

From the unequal harvests of commercialization to the right to food and gender equality

What roles for governments, agribusinesses, and rural communities?

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How does the commercialization of land and agriculture impact food security? How do local, national, and international norms and policies shape these outcomes? And how do processes of commercialization and associated policies, laws, and practices affect gender equality and the right to food? These three inter-related questions guided the research conducted under the DEMETER project, and they also provide the structure for this book. By probing the impacts and politics of commercialization in Cambodia and Ghana, the chapters highlight not only complexities, but also similarities and common patterns. This concluding chapter provides a comparative analysis of our findings through the lenses of the right to food and gender equality. We explore outcomes and processes in the areas of food availability, accessibility, and adequacy and examine the implications of our findings for future policies and research.¹

The realization of the human right to food implies that its core elements of availability, accessibility, and adequacy (which includes cultural acceptability), are respected, protected, and fulfilled. Food is a human right for everyone, and this means that particular attention must be paid to preventing and redressing inequalities within food systems. In the DEMETER project, we used a gender perspective to gauge the availability, accessibility, and adequacy of food in contexts of commercialization, bearing in mind that gender intersects with other dimensions of inequality, here in particular those related to class, age, and ethnicity.

Food availability

Agricultural development policies in both of our case countries emphasize interventions to increase the availability of food through commercial food production, and these interventions have borne fruit. Food availability has

increased in the aggregate and food supply tends to be more diverse. As the interviewees quoted in Gironde et al.'s chapter affirm for Cambodia, there is now more food available, it is available all year round, and it is perhaps more diverse ('it's better than before'). In her chapter, Reysoo shows that for Kampong Thom, food reaches even the most remote places through open markets, shops of various sizes, and mobile food sellers transporting their wares into villages. The picture is somewhat more nuanced in Ghana, where in spite of a long tradition of rural food markets and observed reductions in levels of child malnutrition, seasonal food shortages continue to be the norm in both northern and southern Ghana. Here, interviewees told us that staple foods become scarce during the lean season, in particular in areas where most productive land is dedicated to non-food cash crops, and women are faced with the emotional and practical burdens of figuring out how to feed their families. In their chapter, Dzanku and Tsikata diagnose the phenomenon as over-commercialization; that is, although poor households earn income from cash crops, without efficient food markets, specialization in cash and non-food crops makes food less available and more expensive. Indeed, average food security levels appeared lower in the Asunafo-North district, a highly commercialized area devoted to cocoa, than in the Gonja-East district, where farmers produced food crops in commercial quantities. Thus, despite an overall increase in agricultural production, the substitution of food crops with non-food cash crops failed to guarantee year-round food security. Functioning food markets and the devotion of some land to food crops emerged as two key prerequisites for securing food availability under conditions of commercialization.

The production of some of their own food staples by farmers continues to be important for ensuring food availability in both Cambodia and Ghana. Crucial to this is access to land, which is mediated by gender and ethnicity. Commercialization has reduced the accessibility of land for poorer people, including many women and indigenous peoples. This growing land scarcity alongside the enclosure of formerly communal forest lands has resulted in a decline in the availability of 'free' food sources and this has important repercussions for the realization of the right to food as well as for the burden of food provisioning, which is typically borne by women. In Ratanakiri, Cambodia, indigenous communities have lost large stretches of land because of economic land concessions and these households are particularly food insecure, as shown by Gironde et al. Loss of land has meant the loss of both homestead gardens and plots dedicated to growing staples. This is paired with the declining availability of food from forest sources and the loss of communal areas for livestock grazing. Similarly, in Asunafo-North, Ghana, in addition to households now having to buy staple foods in weekly open-air markets, resources harvested from the commons, such as leafy vegetables, cocoyam, mushrooms, snails, and bush meat have become scarce, and only 'the rich men are the ones who can afford' such foods, as reported by Eweh and Tsikata in their chapter.

Degrees of commercialization differ between female and male farmers. For Cambodia, the chapters by Gironde et al. and Bourke Martignoni and Joshi demonstrate the continued role played by women smallholder farmers in the production and sale of vegetable crops and small livestock. Male farmers in Cambodia are more likely to focus on investments in ‘boom’ cash crops for export such as cassava, rubber, and cashew. The same scenario was observed by Dzanku and Tsikata and by Eweh and Tsikata in Ghana with some important regional variations in that women in the more commercialized, matrilineal zone in the south were producing lucrative commercial crops at a similar rate to men. In both countries, the capacity of women smallholder farmers to engage in large-scale commercial commodity production was hampered by their tenure insecurity and comparatively smaller landholdings and patriarchal power relations that dictate that women should provide labour for family farming enterprises rather than commanding male labour for their own farms.

In Ghana, the chapter by Dzanku and Tsikata shows that female-headed households have much smaller landholdings and are less likely to hold land titles than men. In a context of long-term commercialization, land is increasingly acquired through the market rather than through lineage allocation and inheritance, often leading to a further loss of land rights for women. In the most highly commercialized study region in Ghana, Asunafo-North, only 58% of farmers interviewed had inherited their land, as compared with 94% in Garu Tempane in the less commercialized north. As share contracts and purchases become the predominant means of accessing land in southern Ghana, women’s land rights, particularly those over lineage lands and the commons, have steadily eroded (Dzanku et al., 2021). In the indigenous communities of Cambodia, described by Beban and Bourke Martignoni, customary inheritance norms are in flux, with some families moving away from a matrilineal system that provided women with a greater degree of status to a bilateral pattern where small amounts of land are equally shared amongst all children in the family. But even when women have access to jointly titled land, Gironde et al. and Bourke Martignoni and Joshi show that they do not have the same control over it in that they do not have the power to decide how it will be used or when it might be sold.

Land loss entails the loss of a key social protection mechanism. As Beban and Bourke Martignoni explain, young people gain a start in agriculture through inheritance, while older people secure care and assistance with farming tasks by providing land to children who look after them. They argue that in Cambodia, rapid agricultural commercialization has created a gendered crisis of care, as growing land scarcity undermines informal mechanisms of social security in a context where there is limited state support. Commercialization thus functions to sharpen inequalities by fostering land concentration and landlessness, with women, younger, and older people as well as some indigenous populations being particularly affected.

Accessibility

The availability of food does not mean that it is accessible to everyone. As many of Reysoo's Cambodian respondents emphasized: 'Today you can buy anything at the market whenever you want to, provided you have money'. The statement touches upon the issue of purchasing power and the underlying physical, structural, and institutional barriers to accessing food. Not all individuals and families have equal capacities to buy food all year round. Thus, in addition to seasonal food shortages resulting from reduced food crop production among smallholders, and weak food markets, there are also seasonal shortages resulting from market fluctuations. In Cambodia, these shortages take two forms: fluctuations in the price of food items consumed, and fluctuations in rural job markets. In Ghana, the shortages are manifested in the lack of ready availability of preferred foodstuffs, and food price volatility.

In Cambodia, access to food has become a source of stress for many land-poor families, who have become entirely dependent on cash or credit to buy food. Demand for wage labourers, and hence access to cash, is seasonal and, as Gironde et al. show, seasonal food shortages correlate with seasonal variations in wage labour opportunities. These are predominantly in agriculture and consequently vary according to crop production cycles. Over time, seasonal food shortages have increased in Ratanakiri and decreased in Kampong Thom between 2016 and 2019 in parallel to the differences in wage employment and non-farm self-employment opportunities in the two provinces. In Ghana, commercialization in a context of expansion in education, rural stagnation, and poor terms and conditions of casual labour, has created massive labour shortages that are addressed through the extensive use of weedicides. Thus, the lack of wage labour opportunities is not seasonal, but instead is an integral part of the agrarian economy (Dzanku et al., 2021).

To cope with food shortages in Cambodia, people resort to borrowing money, leading to high levels of indebtedness and forced land sales. While out-migration from rural to urban areas in search of wage labour opportunities is observed in many agrarian communities in response to food insecurity, the chapter by Beban and Bourke Martignoni shows that this is not a livelihood strategy that is viewed as culturally acceptable or feasible for many indigenous women, given the structural discrimination in the labour market. Both the Tsikata and Eweh and the Gironde et al. chapters find that, given their responsibility for putting food on the table, women play a far more important role in borrowing money or purchasing food on credit than men do. They also found evidence of women in poorer households reducing the number of their meals and eating lower-quality food items during periods of food scarcity. Commercialization thus introduces new inequalities in access to food in both Cambodia and Ghana.

Commercialization also changes labour arrangements in ways that are profoundly gendered. This includes an increase in women's productive and

reproductive labour burdens, changes in the gender division of labour, and the payment of unequal wages. The increase in women's labour burden is particularly marked in Ghana. Eweh and Tsikata show in their chapter that there is an expectation that women in rural Ghana should work on the male household head's plots, and as a result, commercialization has increased the demand for women's unpaid labour. At the same time, as explained in the chapter by Atupare, customary expectations that women contribute fish, vegetables, and other ingredients to the family diet have not changed, leading to a double or triple burden for women as the major providers of household nutrition (see also Atupare, 2016). Conversely, women farmers are unable to access the labour or the land they need to participate independently in contract farming schemes.

These patterns differ in Cambodia, where we found labour to be more commercialized. As has been described in other contexts, moving work out of homes and farms leads to a physical separation of income-earning and reproductive labour, what Joshi (2020a), following Maria Mies, calls women's 'housewifization'. Unpaid reproductive labour remains women's work, hindering their participation in the labour market. Bourke Martignoni and Joshi show that women wage labourers in Ratanakiri, Cambodia regretted that they could not bring their children to commercial plantation workplaces, and if they did so, they were paid less (see also Joshi, 2020a). Not surprisingly, Gironde et al. and Beban and Bourke Martignoni confirm that women farmers in Ratanakiri – particularly those who are divorced or older – are more likely to engage in reciprocal labour exchanges, while men prefer to use paid agricultural labourers.

The sharpening gender division of labour associated with commercialization comes with unequal wages and discriminatory agricultural labour markets. In highly commercialized areas of Cambodia, Gironde et al. found that job creation favoured men, and this meant they were much more likely to participate in wage labour than women. Factors such as greater physical strength and the capacity to use heavy tools, mobility, and the greater ease for men to work at night explain employers' preference for men over women and are frequently used to justify the gender differences in wages. In the northeast of Cambodia, most jobs were taken by immigrant Khmers, leaving indigenous and local populations marginalized (Joshi 2020a). Studies of plantation and contract farming agriculture in Ghana have found a similar pattern of a persistent division of labour. Men are typically assigned jobs considered to rely on physical strength, while women are employed in labour-intensive tasks that play to gender stereotypes about their greater attention to detail and manual dexterity. These differences have been used to justify consistently lower wages for women in agriculture across Ghana. Furthermore, contract farmers and sharecroppers are also more likely to be men than women (Tsikata and Yaro, 2014).²

The inequalities in labour arrangements generated by land and agricultural commercialization have implications for food security. The greater

food insecurity of indigenous populations in Cambodia has already been mentioned. Gender differences, in contrast, show a more complex picture. Women in Cambodia reported that they had eaten smaller or fewer meals and gone hungry at night at a higher rate than male respondents. Although our surveys show that the percentage of Cambodian women having to cut food intake decreased between 2016 and 2019, this gender difference has persisted. In contrast, in Ghana, while women and men eat differently in terms of quantity and quality of food, the survey data did not show gender differences in terms of hunger. Access to income matters, but clearly it is not the only determinant of individual food security. Although there is increased purchasing of prepared food in contexts of commercialization, most food continues to be cooked by women and consumed in households. And the gender-differentiated access to and quality of food consumed is often mediated by food cultures.

Adequacy and food cultures

An often-overlooked element of the human right to food is the notion of food adequacy, which encompasses dietary diversity, food safety and quality, and access to culturally appropriate food. Our conception of cultural appropriateness in this book takes into account the availability and consumption of novel food products which become part of a people's food culture. In Ratanakiri, for instance, ideas about the cultural adequacy of food within indigenous communities are undergoing a transformation. The introduction of new food products, higher incomes, the decreased availability of wild foods and the adoption of Khmer-style cooking are all influencing the types of foods that are sourced and prepared. Commercialization has also been accompanied by a surge in food-related businesses as well as increased possibilities for men to eat outside the home (Reysoo, this volume). Similarly in Ghana, north-south migration, the availability of new varieties of imported and locally produced food in food markets across the country, and the increasing consumption of purchased meals, have expanded notions of culturally acceptable food in our research communities (Eweh and Tsikata, this volume). In discussions with our interlocutors, it becomes clear that cultural adequacy intersects with financial accessibility, as many people make trade-offs between what they can afford and what they find adequate. Cultural adequacy must, therefore, be approached as a dynamic and understudied element of the right to food that is appreciated in different ways by individual right holders depending upon their own preferences and expectations about what makes for adequate food.

In Cambodia and Ghana, women tend to have responsibility both for sourcing food and for cooking. As a result, they play a key role in assuring nutritional adequacy in a context of commercialization, and they do so within the confines of gendered customs, while also subverting these in their practices. In both Ghana and Cambodia, what is considered adequate food is changing and often today depends on what is affordable and what

is convenient. Broadly speaking, in both countries, people tend to consider food as adequate if they can access staple foods, a construction that is profoundly gendered. Eweh and Tsikata show that in northern Ghana, staples (in particular *tuo-zaafi*, prepared from maize or millet) are considered more nutritious and are valued more highly than proteins, in part because they constitute men's contribution to the household diet. In the south of Ghana, people associate food shortages with a shortage of *fufu* (pounded cassava or plantain), which is the preferred staple in the region. Similarly, in Cambodia, rice is the central part of a meal with fish, vegetables, and sauce regarded as optional accompaniments added when available or affordable. However, although food security is associated with eating enough carbohydrates, added protein is highly valued in the study sites in both Ghana and Cambodia.

Gendered food cultures also affect what, where, and how much food is eaten. In both of our case countries, men tended to have richer diets. As shown in the chapter by Eweh and Tsikata, in Ghana, men typically eat separately from the rest of the family and consume more protein. They also are more likely to have opportunities to eat outside the home, supplementing their food intake with various forms of snacking. Similarly, in Cambodia, meat is considered an energy-rich food and, when money is scarce, it is reserved for the working men of the family. As in Ghana, Cambodian men were also more likely to eat meals outside the home than women, and they were far more likely to consume alcohol. In Kampong Thom, Reysoo reports from the DEMETER survey a slightly higher dietary diversity score for men than for women. For Cambodia, more broadly, Gironde et al. find that women's responsibility for putting food on the table often leads them to sacrifice and eat less and lower-quality food.

Our research revealed old and new practices of food consumption in rural communities arising from the changes induced by agricultural and land commercialization. According to Eweh and Tsikata, in the colonial period, migrants from other parts of southern Ghana to the cocoa-growing frontier areas brought with them a new way of processing low-quality cassava so that it could be stored and consumed during the lean season. More recently, maize-based foods, yam, and rice have become staples all over Ghana, as has canned fish. On the other hand, commercialization in Ghana has reduced dietary diversity and food quality, according to some respondents. In southern Ghana, foods that used to be available in the wild have become scarce because of the intensive use of agro-chemicals. Similarly, in the upland areas of Cambodia, wild vegetables have become harder to source as a result of the enclosure of common forests, and indigenous households are adopting the more meat-heavy cuisine introduced by Khmer migrants. These transformations of eating and food cultures are not always regarded as negative, and some of our Cambodian respondents noted that they appreciated the convenience of being able to purchase 'modern' food from the market, with several women observing that the availability of purchased food means that they no longer

have to get up early to cook food before leaving for work in the morning (Beban and Bourke Martignoni, 2021).

There is ambivalence about changes in the quality of available food. The villagers from Reysoo's study in Kampong Thom lamented the fact that market-bought vegetables and fish contain chemicals and are less fresh and less tasty; and they felt that food contamination was making them ill. In both Ghana and Cambodia, people also spoke of the introduction of unhealthy new convenience foods. In Ghana, this was associated with processed foods consumed mostly in wealthier households. In Cambodia, Reysoo indicates a strong presence of industrially produced snacks and sweets considered as modern and thus desirable but also nutritionally empty. Thus, even if commercialization may have made food more available and accessible, low-quality foods may generate health impacts, such as obesity, that undermine the realization of the right to adequate food and nutrition.

In sum, land and agriculture commercialization has fallen short of realizing the right to adequate food. As shown in the case of Ghana, the existence of efficient markets and certain levels of income cannot be assumed. In Cambodia, commercialization has deprived smallholder farmers of land without creating decent work opportunities or comprehensive social protection schemes to enable rural people to purchase food. Commercialization also has fallen short because the quality of food often deteriorates as the availability of wild food declines and snack food comes to substitute more nutrient-rich, home-grown food. And significantly, processes of commercialization reproduce and sharpen inequalities. These inequalities are apparent in the depletion of the gendered reproductive labour that enables household food security, the conversion of communal forest and food crop farmland to cash crop plantations, and growing landlessness amongst poor smallholder farmers, particularly women and younger people.

The role of policies and human rights guarantees

Commercialization has been propelled by neoliberal policies, but the international food regime also promotes human rights, and governments combine the drive to commercialization with other policy goals such as food security and human development (Graziano Da Silva, 2019). Both Cambodia and Ghana are bound by international human rights obligations related to the promotion and protection of gender equality and the right to food (Bourke Martignoni, 2021, 2018). The countries are parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and both voted in favour of the adoption of the United Nations (UN) Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas in 2018 (Claeys and Edelman 2019). In Ghana, according to Atupare's analysis in this book, while the 1992 Constitution makes no explicit reference to the right to food, it directly protects gender equality. Nevertheless, courts in

Ghana have protected the right to food on the basis of directive principles of state policy, which are concerned with ensuring the welfare and livelihoods of citizens. In contrast, in Cambodia, the right to food and gender equality are both explicitly acknowledged in legislative and policy documents; however, the neo-patrimonial legal system means that appeals to judicial processes are usually either inaccessible or counter-productive and dangerous for most rural people (Joshi, 2020b; Bourke Martignoni, 2021).

Formal human rights guarantees founder in practice and fail to be ‘vernacularised’ or appropriated at the local level for a variety of reasons (Merry and Levitt, 2017). First, as the case of Cambodia illustrates, they often stand in tension with policies of commercialization. In their chapter, Bourke Martignoni and Joshi show how joint private land titling, a key neoliberal prescription, becomes a driver of large-scale land acquisitions and dispossession in rural Cambodia. In addition, the proliferation of debt through the spread of microfinance institutions leads to land loss. Commercialization policies thus seem to invite dispossession. Commercialization policies also tend to come with a commitment to a small state. As a result, they are rarely accompanied by state-provided social security. As Beban and Bourke Martignoni show for the rural upland communities in Cambodia, the state appears as a mediator of global capital and an enforcer of private property rights for those with the right political connections and economic power. But it is absent in terms of public social service provision, although the right to social security is guaranteed (for Khmer citizens) in the Cambodian constitution.

Existing political structures provide a second set of obstacles to implementing rights-based approaches. Joshi et al. illustrate the salience of patronage in the Cambodian ‘hybrid state’, which not only marginalizes gender equality policies but also violates procedural rights associated with the right to food. Male patronage networks limit the expertise and funding available to advance gender equality policies and the illiberal state has increasingly turned processes of consultation with civil society into an empty performance. While Ghana’s political system is more open than Cambodia’s, Awo and Antwi’s chapter diagnoses shortcomings with regard to women’s participation in agricultural policymaking, both at the national and sub-national level, which amount to no more than ‘tokenism’. Not surprisingly, they argue, significant gender gaps persist in Ghanaian agriculture.

Informal norms are a third potent barrier, particularly with respect to the implementation of gender equality legislation and policies. Bourke Martignoni and Joshi illustrate this for the case of joint land titling: although government documents frequently highlight the success of joint-titling legislation, in practice, the vast majority of women in the country have not benefitted from more equitable access to land as a result of neoliberal cadastral reforms. Patriarchal norms stand in the way. These norms are also embedded in the state and slow the implementation of gender equality policies. Joshi et al. identify norms pertaining to property rights, labour expectations, and prescriptions for virtuous behaviour that hinder the implementation of gender mainstreaming in Cambodia. Nevertheless, as Torvikey and Atupare highlight in their chapter,

settings of normative pluralism may potentially open up new opportunities and spaces for women to strategically engage in ‘forum shopping’ in order to claim their land and labour rights. In the same vein, Bourke Martignoni and Joshi show how women’s resistance to land and resource-grabbing by corporate and state actors may lead to the redefinition of gendered subjectivities.

The Ghanaian case illustrates a fourth difficulty for right-to-food policy processes, namely the dependence on international donors and the salience of agribusiness corporations that neoliberal ideologies have invited into policy-making. While the government has designed several agricultural policies at both the national and sub-national levels geared towards attaining zero hunger (SDG-2) and gender equality (SDG -5), the implementation of these policies is fraught with fiscal challenges. Decentralization opens up avenues for private sector actors to fill the funding gaps. As a result, major agribusinesses drive the implementation of government policies at the sub-national level, co-opting key government agencies for agricultural policies that align with their interests. Specifically, they promote commercialization and cash crops at the expense of food crops. Interestingly, however, these actors also promote women’s participation in agriculture, and they appear receptive to the incorporation of international gender equality norms and standards within their operations. In practice, these corporate social responsibility initiatives tend to adopt a neoliberal approach to inserting women within existing agricultural labour markets and contract farming schemes without meaningfully addressing the gendered power relations that perpetuate inequalities (Tsikata, 2014; Lanz et al., 2020).

In sum, the juxtaposition of policies of commercialization and human rights in the international food regime yields contradictory outcomes. The reification of individual property rights and the enclosure of the commons, the under-emphasis of social protection, and the privileging of the interests of financial and agribusiness actors often stand in stark tension with the promotion and protection of the right to food. In addition, male patronage networks, patriarchal gender norms, and a lack of meaningful consultation with relevant right holders, including women, are obstacles to integrating gender equality considerations into agriculture and food security policies. Commercialization policies that work for those at the margins of power would require addressing these obstacles and radically redesigning the governance of food systems.

Policy recommendations

Our research in Cambodia and Ghana shows the way in which commercialization limits the right to food:

- A focus on cash crops may produce shortages in food crops for small-holder farmers. It also severely restricts access to wild foods and forest products through logging, the privatization of the commons, and the use of agro-chemicals.

- Commercialization sharpens and creates inequalities based on gender, class, and ethnicity, reinforcing gender divisions of labour and discrimination in access to land, increasing women's burden of unpaid reproductive labour while providing limited income-earning opportunities. These gendered inequalities intersect with class and ethnicity, making access to food less secure for many rural people.
- The potential of commercialization to increase the variety of foods people have access to is moderated by its tendency to undermine existing, accessible food supplies, and by the low quality of the new foods. Food cultures are also deeply gendered, with men often eating greater quantities of food and having more diverse diets than women. The interaction between commercialization and food cultures can therefore deepen gender inequalities in access to food and nutrition.
- Governments and agribusinesses have legal responsibilities to respect and protect the rights to food and gender equality and to provide appropriate remedies in the event that these rights are violated. Human rights obligations are insufficiently acknowledged in contemporary agricultural policies, which promote commercialization and increased food production while neglecting the dimensions of food accessibility and adequacy.
- To avoid the harmful human rights impacts of commercialization, food security, land governance, and agricultural development policies and programmes should be grounded in participatory frameworks that prioritize the promotion and protection of economic, social, and cultural rights (Bourke Martignoni, 2020). The value in using feminist right-to-food methodologies that highlight the need for inclusive, democratic participation in food policymaking to challenge existing, patriarchal power structures should also be emphasized (Bourke Martignoni, 2021). States and agribusinesses should respect and protect the right to food in rural communities and promote gender equality. This is particularly urgent in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic and in light of the impact of climate change, both of which have increased socio-economic inequalities (Bourke Martignoni, 2020; FIAN International, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c). The adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas in 2018, which emphasizes the rights to food, land, decent employment, and social security, offers an additional tool to guide states' behaviour (Golay, 2019, 2020).

A number of concrete policy suggestions follow from our studies. To begin with, governments should promote *crop diversification*, instead of focusing on a few selected crops, to ensure the enjoyment of the right to adequate food. In Ghana, the state, along with donors and agribusinesses, prioritizes cash crop production, while efforts to meet food and nutrition needs through increased local production should occupy an important place in agricultural policy. Eweh and Tsikata suggest that crop diversification has the potential to prevent food

shortages resulting from the poor performance of particular crops while expanding the nutritional content of the food that is available in rural communities.

There also needs to be a stronger policy focus on the elements of food accessibility and adequacy. Accessibility requires a firm focus on creating *decent jobs* in the countryside. It also requires governments to implement universal *social protection mechanisms*, as argued by Beban and Bourke Martignoni. In both Cambodia and Ghana, comprehensive social security coverage is inaccessible for the majority of rural people, particularly women, who are excluded from the formal employment relationships that would enable them to receive old age pensions, sickness and caring benefits, and other entitlements. With regard to food adequacy, it may be useful to integrate the perspectives not only of the rural people who consume food, but, as Reysoo argues, that of local food vendors, who in Cambodia offer a wide array of affordable, accessible food items, which are increasingly the nutritional foundation for low-income households. In the case of Ghana, Eweh and Tsikata argue that policy responses to food insecurity need to address more consistently the inequalities in the distribution of productive resources between men and women and the lack of recognition of women's critical role in household food provisioning.

Other recommendations focus on processes of policymaking and implementation. Ankrah et al. urge the Government of Ghana to provide realistic budgetary allocations through innovative local revenue mobilization at the sub-national level to reduce the high fiscal dependency on agribusinesses. They also recommended that agribusinesses should be encouraged to pay more attention to local institutions responsible for natural resource management and the powers they embed in addressing pre-existing gender inequalities. More broadly, mainstreaming gender and a human rights perspective into policy processes would also require the disruption of male patronage networks, the challenging of patriarchal gender norms, and stronger efforts to ensure the meaningful inclusion of all rights holders, particularly diverse groups of women and indigenous communities, in policy development and decision-making.

Notes

- 1 Parts of this conclusion have drawn inspiration from the DEMETER Research Brief 2/2020 on *Agricultural and Land Commercialisation: Do They Foster Gender Equality and The Right to Food?* https://r4d-demeter.info/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Research_Brief_2_2020.pdf.
- 2 As our chapters on Ghana in this book focused on smallholder commercial agriculture, the labour questions of these two types of agricultural commercialization did not receive much attention.

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