

DISCUSSION PAPER

AGRARIAN LABOUR AND RESOURCES IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA:

Gender and Generational Change within Family
Farms, 1980–2015



No. 22, March 2018

DEBORAH FAHY BRYCESON
PROGRESS OF THE WORLD'S WOMEN 2018

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SUMMARY

Overviewing trends during 35 years of Sub-Saharan African rural change and accelerating deagrarianization, this paper traces the restructuring of rural families' agricultural production, the intra-household division of labour and land usage in the interim between the global oil price rise of 1979 and its precipitous fall by 2015. These decades witnessed smallholder export crop production becoming increasingly uncompetitive in the world market due to the high costs of transporting bulky crops over the vast expanses of rural Africa. With the decline of cashcropping, men, women and youth were drawn away from farming towards off-farm cash-earning in a wide variety of non-agricultural activities. Now male heads of household no longer monopolize cash earnings in rural households to the same extent as in the past. Women's and youth's earnings afford them more household

decision-making autonomy. Demographically, the HIV/AIDS crisis has imposed strain on rural households, and impacted on land usage and inheritance, affecting women detrimentally in some countries, whereas state reform of inheritance laws has improved women's situation in other countries. Generally, officially published national-level rural labour statistics harbour gender bias and under-reporting of female labour expenditure. Domestic work continues to be the preserve of women. Published statistics suggest that older women tend to be 'left behind' in rural areas, linked to female prevalence in non-monetized domestic work. Marriage patterns are changing with some women experiencing a reluctance to marry men due to men's lost income-earning capacity and women's increased wariness of contracting AIDS. In this context, matrifocal families have gained salience.

RÉSUMÉ

Ce document passe en revue les tendances des 35 dernières années en termes de changements ruraux et d'accélération des politiques de désagrarianisation en Afrique sub-saharienne et met en lumière la restructuration de la production agricole des familles rurales, la division du travail au sein des foyers et l'utilisation des terres entre la montée du cours mondial du pétrole et sa chute vertigineuse en 2015. Ces décennies ont été marquées par la perte de compétitivité des produits exportables cultivés par les petits exploitants sur le marché mondial en raison des coûts de transport élevés à travers les immenses étendues rurales africaines. Avec le déclin des cultures de rente, les hommes, les femmes et les jeunes se sont détournés de l'élevage pour s'adonner à de nombreuses activités non agricoles plus lucratives loin des fermes. De nos jours, les chefs de famille ne monopolisent plus les revenus dans les foyers ruraux comme ils le faisaient avant. Les revenus des femmes et des jeunes leur octroient plus de pouvoir décisionnaire au sein du foyer. Sur le plan démographique, la crise du VIH/

sida a fait pesé des pressions sur les foyers ruraux et eu des conséquences sur l'utilisation des terres et les successions, affectant négativement les femmes dans certains pays tandis que la réforme de la loi sur les successions a amélioré la situation des femmes dans d'autres pays. Généralement, les statistiques agricoles rurales publiées au niveau national témoignent d'un parti pris sexiste et minimisent le coût de la main d'œuvre féminine. Le travail ménager continue d'être l'apanage des femmes. Les statistiques publiées donnent à penser que les femmes plus âgées sont "laissées de côté" dans les campagnes, un phénomène en lien avec les proportions élevées de femmes dans le travail ménager non rémunéré. La dynamique des mariages est également en train d'évoluer, certaines femmes hésitant à se marier compte tenu de la perte de capacité masculine de gagner un revenu et de la crainte croissante des femmes de contracter le sida. Dans ce contexte, les familles matrifocales (centrées sur la mère et la famille maternelle) sont en train de gagner du terrain.

RESUMEN

Mediante una descripción general de las tendencias producidas a lo largo de 35 años de cambio rural y desagrarización acelerada en el África Subsahariana, este artículo analiza la reestructuración de la producción agrícola de las familias rurales, la división del trabajo en el seno de los hogares y el uso del suelo en el período comprendido entre el alza mundial del precio del petróleo en 1979 y su drástica caída en 2015. En estos decenios, la producción de los cultivos de las pequeñas explotaciones destinados a la exportación ha registrado una creciente pérdida de competitividad en el mercado mundial, debido a los altos costos de transporte de los cultivos muy voluminosos a través de las amplias extensiones del África rural. Con el declive de los cultivos comerciales, hombres, mujeres y jóvenes fueron abandonando la agricultura en favor de otras actividades generadoras de ingresos en distintos sectores no agrícolas. En la actualidad, los hombres que encabezan hogares rurales han dejado de monopolizar la obtención de ingresos en dichos hogares. Los ingresos de las mujeres y las personas jóvenes les dotan de

mayor autonomía en la adopción de decisiones en el hogar. Desde el punto de vista demográfico, la crisis del VIH/SIDA ha impuesto una pesada carga a los hogares rurales y ha afectado el uso del suelo y el régimen sucesorio, perjudicando a las mujeres en algunos países; en otros, en cambio, la reforma de las leyes de herencia ha mejorado su situación. En general, las estadísticas nacionales oficiales publicadas sobre el empleo rural muestran un sesgo de género y una subestimación del gasto en mano de obra femenina. El trabajo doméstico sigue siendo un ámbito exclusivo de las mujeres. Las estadísticas publicadas sugieren que las de más edad tienden a “quedar atrás” en las zonas rurales, un efecto vinculado a la feminización del trabajo doméstico no monetarizado. En lo que respecta al matrimonio, los patrones están cambiando. Se observa que algunas mujeres se muestran reacias a casarse debido a la pérdida de capacidad de obtención de ingresos de los hombres y al creciente miedo a contraer SIDA. En este contexto, las familias matrifocales han ido ganando notoriedad.

1.

INTRODUCTION

Sub-Saharan Africa² is considered the most agrarian continent, characterized by smallholder family production. However, while this portrayal was largely true for the 20th century, there have been significant changes over the past three decades. At the same time, reliable comparative statistics on labour and agriculture in African nation-states are difficult to come by, and getting a firm grasp on African agrarian patterns and trends is challenging. This paper interrogates the dynamics of gender and generational change within smallholder family farming since 1980, prefaced by historical contextualization of resource and climate risks faced by African peasant producers and the unfolding nature of the rise and decline of African peasant agriculture during the 20th century.³

Much of the African continent's enormous landmass is semi-arid or covered in dense tropical rainforest, creating unpredictable and unwieldy climate conditions for agricultural production and human survival. In the face of too much or too little rainfall and the prevalence of tsetse, precluding the utilization of animals to alleviate the workload of agriculture and transport, African producers have devised exceptionally varied agrarian labour and resource practices and coping strategies over the centuries.

Unlike Eurasia – where agrarian innovation in mixed farming emanated from the Fertile Crescent of the Near East, with agronomic and technological innovation spreading to Europe and Asia latitudinally along east-west agro-climate zones at the end of the ice age from around 8500 BCE– the existence of the Sahara precluded the spread of plant innovation southwards beyond North Africa.⁴ Sub-Saharan Africa's agricultural genesis is debatable, but evidence suggests that it began in West Africa roughly two to three thousand years ago.⁵ However, budding West African agricultural production was threatened by the acceleration of Saharan desertification thereafter. The climate downturn spurred southerly migration from West Africa of Bantu-speaking people, who progressed along a western Atlantic coastal route and an eastern route through the Lake Victoria region, having to edge around the Congo forest and the Kalahari Desert. Over the next two millennia, they contributed to the spread of plant domestication and agricultural settlements,

in collaboration with indigenous people, and finally arrived in Southern Africa in about 300 AD.⁶ With travel taking place along a north-south axis, the plants originally introduced by the migrants would not necessarily have been transferrable to more southerly climates. Nonetheless, the Bantu migration transmitted a tool kit and knowledge that promoted the evolution of crop domestication in Africa.

During the Bantu migration, inter-marriage gave rise to assorted ethnic groups with similar languages, technology and an agrarian culture rather than a uniform gene pool per se.⁷ It is believed that iron-making skills acquired en route through the Sahel enhanced the spread of hoe usage and grain-based agriculture in East and Southern Africa.⁸ For millennia, African agriculture has been primarily hoe-based and highly labour intensive. Boserup's (1970) book *Woman's Role in Economic Development* analysed the centrality of female farming in African farming systems, stressing the disproportionate labour contribution made by women relative to men. Such farming systems have historically been associated with shifting cultivation in low population density agrarian settings, where land was abundant and held collectively by the tribal community. Female farming attains relatively low crop yields per land unit but comparatively high output per labour unit through the use of long fallow periods to regenerate fertility of the soil. In the savannah, where erratic rainfall, drought and famine were frequent, hoes facilitated an array of anti-famine measures

including dug channels and raised planting beds, vital for retaining moist soils for plant growth. Farmers avoided planting at a single locality and cultivated more than one field to reduce the risk of crop failure.

Matrilineal descent is associated with female farming systems, although evolution towards patrilineality tends to occur when cattle or other forms of property accumulation become an integral part of rural household production. Polygynous marriage practices are often found where additional wives are critical for increased agricultural output in the absence of hired labour. Women are valued for their labour and fecundity. Wives, in effect, serve as objects of male wealth accumulation in African bridewealth systems, with a prospective husband or his family making payments in kind or cash to the father or uncle of the bride.

Nonetheless, in contrast to male-dominated plough agricultural production, African female hoe cultivators are likely to have more room for manoeuvre, with considerable scope for autonomous production. Women are generally responsible for separate agricultural tasks, notably transplanting, weeding, harvesting and processing the crop, whereas breaking ground and planting is usually the preserve of men. The gender division of labour has evolved over time, with the oldest crop introductions being associated with rituals that stress interwoven gendered task responsibilities.⁹ Women in East Africa have tended to be actively involved in the production of staple grain crops, whereas in West Africa men produce the staple food crop (be it grain or roots) and women tend to focus on farming non-staples such as beans, groundnuts and vegetables that they process and cook as ingredients for the family's 'soup' consumption.¹⁰ In other parts of West Africa, such as Mali, farming has been masculinized while women engage in non-farm activities including trade, handicrafts, weaving, processing of natural materials such as shea nuts for domestic consumption and sale, hiring out their labour or assisting their husband with the sale of his agricultural production.

The rise of African kingdoms in well-watered areas with more reliable food production reflected the unevenness of agricultural risk. Drought-prone, low population

areas tended to be characterized by acephalous clan social structures that were prey to slave raiding by more centralized food surplus-producing tribal groups led by paramount chiefs. With the onset of West African slave export to the Americas perpetrated by Europeans, there were ever-greater disparities between centralized and acephalous groups. Pre-colonial slave trading created mayhem in domestic life and labour patterns in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa during the conflict-ridden 18th and 19th centuries. As the trans-Atlantic slave trade in West Africa drew to a close in the mid-19th century, slavery was escalating in East and Central Africa, less directed at the foreign export of male slaves and more heavily targeted at women serving as agricultural and domestic labourers and, not infrequently, concubines bearing children for their elite masters living in coastal trading towns.¹¹

In non-slave African societies, solidarity through lineage descent traced matrilineally or patrilineally, accorded labour and resource decision-making to men: the maternal uncle under matrilineality and the father under patrilineality. Authority structures were directed at the localized welfare of the family, lineage and tribe. Languages and cultural norms proliferated. In lineage-based societies, women gained social respect and status for their role as child-bearers and rearers, while their agricultural labour, fundamental to family survival, was taken as given. These two facets underlined the iconic image of rural African women as prodigious agricultural producers and reproducers.¹²

The paper is organized as follows: The next section begins with a focus on the emergence of African peasantries, cash-cropping and the female-centredness of peasant family farming, schematically tracing its evolution over a century, before moving to the contemporary period, 1980 to 2015. Section 3 then reviews the transformation of the family division of labour as the coherence of peasant family farming eroded amidst non-agricultural income diversification during the 1980s and 1990s. Section 4 discusses the tendency for rural households' to revert to subsistence agriculture alongside emerging resource and labour inequalities linked to rising gender and generational autonomy, while section 5 provides some concluding remarks.

2.

THE MAKING OF AFRICAN PEASANTRIES AND WOMEN CULTIVATORS AS THE PIVOT OF FAMILY FARMING, 1880–1980

2.1

Colonialism

When European colonial powers began asserting their governing presence in Africa in the late 1890s, African agricultural production was primarily pursued for direct domestic consumption, with barter exchange to enhance diet diversity taking place at the borders of different agro-climatic zones or between agriculturalists and pastoralists. Colonial governments from the outset aimed to reconfigure rural subsistence producers into surplus-producing, tax-paying peasantries. Peasantries are defined here as rural producers who: (i) farm, with an agricultural livelihood that encompasses both subsistence and commodity production; (ii) live in family units, the household serving as the primary unit of production, consumption, reproduction, risk-spreading and welfare; (iii) form a class by virtue of their subordination to state authorities and surplus extraction by external markets at local, national and global levels, resulting in social differentiation; and (iv) reside in rural communities where traditional norms and conformist attitudes prevail.¹³

Colonial commodification of peasant production encouraged gender bifurcation, with men working in cash cropping or wage labour on nearby settler farms or distant plantations or mines and women expected to devote their time solely to household needs for food production, firewood and water, domestic labour and care for children, the elderly and infirm. European

colonial policies towards men were directed at economic profit, whereas rural women were central to most colonies' political stabilization. Local Native Authorities administered the colonially imposed taxation system that propelled men's labour migration and cash earning imperative and the creation of physically divided households.¹⁴ Colonial and Native Authority governance shared the objective of deterring women from migrating to their husbands' distant place of work, be it plantations, mines or the city. Women were obliged to remain in situ in their marital home areas.¹⁵

Colonial governments operated with a double standard towards rural women's work. While taking advantage of the female farming system as a support to male labour migration, they gave women little credit for their economic self-reliance and hard work, placing emphasis on the role of the 'male breadwinner'.¹⁶ The colonial governments' male circular migration and low bachelor wage policy, implemented in East and Southern Africa, was premised on the assumption that women were able to independently care for their households in the absence of their husbands. A wife's domestic labour and food production maintained the rural household, beckoning back their migrant husbands from distant plantations or mines. Bachelor earnings of the male migrants trickled back to their home areas in the form of purchased consumer goods such as agricultural implements, cooking pots, tin roofing material, etc. but bridewealth payments usually constituted male migrants' most significant

expenditure, affording local elders, who collected the payments, a means of wealth accumulation.¹⁷

Women's use value as domestic labourers and child-bearers was in effect commodified in bridewealth payments, which bypassed them. Furthermore, there was a double sting for women. If a woman's marriage turned out to be an unhappy one and she desired a divorce, the bridewealth had to be paid back to the groom's family, which was not something that the bride's elders favoured since they were loath to relinquish the cash. This convention was a deterrent to divorce that could lock women in unhappy marriages.

In areas where men were encouraged to grow the major export crops that Africa became renowned for, namely groundnuts, palm oil, cocoa, coffee, tea, cotton, sisal and tobacco, government agricultural extension was pointedly focused on men rather than women. Women's food crop production was generally ignored and only addressed in terms of insisting on their production of drought-resistance crops such as cassava and sorghum to lessen the risk of famine, in addition to their accustomed root crops, grains or plantains. The household gender division of agricultural labour tended to be highly imbalanced. Richards (1939), for example, records Bemba women in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) averaging approximately six hours of work during both the peak and slack agricultural seasons, compared to men's range from roughly three to four hours daily.

2.2

Post-colonial period

African national independence movements emerged in the aftermath of World War II, on the crest of the African populations' rising resentment against the three-tiered black, brown and white racial stratification of colonialism and aspirations for improved working conditions and living standards. During the 1950s, hurried measures were taken by colonial governments to address racial inequities in wage policies and educational access. Education was vital for creating the work skills needed for the new national economies, and African children increasingly gained

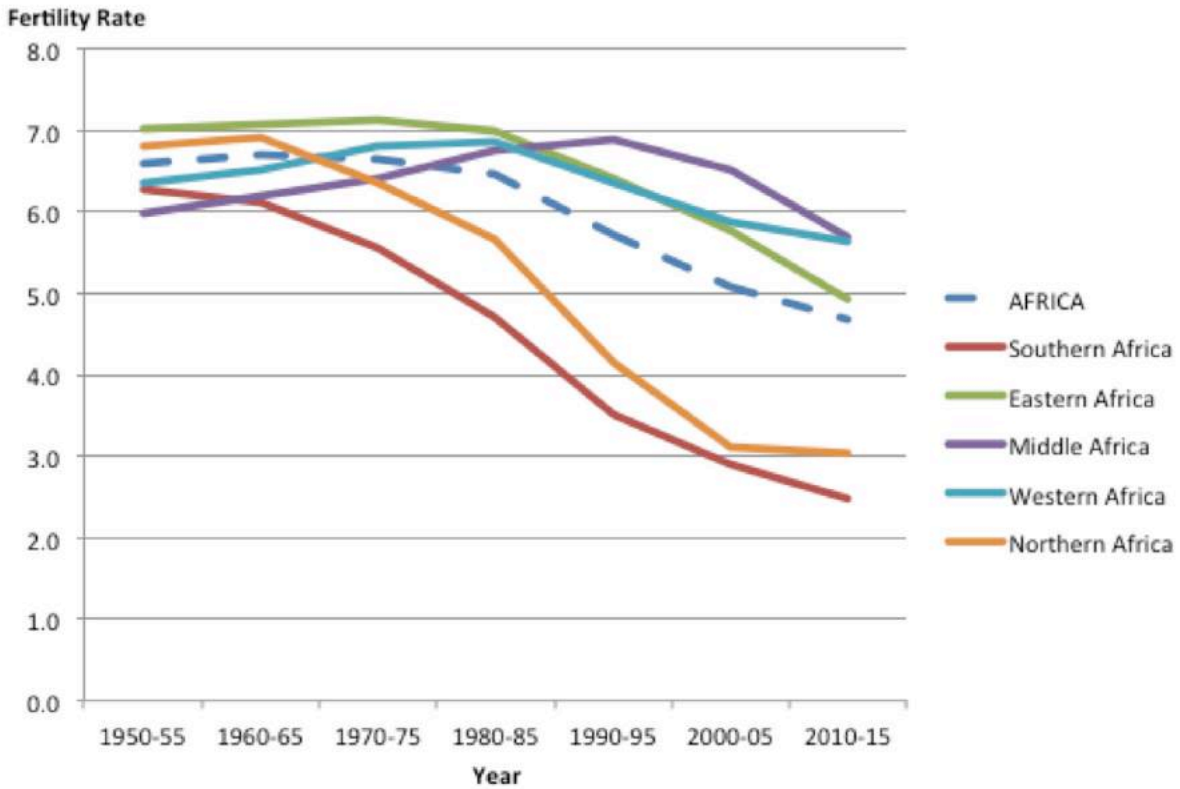
access to primary schools in urban areas, and primary schools were also being initiated in rural areas.

The male circular migration system's extremely low 'bachelor' wage levels began to be reformed. In the first decade of national independence, a 'family wage' level covering the living costs of household members became the norm in many countries, facilitating migration to the city. Women, who had been actively deterred from urban residence during the colonial period, migrated with husbands from rural farms or alternatively made their own way to towns and cities. Given male bias and women's inferior level of education relative to men's, there were few formal jobs for them, but they were often welcomed into the homes of the extended family to assist with domestic labour chores and childcare.

Women's total fertility averaged roughly seven, suggesting that natural fertility practices prevailed during the 1950s and that the coalescing decline in infant mortality had yet to have an impact. During the 1960s and 1970s, rapid urban growth, improving health facilities and a continuing rise in total fertility rates characterized most regions of the continent, with the exception of the Southern Africa mining economies where urbanization was already well progressed (Figure 2-1).

The wave of new African nation-states, gaining their independence in the 1960s, benefitted from a global agricultural commodity price boom. Most long-distance male migrants returned from plantation and mine work to their farmsteads. Post-colonial governments exhorted their large peasant populations to go beyond subsistence agriculture and practice 'modern agriculture' by using fertilizers and improved seeds to raise yields. Many became engaged in the production of export crops such as groundnuts, cotton, coffee, cocoa and tea to earn cash to spend on improving their rural standard of living. Wives were frequently co-opted by male heads of households into cash crop production and/or processing as unpaid family labour. The post-colonial project to expand commodification of peasant agriculture biased the production of export crops entirely towards men in their role of

FIGURE 2-1
Total Fertility Rates by Region, 1950-2010



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. 2012. *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision. Volume 1: Comprehensive Tables*. New York: United Nations.

household breadwinners, while women continued to act as housewives and food crop producers for direct home consumption.¹⁸ It was male rather than female farmers who were targeted by extension officers or offered loans for crop inputs.

Generally, men were responsible for provisioning basic purchase needs such as soap, kerosene and protein foods such as meat, fish, eggs and milk. Otherwise, they spent their cash crop earnings freely as they saw fit, including leisure time pursuits, investments and payment of bridewealth for additional wives. Whether the benefits of men’s cash crop sales percolated to other household members beyond these purchases was debatable. Many donors thought otherwise and initiated income-generating women’s projects to boost women’s purchasing power.¹⁹

Women’s role as homemakers and food producers for their families remained a fundamental premise of government policy.²⁰ Foreign donors supporting African governments’ development plans similarly took women’s domestic labour burden for granted. The rigidities of the gender division of labour were one-sided. While women got involved in many former male tasks of a cash orientation, men were not participating in female-designated subsistence-oriented tasks.²¹ Meanwhile, the drive to enrol children in school reduced their help in domestic labour chores on which their mothers had traditionally relied. Sons’ reduced their input into herding the household’s small animal stock and scaring birds away from crops, whereas girls had less time to assist their mothers with cooking, cleaning, fetching water and childcare of their younger siblings.

Bukh's (1979) meticulous documentation of food preparation and cooking over 10 days in 40 rural households in a marginal cocoa-producing area of the Volta region provides insight into the gender/age division of labour, showing that females over 16 years performed most of the cooking (78 per cent), females under 16 years accounted for another 13 per cent, with older and younger males doing a negligible 8 per cent.²²

Finally, the absence of animal-drawn and mechanical transport in the wide tsetse belt of savannah Africa resulted in women's heavy head and back-loading of water and firewood year-round, constituting an inordinate amount of labour time discounted by everyone except the women involved. Field studies in Ghana and the United Republic of Tanzania reveal that loads of 25 kgs were normal. Women in subsistence-based East African rural households carried on average approximately 85 tonne-kms of goods per year compared with men's 11 tonne-kms. In a more cash-based Ghanaian rural community, the comparative figures were 47 tonne-kms for women and 13 tonne-kms for men.²³ Furthermore, women's childcare role added further labour and concerns. When a woman head-loaded a bucket of water while carrying her infant on her back and looking for small bits of firewood to give

to her other children accompanying her, she had to be mindful of the safety of the baby while minimizing water spillage, maximizing detection of firewood and making certain that her other young child followed her directions.²⁴ Rural women commonly juggled three to four tasks simultaneously.²⁵

One promising agrarian trajectory during the 1970s was state-led efforts, supported by international donor agencies, to raise African peasant food crop yields. This included large development programmes funded by the World Bank.²⁶ For example, in the United Republic of Tanzania, the National Maize Project initiated in 1976 constituted an embryonic green revolution effort, which involved roughly 10 per cent of villages and fertilizer subsidies of approximately 50 per cent. At project completion in 1982, yields had increased by an estimated 30 to 40 per cent (from 1100 to 1500 kg/ha). Regional specialization occurred in four of the country's poorest regions, edging them away from marginality in the nation's economy.²⁷ Such a positive outcome hinted at the possibility of eliminating Africa's age-old uncertainty of food insecurity through sustained public investment in extension and improved inputs, as occurred in Asia's Green Revolution over a 15 to 20 years time frame.

3.

EROSION OF SMALL-HOLDER PEASANTRIES, 1980S–1990S

3.1

Trends

The oil crises of the mid and late 1970s were a turning point for the African continent when national trajectories bifurcated into a few fortunate countries that were oil-rich (Angola, Congo, Gabon, Libya and Nigeria) as opposed to others crippled by the oil price rise. Global competitiveness of Africa's peasant export crops slipped away as smallholder farmers produce, widely dispersed across the continent, were subjected to very high transport costs to distant coastal ports. With the collapse of their export markets, one African country after another inevitably plunged into debt. Forced to seek World Bank and International Monetary Fund loan support, they were subjected to structural adjustment debt conditionality, resulting in swingeing government cutbacks and economic restructuring. On-going agricultural development programmes and Green Revolution-type input subsidies, which had assisted many peasant farmers in the 1970s, were phased out.²⁸ Deprived of the full 15 to 20-year international support provided to smallholder farmers in Asia to achieve the productivity gains of their Green Revolution during the preceding decade, demoralized farmers watched their past yield improvements slip away.²⁹

During the 1980s, African smallholder farmers were out of necessity rather than choice reverting to subsistence farming. Men's cash crop earnings dwindled to negligible amounts. Households that had become accustomed to spending cash on an increasing proportion of their basic needs and school fees faced shortfalls in their household finances. A scramble for alternative sources of income on the part of all able-bodied members of the household ensued.³⁰ In the

process, the gender divide between male agricultural cash earnings and female unremunerated subsistence agricultural work blurred. Men, women and many of their offspring, who would have otherwise attended school, attempted to cobble together viable livelihoods. Their concentration on non-agricultural cash-generating activities set in train deagrarianization, defined as a multi-dimensional process of change involving: (i) livelihood reorientation, (ii) occupational work adjustment, (iii) spatial realignment of residential settlement and (iv) social re-identification, constituting movement away from agrarian patterns in local, regional and international economies.³¹ This continues to the present, evidenced by a declining proportion of the national population and their total labour time engaged in agriculture relative to other sectors of national production.³²

3.2

Impact on families

Colonial policies re-enforced by post-colonial policies had shaped the division between male cash crop and female subsistence spheres that meshed with patriarchal family structures in which male heads of households were accorded the role of liaising with government. Structural adjustment policies of the 1980s, underpinning declining African agricultural commodity production, differentially impacted on rural men and women. Men's labour time and economic returns from cash cropping diminished, undermining their role as family provisioners, and both adults and many older children sought to earn incomes to prevent impoverishment. The individualization of economic activity and the increasing tendency to engage in non-agricultural income earning had a dissolving effect on long-standing agrarian divisions of labour

as well as economic rights and responsibilities within peasant households.³³ Pooling of income within the domestic unit weakened as categories of people who formerly were not expected to earn an income asserted a moral right to determine how their income was spent. This assertion was given added emphasis because of a decline, if not cessation, in income and material goods distribution from rural male heads of households.

Rural men increasingly switched from cash cropping to non-agrarian pursuits, primarily local services, trade, migrant labour, and artisanal mining in mineral-rich areas, while women's work activities became a complex juggling of agricultural and non-agricultural work. Most noteworthy, the long-held gender boundary between women as household subsistence producers and men as cash earners, particularly pronounced in East Africa, was crossed. In addition to their domestic labour responsibilities, women found a variety of income-generating activities that represented an extension of their home-making skills. Sales of prepared snacks and home-brewed beer were the main activities, followed by a panoply of hair-plaiting, knitting, tailoring, soap-making, midwifery, etc.³⁴ Many ventured into petty trade for the first time, while farming to supply their families' subsistence food needs, collecting water and firewood, caring for children and, for increasing numbers, supplying the heart-breaking care of husbands and sons who returned home from migrant labour with advanced symptoms of AIDS.³⁵

In the scramble to find cash earnings, male youth were especially active. Many dropped out of school to work on their own account or for their families. Coincidentally, of those who entered the service sector, some helped to alleviate women's domestic chores in rural and urban areas. Boys with bicycles and specially adapted carriers collected water or firewood from long distances to sell at central distribution points in villages or towns, thereby saving women hours of walking and heavy head or back-loading.

3.3

Impact on family production, reproduction and resource allocation

The stability of the peasant household rested largely on its ability to provision its members not only in terms of basic needs but also through the transmission of agrarian resources generationally. Land inheritance patterns are an integral part of lineage structures; their specific form being heavily influenced by land availability. With the population expansion of the 20th century, many rural areas approached critical population densities that exerted pressure on the capability of family units to bequeath land in the traditional manner to the next generation. Male youths' desire to individually controlled land and autonomy in agricultural commodity production free of patrilineal control was frustrated.³⁶

In rural areas, where population pressure on agricultural land was mounting, land/labour exchange on the basis of age and gender within family units had to adjust. The provisioning capacity of household units deteriorated and the financial dependence of youth and wives on male patriarchs lessened. In the process, peasant family units started inadvertently restructuring. The nature of internal exchange relations was transformed, generating ambiguity and unease about individual members' rights and responsibilities within the household. The boundaries between household solidarity and individual autonomy blurred.

Social restructuring exhibited four major tendencies: (i) 'incomplete' family units arose involving the locational separation of the reproductive couple for the sake of income-earning; (ii) large extended families downsized towards nuclearization; (iii) dependency ties based on gender and age lines weakened within family units; and (iv) women tried to use matrilineal ties to further their material security.

Many parts of rural sub-Saharan Africa subjected to colonial male labour migration systems, notably Southern and East Africa, had experienced manipulation of

family structure and size. This has changed, although in Zimbabwe – despite male out-migration from rural areas no being longer enforced – the pattern continued to be the main coping strategies for rural households. Berkvens (1997) encountered strong ambivalence on the part of the women left behind. They saw their husbands' urban employment as vital to the rural family's economic well-being, but at the same time they worried that their husbands might be spending money on women in the city or be tempted to leave them in preference for an urban rival. The level of remittance payments and the frequency of migrant men's home visits constituted the litmus test for men's commitment to their rural families.

Undoubtedly the most complex patterns of change in family structure and dependency relationships occurred in South Africa. The former Government's apartheid policies were premised on the separation of reproductive couples and manipulation of family ideology to suit the state's notion of optimal African labour usage. Female urban migration was heavily discouraged during the 1960s and 1970s. Women were expected to raise their families in rural areas with male inputs largely restricted to fathers' cash remittances for maintenance and elderly male social control at the level of the rural tribal authority. Over the years, the agrarian foundations of these rural households were undermined.

In the rest of the continent, there were indications of movement away from three-generational households and reduction in extended family size. Madulu (1998) recorded a continuing process of disintegration of the Sukuma's three-generational family structure that began during the Tanzanian Government's villagization campaign in the 1970s. An increasing number of family members worked in non-agricultural activities, including children whose school attendance and contribution to the family's agricultural effort were squeezed. As family labour inputs declined, family reciprocation in the form of basic needs provisioning and household asset transmission declined as well. A point was reached when many youth were no longer willing to conform to traditional social norms. Young men circumvented brideprice payments and accessed land outside family channels through purchase or

rental, using their income from non-agricultural activities.

In one village in Nigeria's Sahelian Sokoto State, Iliya (1999) estimated a decline in family size of over 50 per cent over 20 years during the 1980s and 1990s, associated with a rapid decline in polygyny and the break-up of *gandu*, the joint family production unit. As economic returns from farming declined, fathers could no longer keep their sons on hand to help them. Fifty-two per cent of surveyed fathers had no sons assisting them, while 74 per cent of sons farmed on their own account, preferring this arrangement because it gave them more time to engage in non-agricultural activities. The older patriarchs, who could afford it, resorted to hired labour, resulting in a shift from familial assistance to wage-based contracts. Individualism grew within households, reducing the dependency of youth and women on male heads of households.³⁷

In Nigeria's Middle Belt, Yunusa (1999) observed that family size, ranging from household membership of 15 people to only five, correlated with the success of household farming. Here too, a nuclearization of family units was evident. The desire to obtain non-agricultural training made families concentrate their assets on paying for schooling for their offspring. Families tended to operate with a rough diversification schema in which certain family members were encouraged to set up non-agricultural activities, while others went to school and the rest continued to farm. The family agricultural labour effort was being atomized, with 68 per cent of interviewed household members reporting that they worked more on their own farms than on the household farm. Farming became primarily the preserve of male heads of households. Due to land pressure, youth did not have direct access to land and tended to engage in agricultural wage labour. Women had even poorer land access and sought non-agricultural activities to earn a personal income.³⁸

A similar trend prevailed in the patriarchal Yoruba households of Nigeria's cocoa belt.³⁹ Soon after the introduction of structural adjustment in the early 1990s, cocoa production rebounded and female and child agricultural labour was heavily co-opted into

the family production effort. As cocoa prices and productive infrastructure declined, there was a striking increase in women's own-account farming and male patriarchs resorted to hired labour.

Amidst the process of extended family downsizing, a counter tendency emerged on the part of women seeking wider spheres of economic and social support. Matrilineal and patrilineal descent systems in rural Africa are not mutually exclusive, and lineage affiliation, rights, responsibilities and claims on lineage resources are negotiable. Women in patrilineal households resorted to natal support systems, their matrilineage, especially in times of duress.⁴⁰ The tendency for labour autonomy within Hausa patrilineal households, for example, left women highly vulnerable. As they were forced to assume more direct provisioning of their needs and those of their children, their access to land, labour and capital within their own household units remained static or declined. Many turned to their natal kin.⁴¹ Paradoxically, as economic circumstances deteriorated, women increased their expenditure on gift-giving to other women. Rather than seeing this as a frivolous use of scarce cash, great store was placed on its value. Through gift-giving, women cemented exchange relations with their natal kin as security against extreme adversity. In effect, the gifts could be likened to insurance premium payments.

3.4

Increasing economic differentiation

The decline of peasant agricultural commodity production was differentially experienced by peasant farmers during the last two decades of the 20th century. Broadly speaking, larger-scale farmers and those located in areas close to centres of food demand managed to retain or even expand agricultural production. Economic liberalization's favourable impact was concentrated in areas of cash crop production, where higher yields were attained due to favourable agro-climatic conditions or low transport costs associated with proximity to ports and other areas of market demand. In these areas, better-off farmers,

deploying economies of scale, could afford to purchase crop input packages and maintain yield levels. The dynamics of economic success engendered a process of land consolidation for farmers using economies of scale, whereas peasant farmers with small acreages were increasingly selling or renting their land out to the larger-scale farmers and entering agricultural wage labour employment or searching for feasible non-farm activities.⁴² Thus, the formation of landless agrarian classes was underway in some areas, associated with high population densities where farmers were cultivating small fragmented plots.⁴³

Before actual landlessness appeared, poor families experienced difficulties in mobilizing resources to farm their small and increasingly unviable plots. This was especially apparent in areas utilizing plough agriculture where poor families did not have ready access to the necessary equipment and draught power, as occurred in Ethiopia, South Africa and Zimbabwe. Poor farmers rented these resources from well-to-do farmers or sharecropped, but invariably they did so at sub-optimal times, since the equipment-owning farmers used it on their own fields at peak times. In South Africa, demoralization set in when such farmers decided that the capital costs of farming were incommensurate with output and fields lay fallow.⁴⁴

As peasant agrarian production eroded, the AIDS crisis struck first in East Africa, then Southern Africa, and thereafter spread to urban areas, becoming a pandemic of disease, death and despair. In the early stages of the epidemic, most of the victims were men working away from home who had sex with infected prostitutes, but over time infection inevitably spread to wives in urban and rural areas. When female carers themselves fell victim to the disease, rural areas experienced paralysis.

The AIDS epidemic triggered a demographic downturn. Higher mortality of women and men of childbearing ages, fear of AIDS and the expanding number of orphans challenged pro-natalist attitudes, bringing negative aspects of customary law to the fore. In patrilineal areas, the death of a male household head threatened the continued land usage rights of his wife and children, who were vulnerable to land

dispossession by the deceased husband's brothers. Orphans sought homes with extended family members or attempted to fend for themselves as child-headed households.⁴⁵ Teenage boys were the least likely to find homes with relations, whereas teenage girls could generally find food and accommodation as house helpers for kin, though they occupied a subordinate position relative to the children of the household head.⁴⁶ Furthermore, where depopulation of adults in economically active ages started becoming acute, new forms of land tenure, be it rental or increased land sales as well as labour-saving patterns of cropping and land use, were in the ascendance.⁴⁷

The value of children to support the rural family's agrarian work effort was being reassessed as peasant agriculture contracted. The erstwhile rationale of having large numbers of children to offset anticipated

high rates of infant mortality was superseded by the issue of rising adult mortality, casting a shadow over the future lives of adult carers, let alone their children. Sex became a dangerous activity. The highest HIV prevalence rates were in urban areas among young women and older, economically well-off men. Such men experienced the highest levels of AIDS mortality.⁴⁸ Some women began rethinking their sex lives. In urban areas, some single women avoided marriage, whereas wives who feared contracting AIDS through a promiscuous husband sometimes resorted to divorce.⁴⁹ As both production and human reproduction trends took a downturn, the optimism of the preceding two decades of African nationalist achievement disappeared. The 1980s and 1990s were decades of struggle for immediate survival, devoid of a clear sense of direction within rural households and African nation-states.

4.

REVERSION TO SUBSISTENCE AGRICULTURE, LEFT-BEHIND WOMEN AND ESCALATING INEQUALITY, 2000–2015

4.1

Sectoral realignment: Deepening de-agrarianization and depeasantization amidst mineralization

Since the millennium, sub-Saharan African countries' economic fortunes have been heavily influenced by world market fluctuations. The depressed circumstances of the preceding two decades began to lift. The world price of minerals rose, pushed by a new geography of demand emanating from Chinese and Indian industrial development.⁵⁰ Several well-established mining and oil-producing countries (such as Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Ghana) as well as newer producers (Burkina Faso, Mali, Uganda and United Republic of Tanzania) experienced a welcome flush of economic prosperity.

Men were overwhelmingly the beneficiaries of mining jobs in the international mining companies, but large-scale mining is almost invariably highly mechanized and rarely generates mass employment opportunities. Nevertheless, the mining boom trickled down to local people in the form of informal artisanal mining opportunities and a surge in service sector activity in urban and rural areas proximate to mining extraction

sites.⁵¹ According to Hayes (2008), an estimated 9 million Africans engaged directly in artisanal mining, while 54 million derived an indirect service sector livelihood from it. This contrasted with non-mineral-producing countries, which continued to stagnate.

Young men were especially attracted by the large income differential between agriculture and gold mineral strike site earnings. They left family farms with high expectations of enriching themselves.⁵² Women were quick to follow in many places. Unlike 19th century gold-rush settlements, the sex ratio was not disproportionately male. Young women often flocked to mine sites to work in the burgeoning service sector while harbouring the hope of finding a rich miner as a partner.⁵³

The mining migration stream impinged on small-holder family farms' labour supply. Survey evidence points to the shrinking size and number of such farms in countries with and without a mineral boom economy. Lowder et al.'s (2016) literature survey and analysis of Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) agricultural census data (2001 and 2013) identified a trend towards decreasing farm size for the majority of Africa's smallholder farmers. Sixty-two per cent of all farms accounted for 39 per cent of agricultural land area and 82 per cent of farms measured two hectares

or less. Similarly, Jayne et al. (2016) observed declining farm size between 1980 and 2000 in land-constrained African countries. Downsizing of smallholder farms is by no means restricted to Africa, but given their widespread existence on the continent, their reduced size and under-capitalized agricultural subsistence production supplemented by non-market activities, they impart a vulnerable disposition to rural areas.⁵⁴

Jayne et al. (2016) identifies African small-scale holdings (less than five hectares) as a shrinking share of agricultural land holdings. Average farm sizes of smallholder family farms in land-constrained countries have fallen by an estimated 30 to 40 per cent since the 1970s.⁵⁵ By contrast, medium-scale commercial farms (5–100 hectares) are experiencing rapid growth and are estimated to control 20 per cent of total farmland in Kenya, 32 per cent in Ghana, 39 per cent in the United Republic of Tanzania and rising to over 50 per cent in Zambia. They are projected to become dominant in the future.⁵⁶ Many are operated by urban-based professionals or influential members of the rural entrepreneurial middle class who acquired their farms later in life as business investments. The share of rural land controlled by urban households is rising and is augmented by financially successful artisanal miners investing in land for rural retirement. The net effect on the upside is that medium-scale farming consists of dynamic, higher-yielding holdings; on the downside, however, they are likely to exacerbate land scarcity and poverty for rural family farmers.⁵⁷ Medium-scale commercial farmers' displacement of smallholder peasants intensifies depeasantization, contributing to the increasing precariousness of poor farmers' subsistence production.

The on-going decreasing average size of farm plots of rural smallholder peasants creates blockages to the generational transfer of land and exacerbates economic and political pressures that can erupt in ethnic tension, as evidenced by past strife and civil war in Uganda (1970s), Rwanda (1990s) and Burundi (1990s, 2000s and renewed flare-up in 2015). These countries, although known for their agricultural potential, are territorially very small and have become exceptionally densely populated and land-short. Many African

ethnic conflicts are underlined by acute shortages of rural land for inter-generational inheritance transfers.

While Africa continues to be the most land abundant continent in the world, arable land availability is becoming a serious economic issue and welfare concern. Much of the continent's land is arid or semi-arid and not suitable for farming, with climate change bound to reduce arable land further in the future. It is not a coincidence that the majority of African migrants to Europe are from countries with all or part of their national territory in the Sahel.⁵⁸ The rising commercialization of farmland by urban and rural elites displaces smallholder family farms, often with the compliance of rural chiefs who receive pecuniary gain from land transfers. It is estimated that forests cover an estimated one third of available rural land,⁵⁹ but losing forestland threatens local and regional farming agro-climates, and much of the rest of the unutilized arable land is in formerly or current conflict-ridden countries.

Demand for land escalates with rapid rural population growth. Most countries in Africa have yet to experience a full demographic transition. The population growth is projected to continue rising until 2050.⁶⁰ Tensions within peasant family farms deepen as rural youth come of age and face sibling or paternal rivalry over land, ending up with smaller economically unviable land holdings to the point of landlessness in the more densely populated and arid countries.

These circumstances raise the pivotal issue of labour movement out of peasant family farming in the 21st century. Before turning to a consideration of age-sex patterns of urban out-migration and sectoral change over the rural-urban divide, the next sub-section focuses on how these trends differentially impact on women and men throughout their life cycles, with growing specialization and expansion of the social division of labour associated with urbanization. In view of Africa's relatively poor database,⁶¹ the methodological challenges of piecing together what has happened to gender and generational patterns in the process of urbanization and rising labour commodification are discussed first.

4.2

Tracing the evolving division of labour amidst depeasantization and urbanization

Processes of urbanization across Africa have been spatially disparate. Southern Africa's urbanization was kick-started by late 19th century mining industrialization, whereas the beginnings and rates of urbanization have varied country by country, connected with the timing of national independence, post-colonial government policies and the recent processes of mineralization of the 21st century.⁶² The economic trajectories of virtually all sub-Saharan African countries are heavily influenced by processes of urbanization.

The definition of 'urban' is perennially debated, with some stressing demographic criteria whereas others emphasize occupational or cultural criteria.⁶³ Urban areas are conventionally defined as urban concentrations with populations numbering more than 10,000 or 20,000. The United Nations compiles data on urban areas on the basis of individual countries' national population censuses, which do not conform to a standardized continental cut-off point for defining an urban area.⁶⁴ In the absence of standardization, the magnitude of population shifts from rural to urban areas cannot be strictly compared. Furthermore, some African countries' definition of urban areas is based on administrative categorization rather than total population, which tends to result in considerable undercounting of the country's urban population.⁶⁵

National population censuses in Africa pose various obstacles to an accurate appreciation of the rate and extent of urbanization. They vary widely in quality with respect to the relevance, updating and standardizing of census data categories and the care with which the census data have been collected and processed. Population censuses generally occur at 10-year intervals, or less frequently when financial and logistical delays derail their regularity. Spatial movement of the population between censuses goes unrecorded, including temporary migration of undisclosed sizes and compositions arising

from people's mobility in and out of artisanal mining sites, civil conflict and famines, often on a large scale.

Urbanization in Africa is paradoxical because while people shift to urban areas, the high risk and contingency of their urban livelihoods ordain that they often transpose rural cultural and occupational modes of existence to the towns. Urban farming is the most salient example of this. There is mutual reliance on rural relations for supplementary food and material help, as well as extended family labour assistance in the form of cleaning and care activities, usually performed by young female members of the rural extended family in the urban family household. Thus, the family experience of urbanization may remain open-ended, with goods, money and family members circulating between rural and urban branches of the extended family, aimed at maximizing urban economic opportunities while retaining rural survival fall-back options if and when urban livelihood pursuits fall short of needs. Subsistence farming in urban areas generally serves as a temporary expedient.

In addition to imprecise census data, African labour statistics are notoriously problematic, particularly in the case of informal labour performance, given the difficulties of people accurately enumerating their various daily work activities, which are characterized by multi-tasking and daily or seasonal variation. Furthermore, amidst the process of African deagrarianization, the time allocation and value of household members' market-directed production improves relative to household-based production, yet people working on a self-employed basis are usually engaged in unwaged, casualized labour with an uncertain market. Hence much of market-based rural labour time does not necessarily yield cash earnings, making labour categorization and measurement difficult. The quandary for labour valuation and time measurement is where to draw the line between monetized market production as opposed to non-monetized market production as well as non-monetized internal household production. This distinction, albeit hazy, has profound implications for how data on work activities can realistically be collected, categorized and interpreted based on informants reporting of their work activities and their own definitions of work.

4.3

Gender and generational labour allocation in the 21st century

This sub-section traces economic and demographic trends in eight countries: four core countries representing West, East and Southern Africa (Ghana, Kenya, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia); two poor agrarian countries with less full data sets (Malawi and Uganda); Mali, a poor Francophone country with a high rate of male out-migration to Europe; and Rwanda, a densely populated, now rapidly urbanizing country recovering from the trauma of civil war and genocide experienced in the early 1990s.

Yeboah and Jayne's (2016)⁶⁶ compilation of recent national labour panel data delineated by rural/urban location, labour sector, age and sex for the above-named

eight countries provides valuable, comparable data with which to explore Africa's changing occupational structure. To discern patterns of labour allocation by gender and age, I have calculated sex ratios for labour tasks in rural and urban areas delineated by the International Labour Organization (ILO)⁶⁷ using the conventional calculation of dividing the male population by the female population.⁶⁸

Table 4-1 provides an overview of the two main sectoral divisions between agriculture and non-agriculture in the eight countries, listed in order of their level of urbanization. Women dominate rural agriculture in Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia (average 0.81) and are even more dominant in urban agriculture in those countries with the exception of Uganda (average 0.65). Ghana and Zambia display more gender-neutral patterns. Ghana's rural agriculture is the most gender-balanced (1.04), while the other sectoral/locational allocations show men's 'light' domination.

TABLE 4-1
Rural and urban sex ratios (all ages) for agriculture and non-agriculture sectors

	Ghana 2013	Zambia 2012	Mali 2009	Tanzania 2012/13	Rwanda 2010/11	Kenya 2009	Malawi 2008	Uganda 2012
Rural population	49.3%	61.3%	64.0%	71.9%	76.0%	76.4%	84.5%	85.5%
Agriculture	1.04	0.86	1.70	0.85	0.76	0.75	0.88	0.77
Non-agriculture	1.40	1.31	2.32	1.71	1.87	1.35	2.17	2.28
Urban population	50.7%	38.7%	36.0%	28.1%	26.0%	23.6%	15.5%	14.5%
Agriculture	1.17	0.50	1.73	0.80	0.64	0.53	1.08	0.76
Non-agriculture	1.42	1.43	2.22	1.50	1.43	1.53	2.17	1.45

Source: Derived from Yeboah and Jayne 2016 statistical compilation (see endnote 65 for specified national references).

• Note: For purposes of readily spotting gender patterns and comparing patterns between countries, sex ratio levels are colour-coded with blue representing male dominance that darkens in shade as the sex ratio rises, while women's dominance is denoted by orange with the shading similarly deepening as the sex

* Color-coded sex ratio categories

2.50+	Overwhelmingly MALE	1.05-1.49	Majority MALE	.40-.69	Heavily FEMALE
2.00-2.49	Extremely MALE	.95-1.04	Roughly GENDER BALANCED	.10-.39	Extremely FEMALE
1.50-1.99	Heavily MALE	.70-.94	Majority FEMALE	<.10	Overwhelmingly FEMALE

Men's presence is greater than women's in the non-agricultural sector of rural and urban locations in every country, being most pronounced in Mali (2.32), a Muslim country in West Africa, and the deeply rural countries of Uganda (2.28) and Malawi (2.17) in East Africa. In Mali, men's work relative to women's is dominant in both agriculture and non-agriculture (ranging from 1.70–2.32). The agricultural sectors in rural and urban areas are more variegated in terms of their gender presence, the two extremes being Ghana, which has a rough balance between female and male labour in rural agriculture, and Mali, with its strong dominance of men in rural and urban agriculture related to female seclusion practices.

Yeboah and Jayne's (2016) data compilation is based on Standard National Accounts (SNA) categorizations. Work activities are listed in terms of 'jobs' and 'employment', in which income generation is not definitionally specified. In other words, survey informants are free to interpret the meaning of 'work' and deem which of their activities are 'work'. Women tend to discount much of their domestic and agricultural labour as being simply part of family duties as wives

and mothers, resulting in their work effort being undercounted, whereas men, identifying themselves as family 'breadwinners', are likely to be far more thorough in categorizing and reporting as work the time that they spend provisioning their families' needs or performing income-generating activities.⁶⁹ Patriarchal bias in survey interviewing, and in the minds of women informants themselves, is problematic.

The veracity of age breakdowns is less problematic and sheds light on differences in the work patterns embedded in female and male life cycles. Table 4-2 focuses on the agricultural sector, which comprises the largest work-active share of the national workforce, ranging from 32 per cent in Zambia to 60 per cent in Rwanda. In most countries, with the exception of Ghana and Mali, women dominate agriculture throughout their life cycle, especially in East and Central Africa. Middle-aged women are especially concentrated in urban agriculture in East Africa. There are variegated patterns with the involvement of young males (15–24 years) in both rural and urban agriculture in Ghana, Mali and United Republic of Tanzania. Malawian men between 25–44 years of age lightly dominate urban agriculture.

TABLE 4-2
Male/female sex ratios of participation in rural and urban agricultural sectors by age groups, 2010s

Country	Rural agriculture				% total work	Urban agriculture				% of total work pop.	rural pop. as % of national pop.		
	Age groups:				Age groups:	Age groups:							
	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	pop.	15-24	25-34	35-44				
Ghana	1.26	0.92	0.93	1.01	1.08	29.0	1.41	0.98	1.01	1.40	1.04	7.3	49.3
Zambia	0.75	0.84	0.98	0.93	0.93	34.6	0.44	0.44	0.54	0.62	0.88	5.4	61.3
Mali	1.51	1.52	1.84	1.92	2.69	36.5	1.36	1.49	1.86	2.19	3.16	1.4	64.0
Tanzania	1.06	0.74	0.60	0.78	0.94	46.2	1.39	0.56	0.63	0.46	0.70	5.0	71.9
Rwanda	0.82 0.77		0.71	0.70	0.72	55.7	0.81	0.60	0.59	0.65	0.55	4.5	76.0
Kenya	0.84	0.68	0.70	0.71	0.86	27.5	0.55	0.43	0.51	0.57	0.79	4.1	76.4
Uganda	0.95	0.66	0.65	0.77	0.54	48.7	0.85	0.58	0.61	0.29	0.73	4.6	85.5
Malawi	0.70	0.93	1.02	0.94	0.93	33.6	0.97	1.28	1.17	0.90	0.88	1.3	84.5

Sources: Derived from Yeboah and Jayne 2016 statistical compilation (see endnote 65 for specified national references).

Note *% of rural population estimates: World Bank 2010.

African women’s agricultural effort continues to be primarily focused on subsistence food production. Studies⁷⁰ suggest that women achieve 20 to 30 per cent lower agricultural productivity than men, which contributes to the rural income inequality between women and men. Ali et al.’s (2016) in-depth investigation of this ‘gap’ in Uganda revealed that women farmed smaller plots than men and had lower resource endowments with respect to fertilizer, seeds and extension inputs. The outcome was a 17.5 per cent difference in yields. Child dependency was deemed a strong influence on women’s inferior agricultural productivity.⁷¹ Men had better access to agricultural inputs, whereas women farmers’ plots received more family labour inputs, which helped to ameliorate their heavy workloads but had resulted in lower productivity.

Table 4-3 switches focus to rural and urban non-agricultural sectors, composed of employment that is not part of agriculture or the agri-food system. These are male dominated with the exception of the most urbanized countries, Ghana and Zambia, where the youngest age group (15–24 years) was gender-balanced or slightly female-biased. This suggests that many young women as well as young men migrate from rural areas to find work in the urban service sector. As previously noted, rural girls in their teenage years and early 20s frequently join urban-based households of their extended family network to provide childcare and cleaning services as ayahs and maids, mostly being paid in kind with provision of room and board. This tallies with the age/sex pyramids (Appendix I) of Ghana and Zambia, where there is an urban female bulge between the ages of 10–29 years.

TABLE 4-3
Male/female sex ratios of age groups’ participation in rural and urban non-agricultural sectors, 2010

Country	Rural non-agriculture Age groups:					Total work pop. %	Urban non-agriculture Age groups:					Total work pop. %	Urban pop. %
	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64		15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64		
Ghana	0.97	1.51	1.74	1.67	1.44	8.9	0.99	1.33	1.68	1.65	1.82	21.8	50.7
Zambia	0.81	1.29	1.77	1.73	1.80	6.3	1.04	1.37	1.79	1.62	1.91	18.4	38.7
Mali	1.75	2.66	3.08	2.50	1.87	8.2	1.19	2.51	3.29	3.19	3.64	11.5	36.0
Tanzania	1.41	2.02	1.60	1.89	2.25	11.1	1.13	1.60	1.56	1.84	2.07	12.2	28.1
Rwanda	1.61	2.10	1.87	1.83	2.07	17.6	1.08	1.67	1.45	1.86	1.31	5.5	24.0
Kenya	1.40	1.57	1.64	1.75	1.79	17.7	1.11	1.56	1.75	1.91	2.14	20.0	23.6
Malawi	1.51	2.19	2.35	2.18	2.32	14.0	1.58	2.27	2.35	2.28	3.13	7.6	15.5
Uganda	1.77	2.24	3.42	1.93	4.41	10.5	1.30	1.70	1.29	2.09	3.22	5.9	14.5

Sources: Derived from Yeboah and Jayne 2016 statistical compilation (see endnote 65 for specified national references).
Note % of urban population estimates: World Bank 2010.

Table 4-4 shows women’s reported dominance in the remaining sectors: ‘agricultural processing’, ‘economically inactive’ and ‘unemployed’ (see Table 4-4 footnotes for definitions). They are prevalent in agricultural processing everywhere except in Rwanda,

where men have a slight edge. However, agricultural processing is a small, relatively negligible sector, averaging 9 per cent of total sectoral participation in most reporting countries, except Ghana (18 per cent) where women monopolize the sector.

TABLE 4-4

Male/female participation and sex ratios in other rural and urban sectors, 2010s

	Agricultural processing*		Economically inactive		Unemployed	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Sectoral % in nat'l economy						
Ghana	7.2	10.7	5.3	12.2	0.5	1.8
Zambia	1.8	3.7	11.1	12.5	1.5	4.5
Mali	n.a.	n.a.	29.0	12.4	0.3	0.7
Tanzania	6.3	5.7	5.0	6.7	0.4	1.4
Rwanda	5.0	1.0	8.2	1.9	0.1	0.3
Kenya	n.a.	n.a.	14.9	8.4	3.9	3.5
Uganda	3.6	2.0	17.6	6.8	0.1	0.2
Malawi	n.a.	n.a.	24.0	5.6	11.8	2.0
Average	4.8	4.6	14.4	8.3	2.3	1.8
Sex ratio	Agricultural processing		Economically inactive		Unemployed	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Ghana						
15-24	0.33	0.36	0.91	0.82	0.58	0.65
25-34	0.20	0.19	0.50	0.43	0.24	0.58
35-44	0.22	0.12	0.22	0.18	0.16	0.43
45-54	0.22	0.10	0.28	0.26	0.27	0.77
55-64	0.24	0.12	0.67	0.70	0.49	1.08
All ages	0.24	0.17	0.79	0.70	0.41	0.62
Zambia						
15-24	0.70	1.02	1.45	0.96	0.73	0.68
25-34	0.73	0.66	0.47	0.53	0.53	0.62
35-44	0.59	0.66	0.51	0.42	0.33	0.45
45-54	0.53	0.47	0.49	0.46	0.38	0.62
55-64	0.76	0.50	0.36	0.52	0.85	1.00
All ages	0.66	0.67	1.27	0.85	0.64	0.64
Mali						
15-24	n.a.	n.a.	0.46	0.77	2.28	1.62
25-34	n.a.	n.a.	0.12	0.20	3.46	2.06
35-44	n.a.	n.a.	0.11	0.08	3.84	2.60
45-54	n.a.	n.a.	0.13	0.10	1.90	3.14
55-64	n.a.	n.a.	0.26	0.31	1.50	1.70
All ages	n.a.	n.a.	0.26	0.45	2.52	1.92
Tanzania						
15-24	1.07	0.63	0.90	0.64	0.76	0.80

25-34	0.93	0.55	0.43	0.18	0.46	0.26
35-44	0.71	0.85	1.15	0.14	0.44	0.10
45-54	0.86	0.62	0.63	0.11	0.45	0.68
55-64	0.83	0.61	0.35	0.50	n.a.	1.11
All ages	0.88	0.64	0.81	0.48	0.77	0.55
Rwanda						
15-24	1.26	1.03	1.00	0.83	1.70	0.59
25-34	1.12	1.26	1.24	0.47	1.11	0.40
35-44	1.01	1.07	3.54	0.77	n.a.	0.35
45-54	0.90	0.70	3.53	1.19	n.a.	0.77
55-64	0.63	0.70	1.45	0.64	7.01	n.a.
All ages	1.08	1.08	1.07	0.78	1.65	0.49
Kenya						
15-24	n.a.	n.a.	0.97	0.74	1.30	0.89
25-34	n.a.	n.a.	0.24	0.17	1.38	0.99
35-44	n.a.	n.a.	0.20	0.14	1.47	1.24
45-54	n.a.	n.a.	0.23	0.20	1.41	1.31
55-64	n.a.	n.a.	0.39	0.47	1.22	1.22
All ages			0.68	0.52	1.35	0.99
Uganda						
15-24	1.36	0.36	0.69	0.70	0.79	1.38
25-34	0.92	0.72	0.49	0.53	n.a.	0.16
35-44	0.53	0.58	1.54	1.44	n.a.	0.17
45-54	0.70	0.20	1.48	1.26	n.a.	n.a.
55-64	1.17	0.51	0.93	1.07	n.a.	n.a.
All ages	0.89	0.49	0.74	1.00	1.12	0.60
Malawi						
15-24	n.a.		1.06	0.86	0.48	0.36
25-34	n.a.		0.52	0.31	0.51	0.27
35-44	n.a.	n.a.	0.52	0.25	0.58	0.28
45-54	n.a.	n.a.	0.47	0.26	0.56	0.29
55-64	n.a.	n.a.	0.49	0.51	0.67	0.49
All ages			0.64	0.64	0.31	0.31

Source: Compilation of national labour panel data cited in Yeboah and Jayne 2016 (see endnote 66).

Note definitions of labour categorizations:

- 'Agricultural processing' includes agricultural value chain work including trading, wholesale, storage, processing, retailing, food preparation for sale, beverage manufacture and input distribution.

- 'Economically inactive' are individuals who were not engaged in any economic activity during the set period and are neither looking for work nor available to work for various reasons.

- *'Unemployed' includes individuals not engaged in any economic activity during the reference period, available to work and either looking for employment or not seeking employment because they thought that there was no work available.

A far larger sector is that of the ‘economically inactive’, constituting approximately 23 per cent of the working population and found predominantly in rural areas. It is highly feminized with the notable exception of Rwanda and, to a smaller extent, Uganda. In essence, this category – defined as those ‘not looking for work or available to work’ – is generally made up of women over 25 who are seen as ‘non-working’ housewives. The strong presence of men in this category in Rwanda could relate to war injuries, and likewise in Uganda, where a high incidence of injury or disease may cause men’s work incapacitation.

The ‘unemployed’ sector, amounting to only about 4 per cent of total sectoral distribution, is rather hard to distinguish definitionally from the economically inactive sector. In both, the largest group is 15–24-year-olds. The small numbers reporting themselves as ‘unemployed’, and the likelihood that respondents had dissimilar ways of understanding the term from country to country, makes it difficult to interpret the sex ratios in this category. However, the preponderance of women reporting themselves as ‘economically inactive’, who purportedly do not work, undoubtedly reflects prevailing gender attitudes in the surveyed population rather than the realities of women’s labour time allocation. Surveys restricted to SNA labour categories ignore most female-specific tasks performed in the household, particularly those involving domestic labour and childcare.⁷² The next sub-section addresses this oversight.

4.4

Reproductive labour: Uncounted care and concern

In economies where so much of work is pursued on a non-monetized and ambiguous subsistence basis, women’s work effort is generally undervalued, undercounted or overlooked. Many women under-report or even omit their income-earning activity when asked about work in a survey context. In rural patriarchal societies, women’s subsistence agricultural and domestic work is a family duty rather than recognized as work per se. Furthermore, women’s admission of involvement in income-generating activities can be perceived as an unauthorized challenge to the role of the male breadwinner, even though the money earned is likely to be pooled and spent on family needs.

This ingrained bias against recognizing women’s work effort is beginning to be addressed statistically. A number of African domestic labour studies have been conducted, providing comparative national labour time-use data for non-SNA as well as SNA activities. SNA statistics are counted as productive, wealth-generating labour. Non-SNA work, which is excluded in the national accounts, encompasses the reproductive labour involved in generating and maintaining the welfare of people within the household and community and consists primarily of women’s domestic labour and childcare activities. Table 4-5, based on Charmes’ (2006) juxtaposing of SNA and non-SNA domestic labour time survey data (dated 1999–2001), illustrates the extent of the gender division of labour hidden within the home, with women’s total work time exceeding that of men in all three case study countries: Benin, Madagascar and South Africa.

TABLE 4-5

Daily domestic labour time allocation by SNA/non-SNA categories and gender (hours)*

Category:	Benin (1998)			Madagascar (2001)			South Africa (2000)		
	F	M	M/F ratio	F	M	M/F ratio	F	M	M/F ratio
SNA & non-SNA									
SNA production	3.9	3.9	1.00	2.9	4.9	1.69	1.9	3.2	0.11
Non-SNA production	3.5	1.1	0.31	3.7	0.8	0.22	3.8	1.3	0.34
Total work (hours)	7.4	5.0	0.68	6.6	5.7	0.86	5.7	4.5	0.79
% non-SNA	47	22		49	14		67	29	

Labour Time Breakdown of Domestic Labour Tasks within SNA & non-SNA Categories (hours)									
<i>SNA categorized</i>									
Crop farming	0.18	0.48	2.67	0.33	0.48	1.45	0.08	0.07	0.88
Tending animals, fish farming	0.00	0.22		0.15	0.62	4.13	0.02	0.17	8.50
Hunting, gathering	0.07	0.18	0.27	0.08	0.08	1.00		0.02	
Digging, stone cutting								0.02	
Fetching water	0.75	0.20	0.27	0.45	0.15	0.33	0.13	0.05	0.38
Collecting firewood	0.27	0.07	0.26	0.12	0.22	1.67	0.10	0.05	0.50
Food processing	0.43	0.13	0.30	0.33	0.05	0.15			
Building dwelling				0.10	0.02	0.20	0.02	0.05	2.50
Sub-total	1.70	1.28	0.75	1.56	1.62	1.04	0.35	0.43	1.23
<i>Non-SNA categorized</i>									
Preparing meals	1.25	0.10	0.08	1.57	0.12	0.08	1.40	0.32	0.23
Washing up	0.28	0.07	0.25	0.37	0.07	0.19			
Washing, ironing	0.37	0.12	0.32	0.38	0.02	0.05	0.43	0.10	0.23
Shopping	0.37	0.33	0.89	0.30	0.12	0.40	0.12	0.10	0.83
Access government services	0.02	0.03	1.50	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.02	0.02	1.00
Household maintenance	0.47	0.17	0.36	0.38	0.07	0.18	0.80	0.40	0.50
Other maintenance	0.12	0.10	0.83	0.05	0.10	0.50	0.43	0.10	0.23
Repair of house or apparel	0.02	0.10	5.00	0.02	0.13	6.50		0.03	0.0
Childcare	0.48	0.07	0.15	0.58	0.10	0.17	0.45		0.45
Caring for elderly, handicapped	.03	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.02	0.67	0.10	0.03	0.30
Sub-total	3.41	1.09	0.32	3.68	0.77	0.21	3.75	1.10	0.37
Domestic labour total	5.11	2.37	0.46	5.15	2.39	0.46	4.10	1.53	0.37

Source: Charmes 2006:47 SNA/non-SNA statistics based on cited data from Benin: INSAE/PNUD 1998; Madagascar: INSTAT 2002; and South Africa: Statistics South Africa 2001.

* See Appendix for listing of domestic labour activities that are attributed to SNA versus non-SNA categories.

Charmes 2006, Tables 3.4, 3.6 & 3.12, pp.49, 59

Women's core SNA domestic labour accounted for two to four hours of work in the case study countries, with the ratios of male-to-female labour ranging from an evenly balanced 1.00 in Benin to 1.69 in Madagascar, denoting a higher male labour input, while in South Africa the M/F sex ratio at 0.11 indicated that male labour inputs were negligible.⁷³ In all three countries, the classic trio of cooking, cleaning and childcare was overwhelmingly women's responsibility.⁷⁴ However, when female and male agricultural labour and water and firewood collection were included, the labour imbalance as measured by the M/F ratio was reduced to a range between 0.75 with women dominant in Benin, roughly gender neutral in Madagascar at 1.04, and 1.23 in South Africa. South African men's reported inordinately long hours of livestock-keeping activities tipped their labour contribution to one that exceeded that of women.

Bardasi and Wodon's (2006) analysis of Guinean 2002–2003 data affords insight into the evolution of the gender division of labour from childhood to adulthood. Boys' input into domestic labour was relatively negligible in rural areas, with a M/F sex ratio of 0.52, confirming that girls at an early age were expected to work harder than their brothers. Only firewood collection warranted a higher labour input from boys than girls. However, boys' and girls' input in household farm work and business was balanced at 10.6 hours per week. Adult rural women's household agricultural labour input was lower than men's by three hours per week, whereas their domestic labour exceeded that of men by 19 hours.

Women's domestic labour in Guinea is drastically reduced in the transition from rural to urban residence through the removal of the water and firewood collection burden arising from urban piped water and use of charcoal or other forms of energy for cooking. Interestingly, there is a tendency for domestic labour time to rise in both rural and urban households as income increases, with more time devoted to urban cooking and ironing, for example, suggesting that domestic labour becomes more an issue of housekeeping standards and status than mere basic need provisioning. Households in the highest income quartile in urban areas were likely to have heads of households who

were second-generation city dwellers, educated and part of Africa's burgeoning urban middle class, living in bigger, more comfortable houses with various domestic appliances such as cooking stoves, large refrigerators, washing machines, vacuum cleaners and microwaves.

Malawian 2004 household survey data⁷⁵ was collected just a year after famine conditions prevailed in the country. Gender differentiation in the '4 Cs' – cooking, cleaning, childcare and collection of water and firewood – was similar to the patterns already outlined above. Women had the longest working hours with the least flexibility for reducing their labour input: 15 per cent in rural areas exerted themselves beyond 70 hours per week and only 5 per cent worked less than 10 hours. Rural men were twice as likely to be in the less than 10 hour category and half as likely to be working over 70 hours. Boys and girls had far less onerous workloads with 73 per cent of boys and 56 per cent of girls working 10 hours or less per week.

4.5

From ritually ascribed to role-negotiated gender- and age-differentiated resource access

So far, analysis of the 1980s–2010s period has relied primarily on analysis of large quantitative data sets. While this helps to map broad tendencies, the gender bias embedded in the labour data categories and the lack of intercensal information on short-term circular migration precludes understanding the detailed decision-making agency of family members by age and sex in the processes of deagrarianization and urbanization. In-depth qualitative case studies by anthropologists', sociologists and geographers are more likely than large statistical data sets to yield insights into the question of why women are more rural-based and more involved in rural and urban non-farm sectors compared to men. Are they compelled or do they choose to stay on the farm?

Many observers would be inclined towards the view that women have no choice in the matter and that their traditional role in family food and service provisioning

ordains that they stay behind. This view is contested by Archambault (2010), who interviewed women aged over 50 in Pare, a well-watered mountainous highland area of United Republic of Tanzania, where women chose to stay in their home area with their children because they were accustomed to an agrarian life and it offered them work autonomy. Nelson (1992), researching Kenya's populous Kikuyuland, had similar findings. The women left behind felt independent and best placed to secure their families' well-being, albeit they disliked the stress and insecurity they encountered at times being on their own. The density of population in their rural homelands made them acutely aware of the need for a physical presence to protect their family's rights to their house and fields. Furthermore, those without advanced education calculated that they would not be able to find work in the city and were loath to live there simply as housewives. Urban life did not attract them. Their reasoning reflected volition under constrained circumstances. And even if their husbands were living with other women in other locations, women felt that as farmers and custodians of the family farm they were leading worthwhile lives, appreciated by other family members living in situ or away in other rural or urban areas. In other words, a left-behind woman was a hearth-holder for her rural and urban extended family.

By contrast, there is a coalescing tendency for African women under 50 years of age to question the social worth of being a housewife. Over the last three decades, amidst deagrarianization, urbanization and the AIDS pandemic, they have become increasingly sceptical about the value of marriage. As men's cash cropping earnings have declined and regular alternative income streams have not materialized, women perceive men as increasingly unable to deliver as family breadwinners. Men's income diversification efforts, with the exception of successful artisanal miners, are too often piecemeal and paltry.⁷⁶ Demoralized, some slip into escapist drinking or womanizing, which drains already meagre earnings. Certain women conclude that dwindling contributions to the family purse – combined with the threat of HIV infection and beatings by drunken husbands – pose more harm than good for family welfare, and they may separate or divorce. Among younger women, the experiences

of their mothers and older sisters motivates some to circumvent marriage altogether. Some are willing to have casual sexual relationships and bear children but do not want to be lumbered with the social subordination and lack of economic autonomy of being a wife.⁷⁷

Furthermore, customary marriages with bridewealth payments are declining in many rural areas. Increasingly, the onus of payment has shifted from the groom's family to the groom himself, a practice that is proving very difficult for men existing on low, irregular income earnings.⁷⁸ Women's waning interest in marriage is premised on their desire for more autonomy and avoidance of bridewealth payments that could lock them into an unhappy marriage. Casual conjugal relationships without the intervention of the elders and enforcement of bridewealth payments surface particularly in the case of migrants.⁷⁹ Not surprisingly, there are potential welfare repercussions when a father and his patrilineage have no sanctioned filiation to the child. This tends to lead to patrilineal and matrilineal lineage relationships being displaced while the main unit of family welfare evolves towards the mother-child dyad, the base cell of family life in which women nourish and nurture their children as a sole adult carer.⁸⁰ This pattern emerged early in South Africa,⁸¹ and now researchers in various parts of Africa have observed the spread of matrifocal⁸² residential family units in both rural and urban areas as men are increasingly marginalized from family residential life.⁸³ The pattern is most salient in Botswana,⁸⁴ where matrifocal autonomy has corroded lineage control and is challenging nuclear conjugality as well.

This trend inevitably causes material and emotional stress for women, children and the absent men, but on balance women's bargaining power has scope for improvement in the domestic sphere. Absent men tend to send remittances to their wives/conjugal partners rather than their natal families, according women greater financial management of household income and more leverage to insist on safe sex and reject domestic violence when their partners visit. Divorce is easier for a woman who can cite non-payment of bridewealth as grounds for divorce. Case study evidence suggests that women tend to be slow to remarry or even reject remarriage.⁸⁵ Divorced

women facing financial difficulties sometimes use sex work as a fall back, though everyone is well aware of its hazards in terms of vulnerability to HIV. It should be noted that women living in very patriarchal Haya rural society evolved a matrifocal trajectory over the 20th century to gain economic autonomy, which involved marital separation or divorce and travel to large towns in East Africa to work as prostitutes with the aim of accumulating capital for their return to their rural home area some years later, where they invested in farmland as female heads of household “in solidarity and with the support of female relatives and friends, with a strong priority for [furthering] the education of children”.⁸⁶ This is an oft-cited example of matrifocal homestead-building based on conscious strategy,⁸⁷ as opposed to more recent widespread matrifocality devised by women during the scramble for non-agricultural income-generating activities.⁸⁸

Women’s strategies for greater autonomy in marriage have evolved along other, sometimes puzzling, avenues. Temudo (2017) documents how rural Balanta women of Guinea Bissau up until the 1980s lived in a tradition-bound age- and gender-stratified patrilineal society in which they were obliged to marry polygynous male elders. Young men were sidelined from marriage but afforded scope to having extra-marital affairs with partners from distant villages, while young wives were free to conduct petty trade to earn income to cover the costs of their children’s daily needs. Under the influence of structural adjustment, neo-liberalism, a political coup and the introduction of cashew production and grinding mills, the labour demands on young women and men eased and patriarchal control loosened. Many girls started getting pregnant by boyfriends to evade forced marriage. Free choice of marriage partners gave young men the chance to get married in their 20s rather than their 40s, and these marriages were more fertile. However, as time progressed, tensions surfaced in the new local order of production and reproduction. Living in a non-polygynous household increases women’s domestic workload. Younger husbands expect their wives to help in the rice fields and share the costs of their children’s education, health and clothing. This leaves women with little time for pursuing their former income-generating activities while facing increasing

child-related expenses. Temudo (2017) notes that some try to claw back time by negotiating a kind of “pre-marriage contract’...to impose equal rights and duties between husbands and wives”. But one exasperated informant stated: “it’s better to marry an old man’ [because] they give their young wives liberty to travel and engage in trade activities, to have distant sexual partners, and even to study”.

These examples are illustrative of on-going negotiations over the rural age/gender division of labour in the move away from gerontocratic control of marriage towards conjugal or matrifocal family outcomes. Internal household productive and reproductive patterns, often considered to be steeped in age-old tradition, are responsive and malleable to external economic constraints and opportunities. However, the question is whether rural community conventions and national institutions that influence local-level resource access are similarly amenable to change. The rest of this section considers gender and age access to capital and services, land, and labour.

Access to capital inputs and services

Peasant smallholder input supplies, market services, crop inspection, crop grading and other supports took a nose dive during the 1980–2015 period under review. Previously, these services had been provided nationally by most African states with varying levels of subsidy, particularly in the case of crop marketing boards and parastatals, but they were dismantled in the wake of structural adjustment. In some countries, such services were very partially instituted for select export crops on a commercial basis by international firms, but generally these were not successful, long-lived programmes, given the transport costs they incurred and their lack of comprehensive coverage.

As smallholder production increasingly loses its workable infrastructural context and economic viability, farmers are experimenting with different forms of farming, including agricultural cooperatives and commercial smallholder outgrower schemes. O’Laughlin (1995) observed many women on their own in rural Mozambique, notably divorcees and widows, who lacked land access and hence viability in own-account farming. As female heads of households, they were

acutely short of household labour and struggled against impoverishment. Joining an agricultural cooperative provided them with access to ploughing services, basic foodstuffs or even cooked food.

Just as women are marginalized by state-provisioned agricultural input distribution and extension during liberalization, they encounter similar circumstances in the South African deciduous fruit sector.⁸⁹ Male bias in contract farming in Kenya resulted in land traditionally cultivated for vegetable production by women for home consumption being appropriated by men for horticulture production under contract.⁹⁰ Women are generally not enlisted as contractors in the high-value contract farming schemes because they have inferior access to land and less control over family labour than men. Yet, as family labour performs at the behest of male contractors, women are prevalent and sometimes dominant. In a sugarcane outgrower scheme in United Republic of Tanzania, as growing numbers of women and youth in smallholder households were co-opted as unpaid family labour, their resentment mounted.⁹¹ In Gambia, rice contract farming with the express aim of benefitting women rice farmers generated conflict over female labour as the household internalized the new labour process.⁹²

In Madagascar, on the other hand, Minten et al (2009) found vegetable contract production catalysing technological innovations that improved household food availability year-round. Similarly in Senegal, contracted bean production did not interfere with households' land and labour allocation for staple food production.⁹³

Access to land

Several authors⁹⁴ cite women's unequal land rights vis-à-vis men as foundational to African rural gender inequalities and female poverty. Under customary rural land tenure across sub-Saharan Africa, usufruct rights, rather than legal statutory rights, have been and continue to be the main form of land access for women; however, women are likely to be stripped of these rights at the time of divorce or widowhood in matrilineal as well as patrilineal societies.⁹⁵ Amanor-Wilks (2009) argues strenuously that women's land rights were undermined by colonial interpretations of customary practices and that the term 'usufruct

rights' was a colonial invention encoded in their recording of customary law. Generally, women's plots are far smaller than men's.⁹⁶ In regions of rising population density, women's shrinking access to usufruct land leads to land borrowing, rental or sharecropping, and an estimated third to one half of their harvest being claimed by landlords.⁹⁷

Commercial interests and customary patriarchal attitudes combine into contorted reasoning to justify men's monopolization of land rights and demonstrate the links between men's land and labour control within the household. Yaro and Zackaria (2008) quote an 80-year-old Ghanaian man's rationalization of the state of affairs: "Though they [women] play an important role in income generation, we don't give them rights over land because we the men own them...How can there be an ownership within an ownership?".⁹⁸ In Northern Ghana, Apusigah (2009: 54) observes that "land is treated as a divine entity that must be worshipped", which functions to sustain traditional chiefly authorities and clan leaders who are considered the guardians of tribal land, with the local inhabitants believing that "people belong to land rather than land to people". Women are accorded usufruct rights to farm and gather resources (firewood, water, clay, vegetation, etc.) that are related to their domestic duties, while men hold titles associated with various land rites and rituals. Men's management of the land is expected to be on behalf of their wives and children, but as sharecropping and land sales emerge, their personal monetary gain can interfere with their wives' and families' interests.

Several recent tendencies have acted for better or worse on women's land availability with respect to land inheritance. The AIDS pandemic placed widows' and children's subsistence in jeopardy in patrilineal areas if the deceased husband's family insisted on the widow vacating the land. This became problematic in East and Southern Africa, prodding some national governments to promulgate new land policies to alleviate gender-based land inequality.⁹⁹ However, the transition from well-intentioned policies to law reform has had to confront customary practices and vested interests weighing down the trajectory of intended change. Furthermore, the current tendency for casualized conjugal

habitation as opposed to formal marriage is likely to weaken women's rural land claims.

Meanwhile, there are trends affecting the overall supply of agricultural land for family farming with a knock-on effect for women cultivators. While deagrarianization and strong currents of both female and male migration out of rural home areas has lessened land pressure, governments' and local chiefs' openness to the sell off of smallholder land to foreign and local investors has a negative effect on land supply and women's food production. Customary law is revealed to be 'flexible and negotiable' rather than immutable in cases where alliances of rural elites and the state are collaborating in pursuit of mutual gain.¹⁰⁰ This fluidity extends further to the conclusion that West African land access is not based on any single set of rules.¹⁰¹ Certainly, so-called 'customary practises' are inevitably redefined in the transition from land abundant to land scarce areas, with privileged men seizing the commercial initiative in the name of modernizing farming to displace women hoe agriculturalists producing family food.

Access to labour

Dzodzi Tsikata (2009) stresses the importance of tracing the evolution of women's intra-household labour and land relations in tandem, since both are invisible in terms of their household labour not having market value and their land utilization being devoid of state sanction. Under these circumstances, women are not recognized as 'managers' of the household's family labour, even though they contribute more labour to farming than men and also, in fact, supervise their children's labour inputs. In Ghana, men are designated family providers and considered to be 'owners of the production system', whereas women are classified as dependents without inheritance rights who engage in family production as secondary helpers.¹⁰² This labelling incapacitates men and incapacitates women as decision-makers. Furthermore, in the event of divorce, women are dispossessed of their secondary rights, leaving the wealth of the patrilineage intact. Essentially, the subordination of women rests on their status as derivative and potentially temporary members of the patrilineal household. Paradoxically, women are undervalued and perceived as

supplementary family help even though time allocation measurements indicate they are working longer hours than men. They are deemed to be inhabiting the realm of reproduction and only tangentially the realm of production.¹⁰³ This rationalization ordains women's inferior access to land and capital while elevating their childcare and dictates women's compromised time and logistical engagement in agricultural production. Their lower agricultural productivity relative to men is an inevitability given the lack of support they receive from men in childcare and domestic work tasks. The irony of women as 'dependents' is upturned by women 'left behind' in rural areas who provide primary support for in situ family members and fall-back support for other members living away from their natal homes and amply demonstrate rural women's self-reliance and autonomy as producers.

So too, a polygynous husband's divided attention to multiple wives necessarily spurs his wives' agency and fortitude, giving them reason and manoeuvrable space for be assertive about their needs and amelioration of their work conditions. Kandiyoti (1988) conceptualizes this as African women "bargaining with patriarchy". Northern Ghanaian men described how their wives would "use tactics such as poor sowing, feigned illness, delayed harvesting and side sales as sabotage", if they prevented their wives' own account 'side farming'.¹⁰⁴ Scaling up from the household, Kandiyoti (1988) cites examples of women's collective bargaining in settlement farming schemes in Burkina Faso, Gambia and Kenya in which female solidarity in agricultural production was rewarded with improved work conditions and remuneration.

However, rural women generally endeavour to be diplomatic and avoid challenging the notion of men's supremacy as family breadwinners. This precaution explains why labour survey evidence of women's work is riddled with undercounting. Women are complicit in the devaluation of their work. Such feminine wiles are key to gaining work concessions as well as maintaining husbands' willingness to contribute their economic support to the family. Positioned as supplicants, women strategically appeal to their husbands' generosity. The tightrope that women traverse in their designated roles of primarily 'housewives' and secondarily 'household

agricultural producers' is implicit in the words of a local Cameroonian chief explaining his refusal to allow a multinational plantation investor to hire female labour on land in his tribal jurisdiction:

“Women are responsible for farm work. That is why we call them ‘mothers of the farm’. They are also responsible for feeding and caring for the household. Women are very important people, but they are expected to obey male orders. Employment on the estate would incite women to neglect food production and household work, to behave ‘headstrongly’ and independently, and even to become ‘harlots.’”¹⁰⁵

Consequently, from the tea plantation's establishment in 1957 to 1983, the labour force was entirely male. A few women were hired for the first time in 1983 after the old chief was succeeded by a younger, university-educated chief. However, the tea workers' labour union exerted strong pressure on the plantation management to fire women first whenever retrenchments were made,¹⁰⁶ an illustration of the enduring enforcement of the prevailing gender division of labour that takes place at community level, in contrast to the more fluid negotiability between women and men within households when labour practicality and survival of the household unit are taken into account.

Access to welfare safety nets

As deagrarianization has evolved in African countries in variable forms and at different rates, the impact on rural dwellers can be debilitating or enhancing with the discovery of alternative forms of viable livelihood.

In some cases, the rate of change has been so fast that rural vulnerability sets in. Botswana experienced the fastest rates of deagrarianization and urbanization in Africa during the 20th century. While many acquired enhanced standards of living in the towns, those remaining in the countryside pursuing traditional livestock-keeping modes of livelihood faced life-threatening circumstances during drought years. During the 1980s, the state initiated emergency rural drought relief on a very widespread basis, with women often the main beneficiaries. Criticisms were levelled at the inadvertent effect of such relief, which was criticized for eroding customary kin assistance between rich and poor branches of households.¹⁰⁷

South Africa, the most urbanized country in Africa, in the context of the dismantling of the apartheid state in the mid-1990s, instituted pensions for the elderly that were equalized with what white pensioners would receive. Older women, constituting more than two thirds of the pension recipients, experienced a transformation from poor female heads of households eking out a marginalized existence in the countryside to economic pillars of their extended families. In Mooiplaats, Eastern Cape, most rural households became heavily dependent on state welfare grants.¹⁰⁸ South Africa also instituted state child support, which eased women's child-centred expenses.

It should be noted that Botswana and South Africa are exceptional in providing state welfare benefits for their rural citizenries. In the majority of African countries, which lack a robust national tax base, distributional welfare is largely an internal family matter with supplementary extended family flows of assistance between rural and urban branches of the family.

5.

CONCLUSION: SURMOUNTING ADVERSITY THROUGH LABOUR DIVERSIFICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF FEMALE WORK

This paper has traced the history of peasant family farming in Africa from its colonial origins to the present, stressing the inter-relationship between peasant households, the state and the world market, as well as rural household's internal labour and welfare dynamics vis-à-vis fluctuating climate, disease and market risks. The state, be it colonial or post-colonial, regulated and taxed peasant production and has provided variable degrees of service infrastructure for household reproduction, while local, regional and world markets have generated the motor force for peasant household economic growth or decline. The coherence and complementarity of peasant households' gender and age divisions of labour rested firmly on the logic of male patriarchy until the last two decades of the 20th century.

The 1980s marked a breaking point with the past triggered by world market realignment. Severe deterioration of peasant farmers' international terms of trade, a crisis in state service provisioning and consequent peasant household income decline catalysed a revaluation of household assets and alterations in

the household division of labour. Family farms began shifting away from their dependence on export cash cropping and family members started individually scrambling to find alternative modes of income earning, sometimes disregarding the leadership of patriarchal heads of households, who were powerless in the face of the need for new forms of livelihood for household survival. Family members' coherence as an agrarian production unit was eroding amidst lineage and household reproduction norms being questioned.

Africa's depeasantization differs from the European, Latin America and Asian experience of deagrarianization, which was catalysed primarily by the elite's enclosure and monopolization of land. Displaced by land seizure, large numbers of peasants were absorbed by industrialization. In Africa, as peasants' cash cropping became unviable in the aftermath of the global oil crisis, labour not land displacement was the main motor force, and industrialization and formal jobs were largely absent to absorb the surplus labour coming off the land.

This paper has compared evidence from macro quantitative data with qualitative localized micro case studies to identify the major gender and generational patterns of productive and reproductive labour in Africa that have evolved during this labour hiatus. While the statistical evidence offers a broad vantage point, there are gender biases in the labour categories that result in paradoxical findings regarding women's role in farming families. Combining quantitative and qualitative findings helps piece together a logical understanding of current trends as summarized below.

Continuing gender dichotomized agricultural/non-agricultural work

According to national labour statistics during the 2010s, men dominate the non-farm sector in all countries (with rural non-farm sex ratios ranging from 1.31 in Zambia to 2.28 in Uganda) (Table 4-1), whereas women dominate the rural farming sector everywhere except in the West African countries of Ghana and Mali (Tables 4-2 and 4-3). Previously, men had been most active agriculturally in export cash cropping while women were primarily focused on family food production. To the present, women continue to concentrate on food production while men have tended to divert their work effort to non-agricultural alternatives. Survey evidence from the 1980s and 1990s indicates that women were actively engaging in diversified non-farm activities as well, but clearly the evolution of that trend has not been on an equivalent scale to male entry into the sector. Broadly, the statistical evidence indicates that rural women have tended to be 'left behind' in agriculture in the eight case study African countries (except Muslim Mali), as indicated by Table 4-2.

Paradox of rural women's work devaluation

Despite rural women's heavy involvement in agricultural work, they tend to be diffident about their contribution to family farming. Qualitative case study evidence demonstrates that women's lower social status in agrarian patriarchal systems has cast them as 'secondary helpers'. The fiction of women as

'dependents' has been a running theme in African rural history. Women's reticence about the full extent of their workload is explainable in this context.

Statistically, female housework tasks involving inordinately long hours are omitted from the collection of SNA data (Table 5). The SNA statistical data categories do not afford a complete picture of household members' work by age and gender. Rural people continue to dichotomize gender in terms of a male breadwinner and a female mother/secondary farm-labouring wife, a notion that holds strong moral sway. The material reality is one of women's longer work hours in home-based work and under-reporting of their non-farm activities.

The ironic aspect of female labour devalorization is that far from being marginal agricultural labourers, they are now shouldering a major share of national agricultural labour and have done so in both the absence of men historically during the pre-colonial slave trade, in which millions of men were seized and exported to the Americas, and the male labour migration system connected with European colonial plantations and mines. Furthermore, throughout time, the widespread practice of polygyny⁹⁹ has left wives of polygynous rural men with primary daily responsibility for provisioning the needs of their children.

Vestige family farming

Women cultivators and family farms more generally are producing on the basis of shrinking land and capital. Women continue to be engaged in hoe agriculture and are rarely targeted for improved input supplies.

Recent national farm surveys indicate that small-scale peasant agricultural holdings are beginning to be superseded by medium-scale holdings of largely commercial farmers. Despite much concern about the displacement of smallholders by large-scale agro-industries, it is likely that smallholder land is actually primarily being encroached upon by local rural elites' medium-scale farming and increasingly farming by absentee urbanites who do not necessarily have rural roots.¹⁰⁰

The erosion of family farming logically follows from the impact of structural adjustment policies that dismantled most of the smallholder marketing and productive service infrastructure throughout the 1980s. Peasant producers' crop yield gains, arising from the Green Revolution-like foreign donor-supported agricultural projects of the 1970s, were achieved with subsidized improved inputs. With the collapse of post-colonial investment in smallholder farming infrastructure, and labour movement out of peasant farming, the stage was set for medium-scale commercial farmers to emerge and gain dominance in the African countryside.

Rising rural out-migration and widening female labour inequality between rural and urban areas

African countries are in various stages of deagrarianization and urbanization. In some countries, artisanal mining has acted as a labour-absorbing sector in addition to urban migration and involvement in the non-farming sector in rural areas. Contrary to the quantitative labour survey data, which report high levels of unemployment and economic inactivity on the part of women, labour time measurements reveal that women's seeming underemployment is largely taken up in domestic chores, which are especially arduous and time-consuming in rural areas. As urban middle-class women access piped water and electricity supplies and increasingly make use of labour-saving appliances, the gap between women's rural and urban average daily labour time has widened. When one combines this with the demographic picture in which young women and teenage girls are migrating to urban areas while older women are more likely to remain in rural areas, the rural/urban labour balance widens still further. Rural/urban work patterns are dichotomized between female and male labour and between urban and rural women. There are generational differences between older, often relatively uneducated women in rural areas and young women in urban areas, who may seek fall back support from their rural mothers.

Reverberations in the reproductive sphere: Casualized marriage and high child dependency ratios

Large-scale rural labour restructuring has had a profound impact on the gender and generational power balance in rural households. Patriarchal control of family labour has been subverted by family members' participation in the informal economy. So too, women left behind in farm settings may gain considerable autonomy of decision-making over production and reproduction. Brideprice and marriage were customarily arranged by the elders of the bride and groom, but many young men began to choose their wives and pay the brideprice themselves. Among low-income women and men, high mobility and uncertainty of livelihood tended to casualize marriage to the point that it was most likely that no brideprice was paid and couples informally cohabited in migrant, mining and urban settings.

HIV/AIDS caused mortality rates to rise during the 1990s and orphanhood was rife, involving many children being sent from urban locations, where their parents had fallen ill, to rural home areas. Child dependency ratios increased in rural as opposed to urban areas for this reason, as well as related to the differential between rural and urban fertility rates and the transfers of urban children to the countryside due to family financial distress or other constraints on providing urban childcare (Appendix I).

Moving away from rural family vulnerability and domestic inequality

African farming families have faced great adversity over the last 35 years, contending with economic crisis and a devastating AIDS pandemic. In the face of drastically reduced state and donor aid assistance, they increasingly embraced income diversification, primarily of a non-agricultural nature, while retaining an agricultural subsistence fall back. The gender and generational division of labour varies between countries, but overall there has been a strong predilection for men to dominate the non-farm sector in rural and urban areas, securing higher earnings than women, while women are safeguarding the rural agrarian fall back.

New vulnerabilities have emerged from evolving productive and reproductive patterns. The AIDS pandemic inflicted serious hardship on African rural families. They not only gave refuge to urban AIDS-afflicted family members but also had to cope with the rural incidence of HIV/AIDS. Economically active adults between the ages of 20 and 40 suffered the highest levels of mortality and morbidity. The introduction of antiretroviral therapy has ameliorated suffering from the disease and reduced the infection rate. The exceptionally broad base of the rural age/sex pyramids in Botswana, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia (Appendix I) may signal an on-going baby boom, similar to what happened in Europe and North America after World War II. The existence of high rural dependency ratios suggests a care crisis is underway, taking its toll on children and mothers who bear the brunt of the stress as the primary and often sole carers of their children.

Ensuring the well-being of the carer is a first principle of basic survival in a crisis. Rural women need support to lessen their arduous daily workload, improve their level of education and gain general awareness and access to contraceptives to preclude unmanageable family sizes. A woman with onerous farming and housework duties has traditionally valued having many children, but in the highly competitive world in which children require a good education and skills training to secure employment in later life, a mother's high fertility is likely to be detrimental to her children's future prospects. Child psychologists and educationists have documented how important the early formative years of a child's life are for her or his future health, knowledge base and psychological well-being.

African countries are at varying stages of the demographic transition. Those with lower fertility rates (Botswana, Ghana, Kenya and Rwanda) are much better placed to achieve economic take-off and middle-income country status. Fertility decline follows mortality decline in the demographic transition, generating manageable dependency ratios. During 1980–2015, many African countries veered off course with increasing mortality and persistent high fertility. Until the demographic transition is achieved,

women, as mothers and grandmothers providing fall back support to their multi-generational families, will continue to be over-burdened amidst the on-going erosion of peasant agriculture. Many rural grandmothers serve as custodians of their families' agrarian hearth-holds, facilitating family members engagement in non-farm work and access to subsistence agriculture when needed. This subsistence fall back generally constitutes family members' main if not only form of insurance in the event of livelihood failure.

African peasant family farms of the 21st century no longer provide the labour-absorbing and welfare-generating capacity levels that were prevalent in the first two decades of Africa's independent national-building era. African governments face many challenges to creating an enabling environment for their populations to achieve higher standards of living as deagrarianization evolves. While gender and generational labour autonomy has improved over the last three decades, labour productivity constraints and inequalities persist. National governments and donor agencies need more sensitive statistical delineation of work performance by gender and age in order to devise astute policies. By adopting a 'gender budgeting' approach, they would be in a better position to identify measures to address gender imbalance and target expenditure for assisting rural women to achieve higher productivity and welfare for themselves and their families.¹¹¹ However, such an approach requires a more profound awareness of labour patterns starting at ground level within the family, involving family members' recognition and acknowledgement of each other's labour contributions regardless of age and gender.

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ENDNOTES

- 1 This paper benefited from Shahrashoub Razavi's comments on an earlier draft and Jessamyn Encarnacion's collation of African census population data.
- 2 Throughout this paper, 'Africa' denotes sub-Saharan Africa.
- 3 This Introduction and the following two sections are largely derived from my earlier publications listed in the bibliography.
- 4 van Zinderen Bakker 1976.
- 5 Indigenous forest yams *Dioscorea* and rice *Oryza glaberrima* began to be domesticated in the ecotone between the forest and savannah along the Niger Bend at that time (Harlan et al. 1976).
- 6 Ehret 1998.
- 7 Bryceson 1995a.
- 8 Schoenbrun 1998.
- 9 Guyer 1995; Whitehead 1991.
- 10 Apusigah 2009.
- 11 Manning 1990.
- 12 Bryceson 1995.
- 13 Bryceson 2000 adapted from Shanin 1976.
- 14 Murray 1981.
- 15 Mbilinyi 1989.
- 16 Rogers 1980; Davison 1995.
- 17 Håkansson 1989.
- 18 Rogers 1980.
- 19 Moser 1989; Bryceson 1994.
- 20 Rogers 1980.
- 21 Moore and Vaughan 1994.
- 22 Bukh 1979: 57.
- 23 Bryceson and Howe 1993.
- 24 Bryceson and McCall 1997.
- 25 Obbo 1990.
- 26 In East and Southern Africa, the agricultural input packages of improved seeds, fertilizers and extension were technically backed by the Consultative Group on International Research (CGIAR), which had spearheaded the Asian Green Revolution.
- 27 Bryceson 1993.
- 28 "Agronomic research and extension cutbacks dissipated the momentum towards resolving food insecurity. The agrarian solution to African hunger did not receive international research priority on a par with that accorded to Asia. Agricultural funding slipped from 24 per cent of total World Bank lending in 1982 to 12 per cent in 1997–99 – a funding trend mirrored by many other western bilateral donors and African states" (Havnevik et al. 2007: 57).
- 29 Bryceson 2009.
- 30 Ibid., 2002b.
- 31 Bryceson 2000.
- 32 Bryceson 1996, 1997.
- 33 Bryceson 2002a and b.
- 34 Ibid.; Whitehead 2009.
- 35 Obbo 1995; Bryceson and Fonseca 2006.
- 36 Becker 1990; van der Drift 2002.
- 37 Iliya 1999.
- 38 Yunusa 1999.
- 39 Mustapha 1999.
- 40 Ekejiuba 1995.
- 41 Meagher 1999.
- 42 E.g. Demeke 1999; Iliya 1999.
- 43 Jambiya 1998.
- 44 Bank 1999; Manona 1999.
- 45 Bryceson 2011.
- 46 Ibid.
- 47 Izumi 2006.
- 48 Poulin et al. 2016
- 49 Tanzania 2000; Cloutier 2006.
- 50 Bryceson and MacKinnon 2012.
- 51 Bryceson et al. 2012; Bryceson and Jønsson 2010.

- 52 Bryceson and Jönsson 2010.
- 53 Bryceson et al. 2014.
- 54 Using the FAO definition of family farms: “a means of organizing agricultural, forestry, fisheries, pastoral and aquaculture production which is managed and operated by a family and predominantly reliant on family labour, including both women’s and men’s. The family and the farm are linked, co-evolve and combine economic, environmental, social and cultural functions.” Graeub et al. (2016: 2) estimates that there are 500 million family farmers producing 80 per cent of the world’s food. This is an exceptionally broad and ahistorical definition of family farming that lumps affluent highly capitalized farmers in the industrialized world with agrarian peasant households.
- 55 Heady and Jayne 2014.
- 56 Jayne et al. 2016.
- 57 Ibid.
- 58 The Sahel region constitutes a belt with a width of up to 1,000 km stretching 5,400 km from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea.
- 59 Jayne et al. 2016.
- 60 Yeboah and Jayne 2016: 49–50.
- 61 Jerven 2013.
- 62 Bryceson 2006; Bryceson and MacKinnon 2012.
- 63 O’Connor 1983.
- 64 E-Geopolis Afriopolis used a 10,000 population cut-off. In Ghana, the Government designates populations of only 5,000 as ‘urban’; in Mali it is 30,000 (1998); whereas 20,000 is a common cut-off elsewhere.
- 65 With administrative categorizations, sizeable settlements well beyond 10,000 or 20,000 have to wait to become administratively categorized as urban. The delay is often due to political wrangling on the part of district and regional governments who are reluctant to relinquish their powers of taxation and consequent loss of revenue to a fast-growing settlement. Such settlements seek urban status on the grounds of size and their proliferating division of labour, knowing they constitute a functional town or municipality in all but official designation
- 66 I am extremely grateful to Dr. Kwame Yeboah for providing his compiled data set in electronic form to facilitate calculation of the male-female sex ratios. Yeboah and Jayne’s 2016 data sources are: Ghana: *Ghana Living Standard Survey 2005/06, 2012/13*; Kenya: *Population and Housing Census, 1999, 2009*; Malawi: *Household and Population Census 1998, 2008*; Mali: *Quatrieme Recensement General de la population et de l’Habitat 1998, 2009*; Rwanda: *Integrated Household Living Survey, 2005/6, 2010/11*; Uganda: *LSMS National Panel Survey 2005/6, 2011/12*; United Republic of Tanzania: *Living Standards Measurement Survey (LSMS) National Panel Survey 2008, 2010, 2012*; Zambia: *Central Statistical Office Labor Force Survey, 2005, 2012*.
- 67 Derived from recent national labour survey data for each country.
- 68 A quotient of 1.00 represents a perfectly gender-balanced population. Over 1.00 represents male-dominance while female dominance is denoted as less than 1.0.
- 69 Waring (1988) challenged the bias in the SNA, which leave women’s unpaid work in domestic labour and caring for children, the elderly and the sick uncounted.
- 70 Malawi: Kilic et al. 2015; Uganda: Peterman et al. 2011; General: Udry et al. 1995.
- 71 Ali et al. 2016.
- 72 Bardasi et al. (2011) observe that deploying the ILO’s labour classification system, which denotes those in domestic work as ‘not working’, generates lower female employment rates and higher working hours for employed women and men.
- 73 Charmes 2006.
- 74 There is no mention of women’s arduous responsibility for pounding and grinding grain. Temudo (2017) notes that among Balanta women of Guinea Bissau, rice processing for home consumption was very time-consuming. Once rice-milling machines were installed in the rural areas, women were freed from the ‘toil of hand-pounding’.
- 75 Wodon and Beegle 2006.
- 76 Bryceson 2002a and b.
- 77 Cloutier 2006.
- 78 Tanzania: Archambault 2010; Zimbabwe: Jackson 2012.
- 79 South Africa: Spiegel 1981; Botswana: O’Laughlin 1995, Hunter 2005; Kenya: Thomas 2003; Zimbabwe: Jackson 2012.
- 80 Whitehead 1981.
- 81 Bank 2010a and b; 2011.
- 82 I define ‘matrifocality’ as family households consisting of one or more adult women and their children without the presence of fathers. Extended family support is primarily supplied by female rather than male relations, potentially taking the form of extended multi-generational co-residence of adult daughters to facilitate childcare.
- 83 Tanzania: Stevens 1995, Jackson 2014.
- 84 O’Laughlin 1998.
- 85 Bank 2010b; Jackson 2012.
- 86 Stevens 1995: 476.
- 87 Larsson 1991.
- 88 It should be noted that matrifocal households accord with preceding historical experiences where male labour displacement and the loss of clear male occupational identities related to their ability to serve as reliable ‘breadwinners’ has been at issue. See West Indian examples, notably the case of Jamaica (Smith 1962; Tanner 1974; Standing 1981).
- 89 Barrientos et al. 2003.

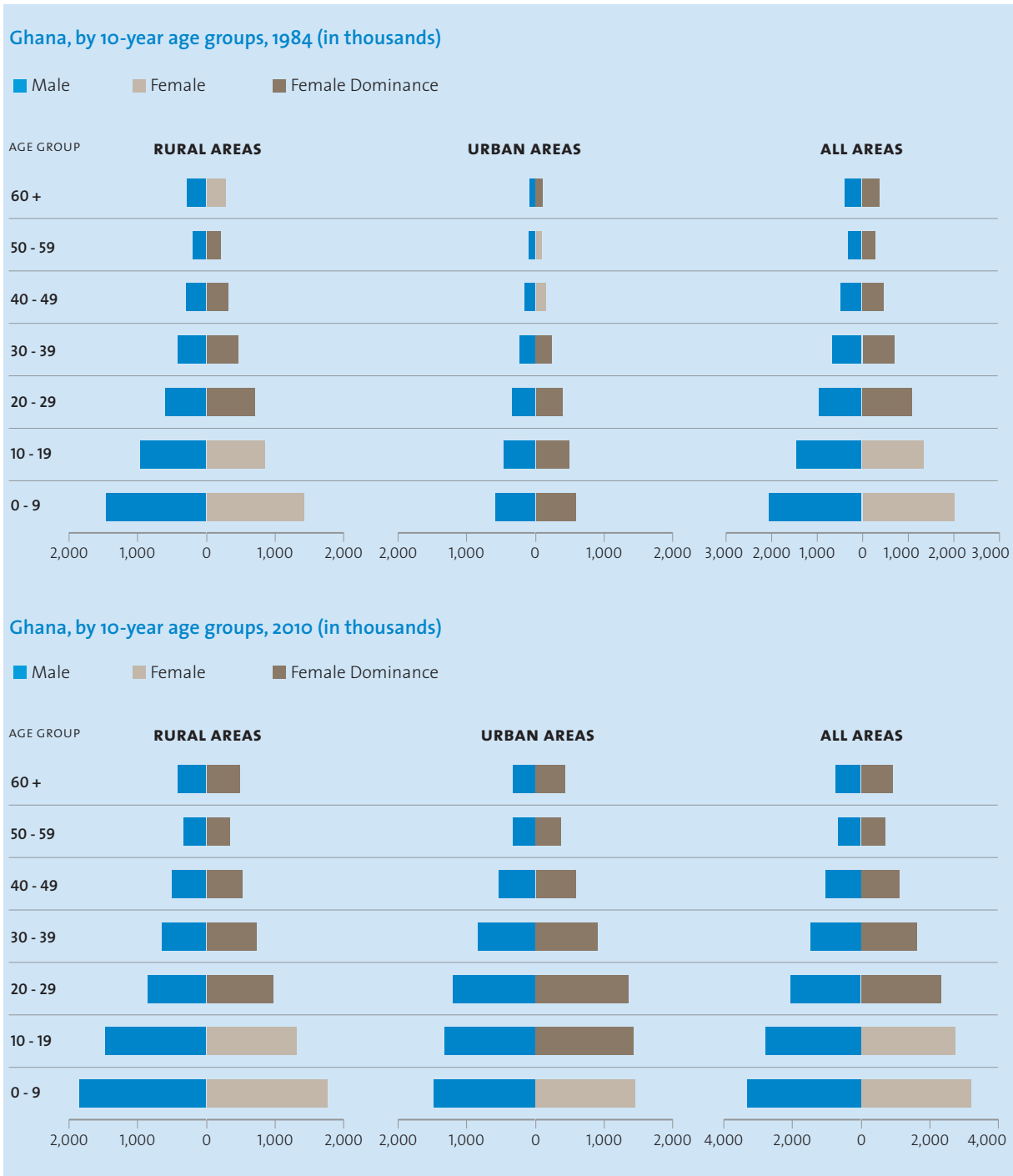
- 90 Dolan 2001.
- 91 Mbilinyi 2010.
- 92 Carney 1988.
- 93 Maertens and Swinnen 2008.
- 94 Butegwa 1991; Wanyeki 2003; Tsikata 2009.
- 95 Okali 1983.
- 96 Amanor-Wilks 2009.
- 97 Lavigne-Delville et al. 2001.
- 98 Yaro and Zackaria 2008: 67 cited in Amanor-Wilks 2009: 37.
- 99 Kenya: Kameri-Mbote 2009; Malawi: Tschirhart et al. 2015; United Republic of Tanzania: Mbilinyi and Shechambo 2009, Brewin 2017.
- 100 Whitehead and Tsikata 2003; Amanor 2007.
- 101 Toulmin 2007
- 102 Apusigah 2009: 54.
- 103 Apusigah 2009.
- 104 Ibid.: 64.
- 105 Konings 2010: 232.
- 106 Konings 2010.
- 107 O’Laughlin 1998: 35.
- 108 Bank 2010a.
- 109 Kandiyoti (1988: 277) insightfully observes: “the insecurities of African polygyny for women are matched by areas of relative autonomy that they clearly strive to maximize. Men’s responsibility for their wives’ support, while normative in some instances, is in actual fact relatively low.”
- 110 Lowder et al. 2016: 18; Yeboah and Jayne 2016.
- 111 There is increasing awareness in international policy circles that “designing budgets to support sexual equality is good for economic growth” (*The Economist* 2017).

APPENDIX:

COMPARISON OF AGE/SEX PYRAMIDS, 1980s AND 2010s*

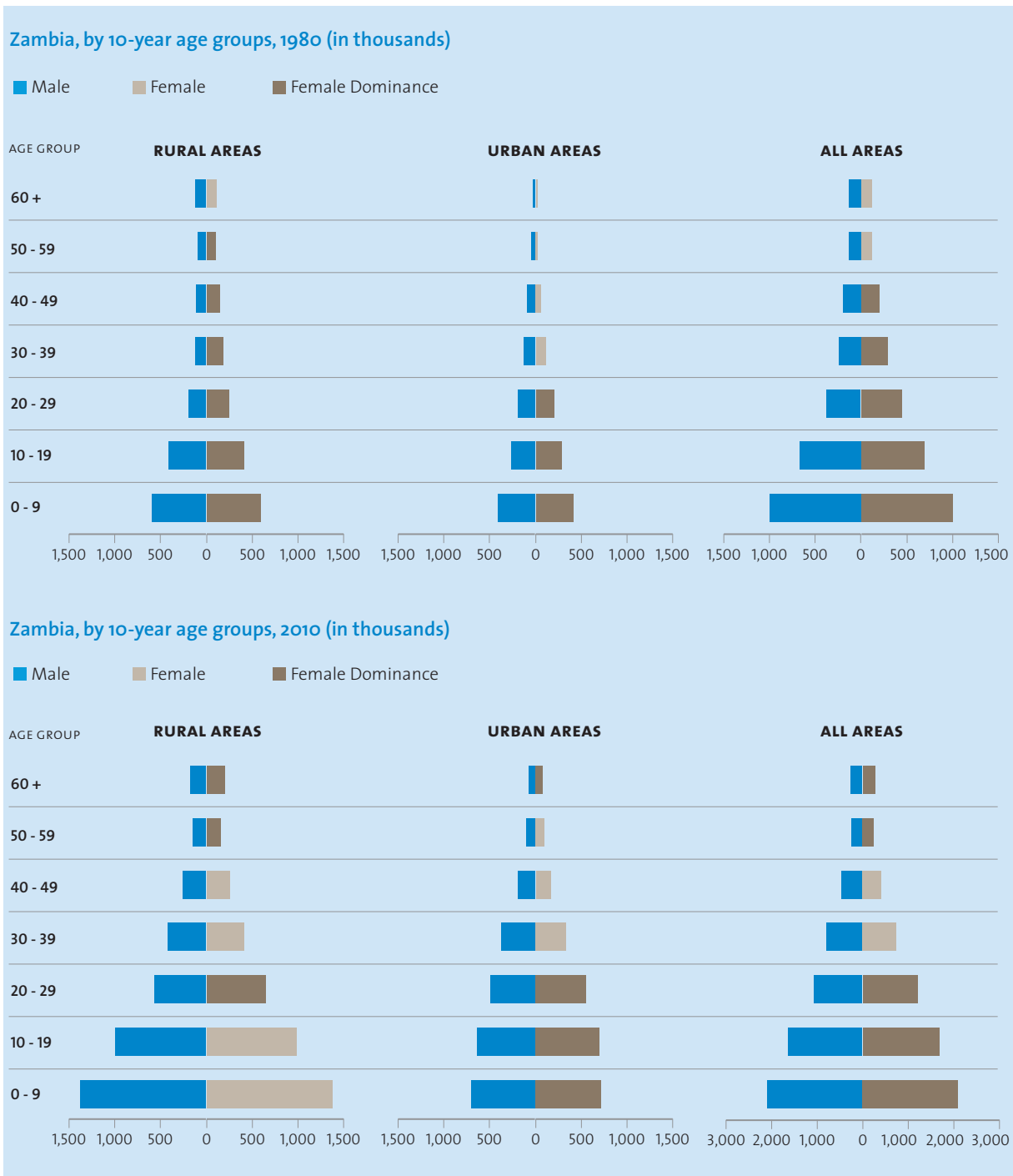
* I am grateful to Jessamyn Encarnacion of UN Women for collating longitudinal comparative African population census data disaggregated by age and sex for the construction of this Appendix.

FIGURE 1.1
Ghana Comparison of Age/Sex Pyramids, 1984 and 2010



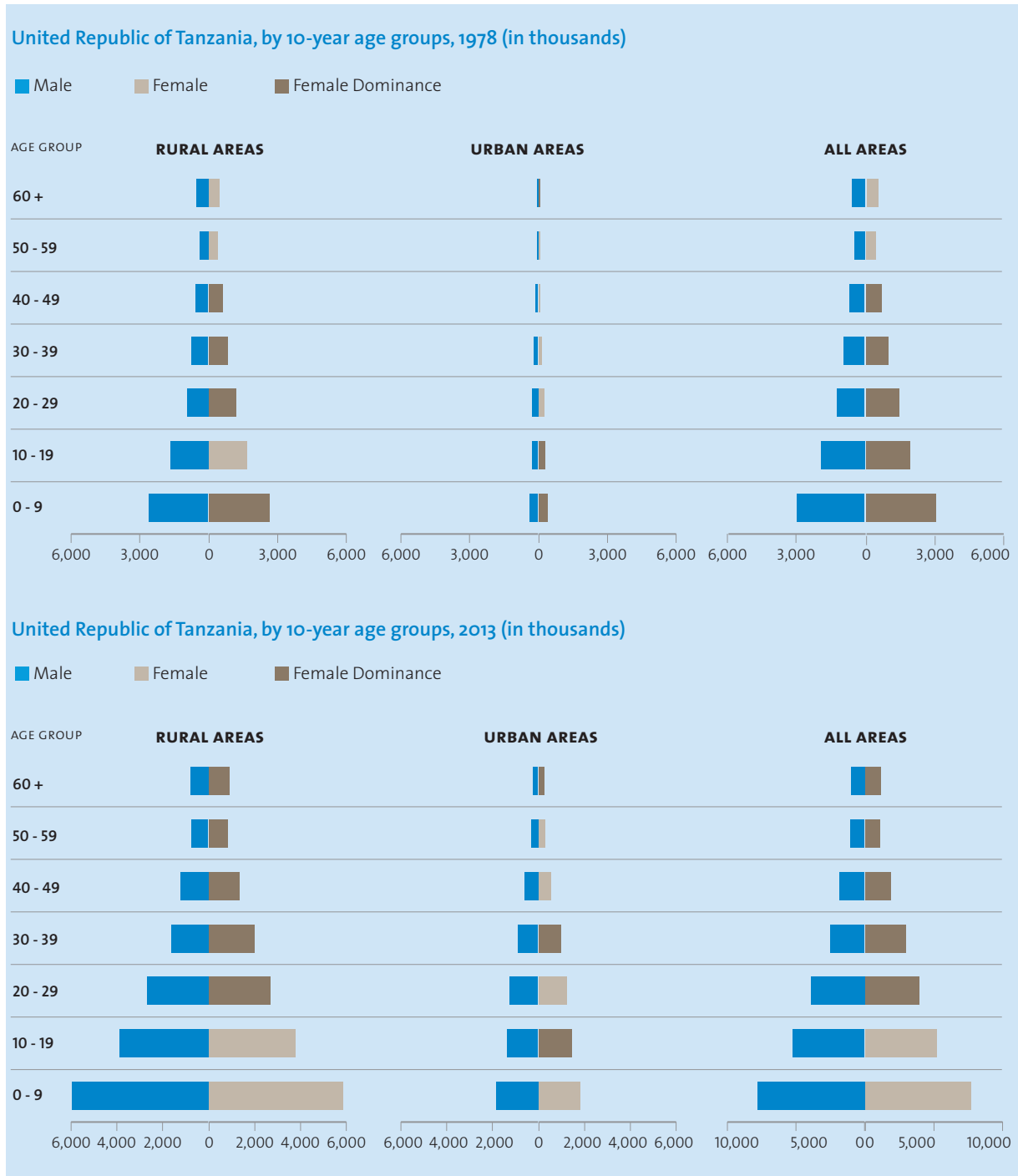
Source of data: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division 2015.

FIGURE 1.2
Zambia Comparison of Age/Sex Pyramids, 1980 and 2010



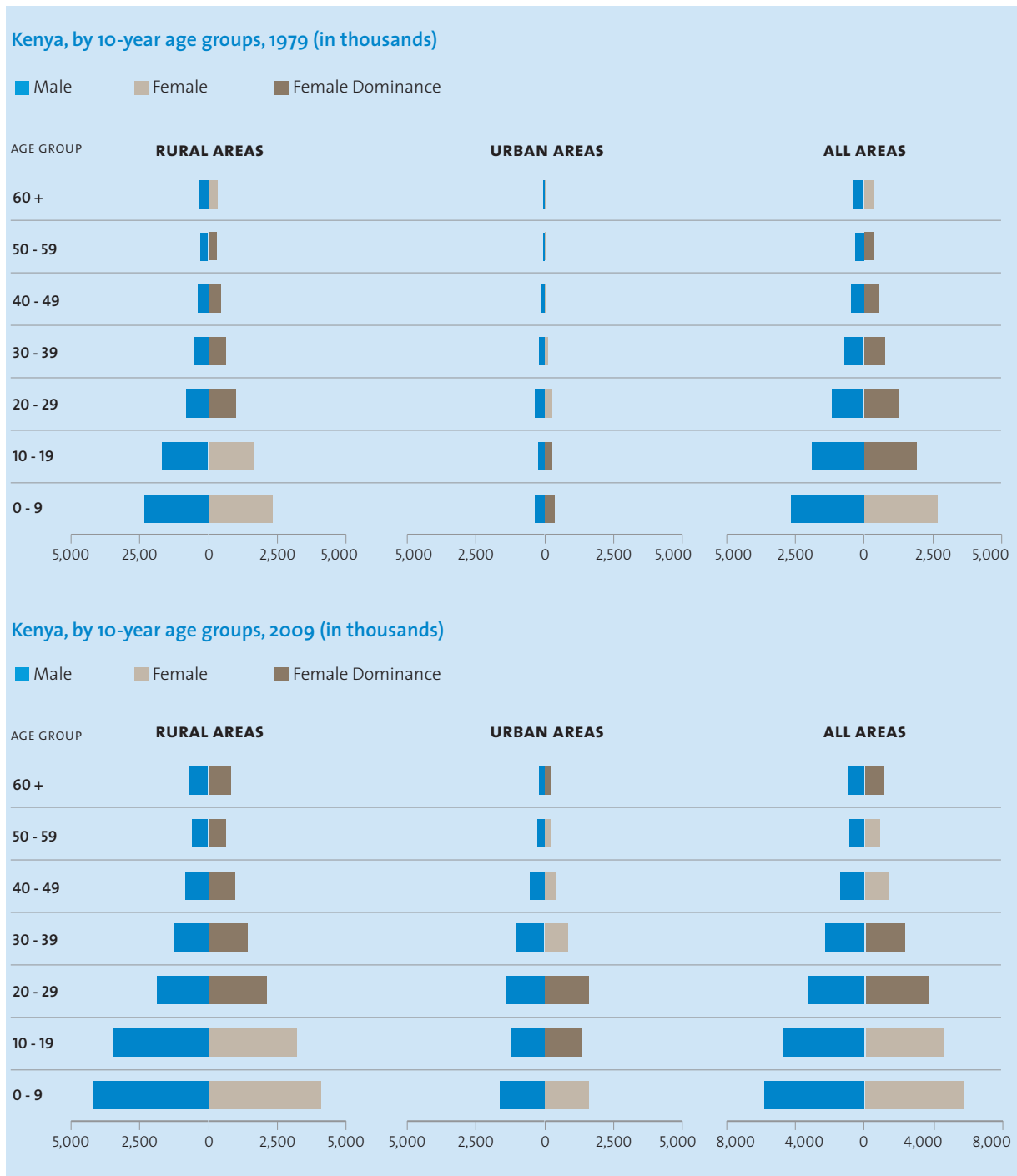
Source of data: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division 2015.

FIGURE 1.3
United Republic of Tanzania Comparison of Age/Sex Pyramids, 1978 and 2013



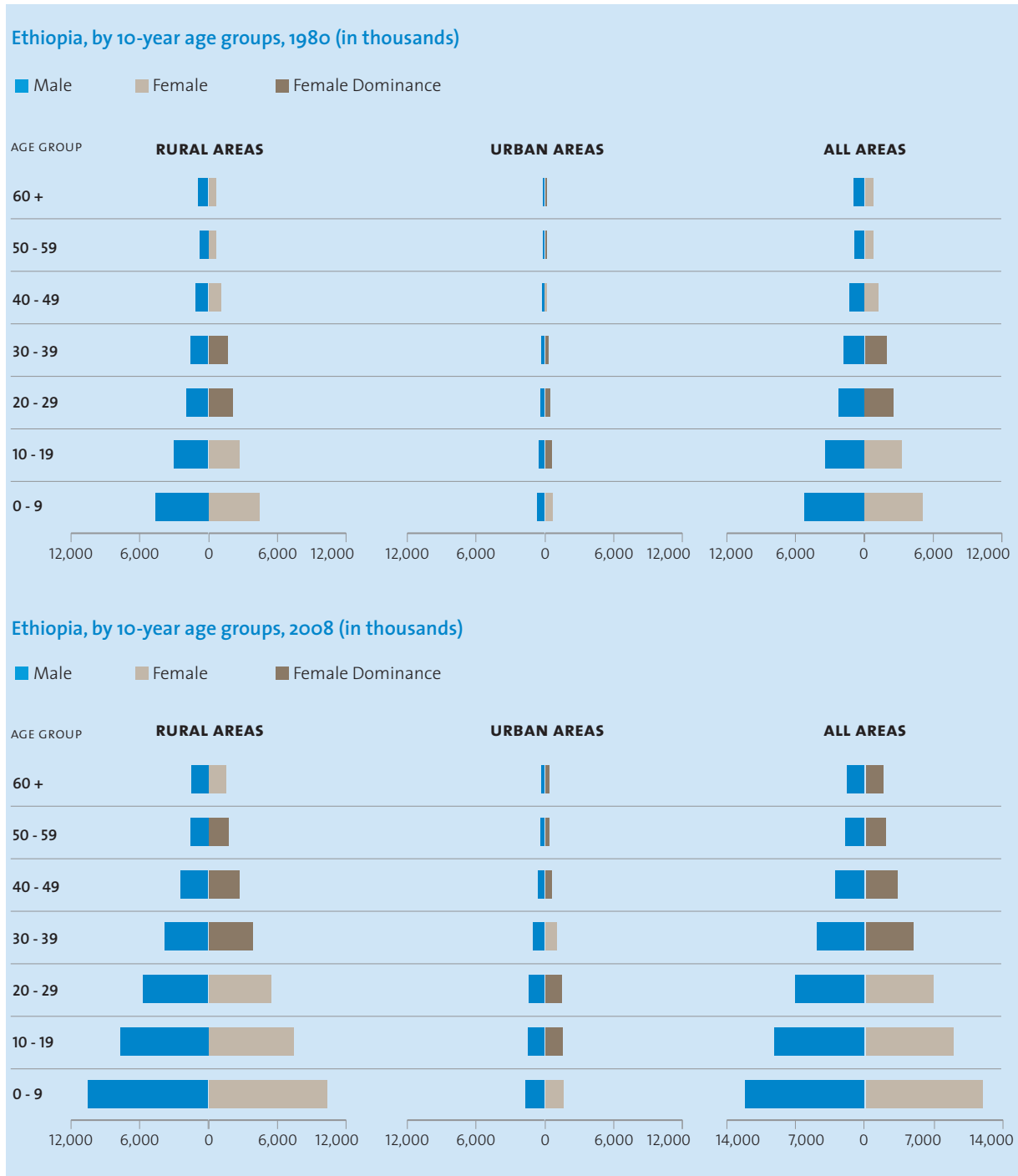
Source of data: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division 2015.

FIGURE 1.4
Kenya Comparison of Age/Sex Pyramids, 1979 and 2009



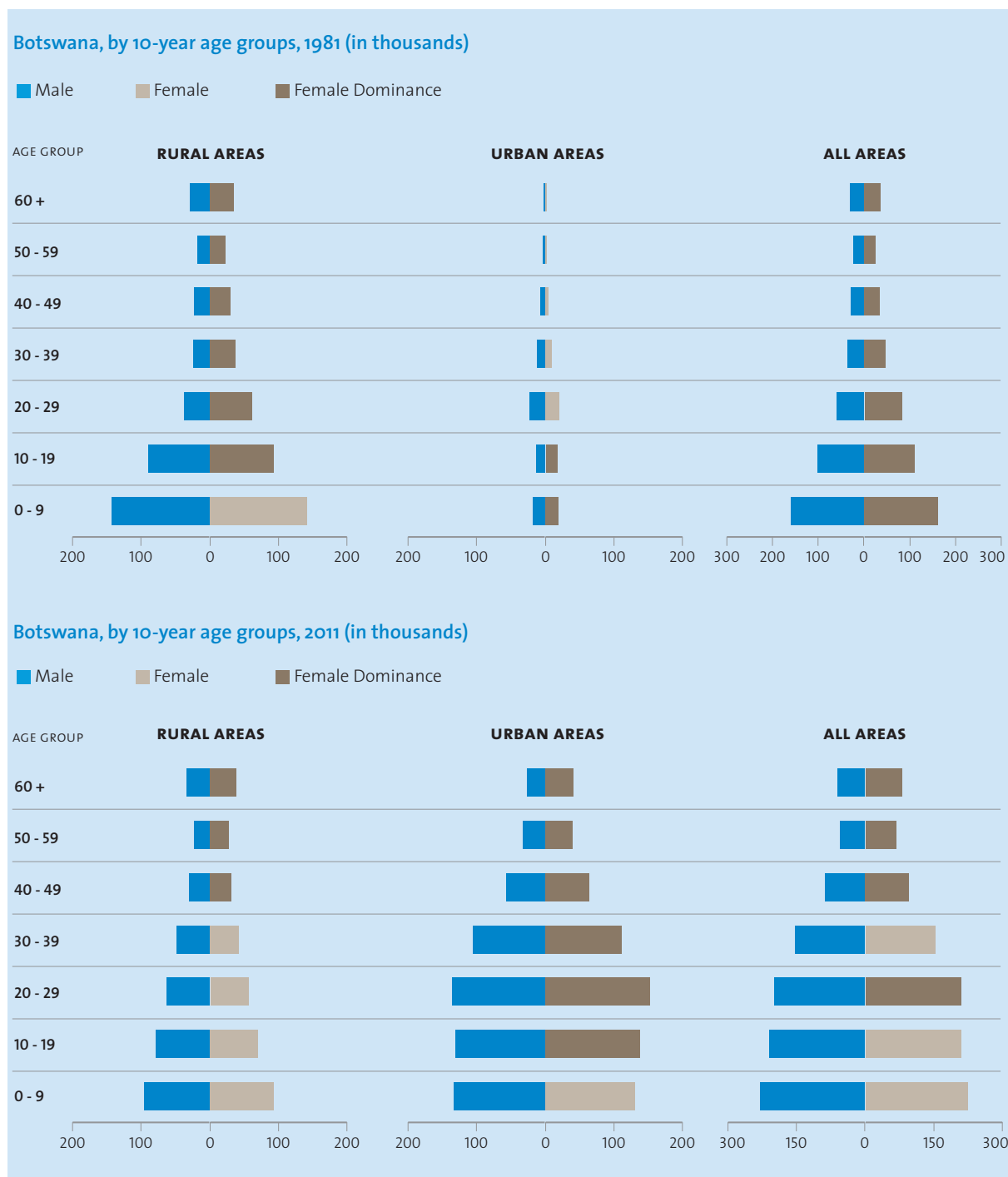
Source of data: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division 2015.

FIGURE 1.5
Ethiopia Comparison of Age/Sex Pyramids, 1980 and 2008



Source of data: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division 2015.

FIGURE 1.6
Botswana Comparison of Age/Sex Pyramids, 1981 and 2011



Source of data: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division 2015.

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