 'whether it entails a more equal distribution of income, more and better jobs, rising wages, more gender equality and inclusiveness' (UNRISD 2000, p.5). In the following sections we will therefore be looking more specifically at some of the social issues, in particular the employment and poverty record. However one point that can be said with confidence is that with very low or negative rates of growth it will be extremely difficult (if not impossible) for countries to undertake policies that can significantly reduce poverty and inequality and enhance the standard of living—the fiscal resources needed to set up comprehensive social programs, for example, will be much more difficult to muster when growth is sluggish.[12] These difficulties are compounded by the fact that redistributive policies (such as agrarian reform, progressive income taxation, and redistributive and comprehensive social policies) have been marginalized in policy debates by the neo-liberal ideological hegemony.

2. Poverty, Inequality and their Gender Dimensions

This section begins with the general picture of income poverty for different regions of the world over the past decade (see Table 1). The measure of income poverty used here is the standard measure employed by most international agencies: number of people (or proportion of the population) with a purchasing power equivalent to less than $1 per day. Arguably, this is a very low figure and seriously underestimates the extent of poverty. The picture is nevertheless far from encouraging: at least 1.2 billion people (or one-fifth of the world's population) were living in absolute poverty in 1998, roughly the same situation as a decade earlier.

[12] On the growth/poverty nexus see Weisbrot et al. (2000) and Rodrik (2001) and references therein.

Table 1—Poverty trends: People living on less than $1 (PPP) per day (millions)

	1987	1990	1993	1996	1998
East Asia and the Pacific	415.1	452.4	431.9	265.0	278.3
(excluding China)	*109.2*	*76.0*	*66.0*	*45.2*	*55.6*
Eastern Europe and Central Asia	1.1	7.1	18.3	23.8	24.0
Latin America and the Caribbean	63.7	73.8	70.8	76.0	78.2
Middle East and North Africa	25.0	22.0	21.5	21.3	20.9
South Asia	474.4	495.1	505.1	504.7	522.0
Sub-Saharan Africa	217.2	242.3	273.3	289.0	290.9
Total	1,196.5	1,292.7	1,320.9	1,179.9	1,214.2
(excluding China)	*890.6*	*916.3*	*955*	*960.1*	*991.5*

Source: World Bank, 1999a (cited in UNRISD 2000).

However as a recent UNRISD Report goes on to argue, 'the incidence of poverty has increased in the past few years not because the world as a whole is getting poorer, but because the benefits of growth have been unevenly spread.' (UNRISD 2000, p.11). There has been a striking increase in inequality both between countries and within countries (even the rich industrialized countries), which raises pressing questions about the policies that have contributed to this worrying trend.[13] Ironically though, the issue of inequality has received little attention in policy circles (and some would say, in research too). The retreat from equality is evident across the literature on economic development, which has been far more concerned with issues of poverty than of inequality (and redistribution). It is also evident in the recent shift in social policy thinking away from ideas of universal welfare provision aimed at creating a more equal society, towards an emphasis on the provision of *basic* services targeted to the needy and the 'poorest of the poor'. The latter aims to reduce poverty and destitution, but is not concerned with the overall distribution of income and wealth within society.

2.1 Gendered poverty

Poverty is increasingly seen as a multi-dimensional phenomenon, which includes market-based consumption (or income), as well as the public provision of goods and services, access to common property resources and the intangible dimensions of a good life, such as low levels of disease and crime, clean air, dignity and autonomy. The proponents of the conventional approach argue that the income/consumption measure is still the best single proxy for poverty since it can incorporate non-market goods and services and a wide range of other utilities (clean air, democracy) and disutilities (noise, pollution), through 'shadow prices', into a monetary equivalent that is easy to compare over time and across context. But their critics argue that common property resources and state-provided commodities have usually been ignored in

[13] For references to recent studies on inequality see Wade (2001).

practice, and the consumption of non-traded goods has also been under-estimated (Baulch 1996). It is also questionable whether 'shadow prices' can meaningfully translate the different kinds of values that are embodied in non-market goods and services into monetary equivalents that are comparable.

In practice while most official studies of poverty, such as the World Bank's Poverty Assessments (PAs)[14] begin by asserting the multi-dimensionality of poverty, they end up giving priority to an income and/or consumption definition, a poverty line measure and a quantitative estimate of the percentage of people in poverty. At the same time, many of the potential insights about the nature of impoverishment, or poverty processes, which emerge from the qualitative and 'participatory' research are either marginalized or dropped from the analysis (Lockwood and Whitehead 1999). This is a fundamental methodological choice, since it locks these studies of poverty into reliance on expenditure data from household surveys, which tend to be unreliable and non-comparable (Lockwood and Whitehead 1999). In most African and Latin American countries, household budget surveys are one-off (non-repetitive) exercises, which make them unsuited as a device for monitoring poverty.[15] There is also little consistency in how the poverty line is established, even for the same country: in the case of the World Bank's PAs, some of them define the poverty line in absolute terms and others in relative terms; some deflate household expenditure by average household size while others use expenditure per adult equivalent. Such methodological inconsistency effectively defeats the purpose of collecting quantitative data, since one of the rationales for using quantitative data is precisely that they are comparable over time and across context (Lockwood and Whitehead 1999).

The reliance on poverty lines and household expenditure data has profound implications for how gender issues are analysed. Measuring poverty on the basis of household expenditure data effectively ignores the long-standing feminist concerns about intra-household distribution. It is very rare to find standard surveys, such as those carried out in the context of the PAs, embarking on a quantitative exploration of intra-household poverty. Per capita and adult equivalent measures make assumptions about *equal* intra-household distribution of resources. Gillian Hart's (1995b) interrogation of the claims made by those using collective models of the household to be able to recover intra-household distributional patterns from household surveys using sophisticated econometric techniques also reveals that they are for the most part exaggerated. In other words, if household surveys are to become useful tools for capturing and monitoring gender differentials in poverty, then intra-household distribution issues need to be addressed at the very early stage and specifically built into questionnaire design.

The reliance on household expenditure data also means that one of the easier ways to make gender visible is by dividing the households into male-headed and female-headed ones, given that the characteristics of household heads (their gender, age, etc.) are invariably collected through these surveys and form a ready basis for sorting the data (Lockwood and Whitehead 1999). The tendency to equate female headship with

[14] These Poverty Assessments (PA) are country studies about poverty carried out by the World Bank as part of the New Poverty Agenda. By 1996 almost 50 PAs had been carried out; for some countries there is more than one Assessment.
[15] See for example, Appleton (1996) on Uganda, and Lustig (1993) for Latin America.

poverty has, however, been queried on both empirical and methodological grounds. The trajectories leading to female headship are clearly divergent, and the category of households labelled 'female-headed' is a highly heterogeneous one. It includes lone female units, households of single women wage earners with young dependents, households in which women earners receive significant remittances from absent males, and so on. Some of these conditions may constitute what can be reasonably thought of as poverty risk factors, such as households with young children maintained by women alone (Folbre 1990). But by aggregating these distinct categories of households generated through different social processes (e.g. migration, widowhood, divorce), and constructing a simple dualism between male-headed and female-headed households, it becomes impossible to interpret the evidence in a meaningful way.

In short, there is a persisting reticence on the part of administrative and governmental structures responsible for data collection exercises to probe the intra-household arena. This is surprising in view of the significant body of evidence and argument that has been brought to bear on this issue over the past two decades. This has effectively shaken the micro foundations of the conventional economic approach, and yet few national level surveys attempt to collect data at a more disaggregated level. In the absence of appropriate data it is very difficult to assess how processes of globalization over the past two decades have impacted on intra-household inequalities in income-poverty. As a recent UNIFEM report concluded:

> 'Without a gender-sensitive income-poverty indicator there is no way of estimating the extent of feminization of poverty—leading to the use of global "guesstimates" such as the much-repeated claim that 70 percent of the world's poor are women. No one can identify the empirical evidence on which this claim is based, and demographic analysis has shown that it is not credible' (UNIFEM 2000, p.95).[16]

2.2 Capabilities and their gender gaps

The capability framework, outlined in the writings of Amartya Sen (1985) within the economics discipline and elaborated in philosophical terms by Martha Nussbaum (2001), sets out an approach towards identifying 'the basic constitutional principles that should be respected and implemented by the governments of all nations, as a bare minimum of what respect for human dignity requires'. The idea of a basic social minimum is provided by focusing on human capabilities, that is, 'what people are actually able to do and to be—in a way informed by an intuitive idea of a life that is worthy of the dignity of the human being'. Moreover, given that these 'beings' and 'doings' are directly measurable on the individual, gender inequalities can be made more readily visible. Not surprisingly, the framework has inspired a large body of feminist research on well-being outcomes, documenting significant and sometimes alarming incidence of female disadvantage.

In this section and the following we will be looking at two standard capabilities, to see how women have fared in diverse regional contexts over the past two decades. The indicators we will be looking at in this sub-section very cursorily relate to female education (net primary and secondary enrolment or attendance ratios). The main concern of this paper, however, is female employment (including gender wage gaps, and social rights linked to employment); this will constitute the content of Section 3.

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[16] For a similar argument and an elaboration of the gendered dimensions of poverty see *Development and Change*, Special Issue on Gendered Poverty and Well-being, edited by Razavi (1999).

As Elson (2001) rightly argues, there are many problems in assessing the impact of particular policy programmes on how women and men have fared (in terms of nutrition, life expectancy, and so on). One major source of problem continues to be the lack of timely, reliable, sex-disaggregated data for many parts of the world. Moreover, as she goes on to argue, 'it is intrinsically difficult to examine causal links between policies and events that follow their introduction' since the policy may not have been fully implemented, or because of many significant events taking place at the same time (such as changes in the weather, or in social and political forces).

Let us take one capability for which data is more readily available and generally more reliable (compared to, for example, nutritional indicators), namely education. Enrolment ratios,[17] it is widely agreed, provide an over-optimistic picture of the degree to which young people are educated (UNIFEM 2000) (Saith and Harriss-White 1999). Enrolment ratios do not take into account drop-out rates (which can be quite high, especially when economic conditions deteriorate); they do not take into account the content of education curricula (which can be gender-biased); nor do they show how qualified people are when they complete their education. Despite these weaknesses, given the fact that enrolment ratios are more widely available, they will be used here. Moreover, given the emphasis that has been placed on female education by diverse policy institutions over the past decade or so, it is also one of the few areas of social development where one can expect to see relatively more progress. However, as we will see below, there have been setbacks in some contexts, and many challenges remain.

During the period 1980-1994 the gap between girls enrolments and boys enrolment at primary level did indeed narrow in developing countries. But there are some important anomalies that stand out. In the case of sub-Saharan Africa the closing of the gender gap in some countries is attributed to a decline in the enrolment of boys and only a marginal increase in the participation of girls (Colclough, Rose, and Tembon 2000, p.8). According to UNESCO data, the gross primary enrolment rate for girls in sub-Saharan Africa was 68 in 1980 and 66 in 1990, while that for boys was 87 and 79 respectively (Colclough, Rose, and Tembon 2000). In other words, the gender gap did indeed narrow, but not in a way that was consistent with the realisation of the right to education of either boys or girls. It is essential to look at absolute levels of enrolment of girls, as well as at the gender gap if we want to evaluate how far girls have enjoyed the right to education in the neo-liberal era (Elson 2001).

If we examine girls' enrolment in secondary school, while the majority of countries have made progress, for about one-quarter of countries there has been deterioration. Again the UNESCO data show that girls' net enrolment in secondary school declined between 1985 and 1997 in 10 out of 33 countries in sub-Saharan Africa; 7 out of 11 countries in Central and Western Asia; 2 out of 21 countries in Asia and the Pacific; 6 out of 26 in Latin America and the Caribbean; 6 out of 9 in Eastern Europe; and 1 out of 23 countries in Western Europe and other Developed Countries (UNIFEM 2000, p.

[17] The gross enrolment ratio (GER) for any educational level is the total enrolment at that level, regardless of age, divided by the population of the age-group which officially corresponds to that level. The net enrolment ratio only includes enrolment for the age-group corresponding to the official age-group for that level. GER's may be misleading compared to net enrolment ratios, especially in developing countries where repetition rates are high (Saith and Harriss-White, 1999).

69-71). Again, the picture is mixed. But even enrolment ratios, which are widely believed to provide an over-optimistic assessment, show that there have been regressions in some regional contexts—and this despite the policy emphasis that has been placed on female education as the panacea for all development ills. One of the benefits of education for women should be to enhance their economic entitlements. Yet, despite the link between education and income, studies from diverse regional contexts indicate that equal years of education do not translate into equality of job opportunity for men and women (UNIFEM 2000, p. 71). Men everywhere tend to get better jobs than women with similar levels of education. A complex set of forces explain the persistence of gendered labour markets, from the more obvious factors such as continuing gender gaps in the fields of science and technology, to the more intractable differences in men's and women's relations/access to employment, the centrality of the 'care economy' in how women relate to labour markets, and gender discriminatory forces in how male and female labour are valued and remunerated regardless of human capital investments. Some of these concerns are addressed in Section 3.

A far more comprehensive picture charting the relationship between gender inequalities in capabilities and neo-liberal policies over the past two decades is provided in **Progress of the World's Women 2000** (UNIFEM 2000) and in Diane Elson's recent article on gender justice and neo-liberal economic policies (2001). The picture that emerges from both the UNIFEM Report and Elson's comprehensive review is far from encouraging. It is worth citing Elson's conclusions, which contrast rather sharply with those voiced by a World Bank report **Engendering Development** (2001)(2001) that was recently released. Based on a limited and problematic data set,[18] the World Bank Report concludes:

> While there is evidence to support both sides of the debate about the impact of structural adjustment, on balance the evidence suggests that females' absolute status and gender equality improved, not deteriorated over the adjustment period (World Bank 2001, p.215).

Elson's review ends with a far less sanguine conclusion:

> Overall, the picture with respect to women's enjoyment of specific rights in the neo-liberal era is not encouraging. The evidence reviewed above suggests that there has been regress rather than progress in the realisation of economic and social rights in many countries, even though in some countries progress has been made (Elson 2001, p.13).

It is beyond the scope of this paper to assess these statements in any comprehensive manner. However, one issue that we will be looking at in some depth is the area of employment. This constitutes the subject matter of section 3.

3. Globalization and Employment

One argument that is frequently made in favor of globalization, and trade liberalization in particular, is that it has brought about higher rates of employment in developing countries as the hub of manufacturing has shifted from the North to the

[18] See Elson (2001) for an elaboration of why the data sets used by the World Bank report are problematic.

South. In turn, high rates of unemployment in the North are, according to this view, to be blamed on the same North-South migration of jobs. Is this argument supported by existing empirical evidence? Has trade liberalization expanded employment opportunities in developing countries? These questions are explored in section 3.1 below. Women, in particular, are often seen as the winners of labour market changes unleashed by trade liberalization. Section 3.2 will therefore be looking at the evidence behind this assertion. Are women the *net* beneficiaries in terms of employment generation and destruction consequent upon trade liberalization? Which groups of women have gained and which groups have lost? What has women's increased presence in labour markets meant in terms of economic and social entitlements as well as in more qualitative terms as far as changes in gender relations are concerned?

3.1 Manufacturing employment: North and South

There is a widespread perception among policy-makers and some sections of the public in the North that processes of trade liberalization over the past two decades have contributed to a significant shift in the structure of global manufacturing production, from the North to the South. A significant part of the academic literature on trade-related employment (by economists) has been concerned with the impact of North-South trade on unemployment and wage inequality in the North. The effects of such global integration on workers in the South 'have generally been taken to be unambiguously positive' (Ghosh 2000, p.4), and have received surprisingly little empirical scrutiny. Only recently has more sustained attention been directed at the impact of global integration on workers in the South (Ghose 2000; Ghosh 2000) (Singh and Zammit 2000a) (UNCTAD 1999) (UNCTAD 2001). This section of the paper draws heavily on the findings of this emerging literature.

One of the main arguments emerging from the trade literature is that the expansion of North-South trade has brought about substantial employment gains in the South, while it has given rise to high rates of unemployment among the unskilled workers in the North. More recent studies raise serious questions about the extent to which high rates of unemployment (in Western Europe) and low wages among unskilled workers (in the United States) can be attributed to manufacturing trade with the South.

Looking at the share of different countries in world merchandise exports, one point emerges with clarity: the share of developing countries in world export of manufactures steadily increased from about 11 per cent in 1980 to about 25 per cent in 1999, while the share of industrialized countries over the same period steadily declined (from about 83 percent to 72 per cent). These aggregate changes in world merchandise exports seem to support the view that jobs are being 'exported' from the North to the South. But such a proposition is weakened when a number of further considerations are brought into the picture. First we briefly look at the employment picture in the North and the extent to which North-South trade can be held accountable for the deteriorating conditions there.[19] Next we turn to the employment picture in the South and scrutinize the proposition that is implicit in the very idea of 'exporting' jobs: if jobs are being 'exported' from the North, presumably they are being 'imported' into the South (Ghosh 2000).

[19] The following paragraph draws heavily on Singh and Zammit (2000a) and the reader should refer to this paper for further elaboration of the points made in passing here as well as references to other relevant literature. A recent UNCTAD paper (2001) advances similar arguments.

The evidence on trends in wages and employment of workers in the North over the past two decades clearly show a marked deterioration in labour market conditions: increasing unemployment in Europe; falling real wages and increasing casualisation of labour in the US; and the significant weakening of trade unions in both contexts. An important factor behind the rising rates of unemployment and increasing wage inequality in most industrialized countries over the past two decades has been job loss in the manufacturing sector, which has in turn been due to a displacement of unskilled labour on a significant scale in a number of industries in which developing countries have increased their market share (UNCTAD 2001). Hence the public concerns about jobs and wages in the North are clearly well-founded. Yet, the results of recent research indicate that there is very little basis for the popular perception that deteriorating conditions in the North are to be blamed on trade with the South. This conclusion is in turn based on a number of related arguments (Singh and Zammit 2000a) (UNCTAD 2001).

First, most manufacturing trade of the advanced countries takes place between these countries themselves and only a small part is with developing countries. It is rather difficult therefore to argue that the rise in income inequality and mass unemployment in the North are caused largely by the rather marginal trade with the South. Second, despite its increased manufacturing imports from the South, over the past three decades the North has generally maintained a surplus in manufacturing trade with the South. Furthermore, neither mass unemployment nor de-industrialization (i.e. the drop in manufacturing employment in the North) is associated with fluctuations in this trade surplus. It is further recognized that these unfavourable labour market conditions need to be explained by taking into account other important factors, such as trade imbalances between Northern countries themselves, cyclical movements in economic activity and its slow long-term growth, technical change, and changes in economic and social policy in these countries themselves. Finally, while it is widely recognized that the main employment problem in the North is the insufficient demand for unskilled labour, even those economists who believe that there is a tendency for North-South trade to be detrimental to unskilled workers will recognize that this tendency can be overwhelmed by the 'lift all boats' effect of faster economic growth (as was the case in the 1950s and 1960s when there was a fast increase in imports from the then NICs, Japan and Italy, into the US but without any adverse impacts on employment and wages in the US). In other words, even if there were some adverse labour market outcomes in the 1980s and 1990s of trade with the South, these could have been overridden by faster economic growth (Singh and Zammit 2000a).

The far more important question that needs to be looked at as far as this paper is concerned is whether North-South trade in manufactures has in fact led to significant employment expansion in the South, as is often claimed.

The first important point to note is that the much-cited changes in the trade relations between the industrialized and the developing economies, or between the North and the South, actually reflect shifts in the position of a small number of developing economies in the global market for manufactures—referred to as the 'Group of 13'

(Ghose 2000).[20] It is the export performance of this small group of countries that explains almost all the significant increase in developing country manufacturing exports over the past two decades and therefore accounts for what is often regarded as a major shift in trade relations between the North and the South. Thus the share of these countries in total merchandise export from the South increased from 33 percent in 1980 to 72 percent in 1996, while their share of manufactured exports of the South went up from the already high figure of 73 percent to 88 percent over the same period. Inevitably, the nature of economic relations between the North and the rest of the South (i.e. excluding the 'Group of 13') remains largely unaltered, and they have been for the most part unable to shift their export base from primary commodities to manufactures. It is fair to conclude therefore that the international division of labour between the developing countries *excluding the 'Group of 13'* and the North 'underwent no major qualitative change' (Ghose 2000, p.14). Consequently, it would be meaningless to argue that the developing countries as a group have gained (in terms of structural change, export earnings, employment, and so on) from North-South trade in manufactures given that no such shift in trade has actually taken place.

The next important question to consider is the extent to which shifts in North-South trade, and the export-orientation of manufactures among this small group of countries has led to significant employment gains. As one author puts it, 'Obviously, if manufacturing jobs have been going anywhere, then it must have been to these locations, since they account for the lion's share of manufacturing exports of all developing countries' (Ghosh 2000, p.5).

Using the UNIDO database for the period 1980-96, Ghose (2000) compares the labour-intensity of export-oriented industries in some of these dynamic developing countries to their import-competing industries, as well as the employment elasticity of manufacturing over the period when growth of manufactured exports accelerated. He reaches the conclusion that in a number of countries (China, Indonesia and Malaysia) trade liberalization did increase the employment elasticity of manufacturing. He also explicitly rejects the argument that trade liberalization in developing countries has reduced employment in the import-competing industries. Some possible explanations are offered for this counter-intuitive finding: first, trade might have eased the foreign exchange constraints which would in turn have stimulated the growth of manufacturing; second, trade could have stimulated the inflow of FDI into both export-oriented and import-competing industries. His overall conclusion about the gains to be made from trade liberalization as far as developing countries are concerned is therefore positive: with greater openness and more trade the employment intensity of manufacturing production will rise in developing countries; and within the Asian developing countries (but not Latin America) the export-oriented industries show higher employment elasticities of manufacturing production than the import-competing industries. His findings therefore seem to confirm the predictions from neo-classical trade theories.

These conclusions are put in question by another recent study (Ghosh 2000) which uses both UNIDO and ILO datasets, and examines patterns of manufacturing

[20] The thirteen countries are: Argentina, Brazil, China, Hong Kong (China), India, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan (China) and Thailand. Several of these countries, as Ghose (2000) goes on to explain, are now regarded as industrialized, and the Republic of Korea and Mexico are members of the OECD.

employment expansion as a whole rather than relying on the factor-content approach which is used by Ghose (2000). First, it is clear from the datasets used by Ghosh (2000), reproduced below in Tables 2 and 3, that with a few notable exceptions—China, Malaysia and Chile—many of the even supposedly dynamic developing countries experienced only a low to moderate employment growth in manufacturing, and that for several countries (e.g. Brazil, Argentina, Mexico) such employment actually declined in absolute numbers over the said period (1985-1998).

Table 2: Growth Rate of Manufacturing Employment, 1985-98
(UNIDO data)

	1985 (000s)	1998 (000s)	compound rate of growth per annum
China	29743	61582	5.8
South Korea	2395	2615	0.7
Malaysia	473	1448	9
Philippines	618	968	3.5
Taiwan	2462	2373	-0.3
India	6469	9300	2.8
Argentina	1174.4	887.5	-2.1
Brazil	4187	3115	-2.2
Chile	185	325	4.4
Mexico	994	920	-0.5

Source: Ghosh (2000), Calculated from UNIDO Country Industrial Statistics

While it is true that countries like Malaysia, China, Indonesia and Thailand exhibit very impressive employment expansion over this period, this increase in only four countries takes place at a time when some of the most dynamic exporters (like Republic of Korea) show very low rates of employment growth, while in other countries the record is much less up-beat (Ghosh 2000). In several large semi-industrial developing countries—Brazil, Argentina and South Africa—industrial employment growth was in fact negative in the 1990s (Ghosh 2000). Moreover, for the vast majority of developing countries, manufacturing employment has actually stagnated or declined over the past decade (UNCTAD 1999).

Table 3: Growth Rates of Paid Employment in Manufacturing
(ILO Data)

Country	Period	Annual rate of growth
PR China	1985-94	4.8
Malaysia	1981-94	7.3
Indonesia	1980-89	9.8
Thailand	1981-93	7.3
Philippines	1981-93	0.9

South Korea	1980-90	4.4
India	1980-90	1.4
Sri Lanka	1980-97	2.8
Brazil	1985-98	-6.8
Colombia	1980-97	0.4
Mexico	1985-98	2.9
Kenya	1980-97	2.5
South Africa	1980-93	-.1
Zimbabwe	1980-97	1.3

Source: Ghosh (2000), Calculated from ILO Yearbooks of Labour Statistics

The other important point to note about the data cited above is that it refers to *total* manufacturing employment, and not just the export-oriented manufacturing job creation. It therefore includes any job loss as a result of import penetration. The data is thus indicating the overall growth rate or *net job creation or destruction* in these countries. Thus what the data on employment growth for even the more dynamic economies seems to indicate is that the perception that the recent period has seen a significant expansion of manufacturing employment in the South does not seem to be warranted.

Rather, the perception which is more widespread among trade unions, workers and people in general in developing countries, that job opportunities in manufacturing are not keeping pace with the expansion in the labour force and may even be declining in the aggregate, appears to be closer to the truth even in several of the most "dynamic" exporting economies… in the net the North has not been exporting jobs to the South, or at the very least, the South is not a net importer of manufacturing employment. Instead, many manufacturing jobs may simply have disappeared somewhere in between … (Ghosh 2000, p.19).

A number of plausible factors may have contributed to this disappointing employment performance. The first is that even though export-oriented industries have created new jobs, under a liberalized trade regime the influx of Northern imports into Southern countries has probably intensified and displaced certain Southern domestic products (and the jobs that created those products). As was noted above, over the past decades the South has maintained a consistently negative trade surplus with the North. But it has been argued (pace Ghose 2000) that both imports and exports shift labour-intensive employment to developing countries and capital-intensive employment to developed countries so that the outcome in employment terms is always positive for developing countries. But this is not always the case. Many of the newly deregulated imports into the South can displace the small-scale and highly employment-intensive domestic producers who are equally unable to compete in international markets (Ghosh 2000). In other words, in many developing countries, the consequent job losses (from import competition) may have been quite significant, and may not have been compensated by the expansion in export employment. Thus the net outcome in terms of employment is low or even negative (Ghosh 2000). One of the outstanding exceptions to this trend has so far been China, where import liberalization has been selective and gradual permitting a range of domestic manufacturing industries to survive. However, the future is not clear, especially if there is substantial import liberalization as a result of joining the WTO and if the state enterprises are radically 'reformed' (Ghosh 2000).

The second factor that can help explain the disappearance of manufacturing jobs in the South, highlighted by (UNCTAD 1999), Ghosh (2000) and others is the so-called 'fallacy of composition' in export expansion. As more and more Southern countries have attempted to replicate the export success of the East Asian 'tigers' (and have been encouraged to do so by the IFIs), more and more manufactured goods exports from the South are beginning to display the characteristics of primary commodities—price volatility and low price and income elasticities of demand. This is why genuinely dynamic and successful countries that have been able to expand net manufacturing employment are so few and far between, despite the large number of countries that are attempting to use export-orientation as the basis for economic expansion and employment generation (Ghosh 2000).

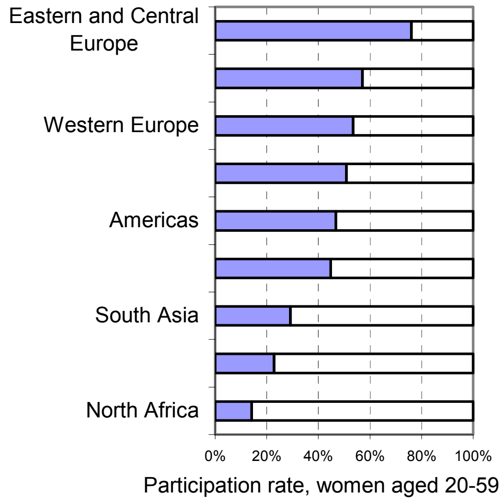
Some of these factors are further elaborated below in section 3.3 where we look more specifically at the dynamics of female employment in the context of trade liberalization.

3.2 Female Employment in the 1980s and 1990s

Women are certainly more likely to be working outside the home than ever before. Between the 1950s and the end of the 1990s, the proportion of women aged 20–59 who were in the labour force increased from around one-third to one-half. The current participation rates by region range from 14 per cent in North Africa to 76 per cent in East and Central Europe (see figure 1). In many cases, women's participation has increased at the expense of men's. In half the developing countries for which data were available, over the period 1975–95 the female participation rate rose while the male rate fell. The global labour force has become more female—rising from 36 per cent in 1960 to 40 per cent by 1997.

But it is also important to underline an important counter-trend taking place in the 'transition' economies of East and Central Europe, where women's formal employment has fallen since the on-set of economic reforms. The female labour force participation rate was lower in 1997 than in 1985 in all transition countries, and the drop in female employment was as drastic as 40% in Hungary (UNIFEM 2000, p.73), although this may hide the increasing informalisation of female labour not only in Hungary (Szalai nd) but also elsewhere in the region.

Figure 1—Women's labour force participation, 1980s and 1990s



Note: Uses the latest census available in 1999.
Source: (UNRISD 2000, p.133)

To some extent the increase in participation (in all regions except Eastern and Central Europe) is a statistical artefact—it reflects better ways of recording seasonal, unpaid family and casual wage labour. But it does also reflect a number of real changes (UNRISD 2000) (Pearson 1999). First, more women must now work to ensure family survival—in the face of declining real wages and the increased monetary cost of subsistence resulting from cutbacks in both public services and subsidies for staple foods. In an increasing proportion of two-adult households, both partners now work. A second factor is the increase in the number of women-headed households—in which women are required to meet the monetary cost of household survival from their own labour. A third reason is that there has been a greater demand for women workers in particular sectors of the economy that have experienced long-term growth. Many industries employing a high proportion of women have expanded rapidly in response to globalization. Much of this is low-skilled manufacturing—notably in garments, footwear and electronic products—and 'non-traditional' agricultural products such as cut flowers, seasonal fruits and vegetables. At the same time, with the increasing emphasis on cost-cutting competitiveness, firms have been searching for ways to reduce their labour costs. This has often meant changes in the structure of the labour market—away from formal, full-time employment with entitlements, such as unemployment and sickness insurance, pensions and maternity benefits. Instead, people must work in more 'flexible' ways—whether part-time, temporary or casual. And this is more likely to involve women. In most industrialized countries, women make up 70 to 80 per cent of part-time employees. Women also make up the majority of home-workers. Other important factors behind the increase in women's labour force participation are: changing social norms, increasing levels of education among women and declines in fertility.

While many see women's entry into the labour force as empowering (economic independence, wider social contacts, and so on), there are several important questions that are also raised. What is the quality of employment? Is labour force participation translated into economic and social rights? Have gender relations been transformed and are women experiencing more autonomy or does it mean a 'double load' with little change in the division of domestic labour? Some of these questions are explored in greater depth below.

3.3 Female employment in the manufacturing sector

It is widely argued that industrialization in the context of globalization is as much female-led as it is export-led (Joekes and Weston 1994) (Standing 1989). By the mid 1990s a clear consensus had emerged which considered the growth in international trade to be, on the whole, favourable to women's participation in the paid labour force (Joekes 1995). The increased absorption of women workers into the manufacturing sector in developing countries, it was argued, has clearly been driven by changes in trade performance in two senses. 'On the one hand, women have been the actively preferred labour force in exporting industries, and on the other, the change in trade orientation has entailed the relative decline of privileged male employment in autarkic industry' (Joekes 1995, p.ii).

While some important elements of this assessment still hold true, a number of trends since the mid-1990s in the employment patterns of developing countries, raise noteworthy questions. First, what was perhaps not sufficiently highlighted by some of the early assessments of the benefits of trade for women is the simultaneous destruction of jobs as cheap imports replace domestically manufactured goods—a point that was raised above. So the net impact of trade liberalization may not be as positive as the gross employment figures for the export-oriented sector suggest. The second important factor is the slow-down in the capacity of the export-oriented sector to create employment in more recent years—even in the more dynamic Asian and Latin American developing countries. The third important factor to take into account is the apparent de-feminisation of employment in some sub-sectors of export-oriented manufacturing, apparently as export production becomes more skill- and capital-intensive. In elaborating these points, particular attention will be paid to developments in Asian labour markets, since the impacts of globalization on female employment have been particularly marked in this region.

To begin it is important to reiterate the obvious point that among the newly industrializing countries of Asia (and others like Mexico, Morocco and Mauritius) where manufacturing production has been successfully oriented towards exports, the share of women in these industries has increased significantly. The available employment data, disaggregated across industrial sub-sectors, suggest that female labour shares have been highest in the relatively low-skill, labour-intensive and often export-oriented sub-sectors (Jomo 2001). To give some idea of the magnitude of change, in South Korea, which is considered to be one of the pioneer 'first-tier' newly industrialized economies (NIEs), the female share of manufacturing workers rose from 26.6 per cent in 1960 to 32.9 per cent in 1970, 39.0 per cent in 1980, and a high point of 42.6 per cent in 1990 before declining to 35.3 per cent in 1999. In the second-tier Southeast Asian NIEs like Malaysia, where the strategy of export-oriented industrialization was adopted later in time, the female share of manufacturing workers rose from 38.2 per cent in 1980 to a peak of 47.6 per cent in 1990, before declining to 40.3 per cent in 1999. Similarly in Thailand the female share of manufacturing workers rose from 37.6 per cent in 1960 to a peak of 50.4 per cent in 1991 before declining slightly to 49.3 per cent in 1999 (Jomo 2001).

Perhaps the single most striking piece of evidence for the feminization of the labour force engaged in export-oriented manufacturing production is the very high share of women in EPZ industries (see Joekes 1995, Table 5). Women also occupy a significant place in the less visible part of the so-called 'global assembly line' (Sen 1999a)—through sub-contracted piece rate work that takes place outside factory premises, in very small units as well as through home-based work. Dispersed across the urban and rural hinterland, it has been very difficult to reach any quantitative estimates of the numbers of workers thus engaged, but there are indications that this type of work may be on the rise in many parts of the world, and that the workforces involved are heavily feminized (Ghosh 2001); (Chen, Sebstad, and O'Connell 1999). Indeed, some estimate that the percentage of home-workers in garments ranges from 30 to 60 percent in different Asian and Latin American countries (Chen, Sebstad, and O'Connell 1999).

The first qualification that needs to be raised in response to the optimistic scenario noted above, is that the growth of export-oriented production processes (and employment therein) can take place simultaneously with the destruction of jobs in other parts of the manufacturing sector because of import penetration following trade liberalization. Unfortunately, there is little empirical evidence documenting the magnitude of jobs destroyed through trade liberalization for different regions of the South, even though there are important country studies providing a clear picture of this phenomenon.[21] But two important trends at the aggregate level seem to suggest that such processes of job destruction are indeed taking place. First, as we have already noted, over the past decade the South on the whole has had a negative trade balance with the North, even in the case of manufactured goods (Ghosh 2000) (UNCTAD 2001), suggesting that Northern imports may be displacing Southern domestic production (note, however, that displacement of domestic production can also take place as a result of South-South trade, as Hart shows for South Africa where imports of cheaper knitwear produced in China through Taiwanese investments is destroying jobs in South African factories producing similar products). Second, and as we have already seen, the overall net employment outcome for the Southern manufacturing sector has not been as positive as one would have expected from the increase in the Southern share of manufactured goods exports (Ghosh 2000). At the same time, adding to the downward pressures on employment from import liberalization, many state-owned and state-protected industries have come under pressure as government subsidies and protections have been withdrawn. While it is sometimes claimed that these industries provided jobs for a male 'labour aristocracy', the validity of such statements becomes questionable when we look more closely at variations across countries.

Looking more specifically at the gender composition of employment, one would need to compare those groups of women who have been able to find employment in the expanding export-oriented sectors of manufacturing with the 'losers' in other parts of the manufacturing sector. The comparison is not simply about numbers of 'losers' versus 'winners' (although that is an important consideration). It is also important to bear in mind that the profile of women workers in the different sub-sectors may be very different (in terms of age, life cycle, levels of education, and so on). To continue

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[21] For an excellent analysis of recent industrial policy shifts in South Africa and their impact on employment see Hart (2001). For the impact of trade policy reforms on industrial capacity and employment in Bangladesh see Rashid (2000).

with the case of China, while it is clear that export-processing industries depend more heavily than the older state-owned industrial sector on female workers (many of them young rural migrants), this does *not* mean that the latter were/are insignificant employers of women. While the new export processing enterprises employ a highly feminized work force—female workforces of the order of 80% according to many studies—at the same time the Chinese State Statistical Bureau figures for 1994 show that 39.3% of the workforce of state-owned enterprises and 50% of the urban collectives' workforces were women (cited in Davin 2001). The numbers of women having lost their jobs already, and those now facing the risk of job loss in the near future as China further liberalizes its economy are thus significant.

Table 4: Employment by Ownership of Enterprise in China (all urban except TVEs) in 1994 and 1998

	1994	1998
1. Urban state-owned units	112,140,000	90,580,000
2. Enterprises funded by Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan capital	2,110,000	2,940,000
3.Foreign funded enterprises	1,95,0000	2,930,000
4. Privately owned, shareholding, jointly owned and corporations	6,760,000	20,510,000
5. Collectively owned	32,850,000	19,630,000
6. TVEs	120,170,000	125,370,000

Source: China State Statistical Yearbook, 1999, section 5, cited in Davin (2001).

Another example worth citing is Bangladesh. This is an important case to consider given the fact that the heavy presence of young women in the ready-made garments industry that has mushroomed in and around the capital city, Dhaka, in the 1980s and 1990s has often been held up as evidence of how women, even in a highly restricted cultural context, can be liberated from the confines of home-based work through trade liberalization. While some crucial elements of that argument remain valid (see 3.5), it has tended to gloss over some of the complexities and counter-trends. It is clear, for example, from more recent studies that policies of import liberalization since the early 1980s have adversely affected the output growth and employment performance of several large and medium-scale industries that compete with imports (the so-called import-competing industries), such as paper, cotton textile and sugar, which have all experienced regression over the same period (Rashid 2000). The other more worrying trend is that the overall employment in the industrial sector has fallen sharply, from 7 million in 1989 to 4.1 million in 1995-6, and much of this sharp reduction in employment in the manufacturing sector has evidently occurred in the small and cottage industry sector (Rashid 2000). A large part of the job destruction, therefore, is likely to have taken place in the informal sector industries that are located in both the urban and rural areas of the country, employing large numbers of men and women and very often catering to demand from the poorer strata of the population; interestingly, it is the decline in agricultural wages and incomes due to import liberalization—substantial imports of cheap foodgrains which have depressed domestic foodgrain prices—that is behind the fall in ***demand*** for the products produced by these rural industries (Rashid 2000). While we do not have gender-disaggregated data to ascertain the gender composition of job losses in these informal sector industries (or in the import-competing industries noted above), a significant proportion has been for the category of 'unpaid family workers' which must include significant numbers of women.[22]

The second qualification that needs to be made is that employment expansion in several regions have already slowed down and are likely to decline even further as the global economy further decelerates. Section 3.1 (Tables 2 & 3) has already elaborated this issue, and so it will not be pursued any further here. Suffice it to say that with a few notable exceptions—China, Malaysia and Chile—many of the even supposedly dynamic developing countries experienced only a low to moderate employment growth in manufacturing, and that for many other countries such employment actually declined in absolute numbers from 1985 to 1998. Another important trend is that those countries that have accelerated their manufactured exports (the 'successful' countries in Tables 2 & 3), like Malaysia and Indonesia, have been facing diminishing terms of trade between 1985 and 1995, despite significant increases in the ratio of exports to GDP and the ratio of manufactures to total exports (Jomo 2001). There thus appears to have been a relative decline in the prices of manufactured exports from the South compared to manufactured imports into the South, especially from the North (and especially the European Union). These trends have been so worrying that observers warn that the 'enhanced productivity and competitiveness in East Asia may well have contributed to a variant of "immiserizing growth", i.e., of productivity gains that are less-than-proportionately reflected in rising real incomes or living standards' (Jomo 2001, p.22).[23]

One of the explanations offered for this apparent paradox is the technology content of the manufactures in which these countries have specialized: most developing countries have concentrated on labour-intensive and low-technology products, and the emergence of low-wage countries like China as major producers and exporters has exerted further downward pressure on the terms of trade of developing countries' manufactured exports since the mid-1980s (UNCTAD 1999). In other words, labour-intensive manufactured exports from developing countries are behaving more and more like traditional commodities, facing terms-of-trade losses. Yet, despite these adverse trends, stabilization and adjustment policies continue to promote manufactured exports, thereby contributing further to world surpluses and intensifying the fallacy of composition.

There is also a plausible gender dimension to this argument. As is well-known by now, one of the main features of countries that have embarked on the labour-intensive export strategy, through the so-called 'low road to industrialization', is the availability of an abundant supply of 'cheap' and 'docile' female labour. However, low wages

[22] Incidentally, unemployment among women has increased at a faster rate than among men in the period between 1989 and 1995-6 Ibid..
[23] For a confirmation of this point see UNCTAD (1999).

and low value-added in exports can keep export prices low and weaken the terms of trade, resulting in a form of immiserising growth along the lines noted above. 'Thus to the extent that gender inequalities and gender biases are allowed to keep wages perennially low', Gita Sen asserts, 'these can reinforce structural inequalities in global trade between South and North' (Sen 1999b, p.9). The policy implication of Sen's argument is that the challenge for industrial policy is to forge a transition from the so-called 'low road' (based on cheap labour) to the 'high road' (based on increasing worker productivity), (and one would add) combined with better policy coordination at the global level to avoid the 'fallacy of composition' likely to result when a large number of countries pursue a similar strategy.

This, however, takes us to the ***third qualification*** we wish to raise in this section. What happens to the gender composition of the labour force when such a transition takes place? The employment trends in East Asia, especially among the first-tier NIEs that have successfully restructured and up-graded their labour-intensive exports by shifting towards skill-intensive products, are highly informative in this respect.[24]

In the latest issue of the United Nations Report, **The 1999 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development** (UNDESA 1999), it is argued that since the late 1980s 'in many middle-income countries the demand for women's labour in manufacturing has been weakening, as export production became more skill- and capital-intensive' (UNDESA 1999, p.9). As examples of this trend, the report cites Singapore, Taiwan, South Korea and the *maquiladoras* in Mexico. In South Korea specifically, it notes that 'the composition of the workforce in the electronics industry has changed in favour of male workers, as production in this sector shifted to more sophisticated communication and computer products'.

In a recent paper prepared for UNRISD, Jomo (2001) traces the trends in female employment as the manufacturing sector in different East Asian countries has gone through various structural changes over the past two decades. First, what is clear is that while the manufacturing share of total employment has begun to decline in the three first-tier East Asian newly industrialized economies (NIE) of Hong Kong, Singapore and South Korea from 1971, 1981 and 1989 respectively, the same cannot be said of the three second-tier Southeast Asian countries of Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia, with the possible exception of Malaysia, which began absorbing more labour into manufacturing much earlier than the other two. Importantly, the female proportion of manufacturing workers peaked at different times in the different economies (and declined thereafter): around 1982-84 in Hong Kong, 1989 in Singapore, 1990 in South Korea and Malaysia, 1991 in Thailand and thrice (1976, 1982 and 1993) in Indonesia. The recent declines in the female share of manufacturing labour in Thailand and Indonesia have been modest, compared to the sharper fall in Malaysia. While the sequence of de-feminisation seems to follow that

[24] In these countries with full employment, the tightening of the labour market triggered a rise in wages and other labour costs, and thereby encouraged greater structural change and shifts away from labour-intensive manufacturing. The decline in manufacturing employment in turn encouraged them to relocate low-skill labour-intensive production to the rest of Southeast Asia and China from the late 1980s. Such relocation was encouraged by two other developments from the mid-1980s: first currency appreciations, and second, retaliatory actions from countries that were the targets of the highly successful export drive from this region (Jomo 2001).

for the peaks in manufacturing's share of total employment, there is no clear pattern in relation to the timing.[25]

However, while the facts of de-feminisation are more or less conclusive, the mechanisms leading to it are far from clear. A number of different explanations have been offered for the observed de-feminisation of manufacturing employment. Ghosh (1999; 2001), for example, argues that the observed de-feminisation of the manufacturing labour force in East Asia may be attributed to the narrowing of the gender wage gap in the region. The figures she cites show a gradual (and, one could say, rather marginal) rise in women's wages compared to male wages. For example, in South Korea, the ratio of average female wages to male wages increased from 50 percent in 1990 to 56 percent in 1997, while in Malaysia it moved from 49 percent to 57 percent between 1990 and 1995. According to Ghosh, what this narrowing of the gender wage gap has meant is that 'women became less cheap as labour in exporting industry'—a tendency that was reinforced by several legislative moves in the region towards protecting women workers' rights and interests (such as more generous maternity benefits). In other words, as women workers have become less 'cheap' and less 'docile'—thanks to their struggles and to public policy responses to their demands—they may have lost their 'comparative advantage' vis-à-vis male labour. But this hypothesis sits uneasily with the fact that Singapore—one of the countries where there has been a clear de-feminization of employment—is also exceptional among the East Asian economies in being the only economy studied where the gender gap in manufacturing wages has actually widened in recent years (Jomo 2001).

Joekes (1995) argues that the swing back from female intensity in Singapore's manufacturing as it has pursued its goal of product up-grading, may be attributed, as a proximate cause, to the fact that women workers with the needed technical qualifications were not available in sufficient numbers for recruitment to new technical and other skilled grades. However, Jomo (2001) notes in response, that it is not clear that this was necessarily a region-wide phenomenon since the facilities for pre-employment industrial vocational training in the rest of the region have been less well developed (though they are likely to be as gender-biased).

Given the fact that the precise mechanisms and relations are still poorly understood, it would be very difficult to reach any definitive conclusions about the causes and mechanisms behind de-feminisation. What can be concluded with some certainty (pace Jomo 2001) is that there appears to have been a general regional pattern of increased female employment in manufacturing during the early period of rapid labour-intensive industrialization, probably accelerated by the availability of export markets. However, with full employment, more sophisticated or skill-intensive manufacturing and other related developments, both manufacturing growth and industrial employment growth appear to have tapered off, and the female share of such employment also appears to have declined, reflecting the gender preferences (or biases) of the new industrial employers, though the existing evidence does not allow a more careful and detailed examination of the processes at work (Jomo 2001). This is, however, clearly an area that requires far more empirical and analytical scrutiny.

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[25] For the detailed evidence for individual countries, and a more elaborate argument see Jomo (2001).

3.4 Female employment, wages and wage gaps

The discussion so far has raised some questions about the *quality* of female employment in the export-oriented industries where women have made significant *quantitative* inroads in recent decades (recent setbacks notwithstanding). Needless to say, many of the same concerns about working conditions would apply forcefully, almost by definition, to the 'informal' sectors (of agriculture, manufacturing and services) where increasing numbers of women and men are concentrated (often as part of household survival strategies). However, what we would like to suggest in this section is that even if the distinction between 'formal' and 'informal' sectors was useful or relevant in the 1960s and 1970s (many argued then that the distinction was dubious), it has become even less useful as a descriptive and analytical device in the present era.

As it is widely known, since the early 1980s labour markets around the world have undergone profound transformations. There has been a massive trend towards casualization of the labour force: trade unions have been sidelined and coerced in many contexts, and labour forces have been deliberately casualised through sub-contracting arrangements and the like. At the same time there has been a continuing process of 'feminization' of the labour force, where the concept of feminization is understood to mean both an increase in women's labour force participation, as well as a recognition of the fact that labour market conditions in general—for men as well as women—have deteriorated and become more like the precarious labour market conditions that have typically characterised many 'women's jobs' (Standing 1989) (Elson 2001). There has been a decline in the proportion of jobs that have security of employment, rights against unfair dismissal, pension rights, health insurance rights, maternity rights and the like, while there has been rapid growth in 'informal employment' which lacks social protection (Elson 2001). In India, for example, during the decade of the economic reforms (the 1990s) it is the informal sector that has grown fastest and absorbed most labour: in agriculture, manufacturing, construction, petty trade and services (Harriss-White 2000) (Ghosh 2001). Similarly in Africa there has been rapid growth in 'informal employment'. It is estimated that well over half of the urban jobs in Africa and Asia are informal, while the figures for Latin America and the Caribbean could be around one quarter; it is also argued that the share of informal employment is higher for new jobs, with as many as 83 per cent of new jobs in Latin America and 93 per cent in Africa being informal (Charmes 1998). Women's share of informal employment is typically higher than their share of formal employment.

Women in many economic sectors today therefore rarely enjoy the wide spectrum of social rights specified in national and international legislation, such as the right to favourable conditions of work, the right to equal pay for equal work, the right to social protection or the right to form and join trade unions—and increasingly the same description could apply to many male workers. The absence of many of these rights in export-oriented factories across the world is well-documented (UNDESA 1999) and does not require repetition here. What such evidence points to, however, is the questionable distinction between the 'formal' and 'informal' sectors when working conditions in much of the so-called formal sector barely differ from those found in the informal sector. The distinction between the two sectors is also ambiguous given the linkages between production processes in the two sectors (through sub-contracting and the like).

Given these labour market trends, have gender wage gaps narrowed? The availability, reliability and interpretability of the data on pay relativities by gender pose major problems. A recent UNIFEM report (2000) made a heroic effort to tackle this question, but was constrained by the limited range of countries for which internationally comparable datasets were available (especially to assess change over time), as well as the incomplete coverage of different economic sectors, with a bias towards urban 'formal' sectors. The report argued that in industry and services, women on average earned about 78 percent of what men earned in the late 1990s (UNIFEM 2000, p.92). As was noted above, in East Asia for which more reliable datasets are available, there is some evidence that the gender wage gaps have narrowed in a number of countries during the 1980s and 1990s, but it must be underlined that even after some convergence the gender wage gaps in this region remain large by international standards (Seguino 1997). For many other developing countries the UNIFEM report cautions that data on the gender wage gaps is likely to reflect mainly the earnings of those in full-time 'formal' employment, given the biases of statistical surveys in many countries.

One piece of research that is frequently cited is by Tzannatos (1995). It asserts a positive correlation between trade liberalization and reduced gender wage gap, based on wage data for Cote d'Ivoire, Brazil, Colombia, Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia. The implicit assumption seems to be that with export growth (which is supposed to be facilitated by trade liberalization) the demand for female labour increases faster than for male labour, so that female wages also rise faster than male wages, and eventually converge. Leaving aside issues of statistical coverage and reliability, it is difficult to attribute the apparent closing of the gap in wages in these six countries to trade liberalization *per se*; the analysis, for example, does not take into account the rise in women's educational attainment relative to men's over the same period (Joekes 1995). Evidence presented by Joekes for a number of other countries reveals no systematic divergence or convergence over time (1995, p.30-31).

The other major problem with some of the evidence on wage convergence (including the study by Tzannatos) is that it does not make a distinction between convergence of male and female wages through a process of 'harmonizing up' and 'harmonizing down' (Elson 1999). In other words, is the gender gap in wages narrowing because women's wages are catching up with men's, or is it rather because men's wages are being levelled down? In some contexts, such as in Singapore during the late 1970s, successful export-oriented industrialization did create a tight labour market for both men and women, and women's wages in particular did rise somewhat faster than men's. But as Phongpaichit (1988) rightly argues, Singapore's population is small and hence its experience somewhat different from that of many Asian countries which rely on migrant labour from a much wider rural hinterland. In Bangladesh, for example, the availability of a generally elastic supply of unskilled female labour has meant that wage increases in the highly feminized garments manufacturing have been more or less the same as wage increases across a wide range of other sectors, despite a substantial rise in garments manufacturing profit margins and real value added over the same period so that there is little evidence of male and female wages converging (Bhattacharya and Rahman 1998).[26]

[26] Even the small rise in wages in the garments industry, the authors note, may have been eroded by the demand for longer working hours.

Finally, it needs to be born in mind that the kinds of mechanisms that determine the value of labour in labour markets include important social and gender norms. This happens, for example, in how 'skills' are defined and labour is categorised — processes which very often carry implicit gender biases. As evidence from different contexts has shown, the lower wages that women often command in labour markets cannot be adequately accounted for simply in terms of workers' experiences, skills and levels of education. There are both implicit and explicit exclusionary and discriminatory processes at work. The policy implication is that the norms and social mechanisms that shape and structure labour markets cannot be tackled through female education alone. There is clearly a need for gender-aware trade unions and women's NGOs to contest the seemingly 'objective' mechanisms through which women's labour is devalued in labour markets.

The issue of gender wage gaps is clearly an important area of concern and a powerful indicator of gender inequality. However, monitoring and evaluating the broader conditions of employment is equally (if not more) crucial, especially from the point of view of *women* workers. The significance of this area stems from women's centrality to the 'care economy', i.e. their socially-ascribed responsibilities for child care and elderly care, and how those prior obligations shape the kinds of work they are able to take up during different phases of their life cycle. Women's groups have repeatedly emphasized the need to recognize that women stand at the cross-roads between 'productive' activities and the care of human beings (the care economy). Subsidized childcare and elderly care facilities, public healthcare programmes, public transport and piped water/electricity help women meet their dual responsibilities. As the literature on the gender impacts of structural adjustment has convincingly shown, when state resources are not channelled to such services, women must work more to compensate for the shortfall. In theory, women's work in the care economy is central to economic activity and should therefore carry economic rights or entitlements. But attracting resources when there are many competing claims on budgets has been a major challenge for women's movements worldwide. Thus, while young unmarried and childless women have been able to benefit from labour-intensive industrial strategies (albeit under working conditions that are far from ideal), *in countries where those strategies have been successful* (important qualification), these labour market opportunities have been far less open to older women with dependants. They have found it far more difficult to enter these industries in the absence of adequate social provision of childcare and other services. In section 3.6 we will therefore consider the area of social policy which is inextricably tied up with issues of employment. However, before we do so we would like to consider one more issue that has been somewhat controversial, namely women workers' own assessments of these jobs.

3.5 Female employment and women's empowerment: subjective assessments

So far we have looked at employment trends, wages and working conditions. But we have not said much about how women workers themselves assess their jobs. Has their position as workers in export-oriented factories, earning a monetary wage, given them more autonomy and voice in terms of their intra-household relations? Has the ability to leave the confines of home-based production been empowering in some respects? What weight should these 'subjective' assessments carry, and more controversially, how should they be read?

One of the contentious issues dividing feminists who are writing on this subject concerns the interpretation of women workers' voices. According to Gita Sen (1999a) the fact that young women sometimes voice a preference for this type of work to going back to the confines of rural patriarchal households only emphasizes how harsh the conditions of rural poverty and rural patriarchal dominance are for these women, rather than being a positive indicator of the conditions of work in the factories. Providing a somewhat different reading of women's voices, Kabeer (1995) has argued that work in export industries (in Dhaka, Bangladesh) has helped households meet basic survival needs, improved their security, and begun a process by which women are being transformed from representing economic burdens on their families into economic assets—a process that can in some ways be seen as empowering.

One of the analytical insights that emerged from the 1980s gender and development literature, and which can be seen as an area of cross-fertilization (or overlap) between feminism and critical institutionalism, was the gender critique of markets, captured in Ann Whitehead's (1979) distinction between gender relations that are 'intrinsically gendered' (conjugal relations) and those that become the 'bearers of gender'. The labour contract was seen as a poignant illustration of the latter, and was elaborated by Elson and Pearson (1981) in their path-breaking work on women's incorporation into export-oriented manufacturing in world market factories.

In many ways this early analysis was nuanced and insightful enough to stand the test of time. Rather than providing a deterministic framework, what they did was to distinguish 'three tendencies' in the relation between factory work and the subordination of women which suggested that factory work could either *intensify* the existing forms of gender subordination, *decompose* them, or *recompose* new forms of gender subordination (Elson and Pearson 1981, p. 31). However, as Pearson (1998) herself has recently argued, their analysis left uncontested the idea that women workers' interactions with capital and patriarchy were somehow structurally determined rather than open to negotiation and reconstitution by women workers themselves. Structuralist accounts, critics argued, rendered women workers 'faceless and voiceless' (Wolf 1992, p.9) and attributed much more personality and animation to capital than to the women it exploits (Ong 1988, p.84). At a more general level, the oversight highlighted some of the difficulties of integrating an actor-orientation in structuralist analyses.

Some of the feminist research that was recording women's own understandings of their work, and their experiences of engagement with factory management, provided somewhat diverse answers to some of the key questions that Elson and Pearson (1981) had posed. The Javanese factory daughters who figured prominently in Wolf's (1992) account of industrialization in rural Java, did not seem to submit their needs to the betterment of the family economy in the way that Taiwanese daughters did. Wolf in fact argued that factory work in Java was giving young women the tools with which to 'hack and whittle away at parental and patriarchal controls over their lives, at least for a certain period, with longer-term implications such as deciding when and whom to marry' (1992, p.254). A similar conclusion was emerging from some of the situated analyses of garments factory workers in Dhaka, Bangladesh (Kabeer 1995).

In the case of Bangladesh, the phenomenon of factory women was in many ways remarkable for a country where women's entry into the public domain in search of employment had been generally associated with dire economic need. Factory work, it was argued, had not altered some of the striking features of gender subordination in this context, such as women's dependence on male *protection* (even though it may have reduced their dependence on male *provision*). Nevertheless the ability to earn a wage (whether their wages disappeared into a common pool, was retained under their own management or handed over to or appropriated by household heads or other senior members), had made a difference in how women were perceived and treated, as well as their feelings of self-worth. The increased sense of power became even more visible in moments of crisis when the expanded possibilities offered by the strengthening of women's 'fall-back position' allowed them to walk out of, or not enter into, relationships that undermined their agency in unacceptable ways (Kabeer 1995, p.35).

While Kabeer (1995) did not explore the gendered patterns of shop-floor politics, Wolf (1992) argued that the increased field of manoeuvring that factory work had offered the Javanese daughters at home was matched by different patriarchal controls in the factory setting that kept these factory women 'relatively acquiescent, poorly paid and vastly unprotected in industrial jobs that are often dangerous' (1992, p.254). Moreover, the increased voice and agency in the familial sphere did not seem to carry over into the factory, despite the attempts of some women to 'rock the boat'; the managers and the work discipline seemed to be much less flexible and much more overwhelming than were parents in their rules and discipline.

Ching Kwan Lee's (1995) comparative analysis of two gendered regimes of production in Shenzhen (southern China) and Hong Kong, however, showed how two factories owned by the same enterprise, managed by the same team of managers, producing the same products, and using the same technical labour processes, developed distinct patterns of shop-floor politics. These gendered regimes were in turn explained in terms of local and communal institutions like localistic networks, kin, and families which underpinned the social organization of the labour markets. The comparative analysis also highlights the negotiated (rather than imposed) aspects of a factory regime where the workers themselves actively engage in the construction of cultural notions of workers' gender. In the Shenzhen factory where the labour regime was highly hierarchical and 'despotic', Lee tries to explain why young women subscribed to the notion of 'maiden workers' and came to terms with localistic, despotic control.

> Many of these young women had fled home to evade arranged marriages. Many also had personal goals like gaining experience, saving for dowries, or financing their educations. Because they intended to marry at some point, factory employment was preferred to other service jobs because of the popular association between factory work and endurance for hardship and disciplined labor, traits deemed desirable for future wives. Thus, entering the factory meant preserving the appropriate femininity of maidens while earning a cash income and enjoying the freedom to explore romantic relationships (Lee 1995, p.385)

The export-oriented production processes had in some ways reproduced gender hierarchies, providing employment that was in many ways exploitative under working conditions that were far from ideal—Lee's account of labour control in the Shenzhen plant, in particular, provides a vivid illustration of this point. But these 'despotic' labour regimes were at the same time social constructions that were both contested, and invested with different meanings and purposes by different parties. In the Hong Kong plant, Lee shows how the women workers used familial discourses as a pretext for circumventing certain managerial demands; women cited gender-based inconvenience and their mothering burdens at home to reject management demands for assignments which required cross-border commuting and overnight stays.

These fine-grained feminist accounts which provide a contextual analysis of labour force formation (workers' histories, familial and kinship relations and localistic networks) and take workers' subjectivities seriously, can also provide better insight into issues relating to collective action—why traditional trade union strategies have proven so problematic in some contexts. In South Africa, for example, where Taiwanese industrialists have invested in garment factories employing women, Hart (1995a) argues that the fact that trade unions have experienced extreme difficulties in organizing clothing workers to press for higher wages and better working conditions reflects not only the adamant opposition of the foreign industrialists, but also broader processes of labour force formation and the desperate search by huge numbers of dispossessed people for a modicum of economic and social security.

This is not to suggest that working conditions in export-oriented factories are by any means satisfactory or 'humane'—in many cases they are clearly not. But at the same time the analysis of working conditions in the export-oriented sectors needs to be fully attentive to the fact that in the more populous developing countries in particular there invariably exist large reserve armies of unskilled, low productivity labour that has to make ends meet by any means, and is in search of work at any price. The challenge therefore must be to forge coalescing strategies and policies that can help 'lift all boats'. Clearly, despite being problematic very few women would like to see their jobs in export-oriented factories disappear, and as far as I know, none of the advocates of women's rights argue that these jobs should be taken away from the women concerned! Rather the point is that the labour-intensive strategy relying on 'cheap' labour needs to be up-graded: this is Gita Sen's argument about making a transition from the 'low road' to the 'high road' of industrialization. At the same time, it is important to widen the agenda to include the conditions for social reproduction more broadly through gender-sensitive social policies. It is to social policies that we now turn.

3.6 Social Policy through a gender lens

There has been a global shift in the consensus over the role of the state in welfare provision, which carries many serious and adverse implications for women. Selectivity in social policy has thus gone hand-in-hand with a trend towards 'multi-tierism' in modes of provision of social protection in several important areas of social policy—pensions in particular, but also health care and education. While selectivity means narrowing the targets for support, multi-teirism means reducing the state component and partially privatizing social protection. There is thus increasing reliance on private provision and community support, or indeed an increased need for these sources to fill the gaps left open by diminishing public provision (Standing 1999).

As feminist economists argue, market economies assume that new workers appear costlessly at the factory gates—already healthy, nourished, educated and socialized; all the employer must do is pay for that day's labour (Pearson 1999). In fact the public funding and delivery of a wide range of goods and services—such as health care, education, welfare services such as day care, care for the aged, care for the retired and disabled—is vital to women who are ultimately the ones who have to balance their time and energies between income-earning activities and the care of human beings. This in fact has been the great advantage of the so-called 'service-heavy' Swedish welfare state, for example, compared to the more 'transfer- heavy' welfare states of the continental European variety (Orloff 2001). The public funding and delivery of social services, has been the cornerstone for gender equality in advanced welfare states—and significantly, some of these states have held up those important funding priorities, and expanded them, despite all the expectations to the contrary. While in many industrialized countries the welfare state takes some of the responsibility for social reproduction, in developing countries the task remains primarily one for the household, and within the household for women—and increasingly so.

The global shift in the consensus over the role of the state in welfare provision has in many contexts entailed the down-sizing of public services and the re-allocation of service delivery to commercial interests, charitable groups, NGOs and *families*. This devolution of responsibility to 'civil society' for managing welfare and development raises serious questions, especially as far as women are concerned. In the case of Chile, for example, one of the novel features in the new (post-Pinochet) system of social provisioning, has been the role that NGOs are playing in the delivery of welfare. However, while there clearly are some positive aspects to this involvement, Veronica Schild (2001) argues that it depends upon an unpaid or poorly paid and unregulated workforce of female 'extension workers'. Ultimately what this means is that claims for more 'efficient' social spending, through a 'partnership' of state and civil society, rely on what Elson (2001) refers to as the 'unspoken and invisible safety net of women's unpaid work', whether in their capacity as mothers and wives or as NGO and community workers. Furthermore, it is not clear whether both the coverage and the quality of service that this patchwork of NGOs with their poorly paid staff and army of volunteers delivers is in any way adequate.

As the state devolves responsibility for welfare delivery to non-state actors there is therefore a danger of even further reliance on women to perform low-paid or unpaid care work as NGO workers, and as members of families and communities. Implicit in the claims for more efficient social spending, through a 'partnership' of state and civil society organizations, is the notion that communities and households can take up the slack for what the state no longer invests in. Ultimately this means that *women*, who have traditionally been responsible not only for the well-being of family members but also of their communities, have to pick up where the state leaves off.

Privatization of pensions and healthcare: The term social security is generally applied to social insurance programs that protect the target population against the risk of loss of income due to sickness, maternity, occupational accidents, disability, old age and unemployment. Social security programs also provide services, most prominently health services. Enrolment in these programs is very often employment based and affiliation to the programs is mandatory for all employees in the occupational categories covered. In the case of developing countries, coverage has tended to be limited due to two factors: first, the large size of the informal sector, and second, the high rate of evasion of contributions, even by employers and employees in the formal sector. For these reasons social security schemes may not be the most effective vehicle for extending coverage to the majority of the population in developing countries. Instead, universalistic programs that are financed through taxation—not employment-based contributions—and with entitlements to basic benefits based on citizenship or residency criteria may have a much greater potential to contribute to human welfare and to developmental objectives. This is particularly the case as far as women are concerned, given their shorter, more informal and more intermittent employment trajectories. Politically, however, it is much easier to mobilize resources via contributions to specific programs. And for this reason, many countries may opt for social security schemes. If this route is taken, then coverage cannot be employment-based; contributions for members of the informal sector have to be heavily subsidized in order for them to be included and to facilitate universal coverage. Costa Rica, for example, has managed to extend health insurance to the members of the informal sector (Huber 2000).

One of the most controversial and significant areas of social policy reform, both in fiscal terms and as far as the life chances and welfare of citizens are concerned, is pension reform (see Mesa-Lago 2000) (Huber and Stephens 2000). In Latin America alone nearly ten countries have enacted structural reform of pensions during the past decade, in many instances as an integral part of their on-going structural adjustment programs. The neo-liberal reformers in many of these countries opted for privatization of pensions even though many other options were available. Political forces and institutional characteristics that vary across countries have shaped and influenced the final policy outcomes. Half of the ten countries undergoing reform—Chile, Bolivia, Mexico, El Salvador and Nicaragua—have gone for the full privatization of pensions, while others have adopted *parallel* (public and private) or *mixed* (basic public and supplementary private) systems.

Those promoting privatization—IFIs and domestic neoliberal reformers—argued that privatization would be superior to all other options on several accounts: expansion of coverage; competition; administrative cost of the system; and its impact on capital markets, national savings and investment. Yet, contrary to the claims and predictions of those promoting privatization, the reforms appear to have been implemented based on assumptions that data show, have not in fact materialized. The evidence on pension reform in Latin America provides a poignant account of the discrepancies between neoliberal nostrums and realities—an astounding case of misguided perceptions shaping major policy decisions.

The first claim was that of increased *population coverage*. In reality, coverage in many countries has actually declined and a significant proportion of affiliates do not contribute. A second unfulfilled claim is that of *competition* within the private sector. One of the key objectives of the structural reform was to break the state monopoly and establish freedom of choice for the insured to select the system and change/choose administrators. In practice the private sector has become highly concentrated. In some countries (e.g. Mexico and Bolivia) the insured have no freedom because everyone must join the 'private' system. In small countries with a limited insured market, there are only two or three administrators; but even in countries with a more extensive insured market and a fair number of administrators, there is a high degree of concentration of the insured. The third claim was that the *administrative costs* of private accounts would be less burdensome than those of collective ones. But contrary to such expectations the administrative costs have tended to be very high and they have not declined over time. In countries like Peru and Bolivia where attempts have been made to reduce costs, it has been by sacrificing some of the benefits of the insured (by not granting minimum pensions, for example). The fourth assumption was that of *capital accumulation* and increase in national savings. The reality is that even where there has been significant capital accumulation—as high as 40 per cent of GDP at the end of 1998 in the much-touted Chilean case—it needs to be interpreted with two important caveats in mind. First, the figures for capital accumulation are gross figures; fiscal costs must be deducted so as to show the net balance. To continue with the Chilean example, the net return has been estimated to be negative (annual rate of -2.6 per cent). Second, in all cases, except Chile, the pension programs began to operate in the 1990s when international markets were producing very high returns. The financial crises in the mid and late 1990s reduced the yields considerably. What this means is that the welfare of the insured is hostage to the oscillations of capital markets.

As research in other contexts has shown, the best way of reducing poverty among the entire aged population is to provide a universalistic citizenship or residency based basic pension, which can then be supplemented by earnings or contribution-related pensions. *One of the other major drawbacks of the private system is its in-built gender bias.* Due to gender discriminatory forces within the labour market and women's care responsibilities, women tend to earn lower wages and work fewer years than men. Thus, in private systems where benefits are calculated strictly based on contributions, women tend to be at a disadvantage. The system of individualized contributions removes the cross-subsidy that women are able to receive under the public system. This is in fact indicative of a much broader problem: the private system is antithetical to redistribution and equity. Those advocating privatization of social security schemes simply skirt these issues. Social values like redistribution, equity and solidarity have no place in a private fully funded individual account pension system.

Yet redistributive action has been central to the project of nation building in both developed and developing countries. Highly redistributive healthcare systems, for example, embed the inequalities of society within those systems (e.g. through socially inclusive insurance mechanisms) while also using those systems as a platform for redistribution (Mackintosh 2000). The lesson from both European and non-European contexts is that effective redistribution involves compromises with the middle class: social equity, with high levels of social welfare provision accessible to all, has been secured and retained when those services have been available to, paid for and used by, the professional and middle classes (Deacon 2000b). At present the opposite approach is dominant in the development mindset, which according to Mackintosh (2000) endorses three main thrusts: privatization; safety nets; and community provision.

Privatization: The liberalization of private provision, with its implicit legitimation of inequality, is undermining government commitment to redistribution in many developing countries (Mackintosh 2000). Marketization tends to drive out cross-subsidy, generating an institutional split between provision through exchange and redistribution via government. Historical evidence shows that highly inclusive systems of health care have been built from patchworks of public, mutual, charitable, employment-based and private. In general, systems that are not highly socially segmented, and not dominated by private care, are easier to universalize. Conversely, systems dominated by private fee-for-service provision are extremely hard to universalize. This is another reason why the current trends towards privatization are so worrying (Mackintosh 2000).

Community provision: There has been an enormous emphasis over the past ten years in the economics literature on 'social capital', 'personalized networks' and 'trust'. As Mackintosh (2000) puts it, by and large this literature highlights the greater ease of sustaining cooperation and reciprocal trust in small communities than in large-scale impersonal interactions. These analyses facilitate the policy shifts towards decentralization and community involvement in health care provision. The emphasis on cooperation within small communities, however, obscures the sharp divisions within small communities, and the difficulties of achieving redistributive outcomes within small communities. Indeed there is often a theory-driven confusion between *collaboration* and *equity*—which are not the same (Mackintosh 2000). One of the outcomes of the emphasis on collaboration and trust has been to marginalize issues of redistribution. What is needed are more systematic explorations of the conditions for effective *redistributive* behaviour by governments, service providers, funding institutions and communities. That problem seems practically absent from the policy debate (Mackintosh 2000).

Targeting: The current social policy and development mindset is also enamoured with 'safety nets' and 'targeting'. Targeted schemes, however, are very difficult to implement, demanding well-established and legitimate administrative structures. Ironically, these were the very arguments on the basis of which neoliberals dismissed strategic industrial policies, alleging that governments do not have the information and the capacity to implement selective industrial policies. But in their enthusiastic embrace of targeted welfare schemes these advocates seem to have forgotten their own reasoning (which would be even more relevant to targeting of poor *individuals*). Moreover, there is no evidence for the underlying assumption that targeted public provision is the way to achieve greater inclusion. Targeting and means testing are likely to produce—on the contrary—increasing inequality.

Critics allege that the models of import substitution industrialization (ISI) that shaped labour market conditions in many developing countries prior to the neo-liberal reforms of the 1980s did not in fact guarantee the universal coverage of social rights. Not only was the entire *working* population not covered by its legal and social provisions—in particular those engaged in voluntary work, care work or community work, who were largely excluded—but a significant part of labour in the developing world never gained the wide spectrum of rights that became institutionalised under the European welfare states. This was particularly the case as far as women are concerned. In India, for example, only a small proportion of the workforce was in the organized sector—on regular wages or salaries, in registered firms and with access to state social security system and covered by its statutory framework of labour laws (Harriss-White and Gooptu 2001). It is argued therefore that even though liberalization has been highly regressive, significant numbers of people were left out and deprived of social rights even when developing country governments pursued various models of ISI.

In response we would argue that while it is imperative to recognize the shortcomings of the Keynesian development model that dominated development thinking in the so-called 'golden age' of capitalism (1945-1973), and although the ISI strategies fell short of their objectives in several crucial respects (especially from a gender perspective), a constructive approach would have been to extend their achievements and to change and fine-tune their less successful interventions so as to make them perform better, rather than to reverse their gains (Razavi and Mkandawire 2001). By the 1970s, however, the criticisms directed at ISI were extended to the social polices associated with them. They were accused of 'urban bias' and, in the urban areas of favouring a male 'labour aristocracy' in the formal sector. According to the neo-classical critique of ISI, the social policies were fiscally not sustainable and a source of high deficits. They were also accused of distorting the labour market, and thereby contributing to the high capital intensity of production and the uncompetitiveness of domestic industry. Associated with putatively flawed industrialization, the social policies were jettisoned, though of course with considerable resistance.

As Elson and Cagatay (2000) argue macro-economic policy approaches that rely solely or principally on full employment to achieve socially desirable outcomes are severely limited because they fail to recognize unpaid forms of work that are just as much at the heart of provisioning human needs as paid work. It is not just labourers whose rights need to be upheld, but different kinds of workers who make different kinds of contributions to society. However, as they go on to suggest, with the massive and pernicious process of privatisation and commodification of social policy and care that is underway, the 'male breadwinner' model that was pervasive in the post-WWII era is being superseded—*not* by a gender-egalitarian reform of state-based entitlements which accords equal rights and entitlements to men and women for different kinds of work (be it employment, training, care or voluntary work), but by a drastic reduction of state-based entitlements and their replacement by a market-based, individualised system of social services for those few who can afford them, and elusive safety nets, poverty and overwork for the great many who cannot.

Conclusions

This paper began by looking at some of the broad facts of 'globalization'—which is taken here to mean greater openness of economies to international trade and capital mobility. While questioning some of the claims of global enthusiasts, it argued that there has nevertheless been a clearly discernible shift toward global economic liberalization which has involved liberalization of the international trade in goods and services on the one hand, and the flows of international capital, on the other. The impacts of these major policy shifts on regional growth rates seem far from encouraging—not to mention the social disruptions caused by financial liberalization. The extent to which external liberalization has weakened the national state and led to 'social dumping', we argued, are complex questions given the *diversity* both in state capacity as well as in institutional and political factors that mediate the forces of globalization. While there has been increasing convergence in macro-economic policies towards neo-liberal deflationary policies, the same cannot be said about industrial and social policies that continue to be shaped by national institutional characteristics and histories, as well as political alliances and dynamics which are increasingly intertwined with clashes of interests and ideas among influential supranational actors. The resistance to neo-liberal models of social policy seems to be most marked among the institutionalized welfare states of Europe, while the trends in East Asia also appear to be encouraging. Hence while the room for maneuver has clearly narrowed, there are still policy *choices* to be made, and contestation and struggle at both the national and global levels can have an impact on the liberalizing juggernaut.

Looking more specifically at the impact of trade liberalization (one important component of 'globalization') on employment patterns, a number of findings emerged from our review of the literature. First, while labour market conditions especially in the manufacturing sector in the North have clearly deteriorated since the mid-1970s, it would be very difficult to attribute these negative trends to the rising, but still rather marginal, North/South trade in manufactures. Moreover, even if there were some adverse labour market outcomes in the 1980s and 1990s of trade with the South, these could have been overridden by faster economic growth. Second, as far as the South's much-cited employment gains from trade liberalization in manufactures are concerned, the picture looked far less optimistic on closer scrutiny. For a start, the gains in manufacturing employment appear to be confined to a small group of developing countries (the so-called 'Group of 13'). Moreover, even within this group there are clear indications that employment expansion through export-oriented industries has coincided with the destruction of jobs in other sectors of manufacturing due to competition from imports, so that the net employment expansion has been far less impressive in most cases than is often assumed (although we suggested that this is an area that requires far more rigorous data and analysis). The same holds true as far as women are concerned: while some groups of women (young, rural migrants) are over-represented in the export-oriented industries, other groups of women (in state-owned enterprises and in import-competing industries) have suffered job destruction consequent upon trade liberalization—an issue that has tended to be neglected. Finally, for the handful of countries that have succeeded in expanding their manufactured exports and employment in recent years (e.g. Malaysia, Indonesia and Chile), there are worrying signs of deteriorating terms of trade and of so-called 'immiserizing growth', i.e. of productivity gains that are less-than-proportionately reflected in rising real incomes or living standards. This, we argued, raises questions about both global policy coordination (or more accurately, lack thereof), as well as national industrial strategies (the limits of labour-intensive growth which has been predicated upon women's 'cheap' and 'docile' labour).

The third important area of concern that we have tried to probe in this paper is the interface between female employment and social policy provisions. Given the fact that poor women in many developing countries enjoyed few social rights even prior to the neo-liberal era, some critics argue that it is almost meaningless to criticize 'globalization' for creating jobs for women that have few social rights attached to them. Models of import substitution industrialization (ISI) essentially created jobs for a male 'labour aristocracy', and their associated systems of social protection were biased in favour of men who were assumed to be the 'breadwinners' while women were considered to be their 'dependents'. There has thus been no regression or reversal of rights as far as women are concerned.

What we have tried to argue in this paper is that while it is crucial to recognize the shortcomings of Keynesian thinking and the ISI strategies that fell short of their objectives in several important respects, especially as far as women are concerned, a constructive approach would have been to extend their achievements and to change their less successful interventions so as to make them perform better, rather than to reverse their gains. A gender-sensitive approach to social policy and to macro-economic policy more broadly must start from the premise that women have a different relation to employment than men; approaches that premise social rights and entitlements on labour market contributions will remain gender biased given that for the majority of women their labour market contribution has to be interwoven with their care obligations (they thus work part-time, and withdraw from the labour market during some periods of their lives when they are intensively involved in care activities). Thus social entitlements based on citizenship or residence can reach women far more effectively. These are the lines along which the Keynesian development model should have been re-structured and reformed.

Instead what we are witnessing today with the new direction of public policy is that poor women in many developing countries are being deprived 'of even the prospect of the progressive realisation of a non-discriminatory system of decent jobs and public services and broad-based social security systems' (Elson 2001, p.14). Employment objectives, the creation of decent jobs and broad-based, redistributive social security systems are no longer even the objectives of public policy in most countries. What we are witnessing instead in many contexts is the drastic reduction of state-based entitlements and their replacement by a market-based, individualised system of social services which inevitably only responds to the needs of a few privileged men and women who can afford them, while the great many who cannot are left with elusive safety nets, overwork and increasing vulnerability.

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