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Gender, Food and Power: New Leverage Points in Global Production Networks?

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December 2010



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Introduction

- Supermarkets transformation of food production and consumption
- Global production networks (GPNs) involve commercial and social linkages/tensions

QUESTIONS:

- What are gender dimensions of this process?
- How are new leverage points opened for civil society organisations to promote empowerment of women? South Africa example

CAPTURING THE GAINS Supermarket Expansion

Top Global Retailers (Grocery) 2009-10 (Financial Times)

Ranking	Company	Country Origin	Gross Revenue	Net Income	Operating Countries
			US\$	US\$	
1	Wal Mart	US	419.14 bn	15.02 bn	14 (15)
2	Carrefour	France	118.72 bn	673.96 m	35
3	Tesco	UK	91.92 bn	3.87 bn	14

Global Supermarkets:

- Wal Mart China's 8th largest trading partner is Wal-Mart
- Supermarkets: high tech planning and centralised distribution systems
- Supermarkets: strict food safety, environmental and social standards
- Expansion into Latin America, Asia and Africa

Rise of regional Supermarkets:

- South America supermarkets 40-60% market share
- Central Europe, Central America, SE Asia supermarkets 20-40% market
- Africa, China, E. Europe, S. Asia supermarkets 2-20% market share

CAPTURING THE GAINS Transformation in Food Retail: Global Production Networks

- Rising Supermarket dominance (globally & regionally)
- Global production Networks (GPNs)
 - Coordinated by lead buyers (production to final consumer)
 - Networks of firms crossing multiple countries
 - Centralised distribution systems
 - Power asymmetries (buyer/supplier – supplier/worker)
 - Value/quality upwards vs. Cost/risk downwards
- GPNs institutionally and socially embedded in gender norms
- GPNs sites of commercial & social bargaining
 - Potential for new leverage points

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Changing gender dynamics of Food Consumption

- Changing gender dynamics of food consumption:
 - Rising female employment and incomes (World Bank)
 - Supermarkets 'one stop shop' for working women
 - Food processing reduces home preparation (+ high value)
- Women key consumer group
 - Women 70-80% of supermarket customers (Wal Mart CEO)
 - Goldman Sachs (2009) study of BRICs:
 - Rising gender equality increasing women's bargaining power
 - Women's spending more focused on enhancing household welfare
- Ethical consumption gendered (*Keynote 2008*)
 - Regularly buy Fairtrade: 23% women, 18% men
 - Care about labour exploitation: 37% women and 34% men

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Changing gender dynamics of Food Production

- Global sourcing transformed women's lives in many developing countries:
 - As unpaid family labour/smallholder farm outgrowers supplying larger farms & value chains.
 - Flow of women from smallholder to wage work – agro-food and manufacture (see McCulloch, Kelly, Maertens)
 - Wage workers production, packing & processing
 - Wage workers in supermarkets of south (little information)
- Challenges: low pay, no property rights, poor labour conditions, no rights, insecure, no social protection
- Opportunities: independent income, socialisation, better bargaining position

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**Gender Global Production Networks:
New Leverage Points?**

- Commercial - Reputational Risks:
 - Integration of lead firms and suppliers
 - Costs/risks offset downwards onto producers/workers (women workers most vulnerable)
 - Adversarial approach: NGO/TU campaigns – corporate codes of labour practice (gender focus)
- Social - Embeddedness of Supermarkets:
 - ‘Value’ > cost – inc. moral and cultural dimensions
 - Company/consumer linkages around ‘trust’ & ‘caring’
 - Collaborative approach: Multi-stakeholder alliances – ethical trade initiatives and Fairtrade certification

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Women Workers in S. Africa Fruit

- Re-integration of South African fruit exports post apartheid
- Estimated fruit workers in 2000:
 - 280,000, 53% women
 - Women 69% temporary and 23 % permanent workforce
- South Africa labour legislation – weak implementation
- Process of retrenchment in 2000s;
 - Small core regular on-farm workers
 - Casualised off farm workers – labour brokers
- Poor conditions of employment (casual workforce)
- Civil society campaigns around workers’ rights
- Supermarket codes of labour practice

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Collaborative Approaches: Ethical Trade

- UK supermarkets:
 - Ethical Trading Initiative: multi-stakeholder initiatives
- South Africa:
 - Wine Industry and Agriculture Ethical Trade Association founded 2002
 - Association - producers, trade unions, NGOs, government, UK supermarkets.
 - WIETA provides: own code, local monitoring, education
- ETI Impact Assessment:
 - Positive impact on 'visible issues' e.g. health & safety
 - Little/no impact on Freedom of Association and Discrimination
 - Little impact on 'irregular' casual, migrant, contract workers
 - Raised awareness of government legislation

See: www.ethicaltrade.org/d/impactreport

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Adversarial Approach: Women on Farms

- Women on Farms – small NGO supporting women fruit and wine workers
- Engaged with international NGOs
 - OxfamWar on Want and ActionAid
- Formed independent trade union – Sikhula Sonke
- Targeted UK supermarket Tesco for poor working conditions in its fruit value chain
- Actress Emma Thompson spearhead WoF campaign
- WoF bought share for woman farm worker from Ceres
- She attended Tesco shareholder meetings in UK
- Tesco listened to WoF and increased its auditing in South Africa

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**Gender Strategies:
value chain of the future**

- *Companies:*
 - ‘Purchasing Practices’
 - Social auditors need to address gender discrimination
 - Support women producers/farmers
- *Governments and Donors:*
 - Implement ILO Conventions on No Discrimination
 - Capacity & training for women workers/producers
- *Trade Negotiators:*
 - Factor in gender impacts of changing trade rules
- *G20:*
 - support for export sectors where millions of women workers in south located
 - Unlock the Value Chain of the Future

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