



## Gender and Diversity for Sustainable Future Agri-Food Systems: Diverse European Perspectives

Presentation 1: Challenges to women's empowerment amid structural change-the case of Albania

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## Structure

- Rationale
- Main theories related to women empowerment under structural change
- Key literature findings on bargaining power (gender, legal status, social norms)
- Present two case studies from Albania
- Emphasise gaps and issues for further research

## Rationale

- Transitions shift power and can reduce women's voice without gendersensitive institutions.
- Agricultural change increases women's workload but not their rights or decision power.
- Land, market, and property reforms may reinforce male dominance if women's access is not ensured.
- Economic restructuring offers opportunities, but women face barriers in assets, mobility, and information.
- Empowerment enables women to navigate competitive, market-led rural systems.
- Equitable agriculture systems and inclusive empowerment strengthens household resilience and adaptation.

## Main theories

- Feminisation of Agriculture (Byrne et al, 2014)
  - As men migrate or shift to non-farm work, women take on more agricultural responsibilities.
  - Institutional/rural restructuring can either increase women's agency or trap them in unpaid labour?
- Intra-Household Bargaining Theory (Collective Household Models) (Sen and Agarwal 1997)
  - Household members negotiate based on their fallback options, assets, and social norms.
  - Structural change affects women's ability to influence decisions, allocate resources, and gain rights.
- Social Norms Theory & Patriarchal Bargain Kandiyoti (1988); Bicchieri (2017)
  - Women negotiate within patriarchal systems; norms shape what empowerment is possible.
  - Structural change doesn't automatically shift gender norms.

## Main theories cont.

- Capability Approach (Sen and Nussbaum)
  - Empowerment expand women's real freedoms and capabilities.
  - Useful for evaluating empowerment outcomes beyond economic gains
- Giddens' Structuration Theory & Women's Empowerment
  - A dynamic interplay between agency (capacity to act) and structure (rules, norms, institutions).
  - Structures enable and constrain, but individuals also reproduce or transform those structures through everyday actions.

## Analytical frameworks

- Empowerment Frameworks (Kabeer, 1999, 2001); Moser (1993).
  - Empowerment is shaped by structural conditions—laws, markets, norms, and institutions.
- Gendered Institutionalism (Mackay, Kenny & Chappell)
  - Institutions are gendered; transitions often reproduce male dominance unless explicitly reformed.
- Agrarian Political Economy & Feminist Political Ecology (Agarwal; (Rocheleau et al, 1996).
  - Looks at power, labour, ownership, and environmental/resource control under institutional restructuring.
- Value Chain development and gender
  - Explore women's ability to access and benefit market-driven disempowerment or empowerment.

## Why Albania?

#### Women position in the value chain

- Women concentrated in low-value chain segments
- In intensive and export-oriented VCs a high proletarisation of women and feminisation of certain functions.
- Underrepresented in decision-making roles
- Intersectionality (e.g., ethnicity, age) exacerbates marginalization

#### Impact of Legal Barriers:

- Low female land ownership restricts collateral for credit and formal contracting
- Customary laws often supersede statutory rights; low awareness of property rights
- Patriarchal norms limit legal literacy, access to finance, training, and cooperative membership
- Reduce likelihood of taking up extension services, legal clinics, or contract negotiations

# Albanian agriculture land tenure and gender – literature review

- Pre-1991: Centralised system, state-owned land, rural poverty and food shortages.
- 1991 Land Reform (Law 7501): Highly fragmented land, distributed per family → women largely excluded from land titles.
- **Gender inequality:** 50% of women work in agriculture, but <7% of farms are managed by women; most female labour is unpaid.
- Male migration: Men leave for work; women take on more farm responsibilities but without increased decision-making power.
- Low productivity: Small farm size (~1.2 ha) and low returns → shift toward migration and less-intensive farming.



# Case 1: Albania's gender gaps in land ownership and inheritance

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Funding: UN Women Albania

## Introduction

#### Rural women in Albania face three layers of oppression:

- a. patriarchy and authoritarianism in government,
- b. male hegemony within their communities and families,
- c. Poverty from high dependence on subsistence farming.

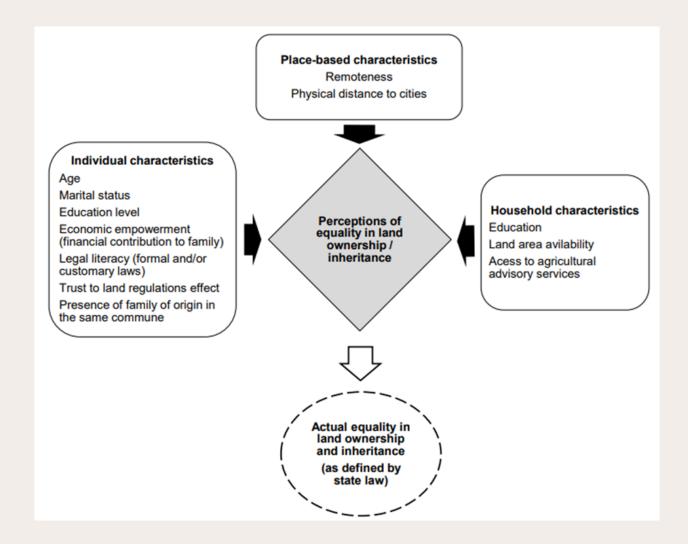
#### Albania combines two institutional realities:

- A traditional patriarchal system favoring men, especially in rural areas.
- A modern state framework promoting legal gender equality, but effective mainly in urban settings.

Although Albania performs well on global gender equality indices, rural women remain disadvantaged in land rights and economic participation.

Objective: Assess rural women's perceptions of equality in land ownership and inheritance and identify the main factors shaping these perceptions (individual, household, and regional).

## Conceptual framework



## Methodology

#### Quantitative Approach

#### Sample & Survey:

- Face-to-face survey (2014–2015) with 1,258 rural women across 306 communes.
- Stratified multi-stage sampling: 24 largest villages in 20 thinly populated areas across 19 districts; 50–100 households per village randomly selected.
- Female surveyors employed → 94% response rate.

#### Survey Content:

- Questions on economic contributions, property rights, and family decision-making.
- Mix of binary (yes/no) and Likert-scale items.

#### Analysis:

• Two binary logistic regressions examined factors affecting women's *factors influencing* perceptions of inequality around land rights and land inheritance rights

## Methodology

#### Qualitative approach

#### Participants & Sessions:

- Five focus groups with 58 women (mostly aged 45–60, >90% married, >80% primary education).\
- Sessions lasted 90–120 minutes, conducted in Albanian, exploring survey findings in depth.

#### Topics Explored:

Work burden, life circumstances of rural women, expectations, family relationships.

#### Analysis:

- Discussions were recorded, transcribed, and manually coded using iterative template analysis.
- Two coders independently cross-checked themes- thematic saturation achieved.

## Enduring importance of customary laws

- In rural Albania, customary laws and informal institutions strongly influence land rights, often overshadowing formal legal frameworks.
- Survey data show that 75% of women are informed about formal land laws, while 70% are aware of customary laws (Table 2).
- Customary rules generally disadvantage women in property ownership, inheritance, and decision-making, leading many to internalize patriarchal norms and accept male authority over land matters.
- More women trust family and custom (52%) than the state law (46%) regarding land decisions, and only 46% believe state law governs land sales (Table 3).

**Table 2.** Information about legal frameworks (formal and informal) on land property (descriptive statistics).

Type of legal framework	Yes	No
Are you informed on formal land laws?	75%	25%
Are you informed on customary land laws?	70%	30%

Table 3. Most trusted entities in decision-making regarding land sales.

Options	Percentage		
State law is followed	46%		
Custom is followed	5%		
Men decide	16%		
Family decides*	31%		
Other/no answer	2%		

## Women's perception of access to land ownership

**Table 3**. Marginal effects of the logistic regression: factors influencing perceptions of inequality around land rights.

Variable†	Coefficient	SE
Distance to the center	-0.003	0.000***
Region NUTS2	-0.066	0.030**
Age	-0.001	0.001
Marital status (married)	0.100	0.035**
Education (non-obligatory level)	-0.031	0.029
Land law trust	0.123	0.031***
Land law literacy	0.116	0.039***
Customary law literacy	-0.067	0.037*
Woman main contributor to incomes	0.054	0.070
Family of origin lives in the same commune	0.028	0.025
Household education (years)	0.016	0.006***
Land area availability (hectare per capita)	0.056	0.013***
Advisory service access	0.057	0.031*

Q: Do you believe you have equal land ownership rights.

#### Factors with Positive and Significant Impact

- Trust in land law: Women who trust the legal system perceive themselves as more equal.
- Land law literacy: Greater legal knowledge enhances women's sense of equality.
- Household education: The family's overall education level (including men's) strengthens gender equality perceptions.
- Land area per capita: Better economic conditions correlate with higher confidence and equality.
- Access to advisory services: Institutional support empowers rural women.
- Marital status (married): Married women are more likely to believe they have equal land ownership rights.

#### Factors with Negative Impact

- Distance from the center: Women in remote areas feel less equal.
- Northern regions (NUTS2): Areas where customary law dominates are less favorable to women.
- Customary law literacy: Greater awareness of traditional (kanun) rules reduces perceived equality.

## Women's perception of access to land ownership

**Table 7.** Marginal effects of the logistic regression: factors influencing perceptions of land inheritance rights

Variable†	Coefficient	SE
Distance to the center	-0.004	0.001***
Region NUTS2	-0.330	0.035***
Age	-0.004	0.001***
Marital status (married)	0.062	0.054
Education (non-obligatory level)	0.007	0.037
Land law literacy	0.109	0.042***
Land law trust	0.122	0.037***
Customary law literacy	0.097	0.042**
Woman main contributor to incomes	0.038	0.073
Family of origin lives in the same commune	0.009	0.032
Household education (years)	-0.008	0.008
Land area availability (hectare per capita)	-0.047	0.015***
Advisory service access	0.009	0.036

Q: Do you believe that they can inherit land equally with their brothers. **Key Positive Influences** 

- Women informed about land legislation are 11% more likely to feel entitled to inherit.
- Those who trust the legal system are 12% more likely to expect equal treatment.

#### Negative or Limiting Influences

- Customary law familiarity reduces women's perception of equality — traditional norms still favor sons.
- Age matters: younger women are more egalitarian, while older women have internalized patriarchal norms.
- Regional effects: Women in northern areas (where customary law prevails) feel less entitled to inherit land.
- Land wealth: In families owning more land, patrilineal inheritance is stronger, lowering women's expectations.

## Conclusions and recommendations

- Legal & Institutional Measures: Strengthen legal literacy through awareness, education, and free legal aid.
- Economic Empowerment: Expand women's access to social insurance, subsidies, and advisory services.
- Education & Awareness: Target men and families with equality-awareness campaigns and offer vocational and continuous training for women.
- Social & Grassroots Support: Strengthen grassroots groups in regions dominated by customary law, especially Northern Albania.
- Holistic Approach: Link land equality with broader improvements in education, employment, and social participation.

**Figure 2.** Socialist realism painting from the 1960s, which glorifies farming and highlights the emancipation of rural women. Female farmers are shown hard at work but also reading the newspaper. Image courtesy of the National Art Gallery.



## Limitations

The study analyses women's perceptions but does not systematically include **men's perceptions**, which are crucial for understanding bargaining dynamics, household negotiations, and resistance to gender-equitable land practices.

Good example: Nacka, M., Drichoutis, A. C., & Nayga Jr, R. M. (2025). Women's Empowerment and Intra-Household Bargaining Power. *Review of Development Economics*.

- The experiment tested whether they would choose efficient overall household gains or favor individual monetary benefits.
- Women's empowerment predict decisions in the allocation task.

The study relies heavily on women's perceptions of equality in land rights, which are influenced by internalized norms and may under- or overestimate real inequalities.

The quantitative survey reflects a single point in time and cannot capture changes in norms, laws, or social behaviour over time.

Good example: Kumar & Quisumbing (2012) "Policy Reform Toward Gender Equality in Ethiopia: Little by Little the Egg Begins to Walk." World Development, 40(7), 1365–1376.

# Feminisation in Agriculture in a Transition Economy: Women's Role in Family Farms

Authors: Prof. Dr. Edvin Zhllima Prof. Dr. Drini Imami Dr. Orion Xhoxhi

## Introduction

- Gender roles shape decision-making, access to assets, and bargaining power in rural households.
- In transition economies, women's agency is key in transforming family farms, but remains under-studied.
- Male out-migration and off-farm work increase women's involvement and responsibility in agriculture.
- Feminisation refers to women's growing visibility and decision-making power, even without full ownership.
- Hypothesis: greater female decision-making leads to preferences for less labour-intensive crops.
- Literature gap: Existing studies examine land redistribution and migration, but not intrahousehold decision-making or women's influence on crop choices.
- This study fills a literature gap by analysing how women's bargaining power affects farm production structures in Albania.

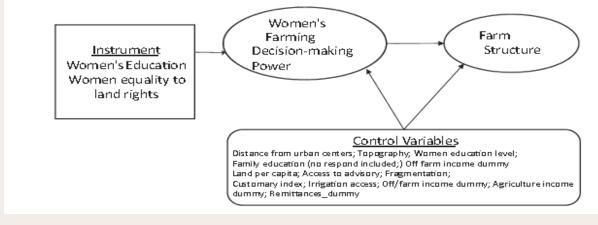
## Methodology

#### Sampling

- Two national rural surveys (2014–2015) focused on women.
- Collected data on farm structure, labour division, property rights, and decision-making.
- Stratified multi-stage sampling across 4 agro-climatic zones (12 sub-zones).
- Sample: 13 communes, 20 villages, 1,167 households (high response rates).
- Random route household selection to ensure diverse female respondents.

## Methodology

#### Objective:



Test the causal effect of women's decision-making power in farming on farm production structure.

#### Theoretical Framework:

- Collective household bargaining model (Quisumbing & Maluccio, 2003).
- Households = individuals with separate preferences; allocation of labor & resources reflects bargaining power.

#### Instrumental Variables (IV):

- Women's education
- Gender-equal land rights

Correlated with women's decision-making power, not directly with farm structure.

#### Two-Stage IV Model:

$$Women\_Dec\_Power_i = \alpha_1 + \theta Women\_Educ_i - \sigma Women_{land_{equal_i}} + \varphi'control_i + u_i$$
 
$$Produc\_Struct_i = \alpha_2 + \beta Women\_Dec\_Power_i + \varphi'control_i + e_i$$

## Variables

Variables	oles Data explanation	
Depended variable		Data type
Dec_Power_Women	Deciding what crops to plant (1.Myself and other women of the household VS 0.0thers)	Binary
Orchard	The ratio between land area cultivated with Orchard to total farm land	Continuous (0 to 1)
Uncultivated	The ratio between Uncultivated land area to total farm land	Continuous (0 to 1)
Forage	The ratio between land area cultivated with Forage to total farm land	Continuous (0 to 1)
Yearly	The ratio between land area cultivated with Yearly crops to total farm land	Continuous (0 to 1)
Independent variable		
Distance_center_drive	Distance in minutes from the main regional urban center	Continuous
Plot level distance walking	Distance in minutes of the plot from the house	Continuous
Topography	Type of topography where the village is positioned (0. Plain; 1. Mountainous; 2. Hilly; 3.Other)	Categorical
Women_educ_years	Women's years of education completed	Continuous
Wome _land_equal	Women feel to have the right to inherit land the same as males do?	Binary
Family education index no respond included	Years of education completed by family members except respondent	Continuous
Off farm women	Women engaged in paid activity	Binary
Land per capita family	Land surface per family member	Continuous
Access to advisory	Accessed agronomist service in the recent 3 years	Binary
Fragmentation	Umber of plots per farm	Continuous
Customary index	Number of plots inherited or taken in other way to total plots	Continuous (0 to 100%)
Irrigation access	Number of plots irrigated to total plots	Continuous (0 to 100%)
Off/farm income dummy	Generate incomes from non-agriculture activities and employment	Binary
Agriculture income dummy	Generate incomes from agriculture activities	Binary
Remittances_dummy	Generate incomes from emigration	Binary

## Descriptive statistics

Nr.	Variable Name (Continuous)	Missing	mean	Sd.
1	Distance_center_walking	40	28.7	31.2
2	Family_educ_index_no_respondetincluded	92	9.11	2.81
3	customary_index	30	21.6	37.1
4	fragmentation	0	3.09	1.55
5	per_plot_irrig	33	0.514	0.424
6	Family_Size_Over6years	0	4.96	1.71
7	Women_educ_years	2	9.47	3.29
8	Yearly_to_total_checked	81	0.261	0.291
9	Forage_to_total_checked	83	0.217	0.277
10	Uncultivated_to_total_checked	82	0.0883	0.221
11	Orchard_to_total_checked	82	0.276	0.315

Nr.	Variable Name (Categorical)	Missing	Categ. 1	Categ. 2	
1	Topographyy	100	304	763	
2	Access_to_advisory	0	820	347	
3	Off_farm_Income	0	497	670	
4	Income_agric_dumy_rev	0	239	928	
5	Remitanc_dumy_rev	0	841	326	
6	women_Dec_power_Dummy	0	954	213	
7	Equal_right_owner	0	230	937	

## Results

	Dependent variable:					
	Dec_Power_Women	n Orchard	Uncultiv	ated F	orage	Yearly
	logistic	IV	IV		IV	IV
	(1)	(2)	(3)		(4)	(5)
Women_educ_years	0.118***					
	(0.031)					
Women_land_equal	0.705**					
	(0.297)					
Distance_center_driving	0.010***	-0.001	0.001**	0.001**		0.001***
	(0.004)	(0.0005)	(0.0003)	(0.0004		0.0004)
Topografy	0.060	0.187***	0.031	-0.080**		0.106***
	(0.234)	(0.031)	(0.019)	(0.028)	(	0.024)
Access_to_advisory	0.430**	0.049	-0.037*	0.044		-0.041
	(0.200)	(0.032)	(0.020)	(0.028)	(	0.025)
Family_educ_index_no_respondetincl uded	-0.087**	0.018***	-0.007**	-0.007	-	-0.005
	(0.034)	(0.005)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(	0.004)
Customary_index	-0.002	-0.002***	-0.001**	0.0002	C	0.001**
	(0.003)	(0.0004)	(0.0002)	(0.0003	) ((	0.0003)
Fragmentation	-0.004	-0.008	0.013**	0.002	-0	0.023***
	(0.063)	(0.008)	(0.005)	(0.007)	(	0.006)
Off_farm_Income	0.105	-0.062**	0.017	0.050**		0.017
	(0.203)	(0.027)	(0.017)	(0.024)	(	0.022)
Income_agric_dumy_rev	0.126	0.074**	-0.085***	0.045	(	0.046*
	(0.257)	(0.032)	(0.020)	(0.029)	(	0.026)
Remitanc_dumy_rev	0.095	0.004	0.035*	-0.022	-	-0.008
	(0.217)	(0.028)	(0.018)	(0.025)	(	0.022)
Irrigation access	-0.013	-0.008	-0.050**	-0.018	О	.114***
	(0.244)	(0.032)	(0.020)	(0.029)	(	0.025)
Family_Size_Over6years	0.007	0.009	-0.014***	-0.008		0.004
	(0.061)	(0.008)	(0.005)	(0.007)	(	0.006)
Women_Dec_power_Dummy(fit)		$0.460^{**}$	-0.259**	-0.399*	ŧ	0.065
		(0.204)	(0.128)	(0.180)	(	0.161)
Constant	-3.263***	-0.282***	0.245***	0.422**	* 0	.458***
	(0.761)	(0.095)	(0.060)	(0.085)	(	0.076)

- Orchards: More common in hilly/mountainous areas; positively influenced by women's decision-making power and household education; negatively influenced by off-farm income.
- Forage: Negatively associated with women's decision-making power and hilly/mountainous terrain. positively influenced by distance to urban centers, advisory services and off-farm income..
- Annual Crops: Not affected by women's decision-making power; positively linked to irrigation; negatively affected by land fragmentation, distance to town, non-plain areas, access to advisory services.
- Uncultivated Land: Negatively related to women's decision-making power and household education; positively linked to fragmentation, irrigation access, and remittance dependence.

## Conclusions

- 1. Empowerment Factors: Education, land equality perceptions, and access to advisory services boost women's farm decision-making.
- 2. Gender Dynamics: Challenging stereotypes and considering male perspectives is key to shifting family power structures.
- 3. Farming Choices: Women prefer perennial crops over labor-intensive livestock due to limited time and energy.
- 4. Implication: Women's resources and household responsibilities shape farm structure and agricultural engagement.
- 5. Future Research: Qualitative and case study approaches can explore evolving gender roles and farming strategies in rural transition contexts.

## Limitations

- The study examines farm planting structures, not the actual crop decisions made separately by women and men.
- Prevents identifying how men may support or constrain women's decision-making power.
- The study has limitations given the lack of data on gender composition in the family
- Moreover, the results are based on farm level data, while plot level data are aggregated.
- Last but not least the study does not cover the historical patterns of farming decisions, which might have a logical influence on current decisions.
- Good example: Tamang, S., Paudel, K. P., & Shrestha, K. K. (2014). Feminization of agriculture and its implications for food security in rural Nepal. *Journal of Forest and Livelihood*, *12*(1), 13-13.
  - Observed crop choices made independently by women and those made previously by men before before exit agriculture.
  - Intergenerational differences

## Further topics

- Male Perspectives & Gender Dynamics: Limited evidence on how men perceive, resist, or adapt to shifting gender roles.
- Longitudinal & Intergenerational Change: Little understanding of how empowerment evolves across generations, especially younger vs. older rural women.
- Marketized Value Chains: Unclear whether commercialisation increases women's bargaining power or reinforces replaceability in fragmented tasks.
- Digitalization: Digital tools are reshaping agriculture, but their gendered empowerment effects are still largely undocumented.
- Psychological Empowerment: Need to examine how trauma, conflict, and displacement affect agency (see also Ibrahim, Bavorova & Zhllima, 2024).
- Beyond Traditional Indexes: Need for relational, psychological, collective, and domain-specific empowerment metrics.

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## Thank you

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