Food Security, Sustainable Livelihoods and Gender in South Africa

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First Soccer Worldcup in Africa 2010...

http://www.southafrica.info/2010/
Who's Perspective? Sustainable Development?
South Africa

- High unemployment rate (up to 40%); high levels of poverty; entrenched migrant labour system; disruption of social structures

- Highest proportion of people living with HIV/AIDS, weak public health system

- More than half of population food insecure, one third at risk of going hungry (Labadarios et al. 2008); children at greatest risk: stunting rates around 20%; micro-nutrient deficiencies
South Africa

- Growing inequality - Gini coefficient highest in the world (with Brazil); qualified workforce leaves; social and economic stability at risk

- High crime levels – especially women at risk; high number of immigrants; xenophobic attacks

- Highly contradictory position of women: formal legal position vs. actual societal norms around gender issues & livelihoods
Countries in Transition Experience:

- Rapid urbanisation
- Rising energy costs, rising food prices
- Migrant labour system
- Growing inequality
- Nutrition transition; co-existence of over-, under- and malnutrition

Alexandra, Johannesburg

Sandton, Johannesburg
Background: Research Since 1998

- Underlying causes of food & nutrition security at household level, intra-household dynamics (gender and other power relations); coping strategies

- Integrating meso- and macro-level

- Rural & urban households, specific focus on farm worker households

Photos: S. Lemke
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year, University</th>
<th>Study#</th>
<th>Study Sample</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996-1998 North West University</td>
<td>THUSA</td>
<td>37 sites; 5 strata (rural, farms, informal, urban, upper urban) n=1854</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Vorster et al. 2000; 2005</td>
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<td>THUSA: Transition &amp; Health during Urbanisation in South Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>1998-2001 TU Munich-Weihenstephan</td>
<td>Household Food Security*</td>
<td>15 sites; 5 strata n=166</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lemke 2001, Lemke et al. 2003</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Since 2001 NWU</td>
<td>FLAGH</td>
<td>3 schools, n=241</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Kruger, Lemke et al. 2006</td>
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<td></td>
<td>FLAGH: Farm Labour &amp; General Health Programme</td>
<td>3 farms, n=136</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004-2008 University Giessen</td>
<td>FANS</td>
<td>4 farms n=69</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funded by DFG, NRF, NTW, DAAD</td>
<td>Lemke 2005; Lemke et al. 2009</td>
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<td></td>
<td>FANS: Farms &amp; Nutrition Security</td>
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* All studies carried out in North West Province, RSA
* 17.2% of THUSA 1998
Participatory Gendered Approaches

- People as actors, not recipients:
  - rights vs. needs;
  - participation vs. patronizing measures

- Emphasis on:
  - How do people themselves reflect and analyze their situation?
  - What are people’s capabilities, livelihood and coping strategies?
  - What are underlying gender issues - impact of direct/structural violence on access to resources, livelihoods, food and nutrition security?
Current Research Since 2009

- Sustainable agriculture & local food systems, sustainable livelihoods, food & nutrition security, right to food, land reform

- How can existing power dynamics (paternalistic system: farm owners-farm workers; patriarchal structures: men-women; multiple other power issues, i.a. age, social status) be addressed?

Photos: S. Lemke
Current Research

- Funded by Margarete von Wrangell Habilitation programme & European Social Fund; Fiat panis (student grants)

- PAR in cooperation with local Partner-NGOs and researchers:
  - Nkuzi Development Association, Limpopo
  - Grootbos Foundation, Western Cape
  - Women on Farms Project, Western Cape
  - CART Center for Appropriate Rural Technology, Western Cape & Eastern Cape
  - also Human Sciences Research Council; independent researchers

10 Masters students carried out research with these NGOs
Sustainable livelihoods framework

(DFID 1999)

Vulnerability context

- Shocks
- Trends
- Seasonality

Livelihood assets

P – Physical capital
S – Social capital
N – Natural capital
H – Human capital

Influence & access

Policies, institutions and processes

- Structures
- Level of government
- Private sector

Livelihood strategies

I n o r d e r t o a c h i e v e

Livelihood outcomes

- More income
- Increased well-being
- Reduced vulnerability
- Improved food security
- More sustainable use of NR base

KEY:
H – Human capital
F – Financial capital
N – Natural capital
S – Social capital
P – Physical capital
Research Example:
The impact of an organic food production and life skills training program on food security and livelihoods of unemployed rural women in South Africa—A case study

Master thesis research by Fereshteh Yousefi, 2010
Grootbos Nature Reserve & Stanford Township

Photos: Grootbos

Photos: F. Yousefi
Selected Results

- Low incentive to work in agriculture, lack of future prospects
- Low incomes (stipends)
- Different expectations of project facilitators and women
- Poor living conditions of women in contrast to working environment, dependence on social assistance, expectation of support
- Project not sustainable: aims to address a variety of tasks while it is not self-sufficient yet.

(Lemke et al. 2012)
SLF adapted from DFID (1999) to illustrate the effect of GTF project on livelihoods of unemployed rural women
Research Example:
Women agricultural cooperatives in the Western Cape, South Africa: a strategy to achieve food security and promote women’s empowerment

Master thesis research by Ana Cristina Eisermann, 2010

Photos: A. Eisermann
Women’s Empowerment Framework
(Kabeer, 1999)

Women's empowerment is about the process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such an ability.

The ability to exercise choice incorporates three inter-related dimensions:

- **Resources** (Pre-conditions)
- **Agency** (Process)
- **Achievements** (Outcomes)
Selected Results

- Women experience difficulties and frustration, i.a. due to lack of skills
- Expectation for more technical assistance from WFP
- Stipend might negatively affect efforts to generate income
- No marketing strategies in place
- Power relations at different levels hamper development of cooperative-based livelihood

(Lemke et al. 2012)
Evidence of Cooperative members‘ empowerment process

**Resources (pre-conditions)**
Land, funds, income (stipend), inputs, education, training, soft and technical skills and organization

**Agency (processes)**
Decision to participate in the cooperative, pioneers, active engagement in the process of land access, women invested time to learn, reflect and bargain

**Achievements (outcomes)**
Sense of ownership, leadership, respect, improvements in the food situation, ability to co-facilitate workshop, awareness about rights, increase of self-esteem and confidence
- Weak tenure security, low job opportunities and seasonal employment, lack of access to land
- Weak organization skills, low social status
- Limited access to health services and education
- Changes in agricultural production & trade - farmers reduce costs – decline in jobs

...
Conclusion Case Studies

- Improvements in the women’s individual capacities and agency were achieved, as well as important livelihood outcomes.

- The structural causes of disempowerment have not been properly tackled.

- Ongoing dependency on support by NGOs or others (farm owners).

- While programmes illustrated here are not sustainable yet, they stimulate an awareness of possibilities, visions, ownership, and rights that can have a long-term effect on the livelihoods of participating women.

(Lemke et al. 2012)
Follow Up Research 2012:

Assessment of marketing strategies and institutional structures to achieve a sustainable model for smallholder farming cooperatives (*Women on Farms Project; Master thesis Tande Ndoping, 2012*)

- Lack of secure funding
- High staff turnover
- Communication gap
- Problems to access land
- Inadequate infrastructure; lack of access to markets
- Lack of skills both at level of NGO and cooperatives
- Lack of adequate extension services
Local food systems and responsible tourism: a strategy to strengthen rural livelihoods?

Challenges:
- Lack of communication: GTF & lodge/restaurant
- 300 € per night and no tomatoes?
- Is agricultural capacity building the right way to go for these women?

Follow up research
Grootbos Foundation
(Master thesis, Gabriel Laeis 2012)
How can we emphasize better the dimension of supporting structures and institutions?

Increasing the power and rights of the poor, using a Human Rights-based approach to development

Photo by WFP during farm workers’ strike in Ceres, South Africa, November 2012. Farm workers in solidarity with the South African’s miners decided to start strikes, demanding better working conditions and the enforcement of the minimum wage.
Human Rights-based approach (HRBA) to assess the missing dimension of power relations

- brings power issues and how they impact on production and reproduction of poverty to the centre

- emphasizes equity, identifies social exclusion, prioritizes the poorest of the poor

- emphasizes accountability, could provide more leverage to mobilization and collective action, demanding more accountability from governments

(Source: Moser et al. 2001; FAO 2011)
Overall Conclusion

• Women are critical to processes and outcomes of food security and nutrition.

• Women face empowerment and participation challenges that require structural change – not simply food security programs. Inter alia, these structural changes also entail changes in

  • Attention to women’s health
  • Women’s and girl’s education
  • Women’s participation in public and political processes
  • Public acknowledgement of, and engagement with, gender-based violence, especially but not only directed towards women and girls
Challenges For Research

- Short time span of Master projects - officially six months!
- Missing background of students in social sciences

Methodological challenges:

- PAR – develop research continuously in cooperation with NGO & research participants, based on insights gained; requires continuous feedback & reflection
- Participant observation – ongoing process of reflection, requires experience
- Observation important tool, under-utilized (Quotes by Denzin, Silvermann, Euroqual Conference, May 2010, London)
Selected References


Selected References


References Qualitative Methods


