

***“Insiders Playing Games: Global Competitiveness on the Field of Canadian Multilateralism”***

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Multilateralism is an “article of faith” in Canadian foreign policy; in Sergio Marchi’s words, it is “part of the Canadian DNA”. Starting from the perspective that multilateralism as a process for managing Canada’s international economic relations has been at least as, if not more, important to the architects and practitioners of Canadian foreign policy than has multilateralism as a means to the achievement of a specified series of ends, this paper critically examines the economic outcomes which the processes of multilateralism have structured. The outcomes which have emerged and taken hold in the era of globalization are based on the norms of a neo-liberal global economic order and a neo-liberal state, and the Canadian state, through its enthusiastic participation in the multilateral institutions which have structured these outcomes, is a key architect of the global economic order.

The paper examines the discourses surrounding Canada’s “insider” participation in multilateral economic institutions and processes, and seeks to uncover the gendered bases of the images of the global economic order concealed therein. In the first instance, what is most evident is the attempt to conceal the political bases of the global economy. Where the imagery of team sports and competition has long been associated with the “high politics” of national security and military deployment, Canadian discourse on international trade and investment increasingly uses this same imagery. Canadians are players on the playing field of globalization, they work together best when they are a team (and here, the entire structure of government programs known under the rubric of Team Canada only serves to underscore the point), and they must do what is necessary to win against the forces of globalization “out there”. Politics are absent from this analogy, a discursive turn which mirrors the institutional bifurcation of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade into political and trade commissioner services. The paper then draws parallels between this discursive analogy and the explicit attempt by DFAIT to develop programs which respond to the needs of women in the global economy. Rather than a softening of the “macho” imagery of team sports where there are winners and losers, the gendered language and images of competitive sports are reinforced in those programs targeted specifically to women. In focussing on the potential of gender-less individuals to win and lose in a zero-sum game, the embedded structure of the global economy, and in particular, its gendered nature and consequences, is both obscured and denied.

***“Gendering Canadian Trade Policy: The Last Feminist Frontier?”***

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This paper examines the specific ways in which gender and trade are linked, given that despite increasing attention in the past couple of years to the social dimensions of trade, DFAIT has paid no attention to the burgeoning literature on gender and trade. The paper begins with an overview of the literature on gender and macroeconomic policy, arguing that trade policies are not gender neutral, but that they often reinforce existing gender, class and racial hierarchies. Using this literature as a starting point, the paper then traces the different manifestations of the problem of gender and trade, focussing in particular on the liberal feminist and the socialist feminist approaches.