



Justice in Trade?

An Interdisciplinary Assessment of Qualified Market Access

University of St.Gallen, 10th-11th June 2013

Qualified Market Access (QMA) is the idea that trade relationships should be made conditional upon their meeting various parameters, such as human rights, labour standards, and environmental regulations. It is an idea that has attracted much attention in recent years. It was the subject of a 2008 European Commission report. It figures prominently in areas of global trade governance, in the context, for example, of the General System of Preferences at the World Trade Organisation, and many social initiatives, such as the Fair Trade movement. It has also been explored in many academic literatures. The idea of QMA raises questions of fairness in trade and the nature of (economic) freedom in the literature of moral philosophy. Potential effects and counter-effects have been explored in the economics literature. Political scientists and legal scholars, meanwhile, take an interest in the dynamics and structures of such agreements and the institutional context in which they arise and are implemented.

It is important, at this juncture, to bring these strands of research and policy together. QMA clearly raises fascinating and multifaceted questions of interest to a variety of actors and disciplines. But to find a comprehensive understanding of QMA, and to answer these questions fully, it is necessary and valuable to consider the topic from an inter-disciplinary perspective and with a combination of insights from both theory and practice.

This workshop is designed to subject QMA to exactly this kind of multidimensional investigation. It will begin by exploring what can be learnt about QMA from the perspectives of practitioners and scholars from a variety of disciplines. It will, then, draw these strands together through dialogue between and across these boundaries to form a holistic, integrated understanding of QMA and the next steps forward for research and practice on the subject.

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<http://www.gdg-hsg.ch/workshops/forthcoming-workshops/justice-in-trade>

