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GENDER AND TRADE: HOW ARE GENDER PROVISIONS IN TRADE AGREEMENTS PERCEIVED BY WOMEN WHO EXPORT FROM CHILE?
GÉNERO Y COMERCIO: ¿CÓMO PERCIBEN LAS MUJERES QUE EXPORTAN DESDE CHILE LAS DISPOSICIONES DE GÉNERO EN LOS ACUERDOS COMERCIALES?

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INDEX

| | | |
|-------------|---|-----------|
| I. | <i>Abstract</i> | 3 |
| II. | <i>Acknowledgements</i> | 4 |
| III. | <i>Introduction</i> | 5 |
| IV. | <i>Chapter 1: Trade and Gender</i> | 8 |
| | a. Trade beyond opening markets | |
| | b. The economy as a gendered structure | |
| | c. Gender provisions in trade policy | |
| V. | <i>Chapter 2: Chile's experience with gender-sensible trade regulation</i> | 27 |
| | d. Historic context of the Chilean economy | |
| | e. Chile's current economic gender gap | |
| | f. Chile's experience with gender-sensible trade regulation | |
| VI. | <i>Chapter 3: Overview of the perception of gender provisions in trade agreements perceived by women who export from Chile</i> | 55 |
| | g. Method | |
| | h. Result and analysis | |
| VII. | <i>Chapter 4: Final remarks</i> | 70 |
| | <i>References</i> | 75 |
| | <i>Annex</i> | 89 |

I. Abstract

The existing literature increasingly highlights the connection between gender and trade, as it can reinforce or challenge the distinct roles of women and men in economic activities. Trade policy serves as a critical tool that can either contribute to reducing or perpetuating gender inequalities.

Chile has strategically incorporated gender provisions into its free trade agreements (FTAs) since 1997, reflecting the significance of trade policy in its economic strategy. However, there is a dearth of information concerning the perspectives of female exporters in Chile on the effectiveness of these provisions. Therefore, this research primarily aimed to explore how women engaged in exporting from Chile perceive the gender provisions in trade agreements. To achieve this, the study involved a comprehensive analysis, including a review of academic literature on the relationship between trade and gender, an examination of Chile's experience with gender-sensitive trade regulation, interviews with Chilean exporters, public officials, and academic experts in trade and gender.

Regarding the methodology employed, this research examines primary and secondary sources and undertakes comprehensive semi-structured interviews with female exporters from Chile, representatives from international organizations, academic experts specializing in gender and trade, as well as representatives from the Chilean public sector. In total, 20 interviews were conducted.

The investigation on how gender provisions in trade agreements are perceived led to the demonstration that most women exporters from Chile are not aware of such provisions. Nevertheless, they perceive the inclusion of these provisions positively as a step towards addressing gender inequality. However, the main finding of the study is that they do not perceive significant differences when trading with countries that have gender provisions in their FTAs with Chile.

Keywords: free trade agreements; Chile; trade policymaking, perception; gender mainstreaming

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III. Introduction

Economic policies can have distinct effects on men and women, influenced by the various roles they hold within their social system. As a result, social relational contexts play a vital role in shaping the existing gender systems in which they coexist. This can lead to job segregation based on sex, division of labor, variations in gender representation in decision-making positions, and other related outcomes. (Bahri, 2021). Such differences often result in a disadvantaged position for women as they negatively affect women's autonomy by acting as obstacles to their social and economic development.

Bearing in mind that, while poverty is not gender neutral, at least 50% to 70% of the world's poor are women (Munoz, et.al, 2018). There is consensus, amongst the 193 UN members, that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls leads to sustainable development as stated in the Agenda 2030 (United Nations, 2015).

Placing gender equality as the focal point in policy development and policymaking is essential. This approach allows international trade to become a pivotal driver of enduring and sustainable development, particularly when trade policy instruments incorporate gender mainstreaming perspectives (OECD, 2021a).

While there has been a proliferation of gender provisions in various trade agreements ever since the Treaty of Rome in 1957, the southern hemisphere has shown significant proactiveness in taking into consideration the linkage between gender and trade within its trade policy making. In fact, the second gender provision ever was negotiated in the Treaty for the Establishment of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS Treaty). The first chapter on trade and gender issues was included in 1994 in the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), and the first gender specific chapter in trade agreements took place in Chile and Uruguay's 2016 Free Trade Agreement (FTA) (WTO, 2022).

There are substantial gender-specific policies in South America's main economic integration processes, Mercosur, established in 1991 and in the Pacific Alliance, established in 2011. On

the one hand, Mercosur, has launched several initiatives such as workshops, awareness-raising campaigns, diagnoses and guides, among others, directed at promoting the participation of women in areas of power and decision-making. For example, the Regional Audiovisual Contest "Parity is Equality" and the "Regional Information Leaflet on Social Security for Domestic Workers in MERCOSUR" (Dieguez, 2022). On the other hand, through the Paracas Declaration, the Pacific Alliance established the Technical Gender Group (GTG) in 2015, and developed the "Roadmap for the autonomy and economic empowerment of women in the Pacific Alliance" (SUBREI, 2021)

Regarding Chile, it has based a large part of its economic development strategy in opening markets, promoting exports and attracting foreign direct investment through unilateral, bilateral, multilateral and mega-regional and sectoral thematic agreements (Muñoz & Lopez, 2020). This has led to a significant increase in the number of its FTAs, providing the country with access to 88% of the world's GDP through its 33 trade agreements with 65 economies from around the globe (SUBREI, 2022). Within this framework, Chile has pioneered the inclusion of gender-related provisions into its free trade agreements with various countries and regional arenas such as the Pacific Alliance and APEC (López, et al 2019).

In 2016 Chile's FTA with Uruguay became the first FTA with a specific gender. As of today, the country is working on two other trade agreements with gender specific policies that are not yet in force, one with Brazil and another with Ecuador (Otero, 2022). Paradoxically, there isn't clarity of the perception of Chilean women exporters on the inclusion of gender provisions in its trade agreements.

This article seeks to analyze the perception of them on the country's gender provisions in its trade agreements. For this purpose, this study reviews academic literature regarding trade and gender as well as Chile's experience on integrating a gender perspective in its trade policymaking.

This paper study is divided into the following sections. After this introduction, the first section reviews the relevant literature regarding the linkage between trade and gender.



Second, Chile's experience with gender-sensible trade regulation was revised. Third, an overview of the perception of gender provisions in trade agreements perceived by women who export from Chile is presented. The paper concludes with some final remarks.

IV. Trade and gender

a. Trade beyond opening markets

An increase in cross-border flows of goods, services, intellectual property, people, technology, and information among a variety of other things has been a crucial component of globalization. The prevailing assumption behind it, is that the removal of trade and other economic barriers help countries specialize, expanding production and employment opportunities for everyone involved (UNCTAD, 2022a). Hence, traditionally, free and open trade has been approached as a tool to raise the productivity levels of countries and expand employment opportunities for their population while boosting their country's overall development. That is why, for decades, a country's main objective in negotiating trade agreements was to reduce trade barriers by seeking greater access to the international market (Albertoni, 2022). Nonetheless, although increased trade has fostered economic growth in certain countries, it hasn't necessarily resulted in commensurate social development. This is mainly attributed to income inequality, social disparities, and exclusion, which hinder the equitable distribution of benefits (UNCTAD, 2020). This has led states at the global level to reach a consensus, made visible first by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000 and later by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, that economic growth alone is not enough to achieve inclusive, and therefore effective development.

“A key feature of economic development in the era of globalization is a disconnection between economic growth and social development” (UNCTAD, 2022a)

Moreover, the economy of a country is a multilevel structure in which different layers intertwine, and interact with one another. For this, it is key in understanding why economic policies, including trade policy, may affect different segments of the population, including men and women, in different ways (UNCTAD, 2022a). Thus, trade policy, amongst other instruments, have been increasingly used to advance and promote sustainable development (Bahri, 2021). Particularly regarding the promotion of human rights, environmental protection, and gender equality.

Historically, there was a prevailing belief that trade and economic activities were predominantly male-dominated, while gender-related issues, including social roles and inequalities, were primarily associated with the private sphere (Rosicki, 2012). This division of labor and perception of gender roles contributed to the separation of gender and trade within analysis and policy frameworks. Moreover, traditional economic theories, like neoclassical economics, emphasized market mechanisms and maintained a gender-neutral perspective that often overlooked the gendered aspects of economic activities. This oversight included neglecting to consider the differential effects of trade on men and women and failing to incorporate gender as a relevant variable in economic models. Further, the scarcity of gender-disaggregated data on trade and economic activities posed a challenge in analyzing the gender dimensions of trade because it made it difficult to assess the specific impacts of trade on men and women separately, further reinforcing the perception that gender and trade were distinct spheres.

Through the 1994 Marrakesh Agreement which paved the way to the WTO's establishment, the international community searched for sustainable development through the protection and preservation of the environment while acting in a compatible manner with the respective trade needs and interests of the countries involved (WTO, 2022). In 2015, both the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development enunciated a direct link between gender, trade and sustainable development. Today it is estimated that about 75% of all states have negotiated trade agreements with human rights provisions (Aaronson, & Chaffour, 2011).

Initially, trade policy instruments were not designed with the explicit purpose of promoting gender inclusivity. They were primarily seen as tools to open markets, stimulate trade, and address macroeconomic goals such as economic growth and foreign investment attraction. As a consequence, gender equality issues were often overlooked and excluded from their frameworks.

However, over time, there has been a growing recognition of the interconnectedness between gender and trade. Research and advocacy efforts have highlighted the differential impacts of

trade on men and women, the role of gender norms and inequalities in shaping trade patterns, and the potential of trade to either exacerbate or alleviate gender disparities. As a result, there has been an increasing effort to integrate gender perspectives into trade analysis and policy-making, leading to a more comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between gender and trade.

b. The economy as a gendered structure

Analyzing the economy as a gendered framework involves taking into account the power dynamics shaped by gender that underlie different institutions, transactions, and relationships in the economic system (Elson, 1999). This perspective acknowledges the economy as a component of a broader system of social relations where gender already plays a role, but these relationships are not fixed; they can evolve and change through suitable tools and public policies (UNCTAD, 2022a).

By this token, any impact of trade on the economy will likely have gender-specific repercussions, and the impacts of trade are expected to differ among women based on factors such as: ethnicity, age, income, educational level, migration status, and prevailing social responsibilities (World Bank, 2021). Consequently, trade policy can be most effective in reducing the gender gap by tackling “gender-specific barriers and structural differences in the economic participation of women and men in different sectors” (UNCTAD, pp. 8 2020).

Definitions

To use the appropriate language, this case study will refer to the following definitions before dealing further into the trade and gender linkage:

- Sex: the physical and biological characteristics that distinguish males and females;
- Gender: a system of norms and practices that ascribe certain roles, characteristics and behaviors to males and females based on sex. i.e gender differences can be understood

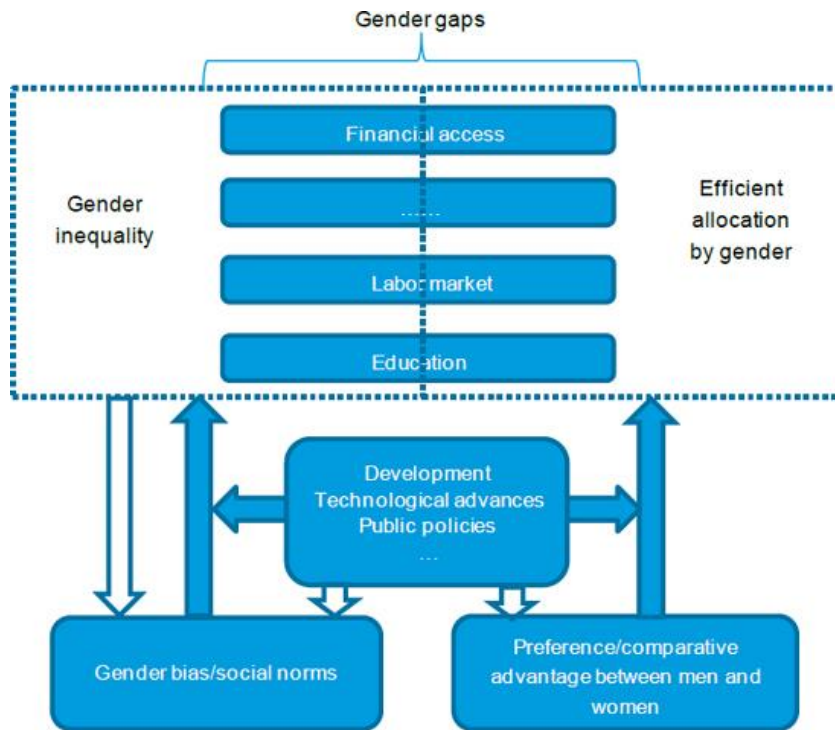
as being socially constructed and learned through socialization processes rather than being based on any biological or “natural” distinction (UNCTAD, 2022a);

- Gender equality: as “equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of women, men, girls, and boys” (Dommen, 2022), and as a vital issue that concerns women’s status relative to the status of men;
- Women’s economic empowerment: whether women have the ability to exercise control over their lives, and whether they have opinions and choice over practical and strategic decisions.
- Gender mainstreaming: the process of integrating a gender perspective into all policies, programs, and activities to address gender inequalities and promote gender equality through a strategic approach based on informed decisions in policy making and resource allocation (OECD, 2023);
- Gender-based discrimination: the differentiated treatment, often detrimental, of individuals based on their gender, which can hinder their participation and opportunities in trade (UNCTAD, 2022a)
 - According to CEDAW’s Article 1, gender discrimination is “any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field”, and can be exercised by law or by practice.
- Gender-responsive trade policies: trade policies and agreements that address the specific needs, interests, and challenges faced by different genders, aiming to promote gender equality through women's empowerment (UNCTAD, 2022a);
- Gender provisions: specific clauses within trade agreements aimed at promoting the reduction of gender-based discrimination in trade (UNCTAD, 2022a);

- Gender bias: “actions or thoughts with prejudice, often against women, based on the gendered perception that women and men are not equal with respect to rights and dignity” (UNCTAD, 2022a), often leading to gender discrimination.

As shown in Figure 1, a significant connection exists among gender gaps, gender inequality, the factors influencing them, and the policy measures put in place to tackle these problems. The presence of gender inequality in different aspects signifies its origins, mainly stemming from gender bias and societal norms. While certain policies may improve gender equality in particular domains, achieving total gender equality necessitates addressing the fundamental issues at their core: gender bias and social norms.

Figure 1



Source: Shang, B. (2022, December). Tackling gender inequality: Definitions, trends, and Policy Designs (2022). IMF Working Paper. <https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/journals/001/2022/232/001.2022.issue-232-en.xml>

Recognizing the interplay between gender and trade is vital in shaping trade policies that advance gender equality, enhance women's economic empowerment, and foster inclusive sharing of trade benefits. This involves addressing gender disparities in accessing resources,

participating in trade, and decision-making processes, while harnessing trade as a tool for promoting gender equality and empowering women. Understanding this interconnectedness is crucial for developing trade policies that ensure the equitable distribution of trade benefits. It requires addressing gender-based inequities in resource availability, trade involvement, and decision-making, while utilizing trade as a means to promote gender equality and empower women. As a result, the integration of gender considerations into trade agreements has emerged as a strategy to bridge gender gaps in the economy and strive for equal opportunities to access the advantages of trade.

Both the MDGs and the SDGs, consider gender equality as one of their main goals as they refer to it as being at the heart of inclusive economic growth, and a critical component of the sustainable development agenda. This notion has led the global community to create international instruments aimed at developing an overarching framework related to gender equality. Some of its key elements are the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995, the aforementioned MDGs in 2000, and the 2015 SDGs (UNCTAD, 2022a).

However, despite their value, international frameworks aimed at gender equality's effectiveness may be constrained by:

- a deficiency in the essential mechanisms or political determination to fully implement and enforce the principles outlined in said frameworks;
- deeply ingrained cultural and social norms regarding gender roles and stereotypes, impeding progress in overcoming discriminatory practices, a lack of sufficient resources (including financial capacity and infrastructure) to fully support the required initiatives;
- resistance from certain political groups who are not fully committed to promoting gender equality further adds to the challenges;
- inadequate data and monitoring mechanisms limit their impact (Montez, 2021).

“Gender equality goes hand-in-hand with macroeconomic and financial stability, can stimulate economic growth, boost private and public sector performance, and reduce income inequality” - Gita Gopinath (IMF, 2022)

Gender inequalities lead to women experiencing discrimination or encountering limited opportunities solely based on their gender. As a consequence, their capacity to fully utilize their skills, knowledge, and talents becomes constrained, potentially resulting in decreased productivity, underutilization of human capital, and a slowdown in economic growth (Gomis, R. et al, 2023). Moreover, such inequalities restrict diversity within the workforce, which can impede innovation and creativity by lacking diverse perspectives and experiences that are vital for generating novel ideas and inventive solutions (Curtis, 2019).

According to the World Bank’s Women, Business and the Law 2023 study, promoting gender equality is crucial in eradicating extreme poverty and enhancing collective prosperity. Ensuring equitable legal treatment of women leads to increased participation and longevity of women in the workforce, enabling them to attain managerial positions, which may result in higher wages for women and greater female entrepreneurship. In fact, it makes economic sense as well to promote gender equality as “discriminatory social institutions not only hold back achieving gender equality but also matter for economic growth” (Ferrant, pp.1 2016). Especially considering that “human capital wealth could increase by 21.7 percent globally, and total wealth by 14.0 percent with gender equality in earnings” (Wodon, 2018).

However, women throughout the world continue to face gender barriers in trade to different degrees. Deep-rooted gender stereotypes and societal norms may limit women's access to opportunities in the trade sector, and express themselves in the form of economic gender inequalities. e.g. disparities in access to resources, finance and education, as well as in unequal share of unpaid care work such as childcare and household responsibilities.

As a result, women face difficulties in fully participating in trade activities or pursuing business ventures. This contributes to unequal wage conditions, perpetuating income inequality and diminishing women's purchasing power, which, in turn, can negatively affect

consumer spending and overall economic demand. Furthermore, it impacts labor force participation, leading to fewer individuals contributing to economic activity and potentially missing out on opportunities for economic growth. Occupational segregation also arises, resulting in an inefficient allocation of talent and skills.

By definition, gender equality calls for the recognition of the vital role that unpaid household-based work of caring for others plays for the continued functioning of a market-oriented economy. This means that goods and services, as well as intellectual property, required for adequate living standards, are produced not only through market segregation, but also through many hours of unpaid labor spent in: cooking and cleaning, collecting water, and taking care of others such as children and the elderly, among others (UNCTAD, 2023).

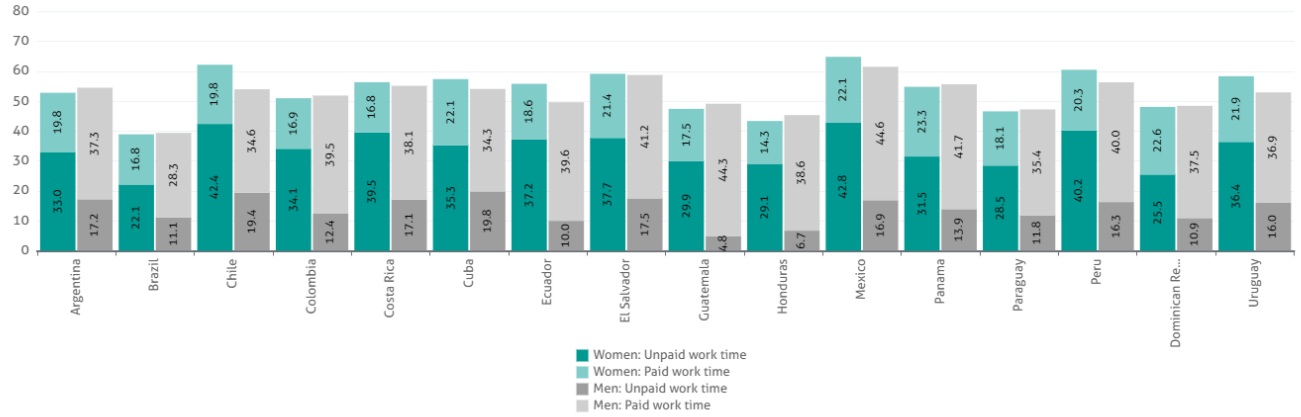
“At world level, women dedicate 3.2 times more time than men to unpaid care work”
(Charmes, 2019).

While in emerging countries women spend the longest hours in unpaid care work (4 hours and 36 minutes), and in developed countries they spend the shortest (4 hours and 20 minutes), the difference between them is no more than 16 minutes. Gender-based norms are largely responsible for this (Charmes, 2019). Figure 2 and Figure 3, evidence the existing gender division across the world regarding the time spent on paid and unpaid work.

Figure 2

Total work time

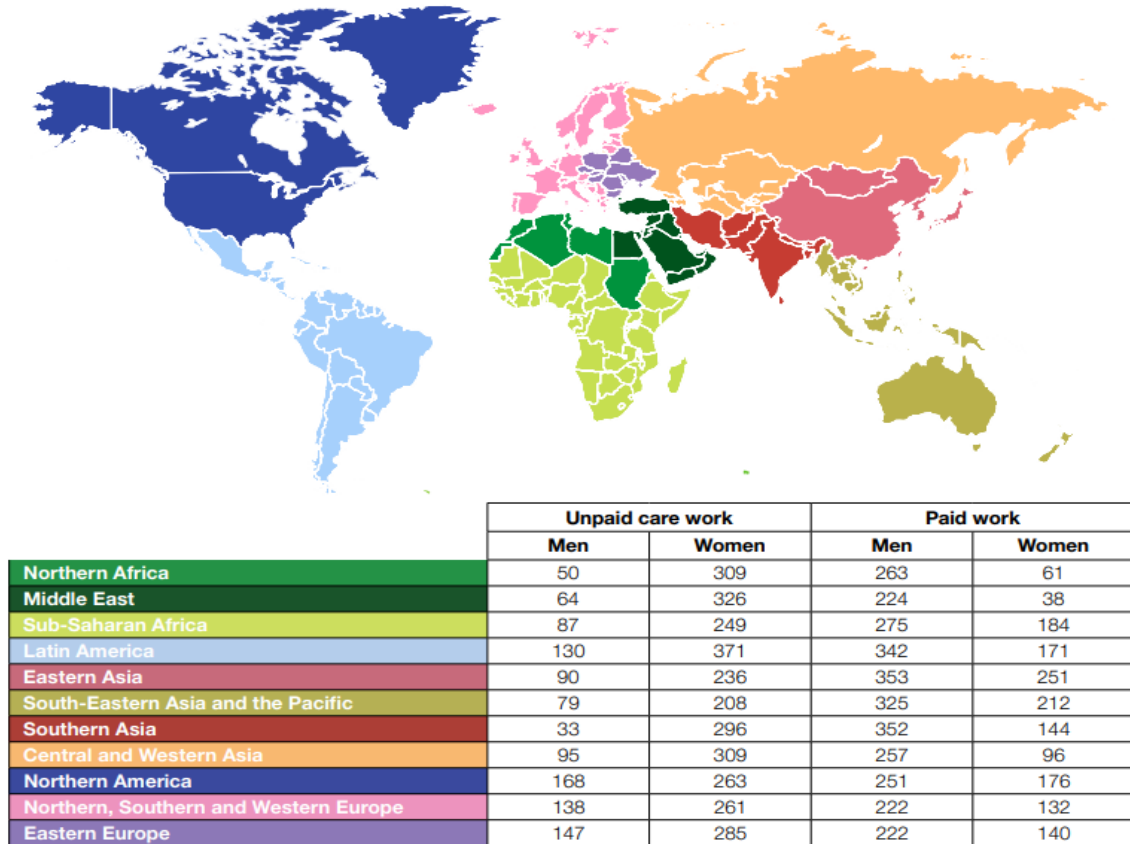
Latin America (16 countries): Average time spent on paid and unpaid work of the population aged 15 and over, by sex, by country, for the latest available data (Average hours per week)



Source: ECLAC, on the basis of the Repository of information on time use in Latin America and the Caribbean

Figure 3

Figure 2. Time spent on unpaid work and paid work across world regions (minutes per day)



Source: UNCTAD secretariat illustration based on data from Charmes (2019).

Note: Unpaid care work is defined as providing unpaid domestic services for one's own final use within households, providing unpaid caregiving services to household members, and providing community services and help to other households.

⁵ This figure is based on an analysis of *time use surveys* from 75 countries (33 developed countries, 36 emerging countries and six developing countries) by Charmes (2019).

This suggests that globally, women carry a larger proportion of unpaid care work, impacting their economic participation compared to men. Chile is not an exception to this trend, and women may face similar gender-related challenges in various economic roles, including trade, even if they are not always fully aware of them due to their normalization. It is estimated that as of 2015, women in the country spent 24.7% of their time on domestic chores and unpaid care work while men spent 10.8% (ECLAC, 2021).

The disproportionate burden of care work on women often leads to increased public spending on social services such as childcare and elderly care, straining government finances and potentially affecting other budget priorities. It reinforces the perception that women's caregiving responsibilities make them less committed or capable, posing barriers to accessing leadership positions and higher-paying roles.

According to the 2022 Global Gender Gap Report, the Covid-19 pandemic's closure of schools and childcare facilities further amplified care responsibilities at home, burdening women with additional unpaid work. This has restricted and continues to restrict women's ability to engage in paid market activities, exacerbating gender gaps in the economy.

Moreover, women who shoulder most of the care work may experience interruptions or gaps in their work history, affecting their pension and retirement savings and potentially leading to economic insecurity and poverty in later life. In addition, women's influence over household financial decisions is often diminished when they bear the majority of care responsibilities, perpetuating gender inequalities and reducing their financial independence (Seedar & Rondon, 2021).

It is important to highlight that women take on multiple roles simultaneously and experience various types of gender inequality that can intersect and compound, leading to disadvantages for women in the market economy. This affects their performance as workers, producers, traders, consumers, investors, users of public services, taxpayers, and may result in reduced productive efficiency due to limited access to productive resources such as credit, land, and inputs (UNCTAD, 2020).

While trade openness can be considered a potent tool for nations to stimulate economic growth, foster development, and alleviate poverty (IMF, 2001), trade policies need to be designed considering their impact on gender dynamics, to avoid exacerbating existing gender gaps (Castillo, 2020). Otherwise, women may be more vulnerable to the negative effects of

trade liberalization and face more obstacles than men in taking advantage of trade opportunities (Kiratu, 2010).

Gender inequalities in different domains of economic and social life may affect a country's competitiveness and export performance (UNCTADa, 2022). To access international trade, developing countries tend to use their low skill labor force as their competitive advantage, using their pricing to attract investment and foreign capital. A way in which they are able to maintain, or even reduce its prices, is by keeping their workforce's conditions vulnerable, either by not taking the necessary precautions to provide a safe working place or by not always respecting labor laws. While low skill employment is available for both women and men, "women are often the majority of workers in labor intensive export production in low-income countries. They are concentrated in low-paid, low-skilled, casual work and are often vulnerable to poor labor conditions and exploitation" (Barrientos, 2017). Thereby, trade openness can push countries to expand their cheap labor advantage, deterring them from taking the necessary steps to provide for a safer workplace, largely jeopardizing women's role as wage workers (UNCTADb, 2022).

"Women workers often face gender barriers in global production. They face discrimination in pay, the types of jobs they do, opportunities for skills training and promotion. They are often subject to sexual harassment and gender violence at work" (Barrientos, 2017).

It is particularly complex for women to reach their full potential in the multiple roles they play in the economy. In the agriculture sector, women have unequal access to or control over farm resources. In the manufacturing sector, women tend to remain in low-skilled sub-sectors of the industry, characterized by low-quality jobs and limited prospects for upgrading towards higher value-added activities; and in the services sector, women tend to be clustered in low-skill segments of the sector, such as street vendors or informal cross-border traders (UNCTADa, 2022)

According to the UNCTAD secretariat, export-oriented development policies have contradictory gender implications because despite the fact that they contribute to the creation

of significant opportunities for wage employment from which women can benefit, they often result in the feminization of labor, leading women to be crowded into labor-intensive occupations with limited possibilities for advancement, and low-value added export. i.g. tourism, call centers and data entry. Further, women as workers may face the following economic gender bias:

- Concentration in a few sectors (horizontal segregation) and in lower-ranking occupations (vertical segregation).
- Concentration in precarious forms of work (e.g. informal, part-time, seasonal, casual or temporary work)
- Weak bargaining power in the labor market (gender wage discrimination may be employed as a conscious strategy to boost profits by taking advantage of the lower bargaining power of women workers)
- Gender wage gap (in 2021, women earned globally more than 35% less than men in similar roles)
- Unequal access to education, training and skill development
- Unequal sharing of unpaid domestic work and care responsibilities
- Gender-based violence and harassment
- Women's dominance among contributing family workers, which implies no personal remuneration except for sharing of household income
- Women's dominance among own-account workers, their unequal access to productive resources, and their irregular flow of income (UNCTAD, 2022a)

Nonetheless, while as wage workers, women mostly hold traditional, low-skill or non-tradable services, their increasing involvement in the provision of higher-skill services represent new opportunities for women's economic advancement (Barrientos, 2017).

Trade influences economic outcomes for women as producers and small entrepreneurs. Gender-specific constraints such as unequal tenure systems, poor infrastructure, limited access to credit, and lack of technical expertise to comply with regulations and output

standards result in most female-owned enterprises being less likely than male-owned ones to export, engage in GVCs, or have foreign ownership. Further, women entrepreneurs face greater risks of gender-based discrimination and tend to be concentrated in lower-value-added sectors such as garments, handicrafts, carpets and food processing (UNCTAD, 2022b). They may also face the following gender bias as farmers, self-employed, business owners or employers, and traders:

- Unequal access to and control over economic assets and resources (e.g. capital, credit, land, inputs)
- Unequal access to market information, producer networks and business development services
- Unequal access to technical knowledge (e.g. extension services in agriculture) and technology
- Unequal access to different modes of safe transportation
- Lower literacy and numeracy skills
- Limited awareness of trade rules and customs procedures
- Unequal sharing of unpaid domestic work and care responsibilities
- Gender-based violence and harassment (UNCTAD, 2022a)

However, digital technologies and e-commerce have eased women entrepreneurs' access to markets through lower investment requirements and flexible time management, as well as by offering the possibility of bypassing cultural and mobility barriers. Indeed, the share of women entrepreneurs is higher in e-commerce platforms than offline businesses, and areas of e-commerce activity include cosmetics, clothing, grocery and baby products (Burga, 2021)

Depending on how much influence trade policy has on the domestic prices of imported goods and the degree of exposure that women have to them, one may be able to get an overall idea of the linkage of international trade and women's economic role as consumers. Since women tend to spend more on household well-being, a rise or fall in the price of basic consumption

goods as a result of import competition may affect women to a greater extent than men (UNCTAD, 2022a). Moreover, as purchasers of food and other goods and as users of public services, women may face the following gender bias:

- Unequal exposure to tariffs that tend to be high on foodstuffs as main purchasers of them for the household. “Compared to men, women tend to spend a larger share of their income on goods with high tariffs, such as food. Removing import tariffs could help women gain 2.5 percent more real income than men” (World Bank, 2021).
- Unequal sharing of domestic work and higher vulnerability to cuts in public expenditure that may follow tariff revenue loss (UNCTAD, 2022a)

"Unequal rights before the law also limit women's opportunities and economic empowerment" (Frohmann, 2019)

Globally, women's ownership of agricultural land stands at a mere 13% (United Nations, 2015). As of 2022, husbands in 18 countries have the legal right to prevent their wives from working, and 39 countries exhibit gender differentiation in inheritance rights (United Nations, 2015). These legal inequalities concerning land ownership and inheritance impede women's capacity to accumulate capital, restricting their ability to invest and trapping them in low-value activities. Consequently, due to limited land rights and restricted access to resources, women's efficiency in production is compromised, leading to smaller crop yields (UNCTAD, 2020).

In certain countries like Bahrain, wives are required to obtain their husband's permission to access banking services (Bahri, 2021), which perpetuates a cycle of inequality as it limits women's economic autonomy. Further, by not having autonomy in accessing their own bank accounts, their engagement in financial transactions is hindered, which in turn limits their potential to establish a credit history that could facilitate access to capital. As a result, women remain secondary participants in economic activities (Frohmann, 2019).

Furthermore, gender inequality can manifest itself in trade through harassment during informal cross-border trading and limitations in accessing transportation. These factors create obstacles for women to access markets as quickly as their male counterparts, resulting in adverse effects on women's participation in trade (Calvo, 1994).

Gender disparities in education may also play a key role in women's relationship with trade as restricted access to quality education and skill development for women and girls often results in a less skilled workforce, impeding their economic advancement and their capacity to compete effectively in a knowledge-based economy (Abdulkadri, 2022).

According to UNESCO's 2022 Gender Report, two-thirds of the 771 million adults lacking basic literacy skills are women. Additionally, the World Bank (2020) reveals that while gender gaps in education have narrowed in certain regions, they persist in others. For instance, access to education for women has improved in Latin America and the Caribbean over the past decades. However, the situation is different in Sub-Saharan Africa, where over one in four young women are illiterate. This lack of education undermines their bargaining power and limits their potential as traders.

In summary, gender disparities have a significant impact on a nation's economic potential, hindering its ability to flourish. By addressing these disparities and promoting gender equality, societies can forge more inclusive and prosperous economies that benefit everyone. The advantages of advancing gender equality in areas such as trade, extend beyond solely benefiting women, making it imperative for the entire community to collaborate in the best interest of each individual.

To achieve gender equality, it is crucial to address the unequal distribution of care work, which plays a pivotal role in creating a more inclusive and productive economy. Implementing policies that support work-life balance, accessible childcare facilities, shared caregiving responsibilities, and challenging gender norms are essential steps in reducing the economic impacts of women's disproportionate care burden.

When women have equal rights before the law, they can fully participate in society and contribute to the economy. As such, promoting gender equality and ensuring equal opportunities for all genders yield several positive effects on the economy, like increased labor force participation, enhanced productivity, innovation, reduced income inequality, and sustainable economic growth. Ultimately, working towards reducing gender inequalities and creating an inclusive environment that empowers all individuals, regardless of their gender, is in the best interest of societies and economies alike.

c. Gender provisions in trade policy

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

However, trade may have negative effects on some women if the trade policy that is in place does not consider how localized costs related with trade liberalization can negatively affect women's livelihoods (Piermartini, 2021, slide 14). Adopting an intersectional and gender lens approach means identifying which women are being benefited by trade, in which sectors and the scale of the businesses that are going to be affected by it. Subsequently, the collection of gender disaggregated data is crucial to use trade as an instrument for mediating gender equality, increasing equal economic opportunity for all, regardless of sex or gender, and avoiding reinforcing gender barriers to trade (OECD, 2022b).

Moreover, in trade-related matters, gender equality may not consistently receive prioritization, especially in countries with more conventional perspectives on international trade. For instance, countries that view trade solely as a means of enhancing market access may be less inclined to include gender provisions in their trade agreements. Conversely,

nations that consider trade as a tool to promote other interests beyond market access may be more willing to incorporate gender provisions in their trade agreements.

Additionally, the inclusion of gender issues in the multilateral trade agenda can be perceived as a cultural imposition by Western countries, which can cause friction and slow down negotiations on the adoption of trade agreements that refer to it. If not careful, gender mainstreaming in trade policy can also be used as a barrier to trade. Especially as national legislation through trade agreements can reduce the policy space afforded to national initiatives (Kiratu & Roy, pp. V, 2010).

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

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

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

Ex-ante gender impact assessments of trade agreements are useful because they provide an estimate of the potential impact of trade policy on women versus men prior to their implementation. This allows for a closer and more accurate look on the positive, neutral or negative effect said policy has regarding gender equality.

It is so crucial that even back to 1999, the Chile-European Union association agreement included Sustainability Impact Assessments (SIAs) to provide an assessment of the potential economic, social, and environmental impacts while the negotiation is ongoing. In this way, gender equality is evaluated by looking at its impact on women as workers, entrepreneurs, traders and consumers (Moisé, 2021). These assessments proved to be significantly useful and have evolved into different social analysis of trade agreements. One of the most known and integrated ones to date is Canada's Gender-Based Analysis Plus, "an analytical process used to assess how different women, men and gender diverse people may experience policies, programs and initiatives" (Canada, 2022).

Notwithstanding, gender impact assessments have two main shortcomings: the inability of their findings and recommendations to be fully reflected in the design and implementation of the trade agreement being assessed, and the lack of subsequent monitoring of the impact of implemented trade agreements on women's empowerment and gender equality (UNCTADb, 2022)

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

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

Likewise, gender provisions in trade agreements can be an effective enabler for gender equality and women's economic empowerment. The 2016 Free Trade Agreement between Chile and Uruguay was the first example of a trade agreement with a stand-alone chapter on trade and gender, and served as a blueprint for innovating in ways for the international community to share experiences on how to further women's participation in the economy and to develop cooperation activities involving institutional arrangements. These provisions may be found in the preamble, stand-alone chapters, side agreements, or even annexes of a trade agreement (Hughes, 2019).

As of today, there are other 7 FTAs that include a gender-specific chapter in their trade agreement, and more than 20% of trade agreements have an explicit provision relating to gender equality. They may differ with respect to their location in the text, their nature, the content itself, the length of their provisions' coverage and in the language used. Regarding the latter one, in most trade agreements, gender provisions tend to use soft or non-binding language (UNCTADa, 2023).

Conversely, the following elements undermine the efficacy of gender provision in trade agreements: they do not introduce specific gender-related standard, milestones or goals, they do not require the harmonization of gender-related legislation between parties, the overall impact on women's well-being and gender equality are hardly explicitly referred to and they have not being subjected to dispute mechanisms yet. "Although gender-related provisions have been included in international trade agreements for some time, and the number of trade

agreements in which they are found has increased steadily since the 1990s, the provisions found in previous agreements have tended to be fairly general in nature and lack firm commitments” (Hughes, 2019)

Howbeit, positive outcomes can be enhanced through: a broader involvement of women, women's groups and civil society representatives in the negotiations, design, and implementation stages of trade agreements with which parties should comply; deeper sensitization of trade officials to the gender implications of trade, which would contribute to a move away from gender blind trade policy to gender aware, and ultimately gender responsive trade policy. and finally, providing adequate resources to implement gender provisions or chapters (UNCTADb, 2023).

Women-owned businesses may face barriers when competing for public tenders, such as inadequate national legislation, misaligned tender design, excessive requirements, poor government practices, lack of information and limited supply capability in terms of quality and quantity. Public procurement can be used to contrarrest this by mainstreaming gender in trade policy and promoting public programs and initiatives that favor women-led or owned businesses. “Gender-responsive public procurement can catalyze women-led enterprises that create a domino effect in empowerment, job creation and social growth stimulation” (Koigi, 2021). This is the case of Kenya, which in 2013, with its Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO) initiative, pioneered its empowerment program reserving 30% of all government tenders for more vulnerable communities, such as women, youth and people with disabilities (Kiriti, 2017).

Finally, countries can mainstream gender in national strategies and action plans to implement regional agreements with gender provisions, as in the case of national and regional strategies to implement the African Continental Free Trade Agreement. The private sector can introduce gender-focused initiatives to incorporate gender into their corporate social responsibility. For example, through training by using gender-responsive procurement, or by implementing zero tolerance for gender-based violence and harassment in the workplace in their strategies. Additionally, international organizations can support women in trade through

targeted interventions like UNCTAD's courses on gender and trade, the WTO Training module focusing on how to implement WTO rules through a gender lens, the ITC with #SheTrades Initiative, UN Regional Economic Commissions, etc (UNCTADa, 2023).

V. Chile's experience with gender-sensible trade regulation

d. Historic context of the Chilean trade policy

From early years of protectionism after gaining its independence from Spain in 1818, to a welfare-based economy since the 1920's, to an import substitution industrialization in the early 1970's, to the establishment of a neoliberal strategy based on trade liberalization after 1973, to the current export model, Chile has implemented different economic development models to boost its economy in hopes of greater economic development.

It is argued that throughout its history, Chile has enjoyed favorable conditions that have influenced its comparably sustained economic prosperity since its colonial times. One of them being its long periods without revolutions or foreign invasions. In fact, Chile has not

lost a war, or been invaded by a foreign power since the 1540s, and was widely politically stable during the colonial period.

Throughout history, Chilean society has predominantly regarded free trade as a favorable approach to achieve economic growth.

“I was emphatic in that two measures were needed, in order to push the people away from their indifference and to make them interested in the revolution: the election of a Congress and the establishment of free trade” - Bernardo O’Higgins (Hojman, 2000)

Bernardo O’Higgins, one of the most prominent Chilean historical figures, encouraged free trade as a way to increase trade volumes and diversify trade partners. However, contrary to modern day notions of free trade, he saw free trade as means to increase tax revenues from international trade in order to lessen the tax burden on domestic activities. This was intended as a way of gaining more political support for those who were championing Chile’s independence from Spanish rule (Hojman, 2000).

From the 17th to the 19th century, Chile’s middle class prosperity relied on export growth and an open market economy. Yet, while it gave the country greater access to different markets, adopting an export-led strategy meant that Chile was also left particularly vulnerable to drastic changes or international shocks. Events such as the Great Depression, and World War II made visible the susceptibilities that an open market economy with an underdeveloped national industrialization could be at risk of (Silva, 2007).

In this line, the Latin American response to the international economic and socio political crises produced by the aforementioned events, among others, was to look for a different strategy to boost its economy. One of its main focus was to move from an commodity-export-led model to an import-substitution model (ISM) as an effort to decrease their dependence on international trade while constructing basic industry, developing infrastructure and furthering income redistribution. This meant having industrial policy at the very core of the import-substitution development strategy and pushing for internal economic expansion and stimulation of domestic industry (Silva, 2007).

Between the 1930s and 1973, Chile's trade policy relied heavily on import-substitution industrialization. During this period, Chilean trade was characterized by having industrial sectors benefiting from high tariffs and differential exchange rates that discriminated against traditional agriculture and mining sectors (Moran, 1974). Over time, economic growth slowed down and maintaining this strategy to boost Chile's socio economic development within a market economy became unsustainable. International factors (e.g. the oil and debt crises, globalization, the Cold War and the great powers' geopolitical interests, among others), and national factors (e.g domestic economic, political and social conditions) strongly affected its success, and fostered structural bottlenecks that ended up precipitating the Chilean abandonment of the ISM and the rise of its free-market development strategy (Silva, 2007). Instead, other nations such as Korea and Taiwan, which were also operating under ISM, opted to adapt the model to the changed international circumstances (Haggard, 1990).

It is worth noting that regardless of Chile implementing its ISM, the country was still an active participant of the international arena through its trade policy. In 1947, among the 23 states that placed their trust in multilateral cooperation, the application of liberal trade policies, and in the acceptance of mutual rights and obligations in international trade, was the Government of Chile (Dunkel, 1982). At the same time, the country promoted a differentiated regime through regional integration schemes such as The Latin American Free Trade Association (LAFTA) in 1960 and the Andean Pact in 1969. Furthermore, Chile also benefited from the General System of Preferences (GSP) which was sponsored by the UNCTAD in 1968 (Schiff, 2002).

From the early 1970's to the early 1990's the nation underwent deep structural socio-political and economic changes mostly ascribed to economic stagnation and sociopolitical unrest. During that time, the Chilean economic scenario was arguably bleak with serious imbalances across most of its sectors. This can be attributed to failures in economic and trade policies resulting in productive goods being restricted, inadequately stimulating imports, and growing government intervention based on multiple and inconsistent price controls. Against this background, Chile's trade policy was unable to competently face the challenges that the

international trade sphere required as the policies that were being implemented at the time, triggered an extremely inefficient resource allocation and the emergence of widespread shortages, queues and parallel markets (Zahler, 1986).

In this context, the year 1973 was exceptionally meaningful for Chile's history as it contributed exponentially to the deterioration of its "national prestige" factor, a crucial soft power element of considerable importance for countries that, like Chile, do not enjoy pronounced military nor economic resources (Muñoz, H., 1982).

“As Chile was living in an international isolation, unilateral openings were the only way to stimulate foreign trade. Average tariff rates were reduced from 94% in 1974 to a uniform rate of 10% in 1979” (Domínguez et al, 2023).

The military government sought to install a new political and socioeconomic order. For this purpose, new trade policy was established as well as a series of economic reforms carried out by a group of neoliberal technocrats known as Chicago Boys (Rumié, 2019). Through the re-introduction of free-market open economy policies, the dictatorship implemented an abrupt unilateral openness strategy that included: opening most of its economic sectors to foreign investment, eliminating non-tariffs barriers as well as multiple exchange rates, putting into force policies that encouraged the export sector, and reducing and homogenizing tariffs (Muñoz & Lopez, 2020). Regarding the latter, the regime bounded all of its Most Favored Nations (MFN) tariffs at 35% with the exception of fluctuation bands (Jara, et al., 2005).

However, in response to the external debt crisis that broke out in the early 1980's, the regime raised its import tariffs by 15%, and employed complementary mechanisms like the drawback system, which was based on the restitution of import tariffs for exports, to protect the market. From 1985 onwards, unilateral liberalization was resumed within the framework of a more moderate and pragmatic economic policy and the uniform tariff was gradually reduced to 15% in 1989 (Dominguez, et al, 2023).

In 1990 Chile returned to democracy, ended its isolationist period and paved the way to the implementation of an open regionalism model aimed at reinserting itself in the global

scenario. The 1980 Montevideo Treaty facilitated the signing of different preferential trade agreements such as Economic Complementation Agreements (eCAs), Partial Scope Agreements (PSAs) or FTAs. This Treaty founded LAFTA, which is composed by Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela, and with the liberalization of trade in goods and services in the Latin American region at its core, it promotes granting tariff preferences at the regional and international levels by signing regional agreements (Muñoz & Lopez, 2020).

Starting from 1990, Chile actively participated in negotiating multiple preferential trade agreements with countries and economic blocs globally. These agreements varied from regional integration deals with Latin American countries to the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the EFTA States. Simultaneously, at the multilateral level, Chile became a founding member of the WTO in 1995, joined the Asia-Pacific Cooperation (APEC) in 1994, and gained membership in the OECD in 2009.(Dominguez, et al, 2023).

Since then, Chile has remained a mainly exporting country, with an economy largely dependent on its interrelation with other markets and its inclusion in global value chains. To address this, Chile's current economic development model continues to seek ways to open markets, promote its exports and attract foreign direct investment through four levels: unilateral, bilateral, multilateral and mega regional and thematic sectoral agreements.

At the unilateral level, Chile keeps relying on unilateral tariff reductions and export promotion policies. At the bilateral level, the country searches for broader market access through Economic Complementation Agreements (ECAs), and FTAs oriented at seeking comprehensive agreements.

Figure 2

Countries with trade agreements with Chile as of 2023



Source: Figure adapted by author from Muñoz, Felipe & Lopez, Dorotea. (2020). *Cuarenta años de apertura comercial chilena*. Cuadernos Americanos. 154. 125-151.

At the multilateral level, Chile carries on as an active member of multiple multilateral economic organizations like the above mentioned. Complementarily, over the past decade, the country has sought to spearhead and join mega regional and thematic agreements like The Pacific Alliance (PA) in 2011, the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership in 2018, the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement (DEPA) in 2020, and the Global Trade and Gender Arrangement (GTAGA) in the same year (Nazal, 2022). Presently, as seen in Figure 2, Chile is part of 33 trade agreements with 65 economies worldwide (SUBREI, 2023).

Finally, Chile' trade policy has adopted different development models overtime. Some have championed free and open markets while others have prioritized the creation of national industries. Either way, international trade has played a key role in Chile's own development as a country throughout its history. Changes in global and national circumstances lead to innovations in trade policy and Chile have not shy away from them. It has pioneered several initiatives that have made it clear that it understands the evolutionary nature of it and the need to be flexible around it. Thereupon, the current scenario calls for a comprehensive and

inclusive trade policy to better tackle today's challenges. To do so, modern Chilean trade policy encompasses themes such e-commerce, gender, human and labor rights and seeks for ways to make it resilient to inadvertent shocks that may arise along the way (like the covid pandemic).

e. Chile's current economic gender gap

Overview on Chile's economy

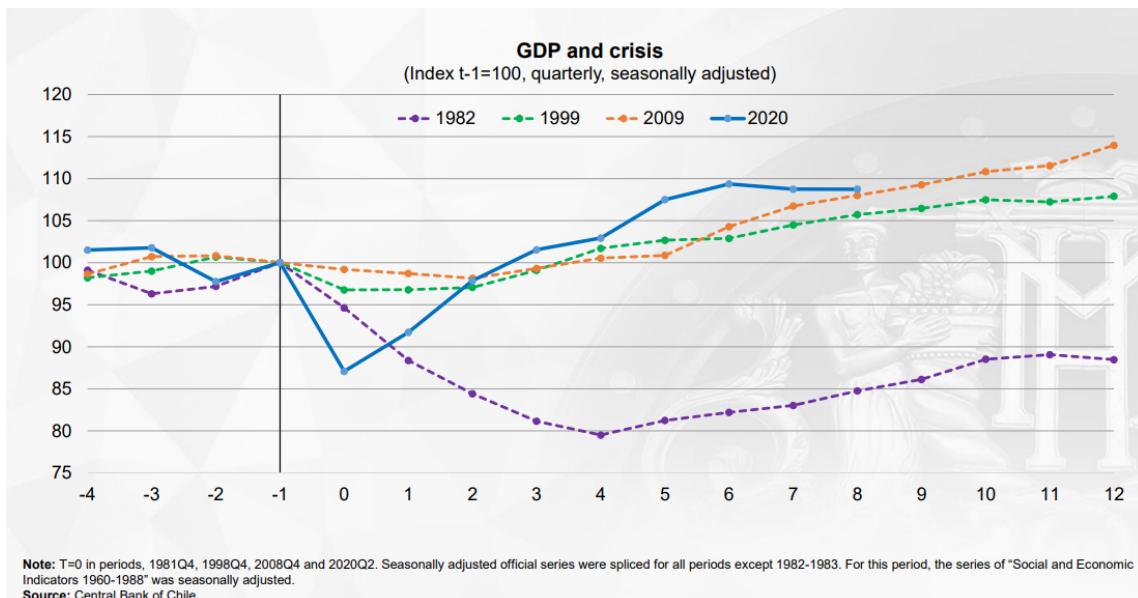
Chile's trade network is vast, however the benefits of trade and investment have been narrowly shared due to deep-rooted inequalities of economic conditions and opportunities. Income redistribution through taxes and transfers is limited and one of the lowest among OECD countries, adequate old-age pensions are scarce, and inequality of opportunity serves as one of the main barriers to upward social and economic mobility for the most vulnerable communities (World Bank, 2021). Moreover, there are clear disparities between men and women in accessing economic opportunities, partly due to gender socialization, gender division of labor, occupational stereotypes in STEM careers, vertical and horizontal gender inequality in the workplace and the absence of affordable care in the society (Dunn, 2021).

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

The last four years have been particularly harsh for the Chilean economy; in October 2019, the country underwent widespread social unrest accentuating the already existing economic

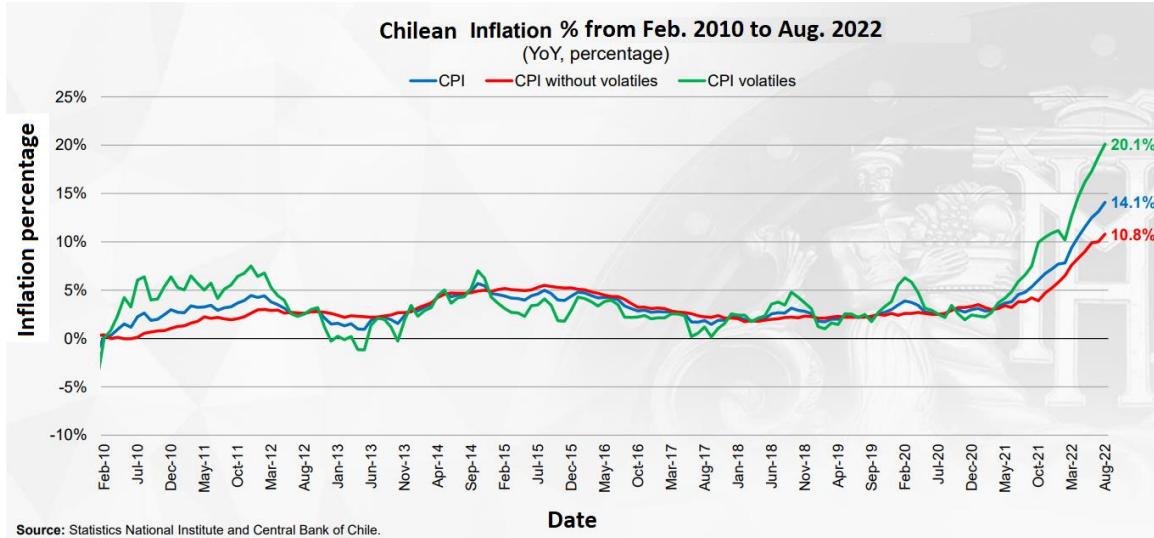
uncertainty. In 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic “led to the sharpest contraction of economic incomes in 40 years” (Arnold & Garda, 2022), but, as it can be seen on Figure 3, it was able to recover quickly in 2021 assignable to strong policy support and domestic demand. Yet, as it is evidenced by Figure 4, factors such as the 2022 Russian aggression on Ukraine, the post-pandemic bottlenecks, the increase in commodity prices, the overheating of the economy caused by high private consumption in 2021, and an acute exchange rate depreciation has caused the country’s inflation to surpass 14% (Marcel, 2022).

Figure 3



Source: Figure adapted by author from Marcel, M. September 20th, 2022. Developments and prospects of the Chilean economy. [PowerPoint slides] Ministry of Finance of Chile. <https://www.hacienda.cl/noticias-y-eventos/presentaciones?foco=/noticias-y-eventos/presentaciones/presentacion-ministro-marcel-en-vi-foro-de-investchile-2022>

Figure 4



Source: Figure adapted by author from Marcel, M. September 20th, 2022. Developments and prospects of the Chilean economy. [PowerPoint slides] Ministry of Finance of Chile. <https://www.hacienda.cl/noticias-y-eventos/presentaciones?foco=/noticias-y-eventos/presentaciones/presentacion-ministro-marcel-en-vi-foro-de-investchile-2022>

Additionally, according to the most updated OECD Economic Survey on Chile (2022), growth is projected to slow sharply to around 1.4% in 2022 and 0.1% in 2023.

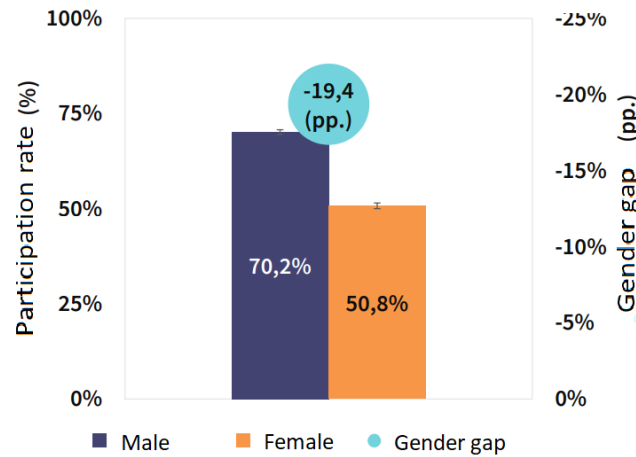
Labor participation gap

“It can no longer credibly be claimed, in any region or for any income group, that the employment gap between women and men is due to the fact that women do not want to work outside their home” (Beghini, et al., 2019)

In the case of Chile, according to the *Encuesta Nacional de Empleo del Instituto Nacional de Estadística* (National Institute of Statistics National Employment Survey) launched on May 2023, between October and December 2022, the labor participation rate for men was 70.2% and for women 50.8%, meaning that a little over half of the women did not participate in the labor market. As seen in Figure 5, women continued to participate less than men in the labor market with a 19.4% gender gap, and 3 out of 10 women that did participate, did so through informal unemployment. In fact, 28.5% of employed women were informally employed

Figure 5

**Participation rate in the workforce during
the calendar trimester october-december of 2022**



Source: Figure adapted by author from Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, May 31, 2023. *Género y mercado laboral en Chile*. [PowerPoint slides] Encuesta Nacional de Empleo (ENE), Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, trimestre calendario octubre-diciembre de 2022.

whereas the men's rate was 26.5%. This implies a 1.9% gender gap in informal employment (INE, 2023a).

Within this frame of reference, a 3.7% reduction in the Chilean gender gap in labor participation is perceived when comparing the 2020 data to the one collected from 2022.

The same study evidences the existing sexual division of labor in the economic activities where employed people engaged. In activities linked to domestic chores and caregiving others, the proportion of women was significantly higher, whereas the proportion of men was significantly higher in activities linked to construction, mining and supplies (INE, 2023a).

While mining has been and continues to be an extremely important industry for Chile. and it is responsible for 14.6% of its GDP (Cardemil, 2023), it has been historically characterized as an economic activity where the majority of its workers are men. In 2021, female

participation in the industry reached 12.6%, 64% of them were under 40 years of age, and 86.6% of them had 10 or less years of seniority and (COCHILCO, 2021).

The Senior Public Management System (SPMS) is a public management system related to the application and selection procedure for managerial positions in state institutions through public processes. It is composed of two hierarchical levels: the first level which refers mainly to heads of public services appointed by the president, and the second level which refers mainly to division chiefs and regional bureaus, appointed by the service chief. Both are positions of trust and are subjected to their respective hierarchical authority's willingness to be able to remain in office. In 2022, 73,8% of the applications to the first level positions came from men while women's applications were limited to 26.2%, evidencing a 47.6% gender gap. During the same year, 72.1% of the applications received to the second level positions came from men while women's applications were limited to 27.9%, evidencing a 41.1% gender gap (INE, 2023a).

Two key main drivers for this phenomenon have been identified: the “glass ceiling”, which entails diverse burdens or stigmas linked to care work acting as inhibitors for women when going through their application; and women being more hesitant when applying to the positions as they feel less inclined to apply if they do not feel certain they meet all the solicited requirement, unlike men who are more willing to apply regardless of it (INE, 2023b). Complimentary, the University of Chile's *Centro de Sistemas Públicos* (the Public systems Center) complements this on its 2021 *Servicio Civil Estudio Participación de las mujeres en el Sistema de Alta Dirección Pública* (español) attributes women's low application rate to three main causes:

1. women's sense of responsibility towards their family and children, enhanced by the prevailing gender roles in Chilean culture relating to women feeling guilty for not spending more time with their children
2. the perceived job instability of SPMS jobs versus the stable position in which they work at the time

3. a relatively negative assessment of the SPMS' job application process where the political variable is key and can be as favorable as unfavorable depending on the situation

Though the application process to the SPMS is hindered by its current gender gap, this has not affected women's effectiveness at getting their intended job position for which they applied to. In 2021, only 22% of applications for Senior Public Management positions were made by women. However, 30% of the resulting appointments are female, meaning that women's effectiveness rate was higher than their male counterparts. "In fact, in 2020, in 67% of the cases of the total number of first-level Senior Public Management positions that include female candidates, ended with them being appointed" (Servicio Civil, 2021).

Wage gap

"Women working in the same occupation as men are systematically paid less, even if their educational levels equal or exceed those of their male counterparts" (Beghini, e al., 2019).

Regarding gender wage gaps, the proportion of women who earn a low income in Chile is 1.6 times higher than of men while also being less likely to advance to management (OECD, 2021). In fact, in 2020, women earned 20.4% less than their male counterparts, 47.1% of women didn't have their own income, and 3 out of 10 employed women received an income less than or equal to the minimum wage (INE, 2020). In 2022, women in Chile earned 21.7% less than men, a gap that decreased to 18.8% in formal jobs and rose to 30.1% in the informal sector (OCEC, 2022).

The Cuarto Reporte de Indicadores de Género en las Empresas en Chile 2022 (the Fourth Report on Gender Indicators in Chilean Companies 2022) reveals the existing gender wage gap at the different hierarchical levels and across different economic activities. This is illustrated in Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3



| Year | Gender pay gap at administrative and middle management levels | Gender pay gap for executive level |
|------|---|------------------------------------|
| 2020 | 9.3% | 12.5% |
| 2021 | 8.3% | 13.2% |
| 2022 | 8.5% | 14.1% |

Source: Author's elaboration from the Chilean Ministries of Finance. March 13, 2023, *Cuarto Reporte de Indicadores de Género en las Empresas en Chile 2022*.

Table 4

| Economic activity | Gender pay gap at administrative and middle management levels | Gender pay gap for executive level |
|---|---|------------------------------------|
| Transportation and storage | 12.0% | 13,2% |
| Electricity, gas, steam and air-conditioning supply | 5,6% | 14,6% |
| Water supply, sewage disposal, waste management and decontamination | 9,2% | 21,9% |
| Other service activities | 6,4% | 18,0% |
| Information and communications | 10,3% | 13,6% |
| Manufacturing industry | 10,3% | 14,2% |
| Mining and quarrying | 6,3% | 4,1% |
| Education | 17,5% | 2,2% |
| Construction | 10,3% | 5,6% |
| Wholesale and retail trade | 4,0% | 19,6% |
| Agriculture, animal husbandry, forestry and fishing | 4,0% | 13,3% |
| Professional, scientific and technical activities | 8,0% | 27,1% |
| Real estate activities | 4,2% | 21,3% |
| Financial and insurance activities | 10,3% | 11,4% |

| | | |
|---|-------|-------|
| Administrative and support service activities | 14,6% | 24,4% |
| Arts, entertainment and recreation | 15,0% | 14,5% |

Source: Author adaptation from chart from the Chilean Ministries of Finance. March 13, 2023, *Cuarto Reporte de Indicadores de Género en las Empresas en Chile 2022*.

Chilean gender wage gaps also vary depending on the number of weekly hours dedicated to the main occupation.. In 2021, in the segment of part-time workers (1 to 30 hrs), the wage gap was 29.4% to the detriment of women, this rate dropped to 21.2% in the case of full working days (1 to 30 hrs), and the gap was significantly reduced in the case of full working days at the top of the ordinary legal working day (44 to 45 hours), reaching 11.2% to the detriment of women (ChileMujeres, 2023).

Covid

In the case of Chile, the Covid-19 pandemic caused a major setback in the participation of women in the labor market, reaching 41.2% in June 2020, which meant a ten-year setback (Mansilla, 2022). On average, during 2020 the participation rates in the labor market were 48.3% for women and 69.6% for men, with a 21.3% gender gap. While foreign women participated 24.1% more in the labor market than Chilean women, their labor participation was still lower than that of foreign men. Nonetheless, among young workers, these gaps were considerably smaller as the gender gap in labor participation was 9.3% between people from 15 to 29 years old, while among people aged 30 years and older, the gender gap reached 26.1% (Godoy, 2022).

Moreover, the pandemic accentuated the historical trend in which women that do participate in the labor force tend to work in historically feminized activities and are overrepresented in informal and temporary employment. Effectively, out of every 10 people working in Chile, 6 are men and 4 are women (Mansilla, 2022).

The following factors have had direct impact in delaying women's return to the labor force in Chile since the COVID 19 pandemic:

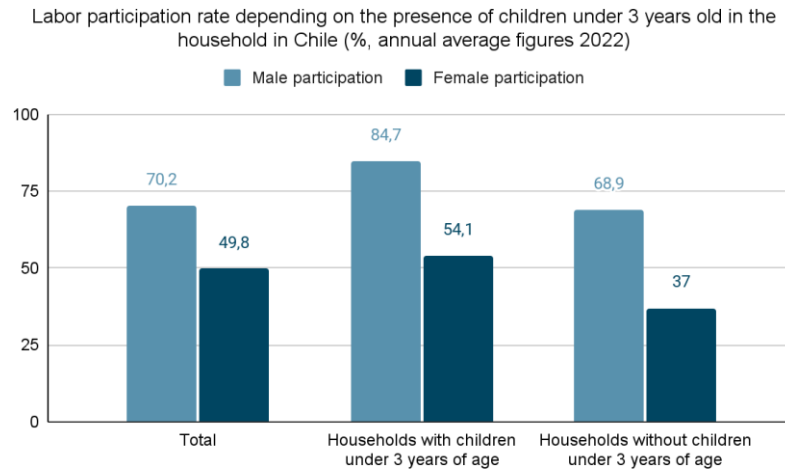
- the implicit costs of being employed during the pandemic (e.g., risk of contagion)
- the implementation of fiscal and monetary policies regarding cash transfers and the 10% early withdrawals of pension funds, the cost reduction strategies adopted at households' level (i.e., learning to live with less)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

Motherhood penalty

Women who want to participate in the labor market may face different types of gender discrimination. Childless women because of their childbearing potential, and mothers because motherhood can be seen as a burden and may often have negative effects on gender pay gaps and career advancement. As such, child-rearing, the process of bringing up a child or children, has been identified as a key driver for women's lower participation around the globe. Especially with the presence of young children. Across the world, mothers of young children are less likely to participate in the labor market than their peers whereas fathers experience higher participation rates (ILO, 2023).

In 2022, on a global average, there was a 29.2% gender gap in the labor force among people aged 25 to 54, with female participation at 61.4% and male participation at 90.6%. This gap jumped to 42.6% in households with at least one child under six, with female participation at 53.1% and male participation at 95.7% (ILO, 2023). As evidenced by Figure 6, gender gaps in female participation are accentuated in households with children under 3 in the case of Chile.

Figure 6



Source: Figure adapted by author from OCEC UDP Fundación ChileMujeres. (2022). Estudio Anua Zoom de Género . <https://www.chilemujeres.cl/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Estudio-Anual-Zoom-de-Genero-2023.pdf>

These disparities lead to the loss of valuable human capital provided by women, which could otherwise contribute to economic growth. They also reduce productivity, hinders certain industries’ potential for growth by limiting their talent pool, and intensifies gender wage disparities.

“Women in general are exposed to pay penalties when in employment but mothers tend to earn less than women without children” (Beghini, et al., 2019).

In Chile, women who have children earn on average 20.8% less than non-mothers, and if a woman has a child between 0 and 17 years of age, she earns on average 6.7% less than a woman who does not have children with exactly the same characteristics (similar age, geographic region of residence, marital status, and educational level). If she has two children, she earns on average 9 % less (i.e., an additional 2.3 % penalty for the second child), and if she has three or more children, she earns on average 9.4 % less (FundaciónSol, 2021).

These disparities in wages might discourage women from actively participating in the labor force. Not only does it undervalue their potential contributions to the workplace, but it can

also lead to morale problems, like reduced motivation and job satisfaction among female employees. Consequently, this could result in lower productivity and efficiency, negatively affecting overall business performance and the economy.

Moreover, in Chile, gender wage gaps can worsen both social and economic inequalities by sustaining differences in wealth and purchasing power, potentially causing a ripple effect on businesses and sectors that depend on consumer spending, ultimately leading to slower economic growth. Further, in families where women serve as primary breadwinners, wage gaps can create additional financial strains, affecting family welfare and constraining opportunities for children's education and development.

In this context, the 2022 Women's Situation and Self-Perception Survey (*encuesta Situación y Autopercepción de las Mujeres de 2022*), conducted by the Todas Foundation holds particular significance. According to the survey, 60% of the interviewed women stated that they were the head of their household, and 48% disclosed that they were the primary breadwinners. This indicates that nearly half of the families in Chile rely economically on a segment of the population that consistently encounters gender-specific and systemic barriers that are expressed in wage gaps.

Gender gap in STEM

“Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) are vital to the economic and social prosperity of countries. Yet, women and girls continue to be underrepresented in STEM careers” (Hammond, 2020).

According to the 2022 UNCTAD’s resolution, E/RES/2022/16, the STEM industry plays a critical role in building and maintaining national competitiveness in the global economy, and it is considered vital for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals. However, stereotypes and biases influence gender gaps in STEM and can lead to discrimination in the workplace (Hammond, 2020).

Despite the significant progress that women in Chile have made in accessing higher education, they remain notably underrepresented in STEM fields. In 2019, 44% of Chilean

women aged between 18 to 24 years old attended higher education compared to 38% of men (Kim & Celis, 2022). However, in 2020, only 32% of the people who work in science and technology in Chile were women (Marca Chile, 2021). This results in two types of inequalities, horizontal and vertical. Horizontal because of the substantial gaps in women's training for relevant scientific and technological careers in the country, and vertical because this leads to a lack of women in high scientific or professional leadership (Delgado, et al 2021).

Moreover, when comparing Chile with the rest of OECD countries, female participation in STEM careers in higher education is below the average and ranks seventh with the lowest participation of women in the enrollment in engineering careers, while in basic sciences it is ranked eighth in the world. Therefore, complementary national policies regarding women's access to finance, as well as women's participation in information and communications technologies (ICTs), and in STEM fields are crucial to reverse this trend.

In an increasingly globalized and competitive world, nations possessing a diverse and skilled STEM workforce gain a competitive edge, leading in key industries and driving innovation. For Chile, reducing gender gaps in STEM fields would significantly enhance its ability to remain at the forefront of technological advancements.

In this context, gender provisions in trade agreements could incorporate measures aimed at fostering women's inclusion in STEM careers. This could involve facilitating the transfer of knowledge related to STEM occupations among the parties involved in the trade agreement. Such initiatives would not only spur technological progress but also stimulate economic growth across various industries.

Moreover, incorporating gender provisions in trade agreements focused on promoting female entrepreneurship, conducting gender-based analysis, and advancing care policies aligns with Chile's commitment to gender equality on the international stage. It also fosters international cooperation to address the unique needs of women throughout the export process (Otero, 2022).

VI. Chile's experience with gender-sensible trade regulation

Persistent gender inequality is a global challenge, which has deepened with the COVID-19 pandemic. In recent years, Chile has progressively advanced in taking measures to address it and close gaps in various areas. Consequently, laws have been drafted and public policies have been implemented to strengthen women's roles as agents of transformative economic change, improve their participation in the labor market, eliminate gender-based violence, and increase women's participation and leadership in political decision-making, among others.

Foreign policy and foreign trade policy have not been exempted from these transformations. Thus, the government of President Boric, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has proposed the development of a feminist foreign policy, mainstreaming gender perspective in a cross-cutting manner in the work of the Ministry, including in the development and implementation of trade policy.

Regarding the latter, Chile has been a pioneer in the incorporation of Trade and Gender chapters in Free Trade Agreements, which began with the negotiation of the 2016 FTA with Uruguay, becoming the first FTA in the world to have a Trade and Gender chapter. To date, Chile has such chapters with six other countries; and is negotiating similar provisions in 5 processes.

The central objective of these Chapters is to promote and facilitate the exchange of experiences and good practices between the parties in order to improve the capacity and conditions of women entrepreneurs, encourage their greater participation in international trade, and identify the interests and needs of women. Chile also participates actively in multilateral forums and instances, such as the Global Gender and Trade Arrangement (GTAGA).

At the national level

The ever changing challenges of international trade has pushed Chile to innovate in its trade strategy to make economic strides through inclusive trade policy. Acknowledging the key role of gender equality as a cross-cutting issue in policy making, allowed for the integration of gender perspective in the development of Chile's public policy (López, et al 2019).

In 1991, *El Servicio Nacional de la Mujer* (the National Service for Women) was established with the goal of promoting equal opportunities between men and women. 23 years later, during Michelle Bachelet's second government, between 2014 and 2018, gender was explicitly integrated into trade policy as part of a progressive agenda focused on achieving gender equality (López, et al, 2019). In 2016, the Ministry of Women and Gender Equity was established to develop public policies aimed at eliminating all forms of gender discrimination to benefit women. Additionally, the General Directorate of International Economic Relations (DIRECON), responsible for formulating and implementing trade policies, adopted a gender perspective in its work agenda (López & Muñoz, 2018). This approach involved identifying relevant areas where gender-sensitive measures could be implemented. To support these efforts, a Gender Department was established in 2016, tasked with monitoring gender-related issues, enhancing internal gender policies, and managing programs that fostered and supported women's participation in international trade (López & Muñoz, 2018).

One of the most relevant concerns that had to be addressed by the Gender Department was understanding how gender should be defined and how public policies should be approached. To address this matter, a Management Upgrade Program, focused on systematically integrating a gender perspective across public institutions and their respective areas of work, was established in 2016 (López & Muñoz, 2018). Within this framework, it was identified that only 1.5% of Chilean exports in 2017 and 2018 came from women-led businesses (DIRECON, 2017), mostly due to issues that acted as trade barriers related to access to financing opportunities, data, and capacity building (López, et al, 2019). To tackle this, ProChile, the government's trade promotion agency, integrated a gender perspective into its operations and introduced specific programs to enhance women's participation in

international trade (e.g MujerExporta), and DIRECON incorporated a gender dimension into its trade negotiation agenda (López, et al, 2019).

Since then, Chile has continued pioneering the instrumentalization of trade policy as a way of furthering its economic growth in a sustainable and inclusive manner. The increasing incorporation of gender perspective in trade policy, either through general provisions, specific chapters or by mainstreaming gender perspective into the trade disciplines themselves have led to more women participating in Chilean exports. In 2018, there were 426 companies led by women and in 2020, the number increased to 472. Considering that 93% of its exports go to countries with which Chile has signed FTAs, continuing the development and implementation of comprehensive gender mainstreaming mechanisms in trade agreements, and promoting their use in bilateral, regional and multilateral negotiations is essential to the Chilean economy (SUBREI-PROCHILE, 2021).

In June 2023, President Boric introduced the Feminist Foreign Policy, which emphasizes inclusive trade as a key element in achieving a more equitable distribution of benefits in international trade. To implement this policy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will establish the Gender Affairs Division, responsible for its execution. The division will collaborate with various agencies under the ministry's jurisdiction, including the Borders and Limits Department, ProChile, the Chilean Antarctic Institute, and the International Cooperation Agency.

During the launch event, the Minister of Foreign Affairs signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for the Gender Equality Seal for Public Institutions. This agreement establishes a cooperative framework to identify gender gaps within the institution and develop an action plan to address them. The program will undergo external evaluation for certification, which is crucial for the recognition of the undersecretary's office as a service that adheres to gender equality standards. This recognition is essential for the effective implementation of the Feminist Foreign Policy (MarcaChile, 2023).

At the bilateral level

The first gender provision in Chilean trade agreements can be traced to 1997 with the Canadian -Chilean FTA. It included two of said provisions, one concerning the elimination of discrimination in employment and another one related to equal pay (Pavese, 2021). In 2014 Chile included gender as an area of collaboration in the cooperation section in Article 9.3 of its FTA with Vietnam (GAO, 2022), and in 2016 with its FTA with Uruguay, the country became one of the architects of the first ever specific gender chapter in a free trade agreement worldwide. This chapter served as a template for future gender chapters in its FTAs with Canada in 2017, Argentina in 2017, Brazil in 2018, Ecuador in 2020, although the latter two are not yet in effect. Furthermore, Chile is currently engaged in ongoing negotiations with five other parties, namely Paraguay (completed), the European Union (completed), South Korea, EFTA, and Singapore (as part of the Pacific Alliance Associated States framework) (Otero, 2022).

Chile's inclusion of gender-specific chapters in its FTAs demonstrates its commitment to international agreements like CEDAW and provides a structure for collaborative efforts on these issues (GAO, 2022). However, gender provisions and gender chapters are highly heterogeneous as they respond to the specific interests and backgrounds of the countries involved at the time of the negotiation. In fact, they may differ in almost every aspect, scope and coverage, commitments and obligations, institutional mechanisms, capacity building and technical assistance, engagement with civil society (Monteiro, 2018). For example, the Canada-Chile and Canada-Israel Agreements, both include standalone chapters on gender, but the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership doesn't (Bahri, 2021).

For example, the modernization of the 2002 EU-Chile Agreement included setting up an interregional trade and gender committee, oriented at performing functions related to accountability, transparency, advisory, coordination and facilitation of cooperation on joint gender equality strategies that could be incorporated into their framework cooperation

(Pavese, 2021). It is the first time a trade agreement has institutional arrangements oriented at complying with the international commitments of the 2030 Agenda and CEDAW, as well as the design of improvement programs, training and studies, among other aspects, geared at increasing the participation of women in foreign trade (Hernández, 2022).

Regional

Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs) are often put forward as one of the most effective channels for promoting women's economic empowerment. In Chile's case, they have helped increase the country's exports and attract foreign investment, as well as promote gender equality through trade policy. As a matter of fact, the Pacific Alliance allowed for 9.468 billions of US dollars in its bilateral exchange between 2016-2021 (SUBREI, 2021). At the same time, in 2020, its trade exchange with the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, APEC, represented 69% of Chile's trade with the world, 60% of Chile's imports, 76% of its exports and 32% of its investments (SUBREI, 2023). As of 2023, Chile became a full member of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership which includes gender provisions in its Development chapter (Canada, G. A., 2023).

In a landmark move, Chile, as the 2019 host of APECs, introduced women's economic empowerment as a top priority for the forum. This led to the establishment of the La Serena Road Map for Women and Inclusive Growth, which aims to foster inclusive economic growth by advancing women's empowerment in the country (APEC, 2019).

Similarly, Chile played an active role in advocating for the endorsement of the Pacific Alliance Declaration on Gender Equality and the Roadmap for Women's Autonomy and Economic Empowerment in the Pacific Alliance (Alianza del Pacífico, 2023). Additionally, in collaboration with New Zealand and Canada, Chile took part in the development of the Global Gender and Trade Agreement, the first international instrument specifically addressing gender and trade matters (SUBREI, 2019).

At present, Chile is actively engaged in the process of modernizing trade agreements to incorporate a gender perspective. This includes strengthening international collaborations and adopting a more inclusive approach to the work conducted within the entire sub-region (MarchaChile, 2023).

At the World Trade Organization

Notable progress has been made regarding women's involvement in trade within the framework of international institutions dedicated to trade. The initial step towards incorporating gender equality and women's empowerment issues into the WTO occurred with the Joint Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment. Adopted in December 2017 during the Buenos Aires Ministerial Conference, this declaration was supported by 127 WTO Members and Observers, among them, Chile. Its commitments focused on making trade and development policies more responsive to gender concerns by sharing experiences on encouraging women's participation in trade, employing effective gender-based analysis of trade policies, monitoring their impacts, and gathering gender-disaggregated data (Zarrilli, 2022).

This initiative spearheaded gender equality issues deliberations at high-level trade policy meetings, and established a connection between gender equality, women's economic empowerment, and trade. The trade neutrality notion was challenged as supporters recognized, through evidence, that trade's distributional benefits differ between men and women. The Buenos Aires Declaration's commitments were followed by the establishment of an Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender (IWG) within the WTO in September 2020 with increasing women's participation in international trade as its main goal (Zarrilli, 2022).

Chile has participated in the IWG by collaborating, with the European Union and International Trade Centre, on four workshops dedicated to exploring how to develop concrete initiatives on trade to support women through public purchasing, online commerce, streamlining trade processes, and promoting investment (WTO, 2023)

In response to the efforts made by the IWG, Members collaborated to construct a more ambitious declaration and launched the Joint Ministerial Declaration on the Advancement of Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment within Trade in 2021. This Declaration reaffirmed the trade community's resolve to utilize trade policy as a means to bridge gender gaps. Implicitly, acknowledging that addressing the challenges faced by women is crucial for trade liberalization's positive impact on them. However, the declaration also suggests that many of the remaining obstacles lie within national frameworks, and trade policy can only have a limited impact on resolving them (Zarrilli, 2022).

According to OECD (2022c), the crux of development cooperation for achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls is centered around well-crafted and effective programming that incorporates analysis, transparent policies, and strategies. Consequently, initiatives carried out by Chile, as exemplified in Table 5, play a crucial role in advancing best practices concerning gender-based analysis, global value chains, public procurement, trade agreements, digital trade, and financial inclusion.

Table 5

| Initiative | Purpose | Institution | Why it matters |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|---|
| Data Initiative for Report on Women's Participation In Chilean Exports | Measure women's participation in trade for improved policy design | Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile | Enables policymakers to develop evidence-based policy responses in their efforts to improve market access for women entrepreneurs |
| ChileCompra | Enable participation of women-owned businesses in public procurement | Ministry of Finance of Chile | Demonstrates it is possible to make public procurement efficient and more accessible to small enterprises and women-owned firms |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Mujer Exporta by ProChile | Bring women-led businesses closer to international target markets | Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile | Develops and strengthens internationalization of export-ready and exporting women-led businesses through access to training and networks |
| Canada–Chile Trade and Gender Chapter | Increase visibility of gender provisions in trade agreements | Government of Canada and Government of Chile | Raises awareness on importance of considering gender perspective in trade issues and provides framework for parties to undertake cooperation activities |

Source: Author's adaptation from International Trade Centre (2020). *Delivering on the Buenos Aires Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment*. ITC, Geneva

As seen in Table 6, Chile's experience has facilitated the exploration of innovative approaches to gender-responsive practices in trade. Through the implementation of online tools aimed at enhancing the accessibility of its procurement market, and actively encouraging women entrepreneurs to engage in public contracts, Chile has been able to demonstrate that procurement regulations can be reformed to expedite women's economic inclusion and empowerment (ITC, 2020).

According to the International Trade Centre, after discovering a gender gap in public procurement and a shortage of women-owned business suppliers, ChileCompra, under the supervision of Chile's Ministry of Finance, took decisive measures to address the issue. In 2015, ChileCompra launched an action plan to enhance accessibility to Chile's public procurement system, specifically focusing on increasing the visibility of women-owned businesses on its platform. In 2016, they enacted regulatory reform, introducing gender criteria in all public purchases (ITC, 2020).

Subsequently, they introduced the Women Supplier Certification scheme to help procurement entities identify women-led firms and those with a female workforce exceeding 50%. The Empower, Connect, and Grow program (*Empoderate, Conéctate y Crece*) was also

initiated, offering business management training for women participating in the scheme. In 2020, ChileCompra implemented the Compra Ágil tool for purchases under 30 UTM (\$1800), streamlining the process and encouraging the engagement of MSMEs, where women-owned firms are prevalent, in public procurement. The introduction of Compra Ágil was proclaimed by the Ministry of Finance as a crucial component of the Economic Plan to Overcome the Coronavirus Emergency (ITC, 2020) .

An additional endeavor was undertaken through the Canada-Chile trade and gender chapter, designed to enhance the acknowledgment of gender-related concerns in trade agreements. Both nations acknowledged the significance of women's full and equal participation in the economy for future competitiveness and prosperity, thus emphasizing the need for an inclusive trade approach (ITC, 2020).

By integrating gender-based analysis and practices into policies, trade agreements, global value chains, public procurement, digital trade, and financial inclusion, the distinct needs, challenges, and opportunities faced by men and women are duly considered. This approach enables economies to fully harness the potential of their workforce, including women, resulting in heightened productivity and economic growth. It facilitates the adoption of effective measures to bridge existing gender gaps, such as wage disparities, restricted access to resources, and women's underrepresentation in specific industries or sectors, ultimately leading to improved social welfare outcomes for families and communities (OECD, 2022c)

Finally, gender-sensitive practices contribute to sustainable development, positively influencing different facets of society and the environment. Additionally, they assist in meeting international obligations while empowering women by granting them greater autonomy and influence in their economic endeavors and involvement in trade and business activities (OECD, 2022c).

Table 6

| Initiative | Challenge | Solution | Impact | Lessons learned |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| <p>ChileCompra</p> <p>Enabling women-owned businesses to participate in public procurement</p> | <p>Analysis revealed a gender gap in public procurement and a lack of women-owned business suppliers.</p> <p>ChileCompra, overseen by Chile's Ministry of Finance, aimed at narrowing this gap, by making Chile's public procurement system highly accessible</p> | <p>In 2015, ChileCompra launched an action plan to enhance the visibility of women-owned businesses on its platform. This included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Women Supplier Certification scheme to aid procurement entities in identifying women-led firms and those with a female workforce exceeding 50%. • The Empower, Connect, and Grow (<i>Empodérate, Conéctate y Crece</i>) program to provide business management training for women participating in the scheme • The Compra Ágil tool for purchases under 30 UTM (\$1800) to simplify and expedite the process, encouraging MSMEs (where women-owned firms are prevalent) to engage in public procurement. | <p>By 2019 the share of women participants in the public procurement system was over 36%, with over 20,000 women and women-led firms as suppliers</p> | <p>Governments can make public procurement efficient and more accessible to micro and small enterprises in general, and to small firms owned by women in particular</p> <p>Identifying companies that are truly women-owned is a critical issue. Technology is key in providing e-certifications and monitoring performance of smaller companies, especially those led by women in the public market.</p> |

| | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| <p>Canada–Chile trade and gender chapter</p> <p>Increasing the visibility of gender issues in trade agreements</p> | <p>Very few Chilean and Canadian exports came from women-owned or equally owned businesses.</p> <p>Developing and implementing an inclusive approach to trade agreements</p> | <p>Signature of the modernized Canada–Chile FTA that included a trade and gender chapter</p> <p>A framework for the parties to cooperate on issues related to trade and gender by establishing a bilateral committee to oversee this work, provide advice, report on progress, and work with other bodies established under the agreement to integrate gender-related commitments, considerations and activities</p> | <p>The development of a comprehensive and evergreen trade and gender work plan, contemplating activities designed to implement the chapter, better understand the gender-related effects of trade, and share information on ways to reduce barriers to women-owned businesses participating in trade, with the objective of broadening stakeholder engagement in the work plan's activities.</p> | <p>Giving due consideration to a gender perspective in economic and trade matters is vital.</p> <p>It is crucial to continually improve and revitalize the chapter through ongoing evaluation of its impact, accumulating experience in achieving outcomes, and substantiating successful results.</p> |
| <p>Data initiative for report on women's participation in Chilean exports</p> <p>Measuring women's participation in trade to improve policy design</p> | <p>Measuring the participation of women in trade as well as increase awareness and visibility of gender issues in international markets</p> | <p>Identify trends regarding women's participation in trade and areas for improvement</p> <p>Including a survey complementing the analysis on women exporters to better understand the obstacles that hinder women from participating in trade.</p> | <p>Helped policymakers assess the situation of women-led exporting companies</p> <p>Rose awareness about extremely low participation rates</p> <p>Developed evidence-based policy responses to continue improving market access for women entrepreneurs</p> <p>Other international actors reached out to learn about Chile's Experience, methodological approach and impact on policy design</p> | <p>The Chilean Government's understanding of women exporters can be enhanced by data</p> |

| | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| <p>Mujer Exporta by ProChile Bringing women-led businesses closer to international target markets</p> | <p>As of 2018, less than 6% of exporting companies from Chile were led by women</p> <p>At least half of the women exporters from Chile believed that they didn't have access to a proper export network and at least 42 percent thought there was not enough public support for women-led companies to enter international markets. Particularly do to the following factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● insufficient access to information ● insufficient financing ● insufficient training opportunities for capacity development | <p>Design and implementation of the Mujer Exporta programme, launched in 2016, aimed at developing and strengthening the internationalization of export-ready and exporting women-led businesses. The programme gives women entrepreneurs the opportunity to access training, networking and business round tables, attend events and trade fairs, and engage in initiatives aimed at enhancing business capacity</p> | <p>Mujer Exporta directly benefited over 1000 Chilean businesswomen who participated in export-related capacity development activities to facilitate access to international markets</p> <p>Established the Women and Indigenous Communities Unit to support women from all backgrounds by addressing general trade issues and other issues more specific to women from indigenous communities</p> | <p>Realizing the importance of designing and offering activities tailored to the specific needs of women entrepreneurs by sector and region, and offering continuous support and monitoring during implementation.</p> |
|--|--|---|--|--|

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|---|
| <p>Businesswomen Community in the Pacific Alliance</p> <p>Creating an online community to support internationalization of women-owned businesses</p> | <p>Increasing women's participation in the labor market and the number of women-led enterprises</p> | <p>Created the online platform Businesswomen Community (<i>Comunidad Mujeres Empresarias</i>) to promote economic empowerment of women to enable women entrepreneurs to connect and explore business opportunities, exchange information and strengthen their entrepreneurial and leadership capacities</p> | <p>Positively impacted the businesses of over 1200 women, mostly SMEs by generating business opportunities and enabling members to support each other to develop export activities</p> | <p>Facilitating virtual platforms for exchanging experiences provides an efficient means of transferring valuable knowledge that can be advantageous for female exporters in the region</p> |
|---|---|---|--|---|

Source: Author's adaptation from International Trade Centre (2020). *Delivering on the Buenos Aires Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment*. ITC, Geneva

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

A methodological approach was employed to collect and analyze qualitative data pertaining to the perceptions of Chilean women exporters regarding gender provisions in trade agreements. The objective was to develop a comprehensive understanding of the intricate nuances and disparities between the country's initiatives in this area and how they are perceived by the intended audience. The research methodology encompassed interviews, observations, and analysis of responses from a sample size of 20 participants. The aim was to obtain in-depth insights and subjective interpretations from the participants. However, it is important to acknowledge that due to the subjective nature of this qualitative research, the findings may not be broadly applicable, and the researcher's own biases and interpretations can influence the outcomes.

f. Method

A qualitative methodological approach was utilized to get an overview on the perception of gender provisions in trade agreements perceived by women who export from Chile. In total, 20 interviews were carried out. As observed in Table 6, the participants of this study were 15% male and 85% female. Among them were public officials, women who export from Chile, academic experts on gender and trade, and on foreign women exporters.

Table 6.

Sample demographics (n = 20)

| Demographics | N | Percentage |
|--------------|----|------------|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 3 | 15% |
| Female | 17 | 85% |

| | | |
|--|----|------|
| Sector | | |
| Public | 3 | 15% |
| High-level officials | 1 | |
| Mid-level officials | 2 | |
| Private | 13 | 65% |
| Women who export from Chile | 4 | |
| Academia / International Organizations | | 20% |
| Nationality | | |
| Chilean | 19 | 95% |
| Foreigner | 1 | 5% |
| Total | 20 | 100% |

g. Results and analysis

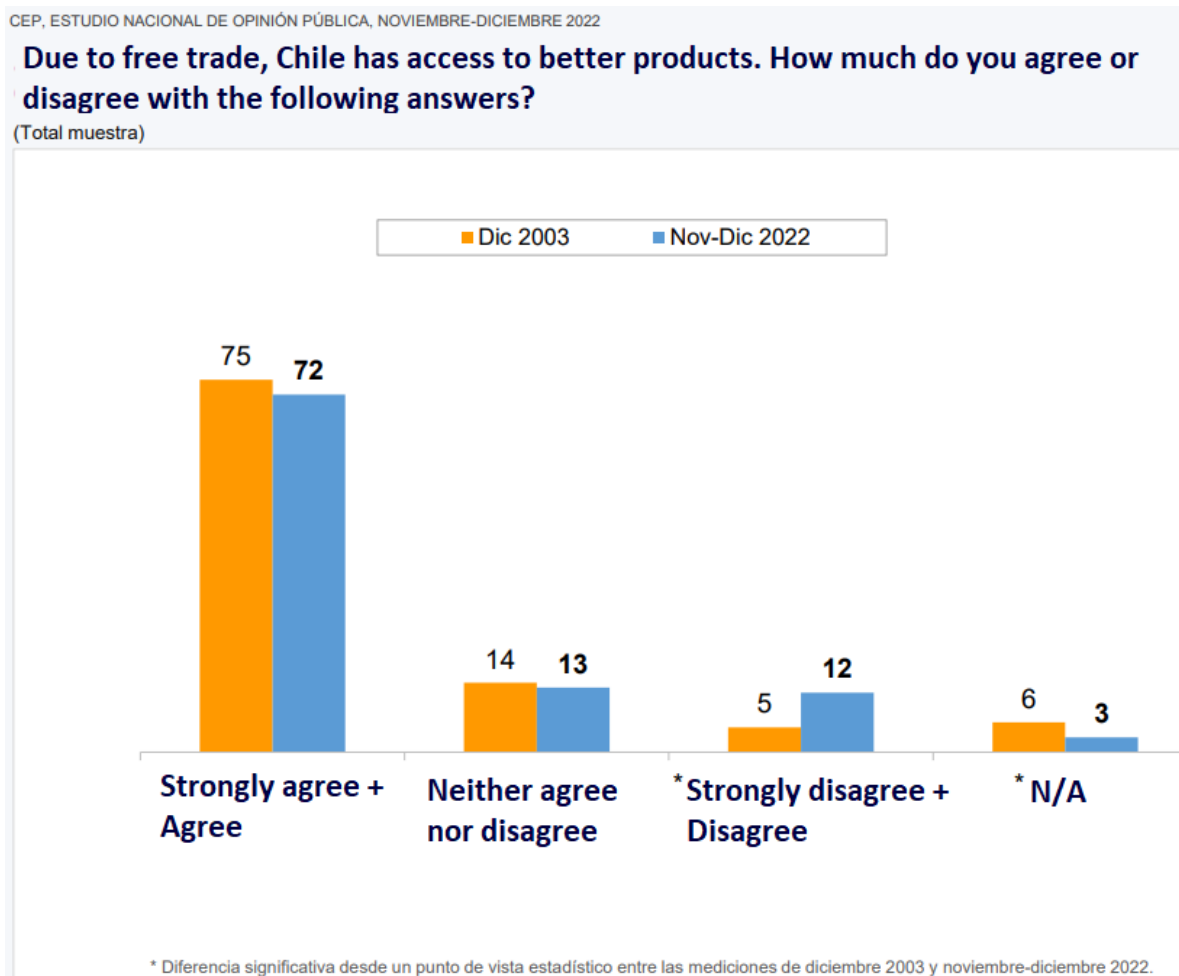
Women exporters from Chile and that participated on this study

Perception on free market

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

In 2022, the *Centro de Estudios Públicos* (the Public Studies Center), CEP, conducted a survey asking whether the interviewees strongly agreed, neither agree nor disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement: “Due to free trade, Chile has access to better products. How much do you agree or disagree with the following answers?”. The report

indicated that, in 2022, 72% of the interviewees expressed strong agreement with the statement while in 2003, the figure was marginally higher with 75% indicating the same. 13% of them indicated to neither agree nor disagree with the statement in 2002, while 14% indicated the same in 2003. Perhaps the biggest difference in public perception regarding this statement, concerning free trade between 2003 and 2022, can be appreciated in the strongly disagree section, where 12% of the interviewees indicated to strongly disagree with said statement while, in 2003, only 5% of them did so in 2003 (CEP, 2022).



Source: Chart translated by author from CEP. (2023, January 11). CEP, ESTUDIO NACIONAL DE OPINIÓN PÚBLICA, NOVIEMBRE-DICIEMBRE 2022. Estudio Nacional de Opinión Pública Encuesta CEP 85. https://www.cepchile.cl/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/CEP88_PPT_ANEXOS-1.pdf

Nonetheless, only 7.69%, meaning 1 out of the 13 of the women that export from Chile that were interviewed, were aware of the difference between an RTA and an FTA. This may be largely due to a lack of participation of this segment in governmental or academic initiatives concerning further knowledge in trade policy. In fact, as of 2023, only the University of Chile offers a diploma program specialized in trade policy, and only few public institutions such as ProChile and SUBREI offer courses related to the matter. To this day, there aren't studies that showcase how many trade policy courses are taught in the country, much less the depth with which they are taught.

Perception on gender perspective

Regarding gender perspective, 100% of Chilean women Chile reported having a positive perception towards it. Over 80% of them perceive it as a tool for allowing men and women to have an overall equal standing in society, while others were more specific and related it to the core of the development of the necessary public policies to ensure equality among sexes. Care policies such as paid maternal leave and society's shift in perceiving women, particularly mothers, as an active player in the economy, were indicated as examples of the effect of gender perspective in public discourse. This is particularly relevant as these types of policies have progressively expanded in Chile, considering not only childcare but also sick and elderly (65 years and older) care, in the design and implementation of long-term care policies (LTCP) (Matus-Lopez & Cid, 2015).

In this sense, it is important to highlight that over the last decade, the elderly population in South America has been projected to experience significant growth. However, that segment of the population are likely to face health challenges because the region's increase in life expectancy is mostly attributed to improved healthcare accessibility, along with the mass

utilization of medical advancements, rather than an improvement in their living conditions (Matus-Lopez & Cid, 2015).

In 1950, only 3.4% of the Chilean population was classified as elderly. Nonetheless, by 2020, this proportion increased to 12.2%, and it is projected that the number of older individuals will double within the next 25 years, and by 2065, the percentage of elderly people is most likely to surpass 30% of the total population (Villalobos, 2020). To face this upcoming challenge, in 2022, the government of Chile announced the start of the design process for a National Care System, broadening social programs related to this issue, such as the Local Network of Support and Care and the establishment of a National Registry of Caregivers (Villalobos, et al, 2023).

Nevertheless, while there might be institutional responses to Chile's demographic change process, women are still likely to be the ones carrying most of the burden in care work at the household level. Therefore, gender provisions in trade agreements might become even more relevant in the future, as any effort towards gender equality may help narrow the gender gap.

On the other hand, 76.92% of the women who export from Chile that were interviewed, indicated being skeptical on the effectiveness of the inclusion of a gender perspective in public policy. Particularly regarding its implementation as the country doesn't have a specific national guideline dedicated solely to the inclusion of a gender perspective in public policy. Although it does possess multiple laws intended to promote gender equality such as:

- Law No. 20.609 which establishes measures against discrimination based on people's sex, gender and gender expression, among others (BCN, 2012);
- Law No. 21.356 which establishes gender representation on both, in the State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) created by law and in the State Corporations that are part of the SOE System, by stipulating that people of the same gender may not exceed sixty percent of the total number of board members, except in the case of boards composed of three members, in which case the number of people of the same gender may not exceed two;

- Law No. 21.129 which reinforces the right of female officers of the Armed Forces and the Law Enforcement to be entitled to maternity leave;
- Law No. 21.155 which establishes measures of protection for breastfeeding and its exercise as it recognizes it as a right, by promoting, protecting and supporting breastfeeding in all areas of society, and safeguards its free exercise, sanctioning anyone who limits or restricts it. It also amends various legal bodies, including the Health Code, establishing a regulation for the incorporation of breast milk banks;
- Law No. 21.153 which modifies the Penal Code to typify sexual harassment in public spaces as a crime;
- Law No. 21.212 which amends the Criminal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and Law No. 18,216 regarding the classification of femicide;
- Law No. 21.264 which amends the Civil Code and Law No. 20.830, to eliminate the norms that prevented women whose marriages had been dissolved or declared null and void from immediately contracting a new marriage;
- Law No. 21.389 which creates the National Registry of Alimony Debtors and amends various legal bodies to improve the alimony payment system;
- Law No. 21.484 which establishes a mechanism for permanent child support payment by the debtor to one or more of his or her children;
- Law No. 21.515 Amending various legal bodies to establish the majority of age as a prerequisite to get married. (This law came into effect in December 2022);
- Law No. 21.565 Establishes a regime of protection and comprehensive reparation for victims of femicide and femicidal suicide and their families, as well as grant the right to labor protection to the victims of attempted or attempted femicide (MinMujeryEG, 2023).

Perception on gender provisions in trade agreements

While Chile at a bilateral, multilateral and regional level have been active in removing trade barriers and facilitating the integration of women to international trade, most women who export from the country are aware of this, but not on how it may directly affect their business in the short, medium or long term. In fact, 75% of women exporters in this paper stated that they did not have a clear understanding of what gender provisions in trade agreements were, or had any idea of the possible implications they could have to their business. This relates to none of them indicating no perceived difference when exporting as women compared to their male counterparts. This can be interpreted either as a lack of gender discrimination in trading, a normalization of gender discrimination practices in trading or a lack of impact made by gender provisions in addressing possible gender gaps through trade policy, amongst others. Thus, the generalized perception regarding gender provisions in Chilean trade agreements was overwhelmingly neutral mostly due to a lack of significant impact perceived.

The 2023 Global Gender Gap Report (GGGR) reveals that no nation has reached complete gender equality, but that the leading nine countries (Iceland, Norway, Finland, New Zealand, Sweden, Germany, Nicaragua, Namibia, and Lithuania) have managed to bridge a minimum of 80% of the gender gap. Nicaragua being the only Latin American country in the top 10. Nonetheless, there has been gradual improvement towards achieving gender equality in the region since 2017. As of today, Latin America has closed 74.3% of its overall gender gap, and holds the third-highest level of gender parity following Europe and North America.

According to the GGGR, Chile ranks at 27th, and along with Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Jamaica, have the highest scores in terms of gender parity in the region, whereas the Dominican Republic, Belize, Paraguay, and Guatemala have the lowest scores. Given that, at the current progress pace, it will take Latin America, and the Caribbean approximately 53 years to reach full gender parity, and the world 131 years, it seems highly unlikely that there is factually no gender discrimination in trading.

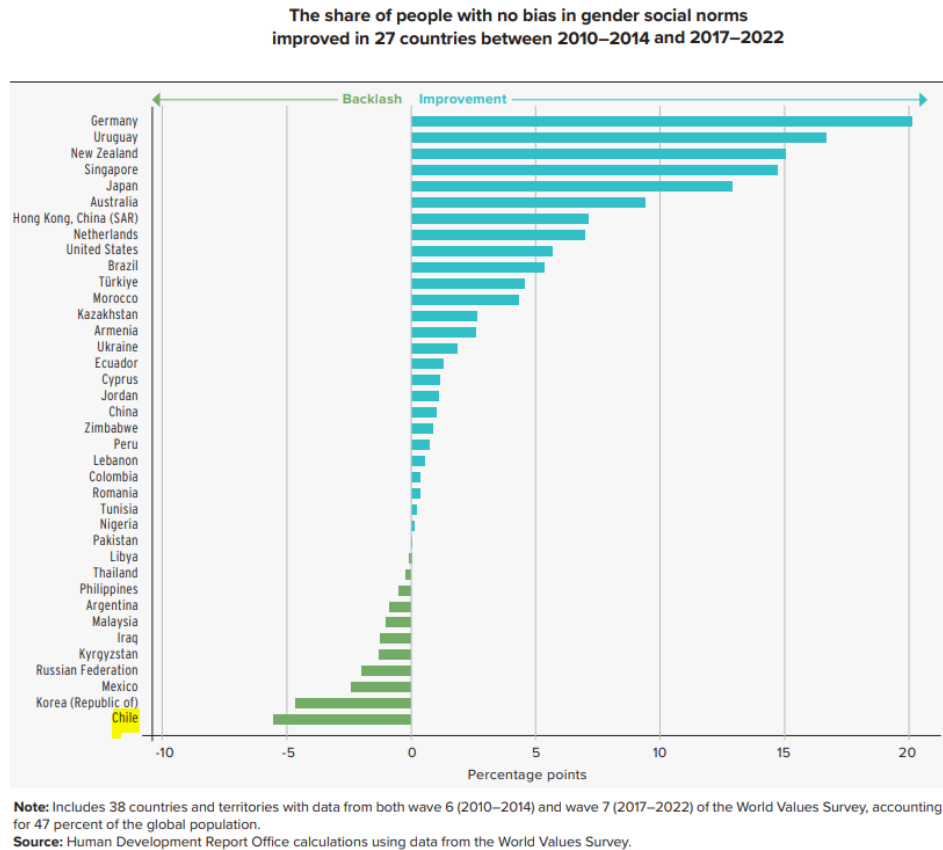
Placing women and men on an equal footing in the political, social and economic sphere is key in eliminating gender gaps in all the roles people play in societies. Governments must address discriminatory laws, social norms, and practices to foster gender equality and

empower women (OECD, 2019). This means actively tackling biased gender social norms, as they may be impeding women's economic empowerment, hold them back from becoming leaders, and deprive societies from the benefits of women's leadership (UNDP, 2023).

In accordance with the 2023 Gender Social Norms Index (GSNI), gender bias is a pervasive problem worldwide and persists over time. Although women have made significant strides in education, with increased enrollment and completion rates across all levels, there are still lingering disparities in economic empowerment. This indicates that the advancements in education have not necessarily resulted in improved economic outcomes and opportunities for women. Even in the 59 countries where adult women surpass men in education, there remains an average income gap of 39 percent, highlighting the ongoing challenges women face in achieving economic equality (UNDP, 2023).

As stated by the GSNI, during the periods of 2010-2014 and 2017-2022, there was a decrease in the proportion of individuals with at least one bias, declining from 86.9% to 84.6%. Progress in reducing biases was more significant among men, with a decrease of 3 percentage points, compared to women who experienced a decrease of 1.5 percentage points. Furthermore, in 27 out of the 38 countries analyzed, the percentage of individuals without biases in any indicator increased. Notably, Germany, Uruguay, New Zealand, and Singapore, observed the most substantial improvements in this regard. Conversely, Chile, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, and the Russian Federation saw the largest declines in the proportion of individuals without biases (UNDP, 2023). In fact, as seen in figure 7, Chile presented over 5 percentage points in backlash regarding the share of people with no bias in gender social norms. In this regard, the normalization of gender discrimination in trade in the country seems rather plausible.

Figure 7



Source: Author adaptation from UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). 2023. 2023 Gender Social Norms Index (GSNI): Breaking down gender biases: Shifting social norms towards gender equality. New York.

Measuring the impact of gender provisions in trade agreements poses several challenges such as:

- Data availability and quality of comprehensive and reliable data specifically focused on gender-disaggregated outcomes in trade;
- Being able to isolate the impact of gender provisions in trade agreements from other factors that influence gender disparities;
- Developing and implementing long-term monitoring capable of capturing the sustained impact of gender provisions outcomes;
- Disentangling the interactions between various forms of inequality that also affects trade outcomes i.e geography, class, ethnicity, etc (Monteiro, 2018).

Therefore, the various challenges that just measuring the impact of gender provisions in trade agreements pose, might impair women who export from Chile's ability to correctly assess whether or not, or in what manners, these provisions may have an impact in addressing possible gender gaps through trade policy,

Regarding gender-related barriers, 54% of the interviewees of this section pointed at reducing tariffs as one of the main benefits they perceived in Chile's FTAs. However, while the liberalization of trade can have a gendered effect, women exporters indicated that they perceived similar benefits from other FTAs that did not include gender provisions. The other 46% of the interviewees reported facing no specific gender-related barriers when trading.

It is worth noting that there are several factors that can influence the perception of gender-related barriers when trading. Among them, sociocultural norms and stereotypes regarding gender roles, the existence or absence of gender-responsive laws (i.e. policies, and regulations within trade frameworks that influence the perception of gender-related barriers), amount of access to resources and opportunities, women's representation and decision-making power in trade-related institutions and negotiation tables, cultural and institutional biases that fail to address gender-specific challenges, the overall economic context, market dynamics, and trade environment (i.e. economic inequalities, market exclusions, and trade barriers that disproportionately affect women), as well as awareness and education concerning gender issues in trade, among others (Hagen, 2014).

Only 20% of women who export from Chile that participated in this study indicated having exported to either Uruguay, Canada, Argentina or Brazil. Canada's market was reported as the easiest to access. On the contrary, both Brazil and Argentina were reported as having protectionist policies that detrimentally increased the cost for accessing their market, to the extent that it was not profitable. This may be one of the reasons as to why export values in the Brazilian market witnessed a negative trend from January to April 2023 (resulting in a decrease of US\$ 129 million), even though 95.6% of exports during the period went to destinations with which Chile has signed economic-trade agreements (SUBREI, 2023).

Academic experts on trade and gender

a. Academic experts' perception on the gender and trade nexus

Two highly distinct approaches to the possible trade and gender linkage were found. While 75% of the academic experts on trade and gender agreed that trade has a direct relation with gender and therefore cannot be neutral to it (and vice versa). This argument was sustained by different examples of the ways in which gender may be associated with trade and its effects on women's standing in society.

The other 25% of the interviewed indicated a lack of sufficient systematic information that could provide enough evidence to prove that there is indeed a linkage between trade and gender. One of the primary arguments supporting the gender neutrality of trade is based on the belief that economic growth resulting from trade, as well as market-based opportunities, can yield positive outcomes for both men and women regardless of gender. This perspective suggests that trade itself promotes job creation, enhances access to resources and technology, and contributes to poverty reduction, thereby benefiting individuals of all genders. A fact that could perhaps be relevant is that the person who argued along these lines was a man.

The use of FTAs for reasons other than increasing access to the international market was highly contested by 25% of the interviewed sample. On the one hand, the majority agreed that the instrumentalization of trade policy can be a positive and effective way to promote public policies geared at global sustainable development. It was argued that by expanding its scope, FTAs can encourage governments to include issues such as environmental protection, gender equality or human rights as part of their foreign policy agenda. On the other hand, it was argued that whilst that might be true, the use of trade policy to influence other national legislation could undermine the democratic principles of free trade. Especially considering that, more often than not, the citizens of the country that is considering joining an FTA, tend to not participate in the decision making process on trade related matters.

In this respect, it was contended that trade policy should primarily focus on facilitating efficient allocation of resources and maximizing economic growth rather than being driven by other unrelated political or social objectives. Especially as it can lead to protectionist measures and trade barriers, has the potential for retaliatory actions, and it may not be the most effective instrument for achieving non-economic objectives, considering that other policy tools like diplomacy, aid, or domestic regulations may be better suited to address social or environmental concerns.

On the contrary, the majority emphasized that trade policy can drive positive transformations by encouraging responsible business practices worldwide, fostering fair trade, supporting marginalized communities, promoting inclusive growth, and even addressing national security concerns through measures like export controls, strategic trade restrictions, and trade sanctions to combat illicit trade and security threats.

b. Perception on the inclusion of gender provisions in trade agreements

The use of trade policy for international cooperation and the inclusion of gender provisions in Chile's FTAs was positively perceived by 100% of the interviewed. This is highly relevant and was primarily attributed to the potential of recognizing and addressing the specific challenges women face in accessing and benefiting from trade opportunities, combating discriminatory practices, promoting women's economic empowerment, and increasing their participation in international trade. Such efforts can create a more equitable business environment, leading to economic advantages like boosting productivity, enhancing business performance, and fostering economic growth.

Moreover, it was argued that integrating gender provisions into trade agreements may contribute to inclusive and sustainable economic development, and parallelly, encourage international cooperation through knowledge-sharing, and the adoption of best practices concerning gender-related issues. Thus, promoting collective learning and advancing gender equality on a global scale, and serving as a platform for operationalizing and implementing

international commitments as well as standards on gender equality, such as SDGs and CEDAW, among others.

Finally, there were several challenges perceived by the interviewees in implementing FTAs with gender provisions such as the following:

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

Public officials

c. Perception on the gender and trade nexus

There is consensus among the public officials that were interviewed that there is indeed a deep interconnection between gender and trade. Thus, the use of FTAs in matters other than increasing access to various markets is widely accepted and perceived positively. This is hardly surprising as one of SUBREI's current main objectives is to promote a more progressive and inclusive international trade policy to ensure that the benefits of trade and investment are shared more broadly, having a positive impact on economic growth and the reduction of inequality.

In view of the above, and recognizing the significance of inclusive trade in fostering sustainable development, the establishment of the Department of Inclusive Trade took place in 2022. This department focuses on advancing international trade that specifically addresses the concerns of gender equality, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), and indigenous peoples (SUBREI, 2023) .

Regarding this matter, SUBREI has been consistently engaged in the development of inclusive trade provisions within trade agreements. It actively promotes the integration of these provisions in bilateral, regional, and multilateral negotiations, as well as advocates for the principles of inclusive trade in international forums such as the WTO, OECD, and APEC. An exemplification of this commitment was seen during the WTO's inaugural Gender and Trade Congress in 2022, where the Chilean delegation comprised prominent representatives including Sofía Boza, the Chilean Ambassador to the WTO, WIPO, UNCTAD, and ITC, along with Olivia Cook, the Alternate Permanent Representative. Additionally, Marcia Banda, the Head of SUBREI's Department of Inclusive Trade, participated, alongside a student from the Diplomatic Academy and Antonieta Sepúlveda, an undergraduate student from the Institute of International Studies at the University of Chile. This diverse representation demonstrates the various sectors involved in Chile's concerted efforts (SUBREI, 2022). Likewise, among those interviewed in this section, there were major proponents of feminist foreign policy, which includes inclusive trade as one of its pillars.

d. Perception on the inclusion of gender provisions in Chile's FTAs

All participants in this section of the survey held a favorable view of integrating gender provisions into Chile's FTAs, although they acknowledged that these provisions are currently perceived as positive but not highly effective. However, there was a consensus among the respondents that the true impact of these provisions will become more evident in the future, primarily because they have been recently introduced and are increasingly being adopted in international trade.

Three primary obstacles have been recognized in the execution of gender provisions in Chilean trade agreements: inadequate allocation of funds, insufficient expertise in addressing these matters during decision-making processes, and a dependency on political will. In response, one-third of the participants proposed compulsory and ongoing training in international trade, gender issues, and negotiation through a collaborative effort between the private and public sectors. Furthermore, all interviewees emphasized the need for inclusive

trade to be established as a long-term state policy rather than a short-term government initiative. This would ensure the continuation of current endeavors and foster the growth of skilled professionals in these fields within the government.

The respondents had a positive perception of the impact of Chile's gender provisions in its FTAs. However, there is uncertainty among the interviewees regarding the extent to which these provisions are currently effective in addressing gender gaps through the instrumentalization of trade policy.

Public policies and programs oriented at promoting the incorporation of women in international trade, such as *Mujer Exporta*, were highly regarded. However, two thirds of the sample suggested extensive research and careful consideration in the design and implementation of such initiatives to avoid creating trade barriers. In this context, the ongoing inclusion of gender provisions in Chilean FTAs was viewed positively.

Chile's trade with Uruguay, Canada, Argentina and Brazil is perceived positively. Especially because the trade flow with said countries increased once their FTAs were implemented. Though, the effect of the gender provisions in their FTAs remain unclear and are not perceived as significant by 66% of the officials interviewed.

As seen on Table 7, women who exported from Chile were not familiar with gender provisions in trade agreements. However, they perceived them as a viable way to tackle gender inequality and promote their business. There were differing interpretations on the complexity of legislating through trade agreements by the academics that were interviewed. Especially regarding the possible friction it can cause with countries' sovereignty. Finally, public officials unanimously perceived the inclusion of gender provisions in Chile's trade agreements positively, while pointing at the restricted budget assigned and lack of expertise in these matters amongst decision-making authorities, as the main challenges to effectively implement gender provisions in trade agreements.

Table 7.

Main ideas from the participant's perception regarding the inclusion of gender provisions in Chile's trade agreements

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Women who export from Chile</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no clear differentiation when exporting as woman from Chile compared to a man nor when exporting to countries with or without gender provisions in their FTA with Chile • FTAs are perceived positively as an opportunity to internationalize local business without disregarding the local market. • Gender perspective in public policy is perceived positively but there is skepticism on its effectiveness. • Gender provisions in trade agreements are not widely understood nor known in the exporting community • Brazil and Argentina have policies regarding the textile industry that work as a barrier in accessing their markets |
| <p>Academic experts on trade and gender</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no complete consensus on the linkage between trade and gender • FTAs can be used for reasons beyond opening markets. This can be perceived positively and negatively • The inclusion of gender provisions in Chile's FTA as well as the use of trade policy in international cooperation are perceived positively • There are several challenges perceived in implementing gender provisions |
| <p>Public officials</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The interconnection between gender and trade is perceived positively as well as the inclusion of gender provisions in Chile's FTAs • The limited budget assigned to the matter, and the higher authorities' overall lack of expertise in the issue are perceived as the main challenges • Chile's gender provisions in its FTAs are perceived positively as well as the country's trade with Uruguay, Canada, Argentina and Brazil |

VIII. Final Remarks

Trade policy has undergone significant changes beyond its traditional focus on market opening. While the objectives of market liberalization and trade barrier reduction remain important, trade policy now encompasses a wider scope of concerns and aims. It acknowledges the intricate relationship between trade and different societal dimensions, including human rights, labor standards, environmental sustainability, and gender equality.

There is an increasing understanding that trade policy should not solely prioritize economic growth but also address social and environmental issues, and must be inclusive. This shift reflects the recognition that trade can profoundly influence diverse stakeholders, and thus requires careful management to ensure sustainable and inclusive development.

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

Extensive research highlights the connection between trade and gender, illustrating how it affects men and women differently due to their distinct societal and economic roles. This is

evident in various gender disparities within the economy. These include gaps in employment rates, wages, occupational distribution, representation in leadership roles, access to financial resources, and the unequal burden of unpaid care work. These disparities serve as evidence of the link between trade and gender, emphasizing the need to address these gaps and promote gender equality in trade and economic policies.

To comprehend the connection between gender and trade, it is necessary to examine the economy as a system influenced by gender. This implies looking at the economy as a gendered structure where women's gender acts as a barrier in their diverse economic activities, including trade. For this, examining how economic systems and processes are shaped by gender dynamics and inequalities is essential to better understand the nexus between trade and gender, and their micro and macro effect on people's everyday lives.

Analyzing the types of work traditionally assigned to men and women, such as paid work versus unpaid care work, and the implications of this division on income, job opportunities, and career advancement may lead to a greater comprehension regarding gender division of labor. Investigating the disparities in wages and earnings between men and women, as well as the factors contributing to it, including occupational segregation, discrimination, and differences in work experience or education may help identify and counterbalance gender pay gaps. Assessing how gender influences access to economic resources, such as credit, land, capital, and education may lead to greater access for women to resources and opportunities. Recognizing the significant contributions of unpaid care work, predominantly performed by women, in sustaining the economy may increase awareness regarding the impact of unpaid care work on women's economic participation, time poverty, and overall well-being.

Accordingly, all of the aforementioned factors contribute to the design and implementation of more inclusive and effective social protection measures and economic growth. Particularly by evaluating macroeconomic policies, such as taxation, public spending, and trade policies, through a gender lens, and allowing it to better assess their potential impacts on women's economic empowerment and well-being. Therefore, collecting and analyzing gender-

disaggregated data to inform evidence-based policy-making and monitor progress towards gender equality in the economy is key.

Throughout its history, Chile has adopted various economic development models with the aim of fostering greater economic growth. These models include protectionism, a welfare-oriented economy, import substitution industrialization, and a shift towards a neoliberal approach centered around trade liberalization over the last decades. Currently, Chile follows an export-oriented model as part of its efforts to enhance economic development.

Despite the country's extensive trade network, the benefits derived from trade and investment have been unevenly distributed due to deep-seated economic inequalities and limited income redistribution through taxes and transfers (it ranks among the lowest OECD countries). Even though Chile's experience in promoting trade regulations that consider gender perspectives dates back to the 1990s, and actively engages in bilateral, regional, and multilateral initiatives to advance gender equality and empower women, gender disparities persist in accessing economic opportunities, influenced by gender socialization, the gender division of labor, occupational stereotypes in STEM fields, vertical and horizontal gender inequalities in the workplace, and the absence of affordable care services in society.

In fact, Chile has been at the forefront of advocating for dedicated gender chapters in trade agreements since 2016, and with the modernization of the trade component of the existing EU-Chile Association Agreement, Chile is pioneering the most comprehensive gender provisions ever seen in trade agreements. However, the implementation of gender provisions overall is in its early stages, and it will take a few more years to evaluate their impact on gender equality in trade.

This study provides evidence that, despite attempts, women involved in exporting in Chile continue to face barriers that prevent them from enjoying equal advantages as men in trade. Although they are generally conscious of gender provisions in trade agreements and the potential benefits that can arise from them, they may not always possess a comprehensive understanding of how to effectively utilize these provisions.. This leaves them susceptible to

miss out on the opportunities that trade can offer in relation to the roles they occupy in society and the economy.

Further, there seems to be a blatant disconnection between the country's actions related to these issues at the multilateral level and the everyday effects perceived by their targeted population. While the general perception of the interviewees perceived gender provisions in trade agreements highly positive, the concept itself and its results are widely unknown. Therefore, acknowledging the role of gender equality as a cross-cutting issue in policy making, is not enough if not accompanied by public policies dedicated at keeping the general population interested and informed regarding this issue.

In this context, public policies that utilize diverse media and communication channels, including conventional media, social media platforms, online campaigns, and public outreach activities, play a crucial role. These policies are essential not only for effectively sharing reliable and unbiased information, combating misinformation, and encouraging dialogue on gender-related provisions in trade but also for empowering women to enhance their business endeavors by utilizing existing tools and fostering the development of additional resources.

In 2018, Chile introduced a similar initiative by launching *Contralorito*, a virtual mascot that serves as a primary communication tool for the Chilean comptroller. Utilizing memes, which are cultural, social, or political expressions often delivered through humor, and posts related to popular culture and current events, *Contralorito* has effectively transformed the technical content of the agency into dynamic and easily accessible information (Benveniste, 2022). As a result, it helps bridge the gap between the Comptroller's Office and the general public, fostering transparency, and addressing inquiries related to its work.

Likewise, to address the disconnection between Chile's efforts in advancing gender equality through trade policy and its practical effects on the population, the country could take steps to democratize knowledge on trade and gender. This could involve providing clear explanations of the objectives, advantages, challenges, and potential trade-offs associated with these policies. To actively involve the public in international policy discussions and

decision-making, Chile could implement programs that educate citizens about gender and trade, enabling them to express their concerns, offer feedback, and contribute to policy development.

Simultaneously, Chile could invest in monitoring mechanisms to ensure that the intended benefits and protections of gender provisions in trade agreements reach its citizens. This would entail maintaining policy coherence by considering the specific circumstances and needs of women exporters when negotiating and adopting international commitments. Additionally, encouraging civil society organizations, advocacy groups, and non-governmental organizations to participate in monitoring and analyzing the implementation and impacts of gender provisions in trade policy would provide independent assessments, raise awareness, and advocate for necessary improvements or changes.

Finally, promoting public education and awareness campaigns regarding gender and trade, including the incorporation of gender provisions in trade policy, can enhance citizens' comprehension of these matters and foster a well-informed and engaged public. This would bridge the gap between international policies and their daily consequences, leading to increased accountability, citizen participation, and more effective and inclusive governance.

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Annex 1.

The interviews for this study were focused on gathering information about the participants' perception on the inclusion of gender provisions in Chilean trade agreements. The structure applied was the following:

Table 3.

Interview's structure

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



- Are you aware of the current effects of Chile's gender provisions in its FTAs? IF so, how do you perceive them?
- Should Chile continue to incorporate gender provisions in its FTAs?