

Friends in Low Places? The Conditional Influence of Trade on the Status of Women

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Abstract Scholars of international relations have actively debated the consequences of globalization. Among this literature is the growing attention to the status of women. While scholars have largely treated globalization as either improving or degrading women’s rights, we point to a conditional relationship. In contrast to assuming that the influence of globalization is invariably “good” or “bad,” we suggest that the character of the norms that will be diffused and adopted is dependent on the domestic norms of those a state is “globalized with.” We offer two expectations. First, states that tend to trade more with democracies should see a domestic improvement in the status of women. Second, we expect women’s status to improve when states trade more heavily with other states with high levels of women’s rights. An analysis of 184 countries from 1981 to 2008 provides strong support for the theory. Total trade flows and trade dependence only have negative associations with women’s status when conducted disproportionately with states that are autocratic or have low levels of women’s status.

Keywords Globalization · Trade · Norm diffusion · Women’s status

Introduction

Scholars have actively debated the consequences of globalization for economic development, democratization, and even human rights. While a consensus has yet to arise regarding what the implications of globalization ultimately are, there is a growing body of literature suggesting that the status of women will be greatly influenced by

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transnational interactions. These have treated factors such as trade and foreign direct investment as being either wholly positive or negative in their relation to the dependent variable. In the following pages, we follow the lead of Greenhill (2010) in arguing that the qualities of whom you are “globalized with” matter. We also move beyond prior explanatory efforts by focusing specifically on the implications of trade ties for women.

We adopt this focus for a few reasons. First, scholars have been clear in suggesting that women are particularly vulnerable to economic exploitation. While employers in Mexico’s maquiladora zone, for example, claim to hire women due to greater dexterity, Meyer (1998) also points to women as being more likely to accept lower pay and more hazardous work. Second, a rapidly expanding body of literature has gone beyond what improved rights mean for women and has explicitly looked at collective gains that can be manifested in various ways in the areas of development. Empirical efforts have recently suggested that improved women’s social, economic, or political status can decrease corruption (Kaufman 1998; Dollar et al. 2001), lower the likelihood of intrastate conflict (Melander 2005), lower the likelihood and intensity of interstate conflict (Caprioli 2000; Caprioli and Boyer 2001), and increase economic development. The well-being of a state’s female population thus carries with it important implications for its long-term growth and stability. Third, we follow the suggestion of Gray et al. (2006) that gender has social, economic, and political implications for every country in the world, and it is across these three broad areas that we hope to provide answers regarding the influence of globalization on women.

We expect trade to have differing influences on women’s rights domestically, depending on whom a state primarily trades with. Specifically, states whose international ties link them more closely with democratic actors or those that otherwise respect women’s rights will see positive benefits for women, while states whose ties link them more closely with authoritarian regimes or those with poor levels of women’s status will ultimately see those rights suffer.

We quantitatively test this hypothesis with global data for 184 countries for the years 1981–2008. Our analyses strongly indicate the qualities of a state’s trade partners are important determinants of the status of women. Increasing trade ties with authoritarian regimes will decrease a wide variety of indicators of women’s status, while increasing financial ties with democracies significantly improves the status of women. For example, when greater than 80 % of a state’s trade is conducted with democracies, we find a positive influence between trade flows and women’s political rights. We also find that the results hold strongly when considering specific indicators of women’s status. That is, when a higher concentration of trade is conducted with states that respect women’s social or economic rights, that indicator improves in the home state. These results are substantively stronger than the influence of having democratic trading partners and suggest that the specific qualities—good or bad—of a state’s partners will diffuse to them.

In all, this paper makes contributions to three broad literatures. First, we demonstrate that the character of those one is “globalized” with matter, providing an important addition to the debate on the association between globalization and women’s status. Second, we add to the growing body of literature that aims to explore the diffusion of transnational norms. Finally, we offer insights regarding a “democracy paradox” that has been described by gender scholars (e.g., Fallon et al. 2012). Though prior efforts have found that—in spite of strong theoretical reasons for the contrary—democracy

fails to improve women's political power, we find that democracy has a strong positive association with women's economic and social rights and provide a few explanations for prior contradictions in the literature.

Economic Globalization and the Status of Women

Numerous studies have assessed the relationship between different aspects of globalization and women's rights, but a number of theoretical ambiguities or inconsistent findings call for further investigation. For example, Gray et al. (2006: 294) anticipated a "considerably mixed picture" when investigating the relationship, and a subsequent analysis found "the relationship between economic globalization and women's status differs by type of globalization, type of status, and era" (Richards and Gelleny 2007: 871). We improve upon these innovative offerings by moving beyond an across-the-board generalization of globalization by considering the characteristics of the financial partners of states. Specifically, we argue that the influence of globalization is conditional on the qualities of the parties that are interacting.¹ In the remainder of this section, we will briefly outline the competing attitudes regarding globalization and women's rights, and then present our conditional hypotheses.

Trade and Women's Status

While globalization certainly has its critics, it is indisputable that the infusion of women into the labor force can bring a number of benefits. Sassen (1996: 26), for example, remarks that even low-paying jobs can help alter gender hierarchies in business, while earning an income can also improve the power of women in the home (Afshar 1998; Afshar and Barrientos 1999; Bayes et al. 2001). Gender equality within the home can diffuse into the larger community, putting men and women on more equal footing. These types of gains can provide women with more resources that are directed toward their education and help secure better-paying jobs (Michael 1985). Previously financially insecure women can avoid a variety of pitfalls, including prostitution, and can further improve their financial stability by delaying marriage and childbearing (Lim 1997). Further, these improved financial conditions can then allow improvements in other areas. In Mexico, for example, female factory workers pooled their earnings to establish centers to provide legal assistance, daycare, education, and training to help women become more skilled and move into better-paying jobs (Bergeron 2001). Thus, gaining economic clout can enable women to secure additional rights.

Beyond the workplace and the home, there is also a connection between women moving into the paid labor force and women's movements for more political rights. As South Korea was industrializing in the 1960s, women began to join the paid labor force at an increasing rate. Shortly thereafter, women began to organize to lobby for greater labor rights and gender equality (Ross 2008). These gains can more generally lead to

¹ Our theory is applicable to a variety of aspects of economic globalization, including trade, foreign direct investment, and even portfolios. Due to limitations in the availability of dyadic data, our analyses are ultimately only able to assess the conditional relationship between trade and women's status. We retain a general use of "globalization" throughout our theory.

increased political rights and participation (Elson and Pearson 1997), and though some have found an insignificant association between women in the workforce and women's representation in government (e.g., Paxton 1997), more recent studies have shown a statistically strong relationship (Iversen and Rosenbluth 2008; Stockemer and Byrne 2012).

Job creation is clearly not solely beneficial to women, but the demand and opportunity for women to work outside the home promoting gender equality through economic, social, and political mechanisms. Thus, it appears that globalization can have a positive effect on women's status through multiple mechanisms.

However, there is also substantial evidence that these benefits are severely constrained. For example, others have argued that the influx of women in the workforce ultimately sees them relegated to low-paying jobs and part-time employment, with little to no chance for advancement. Employers—and even governments through the adoption and enforcement of labor laws—have the incentive to create an attractive investment climate by reducing the costs of operation. This might include rolling back salaries and benefits, suppressing unions, undermining workers' rights, and more generally allowing unsafe working conditions. In a discussion centered on human rights more broadly, Donnelly (2013) has remarked that markets created a whole new range of threats to human dignity, which both created a need and a demand for human rights. In other words, though many have commented on globalization's "positive" influence on the development of human rights law, at times, this influence was specifically due to the need to confront globalization's detrimental aspects (Garcia 1999).

While threats to human rights also plague men, evidence suggests that women are particularly vulnerable to exploitation. For example, employers in Mexico's maquiladora zone prefer "young women because they are...more docile and more likely to accept low wages and unsafe working conditions" (Meyer 1998; 162). Recent events in Bangladesh tragically illustrate this reality. Observers from around the globe were horrified at the collapse of the Savar building in Dhaka, in April 2013. The garment factory employed over 3000 workers, over a third of which would lose their lives in the horrible tragedy. Reports noted that around two-thirds of the 1129 fatalities were women (Dhaka Tribune 2013). The tragedy illustrates the trade-offs associated with globalization. While poverty levels in Bangladesh have plummeted in recent decades due to these employment opportunities, the garment industry has witnessed "primitive exploitation of labor," with women offering employers a "low-cost and compliant" labor force of which the majority are unfamiliar with the labor laws (Kabeer and Mahmud 2004: 95 and 102; our emphasis). It is perhaps worth noting that these workers, 70 % of whom are young women, saw production increase by over 40 % between 1980 and 1992, though real wages actually declined by almost 50 %. Unfortunately, though the Savar building collapse has been the most devastating, it is hardly unique. It was preceded by a fire that killed 112 at the Tazren Fashion factory in November 2012 and another that killed 29 the previous December. Nor are such tragedies limited to Bangladesh, as over 300 were killed in a factory fire in Pakistan in September 2012.

Kabeer's continuing body of work on Bangladeshi workers also points to a paradox. Though the reality of labor in much of the third world is clearly exploitative, the ability

to occupy even exploitative and unsafe jobs does provide those workers with “genuine opportunities” (Kabeer 2004). In response to western advocates of increased labor protections, Kabeer points to a potentially uncomfortable position that although more protections are desirable, the effort to obtain them could lead to a loss of jobs that would lead to many women having to work in the informal sector, a far worse scenario.

This prior literature and case evidence strongly suggest that employers have a strong incentive and willingness to undermine the well-being of people for profits. Subsequently, states could seek to create an attractive investment climate by sacrificing the welfare of its residents. However, states exchange more than goods, including norms regarding how people should be treated, specifically in regard to the treatment of women. In the next section, we discuss the main goal in this offering by explaining how the qualities of a trade partner can reduce the negative implications of economic incentives to roll back rights.

Toward a Theoretical Consensus

Reconciling Divergent Influences

Gray et al. (2006) have suggested that globalization promotes the transfer of “ideas and norms,” but we do not expect the norms and ideas to inherently promote (or undermine) equality for women. To the contrary, the character of norms within states is quite varied from one to another, and the quality of the ideas and norms that will be diffused via globalization will conditionally depend on the internal qualities of the states that one becomes globalized with. For example, given China’s woeful domestic experience with human, labor, and women’s rights, and its “without considerations” approach to increasing ties with developing states, there are clear incentives for governments to create an attractive environment for investment by reducing the standards and costs associated with business in order to attract Chinese trade and investment. There is little reason to think that an influx of imports, foreign direct investment, or portfolio investment from China should somehow promote gender equality in the receiving state. On the other hand, having closer ties with countries that are celebrated for higher gender equality, such as Sweden or Norway, could bring a positive influence (or at the very least might offset the negative consequences associated with financial incentives).

These competing viewpoints can be reconciled by clearly articulating the types of norms that are expected to be diffused from one state to another through financial interaction. Scholars have recently begun to emphasize the importance of socialization in international relations all of which are applicable to the context of globalization and women’s rights. First, coercive practices may convince states to alter policy in an effort to receive the benefits of increased ties or to avoid the losses associated with the reduction or stagnation of economic ties. Preferential trade agreements (PTA), for example, can stipulate that trading partners operate within certain human rights standards, such as guaranteeing civil and political rights of citizens. If the trading partner should regress on such rights, the PTA can be revoked and trade suspended. These economic consequences subsequently alter the utility of deviating from expected

norms of behavior. As such, it is unsurprising that PTAs have been found to positively influence human rights (Hafner-Burton 2005).

Second, actors can persuade others in the absence of coercive measures through repeated interactions and “teaching.” Levitsky and Way (2010), for example, argue that linkage with western democracies plays a critical role in whether or not an authoritarian state democratizes. Linkage comes in the form of economic, organizational, and political ties as well as the cross-border flow of capital, goods and services, and people. Through these linkages, additional networks of interstate communication are developed in which norms are transmitted. When states liberalize, they open themselves up to companies from different states bringing with them their own ideas and norms of women’s rights, which can be spread to those in the host state. There is perhaps no tangible economic benefit, such as gaining a profitable trade relationship to entice a state to change their behavior. Instead, diffusion is much more passive. Through various communication networks, states see how those around them and whom they interact with operate. Globalization and the spread of transnational corporations increase contact between individuals from states with poor respect for women’s rights and states with good women’s rights (Garcia 1999). This helps disseminate information of how well different policies work, and states later adopt policies that have brought success and stability to other states (Elkins and Simmons 2004). The state that adopts the new policy is not forced or coerced into doing so by other global actors; rather, the state changes their behavior through their own initiative. The quality of those norms, of course, can be expected to vary in accordance with the domestic norms of the respective states that are interacting.

Third, acculturation can lead to a more general process in which a state responds to “peer pressure” in order to assimilate with the states they have societal ties with (Goodman and Jinks 2004; Avdeyeva 2007). Keck and Sikkink (1998) note that what pressure states feel depends on who your friends are; therefore, friends with higher respect for women’s status are more likely to influence positive changes in the status of women when interacting with other states.

Each of these three processes is an important part of the norm diffusion story, and we believe economic ties are particularly likely to promote diffusion. Kolodner (1994:13) has remarked that “as corporations are intimately involved with the growth of the economy, they are perceived by many as the most effective levers of change,” and recent scholarship has illustrated these dynamics in other areas. Vogel (1995), for example, found that higher standards of air quality in an importing state influenced the standards in automobile manufacturing in the exporting state. He called this phenomenon the “California Effect” as it was originally studied in air quality standards for automobiles implemented by the state of California. The high standards forced businesses that exported automobiles to California to change their cars, and these practices were ultimately adopted in the home state. This helped passively spread norms of environmental protection from one state to another. Moving beyond environmental practices, Greenhill et al. (2009) found the California Effect to be an important determinant in the spread of labor rights practices, while Cao and Prakash (2010) pointed to a similar trend in a study on human rights.

These prior studies suggest that as women’s rights increase in a state’s peer group, the state will adopt similar practices leading to an increase in women’s rights domestically. There is little reason to believe that authoritarian regimes (e.g., China) or states

with particularly poor women's status (e.g., Saudi Arabia) will diffuse progressive women's norms or promote progressive policies, but there is a strong body of evidence suggesting that others do in fact take an active role in doing so. For example, the exemplary work of Gray et al. (2006) shows how recent decades have seen a variety of important transnational efforts to promote women's rights undertaken by the United Nations, World Bank, and an increasing number of other international women's NGOs. For example, 1976–1985 was deemed the decade of the woman by the United Nations. During this decade, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination (CEDAW) was first established, helping to codify gender equality as a worldwide endeavor. However, some states have been more proactive in promoting the goals of these efforts. For instance, Cole (2013) found that states that had ratified CEDAW had higher levels of women's rights compared to states that had not ratified the treaty. Consequently, women's rights have not improved uniformly since the creation of CEDAW but continue to vary state by state. In line with Zwingel's (2012) suggestion that international relations scholarship has overemphasized formal institutions investigating the diffusion of norms, it is potentially more useful to look beyond broad international frameworks such as CEDAW and look more specifically at the qualities of who the state is primarily economically tied.

Put another way, we expect the norms articulated in agreements such as CEDAW are less likely to be transmitted by states with a low level of gender equality at home and no interest in codifying protections abroad. Meanwhile, whether through coercion, teaching, or acculturation, the character of norms that are diffused is expected to be in line with the character of those the state interacts with.

Democracies as Promoters of Women's Rights

One potential area of disagreement at this point is the relationship between democracy and women's rights. In theory, any regime-type could act as a transmitter of women's rights. However, positive women's rights norms should be transmitted by states that actually protect, advance, or otherwise promote the status of women at home. For example, PTA clauses calling for improved women's rights could be called for and implemented by a state regardless of their level of democratization so long as there were progressive norms to be transferred by the members. Further, previous literature has pointed to a democracy paradox in which increased levels of or duration of democratization have sometimes been found to have no influence (e.g., Stockemer 2009) or even a negative influence on women's representation in government (e.g., Paxton 1997). However, we point to three mechanisms that lead us to predict higher levels of democratization to be associated with an improvement in women's rights.

First, we are interested more in the existence of and respect for specific rights, not simply female representation, and these rights are more likely to exist within democratic states (Beer 2009).² Further, our theory predicts that norms can be transmitted from abroad regardless of the presence of women in parliament at home. In other

² We ultimately find strong evidence that democracy both in one's trade partners and in the home state is an important determinant of women's status. We return to the democracy paradox in our "Analysis" section in order to provide a more nuanced explanation for the literature's disparate findings. In contrast to theoretical differences, arguably, these differences can be strongly attributed to sample selection and operationalization of the dependent variable.

words, while no doubt an important contributor to women's rights, a higher proportion or critical mass of women in the legislature is not a necessary condition for norm diffusion to improve women's status.³

Second, an exhaustive body of literature has indicated that democracies are endowed with stronger civil society. Democratization allows individuals to express opinions, to organize, and to collect and disseminate information regarding a cause. A major component of a democracy is that the freedom of association allows for civil society to flourish (Linz and Stepan 1996), and transnational non-governmental activism has similarly been noted as an important aspect of norm diffusion (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Unsurprisingly, Paxton (2002) found democracies to strengthen civil society and to have a greater number of international non-governmental organizations on average, and recent decades have seen an explosion in women's organizations which have helped expand women's rights across borders. For example, Krook (2006) points to transnational women's networks in Latin America as a primary component for the diffusion of quotas across Latin America, while True and Mintrom (2001) describe the influence of transnational feminist networks in promoting gender equality more generally. Through international and regional meetings, women in Costa Rica learned from Argentina's effective campaign for the adoption of a gender quota and were able to successfully implement a gender quota in 1991. Since democracies have larger civil societies, we expect democratic trade partners to be more likely to have INGOs working to promote progressive women's rights both at home and abroad.

Third, democratization allows for the political mobilization of underprivileged groups. In addition to voicing one's opinion through civil-society organizations, previously underprivileged groups can also speak their minds at the polls. As Dahl (1998: 77) states, "If you have no voice, who will speak for you?" Women have the right to vote in all democracies and comprise roughly 50 % of the population, making a powerful voting bloc. They have an increased ability to hold leaders accountable and to remove them from office if their rights are undermined. True and Mintrom (2001) find that democracies are more likely to adopt policies that promote gender equality, and women's rights have been found to be higher in democratic countries (Sweeney 2004). While sympathetic with the view that women's interests are best articulated and represented by women (e.g., Swers 1998; Schwindt-Bayer 2006), we argue that having a voice through non-governmental organizations and through the ability to vote has the potential to meaningfully influence the spread and enforcement of legislation beneficial to women even in the absence of a substantial portion of female parliamentarians.

In summary, we accept the economic argument that the potential for more profitable trade will increase the incentive to roll back protections for the labor force in an effort to reduce operating costs for businesses. We further accept that women are a particularly vulnerable part of this work force. However, these economic dynamics can be offset by the norms—and policies—that are diffused via financial ties, and we move past previous efforts by more clearly accounting for the character of the norms that are being transmitted. Specifically, we hope to move beyond the assumption that all globalization is invariably "good" or "bad" by considering the qualities of the partners

³ Though not expected, in additional analyses for 1961–2008, we also find that the percent of women in the legislature increases as the proportion of trade conducted with democratic partners increases.

that states are interacting with. Just as Levitsky and Way expect that linkage with western democracies can increase democratization, we similarly expect that diffusion of democratic and progressive gender norms can influence policies internationally.

We consequently point to two specific observable outcomes. First, increased trade dependence on democracies or states with progressive women's rights will make states more susceptible to pressure to lessen discriminatory practices and more exposed to passive norms promoting more progressive policies. Second, even if a state is not trade dependent, higher levels of trade with democracies or gender progressive states will reflect increased interactions, leading to a higher likelihood of norm diffusion. In this case, if a state is non-trade dependent due to a large domestic economy, it is likely they will not be as susceptible to direct pressure (for example, from another government). However, high levels of trade flows will provide the opportunity for more norms and more pressure from non-state actors such as transnational advocacy networks.

In summary, we present two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Trade dependence will be conditionally related to women's status, with trade dependence negatively influencing women's status when states are more trade dependent on autocracies or when more trade dependent on states with poor levels of women's status, and positively influencing women's status when more dependent on democracies.

Hypothesis 2: Total trade flows will be conditionally related to women's status, with total trade flows negatively influencing women's status when trade is primarily done with autocracies or states with poor women's status, while women's status will be positively influenced when states primarily trade with democracies or states with high levels of women's status.

Having laid out our expectations for the influence of trade on women's rights, we now proceed to empirically testing the relationship. We begin with a brief discussion of our data and methods, move on to analyzing and reporting our findings, and close the paper with a discussion of the implications of the findings.

Data and Methods

The previous sections have provided an overview of the theoretical arguments and prior literature associated with the relationship between international trade and the status of women. This discussion led us to propose two relationships: (1) women's status would improve if/when states are trade dependent on democracies or states with a record for respecting women's rights and (2) beyond dependence, the influence of total trade flows would be conditional on the qualities of the typical trading partners. In this section, we test these expectations with a multivariate assessment of a 28-year period (1981–2008) from a global sample of 184 countries.

Dependent Variables

Data for women's rights are taken from the Cingranelli and Richards (CIRI) Human Rights Dataset (Cingranelli and Richards 2008). The CIRI dataset is useful in that it

avoids aggregating a variety of distinct indicators of women's status, as seen in measures such as the gender development index. This allows us to look specifically at three different categorizations of women's rights: social, economic, and political. This distinction is beneficial in that it allows us to test the theory against multiple specifications of the dependent variable, and it allows us to determine if some types of rights are more likely to be influenced by international trade ties than others. Many prior efforts have considered women's political presence as an indicator of the status of women. We feel this is inappropriate for reasons that have previously been alluded to. First, the proportion of women in parliament is not a meaningful proxy for women's substantive power or status (e.g., Lovenduski and Norris 2003). Second, we are interested in the extent to which norms can lead to the establishing and respect for formal policies and it is policies that the CIRI dataset ultimately considers. Third, relatedly, development indicators such as gender disparities in life expectancy or literacy are likely to be influenced by the adoption and enforcement of women's social, economic, and political rights that we are directly assessing.⁴

Each measure is an ordinal scale ranging from 0 to 3 which tells us, respectively, if social, economic, or political rights of women were not guaranteed by law (0), if rights were legally guaranteed but severely prohibited in practice (1), if rights were legally guaranteed but moderately prohibited in practice (2), or rights were guaranteed in both law and practice (3). A more comprehensive list of rights for each measure of women's status is available in Table 1.

Independent Variables of Interest

The primary goal of the analysis is to consider the qualities of those that states interact with, making dyadic data particularly attractive as a starting point. The theory extends to multiple forms of financial interactions, but we are limited to looking at trade flows between states due to a lack of availability of other dyadic financial data. Other variables, such as foreign direct investment, are available only in yearly aggregate amounts that do not report the totals for individual countries of origin (e.g., the World Bank's World Development Indicators). Dyadic trade data are available from the Correlates of War data project, which reports the total value of imports and exports to and from each trade partner (Barbieri et al. 2009). Data are available for a global sample for the years 1870 to 2009, though data availability of other variables will ultimately limit the scope of the analysis to 1981–2008.⁵

The primary focus is on the degree to which a state can be said to have either democratic trade dependence or progressive trade dependence. To assess democratic trade dependence, we begin by identifying whether each trading partner was a democracy, as identified by Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland (2010). We then summed all trade conducted with democratic partners for each country-year. The sum of "democratic

⁴ We utilized percent women in parliament, the gender development index, and gender equality measure as dependent variables in additional tests, each of which provided further support for the theory. We ultimately report the results for the CIRI data in order to use consistent estimators, data sources, and for ease of presentation. Additional specifications are available upon request.

⁵ Models assessing women's political rights only cover the years 1981–2004 due to temporal limitations in the CIRI dataset.

Table 1 Indicators of women’s status, Cingranelli and Richards human rights dataset

Social:	Right to equal inheritance, marriage on a basis of equality with men; to travel abroad; obtain a passport; confer citizenship to children or a husband; initiate a divorce; own, acquire, manage, and retain property brought into marriage; participate in social, cultural, and community activities; education; choose a residence/domicile; freedom from female genital mutilation of children and of adults without consent; freedom from forced sterilization
Economic:	Equal pay for equal work; free choice of profession or employment without the need to obtain a husband or male relative’s consent; right to gainful employment without the need to obtain a husband or male relative’s consent; equality in hiring and promotion practices; job security (maternity leave, unemployment benefits, no arbitrary firing or layoffs, etc...); non-discrimination by employers; the right to be free from sexual harassment in the workplace; the right to work at night; the right to work in occupations classified as dangerous; the right to work in the military and the police force
Political:	Right to vote; the right to run for political office; the right to hold elected and appointed government positions; the right to join political parties; the right to petition government officials

trade” was then divided by the state’s real gross domestic product, held in constant 1996 US dollars (Gleditsch 2002).

A similar approach identifies the extent to which a state was dependent on trade with countries that could be described better respecters of women’s social, economic, or political rights. We consider a state to be more “progressive” if they are coded as either a 2 or 3 on each respective measure of the CIRI index. Just as with democratic trade, we compute a measure for Progressive Trade Dependence that reflects total trade flows with states considered to be better respecters of women’s rights divided by real gross domestic product.

As a secondary test of the argument, we specify additional models utilizing the replication data of an earlier study by Richards and Gelleny (2007). In addition to utilizing alternative data with different controls, these extensions move beyond trade dependence by considering total trade flows as conditionally associated with women’s rights by utilizing an interaction term. Total trade refers to the natural log of the sum of all imports and exports for each country by year and will act as a test for the general influence of trade flows on women’s rights. To test conditionality, we also include a measure for the ratio of trade conducted with democracies (“democratic trade ratio”) or progressive states (“progressive trade ratio”), and a trade-ratio interaction. The second hypothesis predicts that total trade will have a negative influence on women’s rights when primarily conducted with non-democracies or states with poor women’s rights. As the quality of the trading partner improves, so too will the prospects for women in the home state when trade flows increase.

Control Variables

The models also include a number of essential control variables that could be associated with the status of women. First, we include a 1-year lag of the dependent variable as a state’s prior legacy will ultimately be an important determinant of status in the current year. Second, we consider Women in Parliament, which reports the percent of national legislators that are female (World Bank; IPU). Previous work has found that female legislators are more likely to initiate and subsequently support women’s issue

legislation (Swers 1998; Schwindt-Bayer 2006). Women's issue legislation includes bills on equal pay, access to health care for women, and childcare all of which leads to greater gender equality. Thus, states where women comprise a larger proportion of the legislature are expected to have greater women's rights. Third, we consider whether the state is a democracy (Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland 2010) since democratization has been argued to be closely tied to women's rights (Beer 2009). Finally, we include measures for wealth and growth, which are operationalized with measures for the natural log of real gross domestic product per capita and year-to-year percent change in GDP per capita, respectively (Gleditsch 2002).⁶

Analysis

Bivariate Assessment

A preliminary glance at the data is offered in Fig. 1. The figure illustrates two bivariate relationships: (1) the connection between democratic trade dependence, aggregated by quartile, and each of our women's status measures, and the connection between progressive trade dependence and our women's status measures. The graphs show the mean score on each CIRI indicator for states in the lowest to highest quartiles of trade dependence, moving from left to right. Each variable displays the expected trend for each independent variable. For example, moving from the second to third quartile in democratic trade dependence increases the mean CIRI score by 0.36 on social rights (0.96 to 1.32), by 0.20 on economic rights (1.14 to 1.34), and 0.11 on political rights (1.71 to 1.82). Dependence on progressive states brings similar increases in status, with bumps of 0.28 for social rights (0.97 to 1.25), 0.39 for economic rights (1.13 to 1.62), and 0.16 for political rights (1.70 to 1.86) when moving from the second to third quartile.

Trade Dependence and Women's Status

Though the bivariate association illustrated in Fig. 1 is supportive of the theory, it is necessary to control for potentially confounding factors before drawing conclusions regarding the relationship. We begin by testing the first hypothesis, which predicted that increased trade dependence on democracies and states with a record of protecting women's rights would increase the status of women. A summary of the primary analyses is offered in Table 2. The table groups the models in pairs by the dependent variable, with the first column for each pair assessing democratic trade dependence while the second column assesses dependence on states that are more progressive.

We see an interesting trend when distinguishing our total trade and democratic trade dependence measures. Total trade yields a negative coefficient in each model, though it is insignificant when considering political rights. These results would provide some

⁶ As an additional test of the argument, we use our independent variables of interest with the replication data of Richards and Gelleny (2007). Additional controls included foreign direct investment, portfolio investment, structural adjustment, GDP per capita, democracy, as well as a lagged value for each respective measure of gender equality. Results were substantively similar, stronger even, than the results presented here.

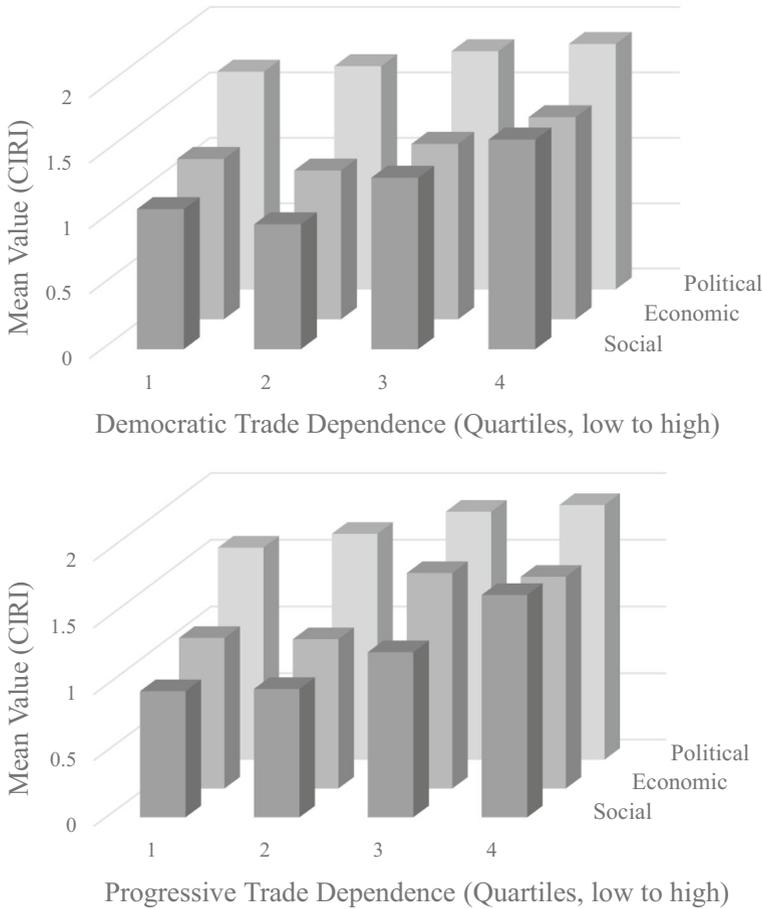


Fig. 1 Mean women’s status, by trade partner qualities (1981–2008)

evidence supporting the view that globalization negatively impacts women. However, our trade dependence measures show the opposite trend; as states become more dependent on trade with democracies or with states that can be seen as (at least marginally) progressive in regard to women’s status, that state witnesses higher levels of women’s status. This trend is true for both independent variables of interest and is true for each type of women’s status investigated in this paper. The total trade measure, however, suggests that the size of trade flows (as opposed to dependence “good” trade) could be negatively associated with the dependent variables. We will return to this measure in Table 3 and Fig. 1 when testing the second hypothesis.

Our control variables largely behaved as expected. Unsurprisingly, the lagged dependent variables have the expected positive influence and are significant at the 0.001 level in each specification. Wealth was positive and significant in four of six models. The measure was not significantly associated with either assessment of women’s political rights. One potential explanation for the less consistent performance of the political rights measures is that it possesses less variation than the other

Table 2 Trade dependence and the status of women, 1981–2008

	Social rights		Economic rights		Political rights	
DV, lagged	3.572*** (0.140)	3.556*** (0.141)	2.977*** (0.141)	2.971*** (0.141)	3.949*** (0.164)	3.949*** (0.164)
Democratic trade/GDP	0.825* (0.328)		0.370* (0.163)		0.637* (0.313)	
“Progressive” trade/GDP		2.188* (0.879)		0.815*** (0.211)		0.552** (0.212)
Total trade flows	−0.065* (0.025)	−0.070** (0.026)	−0.053** (0.019)	−0.056** (0.019)	−0.001 (0.017)	−0.001 (0.017)
GDP per capita	0.425*** (0.084)	0.422*** (0.081)	0.523*** (0.075)	0.527*** (0.074)	0.010 (0.064)	0.015 (0.064)
%change GDPpc	−0.465 (0.494)	−0.363 (0.499)	−0.930* (0.437)	−0.908* (0.436)	0.022 (0.605)	0.053 (0.603)
%women in parliament	0.056*** (0.008)	0.055*** (0.008)	0.027*** (0.006)	0.026*** (0.006)	0.171*** (0.014)	0.171*** (0.013)
Democracy	0.789*** (0.139)	0.754*** (0.139)	0.437*** (0.131)	0.415** (0.131)	0.639*** (0.133)	0.638*** (0.133)
Cut 1	3.647*** (0.571)	3.501*** (0.571)	3.432*** (0.511)	3.388*** (0.509)	1.425** (0.494)	1.447** (0.494)
Cut 2	9.057*** (0.628)	8.912*** (0.626)	8.740*** (0.570)	8.699*** (0.568)	6.452*** (0.537)	6.474*** (0.538)
Cut 3	13.675*** (0.731)	13.569*** (0.728)	13.529*** (0.627)	13.506*** (0.626)	15.088*** (0.622)	15.127*** (0.662)
Observations	2764	2764	3489	3489	3563	3563

Each column reports an ordered logit, with standard errors clustered by country

* $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed); ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

dependent variables. By the start of the sample, most states had already adopted a preponderance of the political rights described in Table 1. A glance at the data confirms this suspicion, as 68 % of the cases in the CIRI data are coded as a 2.

An intriguing finding arises for economic performance. Though percent change in GDP per capita is insignificantly associated with women’s social and political rights, it is significantly and negatively associated with economic rights. A full appraisal of this relationship is beyond the scope of this study, but the result could suggest that states with struggling economies are more likely to witness the rolling back of women’s labor protections and increases in discriminatory practices.

The percent of women in parliament was positively associated with each category of women’s rights. Scholars have argued that in order for policy outcomes to change, including the passage of women’s issues bills, women need to comprise a critical mass of around 30 % (Dahlerup 1988). Currently, fewer than 30 countries meet this threshold and they are largely already respecters of women’s social rights. However, the results presented here suggest that even modest increases in women’s representation could lead to meaningful increases in women’s status.

Table 3 The conditional influence of trade on the status of women, 1981–2008

	Social		Economic		Political	
DV, lagged	3.721*** (0.146)	3.667*** (0.142)	3.130*** (0.175)	3.087*** (0.173)	4.490*** (0.190)	4.523*** (0.200)
Total trade	-0.213* (0.090)	-0.160* (0.069)	-0.135 (0.085)	-0.180* (0.075)	-0.124 (0.131)	-0.171 (0.132)
Democratic trade ratio	-6.396* (2.806)		-2.058 (2.569)		-5.276 (3.571)	
Total trade-democratic ratio	0.305* (0.131)		0.104 (0.123)		0.260 (0.170)	
Progressive trade ratio		-7.574*** (2.302)		-4.997* (2.185)		-2.772 (3.487)
Total trade-progressive ratio		0.399*** (0.109)		0.265* (0.103)		0.219 (0.173)
FDI	0.013 (0.013)	0.012 (0.014)	0.014 (0.009)	0.010 (0.009)	0.018 (0.012)	0.011 (0.014)
Portfolio	-0.009*** (0.002)	-0.009*** (0.002)	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)
Structural adjustment	0.041 (0.142)	0.028 (0.132)	0.114 (0.153)	0.114 (0.150)	0.263 (0.154)	0.215 (0.157)
GDP per capita	0.251** (0.096)	0.227* (0.098)	0.508*** (0.087)	0.498*** (0.088)	0.117 (0.107)	0.117 (0.112)
Democracy (polity)	0.059*** (0.016)	0.052*** (0.015)	0.036** (0.013)	0.030* (0.012)	0.048** (0.015)	0.042* (0.017)
Cut 1	-1.793 (1.768)	-0.726 (1.321)	0.685 (1.724)	-0.250 (1.444)	-0.335 (2.596)	-0.223 (2.598)
Cut 2	3.800* (1.753)	4.927*** (1.320)	6.343*** (1.744)	5.422*** (1.441)	4.601 (2.586)	4.781 (2.637)
Cut 3	8.209*** (1.750)	9.408*** (1.325)	11.740*** (1.765)	10.893*** (1.445)	11.751*** (2.573)	12.021*** (2.632)
Observations	2346	2346	2377	2377	2429	2429

See Richards and Gelleny (2007) for a complete description of control variables. Interpretation of the independent variables of interest should be drawn from Fig. 2

* $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed); ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Democracy carried the expected positive sign and was significant in each specification, lending further support to the belief that democracies are better promoters of women's rights (e.g., Beer 2009; Caprioli 2004). Our results regarding the link between democratization and women's status are in contrast to a number of previous efforts that have utilized women's parliamentary representation as a dependent variable (e.g., Paxton 1997; Paxton and Kunovich 2003; Kunovich and Paxton 2005; Stockemer 2009). We were more interested in the passing of international norms, and while accepting female parliamentarians is important, norms can be transferred in their absence. As it stands, the

models presented here universally suggest that democratization is associated with higher levels of women's political, economic, and social rights while controlling for women's representation. Our analyses further show that states that trade more heavily with democracies will see improvements in women's social and economic rights. In contrast to a democracy "paradox," we find evidence that democracy provides a strong boost to women's status.

The Conditional Influence of Total Trade on Women's Status

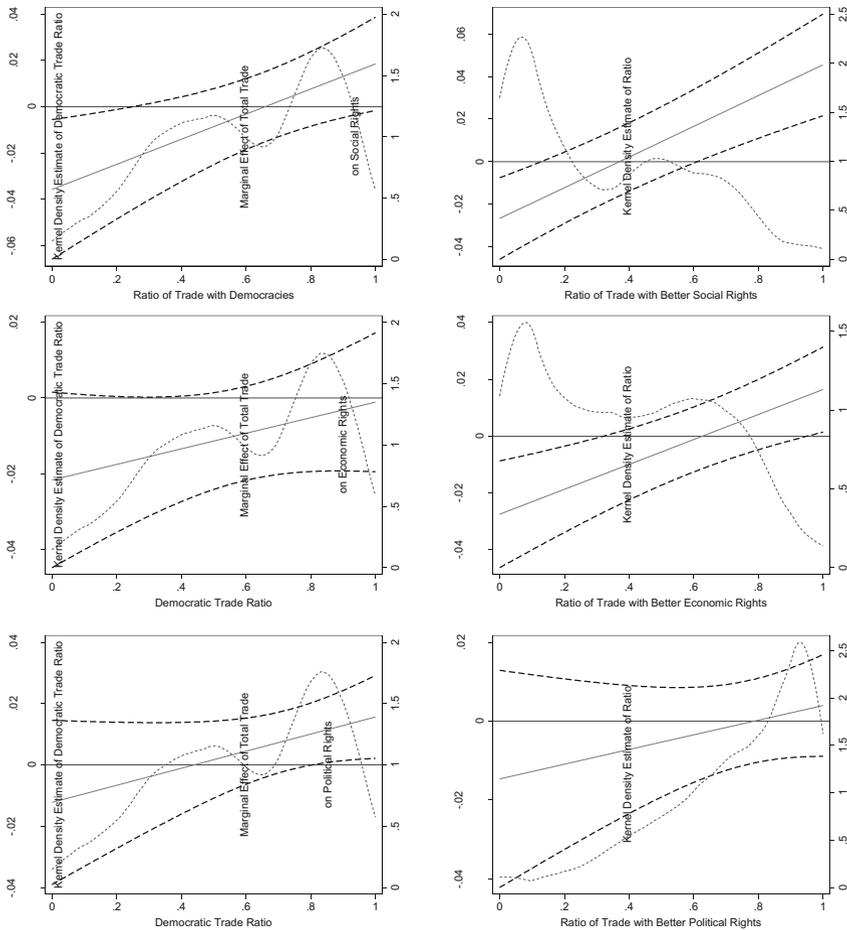
The second hypothesis is tested by considering the influence of total trade flows as conditional, using the replication data of Richards and Gelleny (2007). This approach is advantageous in that it allows us to consider alternative data and to look beyond the issue of trade dependence. Richards and Gelleny (2007: 871) considered total trade, foreign direct investment, and structural adjustment and indicators of globalization, finding that "the relationship between economic globalization and women's status differs by type of globalization, type of status, and era." We argue that considering the qualities of those one is "globalized with" will help refine these conclusions.

The interactive models are reported in Table 3. The format echoes Table 2, which grouped models by the dependent variable, beginning with social rights, then moving to economic rights, and then political rights. The first model for each pair considers total trade flows, the ratio of trade flows that is conducted with democracies, and an interaction of these two constitutive terms (which ultimately represents total democratic trade flows). The second model in each pair considers total trade, the ratio of trade that is conducted with states that are coded as either 2 or 3 on each respective measure for women's status, and the interaction.

Readers should exercise caution when interpreting the table. Recent emphasis has been put on the tendency to misinterpret interactive models, especially when utilizing interval-level variables as the constitutive terms (e.g., Ai and Norton, 2003; Brambor, Clark, and Golder 2006). For example, the first social rights model reports a significant coefficient of -6.696 for the Democratic Trade Ratio variable. At first glance, this would seem to suggest that trading more heavily with democracies worsens women's status, which would obviously run counter to expectations. However, this coefficient can only be interpreted when the logged value of total trade is 0, an impossible scenario.

Consequently, Brambor, Clark, and Golder point to the need to graphically illustrate the effect. Figure 2 provides these representations, using the GRINTER program developed by Boehmke (2006). The left column represents the Democratic Trade Ratio models, while the second reports the models accounting for specific women's rights in trading partners. The first row reports women's social rights, following by economic rights and political rights.

Both considerations for women's social rights display the expected tendency. First, we identify total trade flows as having a negative influence on social rights, but only when low levels of trade are conducted with democracies (i.e., below a ratio of 0.25). All else being equal, the influence of trade on social rights improves and becomes statistically indistinguishable from the null as the ratio conducted with democracies reaches higher levels. We see an even more dramatic relationship when accounting for



Notes: Dashed line reflects 95% confidence interval. Dotted lines represent the distribution of the data at each level of the respective trade ratio measures.

Fig. 2 The conditional influence of trade flows on women’s rights

the ratio of trade that is done with states ranking high on CIRI’s social rights scale. Again, trade has a negative influence on social rights when a low ratio (<0.15) is done with states that can be described as more progressive on social rights and as this ratio increases the likelihood of improved social status increases. Once states surpass a ratio of 0.60, we see total trade exercise a positive influence on women’s social status.

A similar, though less dramatic, relationship is seen with economic rights. Considering democratic trading partners produces a similar slope but just misses statistical significance for lower ratios of democratic trade. Considering whether or not trading partners are more progressive on women’s economic rights reveals that trade has a negative influence on women’s rights when less than a ratio of 0.30 is conducted with states that are more progressive on economic rights. At the highest extremes (above 0.95) of the ratio, we see trade have a positive influence.

Finally, women's political rights are improved by increased trade flows when the democratic trade ratio is above 0.75. Trade below that threshold is insignificant. Trade proves wholly insignificant when accounting for whether or not the trading partners are more progressive on women's political rights. Again, poor performance in the political rights models can in part be attributed to a lack of variation in measure for the timeframe of the CIRI dataset.

These results point to a few conclusions. First, the relationship between trade and women's rights extends beyond dependence. While Table 2 shows states more dependent on trade with democracies or trade with states more progressive on women's rights would see women's rights improve, the table also hinted that the total amount of trade flows more generally could be harmful to women's rights. Figure 2 reveals that increased trade flows are only detrimental to women's rights when states are more heavily tied financially to non-democracies or to states that have low levels of women's social and economic status. In regard to social status, and to a lesser degree economic, we see that higher trade flows can actually lead to improvements to women's status when those interactions are more densely associated with more progressive states.

Conclusion

The preceding analyses have led to a number of conclusions. First, the story of globalization and women's status should not see scholars suggest that increased international ties should invariably influence women's rights in an either positive or negative manner. Instead, the qualities of one's trading partners are a very important determinant of women's rights domestically. Though data availability ultimately undermined our ability to test the argument beyond transnational trade, we strongly suspect that other aspects of globalization, such as FDI, will have a similar influence. Future explorations of the influence of globalization will certainly be able to assess this expectation as more data become available. Second, in addition to finding support that democracies are significant supporters of the status of women at home, we have demonstrated that the internal norms in democratic countries can be effectively diffused to their trading partners. Third, this trend is even more apparent when we refine the models to look directly at the extent to which trade partners respect specific indicators of women's status.

Given the results of this analysis, we conclude that the lives of women are meaningfully influenced not simply by trade, but rather by the qualities of states with whom their home state trades with. We hope these findings help guide future efforts that attempt to investigate the influence of globalization, particularly as it relates to the status of women.

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