



NEGATIVE TREND IN THE POSITIONING OF WOMEN IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS NEGOTIATIONS

Original scientific paper

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ABSTRACT

Over the past decade, many studies have been conducted on the ethical aspects of gender equality in international business negotiations. Research shows that, despite women's success in solving global negotiation challenges, their participation is still limited. And while this influence may not be direct, it should be noted that women are generally considered less good negotiators than their male counterparts. In this sense, through analyzing theoretical discourse, this article examines the contemporary practice of business negotiation. The goal is to point out the (un)ethical continuity of the gender division of labor, whereby gender should not prejudice the individual, but rather his negotiation abilities. As the existing scientific literature requires further multidisciplinary research, we believe this article will contribute to a better understanding of the importance of ethical harmony of gender equality as the best strategy and practice for negotiating parties in international business negotiations.

Keywords: *business, gender expression, gender inequalities, international negotiation, power and gender, unethical preference*

INTRODUCTORY CONSIDERATIONS

The position of women in society, politics, and the economy, even in today's time of change, democracy, and technological and innovative achievements, is not equal to that of men. Different climates, and geographical, political, and cultural conditions significantly deepen this gap, so even in the most democratic and advanced politics cannot be said that women are equal to men when it comes to the representation of women in socio-political life and its accompanying processes. This fact is consistent and the same in low and developing countries as in high-income countries. However, the nature and extent of gender

inequality vary greatly depending on the economic structure of the country, the socioeconomic and cultural characteristics of society in general, and the capabilities of the individual. The dynamics within politics and the economy and the position of women in all of this are very specific. In his analysis, Bakker (2015) states that it is necessary to understand the dynamics within politics and the economy, which will greatly clarify and determine the position and role of women in social and economic processes. Bakker (2015) believes “that the liberalization of social services may have negative implications for the distribution of unpaid work, with women in poor and marginalized households likely

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to bear the brunt". This will put the position of women in society in an ungrateful position. Bilopavlovic (2021, p. 40) points out that today women are more active in all areas of political situations, economic life, and diplomacy. However, the situation is not as it should be, especially in countries in transition and underdeveloped countries. "They [women, op. a.] are negotiators, directors, leaders, business advisors, entrepreneurs, presidents, and prime ministers. Although their representation in the business world is incomparable considering the past, it is still more difficult for them to progress, they do not have equal access to information and they are very little represented in management positions". Thus, the active participation of women in political, diplomatic, and economic life is noticeable. Unfortunately, all this does not imply an equal relationship, position, and opportunities that women have when it comes to the processes of business negotiation and/or diplomacy. Although today women are equally capable and educated, in many countries they achieve their equality with the help of systematic quotas imposed by the state. The causes of such irregularities come from society, the stereotypical educational system, but also the insufficient engagement of women themselves, women's associations, and even trade unions to change the legal regulations (Poslovni. hr, 2012). However, such a relationship violates equality and deprives society of valuable talents. Therefore, the fight against gender stereotypes is a priority because they are rooted in reality and thus affect individual trajectories in different segments of our society, including and positioning women in the world business discourse. This article aims to shed light on gender expression by questioning the position of women in today's social, political, and economic events. A particular goal is to contribute to a better understanding of the role of gender in International Business Negotiations. By analyzing theoretical discussions and relevant reports of international institutions, we try to point out unethical preferences and their characteristics. Our research question is: What is the current trend in the positioning of women in International business negotiations and what factors influence their continued underrepresentation?

THE PROBLEMATIZATION OF THE ROLE OF GENDER IN INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATION PROCESSES

The problematization of gender inequality in the framework of political and social life, business, and diplomatic negotiations can be traced through

two spheres. The first represents the sphere of the woman's position in society and the social roles imposed on women, that is, through the forms of the gender gap. The second sphere is related to the position of women when it comes to the opportunities a woman has to get an education - from finding employment to engagement in positions dealing with political and economic processes and affairs, diplomacy, and negotiation. All of this will greatly affect the issue of gender equality in negotiation processes, precisely because women do not have equal access to elements necessary for related activities. At the same time, the position of women and their determination in society also affects communication, as the central basis of negotiation. Kovacevic (2010, p. 27) states that negotiation is a two-way communication that is... (...) aimed at reaching an agreement between parties that share interests or are in conflict with each other (...) In international relations, negotiation has always had a central place, both in the functioning of nation-states and the relations between them and in international and global systems of collective security that were gradually emerging. In essence, negotiation is at the heart of diplomacy and business processes (international and otherwise). Diplomatic activity and business execution are carried out through negotiation. For Bilopavlovic (2021 p. 22), International business negotiation is a complex process that requires extra effort as it differs significantly from a day-to-day business negotiation. "International negotiators face several challenges when dealing with another culture, as cultural differences are the most sensitive obstacle. Despite the threat to our cultural identity, there is no doubt that the global tide relentlessly insinuates itself into our lives, altering them profoundly and ever wider. More active participation of women in diplomacy and business negotiations has been developing since the 1990s, within the framework of academic education and the establishment of diplomatic schools. The basic idea was to fill the void created by the lack of women in political and economic structures and functions in such a way as to involve as many women as possible in diplomatic and business processes. Lenine and Sanca (2022) state that several studies have been published in the field of the history of diplomacy that problematize the representation of women in business negotiation processes. Their results represent a very interesting cross-section of conditions whose elements still cannot fit into the global social system and order. Enloe (2014, p. 63) states that women as "informal envoys, business representatives, diplomats, and ambassadors are involved in international

affairs of diplomacy, but this is not an adequate measure that would indicate an equal position". The position of women in business negotiation (and any other form of negotiation) is also conditioned by her position in society and the economy in general and depends on the opportunities for a woman to participate in the negotiation process, that is, if she is in a position that allows it. To realize this, women must be provided with adequate education and the support of society and the political system. The roots of these problems lie in the two spheres mentioned above. Trade, finance, and economy, as well as their elements, simultaneously contain gender inequality. Trade policies and agreements affect women's and men's opportunities to access safe and decent employment and benefit from international trade differently. Braunstein (2017) highlights the bidirectional causality between gender equality and economic growth: growth affects gender equality in many ways, but gender also affects macroeconomic outcomes, such as growth, trade, imbalances, and inflation. "The gender structure of markets has two main implications for how gender and trade interact in a country. First, gender inequalities affect trade strategies for competitiveness and second, inequalities will affect whether trade reforms translate into desired economic outcomes".

Shonk (2022) states that "deeply entrenched social gender roles lie at the root of the gender gap", which will ultimately affect the outcome of negotiations. Firstly, will a woman, given her predetermined gender role, have the opportunity to be in positions dealing with negotiations, secondly, if yes - what is the attitude of society if a woman is in the negotiation process? "In many cultures, girls are expected from a young age to be accommodating and to protect the well-being of others" (Shonk, 2022). If these attributes refer exclusively to women, it is concluded that these attributes are not desirable for negotiation processes, because they are in contrast (or partly in conflict) with the more assertive behavior that is characteristic of diplomatic and negotiation strategies. In this sense, "assertiveness (Lat. *asserere*: to appropriate; to assert), a characteristic of behavior or a personality trait that manifests itself in the active defense of one's rights or attitudes (...) 'self-confidence', 'self-confidence', 'self-awareness', 'penetration' "(Hrvatska enciklopedija, n.d.). All these attributes according to social roles, and due to the understanding that women are more accommodating, are not related to women and are not desirable in negotiation

processes. Examples and history show that social roles are rooted in gender inequalities. Most men negotiate for themselves as well as others, while women negotiate more assertively for other individuals than for themselves. This is because it is tough for them to negotiate in their interest while negotiating for others is in line with the traditional female gender role, in which women feel more comfortable doing more for others than for themselves. Thus, women in negotiations effectively reduce the gender gap in outcomes, ultimately leading to women achieving lower economic results in negotiation processes than men. For Bilopavlovic (2021, p. 38) gender identity brings a series of distinctions between the fundamental differences of individuals as an interlocutor. By this, the concepts of male and female negotiating styles have developed. The male negotiation style implies dominant and assertive negotiators who advocate exclusively for their interests and apply distributive negotiation. On the other hand, the female gender in the role of negotiator is intensely collaborative. Avelini Holjevac and Galicic (2005) indicate that women make much better use of the opportunities and chances they get for schooling "or for doing business tasks, they have a better ear for understanding other people's problems, they do not tend to create a hostile business atmosphere, and they more easily respect social, racial, cultural and all other peculiarities of individuals". For Babcock and Laschever (2004), men negotiate their salary twice as much as women and nine times more often than women, regardless of age, level of education, and work experience. They point out, "Women do not initiate negotiations on their initiative, and they pay a high price for this throughout their working life".

"Men in negotiations express their independence and status on the hierarchical scale, while women in negotiations seek support and confirmation of their values" (Robbins & Judge, 2009). Juricev (2014), on the other hand, states that women in negotiations respect the interests and "requirements of the opposite negotiating party, and an integrative approach to negotiation is more suitable for them. Namely, female negotiators are extremely communicative and warm people who positively affect the outcome of negotiations". Therefore, women are significantly more flexible and respect other people's opinions and attitudes more often than men, which puts them in a disadvantageous position when it comes to negotiation processes. In this context, Nidogon Visnjic, Begicevic Redjep and Vidacek-Hains (2018) state that women are less inclined to brag

than men. In doing so, they sometimes diminish their authority and success, fearing they might hurt their colleagues by bragging. Men have no problem glorifying their successes, and women's reluctance is often interpreted as a lack of self-confidence and competence for a certain task. (...) For men, oral communication emphasizes status, while women use it to establish a relationship. However, different groups of women face different economic opportunities and often constraints. Fontana (2016, p. 15) observes that "women are often assigned different roles and responsibilities both in the market economy, politics and society in general, as well as at home (most often very similar). This fact is most pronounced in countries with low (but also in those with high) incomes, "although the nature and extent of gender inequalities are likely to vary, depending on the economic structure of the country, institutions and socio-economic circumstances of the individuals concerned" (Fontana, 2016, p. 15).

This will depend not only on the sectors in which women and men work but also on their skills, family circumstances, consumer needs and the means they have, and the public resources and services they can access. The formulation of equitable policies must consider these differences (Fontana, 2016, p. 16). In the analysis of the World Economic Forum (2022), it is indicated that gender differences in the very processes of work and negotiation are influenced by numerous factors. In the first form, these are long-term structural social barriers rooted in society in the form of socioeconomic and technological transformation. At the same time, the uneven distribution in terms of gender representation is also affected by economic changes. "More and more women are moving into paid work and, increasingly, leadership positions, but globally societal expectations, employer policies, environmental law and the availability of care continue to play an important role in the choice of educational paths and career paths" (World Economic Forum, 2022). Nevertheless, attitudes towards gender roles that promote gender divisions in a society still result in values in which female characteristics are valued less systematically than male characteristics. Eagly (1987, p. 21) observes that "gender role beliefs for female and male gender roles are described as shared, and when it comes to women, they almost always attract attributes such as - caring, warm, cooperative, relationship-oriented."

According to this author, the male gender role is agentic, containing assertiveness, competitiveness, strength, dominance, and profit-oriented attributes. In this context, Eagly and Wood (2012, p. 460)

think that gender role beliefs influence people's behavior through at least two mechanisms. First, gender role beliefs create specific role expectations toward which people behave because role-conforming behavior is socially rewarded and role-incongruent behavior is punished. For Rudman and Phelan (2008) this is marked as a social reaction, "where gender roles do not only describe and show what people (usually) do but at the same time impose what people should do". Mechanisms of social control thus influence gender roles in which people adjust their position according to social forms and processes. In other words, gender roles and social norms determine the division of labor, whereby men and women are assigned to different types of work, often depending on the country's level of development and the local climate's traditions and customs. This is especially visible in less developed or developing countries, where women will take on more unpaid responsibilities and tasks, such as housework, childcare, and caring for elderly and sick family members. Nohe et al. (2022) observe that: "People internalize their gender roles and beliefs so that they become part of their subjective identities. Gender identities, in turn, guide behavior because people tend to behave by their identity." This gender division is also reflected in economic roles. Von Hagen (2014, p. 22) notes that as a result, women and men engage differently in economic activities and benefit from them unequally. However, in their multiple economic roles, women face several specific challenges. Also, Higgins (2012) observes that women are more likely to find themselves "generally in precarious forms of work, that women suffer from time and resource constraints, may lack (access) to skills, information, and networks, are exposed to security and gender-based threats and are more likely to be affected by tax reforms". Geopolitical conflicts and diverse social and climate changes also affect the uneven distribution of women in work and negotiation processes. The worsening crisis and the cost of living are likely to hit women more than men, as women continue to earn at lower levels (World Economic Forum, 2022). In the analysis of the World Economic Forum (2022), different levels of gender differences are problematized, which are reflected in the area of political and economic relations, but also the entire society, and the area of women's participation in negotiation processes. Gender differences in the recovery of the labor market: among workers who lost their jobs under any conditions (pandemic, etc.), during the global drop in the unemployment rate, women

are represented in the highest percentage. Gender differences in unpaid work: based on the analysis of data for 2019 from the 33 countries included in the analysis by the World Economic Forum, which represents 54% of the global population of working age, the share of men in the time spent in forms of unpaid work was only 19 %, while for women it is quite higher and amounted to 55%. Rising costs and childcare impose an asymmetric position on women when it comes to paid work. Gender differences in management positions: According to the World Economic Forum analysis, the share of women engaged in management positions records a constant growth from 33.3% in 2016 to 36.9% in 2022. However, while the share of women in management has increased, women are not employed in all industries in equal proportions. Research shows that, on average, a woman is in a managerial position in those industries where women were already represented to a greater extent (for example, education). Gender differences in political representation: World Economic Forum analysis shows women's progress in leadership in public office. According to the analysis, globally, Germany had women in public office for the longest time, an average of 16.1 years, followed by Iceland for 16 years, the Dominican Republic for 14.9 years, and Ireland for nearly 14 years. The World Economic Forum analysis shows that the global average share of women in ministerial positions nearly doubled between 2006 and 2022, from 9.9% to 16.1%. Furthermore, the average participation of women in parliaments increased from 14.9% to 22.9%. Although increasing, these data indicate that there is still a persistent gap. Gender differences in the accumulation of wealth: According to the analysis of the World Economic Forum in the context of 39 countries, women are at a disadvantage in wealth, that is the accumulation of profits during their work and life. The most prominent contributing factors are gender-based wealth inequality through receiving lower wages, unequal career paths, gender differences in financial literacy, and life events that increase women's wealth and educational conditions. Gender differences in lifelong learning: research by the World Economic Forum shows that women are still overrepresented in education and health, and underrepresented in STEM fields. Enrollment behavior shows that men and women prefer skills that continue (and repeat) traditional patterns, deepening gender gaps. Gender differences in stress levels (at work and in general): based on data obtained by the World Economic Forum, the report reveals

that between 2021 and 2022, reported stress was 4% higher for women than for men. This contributes to the growing global health burden of mental and emotional disorders, disproportionately affecting women's health and well-being (World Economic Forum, 2022). All these differences, which are traditional gender differences that maintain the equal position of women in society and politics in general and of a social and economic nature, determine the issue of gender equality in International business negotiations.

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN NEGOTIATIONS

Rubin and Brown were among the first researchers to study the very influence of gender on negotiations and business processes. Their monograph and research (1975) present results showing that women negotiate more cooperatively than men, despite accompanying gender stereotypes. However, the findings of Kolb and Williams's (2000) research that studied individual differences in behavior between the sexes and the associated attributes indicate that the behavior of each actor participating in the process can be predicted reliably during negotiations. Thus, Hederos Eriksson and Sandberg (2012, p. 406) find that women are less likely to enter into negotiations, especially with male colleagues. This accepted idea stems from the fact that aggressiveness is a highly valued business behavior that favors the male gender. Kolb (2009) also problematizes the economic outcomes of negotiation processes and the sex of the negotiator and concludes that the results of negotiation processes of male negotiators are generally superior to those of women, which is related to the hypothesis that women more often set goals of lesser value. It is precisely in these conditions that the difference in negotiations is most pronounced when it comes to women and men. According to gender roles and pre-defined (traditional) patterns, women as such set lower goals where their attributes come to the fore, such as those who are accommodating and oriented towards others. On the other hand, men, as stated by Mazei, Zerres and Hüffmeier (2021), "are not more ready to exchange information and generally make ambitious first offers", which puts them in a more favorable position in negotiation processes compared to women. Fattori (2022) states that men tend to show dominance and leadership in negotiation processes, which favors the economic outcome and which, under certain conditions, precedes

a positive outcome. In this sense, men behave more rationally, “they are more ready to protect their interests and turn negotiations towards their own goals and fulfilling their needs”. Male leadership is also guaranteed by traditional gender roles where women are disadvantaged in all parameters in terms of dominance and expression of leadership. Women’s negotiation style is more compassionate, intuitive, and collaborative. According to Paddock and Kray (2011), women are generally more sensitive and accommodating in negotiations. It should certainly be taken into account that these are some general reflections and that at the same time, there are deviations and examples where women showed more assertive behavior, and men were more accommodating in negotiations. Fattori (2022) notes that all these attributes actually “exclude” women from the negotiation process, and its positive outcome, because it is assumed that, due to their characteristics, the negotiation will go in favor of the other party. Kolb and Williams (2000) state that an effective negotiator is characterized by a male who is independent, confident, active, objective, and insensitive to pressure. Consequently, men are often considered better negotiators than women. This also determines that ‘being a man’ is enough to be recognized as an effective negotiator. Stereotypes are then directed at women, who are put under additional pressure to demonstrate that they deserve their place at the negotiating table (Fattori, 2022). Fattori (2022) states that some feminist theories and positions reject the idea of diversity based on gender, i.e. gender roles, but refer to ideologies and political systems that are directly related to gender inequality in the context of negotiations. Paddock and Kray (2011) indicate that gender stereotypes are effectively activated when individuals negotiate, for example through the phenomenon of expectations, which can influence the process and outcome of negotiations. Individuals then, afraid of being judged according to gender stereotypes, unconsciously lead to stereotypical behavior. At the same time, for women to be more accepted in negotiation processes and in general in international affairs and relations, especially by male colleagues, women ‘adopt’ male characters, they become authoritative and display more assertive behavior. Negotiators do not act individually. Thus, Snyder and Swann (1978) observe that expectations shape both behaviors: both the bearer of expectations and his or her interaction partner. Therefore, every negotiation assumes that the negotiators and the negotiation colleagues enter the negotiation process with

certain expectations. In an analysis of the influence of gender on negotiation processes, Paddock and Kray (2011) cite the example of a male negotiator who expects a female negotiator to fall under the gender role of a woman, not to be assertive, to be oriented towards the other. At that moment, a man and the entire environment expect weakness by the stereotype of women, their emotions, and their characteristics. “Noticing this condescending way of negotiating and communicating, it is possible that it will lead to the woman concentrating harder on the negotiation, which results in a decrease in her ability to understand the issues within the negotiation, and how to solve them.” According to the same authors, expectations in negotiations are related to gender and persistent to the extent that they actively and continuously influence the negotiations and their outcomes.

Fattori (2022) believes that the role of expectations in negotiations is very specific, especially when the negotiating partner deviates from the originally expected role. Also, Fattori observes the possibility of a woman making an assertive first offer in the negotiation process. However, such an offer is not in line with the expectations of her side in the negotiation process. In this context, Rudman (1998) states that negative peer responses to counterstereotypical behavior “can take the form of social and economic phenomena called the backlash”. This feedback effect is evident in organizations more broadly. Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs, and Tamkins (2004) show that women who are more successful in stereotypically masculine tasks are personally derogated from more than men. According to the same authors, this is reflected in the distribution of business resources. Research by Heilman and Wallen (2010) shows that men who violate gender norms are perceived as less effective and less respected than women. Brunazzo and Settembri (2012) also point out that negotiations should not always be confrontational, “but cooperative approaches should be preferred mainly when there are ethnic, cultural or economic differences between negotiators”. At the same time, Fattori (2022) indicates that the new tendency to emphasize the positivity of some of those stereotypes that traditionally belong to women, above all empathy, has led to a new interpretation of effective negotiators and helps women at the negotiating table. However, when problematizing the role of gender in negotiation processes and ethical dilemmas, it is necessary to analyze other contexts - the actors themselves, and the ways of communication. Also, other dimensions should be included in the analysis,

precisely because the negotiator's identity is not exclusively bound and regulated only by gender, but also by religion, ethnicity, age and experience itself, status in society, sexual orientation, etc.

STRATEGIES PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY

It is necessary to direct action in two directions to approach the processes of improving women's position in diplomacy and actualize the opportunities for women to find themselves in positions that directly deal with negotiations. The first involves building strategies for improvement, especially in environments where access to data is limited, to simultaneously improve their position in cultures/climates where this was not the case. The second direction involves focusing on gender hierarchies that hinder the work of female diplomats, their career advancement, and participation in international security and economic negotiations while working to ensure that women engage not only in activities related to their 'female roles'. It is a broad concept that includes changing the collective consciousness of individuals and society. Aggestam and Towns (2018) emphasize three urgent questions that must be answered to arrive at precise mechanisms and models of how and in what way to influence gender equality in decision-making and negotiation processes. The first of them is the question of the position of women in contemporary diplomacy and negotiation affairs, their representation, but also their choice in negotiations. Another question is to what extent the so-called toxic masculinity participates in the structure of institutions, institutions, and organizations, obstructing the presence of women, so that women cannot even be in positions that participate in negotiation processes. As a third issue, they state the connection between diplomatic activities and the ideals of *men* and *women*. In this sense, the first question maintains concern for the very number of women in contemporary diplomacy and negotiation processes, without losing sight of its qualitative dimension. Although female diplomats are increasing in some countries and international negotiations, gender equality is still limited to a few countries or regions (for example, Sweden). Chebab (2022) provides the following analysis results:

Of the 4,293 ambassadors currently appointed in the sample (certain positions were vacant during the survey), only 927 are women. This puts the overall proportion of female ambassadors at 21.6% for 2022, a slight improvement on the

20.7% we recorded in 2021 and the 16% we recorded in 2018 for G20 countries. The data shows that Canada and Sweden lead the way in appointing women ambassadors and permanent representatives during 2022 with 50.0% of ambassadorial positions in both countries held by women, i.e. 52 female ambassadors out of 104 in the case of Canada and 53 out of 106 places in the case of Sweden. In Norway, the share of female ambassadors is close to 46.1%, with 35 female ambassadors appointed out of 76 related posts. The second question implies the discovery of gender structures within the framework of institutions or organizations dealing with diplomacy. Durie-Smith (2018) observes how toxic masculinity "gives certain attributes, values, and roles to men and women: the former are given rationality, objectivity, decisiveness; others are associated with kindness, empathy, caring, and the need for security". However, this creates an inequality of power that is further reproduced and incorporated into the sphere of diplomacy and negotiation. Diplomacy and business negotiations are certainly not an exception, and the question of women diplomats and women in negotiation business processes and their adaptation to positions and norms is being brought up to date. As a result, in ministries of foreign affairs and international organizations, in institutions and organizations of an economic character, the division of labor is carried out according to gender in a considerable percentage. Chebab (2022) further indicates that the position of women as ambassadors (or where decisions are made and negotiated) is at the top of the list for the Nordic countries (Denmark, Norway, and Sweden) when it comes to the global context. In North America (USA, Canada, and Mexico), the percentage is 35.7%, with Canada appointing the largest number of female ambassadors, while in South America (Brazil, Argentina, and Colombia), the percentage of women in ambassadorial positions is 18.8%. Regarding the European Union and Europe, the percentage of female ambassadors is 23.5%, while Europe reaches a share of 29%. The third problem deals with the issue and ways of increasing the presence of women in diplomacy and business negotiation processes in general. According to Cohn (2013), these practices are also shaped by notions of masculinity and femininity. Diversity in diplomatic activity – whether it is a question of commercial or political negotiation, understood not only through the binary category of men and women but also, and above all, through the gendered expectations and performances which structure the institution – broadens our view of international phenomena

by questioning solutions designed for conflicts, as well as negotiations of all kinds. In this sense, the pressure of the peace negotiation agenda examines how masculinity permeates the post-conflict state of power structures related to security and militarism and how female diplomats can disrupt the logic of these negotiations (Aggestam & Towns, 2018). Furthermore, gender diversity also drives the transformation of power hierarchies into their various intersectional manifestations within ministries and international organizations, allowing the emergence of new norms and the direction of the international arena.

It is recognized that economic development and growth through trade openness has a positive effect on the development of states and society, and positively affects the process of women's inclusion in political and economic life. However, Wagner (2012, p. 505) believes that most trade agreements are still gender-neutral, not taking into account existing gender biases and inequalities.

The history of trade negotiations has been marked by economic issues at the expense of social issues, especially gender issues. They were generally considered to be gender neutral, nor do they think that men and women are treated differently, that is, that one of them is put in a less favorable position than the other. Regarding women's employment, the UN Women study (2020) shows that women are more likely to be employed in the informal sector and perform seasonal jobs... (...) in less developed countries, 92% of employed women are in informal employment compared to 87.5% of men. The overrepresentation of women in informal employment, and informal trade is a key issue for developing countries and it can be difficult to design effective policies when jobs and businesses are informal and not effectively regulated by the state. Larouche-Maltais and MacLaren (2019) state that women also take on the majority of unpaid care and housework in the household, "and therefore have far less time and resources than men to take advantage of economic opportunities and new markets for their businesses". At the same time, it is a universal fact that women face discrimination from financial institutions around the world. This will result in lower incomes and less favorable economic conditions. Von Hagen (2014, p. 22) thinks that women generally borrow more from friends and family than men because they do not have access to formal sources of finance. This affects the choice of how and where women will start working, and they are increasingly turning to unpaid work. The same author states that

women perform 76% of the total unpaid work, three times more than men, devoting up to three hours more to household chores than men, ten times more time per day to care, and up to four hours less per day to market activities. Women Entrepreneurs, according to Von Hagen (2014), "are usually entrepreneurs in the fields of service activities – beauty, cleaning, where minimal expenditure is required for development and therefore minimal investment". This is one of the inequality issues that also actively donates to the unequal representation of women in advocacy processes and diplomatic activities. Trade and economic policies affect women and men in many ways. Considering the different impacts on women and men in policy-making, policy implementation, and evaluation helps clarify trade's impact on gender equality. This requires consultation with women and men to analyze relevant data and statistics to understand the current situation and identify inequalities. Research by UN Women (2020) found that there are multiple channels of interaction between gender roles and trade, the impact of which is often country-specific and needs to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Different economic conditions, degrees of trade liberalization, current gender inequalities, and political inequalities, differ from country to country. At the same time, "a successful strategy or mechanism in one country will not necessarily work in another" (UN Women, 2020). Developed countries' action agendas recognize women's role in the context of producers, traders, politics, and diplomacy, and call for equal and active participation in domestic, regional, and international politics, diplomacy, and trade. However, it is necessary to create such an environment where women can progress in these areas, and the support of women in the processes leading to these areas is stated as imperative. The insufficient representation of women in certain professions, sectors, and positions does not give equal treatment to women and therefore contributes to the processes of international negotiation and inequality in them. In the UN Women survey conducted in 2017, which refers to that year in the context of the European Union, the following conclusions were reached: (...) only 38% of jobs were related to women, although women made up 46% of the total number of employees. Women usually work in the field of human health and social work (79% of employees in these sectors are women), education (71%), accommodation and restaurants, i.e. service industry (54%), wholesale and retail trade (50%) (UN Women, 2020).

Von Hagen (2022) thinks that trade negotiations often reproduce gender structures, that men are overrepresented and women are insufficiently consulted. Trade reforms, policies, and agreements without knowledge of the impacts of trade on gender will not include remedial measures and/or additional clauses. Trade negotiations, for (trade) policy reforms, should consider gender impacts related to technical assistance through possible expansion (or harmonization) of the sector.

The total losses in government revenue due to tariff reductions and compensatory efforts must be

a) analyzed and calculated and
b) designed so as not to affect women, children, and the poor disproportionately.

All of this must be done to avoid implicating gender roles in negotiation structures, when it must be understood that it is the state itself that, through its institutions, enables the incorporation and rewarding of existing gender roles and structures. Gender segregation is the predetermined behavior of individuals of a particular social status about the roles of *men* and *women* in the public or private sphere. In this way, the market creates a "selfish negotiation culture" that presupposes the dominant presence of men as a key factor. On the other hand, as Hawkesworth (2019) points out, women are associated with the private sphere of the home, whose role is defined by caring for children, family, and household. Tickner (2006) also argues that these ideals of femininity and masculinity are protected and promoted by the state and the economy itself, establishing "unequal patterns of access and position". Despite progress, International business negotiation remains a distinctly masculine and *masculinized area*, characterized by gendered norms, rituals, and traditions. One of the most important transformations to reduce the gender gap and inequality, which must be made in this area, is women's visibility and active involvement. It is necessary to work on several levels, and it is only by correctly integrating women on the international scene that this gap can be reduced. The key step is to consider all the above assumptions - from gender roles and hierarchy to the position of women in the economic sense, education, lifelong learning, and employment opportunities.

CONCLUSION

Negotiation is a science, skill, and art. It is a science with its own rules and an art that requires experience, human qualities, and ethical culture. Gender equality is concentrated in Goal 5 of the United Nations' sustainable development. The

goal is to empower women, including equal opportunities and effective participation at all political and economic decision-making levels. The issue of gender equality and the place of women in International business negotiations are essential issues for the development of society as a whole. By reviewing the literature, we determined that the trends of some indicators point to the improvement of educational, economic, and political conditions. Still, this progress is insignificant and uneven throughout the world. However, regarding women's participation in international trade negotiations, there are still significant differences between men and women in terms of unequal opportunities. In addition to the established stereotypical position of women, their limited progress in negotiations was made even more difficult by the Covid-19 pandemic and the fact that women follow a career strategy less often than men. However, the research results so far show that existing differences in gender distribution do not significantly affect the success of negotiations, which means that men are not necessarily competent. The evidence shows the opposite - the inclusion of women in global economic negotiations and decision-making is beneficial for their better positioning and achieving better business outcomes. Therefore, we believe that the current trend should be stopped with an equal balance of power, which would ultimately lead to better positioning of women so and better business results and economic growth in general. Finally, this study encourages further research with the need to see more clearly the practical application and effects of institutional regulations that can help remove obstacles to equal participation in International business negotiations. In other words, promoting policies at all levels that enable the full participation of women in these areas will be necessary to correct existing inequalities.

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