

## **Scientific report IZ32Z0\_143014**

### **International Exploratory Workshop: Gender and Agriculture after Neoliberalism**

Geneva, July 19-20, 2012

#### **Summary**

More than forty years ago, Boserup discovered that international cooperation disadvantaged women, and thus sowed the seeds for a new field of study pertaining to gender and development. One of her key arguments concerned the introduction of capitalist modes of production and its negative consequences for female farmers' livelihoods. Since then, scholarly attention on issues pertaining to power relations in agriculture has fluctuated. More recently, the topic of gender and agriculture has resurfaced since this is intricately related to issues of food security and sustainable development. In this exploratory workshop, we pooled together knowledge from scholars (junior/senior; North/South) to lay the grounds for a research project that questions the effects of neoliberal policies on gender power relations in rural and agricultural regions as well as how these policies have changed food security and environmental sustainability.

#### **Objectives of the international exploratory workshop**

##### **Scientific aims and methods of the workshop**

The purpose of the workshop was to fine-tune the theoretical and methodological contours of a joint research project, which we plan to submit to the SNF in the spring 2013 under the new Swiss Programme for Research on Global Issues for Development, theme 3) Agricultural production systems and food security.

Starting from dispersed evidence, we endeavoured to identify existing research and knowledge gaps on the effects of neoliberal policies on gender power relations in the countryside as well as on the identities of rural women and men in agriculture in low-middle and high-income countries. We also intended to establish an inventory of developments and policies that are emerging in the current post-crisis period.

There were several relevant dimensions to our future research questions. First, we identified different pre-existing agrarian and social structures that are likely to influence the gendered transformations which have ensued as a result of liberalization. One can, for example, distinguish countries with an extensive smallholder agriculture from more dualistic structures where large scale latifundia type of farming employing wage labour co-exists with perhaps a much smaller set of smallholders.

Second, there are different gender orders within diverse agrarian economies. Scholars have distinguished areas with less corporate family forms where women are independent farmers and consequently have some financial independence while also contributing to men's farms (as in parts of West Africa) from areas where women contribute to family farming and also engage in off-farm activities (for example in Vietnam) and from areas of "classic patriarchy" where male farming dominates. Here, women may be seasonally involved in men's farms, but men manage the farms and the household/farm budgets. Marriage, kinship and family arrangements are closely

interlinked with these gender orders, which we hypothesize will have implications for the transformation of gender relations under neoliberalism.

Furthermore, countries have also differed in terms of the *pace* of liberalization and the *paths* that they have taken. Some have made a rapid transition from socialism in its various forms (including “African socialism” such as in Tanzania and Ethiopia), whereas others have followed more gradual policies of liberalization. Some have embraced all-out liberalization opening up their borders completely and withdrawing all state support to smallholders (as happened in many African countries undergoing structural adjustment). In other situations, various countries have proceeded more selectively and gradually, giving some protection. We expect that the implications for gender relations will differ depending on the pace and paths of liberalization.

The workshop has allowed us to pool the knowledge of a core group of researchers from various countries in order to clarify some of these questions. It also allowed for genuine participation from partners in the South in the conceptual development of our research project – something that is often missing in North-South collaborations.

With the SNSF fund, ten researchers from the South were able to participate. These participants all prepared short inputs for the workshop (see appendix abstracts of the workshop). They were asked to outline the broad implications of neoliberalism in their particular national contexts, review relevant existing literature and data sources, identify where new research will be needed, as well as what research methods and data sources can be employed to answer the key research questions. Their inputs were organized around three thematic sessions:

- 1) Changing land tenure systems and their gendered implications (cases from Zimbabwe, Ghana, Ethiopia and Mozambique)
- 2) Agrarian capitalism, global forces and land grabbing: continuity and change (cases from Latin America, Tanzania, Ethiopia)
- 3) Feminization of labour within agrarian economies: autonomy or subordination (cases from India, Mexico, China)

Some Swiss and other international researchers also participated. Presentations were built around the issues raised in a concept paper drafted by the organizers beforehand.

### **Workshop organization**

As planned, the workshop took place on July 19th and 20th in Geneva. During these sessions, twenty-five participants attended, including the organizers. SNSF financed travel for ten participants from abroad as well as their accommodation and food. The first day was primarily dedicated to presentations by the participants and discussions on content. On the second day, the participants worked in small subgroups aimed at identifying relevant research questions to help us in developing a common research proposal. The workshop was wrapped up in a plenary session at the end of the second day. The final session was also very useful for identifying future partnerships for the research component, and other relevant stakeholders who could potentially translate the research results into material for training, campaigning/advocacy, and policy making (see programme of the workshop,

<http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BD6AB/%28httpEvents%29/C9DFD1480EEC9314C1257A30004766A5?OpenDocument&category=Agenda>).

The workshop took place at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva. The workshop was a fruitful co-operation of the Graduate Institute (Reysoo and Prügl) with the UN Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) represented by Razavi. It brought together the Institute's academic focus on issues of Gender and Global Change with UNRISD's policy-oriented research. It also drew on the Graduate Institute's and UNRISD's extensive networks with scientific researchers working on development globally.

### **Workshop's relevance and results**

The main objective of the workshop was to pool together knowledge in order to identify needs for future research. Interesting discussions evolved around the framing of the problem of "Gender and Agriculture after Neoliberalism." Provocatively, the organizers chose the term "after neoliberalism" to trigger reflections on the transformations brought about by three decades of neoliberal policies in the agrarian sector and to assess the assumption made by some observers of a shift towards a more heterodox set of policies that in many ways diverge from the "pure" neoliberalism of the 1980s/1990s. Phenomena such as state deregulation, efforts to create a global market (in finance, trade, investment, ...), foreign direct investments and public-private partnerships seem to have facilitated "land concentrations", albeit in different forms, along different paths and in various paces. These land concentrations have coincided with processes such as "post-agrarian use of land" (production of biofuels, emergence of flex-crops,...), "intensification of production methods" (mechanisation, industrialisation, biotechnologies ...) and a pressure on small-holder agriculture. The re-organization of agrarian production systems came along with the dispossession of land, resettlements, livelihood diversification, food insecurity and poverty. Voices in favour of re-embedding the economy are emerging. The participants observed that the processes are multi-dimensional, since agro-industry also creates job opportunities and new niches of accumulation.

The outcome of the exploratory workshop is that neoliberal policies have led to the restructuring of accumulation and to an ongoing process of commodification of land and agrarian produce. New forms of control over land and production have emerged with a global tendency towards what the workshop participants called "land concentrations." The notion of "land concentration" was considered to be more heuristic than the concept of land grabbing.

In view of future research relevant for development, the issue of gender and land concentrations has been selected as central. However, the participants agreed that this issue should be framed in such a way as to include several dimensions that have gone unrecognized or were underdeveloped in existing research on agrarian change. The workshop participants identified the following knowledge gaps, and recommended that future research include:

- a **historical dimension**, since some forms of land concentrations in particular countries can be seen as a continuation of a process that started long before (colonialism, capitalism, ...).

- a sensitivity to **resistance**, since local people, both women and men, are not passive victims of global policies. Opposition to various forms of land concentrations has emerged.
- a discussion of **social reproduction**, since new agrarian production systems induce changes in existing systems of social reproduction (and its associated sexual division of labour), for example, by intensifying the amount of time that women allocate to the unpaid reproduction of their households. Agricultural policies in many countries ignore social reproduction, since they focus on technologies and agrarian support services (WTO-driven policies).
- a reflection on **democratic participation**, how do small farmers, local populations and women participate in decision-making processes—including decision-making about land sales and acquisitions—and what is the role of the state (strong states, failed states, local versus federal government...) and its relation with its power base (to whom is the state accountable?).
- the inclusion of **identity** issues, in particular the changing roles of women and men, new representations of femininity and masculinity in a context of redefined labour relations and livelihoods.

In the final plenary session, the three separate working groups presented the research questions that came out of their discussions. Although still in an embryonic stage, the outcome of the three parallel working groups demonstrated interesting overlaps in identifying relevant research areas and questions. What comes to the fore is a) the role of the state, b) labour relations and c) social reproduction. However, it is important to emphasize that countries have experienced different transformations. The participants highlighted that the issues in the *Journal of Peasant Studies* in the 1980s focused on “**land fragmentation** and food security” issues, whereas nowadays it has become more urgent to question “**land concentration** and food security” issues.

Our future common research will be relevant for gender equitable alternatives for the actual processes of land concentration and agro-industrial developments. A new equilibrium should be thought of where objectives of economic development (and processes of commodification) harmoniously coincide with objectives of social development (and processes of re-embedding the economy).

The workshop has been very effective in pooling ideas, clarifying concepts, and developing paths towards further research. It was also useful for identifying future partnerships for research and for generating policy impact. The relevance of research on gender and land concentration issues were acknowledged, for example, by the Tanzanian Gender Network Programme (TGNP) and its campaign for economic justice. In other countries, the research can provide useful evidence for activist organizations that are tracking land grabbing and agro-industrial developments (Ethiopia, Ghana). The research can also serve development projects that aim at making resources more accessible and useful for marginalized women (Mozambique, Cambodia). And it can help identify value chains for the commercialization of agrarian produce. In the end, the research on gender and land concentration makes a critical contribution to the prevention of food insecurity.

#### **Other sources of funding.**

A complementary grant of 15'026,- CHF was allocated by the SDC.

## Deviations from the initial list of participants.

Initial list of Participants to be funded by SNF, and definite list of participants

Initial list	Organization	Address	Definite list of participants
1. Appendini, Kirsten	Professor at El Colegio, Mexico	El Colegio de México, A.C. Camino al Ajusco No. 20 Col. Pedregal de Sta. Teresa C.P. 10740 México, D.F. Tel: +52 55 54493000	Ms. Appendini could not attend, instead from Mexico we invited: <b>1. Patricia Arias</b> Department of Political Science, Universidad de Guadalajara Avenida de los Maestros y Mariano Bárcena Puerta 2. C.P.44281 Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico Email: <a href="mailto:parias@prodigymovil.com">parias@prodigymovil.com</a>
2. Borrás, Jun May 5, 1965	Associate Professor of Rural Development Studies International Institute of Social Studies (ISS), The Hague, Netherlands	Kortenaerkade 12 2518 AX The Hague The Netherlands borras@iss.nl Tel: 31 (0)70 4260 664	<b>2. Borrás, Jun</b>
3. Damodaran, Sumangala December 8, 1966	Associate Professor School of Development Studies Ambedkar University, Delhi	Ambedkar University, Delhi, Integrated Institute of Technology Campus, Sector 9, Dwarka, New Delhi 110 077 sumangala@aud.ac.in	Ms. Damodaran could not attend, to represent India we invited: <b>3. Supriya Garikipati</b> Management School, University of Liverpool Liverpool L69 3BX, UK Phone: + 44 151 795 3008 Email: <a href="mailto:s.garikipati@liverpool.ac.uk">s.garikipati@liverpool.ac.uk</a>
4. Fernandez, Janina May 27, 1945	Consultant at the FAO, Regional office for Latin America & the Caribbean	FAO Regional Office for Latin America & the Caribbean Av. Dag Hammarskjöld 3241, Vitacura Santiago, Chile Tel: (506) 2268-1915	Ms. Fernandez could not attend, instead we invited: <b>4. Zeneberke Tadesse</b> The University of South Africa (UNISA) Regional Learning Centre in Ethiopia PO Box 10301 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia Email: zentad@ethionet.et <a href="mailto:zentad71@gmail.com">zentad71@gmail.com</a>

5. Mbilinyi, Marjorie July 14, 1943	Researcher on land reform in Tanzania, member of Tanzanian Gender Network Project	Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP) P.o.Box 8921 Dar es Salaam <a href="mailto:marjorie.mbilinyi@tgnp.org">marjorie.mbilinyi@tgnp.org</a> Tel: +255 22 2443450	<b>5. Mbilinyi, Marjorie</b>
6. Mutopo, Patience November 11, 1978	PhD research fellow with the Cologne African Studies Centre, University of Cologne, Germany	University of Cologne Building no.: 100 Albertus-Magnus-Platz D- 50923 Cologne Tel. +49 221 470-0 <a href="mailto:pmutopo@ymail.com">pmutopo@ymail.com</a>	<b>6. Ms. Mutopo</b> attended the workshop, she travelled from Zimbabwe where she is professionally based.
7. Paulilo, Maria Ignez Silveira	Senior professor of sociology at Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, UFSC, Brasil	Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina Center for Philosophy and Humanities, Social Sciences Department Florianopolis, Santa Catarina - Brazil - Caixa, 476 <a href="mailto:jpaulilo@terra.com.br">jpaulilo@terra.com.br</a> Tel: + 48 372 18 632	Ms. Paulilo could not attend
8. Tsikata, Dzodzi April 25, 1962	Head of the Centre for Gender Studies and Advocacy (CEGENSA) and a Senior Research Fellow at Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER), University of Ghana	Centre for Gender Studies & Advocacy, P. O. Box 862, University of Ghana. Accra- Ghana <a href="mailto:dzodzit@yahoo.co.uk">dzodzit@yahoo.co.uk</a> Tel: 0285075765	<b>7. Tsikata, Dzodzi</b>
9. Song, Yiching April 27, 1961	Professor of the College of Humanity and Development of China Agricultural University and a senior research fellow in the Centre for Chinese Agricultural Policy (CCAP)	China Agricultural University Tonggang Building, No.2, Huayuan North Street Xicheng District 100032 Beijing, P. R. China  <a href="mailto:yiching2002cn@gmail.com">yiching2002cn@gmail.com</a>	<b>8. Song, Yiching</b>
Vietnam (tbc)			We were not been able to identify a researcher from Viet Nam in the given time frame.
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Central-Asia	Mr. Fischer gave an overview on Central-Asia	Email: <a href="mailto:fischer@iss.nl">fischer@iss.nl</a>	<b>10. Andrew Fischer</b> International Institute of Social Studies Kortenaerkade 23 2518 AX The Hague, the Netherlands <b>Phone:</b> +31 70 42 60599 Email: <a href="mailto:fischer@iss.nl">fischer@iss.nl</a>

### Contributions made by the project staff:

The project staff formulated and circulated a concept note a month before the workshop in order to allow the participants to position themselves in the various debates. The project staff, also, organized and facilitated the workshop.

### Supplementary information:

Announcement UNRISD

<http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BD6AB/search/C9DFD1480EEC9314C1257A30004766A5?OpenDocument>

Workshop programme:

<http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BD6AB/%28httpEvents%29/C9DFD1480EEC9314C1257A30004766A5?OpenDocument&category=Agenda>

Workshop abstracts:

<http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BD6AB/%28httpEvents%29/C9DFD1480EEC9314C1257A30004766A5?OpenDocument&category=Abstracts>

Information on researchers:

<http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BD6AB/%28httpEvents%29/C9DFD1480EEC9314C1257A30004766A5?OpenDocument&panel=team>

Interview on-line with Supriya Garipikati

[http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BE6B5/%28httpNews%29/552B39322BA2AB88C1257A550048AF3A?OpenDocument&panel=audio\\_files](http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BE6B5/%28httpNews%29/552B39322BA2AB88C1257A550048AF3A?OpenDocument&panel=audio_files)

Interview with Patience Mutopo

[http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BE6B5/\(httpNews\)/0B4C0A20B5D27D01C1257A610033690F?OpenDocument](http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BE6B5/(httpNews)/0B4C0A20B5D27D01C1257A610033690F?OpenDocument)

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