

Summer School 2005

Engendering Economic Policies in a Globalising World | September 1 - 7 in Berlin



HEINRICH BÖLL FOUNDATION



Die diesjährige Summer School "Liberalization, Agriculture and Food Security" beschäftigte sich mit Handelsliberalisierung in der Landwirtschaft. Schwerpunkt war die Betrachtung des Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) der Welthandelsorganisation (WTO) aus einer Gender-Perspektive. Es wurde untersucht, wie sich das Abkommen auf das Geschlechterverhältnis in den jeweiligen Regionen und vor Ort auswirkt und wie Ernährungssicherheit jenseits neoliberaler

Prämissen gewährleistet werden kann. Damit wurde auch die Verbindung zwischen politischer Makro- und Mikroebene hergestellt. Hierzu kamen ca. 55 TeilnehmerInnen vorrangig aus dem Süden.

ReferentInnen waren u.a. Gigi Francisco, Zoraida Garcia, Christine von Weizsäcker, Jayati Ghosh, Aileen Kwa, Silvia Ribeiro u.a.

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Aims

The Summer School 2005 of Heinrich-Böll-Foundation, the third one on "Engendering Economic Policies in a Globalising World", focused on the WTO-Agreement on Agriculture (AoA), on the progressive liberalisation in the agricultural sector and the globalisation of free trade in food. Vulnerable groups are specially affected by agricultural politics as small-scale farmers, as workers on fields, in food production and the trade chain, as consumers, and providers of care and nutrition in private households. The multilateral Agreement on Agriculture has been one of the most controversial within the WTO, and it will be once again a highly contested area at the forthcoming WTO-Mini

meeting in December 2005 in Hong Kong.

The Summer School 2005 aimed at building capacities with regard to macro-economic policies field of agriculture and wanted to demystify the pretended gender neutrality of trade agreement liberalisation processes, and the WTO-regime. It analysed the linkages between macro-economic policies and micro-economic structures, in particular women's livelihoods using concepts and feminist economics.

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Background

Economic policies are no longer made within national contexts. Globalisation implies that financial and trade policies are shaped and increasingly formulated in international institutions (World Trade Organisation, International Monetary Fund, World Bank) with far-reaching consequences for regional and local governments and for civil society. The neoliberal forms of globalisation invoke new governance mechanisms that have differential impacts across the social spectrum, i.e., relative to class formation as well as gender relations. Partly at issue therefore is the degree to which the competitive pressures of the new global market order tend to fragment human communities, increase social inequality and intensify human insecurities.

Globalisation has impacted upon gender relations in complex and contradictory ways, and gender inequalities are fundamentally shaping the global political economy. The world market is based on an increasing international division of labour, but as well on the gendered division of labour. Women are specifically affected by economic and other crisis situations, since they are the main care providers in the households and communities while they lack livelihood rights, and the gender bias in the allocation of resources persists. The liberalisation of trade relations has also increased the "feminisation of the labour force", such that more women are income earners but at the same time more jobs are precarious, informal and without social protection.

Women have been active in campaigning for global economic justice and gender equality. They have taken the initiative in exploring theoretically and empirically new ways of engendering macroeconomic and international trade policies, and have analysed the implications for specific macroeconomic policy questions within democratic governance frameworks. A large gap continues to exist between government commitments of the Beijing Platform of Action, which was ratified by governments at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, and the "silencing" of gender issues in the agendas of the WTO and IMF.

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Focus on Agricultural Politics

Since the beginning of negotiations on a multilateral Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) in 1994, it has been one of the most controversial issues in the WTO-regime. The main objective of the agreement is to liberalise agricultural markets and to establish mechanisms which reduce and phase out various "trade distortions". Additionally, the Doha Declaration addresses non-trade concerns and states that it aims at enabling "the developing countries to effectively take account of their development needs including food security and rural development". The basic assumption is that intensification of trade will ensure food security all over the world, and will result in global efficiency and welfare gains.

However, contrary to the articulated intention to balance needs and interests of agriculture-based and industry-based, of import- and export-oriented countries, and provide Special and Differential Treatment (SDT) for developing countries, inequities and distortions in trade persist: OECD countries continued their high levels of protection and maintained high tariffs, in the wake of a protective farm bill, the USA increased subsidies substantially, while developing countries were

forced to reduce tariffs and remove their import restrictions. The globalisation of agriculture and food systems is directed towards industrialised export production which normally externalises environmental and ecological costs and enhances the expansion of transnational corporations. Exactly, this system has failed to feed the world, and to globalise food security. End of 2003, the FAO had to state that hunger is on the increase again. Critics blame the AoA to be a root cause of this problem instead of being the solution.

It is obvious that trade liberalisation has different impacts on different agricultural economies, on different social groups of farmers within agricultural economies, and on gender. Due to the gender specific division of labour in agriculture and a strong male bias in the control and allocation of resources within the households, women and men are differently affected by trade liberalisation. Liberalisation tends to benefit large-scale farmers, commercial producers, trade corporations, and sometimes medium farmers. At the same time, trade distortions by the industrialised countries such as export subsidies and dumping of food crops in the south have the most adverse impact on small-scale farmers in the south, and on the livelihoods of women farmers. It is women farmers who lack resource rights, in particular rights to land and water, as well as access to credit, agricultural extension services and technology. Their production for subsistence and local markets gets undermined by the export oriented structural adjustment programmes and outcompeted by trade liberalisation. These gender inequalities influence the agricultural productivity, trade performance as well as food security in different countries. Macro-economic structures and policies have an effect on micro-economic conditions and gendered resource rights, labour and livelihoods, and vice versa.



The negotiations on agriculture are considered to be the key to the conclusion of the Doha Round. At the 5th Ministerial Conference of the WTO in Cancun in September 2003, the denial of Northern countries to reduce their export subsidies and their domestic support was the main reason for the collapse of the negotiations. At the "package" negotiations in Geneva in July 2004, which were praised to be a win-win-game, countries of the North made some vague promises on agricultural reform in exchange for the opening of markets in developing countries for manufactured goods and service companies from abroad. Accordingly, commitments on Special and Differential Treatment for developing countries were unsatisfactory. Agriculture, food security and ultimately the right to food became part of a trade off within the WTO regime. The AoA is far and away from referring to the right to food as a normative principle, and from setting up a regulatory regime for the sake of sustainable, environmentally sound agriculture and fair trade. The equitable balancing of interests is still pending in the post-Doha round of the WTO, the promise of development large and small is disregarded. At the same time, a differentiation of interests among countries of the South can be observed which leads to new political alliances and power formations.

Critics from civil society and peasant organisations demand to take agriculture out of the WTO regime. Due to its focus on free trade at all costs, WTO seems to be not in a position to provide appropriate mechanisms and regulations to ensure food security. They advocate for the establishment of an alternative system of agricultural production and distribution which should be based on food sovereignty, sustainable agriculture, and fair trade.

Regarding gender and food security, presently discourses move into two directions:

- A women's-rights-oriented, gender mainstreaming perspective explores ways to make trade liberalisation in the agricultural sector work in favour of women and to engender the WTO regime and agreements,
- a food-rights-oriented perspective explores ways to change the global system of agricultural production and trade in a way that it doesn't undermine feminised agricultural systems and food sovereignty.

The challenge is to intertwine trade justice and gender justice in a comprehensive concept of sustainable agriculture and fair trade, food sovereignty and women's livelihoods.

Urgently needed is more analysis of the gender impact in different world regions and the conceptualisation of gender strategies as input to the national and global negotiations of the A
The Summer School intends to develop recommendations from a gender perspective, hoping t
these could be submitted to the negotiating bodies of the national governments as well as dire
the WTO.

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Objectives of the Summer School 2005 on Agriculture

- 1) Capacity building on free trade in agriculture and food, on power relations within the WTO-regime, and the progressive liberalisation of the agricultural sector from a gender perspective,
- 2) Understanding of linkages between macro-economic and micro-economic systems, between multilateral agreements on agriculture, national policies and the livelihoods, labour and resour rights of women, with the help of feminist economic concepts,
- 3) Reflections towards a feminist concept which links sustainable agriculture, fair trade and ge justice and towards an alternative to the neoliberal logic of the world market of food, and the export- and industry-led model of agricultural production and food security, thinking beyond th WTO-Regime,
- 4) Enhancing alliances and networking between HBF-partners, feminist economists, experts, li minded policy makers, and grassroots activists in their struggle for food security and gender democracy,
- 5) Bridging the gap between economic theory and political practice with regard to macro-econ and trade, as well as regarding gender justice and gender democracy, coordination of strategie directed at the global, national and local level.

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Programme

The programme consisted of lectures (some of them open to the public) and workshops, one fi trip and a visit to the German Federal Ministry for Consumer Protection, Agriculture, and Food. lectures provided a general introduction in the AoA within the neoliberal governance regime of WTO, an analysis of linkages between macro- and micro-economics, and women's role in the globalised agricultural and food systems.

The purpose of the workshops was to exchange information on ongoing liberalisation of the agricultural markets in various regions of the world, and share experiences about successful p campaigns and interventions. They provided the space to the participants to assess and conne their knowledge on agricultural policies in their respective countries as well as their attempts t revisit the concept of food security and their political strategies. This aimed at encouraging the participants to network on the various topics in future.

The Summer School 2005 took place from September 1-7 with around 55 participants from dif regions of the world.

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Participation Summer School 2005

Participants were expected to come from different regions of the world, with different political academic background, and various work experiences, from NGOs, universities, or public institu

Interested participants, women and men, were selected according to geographic regions and s prior knowledge of trade and financial global issues, agricultural politics, and gender dimension. Conference language was English.

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Heinrich Böll Foundation

The Heinrich Böll Foundation, affiliated with the Green Party and headquartered in the heart of Berlin, is a legally independent political foundation working in the spirit of intellectual openness. was founded in 1997 by uniting the three foundations Buntstift (Göttingen), Frauen-Anstiftung (Hamburg), and Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung (Cologne).

The Foundation's primary objective is to support political education both within Germany and abroad, thus promoting democratic involvement, socio-political activism, and cross cultural understanding. The Foundation also provides support for art and culture, science, research, an developmental co-operation. Its activities are guided by the fundamental political values of ecology, democracy, and non-violence. In 2003, the Foundation started a programme on globalisation and gender with the aim to engender economic policies. The Summer Schools are important element of this programme. The first one in Summer 2003 in Berlin was focusing on GATS, the second (regional) one took place in October 2004 in Johannesburg and was on the international trade regime, the third one on agriculture will be organised in September 2005 in Berlin.

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Aktualisiert: 10.10.2005, str