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## **THE GENDERED IMPACTS OF LIBERALISATION POLICIES ON AFRICAN AGRICULTURAL ECONOMIES AND RURAL LIVELIHOODS**

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Gender Equality: Striving for Justice in an Unequal World

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Economic liberalisation has been taking place in SSA since the early 1980's, when many countries undertook stabilisation and restructuring measures of unprecedented scope as conditions for further loans from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IFIs). In 2004, individual countries are continuing to liberalise their trade regimes, to encourage private investment, foreign and private, and to maintain fiscal discipline. IFI loans are now more closely tied to the adoption of national poverty strategies - itself a tacit recognition that structural adjustment has not brought ordinary people in African countries out of poverty. The structural adjustment decades have been marked as much by contestation over the policies and their effects as they have been by the policies themselves. By now the minority critical position of the late eighties and early nineties has become more mainstream. There is a widespread recognition that the anticipated growth rates have not occurred and that the sought stimulus to production, to technological change and to a restructured composition of the economy has been muted at best. Nowhere are these debates more important than with respect to the agricultural sector and African's rural populations. In most SSA countries a high proportion of the population lives in rural areas, is dependent on agriculture for its livelihood and is poor. One of the further characteristics of this rural population is that the family - or more properly the household - is a key institution within the rural economy. Divisions of labour based on gender and generation have an impact on the effects of liberalisation. Conversely the gender and generations are affected in different ways by the impact of changes in the macro-economic environment for agricultural production and in the institutions that deliver inputs and distribute outputs. This paper seeks to provide an overview of these gendered impacts.

An initial section looks at the background to economic reforms and describes liberalisation policies, especially with respect to agriculture and assesses their rural impacts. It makes the important point that any discussion of gendered impacts needs also to take on board that rural poverty and food insecurity in general have increased in many areas during the structural adjustment decades. Section 2 explores 'the evidence base' - what data are there which tell us about gendered impacts? I suggest that there is surprisingly little information that disaggregates by gender, at either national or district or community level in case studies. This poor evidence base affects the form of this paper. The substantive discussion begins with a fairly lengthy case study of Tanzania in which I examine what we know about the gendered impacts of liberalisation on rural men and women's livelihoods in Tanzania. Themes from this case study are then placed within a review of what we know about the gendered nature of the rural economy in sub Saharan Africa as a whole. This gives some indication of how widespread the findings from Tanzania might be in the continent as a whole. The paper concludes by summarising the effects of liberalisation and discussing the evidence for changes in rural gender relations occurring as a result.

## 2 LIBERALISATION, AFRICAN AGRICULTURE AND RURAL POVERTY

By the early 1980's many African countries were in severe economic crisis characterised by worsening budget and balance of payment deficits, stagnant growth and stagnant or declining social indicators. Prices for primary agricultural

commodities had been dropping on the world market and this, plus the hike in oil prices, had produced very deteriorating terms of trade for African countries. As interest rates climbed, governments had increasing difficulty in servicing their international debts. These conditions opened the way for the international financial institutions to set extremely stringent conditions for further loans, the centrepiece of which were requirements of economic stabilisation and restructuring. IMF stabilisation measures, including currency devaluation, exchange rates liberalisation and cuts in government spending, aimed to impose strict fiscal and monetary discipline. These were followed by liberalisation measures, which although they did vary from country to country, took a highly standardised form. Typical structural adjustment measures included trade liberalisation, especially through reducing tariffs, investment deregulation, privatisation of public utilities, marketing boards and other state enterprises, reform of the agricultural sector, the labour market and pensions and the liberalisation of domestic markets. Public expenditure reform included the elimination of subsidies in the social sectors and the imposition of user fees. The aim of adjustment restructuring was to limit the role of the government in the economy and to dismantle all forms of restrictions, to promote private sector investment and ensure that markets determined prices. The diagnosis was that Africa's economic crises were a result of heavy state involvement in the economy, which led to marked inefficiency and rates of public expenditure that were high and out of control. Adjustment measures were based on a neo-liberal agenda of the efficiency of the market as a driver of rates of production and a distributor of goods and services and a strong stance against all forms of state activity in the economy.

In truth most post-independence African states were heavily involved in their countries' economies. At that time there was a widespread view that markets and other existing civil institutions in post colonial Africa were not adequate to build a strong economy and achieve growth and poverty alleviation (Eicher 2003). Independence then was accompanied by import substitution policies, restrictive international trade policies and active state involvement in investment through state owned enterprises and state owned corporations. Paramount amongst these were the institutions for marketing major agricultural products - the state marketing boards. These provided subsidised inputs and usually adopted pan territorial pricing, which meant farmers in remote areas received the same prices as those closer to urban markets. These agricultural parastatals initially promoted good growth in agricultural production, but this was not sustained, as they gradually ran into trouble. Many began to incur heavy losses in paying prices well beyond the cost of production and marketing to small farmers, in areas which were marginal for the production of staple crops such as maize and/or which were well off the major infrastructure routes. Inefficiency and patronage also contributed to high parastatal operating costs, which in turn contributed to spiralling national budgets.

Most of the initial economic reform in the food and agricultural sector revolved around liberalising markets by abolishing or reducing the role of parastatals that were involved in procuring, transforming and selling of food and export crops. Market and trade liberalisation in the agricultural sectors were important because of agriculture's role in generating employment and income, in providing wage goods and earning foreign exchange. Throughout the nineties however other forms of trade liberalisation reform continued and became more prominent with the formation of the WTO. Latterly most countries have been engaged in liberalisation measures relevant to

international trade, with the removal of tariffs and other restrictions to open up African economies to world markets.

The effects of the early liberalisation and restructuring were hotly debated. As fuel, food and transport costs soared and families cut back on education and use of the health services, the initial response of those pro-structural adjustment was to argue that there would be some transitional costs to some sectors of the population. However World Bank President James Wolfensohn, admitted in April 1996: "Adjustment has been a much slower more difficult and more painful process than the Bank recognised at the outset" (SAPRI 2003: 5). The literature is now increasingly dominated by much more sober assessments of the impact of liberalisation. Authors from various institutional and political perspectives argue that overall growth rates in African economies have been disappointing. Where growth rates have been good, it is often for special reasons. Uganda for example is regarded as a liberalisation success story and has achieved good positive growth rates. However the political turmoil and conflict of the years preceding reform had decimated the economy and these good growth rates are from a base line of economic performance that was very low indeed. The picture with respect to poverty reduction is also mixed, with some countries showing meaningful decreasing poverty rates but by no means all.

In all countries, the effects on poverty have not been uniformly felt by all sections of the population. There have been winners and losers. Amongst those who have been negatively affected, the rural poor, or certain categories of rural household, figure prominently. In many cases too, quantitative assessments of changes in poverty rates in rural areas are contradicted by findings from qualitative studies and clear explanations of these discrepancies are lacking.<sup>1</sup>

Initially, structural adjustment impacted on rural populations in three main ways<sup>2</sup>

- They were negatively effected by the fees and charges imposed within education and health.
- They were particularly affected by the removal of subsidies on agricultural inputs and the closing down of marketing boards, which initially produced loss of income.
- An additional process affecting rural areas was retrenchment in urban public or industrial employment. Many of these retrenched workers returned to the countryside, either within a particular country, or more often within a region. Zambia and Malawi were particularly affected by the return to rural areas of male labour migrants who had been working elsewhere in southern Africa.<sup>3</sup>

Subsequently rural populations have been particularly affected by the continued disappointing performance of agriculture. It is now clear that growth rates in agriculture have been quite flat over the long term, especially when the initial figures are deflated by population growth. Commercial farmers have been in a much better position to take advantage of increased prices of agricultural products and new

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<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of the quality of poverty data in Zambia see OXFAM IDS 1999

<sup>2</sup> Rural areas were also affected by declining overseas aid to agriculture, which was cut back in the 1980's (von Braun et al 1993).

<sup>3</sup> Some of the main movements back to Malawi of labour migrants occurred before Malawi's main liberalisation measures.

markets. In several countries and for particular agricultural commodities, liberalisation eventually produced spurts in smallholder production of particularly export crops, but over time these have not been maintained. The welfare effect on rural households depends on whether private market institutions have developed to deliver inputs and knowledge and to purchase crops. It also depends on whether households had assets of various kinds to respond to new incentives and new markets. Many commentators have pointed out that many rural small holders have not been in a position to respond positively. In a recent discussion of globalisation and the rural poor Killick makes it clear that he thinks this state of affairs is likely to continue. "In the long-term poor smallscale farmers are unlikely to be able to respond to population pressures, growing international competition, agricultural commercialisation and greater technology use" because they lack assets (Killick 2001).

The negative welfare effects on some rural populations became particularly apparent in Southern Africa in 2002, when several countries experienced severe food shortages, or in the case of Malawi and Zimbabwe, famines. This crisis blew up very swiftly and caught governments and donors unawares. Effects were widespread. 'Continuing food crisis has brought great suffering to as many as 14 million inhabitants of the region' (RCSA 2003). The immediate cause of these food crises was region- wide drought and localised flooding in 2001-2002. But all the sources agree that the adverse impact on household food security had been made much worse by an underlying environment in which many households are (already) highly vulnerable (see sources listed below). The depth and severity of this unpredicted food crisis galvanised research, policy and advocacy work to document the scope of the problems and identify the causes.

The food security situation had been identified as in decline in southern Africa as early as 1999, when Agbalu and Hassan found that: while "in the 1970s per capita food and cereal production were high enough to meet the food and income requirements of the average household in the region; today virtually all countries in the region produce and consume less food per capita than they did in the 1970's" (Abalu and Hassan 1999). A 2003 review concludes that "food insecurity ...is a pervasive problem in southern Africa, which has been steadily worsening for at least three decades" (RCSA 2003:1, listing Duncan 1998, Mullins 2002, von Braun 2003, Wiggins 2003, World Bank 2003). "It is clear beyond doubt that a large proportion of the population in rural, and to a growing extent in urban, Southern Africa is experiencing great difficulty in securing adequate food in both amount and quality" (RCSA 2003:1)

In a careful review of country vulnerability studies Wiggins concludes that households are vulnerable because of "long term inadequacies of livelihoods" (Wiggins 2003). He attributes this to three main factors:

- Long term development models and strategies have 'disappointed and failed' across 'the main production sectors of the region (e.g. mining industry and agriculture)'
- 'Approaches and programmes aimed at revitalising the small holder-farming sector during the 1990s have not had the hoped for impact nor have growth strategies aimed at strengthening the commercial sectors'.

- 'Economic reform designed to produce higher rates of agricultural growth have ...resulted in increased vulnerability and a decrease in the efficacy of livelihood options for the rural poor' (Wiggins 2003)

Food insecure households were found to have livelihood systems that are 'fragmented and fragile and their poor asset base leaves them highly vulnerable to exogenous shocks and adverse trends'.

The 2001-2002 food crises in Southern Africa throw the spotlight on what has been happening to agriculture under liberalisation and on to the livelihoods of poor rural households. They confirmed that for many households there is little to fall back on if macro-economic policies result in shocks to household livelihoods and suggest that we should bear in mind that many men and boy children, as well as women and girls, are suffering.

### 3 GENDER DIFFERENTIATED EFFECTS: CRITICAL REFLECTIONS ON DATA SOURCES

Research and analysis on gender relations in rural Africa has, for thirty years, been dominated by accounts of the gender division of labour in farm households and its links with economic development. This body of work was initiated by Boserup's early 1970's study, flowered as feminist gender analysis developed during the 70's and 80's and has been brought into the mainstream literature largely through the work of micro-economists. The gender division of labour in rural African households is centrally implicated in forms and levels of production, responsiveness to market signals, uptake of technology, as well as to food security, the capacity to withstand shocks and individual welfare.

It is particularly surprising therefore that there is such a thin evidence base on which to start these discussions. National agricultural statistics are inadequate in a number of key respects, some of which stem from using either the individual holder, or the holding, as the unit of analysis, which means that the relationships between the farming of household members cannot be assessed. It also remains the case that accurate information about women's own account farming, which is ostensibly collected in national agricultural statistics, is rare, largely because of the techniques and methodologies of data collection. These are insensitive to the widespread way in which social representations of the gender division of labour may be markedly different from who is doing what kind of farm work, under what circumstances and with what degree of control. One example of a study that actively sought to obtain information about both men and women in farming, but did not do so because of the failure to overcome some of these methodological problems is the Agricultural Diversification and Intensification Study conducted by the Food Studies Group at Tanzania's Sokoine University (ADIS 1992). This survey adopted a 'holder' approach collecting data from both male and female holders. However relatively few women farmers identified themselves as 'holders', with about 70% of those that did so being female heads of households. The large part played by women in households headed by men in the household farming, including their own account farming, was thus not recorded. Bryceson suggests that there may be an element here in which women don't



wish to claim decision making power, which is a central element of the definition of a holder, although she points out 'whether women's failure to qualify as agricultural decision makers is due to a real or merely perceived lack of control is impossible to ascertain from this study' (Bryceson 1996).

Some of these central criticisms of agricultural statistics were made first in the 1980's by gender specialists who strenuously argued for the need to reform national and international agricultural statistics. As a result of this work there is widespread recognition that women play an important role in SSA farming, yet the forms of data collection remain woefully inadequate. The study of gender in the cashew sector in Mozambique, which is summarised in Box 4, found a relatively positive picture for women on the gender division of labour, on access to income from cash crops and on women's access to productive resources. This was in marked contrast to earlier studies. These had had mainly interviewed male household heads or had confined themselves to women who were themselves female heads of household (Kanji and Vijfhuizen 2003).

It is disappointing therefore to find that Randriamamonjy, from the Sustainable Development department of the FAO, was in 2000, still asserting that "What women do is often unrecorded, undervalued or not valued at all" (Randriamamonjy 2000). Randriamamonjy raises the further critical issue of what agricultural statistics are for and the extent to which gender issues matter as a result.

"The data base compiled in FAO does not aim at addressing social and development issues of rural populations in their roles as producers and consumers, or as human capital autonomously involved in the process of production (i.e. people using technology, knowledge and information directly in their daily work.) FAOSTAT gives data mainly about the production tool itself as a process of management of agriculture and the input/output balance of material resources involved. Thus the focus of FAO agricultural statistics does not include the human resources themselves as a force directly shaping the production of food, its quantitative and qualitative characteristics" (Randriamamonjy 2000:).

Randriamamonjy goes on to suggest that a gender sensitive database would require the FAO to be able to link demographic and labour force data with subnational agricultural censuses and surveys on producers whose agricultural and rural profile is known<sup>4</sup>.

The gender division of labour at the household level is also obscured in agricultural economics studies, which routinely collect data on labour inputs to particular crops. These studies of labour input now do much more often differentiate by gender for both non-family and family labour. However understanding the pattern of labour input to particular crops and its link to gender relations requires setting each particular crop within the context of the economic activities of the farm household as a whole - a step which is not taken. Again this is largely for the reasons advanced above by Randriamamonjy - agricultural economics does not set itself this kind of task.

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<sup>4</sup> Other national level statistics that seek to measure the outcomes of rural production processes are those concerned with income health education and so on. Relatively good gender disaggregated data is sometimes collected on health and education variables, but those on income and poverty are generally inadequate.

If agricultural statistics give us very little gender-disaggregated information and it is difficult to interpret what there is, surely there is a wealth of case studies that can provide the evidence for continent wide comparisons? After all agriculture remains the mainstay of livelihoods for a majority of households in most African countries and Africa's ailing agriculture and high rates of rural poverty have been at the forefront of policy discussions about the continent for the last two decades. Here again it is surprising how little research has been done. A recent review of twenty-five Years of Research on Women Farmers in Africa produced 93 articles/studies that had something to say about gender (Doss n.d.). On average less than four a year for a large continent, composed of more than 50 countries. Of these 9 were written before 1980, 37 during the 80's and 43 during the 90's. In several of these the gender findings were highly limited or even perfunctory. It is very difficult indeed to make respectable generalisations about trends and changes with such a sparse research base.

This paucity of research material is one reason why 'gender sensitive economists' (O'Laughlin 2003) fall back in a handful of studies containing econometric data to convince the bulk of economists ('who regard a gender division of labour which puts women in charge of a domestic non-marketed realm and men in charge of marketed production as naturally grounded in human nature and thus efficient' O'Laughlin 2003:3) of the importance of intrahousehold gender issues to arguments about agricultural production and development in Africa. O'Laughlin 2003 and Whitehead 2001 and 2003 draw attention to the use over and over again of 2 or 3 econometric studies by policy makers arguing that intrahousehold gender relations compromise the efficient allocation of resources in small holder households and hence impede agricultural growth. Although the papers by Jones 1986 and Udry et al 1998 are 'exemplary pieces of academic work, clear in their assumptions, careful in their presentation of evidence' (O'Laughlin 2003:5), they have been taken up in ways that go far beyond their own arguments (see especially Blackden 1997; Blackden and Banu 1999). O'Laughlin and Whitehead both argue that interpreting the findings of these two careful studies requires much more attention to the historical and livelihood context of the rural producers. Much of this historical and livelihood context and its gendered nature has to be read off from buried or inaccessible sources.

The review in this paper is singularly affected by this poor evidence base, which is important not just as a comment on the arguments I draw out, but for analysis and policy making in the field as a whole. Arguably, few academics and policymakers would have to content themselves with such a poor evidence base in fields other than gender.

#### 4 EARLY APPROACHES TO GENDER AND ECONOMIC REFORM

One of the earliest critical responses to structural adjustment was a body of literature which stressed the increased vulnerability of some sections of the population and that the transitional costs and disbenefits of restructured economies were not equally distributed. The changes in rewards, costs and incentives implied in economic restructuring inevitably entailed a severe income and livelihood shock for many households. Poor and poorest households were ill-placed to withstand these shocks and were less able to adapt. The same households were also ill equipped to meet increased social sector costs. These early critiques often identified women and

children as amongst the most vulnerable (Cornea, Jolly and Stewart 1987). Important as this was, little was said in this literature about why women and children were suffering more and the analysis implicitly rested on the long held assumption that gender and age were sources of 'vulnerability' in themselves.

That so many countries adopted economic reform and on such a large scale provided a major impetus to feminist economists to theorise why women were being so adversely affected. Authors such as Elson and Antrobus made two main points: first, that women often could not take advantage of new economic opportunities offered by market liberalisation because they lack assets and resources - e.g. land, technology, savings in the form of livestock, money to invest - and access to labour and information. The genders do not come to the market with the same material endowments. Second, that men and women have very different roles and relationship to the unpaid economy. The most significant early analytical innovation was the emphasis placed by feminist critiques on the fact that the economy was composed of both productive and reproductive sectors and that much activity in the reproductive sector was unpaid and took place in domestic settings. Because economic theory 'considers work performed, services rendered and products made that do not have an explicit price to have no economic value' ... 'much of what society deems as women's work (bearing and raising children, preparing and growing food for family use, cleaning the house gathering fuel and water etc) is rendered invisible' (Sparr 1994:6). This unpaid labour is regarded as infinitely flexible and free. Structural adjustment, Elson pointed out, entails changes in the balance between paid and unpaid sectors and moreover the intensification and extension of unpaid labour is a hidden factor in many episodes of stabilisation and structural adjustment. Initially, unpaid labour can help absorb some of the shocks of adjustment, but at the cost of increasing women's work burdens, extending the hours they work and increasing its intensity. 'What is regarded by economists as increased efficiency may instead be a shifting of costs from the paid economy to the unpaid economy.' Elson date : The effects on women of removal of subsidies on social services in education and health began showing up in increased time burdens and decreased use of health services (Tsikata and Kerr 2000).

The gender division of labour in reproductive and domestic work appears to be very strong in SSA. Most estimates suggest that the average rural woman spends between 3.5 and 5 hours a day on tasks such as fetching water and fuel, preparing food and looking after children, while men's time on similar tasks is small or negligible. Some authors have argued that burdened as they are with domestic and reproductive work, women suffer from a time famine that limits the time they can/do put into productive work. Blackden argues this for Zambian rural women (Blackden 1997). Based on her research in Meru, Kenya, Dolan argues that there is an absolute limit on women's time that comes from her reproductive work burden (Dolan 1997).<sup>5</sup> Even where there is no demonstrable direct effect on production, indirect effects occur because of the impact of time burdens on health and nutrition. Galli and Funk found that women and children were identified as the population categories most vulnerable to the distress caused by structural adjustment in Guinea-Bissau in the early nineties and that one of the effects was to increase women's workload and this had a demonstrable effect on

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<sup>5</sup> Its worth noting some specificities of the Meru situation however: this includes a dominance of nuclear family household forms (Launonen - pers. com.) a higher than the continent wide average of invested capital in smallholder farming and the presence of several income generating opportunities.

their health (Galli and Funk 1995)<sup>6</sup>. A study of the health effects of structural adjustment in Zimbabwe found highly significant changes in the nutritional status of children. More children were born stunted and short because of dietary stress in their mothers during pregnancy and fewer children thrived because of feeding problems during the infancy (Bijlmakers, Bassett, and Sanders n.d).<sup>7</sup>

Although women in sub Saharan Africa do not experience the forms of gender discrimination in feeding that has been reported in S. Asia, their physical well being is compromised by the long working hours they put in often in energy intensive forms of work and by high fertility rates. As Kabeer points out, although maternal mortality rates are not known with any degree of certainty, WHO estimates suggest that SSA rates are much higher than those on other continents.<sup>8</sup> (Kabeer 2003: ??) They also suffer higher rates of miscarriage and high levels of child mortality. While these excess levels of illbeing are historic, Kabeer suggests that there is also evidence that they have risen in recent years. More recent studies also find that the rising demands on women's time in both paid and unpaid labour compromised the health of women and children. A further demonstration of the importance of women's work in the reproductive economy are the widespread reports that women withdraw daughters from school to do domestic chores as the burden on adult women's time increases - a response which leads to a vicious circle of poverty reproduction.

The connection between reproductive and productive spheres of the macro-economy insisted upon by feminist economists are concretely manifest in rural households in high work burdens for women. Far too few studies of the impact of liberalisation look at health and nutrition indicators, which of course may only be manifest over the long term.

### **Intrahousehold relations as barriers to agricultural supply response**

A second fairly early significant body of work on gender relations and liberalisation in African agriculture concerned the role of gender in agricultural supply response. Rural farm households in many areas of Sub Saharan Africa do not organise the distribution of resources and incomes on the basis of norms of sharing and pooling. They thus form a special and extreme case of the more general feminist arguments that households are not necessarily sites of sharing and equity - an approach which entails a strong challenge to the neo-classical assumption of household unity in the modelling of household behaviour (Agarwal 1997, Evans 1989, Hart 1997, Haddad et al 1997, Kabeer 1994, Sen 1990, Whitehead 1981). As concerns with the performance of agriculture grew, micro-economists turned their attention to how to model household behaviour in African small-holder households, where this is assumed to be characterised by conflict and bargaining, rather than by altruism. These investigations have in turn been taken up by policy makers to argue about the effect that separate

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<sup>6</sup> Galli, Rosemary E. and Funk, Ursula. 1995. Structural adjustment and gender in Guinea-Bissau. In: Thomas-Emeagwali, Gloria (ed) Women pay the price: structural adjustment in Africa and the Caribbean. Trenton, N.J. : Africa World Press: (1995), p. 13-30

<sup>7</sup> L. Bijlmakers, M. Bassett, and D. Sanders Health and Structural Adjustment in Rural and Urban Settings in Zimbabwe at a Time of Structural Adjustment: A Three-Year Longitudinal Study. Nordic Africa Institute Research Report No. 105.

<sup>8</sup> In Asia for example maternal deaths per 100,000 births are 10-50 for China and 9-42 for Korea, but 600 for Bangladesh. Within Africa figures range from between 500-1500 for Ghana and 1750-2,900 for Mali. Although SSA accounts for 20% of the world's births it has 40% of the world's deaths (Kabeer 2003).

income streams have on incentives for men and women and on the rationality and efficiency of patterns of allocative behaviour.

One path-breaking study, which sought to examine the adequacy of conventional economic models of the household for an African situation, was that by Udry et al (1995). This re-analysed time panel data collected by ICRISAT in Burkina Faso during the 1980's. Udry et al showed that, within the same household, yields were lower on women's plots than on men's for the same crop in the same year, for all plot sizes<sup>9</sup>. Yield differences between men and women's plots were related to differences in input intensity, including that of labour, rather than the lower productivity of female labour<sup>10</sup>. Udry et al offer a cautious interpretation in their paper, where they argue that the results 'contradict the hypothesis of Pareto efficiency'<sup>11</sup> within the household' (p. 418).

Chavas and Smith investigate the same 1980's ICRISAT data set to explore the potential effects of intrahousehold gender relations on cotton production (Chavas and Smith 2000). Their model assumes households are based on monogamous married couples<sup>12</sup>, but that there are spheres of both separateness and interdependence in household farming. It posits a conflict between husbands and wives which derives from the fact that although cotton demands both male and female labour (and the relative increase in female labour appears to be greater the more cotton is grown), women get little if any income from cotton, which all goes to men. While men want to maximise cotton cash crop income, women have less incentive to do so and expend more resources on food crops. They suggest that cash crop supply response is muted in non-resource pooling households in West Africa because men and women have different preferences as to how they spend their time.

A very similar set of assumptions is made in Warner and Campbell's household modelling exercise for African agricultural economies that produce an export cash crop as well as food crops (Warner and Campbell 2000). They use highly general data about Tanzanian agriculture to suggest that women are essentially the sole providers of household maintenance services such as housework and childcare and food production. "Women have virtually no leisure time" (op.cit: 1329). Both men and women usually produce cash crops. Their account of the resultant preference heterogeneity is that "men control most of the cash crops sales" and men "see cash as a vehicle primarily to satisfy their own individualistic needs" (: 1330). "Combining their own productive capabilities, along with any amount of labour that can be coerced from women, men sell crops to purchase commodities that increase their own utility" (ibid.). For the women's part, strategies can be devised that limit the loss of control over her economic resources. "By resisting production that is converted into cash women can reduce the possibility of losing control of their resources" (ibid.).

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<sup>9</sup> This empirical demonstration is done only for a single crop in the total array of crops in the farming systems.

<sup>10</sup> Quisumbing 1996 points out that very few Sub-Saharan Africa studies have good enough data to measure gender differences in agricultural productivity. She reviews the few that do and in Sub-Saharan Africa finds no difference between men and women in their levels of productivity once all other factors are controlled for.

<sup>11</sup> Pareto efficiency refers to optimal allocation of household resources (equalisation of their marginal productivities across uses) such that their marginal productivities are equal so that overall output is maximised.

<sup>12</sup> An assumption which is extremely unrealistic given the actual structure of Burkina Faso households. See below and Veirich 1986. See also Whitehead 1998.

They conclude “it is questionable whether a chain of increased economic opportunity translates into an overall welfare increase for the entire household” (ibid.).

Gender specialists in the World Bank's Africa department saw that there was considerable potential here to educate mainstream economists in the importance of gender inequality. The 1998 SPA Report from the World Bank centrally addresses the contribution that gender relations make to the sluggishness of the agricultural supply response to liberalisation in Africa. In addition to the argument about the effects of women's time famine because of their reproductive and productive work burdens (see above) on responsiveness to price opportunities, it emphasises how the division of farming responsibilities between men and women may affect their economic behaviour. That women's responsibility for family food directly reduces her willingness to switch crops, an argument that is widely made in qualitative discussions, is made explicitly with respect to national statistical findings in Zambia by Wold (1997).<sup>13</sup> He shows that as the price of maize fell in Zambia, there was a major expansion in the cultivation of maize, especially for sale. While this negative supply response was shown by male headed and female headed households, it was stronger in the case of female heads of household, which he attributes to women's responsibilities for food production.<sup>14</sup> Wold sees women as more risk averse than men since they are more attached to food crop production, leading them to ignore price signals. ‘Given their obligations, it is almost impossible for women farmers not to produce the traditional food crops e.g. they can hardly switch to cotton production’ (1997: 30).

A central plank of the argument in the 1998 SPA Report, are what Blackden and Bhanu see as the implications of Udry et al's findings for arguments about intra-household gender dynamics and agricultural growth. They suggest that greater productivity and household production could be achieved by re-allocating farming inputs more equitably between men and women. They suggest that agricultural production could be increased by 10-20% in Burkina Faso if the allocation of inputs within households was both more efficient and more gender equal (Blackden and Bhanu 1999). As can be seen from the later modelling investigations of Chavas and Smith and Warner and Campbell discussed above, several authors have also subsequently implied that allocative inefficiency and depressed production arise in African agriculture because the separation of resource streams implies individual, not shared, incentives with respect to crop outputs

These arguments are exhaustively discussed in Whitehead 2001, who suggests that attractive though this synergy between improving gender equality and improving agricultural output might be for convincing sceptics about the need to consider gender, the arguments are very overstated. In the first place these accounts are based on stylised facts which do not capture variety and complexity of GDOL in different areas in Africa. There is a very large and highly significant element of variability between countries, within countries, and within communities as to whose work goes into food crop production and indeed into cash crop production, but all these modelling accounts underplay men's important role and commitment to food

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<sup>13</sup> I have given only a very brief account of Wold, taking out only the point about women's culturally assigned responsibilities for meeting food consumption needs.

<sup>14</sup> This analysis uses data on female headed households to discuss the behaviour of women farmers, a considerable methodological weakness in its own right.

production. Risk-averse behaviour and a commitment to continuing food production side by side with income generating crops are thus likely to be much less gender-skewed than some of these accounts suggest.

There is also a need to discuss what efficiency means in the context of small-holder households. It may well be appropriate for these households to maximise a wide range of utilities and not simply cash income from their crops. These might include capacity for diversification, flexibility in the case of agroclimatic shocks, other kinds of risk spreading (against illness and death, for example) long term investments and social reproduction.<sup>15</sup> There may well be other ways in which the social organisation of the household and its gender relations contributes to these wider objectives. How are household economic objectives affected by the opportunities and constraints offered by the particular rural and farming economy and agro-ecological circumstances? Where markets are very liable to let rural people down, what part does the protection of household food supply play in these objectives? Although household modelling is growing ever more sophisticated in trying to take these kinds of factors into account, at the moment it fails to capture the complex economic objectives of African small holder households that are pursuing livelihood strategies in conditions of high risk and insecurity and very scarce resources. The grounds for judging whether allocations are efficient are over-narrow and often take unrealistically short time frames.

The final shortcoming in these approaches is that a concentration on the conflicts of interest between men and women is inadequate. Household relations in African small holder families are a complex and changing set of dependencies, inter-dependencies and autonomies (Whitehead 2001; Whitehead and Kabeer 2001). These create commonalities as well as conflict of interest. The simple presence of separate income streams and of labour that is not directly remunerated does not tell us enough about the incentives structures of such households. By themselves they do not tell us about the welfare outcomes that derive for different members from different income sources. There is no empirical evidence to support Warner and Campbell's stylised fact that Tanzanian rural men expend their income solely for their own individualist needs or to increase their own utility. This point will become clear in the next section, where I look in detail at Tanzania's experience of economic reform in agriculture and its gendered impacts.

Although the link between the lack of incentives for women to work on cash crops continues to be argued as being a key factor in the economic behaviour of farm households in some literatures (e.g. Booth et al 2003), in the last decade other kinds of analysis of the flat response in African agriculture to structural adjustment have become very much more well understood. Those promoting liberalisation and reform had seriously underestimated many barriers that prevent African small holders from shifting into different crops, as had the difficulty of raising real producer prices through market mechanisms in the conditions that prevail in factor markets in Africa. These points too will become apparent from the Tanzanian Case Study.

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This issue is also discussed in Whitehead and Kabeer 2001.

## 5 CASE STUDY: THE GENDERED EFFECTS OF LIBERALISATION IN RURAL TANZANIA

This case study brings together information on liberalisation in Tanzania and its effects in rural areas, concentrating especially on gender differences. It is a far from comprehensive account, not least because the amount of research is limited, despite the very experienced gender research capacity in that country. The first section reviews the kinds of reforms that were put in place in Tanzania and their general economic effects. I then go on to look briefly at the effects on agriculture and rural well being, before taking up gender impacts under three main headings: the effects on women's farming; the gendered nature of rural diversification and gender differences in the impact of tourism on the local economy in Zanzibar. The case study concludes by pulling out some themes to take forward to a more general discussion of sub-Saharan Africa as a whole.

### **Liberalisation Measures and their effects**

Economic reform in Tanzania has been a gradual process of market liberalisation and deregulation, together with more precipitate currency and fiscal measures to control spending and inflation. The currency was devaluated in 1984 and again in 1986, while fiscal discipline was exercised from 1986 onwards with marked falls in public expenditure, particularly after 1992. Liberalisation of internal and external trade and of agriculture began in the mid eighties, but some state regulations and institutions remained in place for at least ten years after this, although they were being progressively dismantled. Direct taxes were also increased, as were tax incentives for foreign private investment. A key area for reform was the agricultural sector, which contained a whole edifice of institutions for providing services and inputs to farmers and marketing their crops. This took up a substantial proportion of government spending. Here too reform was gradual, with some controls on food prices taken off in the mid-80's. Export crops were liberalised later but proceeded only slowly and was not complete till the mid-90's.

These reforms resulted in low inflation, an increase in foreign assets, buoyancy in the mining and tourism sectors, which were key areas of new tax incentives, and a remarkable contraction of government activities. They also produced stagnation in agriculture and a very disappointing overall growth rate. Government expenditure was reduced from 27 per cent of GDP in 1992 to 11 per cent in 1998 (Bigsten, Levi and Persson 2001), producing retrenchment of public sector workers and a decline in public services. Ellis and Mdoe cite official data indicating a loss of one quarter of the government sector workforce between 1993 and 1999 (Ellis and Mdoe 2002). Historically Tanzania's literacy rates had been high (85% in 1970s and 1980s), reflecting government investment in education and human capital, but they went down steeply to 68% in 1990s. Primary school enrolment also initially went down, but recovered to nearly pre reform levels by 1998, after a reversal of policy and an increase in government funding in education.

Levels of household well being and income were also affected by the poor growth rates and by the much higher levels of tax. GDP grew between at an annual rate of 3.5 per cent between 1986 and 2000, but as population also grew at 3% over the same period, the achieved annual growth rate was around 0.5 % (Sen 2002). As well as increases in direct taxes and taxes on agricultural products, the number and level of



local taxes increased markedly as a result of decentralisation. Although the inflation rate has been controlled and kept low, the benefits of this have been more than offset by appreciation in the real exchange rate.

Hard evidence on the effects of all this on household income and poverty is sparse and hard to assess. Qualitative studies indicate that liberalisation is perceived by many Tanzanians to have increased poverty, vulnerability and the difficulty of making ends meet. The huge expansion of the informal economy especially in urban areas is some indication of this. Incomes in this sector are generally low and households that rely on them are struggling to survive. The official statistics on poverty are not very reliable

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### **Effects on Agriculture, Rural Livelihoods and Well-being**

The effects of liberalisation on agriculture, rural livelihoods and well-being are very important because agriculture is such a significant sector of the Tanzanian economy and because such a high proportion of the population, and especially of the poor, lives in rural areas.

Tanzania's agricultural sector in the pre-reform period has its roots in both colonial history and post-independence policies. In common with many other colonies, Tanganyika had a dual agricultural economy, with a commercial estates sector side by side with peasant agriculture. The number of European settlers who had alienated land for coffee, tea, tobacco and sisal plantations was small in comparison to other nearby countries and did not preclude the development of some commercial farming in small holder agriculture. From quite early on, the colonial authorities promoted peasant coffee and cotton production (often coercively) as well as agricultural co-operatives (Gibbon 1998).<sup>17</sup> Several areas experienced growing incomes from coffee in the interwar years (Swantz 1985). Cotton output in Eastern and Western Tanzania rose after the adoption of local pest resistant varieties in the 1930's, so that by 1966 Tanzania had 0.75% of world production, largely from small holder areas (Baffes 2002a).

Post independence, agriculture was based on the objective of boosting smallholder incomes and providing 'real livelihood possibilities' (Bryceson 1999a) but largely favoured food crops at the expense of export crops. Institutions and activity to support agriculture were a major area of government spending. Pan territorial producer pricing of basic staple food crops was delivered through parastatal organisations, such as the co-operative unions, which also provided credit and delivered subsidised fertilisers and other inputs the length and breadth of the country. They also collected, stored, processed and marketed the crops. Smallholder tea and coffee initially grew rapidly post independence, as did the production of food crops both for consumption and for sale as a result of these new subsidies and institutions. Maize as commercial food crop was a notable production success.

This structure of support for agriculture proved costly and increasingly inefficient and led to declines in production. All this contributed to the very severe economic crisis in Tanzania in the early 80's. The resultant structural adjustment and economic recovery programmes, which were the conditions for IMF loans for Tanzania, had

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<sup>16</sup> Ellis and Mdoe 2002 contains a preliminary discussion of why.

<sup>17</sup> Attempts to coerce peasants into cotton production were resisted in several places (Swantz 1985)

reform of the agricultural sector high on the list of priorities. This consisted largely of deregulation of price controls and the liberalisation of agricultural input and output markets, in a series of gradually introduced measures that began in 1986 and continued for over a decade. Food prices were decontrolled immediately in mid 1980s. By 1988/89 marketing had been decontrolled at the level of co-operative unions and pan territorial pricing policy was effectively abandoned. Other reforms took longer. Subsidies to fertilisers, for example, were gradually reduced down to zero by 1994. Export crop reform began in 1991, with the coffee sector, where further key reforms took place in 1994. Cotton and cashews followed, but these were only fully liberalised by the mid-nineties.<sup>18</sup>

There have been a number of sectoral studies of the effects of reform (liberalisation) on particular crops notably coffee, cotton and cashews.

Coffee is grown on small farms and estates and remains Tanzania's largest export crop, although its share in exports has declined (Baffes 2002b). Between 1994 and 2001 coffee output declined by 13 per cent and its quality deteriorated. During that time credit systems collapsed and input use declined, particularly amongst small holders. Only a quarter of coffee growers used purchased inputs after 1994. Baffes argues that 'while the producer's share of export prices increased, official statistics show no supply response' Baffes 2002b:pn. He attributes this to a number of problems apart from the issues of inputs and market access. While the share of price to producer has increased, real producer prices have declined, not least because taxation is high and complex. Tanzania's coffee producers are also likely to be affected by the recent drop in world coffee prices, although because it is a perennial bush crop, these effects take time to work through to production levels. A shift in the structure of the sector has occurred since liberalisation in the mid-1990s, with many private estates being rehabilitated, while some former nationalised estates have been privatised.

The cotton sector has also been reviewed by Baffes (2002b). A single cotton producing area was the subject of a detailed case study by Gibbon (1998). Many of the findings from this research carried out in the fourth year of market liberalisation are paralleled in Maro's much later review (Maro 2004).

Gibbon found that 'There was almost certainly a substantial production response in 1995/96 over 1994/95, but this response has not been subsequently amplified as liberalisation has continued and monetisation of cotton sales has been institutionalised. There was in fact a decline in production and sales in 1997/98'. Maro's points out that although production figures have been rising in each successive year since 1998/99, they have not reached the levels of 1995/7 (Maro 2004). Production had decline in Gibbon's study because of a decline in non labour input use. 'Inputs now have to be bought with cash upfront and the institutions for delivering them are poorly developed.' Maro also finds that no imported fertilisers were being used, that only a small minority of farmers were able to use kraal manure, that there was no credit to purchase other chemical inputs and very little extension provision. Gibbon also identifies a major problem with the quality control elements of market arrangements. 'Competition amongst small and inefficient traders leads them to

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<sup>18</sup> Sources for this section are Rweyemamu 2003, Mung'ong'o 2000, Sen 2002, Bigsten et al 2001, Ellis and Mdoe 2002.

purchase poorer quality cotton and cause downward pressure on the quality of all purchases, by not grading and rejecting the poorer qualities'. The loss of effective quality control procedures and an absence of grading is also highlighted by Maro (2004). Gibbons main findings is that four years of liberalisation have failed to transform farming methods in any way with 'with larger and better off farmers farming in more or less exactly the same ways as poorer ones.' Writing some five years later, both Baffes and Maro emphasise the world trading environment in which Tanzania's cotton farmers now have to compete. World prices for cotton have dropped since the mid- nineties, in a context where the US and EU are refusing to give up the major subsidies that make to their cotton producers.<sup>19</sup>

The private sector's failure to provide market access for most farmers goes much further than the coffee or cotton sectors. Rweyemamu singles this out as a major aspect of liberalisation, citing a study which shows that it is a majority of farmers who now have to sell at the farm gate at lower prices (Rweyemamu 2003). Competitive nature of private market sector means that it does not replace earlier state systems. Liberalised marketing 'arrangements have not provided adequate incentives to growers in terms of pre-harvest services and marketing efficiency in general' Rweyemamu. Fertiliser use has declined steeply and there has been a virtual collapse of credit provisions for smallholders. Competition has other deleterious effects too. Poorer quality controls impact on producer prices.

It is not surprising then that growth rates in agriculture have been poor or even stagnant over the full period from liberalisation to 2002. Tanzania's agricultural performance since 1986 has been reviewed by Sen and the graphs from his paper on what has happened to the production of major agricultural crops are reproduced in the appendix to this paper (Sen 2002). Sen demonstrates that there has been no increase in food crop production and that the performance of export crops is very uneven. The increase in export crops has been driven largely by an increase in cashew production. The maintained low inflation rate from 1986 has been impressive, but its effects have been offset by unfavourable movements in real exchange rates which significantly 'impaired the profitability of farming in the exports sector'. Agriculture and smallholders have been affected by increased taxes and fluctuations in world prices for agricultural commodities. From 1992/93 all food crops saw a sharp decline in real producer prices (although this was somewhat stabilised for maize after 95/96) and Sen attributes the 'relative stagnancy in real purchasing power of small holders growing food crops' to 'the slow progress in poverty reduction in Tanzania'. Sen argues that, although deregulation has reversed the anti-export crop bias, the government had failed to provide an enabling environment for export and food crop producers. The key issues he lists are rural infrastructure, agricultural extension services, local taxation regime, a pronounced market failure in agricultural credit and the failure to support private involvement in agricultural marketing.

Faced with this macro-environment in areas where they can small holders have moved into cashew production and moved out of several traditional cash crops. Other solutions are apparent from the LADDER studies. In the 8 villages in the Morogoro region studied by Ellis and Mdoe other crops had taken their place as sources of

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<sup>19</sup> Several sources discuss distortions in the global cotton market as a result of these subsidies and their impacts on poor producers in African countries and elsewhere that are no longer allowed to subsidise their agricultural sectors.

income. "Due to the disintegration or dissolution of co-operatives and crop parastatals cotton coffee sunflower and castor disappeared during the 1990's from villages that formerly grew them as significant cash crops. As sources of cash income they have been replaced by the two main food crops, maize and rice, but also in some areas by sesame seeds tomatoes and vegetables. However it is important to recognise how locally specific such supply responses are. Bryceson's study of diversification found that maize production had declined.

The overall impacts on well being and rural poverty are hard to trace in national level poverty assessments.<sup>20</sup> Qualitative research suggests that food security has declined in some places and has got more volatile in others, as rural incomes are more exposed to changes in export and cash crop prices. Until recently there has been little awareness at official level of this. In the last six months however there have been web reports of a looming food crisis. A posting from Food Security International in October 2003 suggested that 2 million Tanzanians in a widespread number of rural districts required food relief (internet location needed). In March 2004 a Tanzania government posting reported that 3.5 million people now in need of food relief (internet location needed). The causes of this food crisis are similar to those identified in 2002 for southern Africa. Poor maize supply together with increased demand has produced a major increase in maize prices and many rural households have become severely food insecure Refs. The excess demand is coming from across the border from Kenya and the poor supply is partly because of adverse weather, but generally decreasing food security is likely to have played a contributory role.

Prior to this there had been widespread reports that rural households feel that income levels and access to services has been worse since liberalisation. Bryceson is one of a number of authors arguing that small-scale peasant farmers are suffering adversely as a result of market liberalisation policies because they are unable to compete in the high-risk low return environment it has created.

### **Gender Differentiation in the Impacts of Economic Reform in Rural Areas**

As has been stressed earlier, the number of robust accounts of the gender-differentiated impacts of economic reforms in African rural areas is exceedingly few. This is as true of Tanzania as elsewhere. This section makes use of the sparse existing studies to examine three areas of the rural economy in Tanzania. The first theme is the effects of liberalisation and reform on women's farming, both on their own account and as family members. Here I draw on qualitative research by Action Aid UK of Southern Tanzania's cashew owing areas (Action Aid 2004). The cashew sector is particularly important because it is one of the success stories of the last decade. A comparison is offered with the findings from a study of the cashew sector in Mozambique. The second theme examines gender differences in the processes of diversification in areas where liberalisation has led to a loss of income in agriculture, based on material that has been interpreted by Deborah Bryceson (Bryceson 1999). In the third discussion I take another growth area of the Tanzanian economy with liberalisation, that of tourism, which has the potential for many linkages with local rural economies. I examine the overall nature of these linkages and particularly

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<sup>20</sup> National household level data had not been collected for some time in Tanzania until the recent integrated budget survey. see Ellis and Mdoe 2002 for some discussion.

gender differences in these in a case study of tourism in Zanzibar, which is also taken from ActionAid 2004.

### **Effects on Women's Farming**

Tanzania has a wide variety of agroclimatic niches, partly because it encompasses mountainous, lakeside and riverine areas, as well as areas of more or less rainfall and of poor soils. It also has a wide variety of kinship structures, including many cultural groups with matrilineal forms of social organisation. These two features, together with its period as a colonial economy and the relatively pro-rural policies of the post independence government, have produced a very complex picture with respect to contemporary farming and rural livelihoods systems.

During the colonial period, male wage labour left some rural areas either to cross international borders to work, or to employment nationally in agricultural plantations and towns, leaving a more female rural population. Smallholder market production, especially of coffee and cotton, increased with colonialism, when male family members became more involved with the monetised economy than were women. In specific cases, such as the government cotton schemes, the extension services, credit and crop purchase schemes targeted men, ignoring women's role in farming. The tendency for men to be associated with non-food cash crops and women to be associated with household food crops developed further as market production increased throughout the 60's and 70's.

Nevertheless Tanzania's smallholder areas do not fit the stylised picture of the gender division of labour in African agriculture in which men control cash cropping, using women's labour while women also grow family food. Instead there is a wide variety of cash and staple food crops and many different gender divisions of labour in Tanzania's rural economies. Three examples of the gender divisions in farming in different area of Tanzania are found in Boxes 1.

#### **Box 1 Coffee, Cattle Maize and Bananas in Mt Kilimanjaro area**

The slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro are a coffee growing area, where patrilineal Chagga farm and herd cattle. Chagga have been growing coffee for many, many years and their fortunes have fluctuated throughout the century. As a result, rural communities are economically stratified. This is one locality that fits the Sub-Saharan Africa stereotype to some extent. In the early 1980's, Swantz found that women were growing bananas maize and beans and using beans and bananas as sources of income. Coffee and maize were sources of men's income. Women's unpaid labour went on men's cash crops, but whereas women family labour went towards the labour of cultivating maize, hired labour was very important for coffee. Picking was done by female casual labour, but for other coffee cultivation tasks both male and female labour was hired. In periods when coffee became less profitable men had moved to work elsewhere. Source Swantz 1985

### **Box 2 Cashews, Charcoal, Rice Cassava and Maize in Rufiji.**

Another area in which men had diversified into the developing cash economy is a coastal area in Rufiji studied by Matthew Lockwood in the mid-80's. Men had become involved in a lucrative charcoal industry in trading and also owned cashew and coconut trees as cash crops. Women mainly farmed cassava, maize and rice. The normatively stated gender division of responsibility was that men provided money in the household economy and women provided labour. Each gender had a source of income - for women this was rice and although they did not control all the income, they retained a substantial portion of it. Lockwood's time use studies showed men put much more time into productive activities as a whole than women, because of their work in charcoal production and in trade, but even in farming men did more work than women. Women did much more domestic work, which averaged about 5 hours a day. The allocation of tasks was sometimes gender specific, but most farming tasks were done by both men and women and there was often joint decision making in farming. Source Lockwood 1998

### **Box 3 Morogoro District 8 Villages from LADDER studies**

Lyimo-Macha and Mdoe carried out research in 2001 on women's livelihoods in two districts in the Morogoro Region of central Tanzania in 8 villages that form the basis of the LADDER studies (Ellis and Mdoe 2002). They have high levels of rural poverty and a range of farming systems.

The majority of women have good access to land for farming, although a minority own it outright. 75% of women even so said they had full control over it and few listed it as a constraint on their farming. The constraints that inhibit women from expanding their farming and other livelihood activities are limited access to credit, and no access to extension services, constraints that are also significant for many male farmers.

Lyimo-Macha and Mdoe found that some of the villages had no sharp gender division between cash crops and food crops, with both men and women taking part in cultivation and decision making. In other villages, women have much less control over cash income from crops. In terms of who does what, men make a considerable contribution to farm work. Although some activities are carried out by women only, very many activities are regularly undertaken by both men and women and many others undertaken by men throughout the farming season.

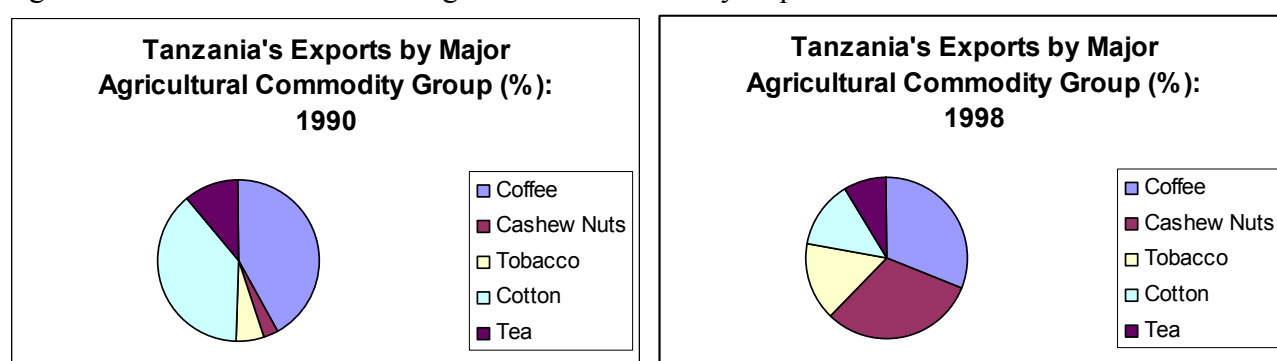
A sizeable minority of farming decisions are taken jointly as well as some taken by men alone and some by women. Men market more cash crops than women, but the latter have responsibility for some food cash crops. Women reported having access to income but not 'full control' over it. There is however a significant degree of both joint and female only control over some income. Source Lyimo-Macha and Mdoe n.d.

These brief accounts illustrate the variety of ways in which men and women are inserted in monetised agricultural commodity production. Any simple association between men and cash crops and women and subsistence food production is very far from an appropriate representation of what is a complex reality. Women do work on men's cash crops, but men put in considerable labour time on them too, and also on food crops. There is often an arena of joint decision making and in some cases joint use and/or control of income. These illustrative examples provide a context for evaluating one of the few major studies that has looked at the gendered impact of liberalisation within farming in Tanzania.

### Case Study: Cashews - A Success Story?

As described earlier, one export crop that has expanded with liberalisation is that of cashews, which are grown mainly in Southern Tanzania. By the end of nineties cashews were contributing a much greater proportion to agricultural export earnings. Whereas cashew nuts made up 2.7 percent of Tanzania's export of key agricultural commodities in 1990, its share had increased to 31 percent by 1998.<sup>21</sup> (See figure 1). In 2001, 99 percent of the cashew nut harvest was exported as raw nuts mainly to India. Although the Tanzanian government has offered incentives to investors to revive the processing industry, little interest has been shown and the absence of any value-added activities within Tanzania represents a long term problem (ActionAid 2004:4).

Figure 1: Cashew Nuts Share of Agricultural Commodity Exports 1990-1998



Source: Calculated from WTO, 2000: 8

Action Aid interviewed farmers and district officials in the Lindi and Mtwara regions of southern Tanzania. In discussing the effects of trade liberalisation, or 'sokohulu', cashew nut farmers make a clear distinction between two periods. The first being the 'honeymoon' period, which started soon after the introduction of the free market in the mid-1990s and lasted until year 2000. The other being the 'crisis' period, which started in 2000 and is still ongoing.

During the initial 'honeymoon' period small producers benefited a great deal from the liberalisation of the trade in cashew nuts. Competition between cashew nut buyers in the newly privatised sector was stiff during this period and farmers were offered a

<sup>21</sup> If all commodities groups are included in these calculation the percentages change to 1.5 percent in 1990 and 18.3 percent in 1998 (WTO, 2000: 8).

good and rising price for their produce. The area under cashew nuts expanded, as did the yields per hectare, the export price and value, and the producer price. Moreover, the government then still supported the smallholder production to some extent by negotiating indicative producer prices.

By 2001, the ‘crisis period’ had set in, with drastic cuts in world market prices as well as in producer prices. Apart from the falling world market prices, the buyers had established cartels, through which they were able to squeeze the small producers by weakening their bargaining power. This was reported as postponing buying the cashew nuts until the end of the season when the size of the harvest was known and competition among producers was high due to their need for money. In addition the buying cartels had more or less monopolised trade in agro-inputs like sulphur dust, adding an extra squeeze on smallholder producer by raising the price of this input at the time cashew nuts were bought .

Table1: Cashew Nut Prices: 1995 - 2002

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Exports-Value 1000 \$	48,160	63,070	45,000	76,000	90,900	123,782	85,936	n.a.
Export Price \$/Mt	800	850	750	800	900	1,039	708	n.a.
Producer Price Tsh/kg	300	325	315	300	440	600	250	n.a.

Source: FAO 1990-1998 / Cashew Nut Board of Tanzania quoted in Sijaona (2002: 10, 16)<sup>22</sup>

On top of the intense pressure put on farmers' incomes by the people who manage both their input and output market, cashew nut producers are subject to heavy levies and taxes both at the central and the district level. According to farmers in Tandahimba district, it is not uncommon that taxes and levies per kilo cashew nut sold constitute 20% or more of the price they receive. In 2001/2002 the farmers had to pay a total of TSH83/kg in tax, although the value of taxes and levies is not permitted to exceed 5%.

Levy by District Council per kilo:	TSH 65
Levy by the Cashew nut Board per kilo:	TSH 18
Price received per kilo cashew nut sold:	TSH 360
Cost of production per kilo cashew nut:	TSH 420

#### *Gender impacts*

Women have traditionally provided much of the family labour in the cashew nut production. While men carried out heavy work, women did most of the labour intensive tasks like weeding, harvesting and processing (p. 8). In the ‘honeymoon period’ women appear to have been remunerated better for their work and additional

<sup>22</sup> The figures for area harvested and yield per hectare are taken from the FAO. Data on production export quantity, export value, export price and producer price information is from the Cashew Nut Board of Tanzania.



labour was hired to alleviate them from some of the work. Nevertheless, the authors point out that women gained less than men did during this period. In part, this is because men control the sale of and income from cashew nuts, and as they negotiate the prices with the buyers, women have little idea about how much has been sold and at which price.

*“Despite their vital labour contributions, which are non-negotiable, women in both Newala and Tandahimba districts revealed that their ability to access income earned from cashew nut production is dependent on good will.” (p. 9)*

There is also some evidence in the ActionAid report that in the 'honeymoon period' farmers faced labour constraints that produced gender tensions. In Lidumbe, women complained that the number of divorces went up as producer prices in the cashew nut sector increased. Men would make use of women's labour during the cashew nut season, only to abandon them for new wives when the season was over. "Men take the money and take a new wife and she gets it all".

Reading against the grain of the Actionaid account, however, it is possibly significant that there are no reported complaints from women that they had to work much harder and resented this. There is some evidence instead that women had shared in rising household incomes. Speaking to women in Mtwara and Lindi regions, Actionaid found that women generally felt that compared to recent years, they were better off in the initial post-liberalisation years. Women from Newala district maintained that, compared to today, they were certainly better off four to five years back. Their families were then able to hire labour to assist on the farms, but this was no longer possible. Previously they would also have been able to stock essential commodities. Some of the women interviewed could no longer afford even one litre of paraffin and often spent their evenings in the dark.

Some women engaged in cashew nut production on their own account but they were largely confined to local trade. One local male official represented women as lacking the capital, skills and storage facilities necessary to engage in and benefit from foreign trade, although the Action Aid research suggested that credit was a particular problem for women. One strategy is to join women's group, which can obtain credit to purchase land. Another advantage is that the women can rotate work within the group to keep up with reproductive responsibilities (p. 11).

The majority of women do not engage in cashew nut production independently but engage in other income generating activities, such as farm labour and petty-trade, with low entry constraints. "[T]he profitability of these activities appears to be highly dependent on the success of the cashew nut market. Both the availability of and remuneration for paid farm work was reported to differ dramatically between seasons and opportunities for off-farm trading were also thought to be unreliable" (p. 10). While trading was profitable during the 'honeymoon period', demand fell drastically with the falling cashew nut producer prices.

The two key findings in this study are that liberalisation first produced an upsurge in incomes, but this then fell away and that men and women are affected differently, because it is mainly men who won cashew trees. But the story is not a simple one. There is limited evidence of gender conflict as cashew production increases (contested divorces), but mainly women shared in rising prosperity and there was no

general complaint about increased workloads. Women are also concerned that the recent fall in real incomes is affecting all family members.

More detailed gender impacts of liberalisation of within cashew production and processing have been reported from in a much more extensive study done in Mozambique. See Box 4. Here the authors found that the ownership of cashew trees was not reserved to men and both men and women provided labour for their cultivation. Men had advantages in liberalised marketing institutions, although women were directly involved in marketing cashews in three-quarters of households. Women had lost jobs in the newly private processing plants compared to men and they have lower incomes than men there.

This comparison confirms that men's and women's farming are affected differently by liberalisation because of differences in the control over key resources and in the labour input to crops and in the control over income. However there is no evidence here of generalised gender conflict over work burdens. Much more important has been the loss of real income to households that liberalisation has brought, together with increased vulnerability in the face of powerful traders.

**Box 4: Comparative Case Study: Gendered Effects of Liberalising  
Cashew Nut Production and Exports in Mozambique<sup>23</sup>**

The research was carried out in 2002 in a predominantly matrilineal area in the north of Mozambique, in Nampula province, which has the largest share of marketed production of cashew nuts (75-80%). Raw cashew nuts have been exported from Mozambique since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and a local processing export industry since World War II, with women providing the majority of the labour. Production peaked in 1972 when 216,000 tons were marketed and Mozambique was the world's leading exporter of shelled cashew (kernels). Until the mid-1990s, the Mozambican government protected the national cashew nut processing sector through protective trade policies, but conditional loans from the World Bank required a liberalisation of the sector through opening the markets and lowering the exports tariffs. The liberalisation of the cashew sector became one of the most contentious policy reform issues in Mozambique (Wandschneider and Garrido-Mirapeix, 1999; Cramer, 1999; Hanlon, 2000). Rapid liberalisation is now acknowledged to have brought few gains to farmers and to have caused huge job losses (McMillan *et al*, 2002). By 1997, most factories had closed and about 10,000 jobs were lost. Although intense national debate led to a raising of tariffs on raw nuts in 1999, most factories have not reopened.

At the end of the 1990s, the government put in place a strategy to revive the sector, with the participation of the private sector, NGOs and communities. At present, cashew is still the third most important export for Mozambique. Smallholder farmers are responsible for about 95% of total raw nut marketed production and in total about one million rural households (40% of the rural population) have access to cashew trees (Wandschneider and Garrido-Mirapeix, 1999). At present, marketed production is only about 50,000 tonnes as compared to over four times that amount in the 1970s.

<sup>23</sup>

Taken from Kanji et al and Kanji and Vijfhuizen 2003

Processing initiatives provide only about 2000 jobs, as compared to 10,000 before liberalisation, although this does not include many small, unregistered processing initiatives for domestic and regional markets. Factories only purchased 6,000 tons of raw nuts in 2002 as compared to 25,000 tons in 1995-96.

As in Tanzania, Nampula smallholder cashew growers compared the value of growing cashews under the present regime unfavourably with the period before liberalisation. Their real income compared to what they can buy is lower. This is in part because the prices of consumer goods have risen and in part because increases in raw nut prices have benefited the trading sector rather than the smallholder producers. Competition in the private trading sector is limited because entry costs to trading are high and also because, the major traders co-ordinate prices [cf the trading cartels in Tanzania]. Additionally farmers can afford few technological as their price is high compared to the price they get for the raw nuts. Smallholders do not have many incentives to maintain or increase their cashew nut production, although there are also not many alternatives either.

#### *Gendered Effects in the Smallholder sector*

Whereas previous studies had made oversimplified generalisations about women's lack of access and control to land and trees, most women in Nampula had significant control over the use of cashew trees and their products and reported considerable security of tenure to land and to trees. The gender division of labour in cashew production was not very distinct, apart from pruning, which is almost always done by men. Both women and men participate in activities, such as weeding, clearing, planting and sowing, albeit in different proportions.

Women were also actively involved in the marketing of raw cashew nuts -a finding that challenges those in some previous studies in Nampula (including CASCA, 2002:19), that report that most income generating activities including the marketing of cashew nuts is dominated by men. This study found that women were directly involved in marketing the nuts in three-quarters of the households that sold cashews. Women also processed nuts themselves (at home) for consumption.

Nevertheless, the large trader/exporters and their agents tend to be men and women farmers are less likely than men to have access to information and inputs within the new interventions, although many men also lack access. Women are less likely to belong to farmer associations, which are male-dominated, or attend village meetings. Spraying contracts through these associations are signed by men and the operators of the spraying machines are always men. Extension workers are usually male and tend to contact and pass on information to men.

#### *Gendered Employment Effects*

Women held many of the jobs in processing factories in the 1970's and the study also examined gendered employment patterns in the new private processing plants. These were found to now employ a very much higher proportion of men than women (around 75%:25%). There are now few opportunities for factory work in Mozambique and men have crossed the gender boundaries, moving into the areas previously perceived as a female task, such as peeling. Women on the other hand have not been able to move into the shelling. Women's wages are lower than men's wages are, either because they work longer hours for the same pay, or because the work is paid

piecemeal and the areas in which women dominated are less well paid. Both women and men work long hours, but more women worked the longest hours per day. A high proportion of the women workers were widowed or divorced women, and employers preferred them as workers than married women. Overall, women have been more affected by the job losses in the cashew-processing sector because they have few other possibilities for taking up wage labour and they are less mobile than men are. As men have entered the domains, which used to be dominated by women, women's employment chances have decreased, as they haven't been able to enter the male dominated work spheres. Source: Kanji and Vijfhuizen 2003

### **Rural Diversification and its effects on relations between the genders and generations**

Deepening diversification is a widespread feature of the last 20 years of economic change in rural Africa and particular concern has been expressed at the form that it is taking in Tanzania. Some commentators argue that it is an indicator of the stress on rural incomes, and that few of these diversification strategies are likely to offer ways out of rural poverty. Bryceson argues that one of the major affects of Tanzania's market liberalisation policies on local village economies has been to produce a re-allocation of labour from agriculture to non-agricultural activities, especially trade and migrant labour employment. To examine this hypothesis research was carried out in four different villages in southern Tanzania.<sup>24</sup> The area had been part of Tanganyika's extensive labour reserve areas during the colonial period that had 'blossomed into important peasant commodity producing areas under the agricultural modernisation policies of the post independence government' (Bryceson 1999a). The villages were in areas with different farming systems and different local opportunities for diversification. It is one of the few studies of diversification in which issues of gender and of age are centrally embedded within the research. The findings for each village are in boxes 5-8. Each of these case study villages has had a different experience of liberalisation depending on the kind of cash crops each produced, on the relative scarcity or abundance of land and on the geographic factors which affect the potential for the development of a non-agrarian sector.

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<sup>24</sup> Village Examples taken from the Beyond the Shamba study from ASC Leiden and University of Dar es Salaam.

#### **Box 5 DARE Study S. Tanzania: Village A**

After independence this village became a well-developed ujamaa village that had prospered under state support for agriculture by producing considerable quantities of maize. It is situated in the Iringa region where young men had migrated to sisal plantations of central and coastal Tanganyika during the colonial period. In the post independence maize boom this region became highly specialised in commercial maize production.

Liberalisation produced a drop in maize prices in real terms and farmers faced real difficulty in marketing their crops, as traders no longer came to the village to buy. As a result maize acreage was declining, although there were few local cash earning alternatives. There was not enough purchasing power in the areas to support local smallscale industries and there were few major trading opportunities.

Young men and young women had turned to migration for income- the men were travelling many miles to work as wage labourers on tea estates or as rice sharecroppers. Bryceson describes this as the return of the labour migrant economy of old, but this time young women are also going away to work, mainly as house servants in Dar es Salaam.

#### **Box 5 DARE Study S. Tanzania: Village B**

Village B is in the same area as village A and was also experiencing a severe decline maize income.

This village is on a road giving it good links with a nearby town and ultimately with the capital. This village also had a much greater level of socio-economic differentiation than village A. A stratum of big commercial farmers, who had prospered under the maize boom were buying up more land, as many small holders became poorer with liberalisation. However there was no overall land shortage in this area and youth were still subsistence farming and expected to inherit land.

However they were keen to find non agricultural income sources to add to their farming and there was a local labour market providing some prospects of relatively skilled work for young men. Local purchasing power was high, because of the commercial farming stratum, there are technological training facilities nearby and the links with urban areas also created demand.

#### **Box 5 DARE Study S. Tanzania: Village C**

This village is situated on Lake Nyasa across from Malawi. Its farming systems were based in domestic food crops with rice and cocoa as cash crops. It is experiencing increasing land shortage. Rice plots are now too small for viable incomes older farmers rely more on cocoa a sign of food stress is the increase in cassava plantings. Male and female youth do some subsistence farming but only seasonally and few youth will inherit sufficient land to be farmers.

This village has developed a service sector niche for itself within the Malawian economy by instituting a weekly market, which caters primarily to Malawians who cross the lake to purchase cheap consumer items from China and imported second hand clothing. Young men and women are very active in these market trades and male youths transport and trade sugar from Malawi.

Bryceson reports that there is a profound sense of discontinuity and unease between the generations because of the very different income earning opportunities and labour markets that each generation has experienced.

#### **Box 5 DARE Study S. Tanzania: Village D**

There is a formerly tea and coffee producing village founded by returning South African labour migrants in the 1940's which has, historically, been very open to new ideas. Tea and coffee production have gone downhill for both economic and agronomic reasons and attempts to initiate new farming patterns were foundering because of lack of extension advice.

Land is at a premium and traditional inheritance patterns are under pressure, at the same time as farming opportunities are limited. This village, however, is on verge of becoming small town, and a centre for developing commercial and service activity. It is these commercial and service sectors that provide the younger generation with income in the informal sector and Bryceson describes trading as 'a youthful passion'

Bryceson argues that what is happening in these four places is very similar to what is happening more generally in rural Tanzania.

- There is a major diversification in rural incomes. This diversification is into mainly non- agrarian rather than agrarian sectors - which leads her to identify a process of de-agrarianisation as characteristic of the post liberalisation period in Tanzania.
- New forms of migration are important components in contemporary diversification strategies.

- The diversification does not provide as much of the forward and backward linkages that the literature on diversification emphasises as one of its positive aspects. Instead it is dominated by petty trading, often of cheap imported consumer goods from S and E Asia, second-hand clothes and imported foodstuffs. Some linkages are present e.g. in the rise in sales of local beer.

Bryceson's major contribution is to foreground the way in which the 'scramble for cash has caused an upheaval in age-old gender and generation divisions of labour' (1999a: pn). She suggests that 'the types of work ascribed strictly to men or to women have broken down'. 'Rural men have generally accepted that their wives and daughters can and in fact should work outside the home. This change in male attitudes appears to have taken place quite rapidly and under duress' (1999a:pn). She cites a study by Sender and Smith in 1980s in a village in eastern Tanzania where 'men (were) protecting women from working outside home. Little more than 10 years later women were emphatic that men were actively encouraging them to earn income' (Sender and Smith 1990). 'Rural women often refer to their new income earning role in terms of it having been thrust upon them by worsening economic circumstances' (Bryceson 1999a: pn).

While 'the nature and range of the cash earning activities that women currently pursue are striking'...'men have also taken on women's tasks (e.g. in some places beer brewing'. 'As age and gender barriers to market entry have melted away and growing divide has appeared between those with and those without sufficient capital to enter those non-agricultural product and services lines with high returns to labour'. The village examples show that many of the opportunities taken up by young men and young women are of the low entry low return type, producing poor incomes and that young men are more frequently to be found in the better remunerated activities. As women and youth 'flock to easy entry activities the competition produces low remuneration'.

Bryceson argues further that these changes are having profound effects on the relations between the genders and generations within households and families. While men are willing to acquiesce in women's new cash earning opportunities, they were much less willing to accept a restructuring of household relations. Women complained of an intensified working day as cash earning is added to their other productive and reproductive work. In another study in a coffee producing area, which has strong patrilineal and patriarchal traditions, rural diversification had meant that women had gained relative to men. 'Women faced complaints about demoralised husbands who resented and taunted their wives efforts to earn cash incomes, usually from trade and beer brewing' and 'Wife beating is cited as an increasing problem.' (Bryceson 1999a:20)

Bryceson emphasises the profound changes in relations between men and women as well as between children and their parents. She suggests that 'co-ordinated decision-making and income pooling is on the decrease' as the cash and income crisis has forced 'virtually all able-bodied adults as well as many children to seek different forms of income'. 'When choice is exercised (in these ways) there are fracture lines by gender and generation that serve to delimit co-ordination or co-operation of decision making amongst household members'. 'The individualisation of economic activity and the increasing tendency to engage in non agricultural income earning have had a

dissolving force on long standing agrarian division of labour as well as economic rights and responsibilities within rural households' (p21).

An important issue here is how widespread are the DARE studies findings? Madulu's study in Mwanza in North Western Tanzania found that farming was much the preferred activity - with 58% preferring farming ONLY as their livelihood base - despite an increase in the migration of young males to more commercial farming areas and to the mining areas (Madalu 1998 cited in Bryceson). "Agrarian values run very deep here, even though the region is experiencing a recent boom in small scale diamond and gold mining" (Bryceson 1999: 30 WP 43..).

A study of 8 villages in the Morogoro District which specifically examines diversification in livelihood portfolios and based on fieldwork in 2001(?) found that:

- 50% of household incomes are derived from non farm sources (wage labour, non-farm self employment and remittances)
- remittance transfers played a very small part in income portfolios
- The poorest households are more reliant on agriculture for their income than richer households
- Non-farm self-employment is the most significant source of non-farm income. For the poorest quartile it constitutes 11 per cent of income; for the richest quartile it represents 44% of income
- The kind of waged work undertaken by rich and poor is different. "Wage income for the poor derives from seasonal and intermittent work on the farms of others, while for the better off it is more likely to be more continuous wage work in non-farm enterprises, or salaried work for local government or public services" (Ellis and Mdoe 2002).

Although there is no base line data from which trends in non farm income as a contribution to total income can be assessed, the authors conclude that "becoming less reliant on agriculture is part of the process of climbing out of poverty in rural Tanzania" (Ellis and Mdoe 2002:17). We should perhaps add, bearing in mind Bryceson's findings that becoming less reliant on agriculture is also a survival strategy with negative consequences.

Ellis and Mdoe's study in Morogoro did not consider gender issues but Lyimo-Macha and Mdoe's carried out further work in which they interviewed women. They found that between 28 and 50 per cent of women had non-farm incomes (depending on locality). Women brewed beer and sold cooked food, made and sold thatch and mats and had seasonal and intermittent farm wage employment. Overall one third of women were working as casual labour at some time during the year on the maize and paddy fields of their neighbours, where they weeded, planted and harvested. Lyimo and Mdoe are more cautious about that pace of deepening diversification. 75% of women report no changes in their income portfolios in the last five years. Of the 25% that have changed, some of these are women who have given up activities as they have got older (and there are presumably other life cycle effects too).

There is no doubt that diversification of rural incomes in Tanzania is increasing, although in different localities to different extents. Although several other commentators highlight increased diversification as an outcome of increasing rural



poverty and associate this with the impact of liberalisation,<sup>25</sup> national level data that would provide information on trends are unavailable. Bryceson's review of the DARE studies remains the most comprehensive account that takes account of gender. However Lyimo-Macha and Mdoe (2002) report that women have full control over the income brought in by their non-farm activities, which they contrast with their farming income. This finding might point to a more significant change in gender relations of the kind described by Bryceson, if the incomes were not so small. Most of the craftwork brings in relatively little and casual farm work is also poorly paid and only the poorest sections of the population take it up.

### **Tourism in Zanzibar: gendered effects on the local economy**

The final sector to focus on in this discussion of the gendered effects of liberalisation is that of tourism, which has been a major growth area of the Tanzanian economy since liberalisation. Overseas investors have benefited from tax incentives (as has mining), and it is now Tanzania's major foreign exchange earner (Bigsten, Levin and Persson 2001). Tourism potentially provides jobs for women that can form part of their diversification strategies. There are also potential linkages to agriculture in the new markets for foodstuffs in hotels and restaurants. The Action Aid study described above also investigated the gender effects of liberalisation in Tanzania by researching the tourist industry in Zanzibar. Initially, the Government of Zanzibar had sought to protect Zanzibarian interests by seeking to secure more employment to people from the islands, to ensure their training and safety, and through trying to ensure local as well as foreign investment. However this strategy had not been very effective.

The Action Aid study found that the local population had not benefited much from direct employment in the tourism industry. Foreign investors preferred to draw in experienced staff from Europe or other East African countries to take on managerial and service tasks. Moreover, there had been an influx of illegal immigrants from the neighbouring regions and from Kenya, who have had more experience than Zanzibaris in dealing with the tourists and who were willing to depress wage levels (Action Aid 2004:16). Although six times as many people were involved indirectly in the tourism industry than those employed directly, Zanzibaris had lost out in other ways. The majority of the food supplies to local hotels are bought from commercial farms or imported and there was little local sourcing of foodstuff, with the exception of fresh fish. While some local male fishermen had benefited, outsiders had entered the fishing sector and fishermen owning larger boats and better equipment had been able to push many of them out.

There are a number of significant gender dimensions to these effects. Nationally the major sector of employment for women in the informal sector in Tanzania is that of trade/restaurant/hotel, where they are a higher percentage of the workforce than are men. Despite this, the Action aid study found that it had been particularly difficult for local women to get employment in the burgeoning tourist industry in Zanzibar. Women were being kept out of these jobs partly through the risk of being slandered as prostitutes within the local community (p. 20). Where they did get jobs, they were often forced to "settle for unfair wages and insecure employment" because their labour is devalued compared to men's labour, as it is the only way they can enter the labour market (p. 22). Women's livelihoods have also been adversely affected in the

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<sup>25</sup> For example Madula 1998 in a study in found that young men were increasingly migrating to work in commercial farming areas or small mines, as they were unable to find work locally. See Francis bibliography.

local community, where they have not been able to exploit the new market for garden produce, poultry or dairy products, as hotels bring in food from the mainland or buy from commercial farms on the islands. Some of the local fishermen were able to exploit the new market but diverted most of the catch to the hotels directly. This means that their wives lost out. They had less access to fish for domestic use and had also lost the income they used to get from acting as middlemen selling the fish for their husbands. The demand for fish for the new hotels had also pushed up the price of certain local fish and local people could no longer afford them.

These gendered outcomes in Zanzibar are disappointingly negative in what has been one of the few growth areas on the Tanzanian economy since liberalisation. However there is every reason to believe that they are not isolated findings. A recent paper by Williams looking globally at the political economy of tourism liberalisation and its effects on women in the context of GATS makes a number of similar points (Williams nd). She identifies several ways in which tourist development may not be in line with social sustainable development. These include the high leakage of tourist receipts abroad and skewed ownership of resources to the North and northern based FDI. In the Tanzanian case, Chachage estimates that two thirds of the foreign exchange from tourism is lost to Tanzania (Chachage 1999). Williams says further that as liberalisation introduces foreign owned tourist enterprises, there is a gradual loss of small and medium enterprises, as local entrepreneurs are unable to compete. She also highlights negative equity effects, including those relating to gender, in which it is common to find that women lose out in formal employment, although they may benefit in the informal sector, from selling of handicrafts and the like.

There is a further negative effect for women. An important theme raised by the Williams Chachage and Action Aid sources are the problems around land grabbing and speculation associated with tourism. The Action Aid study in Zanzibar found that the tourism industry had affected the access to land in the coastal villages, as land has been tricked away from the local population. This is likely to be impinging on the livelihoods of entire households (p. 17-19), although the study was not able to research this. Chachage (1999) argues that the growth of tourism more generally in Tanzania is leading to land shortage and land conflicts.<sup>26</sup> As has been discussed extensively by Tsikata, women's weaker claims to land mean that they lose out in situations of land shortages in Tanzania, to which recent land grabbing and land speculation have contributed (Tsikata 2003).

### **Themes to take forward**

One major lesson from the Tanzanian case study, which is borne out in many other country examples, is that the private sector provides inadequate markets for small holder farmers. A comparative example here is Zambia, where the disastrous initial effects of liberalisation policies on food producers maize farmers is relatively well known (Sources). Local-level research by an OXFAM IDS in 1999, comprehensively addresses this issue (OXFAM/IDS 1999c). Prior to liberalisation, pan territorial pricing favoured farmers in remote areas where maize production was much more marginal. The removal of maize subsidies and state marketing lead to a loss of guaranteed prices occurring at the same time as a catastrophic loss of marketing and credit facilities. Many small farmers in remote areas suffered a serious loss of income,

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<sup>26</sup> Wild life parks and safari tourism are especially significant here, but so are the effects of tourism in areas where land is already in finite supply - such as the coastal areas and urban areas such as Dar es Salaam.

as they were unable to switch to other crops because there was no institutions or markets to provide inputs or to buy crops. Areas that were marginal for maize and cotton production were exposed because the higher transaction costs meant that even where there were increased prices only a small proportion got through to farmers. Liberalisation favoured Zambia's small commercial farm sector in well-favoured regions, but produced absolute losses in income and welfare for many.

“The overriding conclusion of the field research is the critical role of markets in determining the poverty impacts of trade and other liberalisations. Where conditions for the poor have improved this has usually been associated with better performance of and access to markets. Where they have worsened faulty or missing markets are to blame” (Winters 2000b).

A further key lesson from the Tanzanian case study is that exposure to world markets brings increased vulnerability. The cashew sector first expanded and then declined. World agricultural commodity prices have been quite volatile in the last decade. One country where this is of particular concern is Uganda. Uganda has achieved good growth rates with economic reform and there is no doubt that overall there has been a decline in rural poverty (Morrisey et al 2003 and others). The basis for this agricultural growth has largely been a major expansion in coffee production. World coffee prices have declined sharply since most of the assessments of household level poverty were undertaken and there is likely to have been a sharp decline in household incomes as a result.<sup>27</sup> Another relevant example is that of cotton production in Burkina Faso, which also increased markedly with liberalisation. Considerable official concern has been expressed recently at the effects that lower global cotton prices are having on Burkina's rural households. The Prime Minister has made strong representations against US and EU subsidies to their cotton producers, which undercut Burkina Faso's farmers. Some accounts have also noted that women food producers are also exposed to global food prices and find themselves undercut by imports of cheaper regionally sourced food (IWGGT and Brussels Group).

The final key theme emerging from the Tanzania case study is the changing role of diversification into off farm activities in livelihoods. Studies in the two decades up to the mid nineties suggest that between 30 and 50% of rural incomes comes from this sector (Chuta and Leidholm 1990 Reardon 1997). The off farm sector is very varied. Historically it seems to have performed two roles. Given the widespread failure or absence of credit markets, access to high-return off-farm activities provided one source of surplus for investing in improving agricultural productivity and other forms of accumulation (Example Kenya). It is a source of investment capital (Reardon 1995). Working off-farm is also one of the ways in which small holder households managed the risks associated with unpredictable and insecure agro-ecological conditions. They are part of coping strategies. (Davies 1995, Scoones 1996, Devereux 1992,1993).

The increasing move into non-farm income activity in the last 10-15 years seems to be an increase in a different type of diversification activity - namely the search for survival under conditions of increasing economic stress. This has lead authors to stress that there are in effect two different kinds of links with poverty. Some off-farm

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incomes provide routes out of poverty (Ellis 1999) - either because diversification itself gives higher and more secure incomes or because such income can be reinvested in farming. In other cases, incomes earned are so poor that diversification “does not contribute to the achievement of sustainable livelihoods but to a cycle of impoverishment” (Hussein and Nelson 1998). Diversification is a survival strategy that may entrench poverty.

A further and linked feature of off farm activities is that they can be divided into two broad categories: a set of low return activities with few entry constraints and a smaller set of entry- constrained high return activities (Reardon 1997; Dercon and Krishnan 1996). The number of high entry high returns activities is small and includes long distance trade and formal sector employment requiring material and human capital resources. The low entry low return activities are a myriad of different forms of informal and self-employment and casual employment, both on and off farm. The off farm sector is in effect segmented. Diversified activities appear to play different roles in the portfolios of poor compared with wealthier rural households. Poorer people tend to take poorly paid casual farm labour or to be forced into survival strategies in the informal economy which give very low returns, while the more wealthy specialise in high entry, high return activities. Different authors are thus able to emphasise different aspects of increasing diversification. Some as Dolan points out have 'depicted diversification into off farm income activities favourably associating it with poverty reduction, employment generation and enhanced market linkages for rural households (Reardon 1997, Yunez Naude and Taylor 2001 Ranis and Stewart 1993 Ellis 2000)' (Dolan 2002). Others, of whom Bryceson is one, have argued that they are a symptom of a downward poverty spiral, stressing also that much of this activity is petty trading, rather than more productive work (Bryceson 1999b).

These processes provide the background to examining the gendered impact of liberalisation in Sub Saharan Africa more generally. The Tanzanian case study suggests that three questions should be addressed:

- a) What kind of diversification strategies are women pursuing and what are their effects?
- b) Are women farmers able to take advantage of new opportunities? If not, why not?
- c) What kinds of changes are taken place in gender relations within rural households, especially farm families?

## 6 LIBERALISATION AND THE GENDERED RURAL ECONOMY

As I have asserted earlier, studies of changing gender relations under the unfolding impact of liberalisation in sub-Saharan Africa are exceedingly sparse, so there are few empirical accounts draw upon. It is however possible to consider the issue more abstractly. In this section I review what we know about the links between gender and the rural economy, highlighting the three themes coming out of the Tanzanian case study. To do so I adopt the approach developed by feminist economists that conceptualises the economy as gendered. "Instead of thinking of the economy as something external that has an impact on women, we can think of the economy as gendered structure; and economic change as a gendered process. Gender relations condition all the operations of the economy" (Elson and McGee 1999:1991).

- gender is "a category of social and economic differentiation that influences the division of labour and the distribution of work income, wealth, productivity of inputs, and economic behaviour of agents" (Grown, Elson and Cagatay, 2000: 1148).
- "economic institutions which are not themselves intrinsically gendered are nevertheless less the bearers of gender" (Elson 1995:1852).).

I pay particular emphasis to the ways in which institutions such as labour markets or markets for goods are gendered.

- Institutions are the site of social norms shaping behaviour (Grown, Elson and Catgatay 2000) and of relations of power and inequality, including those of gender (Whitehead 2001). "Though social institutions may appear to be gender neutral they bear and transmit gender biases. They embody social norms which shape the behaviour of individuals about what it is appropriate to want and to do." (Grown Elson and Cagatay, 2000: 1148 )
- "Gender relations are not rigid, but rather as subject to change and requiring active maintenance. There may be internal ambiguities and contradictions. Men and women have continually to negotiate access to and control over income, assets, labour use and other productive resources. In these negotiations men and women also deploy symbolic and cultural resources." (Whitehead 2001)

In what follows I look at a) gender in diversified labour markets b) gendered access to resources.

### **Gender in Diversified Labour Markets**

The diversification into off-farm income generating activities, which is as we have seen a key trend, includes a very wide variety of activities: working for wages and self-employment; small businesses and micro-enterprises; formal sector employment. Many activities take place in the 'informal economy' - the area of unrecorded and unregulated employment activity. I find it helpful to refer to all these as a rural labour market available to men and women, using the term in a wider sense than commonly used in macro-economic statistics. The broad definition employed here include own account working in trade and enterprises providing small manufactures and services, wage labour in these, together with wage labour in agriculture and the vast myriad of

small scale informal income generating activities. The use of a single term helps to emphasise economic continuities and discontinuities in the income generating possibilities and also emphasises the economic factors affecting how men and women are recruited to different activities. As described earlier, this diversified labour market is lumpy and segmented in a number of ways, with one of the most significant segmentations that between low entry low return activities and higher entry higher return activities.

A further feature of this diversified rural labour market is that it is segmented by gender. There is a very strong tendency for activities and employment to be specific to either men or to women. Beer brewers and seamstresses are women; brickmakers and butchers are men and so on. There are only a few activities taken up by both men and women. One such potential example is discussed in box 6, which looks at the scattered evidence for women's agricultural employment. This is a vastly under-researched area of women's work, but evidence is mounting that it is a major source of income for the poorest rural women. Both men and women are employed casually in farming, but rarely at the same tasks. This is partly because of gender task specificity, because employers prefer men and women to do different kinds of tasks, or because some casual work requires migration away from home. A clear outcome of these gender differences is that it allows men and women's wages to be very different, with women's usually being about half that of men.

#### **Box 6 Women's Agricultural Employment**

The structure and characteristics of women's agricultural employment is severely under-researched, partly because historically it has been seriously under-recorded. There is scattered evidence that in some countries women may form a large proportion of the casual labour force in small holder agriculture, as well as in commercial agriculture. Employment by day, for cash and for payment in kind, is both very widespread and a critical source of labour supply to the more successful farmers in small holder areas. A good deal of the casual labour used on growing hybrid maize in Zambia in the 1980's was female. Evans and Young found that in the Northern Province around two thirds of the sampled households hired in labour and that the regular supply of locally hired labour was largely female (1997). A study of female wage employment in agriculture in Zimbabwe showed that women played an active part in the very lively local labour market in a communal land area. 62 % of the household members who worked for wages were female casual day labourers. Much of this low paid casual agricultural work, in which women predominate, was not formally recorded (Adams 1991).

We know very little about the wage rates and total income to women for this kind of work, or about its knock-on effects on their own account farming. Most studies offering estimates suggest that women are paid from one third to one half the male rate for a day's work (E.g. Whitehead 1996). The Benin poverty assessment reports rural women being paid about half as much as men "because the work given to them is considered less arduous" (WorldBank 1994: 64). Wage employment of this kind may however bring in more income than self employment in the informal economy. Dolan reports that although in her

two predominantly agricultural village, only 9,5% of female heads of households one village and 5 % in the other participate in wage employment the comparable figures for male heads of household are 45% and 36%), this wage employment puts the women are in middle income tercile - compared with self employment which puts them in the lowest (Dolan 2002).

Some casual work is done by women as migrants. Adams (1991) suggests that doing this kind of waged work in Zimbabwe was a hallmark of female poverty and an indication of the absence of other employment options. Her study of the female labour market in Zimbabwe included a sugar cane factory employing 3,400 permanent employees and between 3000 and 1,300 casual workers for fieldwork. Many of these were women. Although the casual wage rate was comparatively good, the work was seasonal. Many women were re-hired and the critical factor affecting overall wages was the length of the working period in any one-year. This varied quite a lot, with potentially very different welfare outcomes. Adams describes the women employed casually in the factory as in "desperate" circumstances. Mostly 'single', they were work migrants who had left children behind in their home villages and lived all year round near the factory. Those who had only short contract periods were in dire straits and Adams hints that when they were not wanted in the sugar cane fields their only other livelihood strategy was selling sexual services. Women migrating for casual work lack the protection of family and kingroup. There may also be little housing provided and they may enter into partnerships with men to get places to live.

A further factor affecting the welfare of casual women workers lies in what other livelihood strategies they are able to adopt in addition to casual estate work. One of the main problems for Zimbabwe farm workers is that they have few other income sources. They are not living on their own land and adding casual work to own account farming.

This raises a further characteristic feature of the gender segregation in diversified rural labour markets. Women are overwhelmingly clustered in low-entry, low-return type activities. Most men are found here too, but some men also occupy the high-entry, high-return type activities. The tendency to gender segmentation of this kind is not absolute. For example women traders are very prominent in southern Ghana and although they are more likely than men to be found in the low entry low return type of trade, there are a minority of women who operate on a much larger scale, including international traders. In 1990 Ameyaw found that over 90 per cent of women in Techiman market have less than 5000m cedis trading capital and are limited both in type and volume of commodities traded (Ameyaw 1990). The majority of women in Kumasi market in the mid-nineties made insufficient profits to support family needs and their market activities tended to be low paid and risky (King 1999). Both markets also contained wealthy larger scale women traders. One of the impacts of trade liberalisation on women in Ghana has been "tougher competition among women international and domestic traders; more resources and skills are needed to compete, leaving fewer opportunities for women who are poor and disadvantaged and/or have a high burden of reproductive tasks." (IWGGT n.d). Another example where women are in high return activities is Adams' study in rural Zimbabwe, where some educated women were employed as teachers nurse and so on (Adams 1991).

In the main however women are confined to low entry low return activities. Most of the activities that women undertook in Tanzania required little start-up capital and yield relatively low returns to labour. Baden found that, although in some areas women play an important role in trading, they are mainly involved in petty trading, especially of fresh produce with a high degree of perishability (Baden 1998). Several kinds of constraints prevent women from entering into the more lucrative trading markets. In a recent (2001) study of three villages in Uganda, Dolan found that most female-headed households were engaged in off farm income activities, with the majority in self-employment rather than wage employment. At least 50 % of those whose livelihood portfolios included self-employment fell into the lowest income tercile giving some indication of the poor returns to labour in some of these activities. Female-headed households have a mean per capita income that is about 30% lower than male headed households and 'this poverty is partly a product of FHHs inability to diversify into higher return activities' (Dolan 2002:6)

### *Reasons for gender segmentation*

There are a number of potential reasons why the rural labour market in Africa is so strongly gender segregated - among them gender difference in educational and skills levels, gender ideologies and their effects on trust and social capital, entry costs, and the values that men and women place on their labour.

There is relatively little evidence that differences in education between men and women are a major factor underlying rural labour segmentation. In rural Zimbabwe where there are well-developed and relatively well-differentiated labour markets, it is likely that education offers access to better-paid occupations and that gender differentials in educational attainment will play a role in differentiating access (Adams 1991; Piesse and Thirtle 1999). Overall, however, the evidence that educational inequalities underpin gender inequalities in access to the off-farm sector tends to be strongest for urban areas, and for particular activities in urban areas<sup>28</sup>. There is some evidence of inequality in returns to male and female education from rural Tanzania where Collier et al. (1986) pointed to the extremely skewed access to non-farm employment, with access critically determined by education, age and gender. A 36 year old man with secondary education had a three in four chance of such employment while a woman of the same age and educational level had only half of that chance. With completed primary education, she had a quarter of the chance and with partial primary education, only a fifth. By and large however the evidence that education increases returns to labour in rural areas is at best ambiguous, and it does so much more dramatically and consistently in the formal sector (particularly in the public sector) of urban areas<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> It should be noted here that this is another area where there is relatively little evidence about the effects of education on returns to labour for men and women. Glick and Sahn (1997) point out that there have been very few attempts to analyse labour markets in Africa using household-level data and even fewer that differentiate findings on the determinants and returns to employment by gender. By largely focusing on returns to education for wage earners, the literature in Sub-Saharan Africa has tended to cover only a very small fraction of the overall labour force and focus mainly on the urban sector. Education levels may also be a factor affecting farming patterns. Quisumbing reviews studies using econometric approaches to the adoption of technology and new crops and found that the education variable had little effect in Zambia (Kumar, 1994; Jha et al. 1991); Kenya, Tanzania or Cote D'Ivoire (Appleton et al., 1991). The main exception to this absence of an educational effect was in Kenya where it was found that while female decision-makers were somewhat less likely to grow coffee than male, more educated females were more likely to do so than those with less education.

<sup>29</sup> See discussion in Whitehead and Kabeer 2001



Although typically the trade, services and manufacturing of the African countryside require few formal skills and all the workers in them are in national accounting terms unskilled, nevertheless the activities themselves frequently depend on skills that individuals have acquired through informal education and socialisation. Examples are legion: cooked food selling, dressmaking, brickmaking. The vast majority of these build on gender specific performance of activities in the non-monetised arena and this is bound to have a marked effects on the kinds of off farm activities men and women undertake. This should not be seen as a matter of cultural stereotyping (only women can sell cooked food, only men can do blacksmithing), but as a matter of the invisible training to do certain work that takes place in the household and community.

Social and cultural factors play important roles in gender segregated entry to labour markets in other ways. One of the few studies which has explored in detail the processes which lead to gender segregation in rural labour markets is that by Evans in an area in Uganda.

"On the demand side of the market employers, who were generally but not exclusively male, stated that it was easier to deal with male employees because there were "fewer misunderstandings between men". Many referred to the rumours and innuendo that would start in the village if a woman, and particularly a married woman, worked for another man for payment. The few male employers that did hire women generally hired women that were divorced widowed or separated. On the supply side, men and women both stated that doing manual work for another was no better than begging, and was a reflection of a poor and disorganised home. However for a married woman working for a male employer was considered to be particularly damaging, not only to her own reputation, but also to the reputation of her husband. "When a wife goes for casual labour and is paid by another man, she is dissatisfied with her home and is seeking a new husband" (Mosley 2000 :114-115 citing Evans 1992).

Evans is here drawing attention to the ways in which trust and social capital come into play in gendered ways. Similar issues are raised by Bryceson in her account of the Tanzanian cereals trade where "the maize wholesale and intermediary trade is almost exclusively the preserve of men. Women traded more locally and in small quantities than men" (Bryceson 1993). More generally:

Women who act as intermediaries tend to take a low risk intermediary approach by collecting produce from their home locality and selling in location where they have established contacts, thus limiting their potential to become wholesalers. In order to build up contacts and access information, intermediaries have to live a mobile and outgoing lifestyle, often involving drinking and sexual promiscuity (op.cit.: )

These factors clearly play some part in the very different kinds of trade activity that women and men engage in the forms of diversification characteristic of de-agrarianisation which Bryceson has identified for Tanzania which were discussed above.

Aspects of the role that trust and social capital play in the working of the economy have been conceptualised by Elson who sees them as an important aspect of risk handling institutions." One of the important ways in which labour markets are gendered is in terms of the ways in which they handle risk" (Elson 1999:615). Male jobs in formal employment more often feature risk reducing mechanisms - such as trades unions and other profession or work based associations, job security rights and social insurance. Risk reducing institutions for the self-employed include chambers of commerce, business clubs, trade associations " (ibid.) which are often "the bearers of gender - that are contracted around male norms and may even formally exclude women." (op.cit.: 616). Here the institutions being considered are relatively formal more urban institutions, but social capital in the form of informal rural social institutions probably perform similar functions and are similarly "the bearers of gender".

The gendered rural labour market is also based on two very important, much more strictly economic issues, namely those of entry costs and the value people seeking work place on their labour.

The entry costs to different kinds of non-farm income generating activities are clearly a major factor affecting men and women's location within it. In his review, Reardon notes that high entry, high return non farm employment are a largely male preserve because 'women sometimes appear to be limited to the low wage activities in the non-farm sector and (to) businesses with low start-up costs' (Reardon 1997: ). Many of the typical women's off farm employment can be surmised as requiring only very low start-up costs. Trading in fresh vegetable produce e.g. may mean selling produce from your own farm or garden. The costs of a day's worth of ingredients and fuel for cooked food can be quite low and the equipment may be confined to household items a woman already has. Beer brewing is often a larger scale activity and requires access to large pots, up-front money for ingredients and copious amounts of fuel. Some of these can be borrowed. Women get start-up capital and /or credit from mothers, other relatives and husbands. Research in Zimbabwe of the effects of a decline in formal employment associated with liberalisation found that it led to expansion in the informal sector, especially for women. Examples are given of work that gives very low returns to women (making pots for tourists) and Winters warns the very poor are not able to start even in these low-level informal activities because of lack of capital (See Box 3.3, Winters 2000 p). Dolan found that in her case study in Uganda, most FHHds complained they couldn't invest in trade and business because they couldn't find the startup costs. This leaves FHHds confined to trading activities characterised by low returns.

The final important issue is the gender segmentation that occurs with respect to willingness to work for very poor wages and returns to labour. The reasons why women are willing to accept very low returns to labour while men are not are complex. The Benin poverty assessment reports rural women being paid about half as much as men "*because the work given to them is considered less arduous*" (World Bank 1994: 64). However, this local justification for low wage rates to women masks the way in which the very different positions of men and women in the rural economy as a whole affects the reserve price of labour. Women's reserve price of labour is likely to be low where the income potential of their own production is low, where the income generating opportunities off farm are few, or give low returns to labour, and

where there is urgent need. There are often few local opportunities and an excess of women needing work.

"In instances where there is a debt to be urgently repaid or a major expenditure to be covered ...the reserve price of labour tends to drop. A significant amount of female casual labour is supplied under these conditions...Women are often forced to drop their reserve price below the village "norm" because of an urgent need for income or food." (Evans 1992 para 8.17)

In Tanzania Lyimo-Macha and Mdoe found women and men engaged in distress selling of labour. "Labour selling among women and men was common during food shortages. During this period members of a particular household are compelled to work on the farms of others to get cash for purchasing food. Sometime the payment can be in kind in the form of food" (Lyimo-Macha and Mdoe n.d :11). On the whole, women seem more likely than men to have to offer themselves up for work in conditions where they are distress sellers of labour -i.e. so lacking means of livelihood that they will take anything (Elson 1999:618). The most informed discussion of "distress labour selling" by women in the African countryside is that by Evans who stresses of women's contractual inferiority in the labour market.

"The severe constraints on women's time and income earning frequently places them in a contractually inferior position in the village labour market. Whilst most employers argue that male and female labourers receive the same payment for the same piece of work, the fact (...is..) that women, especially women heads of households, women from households with inadequate land endowment and women known to be "in distress" do not enter the wage bargaining process on the same terms as men. So in practice a woman's offer price may be below that of a man's, or will quickly be reduced in the face of an intransigent employer. The fact that women more frequently ask for, or are offered, food as payment for labour makes identifying possible wage discrimination between men and women more difficult". (Evans 1992 para 8.18)

Men's better farming opportunities give most men a stronger fall back position, but there are also more opportunities for men that give higher returns to labour<sup>30</sup>. Men may also perceive that doing very low paid work - some of which is seen as akin to begging - will affect their capacity to command other kinds of work - for example by being pushed out of the social networks that will bring them other work.

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#### *Liberalisation and Gender Differentiated Diversification*

These general findings about the nature of and reasons for gender segmentation in rural labour markets help us to understand the findings in the few studies that have looked at how the processes of diversification for rural women have been affected by liberalisation. Three such studies are summarised in Boxes 7-9 below. These boxes suggest that there have been new diversified opportunities for women with liberalisation. The expanding horticulture sector is one example. Here the welfare

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<sup>30</sup> There is of course a historical virtuous/vicious circle at work here in which men become associated with work that has better returns and women become associated with low returns work and these begin to form part of gender ideologies.

enhancing effects seem to vary from country to country, with experiences being more positive in ?? compared with Zimbabwe Box 9. The other two case studies paint a much more negative picture. Malawi's experience of liberalisation has been particularly negative, but box 7 suggests that within this rural female-headed households have been particularly badly effected. The main diversification strategy being taken up is ganyu work, which has knock on effects in reducing the time they can out into their own food production. Box 8 also looks at Zimbabwe in a study of the urban informal economy. Although it does not deal with rural issues, it is reproduced because it is one of very few studies that have collected longitudinal data. These suggest a steady decline in incomes and well-being for women depending on the informal sector.<sup>31</sup> These three studies are indicative, but it should be reiterated that, despite all the recent attention to livelihood diversification, there are still far too few studies that collect gender data and even fewer that do so together with good economic data on entry costs and returns. Only these can reveal how these gendered processes are unfolding with liberalisation.

**Box 7 Liberalisation and Gender Diversified labour Markets 1  
Female Household Heads Struggling for Survival in Malawi**

A considerable literature has explored Malawi's experience of liberalisation, which has been particularly negative (Peters Kydd McDonagh 2002 +list sources)<sup>32</sup>. As described earlier, Malawi was one of the southern African countries that experienced famine or near famine conditions in 2001-2002. Writing in 2002 and based on fieldwork in the previous 12 months McDonagh concludes:

"The results from the village level studies in this research leave no doubt that most low income households in rural areas are in a desperate state, struggling to feed themselves with very few assets to fall back on when times are hard. A Combination of the droughts and floods of the last decade, price trends and the negative effects of structural adjustment policies are directly to blame. Farmers are also suffering exploitation at the hands of the private sector and the national agricultural support services have almost completely broken down" (McDonagh 2002:21)

Smallholder areas of Malawi, e.g. the Southern region, have high levels of de facto and de jure female headed households (Peters), many of whom farm under 0.5 hectares of land. These households have been particularly hard hit by the increased vulnerability that liberalisation has brought. Of particular concern are the diversification strategies that are open to them. Liberalisation has been accompanied by a growth in people seeking ganyu work in the last five years as poverty is increasing. This term describes a wide variety of casual piecework arrangements with may be paid for by cash or in kind (Whiteside 2000). Sometime ganyu is a way neighbours, relatives and other seek to help out those in distress, but it is also an important category of estate labour. This work often brings in poor returns, although in some forms - e.g. when men

<sup>31</sup> In these Zimbabwe studies it is of course difficult to disentangle the effects of liberalisation on the economy from the effects of political upheavals.

<sup>32</sup> It should also be pointed out Malawi had negative growth rates ( -1.1% I 1980 and -4.7% in 1981) immediately prior to structural adjustment measures

travel to better off rural areas for casual waged work, returns are better. Ganyu is the most important source of livelihood for most poor households and in places it has become even more important than own farm production (Whiteside 2000). The wage rates paid are driven down when labour demand or overall food supplies are poor.

In Southern Malawi, many female household heads are increasingly engaged in ganyu and for longer periods. 'Female headed households use up more of their labour time on ganyu, but for lower reward' Whiteside 2000. Women's ganyu wage rates are less than men's and they also tend to be confined to more poorly rewarded ganyu close to home. 'Even with ganyu income those households with smaller land holdings do not earn sufficient income from ganyu to make up their maize deficit'. Many of these are female-headed households. A highly significant finding is that the pressing need to take on ganyu takes women (and men) away from their own small farms. This conflict with their own-farm food production locks these households into poverty and food deficit. (Whiteside 2000)

#### **Box 8 Liberalisation and Gender Diversified Labour Markets 2 Declining Women's incomes in Harare's Informal Economy**

A study by Mupedziswa and Gumbo of the effects of the economic recovery and structural adjustment programme in Harare in Zimbabwe of women in the informal economy is one of the very few that has longitudinal data. 175 households were interviewed in three rounds between 1992 and 21995. This time period is important because it allowed for the temporary effects of the drought to have been worked through by the final round and the authors are confident that some of their findings relate directly to the economic reforms. They concluded that although there are subsectors in the informal economy most women are struggling for survival and living from hand to mouth and that there had been a marked drop in living standards in the surveyed households.

"Even when drought and the recovery from the drought are taken into consideration together with the initial shock of adjustment, there is a clear tendency to a slight but steady decline in almost every respect: trading returns, lowered consumption, and increased working hours. The reasons for this development include: a weakened demand, increased competition as well as the escalating costs of raw material and other goods." The found a widening gap between different sub-groups of traders but "The vast majority of women either remained where they were or suffered setbacks." "The state of things got even worse in the third phase of research. Demand had gone down to its lowest ebb and virtually all women traders blamed the economic reform programme for this development."

**Box 9 Liberalisation and Gender Diversified labour Markets 3**  
**Expanding Horticulture and Women's Waged Work**

Production of high value agricultural crops for export is a major growth area in developing countries and it has grown steadily as a proportion of several country's exports in the last decade. Much of this has created employment in medium and large-scale enterprises, although in Kenya smallholders have been engaged in vegetable production for exports - e.g. of green beans. Women form a high proportion of this new workforce (see table below), and the wage rates are relatively good in relation to prevailing incomes. An FAO study reports a women's farmers leader saying "The export crops have changed our lives. We have new roofs, better homes and our children can go to school" (FAO 2002 cited in Dolan and Sorby 2003). Not all reports of the income effects for women are favourable however. The authors of the OXFAM/IDS study of trade liberalisation and poverty in Zimbabwe cautioned that the poverty reducing affects of horticultural and NTAEs employment was probably small because the pay and conditions of the casual workers, especially on medium scale and small-scale farms, were so poor that it was doubtful whether there was any net welfare gain.

There are several factors that undermine the welfare enhancing effect of this new employment for women. First, agribusiness enterprises operate gender-segregated employment with men and women doing different kinds of work. In addition to doing different kinds of task, women are overwhelmingly employed in more insecure and unskilled forms of work - as seasonal, temporary or casual workers. Gender segregation allows the maintenance of gendered wage differences and reduces opportunities for women to become skilled. When they are working, they work very long hours, often in poor conditions and they are not covered by social provisions. As they are earning for only part of the year, the impact on their welfare depends on what other livelihood strategies they can pursue. Many of the women working in agribusiness are migrants. Own account farming is not open to them and they are very vulnerable in the periods when they are not working on the export crops. Many of the women working in agribusinesses are relatively young and are single, but even so most of them have children. One of the other costs of their work is that they may have to leave children behind in home areas. Some studies report also that the long working hours mean that women become isolated and do not build up social links in the communities in which they are living.

Dolan and Sorby emphasise that export agribusiness to US and EU countries is a very competitive sector. This puts a great deal of pressure to use more flexible labour - especially casual and seasonal workers, under poorer conditions (more women) and to drive wages down. It is also driving Kenya's smallholders out of vegetable production.

Source: Dolan and Sorby 2004

## Women's Employment in High Value Agricultural Export Production

	Numbers employed	Gender composition	Age (range or median)	Employment status
<b>Cut flowers</b>				
<b>Kenya<sup>a</sup></b>	40,000 + 4-5,000 small holders	75% female	20–34	Seasonal
<b>Uganda<sup>b</sup></b>	3,000	85% female	–	Permanent
<b>Zimbabwe<sup>c</sup></b>	27,000	79% or 87% female	–	Seasonal & permanent
<b>Fruit</b>				
<b>South Africa<sup>d</sup></b>	280,000	53% female	31	Seasonal , temporary, & contract
<b>Vegetables</b>				
<b>Kenya<sup>e</sup></b>	20,000 - 32,000	66% female	18-29	Temporary

Notes: Adapted from Dolan and Sorby 2003

a Blowfield and others 1998, KHRC 2001.

b Djikstra 2001, Asea and Kaija 2000.

c AEAA 2002.

d Mainly producing grapes and apples -relatively well established 'traditional' exports.

Barrientos and others 1999b, Barrientos and Barrientos 2002.

e Dolan and Sutherland 2002.

## Gendered Access to Resources

One of the major lessons of the experience of economic reform and liberalisation in SSA is that the resource poverty of African farmers prevents them from taking up new opportunities.

'In order to participate in the positive effects of trade liberalisation an individual must own factors of production, or have access to them and must be able to reallocate them in line with new economic incentives that trade liberalisation precipitates' (Fontana, Joeke and Masika 1998).

Capital constraints are extremely important to both men and women farmers. All small holder farming requires some capital, even subsistence farming for which there must be seeds and tools, but cash crop farming, whether of food or export crops, requires much more outlay. The sums involved are often beyond the reach of many women, through whose hands pitifully little cash may pass during the normal year and who particularly suffer from what Reardon has termed investment poverty.<sup>33</sup> Women's investment poverty arises out of a combination of factors:- the small scale of her farming enterprises provides little surplus to re-invest and her culturally assigned responsibilities for food production may prevent her from squeezing family welfare in the way that men sometimes do to get investment for farming. It is exacerbated the extent to which women get off-farm incomes and the level of these

<sup>33</sup> Reardon 1995 distinguishes between investment poverty and welfare poverty. Welfare poverty is essentially consumption/income or expenditure poverty and investment poverty is lacking any resources to put into income generation.

incomes and by public and private policy with respect to credit, input schemes and crop markets.

It is here that differences just described between men and women in their access to off-farm income become doubly important. Of-farm income has historically been a major source of investment for those who have been able to accumulate through agriculture. This can include savings from local medium scale trading or formal employment. Kenya is a particularly well-documented case in this regard, where incomes of household members in formal and informal urban employment have been critical in agricultural modernisation (Collier and Lal 1986, Haugeraud 1995, Kitching 1980). In Zambia in the late 1980s, Moore and Vaughan noted that "Wage employment is still the most secure way of acquiring the capital needed to engage in hybrid maize production" (1994 :213) and reported many returned labour migrants in this agriculturally less favoured area using savings to become small commercial farmers.<sup>34</sup> Women as we have seen are much less able to enter into off-farm incomes that provide enough to provide savings for agricultural investment. Capital constraints thus become a vicious circle. The fact that women lack capital which confines them to lower return activities off the farm also means that they don't get enough from these sources to re-invest in farming. Gender inequality is thereby exacerbated. This possibility is alluded to by Reardon when he concludes that the "differential capacity to enter the non farm labour market can effect household and gender income differentiation over time' Reardon 1997.

One set of rural households whose welfare is particularly affected by this vicious circle is female-headed households. Although it is well known that female headed households are not a homogeneous category with respect to the processes which have produced female headship, or their poverty levels or livelihoods, many/most female headed households in rural SSA are likely to be amongst the worst hit by liberalisation and reform. This is largely because they are asset-less and labour-poor and lack other resources to respond to market opportunities - such as patronage networks, knowledge, credit and extension services. A study of the effects of trade liberalisation in Uganda in which rural poverty levels have declined as a result of increasing production of agricultural exports, especially coffee found that among the categories of rural households that have failed to benefit have been female headed households. They lack the resources to get into coffee production (Morrisey et al 2003).

Research carried out in 1997 in Zomba District in Malawi by Uttaro found gender differences in the food security and agricultural practices. Uttaro looked at the decisions whether or not to buy chemical fertiliser and to buy and plant hybrid maize seed for farmers who were distinguished by gender and marital status into three groups men in male headed households married women and female household heads. 55 per cent of FHHs did not use any chemical fertiliser on their maize, compared with 38 % of married women and 33 per cent of male farmers. In large part this was because they could not afford to buy these inputs. Uttaro examined whether there was preference for local maize and found there was not. All categories of farmers preferred the hybrid maize because it matures earlier, and if fertilised yields more. It

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<sup>34</sup> This proved a high-risk strategy for some. Not all were successful at farming. Those that were of course lost out heavily with the collapse of maize markets in the nineties. Investment of savings in farming is by no means an automatic route to accumulation.



also provides a source of income. But less hybrid maize was being planted because of costs and female-headed households had little other option.

It is because so many farmers are resource poor that the removal of the input credit systems with the demise of the marketing boards had such a devastating effects. Other forms of credit do not reach the poorer farmers and often fail to reach women and female headed households. Several studies have shown that women have very limited access to credit in rural SSA (References needed here; for Uganda See Goetz 1995). The OXFAM-IDS study found that in Zambia despite being as productive as MHHds, FHHds receive only about half the mean credit (OXFAM IDS 1999c). Economic reform appears to have made this worse. A IWGGT study of Ghana found that "The export of male dominated cocoa has resulted in lower levels of extension services credit and marketing support or women's food crops whose production is then pushed to marginalised land." (IWGGT n.d.) Evers and Walters 2000 point out that Wold's study found that changes in the institutional structure of markets under structural adjustment in Zambia had a more profound impact on women than on men farmers. Market liberalisation resulted in a breakdown of local marketing co-operatives, which women had had more access to than other market, even though marketing boards tended to favour male farmers, especially those with some capital to invest in the additional labour requirements of hybrid maize production.<sup>35</sup>

In some of the new private marketing schemes imposed institutional disadvantages may affect women. There might, for example, be a minimum size of crop output that has to be reached before farmers can join the scheme (In Zimbabwe Cotco requires 400 kg of cotton from its small holders (OXFAM-IDS 1999b). Issues of scale are not gender neutral. The time involved in accessing markets may be of greater significance to women than men. This becomes very important when trading-off against scale. Where women are only marketing small quantities it may not be worth walking to the nearest market centre. More women may therefore be selling crops at the farm gate, to itinerant traders who pay poorer prices and may even not pay in money at all, but only in bartered goods (Samuels 2001).

### *Land*

One final category of resource for farming is that of land. Secure access to land played an important analytical role in early approaches to liberalisation. It was an initial orthodoxy that the lack of private property rights in land hampered agricultural and modernisation and development in Africa. Much land distribution and land access is governed by locally managed systems of so-called customary rights. Received wisdom has swung against the once orthodox view that these customary rights were insecure and acted as a disincentive for farmers to invest in agricultural improvements. Research carried out by the World Bank and the University of Wisconsin Land Tenure Centre in the early nineties showed that customary systems of tenure provide secure access and there was no evidence that they it acted as a disincentive for improvements in agriculture (Bruce and Migot-Adholla 1994). They have allowed and facilitated agrarian accumulation and the development of quite unequal land holdings amongst small holding farmers (For Ghana and Nigeria see e.g.

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<sup>35</sup> Studies in the Northern Province indicate the profound importance of additional labour for hybrid maize (Moore and Vaughan 1994 And Evans and Young 1998). Smallholders who are successful maize producers bring in additional people to live in their households, as well as using exchange labour and hiring casual labour. Money to pay for this is not part of the maize marketing board's credit scheme.

Hill 1971, Whitehead 1996, Ross 1988). Land markets develop without land titles, but the pressure for land titles increases when land becomes scarce.

Typically, women who are heads of household and women household members who farm independently, farm very much smaller parcels of land than do male heads of household, or household men<sup>36</sup>. This has led many authors to stress the need to strengthen women's property rights if they are to benefit from liberalisation. Addressing gender inequality linked to trade patterns in Sub-Saharan Africa requires 'strengthening and enforcing women's property rights in land' (Fontana Joeques and Masika 1998: 2). 'In SSA where agriculture predominates in export activities women do not often benefit directly from increased export production since their property rights in land are limited and unpaid family labour is the mainstay of smallholder export production' (ibid.).

Many women are among a number of categories of rural dwellers whose land claims appear 'weak'. Most analysts argue that women's land claims are inferior to those of men and that this is primarily a function of the different positions they occupy in the kinship system. Women do have claims to land. Women make claims to land as daughters, wives, widows and also as independent women who are separated or divorced from their husbands. Kinship systems differ in the extent to which divorced and separated women can make claims on their own kin groups for land, although there are several examples where this can and does happen. For example, in the matrilineal areas of Zambia, as they get older, women frequently move back to their home village or to the villages of their brother's, separating from or effectively divorcing their husbands (Samuels 2001). When women divorce or separate, or are divorced and separated, they do not retain access to land that they have been granted to farm as wives. Kinship systems also differ in the fate of widows, although for many widows married in patrilineal kinship systems have quite strong claims to maintenance and to the requisite land for maintenance after their husbands have died (Bosworth 1995, Yngstrom 1998). This claim is often made through being the mother of a son who is a member of the patrilineage (Ncube et al 1997). In most kinship systems women have access to land as wives. There is enormous variation in the strength of these claims. In Northeast Ghana, which is another patrilineal system, women do get access to land through their husbands' kin group. His senior male relatives release land to her to farm, but this is usually not a very big area and she doesn't usually get this land very early in her marriage (Whitehead 1996). If she has the resources to farm there are other ways in which she can and does get more land.

What constitutes a 'weak' claim probably varies in areas of incipient or real land scarcity compared with those of relative land abundance. In Uganda, where land scarcity has become acute in some areas, what were once quite strong claims for women under patrilineal kinship systems have been eroded (Bosworth 1995). Widows are losing their land and other women complain that they cannot get enough (Dolan 2002, Carswell and others)

In evaluating the women's 'weaker' claims to land, five points should be born in mind. First, getting access to land through her husband is rarely the only method available to women to get land. Second, her right to land in this way is often backed by strong

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<sup>36</sup>

Whitehead and Tsikata 2001 discuss gender and land issues in detail.

norms, such that if a husband fails to provide his kinsmen may well. Although women lack secure titles and their access to land is through men, their entitlement are often recognised by men, even in situations of modernising agriculture (Sorensen 1996, Kasente et al 2000; World Bank 1994). Third, a husband may actually encourage his wife to get land outside his own, because this increases the total amount of land to a household. Fourth, although there are some areas where women identify lack of land as a constraint on their farming, in many cases even where they are farming smaller amounts, it is lack of capital or labour that are cited as reasons, rather than lack of land itself. (Example) In many rural areas conditions of land scarcity now exist - as several of the Tanzanian localities illustrate, This land scarcity exposes the various ways in which women's claims are weaker or can be made weaker than men's.

A further factor that turns women's claims into weaker ones has been the introduction of modern forms of property titling itself. Where this is accompanied by individual registered title, women have often lost what claims to land access they had while male claims have been made stronger. Citing some well known cases where freehold titling has been introduced, some argue that it is privatisation and commercialisation of land, accompanied by the generation of freehold title, that disadvantages women (Lasstria-Cornheil 1997, MacKenzie 1990, Gopal 1998). Others argue that it is the inherent weakness of women's claims in customary systems that leads to women's apparent disadvantages in claiming land in areas of land scarcity (Ncube et al 1997, Okoth-Ogendo 1989).

In evaluating these arguments, it is very difficult to disentangle several factors that tend to vary together in real and historically situated circumstances. In many cases the generally very small sizes of women's farms reflect their labour and cash constraints and not lack of rights. However there may be other circumstances, particularly ones of land scarcity, where their small farm holdings are associated with their inability to make sufficiently strong legal claims against men, in both formal and customary law. Women's weak claims to access are a result of a combination of both customary modes of access, greater male power in the market and gendered differentiated access to other important resources. This implies an indirect strategy of enhancing the other assets necessary to work the land to supporting those claims to land access that women already have may be more of a policy priority than land tenure reform.

Women's land claims need to be strengthened not because lack of security prevents them from seizing new opportunities<sup>37</sup>, but because land access is linked in other ways to unequal gender relations. Evers and Walters emphasise the importance of 'gendered rights in property' first, because lack of property rights to land affects access to other resources, such as credit and water and grazing rights and second, because land ownership is linked to labour relations: 'control over land also confers on men property rights over women's labour' (Evers and Walters 2000: 1342). In a similar vein, Warner and Campbell (2000) emphasise that "The women's allotment generally comes with the obligation to provide food for the rest of the household". They suggest that women obtain land from their husbands on "implicit intrahousehold rent agreements"... "thru which men extract the fruit of women's labour time in cash crop production" (Warner and Campbell 2000: 1330). Evers and Walters 1999 also discuss land and women's decision making about their labour use: "Access to land and

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<sup>37</sup> In some places, however, men resist women growing tree crops on their land because it gives them greater 'ownership' rights.

the income it may generate strengthens one's fallback position in household bargaining"; and "If a woman has access to surplus land she may choose to grow more food for sale particularly for export" (Evers and Walters 1999:15).

### Conclusion

In this section I have considered the various factors that affect the ways in which women might be diversifying their livelihoods under the impact of liberalisation and the factors that affect their access to the resources they are able to deploy within farming, in sub-Saharan Africa as a whole. In both these areas what we know about the gendered nature of the rural economy suggests that the impact of liberalisation on women will be different than the impact on men. It is imperative however to bear in mind the great variety of ways in which men and women are inserted into what are also highly variable local economies. Although the generalised findings in this section thus amplify the trends shown in the Tanzanian case study and in some cases confirm that they are likely to be found elsewhere, they cannot be predicative about individual cases. This is an important caution when considering the next section, in which I attempt to summarise what some of the general trends in changing gender relations under the impact of liberalisation might be.

## 7 LIBERALISATION AND CHANGING GENDER RELATIONS

In this final discussion I aim to consider the very scattered evidence for changes rural gender relations conceived more widely than the mainly economic changes that have been discussed previously. This paper has argued that liberalization and economic reform in SSA has not been as successful as predicted by IFIs. Initially it brought transitional costs, borne differently by different sections of the population (the 1980's 'vulnerable'). The transitional losers included households in many rural areas and women more than men. Over the long term most countries report 'winners and losers'. Whatever the success of reform at the national level, some rural areas have suffered - these can be quite extensive and cover big populations. They include the (often-extensive) areas that are mainly producing food crops<sup>38</sup> and areas that are 'remote' or agro-ecologically marginal, but as we have seen they can include areas whose cash crops have become unprofitable under conditions of liberalization.

Growth in agriculture has been disappointing and the hoped for technological changes or changes in production relations are not occurring very quickly, if at all. According to which crops they produce and trends in world prices, export crop producing households have experienced mixed fortunes. Some have gained. Some fared well earlier and now income has dropped back. Exposure to world markets has provided new opportunities for income (although some states have imposed high taxes on these), but it has also made export crop households (and those that depend on them for direct employment and indirect employment in the local informal sector) very vulnerable to fluctuations in world commodity prices. Subsidised developed-country farmers also produce several of these commodities. The huge subsidies that USA and EU cotton farmers, for example, receive from their governments make it impossible difficult for African farmers to compete.

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<sup>38</sup> This food production is for both sale and consumption. Internally marketed food crops represent a large proportion of agricultural production.

Households of domestic food producers have not fared so well. Terms of trade have moved against them and poor infrastructure and markets and high cost of inputs constrain their incomes. Evidence for this increased vulnerability is provided by the probably widespread expansion of diversified rural livelihoods in which many non-agrarian activities are being added on. Diversification is a complex phenomenon. The increase in non-farm activities includes the addition of relatively well rewarded wage employment to the portfolio (usually based on migration) and the exploitation of new business opportunities, especially trade, as well as multiple petty trading and production activities which produce very little income and poor returns to labour. Diversification can thus be a route out of poverty and an accumulation strategy for some, while it is a survival strategy for many. This is Bryceson's model where all household members seek whatever low entry low return incomes they can find because household farming is inadequate to meet income and subsistence needs.

The gender effects of these processes are specific to particular countries and to particular regions within countries as they depend on a number of factors including the pattern of agriculture (farming systems, crop patterns, agro-ecological constraints); the prevailing gender division of labour (by crop, by task etc) and which is nevertheless subject to change; household structure; access to crop inputs and credit markets; the actual or potential level of development of the accessible non-farm sector.

The shift against food producers necessarily affects women more than men. Women in female-headed households are much more heavily dependent on food farming than any other sector of the rural population. Many of them have seen a deterioration in already poor living conditions. In male headed households, there are many circumstances where women are primarily responsible for food production (but by no means all) Women commonly sell some of this food for other household needs and are thus likely to be finding it hard to meet those needs. There is a dearth of good case studies that might tell us whether, or when, men's income is used instead, or what kinds of gender conflicts might arise in these circumstances.

In households producing food and export crops, women have probably had workloads increased, but they may have shared in the overall fortunes of the household as they did in the case of cashews in Tanzania. A GERA study in Mali also reported that men and women shared in the increased rice income Ref. They may not, of course, have shared *equitably* in improvements in income and well being and they may have, like men, become vulnerable when prices have dropped. They have definitely faced much more difficulty than men in growing export crops themselves due to lack of access to factor markets.

A significant impact in these households is the need for negotiations over new forms of responsibility for men and for women and the potential for gender conflict as a result. Box 10 summarises research in a tea growing area of Kenya which finds women working harder on cash crops, although there is poor incentives for them to do so because they do not receive direct or commensurate payment for this work.

**Box 10 Effects of Liberalisation on Gender Relations on Kenyan Tea Producers**

Using baseline data from a study conducted in 1985/86 by two Danish researchers (Bulow and Sorensen), Ongile interviewed many of the same households in 1995/96 during which time Kenya had implemented Liberalisation and economic reform. Declines were observed in the annual price of maize while tea payments fluctuated. Since prices paid to farmers did not always keep pace with the increase in consumer prices, it is not surprising that the majority of women felt no better off in 1995/96 than in 1985/86. Half the women felt worse off while 31 per cent felt better off and 18 per cent noted that their lives had remained the same. The main reasons for improved living standards were given as better earnings from wage employment, tea production and sale of maize, while those who felt worse off referred to the burden of school fees, more children to take care of, and the rise of food prices. In 1985/86, half of the tea households used hired labour on a regular basis while the other half depended on family labour except for pruning. In 1995/96 there was much more reliance on family labour. Women in male-headed households received no bonus or monthly payments from the Kenya Tea Development Authority (KTDA) and worked in the tea fields mainly as unpaid family labour. This, together with the fact that they cannot control the income from tea is likely to have a negative effect on their incentive to work in the tea fields. Women from male-headed tea households said that they would devote more time to tea production if they received part of the bonus payment. Ongile n.d

Some caution does need to be exercised in discussing the source of these increased workloads. They may not always come from intrahousehold pressures from men. In similar circumstances in Zambia, women interpret the pressure as coming from external sources.

"Women we spoke to ...argued that the shift to the production of cotton away from maize had substantially increased their workloads, given that cotton production is much more labour intensive requiring very strict crop husbandry practices. This left them less time for household chores and childcare, as well as less time to grow household staples, including maize for consumption. A number of women noted they would prefer to grow less labour intensive crops than cotton, if a choice were available but lack if traders in alternative crops made the a-switch out of cotton production difficult" Zambia IDS OXFAM

Gender conflicts are also expressed somewhat differently in one of the GERA studies in liberalisations gendered effects. The Mali study found that women had increased their food production to meet family needs because men had reduced their input to family responsibilities. The authors argued that it was men's lower incomes that had led them to reduce their inputs to responsibilities for children. The proportions of agricultural production left over by men for household use has declined because of the increases in costs of input. Almost three-quarters of household revenues from agricultural production went towards the repayment of inputs. The burden falls more on women 'by default'.

Negotiation of gendered responsibilities at lower levels of overall income is likely to lead to gender conflicts and is also likely to be the most widespread effects of liberalisation. This is also true of the processes of diversification and their effects on gender relations. The previous sections of the paper have shown that although there are some women who are diversifying into better incomes, for the vast majority of rural women diversification is more of a survival strategy than a route out of poverty. In some circumstances, where both men and women household members need to earn non farm incomes to survive there may be more opportunities for women to do so - but then there may be gender tensions over women's new earning opportunities, especially if men cannot find employment or men's farming income is going down.

"In one poor community in Lusaka, the women considered that life had become harder as everyone had to work, but appreciated that women were now able to participate in potential opportunities available. This appeared to be the general feeling, even when it was clear that women were making very little profit (if any at all), from many of their activities. We carried out a calculation of the profit margins on fritter baking for sale on the street. The activity appears only just to break even." Zambia OXFAM IDS

Box 11 contains a lengthy summary of a GERA study in Rural Kenya, which is unusually comprehensive in its coverage of gender issues. The study reports considerable shifts in household gender relations. Men's income and employment opportunities have been undermined by liberalisation, but women have found opportunities for both farm and non-farm incomes. The women comment graphically on the dilemmas and gender conflicts and re-negotiations that have ensued. A key element that plays into these conflicts is not simply that women's economic role has expanded, but that that of men has been reduced.

#### **Box 11 Gender Tensions with Liberalisation in Rural Kenya**

The research, which used mixed data collection methods, focused on food security and gender issues and was carried out in two rural Districts<sup>39</sup> and is one of the few pieces of research that explores qualitative changes in gender relations.

The study found that there were some gains from liberalization, but that these were very differentially distributed. The price of farm inputs has increased, and the quality reduced, since government supply mechanisms were withdrawn. Extension services have been dramatically cut and credit services have reduced for both women and men with the withdrawal of the Agricultural Finance Corporation. As a result there has been a decrease in profitability and production of maize and some other agricultural crops. The reduced income from the main marketed crops has led to diversification into other enterprises which offer commercial opportunities including draft oxen, dairy cows, pigs, tomatoes and kale, groundnuts. These enterprises require fewer and more locally available inputs than maize, and can be locally marketed. Some

<sup>39</sup> Its findings are somewhat limited by the absence of any significant household level economic data and because it concentrated on interviewing women community members

households have fared better than others and women's ability to respond to decreasing maize profitability with successful sale and production of other crops has been mixed. Some households are struggling for survival with declining producer prices, production acreage and high input costs.

With respect to food security the study concludes that the main effects of liberalisation has been to:

- Undermine the capacity of small-scale farmers to sustain household food security.
- Brought about a decline in production of some main food crops such as maize due to reduced use of e.g. certified seed and fertiliser inputs and a declining acreage under cultivation.
- increased vulnerability to seasonal fluctuations in food availability, dependence on imports from Uganda, and volatility in food imports.

These changes in the profitability of particular crops and changes in the income profile have of course filtered through an existing gender division of responsibilities and lead to changes in the way crops are grown and marketed and in relations between husbands and wives. Before liberalisation, big sales of crops as maize were mainly the preserve of men, but this role was found to be decreasing. Poor producer prices and the collapse of established marketing channels through cooperatives and parastatals has caused men to 'neglect their role in production' (34). The main earners – maize, pyrethrum, milk and cattle – are no longer marketed and controlled only by men. Women are more involved in cash crop production and marketing, as well as their conventional food production work. There is also a greater dependence on women's incomes both from sales which they previously controlled (chickens, eggs, small milk quantities) and diversified products. Women seem to have been better at diversifying into enterprises viable in local markets e.g. dairy, groundnuts, pigs, tomatoes, and kale. Women's workloads have increased as they take on more cash-production work without being free of food production and household responsibilities.

As a result there have been some household conflicts over roles, control of income, decision-making, and issues of respect and trust. Women's increased role in income earning has bolstered their self-respect but damaged that of men. One woman is quoted as saying: "I really sympathise with my husband because of the frustration he has been going through. Before the coming of soko huru (free market) he used to fend for the family. Nowadays I have to buy him clothes. This has on the one hand increased my dignity but on the other it has created animosity in the house." And another: "Instead of my husband respecting and awarding me for enabling the family in a bad situation, he calls me 'a female tycoon'" (35)

Women reported that domestic violence had risen as men lose their role as sole breadwinner, and with pressure on scarce resources. Women's time-use has also caused conflict as their increased production work leaves less time for household and childcare tasks. The use of and control of income has been contested, and caused men's suspicion and distrust: "If my husband could recognize my role, responsibilities and respect me, I would not complain, but



now the opposite / reverse is the reality.” (35) “Men also suspect women that they go to the market to look for other men and or prostitution.” (37) Actual income earned by women from the market has been a subject of conflict. Conflicts over market income and the suggestion that women do not always seek permission to go to market, implies that the decision-making process is contested. *Source: RODI/Kenya 2004/2002.*

The Kenya case is neither unique, nor is it universal. We know very little about the ways in which changes in the income sources of farm families and in the balance of profitability of various activities that is the hallmark of liberalization has led to re-negotiations between men and women or to gender conflicts within households. Where are the studies of the intrahousehold impacts of successful male cotton production in Burkina Faso or of male coffee producers in Uganda? Without good studies over the whole terrain we can neither say confidently what the gender impacts of liberalisation have been, nor can we begin to establish policy that will mitigate the negative effects on women and on gender relations.

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