Capturing the Complexities of Globalization

Gendered Divisions of Labor and Difference

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The Problem

* How can we theoretically understand gender and globalization?

* How might we comprehend the nuances and complexities of gendered economic processes?

* Within a general pattern of impact in a given locale, what factors shape a person or group's ability to adapt to changing economic contexts?
The Framework:

* Informed by:
  - Gendered Commodity (or Value) Chain Analysis
  - Livelihoods Analysis
  - Feminist Studies of Household Economy

* Multi-Scale in approach:
  - How states and locales are situated in the “Global Fish Food Regime”

* “Local Divisions of Labor” (Jarosz 1996; Ramamurthy 2000)
Global Fish Food Regime

* Dramatic expansion of world production & trade through technological innovation & global demand from industrialized countries.

* Flow of trade increasingly from developing countries to industrialized

* Elite consumption habits shape development of national agro-food/fisheries sectors – SHRIMP is main item exported

* Per capita fish food supply greatest in China and industrialized countries; lowest in South America, Africa, Central & South Asia
Fisheries Development in Kerala

* State-led
* Modern, mechanized technology to take advantage of global markets for shrimp/seafood
* Fishermen welfare
Local Divisions of Labor

Gender Divisions of Labor:

- Men Fish
- Women Process; Take to Market; and Work in Ancillary Activities
Gendered Impacts

* Production:
  1. Stratification between producers;
  2. Geographical shift in landing sites;
  3. Overfishing, declining harvests for traditional artisanal sector,
  4. Declining incomes from men’s work
      a. attempts to intensify effort;
      b. migration for work

* Processing:
  1. Traditional industries in decline;
  2. New processing industries have emerged (frozen shrimp)
Gendered Impacts – cont.

* Distribution:
  1. Commercialization & stratification of market networks;
  2. Opportunities and constraints;
  3. Increased household reliance on women’s work in marketing to survive

* Ancillary Activities:
  Work in netmaking/repair replaced by machine-made nylon nets
Local Divisions of Labor II

Factors shaping livelihood strategies:

* Current asset base (boat ownership, other productive assets)
* Household size/composition
* Education & skill levels
* Work identities & family ideologies
* Entrepreneurial initiative
Household Profiles

Tracy:

Age: 60 yrs

Household Members: husband (70); son (26); 2 daughters (20, 23); son-in-law (32) and grandchild (2)

Current occupation: fish vendor (retail)

Livelihood History: fishing/fish vending; owned boat for 10 years – she managed net; then husband migrated, she returned to fish vending; now she, son, and son-in-law support household.
Lily:
Age: 49
Household Members: husband (55); son (25); 2 daughters married - in own homes
Current Occupation: fish vendor (wholesale);
Livelihood History: husband previously a fisherman, for past 27 years a porter at airport. Lily a fish vendor from age 13 - did retail trade until age 20, then formed partnership with 3 women and later began petty wholesale trade that continues today.
Selin:

Age: 35

Household Members: husband (39); daughter (15); son (13) - both in school; father-in-law (retired)

Current Occupation: fish vendor; fishing with outboard motor boat

Livelihood History:
Husband: owns OBM (6 years), previously owned a kattumaram (8 years), previously worked for others
Selin a fish vendor from childhood; sometimes takes husband’s fish; usually operates independently