



Insights from Feminist Political Economy Live session

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Outline

- Brief introduction to feminist economics & political economy (pre-recorded lecture)
- Part I. Gender and feminist analyses of agrarian transformations
 - Households
 - Markets
- Part II. An example to reflect on: gendered time use in agriculture-nutrition pathways
- Part III. Feminist research practice

Discussion questions

- Do you see any scope to bring feminist insights into your research?
- If not, why?
- If yes, how? Do you want to capture gender/intersecting inequalities or understand how inequalities shape/explain what you are interested in studying?

Part II. Gender and feminist analyses of agrarian change

- How has an understanding of gender dynamics been integrated into the study of agrarian change and agricultural development?
- What does a feminist lens reveal about agricultural work and production in households/land markets/rural labour markets?

What does a feminist analysis of agrarian change do?

- It analyses the gender relations of power relevant to agricultural production and the life of rural households
 - to counter approaches to agricultural production as a genderless process

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- It analyses how social reproduction and capitalist production relate in agrarian or rural contexts
 - to complement approaches that focus only on capitalist production or have a partial view on non-capitalist production

The rural household

- Early thinking on the peasant/farm household and production informed by
 - Chayanov, agrarian political economy
 - neoclassical economics (New Household Economics)
- Farm household as the foundational institution of farm production
- Common interest in decision-making and allocation of productive assets in farm households
- Household as a rational and internally homogenous/altruistic unit

Inequalities within households

- Gendered control of income and crops/land
 - Partial income pooling in farm households in Southern Malawi (pooling of agricultural income, but separate control of other sources of income) (Fisher et al., 2010)
 - Women's and men's land plots in Burkina Faso (Udry, 1996), but gendered rights are subject to change (Kevane and Gray, 1999)
- Empirical evidence rejects the idea the household members have shared interests and the household works as a collective in the interest of everyone
 - Uneven intra-household food sharing practices leading to worse nutritional outcomes for girls and women in India (Harriss-White, 1997)
 - Uneven access to productive resources for agricultural production leading to lower productivity in women's agriculture (Quisumbing and Pandolfelli, 2010)

A question to you

- ❖ If households are internally fragmented sites, what determines who makes decisions? And how are decisions made?

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- Feminist economic response: households as sites of conflict and cooperation, where individuals bargain over assets and resources; **bargaining power** is key

Bargaining power within households

- Bargaining power is determined by both quantifiable – such as economic assets – and non-quantifiable factors – such as community-based support, social norms and institutions, or perceptions about contributions and needs (Agarwal, 1997)
- Rules, social norms and institutions define the boundaries on the resources on which bargaining is *socially accepted* (Agarwal, 1997; Folbre, 1997)
 - In South Africa, women who were farming land owned by their husbands did not consider asking for a change in land titles because customary norms did not envisage such a possibility (Agarwal 2003)

❖ Your thoughts: Implications for data collection?

- Important to consider how bargaining dynamics may work in households not structured around a heterosexual couple, e.g. women-headed households (Ruwanpura, 2007)

Women-headed households

- Attention to women-headed households due to feminist work exposing gender inequalities + rising prevalence on women-headed households
- Household headship is referred to responsibility for decision-making within the hh and/or economic contribution, but not always easy to discern in context of complex decision-making practices
- Commonly-used distinction within women-headed hhs: *de jure* and *de facto* female-headed households
 - Households where the migrant husband was working in South Africa had highest per capita expenditure in Malawi (Kennedy and Peters, 1992)
 - In Botswana, it was not so much the gender of the head that mattered for poverty concerns, but how many adults of prime working age contributed to household income (Koussoudi and Mueller, 1983)
- Distinction between women- and men-headed households insufficient to capture gender inequalities at the household level

Beyond the focus on micro-units: Capital accumulation and household social reproduction (1)

- Colonial labour regimes based on extraction of male labour from rural areas in **southern Africa**, what implications?
 - Prevalence of women-headed, or divided, especially in rural areas (O’Laughlin 1998)
 - Shifts in types of crops cultivated – from more time-consuming, such as maize, to less time-consuming, such as cassava (O’Laughlin 2013)
 - History of fragmented families in eastern and southern Africa continues to pose challenges for the provision of care (Schatz and Seeley 2015)
 - Increase of women’s migration to urban another challenge to care provisioning of left-behind children in rural areas, worsened by high prevalence of HIV/AIDS (O’Laughlin 2007; Razavi 2011; Schatz and Seeley 2015)

Beyond the focus on micro-units: Capital accumulation and household social reproduction (2)

- Structural transformation and economic growth in **China** entailed male migration to urban areas, what about the left behind in rural areas?
 - Women who are left behind spend more time in agricultural work than in wage work or family business activities; farm work seen as more compatible with care responsibilities (Mu and van de Walle 2011)
 - Gendered segmentation of the urban labour market as well as women roles as mothers and carers in rural areas reinforced (Fan 2003)
 - Children left behind with grandmothers, who become primary carers (Samman et al. 2016)

Markets as gendered institutions

- Markets are not neutral sites of exchange
- Markets are vehicles for the reproduction of existing inequalities
- Women's disadvantage – uneven responsibilities for care and domestic work, lower education and participation in public life – reproduced in the labour market (Elson, 1999)
- Women enter the labour force on unequal terms and are exposed to super-exploitation (Elson and Pearson, 1981)

Land markets

- Land reforms (land titling) to establish ‘land markets’
- Shift from customary to private property rights over land
 - Evidence that women tend to lose access to land through processes of land titling (Lastarria-Cornhiel, 1997; Whitehead and Tsikata, 2003)
 - Land and women’s work as key to the social reproduction of rural households in India (Naidu and Ossome, 2016)

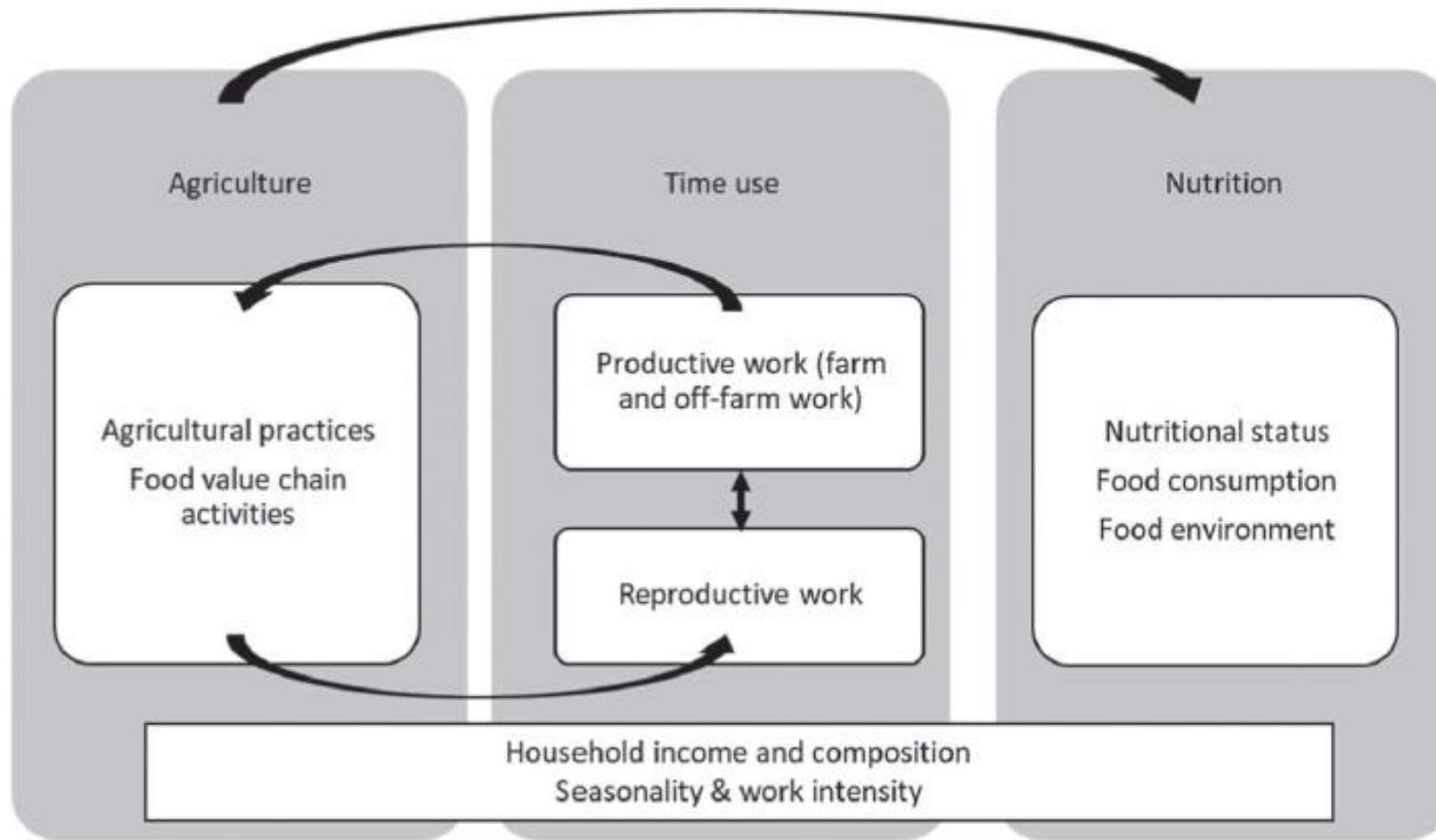
Rural labour markets

- Segmented rural labour markets (Oya and Pontara, 2015)
- Divorced and separated women over-represented in rural labour markets
- Women over-represented in 'worse' jobs (pay, working conditions and job security) (Razavi, 2009)
- But bear in mind that women are not a homogenous group!
- Beware of 'hidden' rural labour markets (e.g. small-scale producers)

Part II. An example to reflect on: Gendered time use in agriculture-nutrition pathways

- How does gendered time allocation relate to both agriculture and nutrition?
- How to account for the complexity and multi-dimensionality of pathways?
- What are the parallels with livestock production and infectious disease?

Source:
Stevano et al.
(2018), p. 5



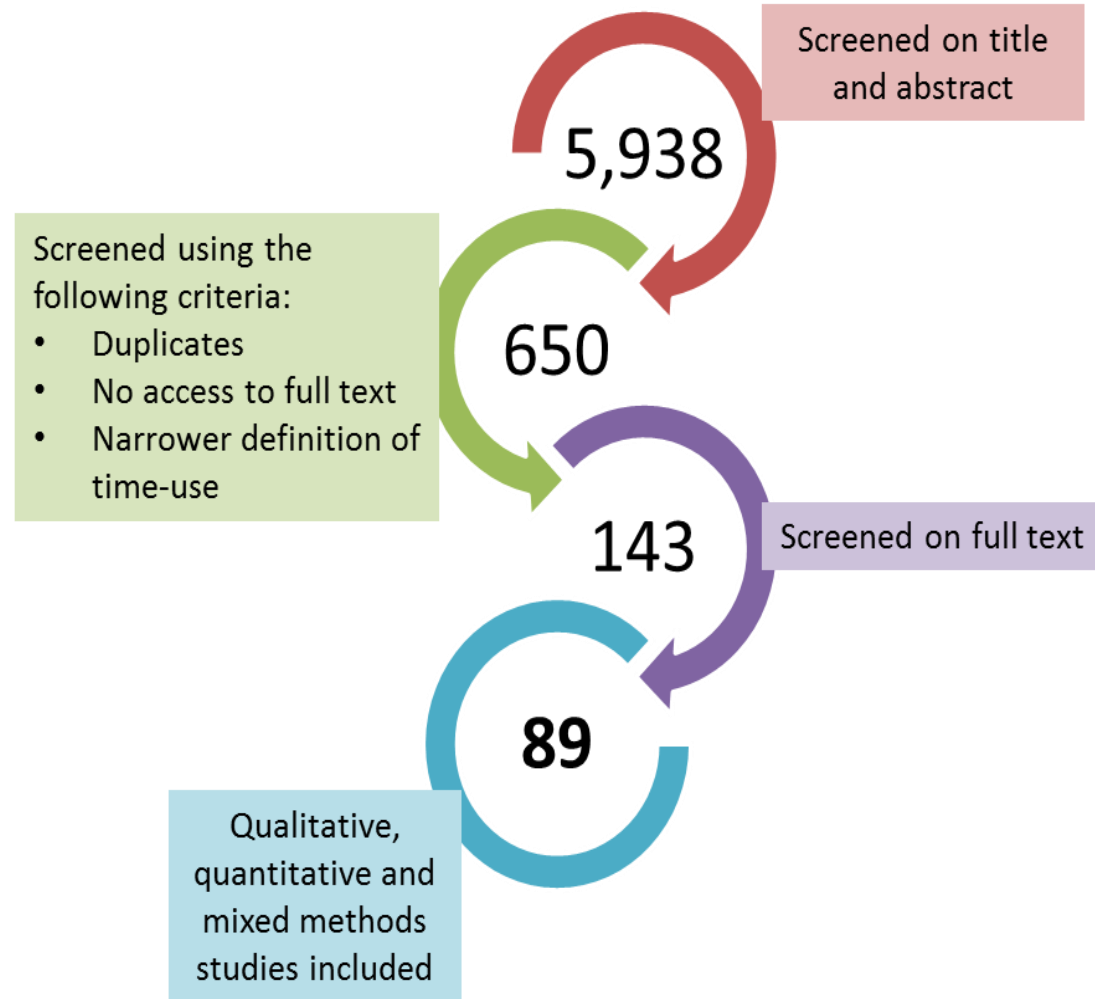
What are the intended and unintended consequences of agricultural practices or interventions on nutrition?

Figure 1 Conceptual framework: Gendered time use, agriculture, and nutrition.
Source: Adapted from Johnston et al. (2018).

References:

Johnston, D., Stevano, S., Malapit, H. J., Hull, E., & Kadiyala, S. (2018). [Time use as an explanation for the agri-nutrition disconnect: evidence from rural areas in low and middle-income countries](#). *Food policy*, 76, 8-18.

Stevano, S., Kadiyala, S., Johnston, D., Malapit, H., Hull, E., & Kalamatianou, S. (2019). [Time-use analytics: an improved way of understanding gendered agriculture-nutrition pathways](#). *Feminist Economics*, 25(3), 1-22.



Exclusion criteria

High income country

Language

Urban focus

Reverse causality

Study type

No time use

No agriculture or no nutrition

Non human

Key findings

- Women play a key role in agriculture, reflected in their time commitments whether as farmers or farmworkers
- Agricultural interventions tend to increase women's, men's and children's time burdens
- Nutritional impact? Not clear-cut:
 - Indicators of food and nutrition could worsen
 - However, as non-maternal care gives important
 - Purchased food substituted for home-grown or -prepared food
- Impact on nutritional outcomes is mediated by: Seasonality; Income and socio-economic status; Household composition
- Challenges for development policy? Need to look at different responses to manage time burdens and shape interventions accordingly

Socio-economic status

Seasonality

Managed by reducing time for feeding and cooking

- New technologies and services to reduce time burden
- Incentives to employers to provide meals for farmworkers and their children
- Joining-up with health interventions for vulnerable members

Managed by extending the working day

- Focus on the health of women
- New technologies to reduce the time burden
- Provision of services that alleviate women's reproductive burden

Managed by devolving tasks to other women and children

- Provision of technologies and services that alleviate reproductive burden
- Joining-up with health interventions for most vulnerable members
- Interventions that target smaller households

Managed by substituting purchased food

- Increase accessibility and affordability of healthier food
- Interventions to change purchasing patterns in target groups

Group work

Consider livestock production and infectious disease from a gender lens, can you think of any parallels with the example discussed?

- Consider a potential conceptual framework
- Consider the gendered dimensions through the organization of productive and reproductive work
- Consider who livestock interventions should target
- Consider the possibility of intended and unintended consequences

What is missing

- Embedding pathways in historical understanding of context – changes in gender roles in agriculture and nutrition-related activities
- Importance of macro-context – e.g. agri-food systems and labour regimes – in shaping work practices of women and men in agriculture

Part III. How to take a feminist approach to research?

- Feminist epistemologies
- Mixing methods to overcome male-bias in data collection
- Importance of time and time use data

Feminist epistemologies

- Concern about forms of knowledge and ways of knowing – research for whom and for what?
- For feminists, methods are ‘empty containers’, it all depends on how they are deployed (Harding, 1987; Berik, 1997)
- Similar epistemologies can apply to other research driven by social justice motives

- Reflexive research practice:

‘[...] reflexivity is self-critical sympathetic introspection and the self-conscious analytical scrutiny of the self as researcher. Indeed reflexivity is critical to the conduct of fieldwork; it induces self-discovery and can lead to insights and new hypotheses about the research questions. A more reflexive and flexible approach to fieldwork allows the researcher to be more open to any challenges to their theoretical position that fieldwork almost inevitably raises.’ England (1994: 244)

Mixing methods

- Pragmatist/political approach to mixing methods
- Feminist epistemologies and use of qualitative or mixed methods to counter male-biased account and capture experiences of subordination and marginalisation, to assert marginalized people as agents of knowledge (see Berik, 1997)
 - Problems with household surveys
 - Importance of qualitative interviews

Time as a methodological approach

Time important for two main reasons:

- To capture economic activities excluded from economic statistics (e.g. unpaid reproductive work, informal work)
- To capture time constraints emerging from double burden and associated outcomes
- ❖ Beware of seasonality, simultaneous activities, household socio-economic status and composition

Group work

- What methods are you using in your research? Do you think they may be prone to male bias or to exclude some people/groups?
- How would you explain your research to different people you will be interacting with?
- Can you think of any bias that would influence how you interpret the data?

Takeaway messages

- ❖ Gender and feminist analyses of agrarian change have shed light on the inequalities embedded in rural households and markets
- ❖ Key attention has been placed on decision-making and bargaining power within households but embedding micro-level dynamics in macro-level processes is of the essence
- ❖ The gendered allocation of time across productive and reproductive work is central to the understanding of the organization of agricultural practices and the impacts of agricultural interventions
- ❖ Embracing a feminist research practice entails the use of a reflexive approach cognizant of power relations in the research process