

Presentation by

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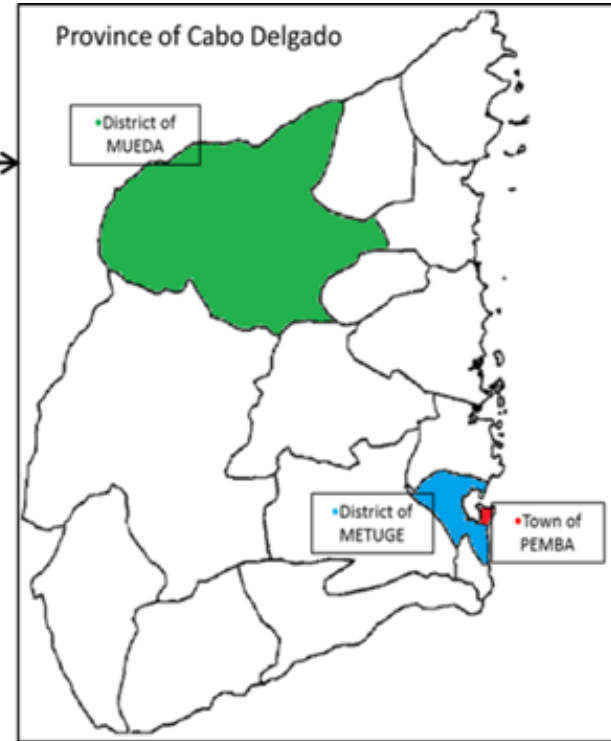
Lecturer in
Economics

Women's work in Mozambique: Gender, social differentiation and social reproduction

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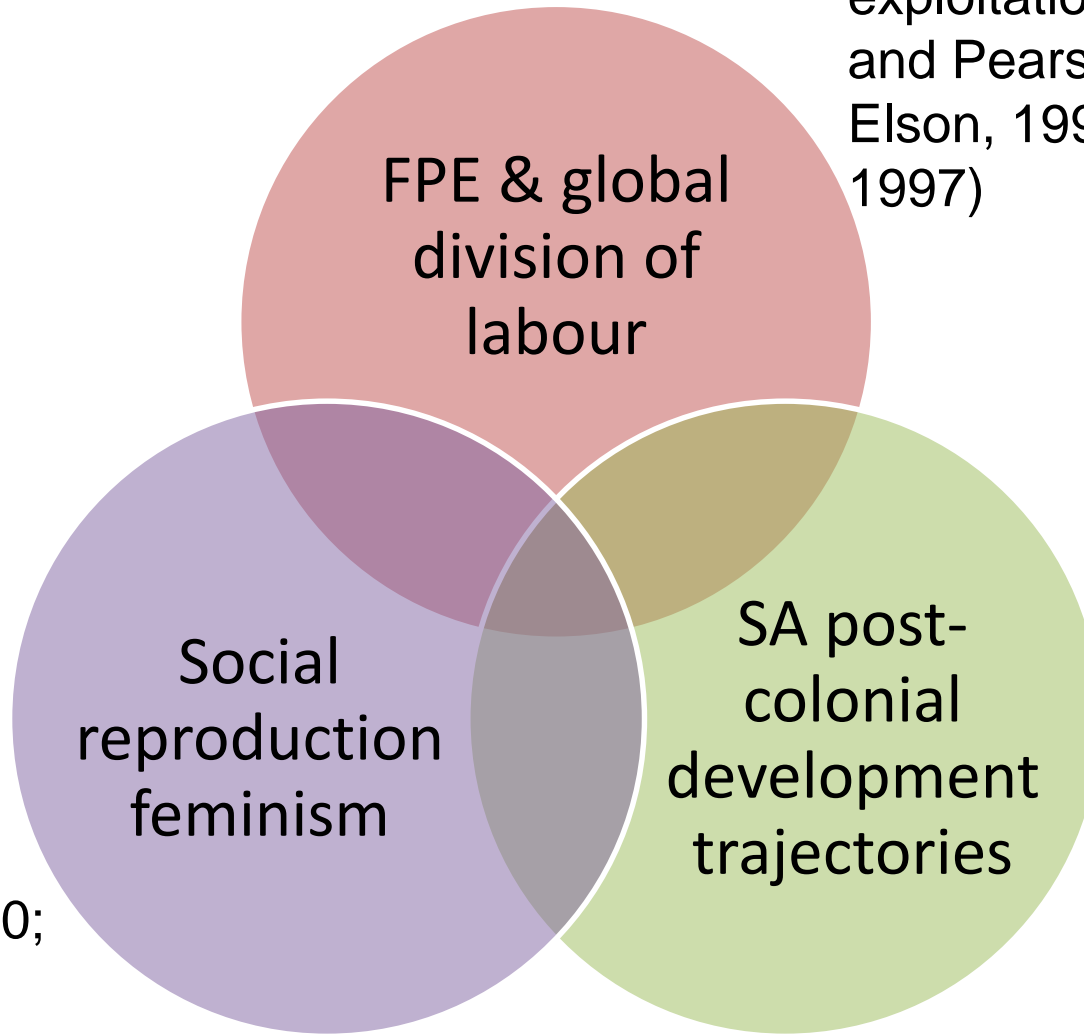
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How can women's work in localised labour markets be conceptualised? How does it relate to gender relations, social differentiation and social reproduction?

Historical-materialist analysis of production of human labour and value; beyond micro-macro divide and unifying theory of inequality (LeBaron, 2010; Bhattacharya, 2017)



Labour markets as gendered institutions, exploitation debate (Elson and Pearson, 1981; Elson, 1999; Seguino, 1997)

Colonial forced labour & post-colonial labour relations, household configuration, social differentiation (O’Laughlin, 2002; Budlender and Lund, 2011; Pèrez Niño, 2017)

Synergies and gaps

- FPE literature focused on macro processes, export-oriented sectors linked to international markets and gender inequality
 - Overlooks processes of social differentiation among women in the labour force and does not engage with analysis of localised labour markets
- SA regional literature analysed how wage labour processes changed peasant production, (household) social reproduction and processes of social differentiation
 - Less consideration for how social reproduction shapes participation in wage work and income-generating activities
- Social reproduction feminism theorises the interrelations between production and reproduction in advanced capitalist economies
 - Limited reflection on these interrelations in contexts with different trajectories of capitalist development (no phase of predominance of formal wage labour, persistent informal employment and peasant production, lacking welfare state)

Arguments

- Labour processes that are seemingly detached from global production and international markets are nonetheless shaped by shifting relations of production in globalised capitalist systems
- Social reproduction relations shape women's participation in the labour force, gendered labour relations and processes of social differentiation

Women's employment trajectories in localised markets reflect global production processes, but are also framed by processes of social differentiation that are determined by social and gender relations of reproduction.

Colonial labour regimes

- Mozambique part of the area that supplied labour to the South African economy (Arrighi et al., 2010), but northern Mozambique in different circuits of labour – forced cotton production, sisal plantations in coastal areas and southern Tanganyika (Isaacman, 1982)
- Ability to hire labour for cotton farming triggered processes of social differentiation (Isaacman and Chilundo, 1995)
- Shifting gender relations and tensions on division of labour for agricultural production (O’Laughlin, 2013)
- Embeddedness in colonial labour regimes as well as resistance to them (e.g. migration to Tanganyika) increased reliance on commodity production (O’Laughlin, 2002; Perez Nino, 2017)
- No linear processes of proletarianisation, with persistence of subsistence production; nonetheless proletarianisation occurs through commodification and tie to global markets (O’Laughlin, 2002)

Contemporary labour regimes

- Pockets of export agriculture – cashew nut in the North (declined cotton production) – and commercialised agriculture for regional markets – in peri-urban areas and southern districts of the province (better road infrastructure)
- Scattered presence of agro-industry, tourism infrastructure, natural resources
- Livelihood diversification - practice to use earnings from one type of work to finance another cash-earning activity
- Combination of household production for own consumption and sale, casual wage labour, petty trade and cash-earning activities (Bernstein's *classes of labour*)
- Evidence of links between commercial farming and i) previous cotton production, ii) access to urban markets and/or proximity to development corridors
- Labour markets for casual wage labour in agriculture (ganho-ganho) – continued significance of ability to hire agricultural labourers for rural and urban households
- War veterans who receive a monthly pension hire agricultural labourers and support younger/unemployed family members

Women's employment

- Difference between official statistics and reality of employment:
80% women employed in agriculture, only 2% have a secondary off-farm occupation (IFTRAB 2004-05)
75% women in the sample performed casual wage work and/or cash-earning activities in addition to farming (survey 2011-12)
- Vision of rural residents as subsistence farmers reproduced through colonial and post-independence political narratives - persists in contemporary idea that Mozambicans lack 'work culture'
- Women work as farmers, casual wage workers, trade and sell agricultural produce, prepare food and drinks for sale, sell fire wood
- These types of labour differ in terms of regularity, earning levels and mobility
- Social norms that men should provide for the family but practice differs – commodification of subsistence and lack of decent/regular incomes push women into the labour force

Gendered labour processes

- Divorced, separated, widowed women over-represented among those working for a payment

Failure of social relations that should ensure access to income creates the conditions for women to seek employment

- Proportionally more women in rural areas engage in wage/paid work than their urban counterparts

Men have more access to regular employment/higher incomes in urban areas – with decline of economic need renewed dominance of patriarchal norms on division of labour

- Women's cash-earning activities are often financed with earnings from other types of work

Gender character of livelihood diversification processes and men's regulation of women's employment

→ Gender and social relations shape and differentiate women's employment trajectories

Social reproduction and work

- Types of work that entail mobility (trading) are performed only by women who do not have young children or who can rely on family members to look after their children

Centrality of family relations for child care provisioning; child care needs exclude some mothers from certain jobs

- Evidence of work interruptions due to taking care of ill relatives

Gendered responsibilities along family ties to take care of ill members of the family; temporary relocations can be necessary when relative not a member of the same household

- Evidence of children's mobility to provide domestic labour to elderly and women lacking family labour

Labour shortages, due to old age or household's composition, may be addressed through relocation of older children to the labour-deficit household

→ Fragmentation of labour regimes and associated need for mobility (due to both production and reproduction) complicates family-centred social reproductive relations in ways that shape and differentiate women's employment trajectories