
Feminization of employment with export-oriented industrialization in Vietnam: on the role of Gender in macroeconomic adjustment

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Abstract (in French and/or English)

The early successful experiences of the Newly Industrializing Countries (NICs) in East Asia have given evidence about the role of exports as an engine of growth. Surprisingly, most of the existing studies omit one important empirical fact: that is, feminization of work has dramatically contributed to their rapid industrialization. Feminist trade theories argue that export-oriented development strategies have so far been exploitative of cheap female labor in the South. Under the accelerating pace of globalization, an increasing number of women in Developing Countries (DCs) have been absorbed into labor-intensive, export-oriented manufacturing sectors. However, the changing structural features which accompany export promotion, as well as the international environment the South is faced with today, have modified dramatically current transmission processes of macroeconomic shocks. The question is whether export-led growth, which tends to be "female" intensive, has increased the vulnerability of DCs that have become embedded in complex subcontracting networks. By examining women's labor force participation rate in Vietnam, we show how patterns of gender stemming from structural characteristics but also from social norms (formal or informal) and institutional factors, impact on the macroeconomic outcomes of an export oriented strategy.

Keywords: Export, oriented strategy, Industrialization, Macroeconomic adjustment, Gender relations

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