The SDG Gender Equality Agenda and the Distribution of Land: Research Challenges

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Why a focus on the Sustainable Development Goals?

• The global development agenda one of the platforms where theory and practice come together

• Reflect consensus and hard work of a broad coalition: policy-makers, scholars, practitioners and activists
SDG5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Targets:
5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere
5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence...in the public and private spheres...
5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage...
5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household...
5.5 Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic & public life
5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights...
5.a Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as ownership and control over land & other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources in accordance with national laws
5.b Enhance the use of enabling technology...
5.c Adopt & strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality...
**SDG advances over MDG process**

- MDG3 had only one target: eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education
  - SDG5 much broader, tackles root sources of gender inequality
- Gender equality is mainstreamed across many of the other goals
- SDG framework grounded in Universal Declaration of Human Rights
  - Goes beyond poverty and deprivation in LDCs
  - Universal scope, applicable to both developed and less developed countries
Feminist critique (Razavi 2016; Esquivel 2016)

• SDG framework does not offer a coherent model of socio-economic transformation
  • Broad vision of sustainable development
  • Conventional view of growth: GDP growth to fuel progress
  • Little attention to role of macroeconomic or redistributive policies to assure that growth is inclusive

• Lack of financing to implement 2030 agenda
  • To rely on conventional sources; no new sources of targeted funding

• Relatively weak accountability mechanisms
  • Reporting on the indicators for the 169 targets is not mandatory
  • Implementation will depend on lobbying governments to comply
SDG process offers unique opportunity to move forward on women’s ownership & control over land

Target 5a
• Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as ownership and control over land & other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources in accordance with national laws.

Indicators
• 5.a.1
(a) Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex; and
(b) share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure.
• 5.a.2
Proportion of countries where the legal framework (including customary law) guarantees women’s equal rights to land and/or control.

@wgdconf   #outofthetheory   #intofield

WGD Conference 2019
Theory + fieldwork = awareness of importance of women’s land rights

Agarwal (1994), *A Field of One’s Own*, lays out the case:

1. Welfare
2. Efficiency
3. Equality
4. Empowerment
   - Land ownership increases women’s fallback position and hence, household bargaining power
Kabeer’s (1997) Process of empowerment

- ACCESS TO RESOURCES: Land, Employment, Education
- AGENCY: Bargaining power
- ACHIEVEMENTS: Outcomes

Fallback position
Why the SDG5 indicators on land are so important

• Lack of appropriate data until recently has hampered testing many of the propositions of feminist economics

• Since the 1970s concerted lobbying to expand information collected in the agricultural censuses
  • Only gather data on female landholders, not landowners

• Nationally-representative survey data on distribution of landowners still quite limited
  • Advances: Demographic Health Surveys (DHS), Living Standard Measurement Studies-Integrated Surveys for Agriculture (LSMS-ISA); specialized surveys of IFPRI, GAG Project

• Interdisciplinary fieldwork has played crucial role in defining the research issues and content of survey instruments
What can we learn from the agricultural censuses?

The share of women landholders
Share of women landholders, Africa

Source: Doss et al. (2014), based on FAO Gender and Land Rights Database
Share of women landholders, Asia

Source: Kieran et al. (2015), based on FAO Gender & Land Rights Database
Share of women landholders, Latin America

Source: Deere (2018), drawing on FAO Gender & Land Rights Database and country agricultural censuses
Problems with agricultural census data on landholders

- Not all countries carry out the agricultural census in a timely manner
  - Relatively recent that they even ask or report the sex of the landholder
- Census questionnaires assume only 1 person is the manager
  - If only 1 person per farm = head of household
  - Not until 2010 decennial round did FAO recommend taking into account “joint holders”; i.e., that more than one person could be a manager
    - Issue of sub-plots (separate spheres)
    - Multiple activities (agriculture, livestock, home gardens, etc.)
    - Farming involves multiple decisions: different people might be involved, depending on the decision
- Land tenure question tells us only if farm is owner-operated; no information on who in the household owns the farm
The under-reporting of women’s participation as farm managers: FAO Pilot Study in Uganda

Distribution of landholders by sex, traditional census question (one person per holding)

- Men: 71%
- Women: 29%

Distribution of those participating in 14 agricultural decisions

- Only men: 19%
- Only women: 11%
- Both: 67%
- NA: 3%

Source: Hillesland/GSARS (2017)
## Distribution of farms by sex of the landholders, including joint holders, Colombia (2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Joint, Men &amp; Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic groups:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>48.2%</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afro-Colombian</td>
<td>53.4%</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DANE (2016)
A few censuses asked landholders who were married/consensual union: Does your spouse participate in farm activities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male Landholders</th>
<th>Female Landholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador (2000)</td>
<td>Yes - 80%</td>
<td>Yes - 81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru (2012)</td>
<td>Yes - 91%</td>
<td>Yes - 93%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

➢ Suggests that in these countries joint management of the farm is probably common, although the question is not very precise (field work and/or decision-making)

Source: Deere (2018)
Distribution of land ownership by sex and form of ownership
Distribution of land by sex and form of ownership, Africa

Source: Doss et al. (2015), LSMS-ISA surveys around 2010

WGD Conference 2019
Distribution of land by sex and form of ownership, Asia and Latin America

Sources: Kieran et al. (2015); Deere, Alvarado & Twyman (2012)

Note: * documented land only
Gender Asset Gap Project surveys: Ecuador, Ghana and Karnataka, India

Distribution of agricultural parcels by form of ownership

Source: Doss et al. (2014)
Women’s land ownership & agricultural decision-making

1) Do women landowners manage their farms?
   • Are women landowners as likely as men to work their land directly rather than renting or sharecropping it?
   • Do women landowners participate in agricultural decision-making?

2) Does the form of ownership (sole vs. joint) make a difference?

3) Do husbands and wives have similar perceptions of women’s participation in decision-making?
1.1 Are women landowners as likely to work their land directly?

Distribution of parcels by form of ownership and current use of land, Ecuador

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of Property</th>
<th>Sole Male Owners</th>
<th>Sole Female Owners</th>
<th>Joint Owners (couple)</th>
<th>Other Joint Owners</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current use:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked by household</td>
<td>87.7</td>
<td>73.6</td>
<td>90.1</td>
<td>88.6</td>
<td>84.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=440</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rented, sharecropped or lent</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=514</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Deere & Twyman (2014)

What we need to research: Are women owners less likely to work their land directly because of discrimination in access to technical assistance, credit, etc.?
1.2 Do women landowners participate in agricultural decisions over their plots?

Gender Asset Gap Project: Ecuador, Ghana & Karnataka, India

• Considered 4 decisions: what to cultivate, what inputs to use, how much to sell, control over the income generated

• Depends on marital status, form of ownership & the specific decision

• Female heads more likely than partnered women (married or in consensual union) to make most of the decisions on their plots

• Among partnered women, sole owners more likely than joint owners to be involved in decision-making & make decisions alone
  • Joint owners more likely to make decisions jointly

Source: Deere et al. (2013)
2. Do sole women owners always participate more in decision-making than joint owners?

- Doss et al. (2014)
  - Malawi, Mali & Tanzania: Yes, sole owners always participate more than joint owners
  - Orissa, India: Neither sole nor joint ownership significantly different than not being an owner

  - Uganda & South Africa: Yes, sole owners participate more
    - Joint owners do not participate more than women who only have traditional usufruct rights to land

- Slavcheska et al. (2015)
  - Consider gender differences
  - Nigeria: male sole owners more likely than female sole owners to manage their plots
  - Ethiopia & Niger: male and female sole owners equally likely
  - Malawi, Tanzania & Uganda: women sole owners more likely to manage than male sole owners
    - Male-owned plots tend to be managed jointly with their wives
    - In all except Nigeria, jointly owned plots tend to be managed jointly by husband and wife
Sole vs. joint ownership: Much depends on context

• Wiig (2013) study of joint titling program in Peru

Women in communities where joint titling carried out more likely to participate in agricultural decisions than women in similar neighboring communities where mandatory joint titling not carried out
3. Do husbands and wives have similar perceptions of women’s participation in agricultural decision-making?

Index of perceptions of women’s participation in decision-making, Ecuador

Source: Twyman, Useche y Deere (2015)
Factors associated with husbands’ and wives’ perceptions of women’s participation in agricultural decision-making, Ecuador

Male model
Positively related to:
• Wives’ participation in field work
• Wives’ work off-farm
• Wives’ share of couple wealth

Female model
Positively related to:
• Wives’ participation in field work
• Sole landowner (as opposed to joint)

Inversely related to:
• Wives’ work off-farm

Source: Twyman, Useche & Deere (2015)
Women’s landownership & outcomes
Women’s land ownership & household decision-making

• Nepal: Women’s landownership, compared to not owning land, increases their participation in decisions involving their own healthcare, major household purchases, & visiting relatives (Allendorf 2007; Mishra & Sam 2016)

• Karnataka, India: associated with their participation in decisions involving their own healthcare, whether to be employed and use of their own income (Swaminathan, Lahoti & J.Y. 2012)
Women’s landownership & household expenditures

• Ghana – women’s share of farmland positively associated with an increased share of expenditures on food (purchased & home grown) (Doss 2006)

• Vietnam – households where women have land use certificates (compared to those without, or male-only or joint certificates) increase food and reduce alcohol & tobacco expenditures (Menon, Rodger & Nguyen 2014)

• Ethiopia – households with joint land certificates (compared to those where in man’s name alone) spend more on health care & homegrown food and less on education; also spend more on women’s and girl’s clothing compared to men’s (Muchomba 2017)
Women’s landownership & their and their children’s wellbeing

• Ethiopia - Share of land women bring to marriage positively associated with women’s health status (Dito 2015)

• Nepal – Women landowners (compared to non-landowners) less likely to have underweight children (Allendorf 2007)

• Vietnam – Households where women have land use certificates, children less likely to have been sick, more likely to have health insurance and to be enrolled in school (Menon, Rodgers & Nguyen 2014)
## Women’s landownership & intimate partner violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Scope</th>
<th>Protective</th>
<th>Positively associated</th>
<th>No significant effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peterman et al. (2017), DHS data</td>
<td>Past year, physical and/or sexual violence 29 countries</td>
<td>Cambodia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tanzania &amp; Zambia</td>
<td>Cote d’Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Kyrgyz Republic</td>
<td>19 countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panda &amp; Agarwal (2005)</td>
<td>Past year, physical; emotional Kerala, India (ag land + house)</td>
<td>Kerala, India (ag land alone)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICRW (2006)</td>
<td>Past year, physical; emotional Kerala (ag land)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bueno &amp; Henderson (2017), DHS data</td>
<td>Past year, physical</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ezeh &amp; Gage (2000)</td>
<td>Lifetime, physical</td>
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</table>
Why so inconclusive?

• Measurement issues & methods

• The context:
  • Whether the dwelling & agricultural land can be thought of separately
  • How common it is for women to own land
    • May need a critical mass of women landowners for landownership to be empowering
    • Otherwise, male backlash
  • The degree of rurality may matter

• May not be ownership of a specific asset that matters for women’s bargaining power, but a woman’s ownership relative to the man’s: woman’s share of farmland or farmland brought to marriage, of household wealth
Women’s share of couple wealth & IPV, Ecuador, past year physical violence

Net Effect of Woman’s Share of Couple Wealth on Odds of Physical vs. No Violence

Source: Oduro, Deere & Catanzarite (2015)
Among the issues that require further research:

• Does land ownership by rural women lead to more favorable outcomes for them than off-farm employment?
  • Agarwal’s (1994) argument
  • Important question, given emphasis in development policy on microfinance (self-employment)
  • Some attempts at exploring broader question:
    • Anderson & Eswaran (2009), rural Bangladesh, comparing women’s wealth vs. their independent income on decisions regarding small & large purchases
Conclusion

• Importance of collecting individual-level, gender-disaggregated data on women’s ownership of land & other assets

• Research on land ownership provides some evidence on how women’s access to resources increases their household bargaining power resulting in outcomes more beneficial to them & their children

• Have focused on land, because of crucial importance of land as a productive resource for rural women in many developing countries

• Also, because SDG process has provided a unique opportunity to make progress on what has been a major obstacle to gender research: adequate data on women’s ownership & management of land
Progress: SGD indicators 5.a.1 & 5.a.2

FAO the lead institution for agricultural-related SDGs:

• Maintains database on land rights indicators
  • Until recently, only agricultural census data on landholders
  • Now collecting survey results on women’s ownership

• Also maintains country profiles and database on legal frameworks
  • Legal Assessment Tool: 30 legal indicators
    • Whether countries have eliminated gender discrimination in constitution, in inheritance, nationality, property rights and access to justice
    • Information for 23 countries
Progress: FAO recommendations for 2020 decennial round of agricultural censuses

1) Landholder – to include joint management
   • May include “a group of civil persons” from the same household, such as husband & wife

2) Module #10. Intra-household distribution of managerial decisions and ownership of the holding
   • Management & ownership of land, each by sex
   • Management & ownership of livestock, each by sex

WILL REQUIRE MAYOR LOBBYING EFFORT TO IMPLEMENT!!!!
THANK YOU!!