


# The social reproduction of agrarian change: Feminist political economy and rural transformations in the global south. An introduction

Alessandra Mezzadri<sup>1</sup>  | Sara Stevano<sup>2</sup>  | Lyn Ossome<sup>3</sup>  |  
Hannah Bargawi<sup>2</sup> 

<sup>1</sup>SOAS Development Studies, London, UK

<sup>2</sup>SOAS Economics, London, UK

<sup>3</sup>MISR, Makerere Institute of Social Research,  
Kampala, Uganda

## Correspondence

Alessandra Mezzadri, SOAS Development  
Studies, London, UK.

Email: [am99@soas.ac.uk](mailto:am99@soas.ac.uk)

This article is part of the Special Issue: The  
Social Reproduction of Agrarian Change:  
Feminist Political Economy and Rural  
Transformations in the Global South.

## Abstract

The last decade has seen a renaissance of feminist political economy studies centred on the concept of ‘social reproduction’. These aim at studying global capitalism from the vantage-point of what produces and sustains life, expanding the social boundaries of processes and subjects analysed in political economy. Contributing to this research agenda, the special issue we present in this Introduction explores the Social Reproduction of Agrarian Change. Building on the contributions comprising this collection, we argue that the study of agrarian change *through* social reproduction enables us to de-invisibilise processes of life-making behind agrarian transformations in three distinct ways. First, the lens of social reproduction enables us to better grasp the regeneration of ‘classes of labour’ in rural areas; gender processes of de-agrarianisation and their implications for livelihoods; and centre reproductive labour within and beyond the household - across spaces and temporalities - as central to life in the countryside. Secondly, this lens also allows us to complicate the land question beyond productivist readings, explore its significance for life in rural settings, and multiply the agrarian questions of our times,

This is an open access article under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) License, which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

© 2024 The Author(s). *Journal of Agrarian Change* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

whose histories and trajectories must grapple with debates on economic justice. Finally, the study of the social reproduction of agrarian change also provides us with a novel vantage point to read the formation and reorganisation of complex global geographies of the rural, their relation to crises of social reproduction and the ability to redraw the urban–rural divide. All contributions in this issue insightfully advance debates on methods in social reproduction analysis. The study of the agrarian lifeworlds analysed here also contributes significantly to social reproduction debates. It challenges rigid dichotomies between the ‘productive’ and ‘reproductive’. It problematises the households as a unit of analysis and sets land as central to planetary debates on crises of social reproduction and their resolution.

## 1 | THIS PROJECT: AGRARIAN CHANGE AND ITS SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

The special issue we present in this *Introduction* is the result of years of intellectual exchange between the members of this guest editorial team and of the editorial team of the *Journal of Agrarian Change* – an exciting conversation particularly nurtured by Bridget O’Laughlin and then supported by Carla Gras and Jens Lerche, in particular. We are profoundly grateful for these exchanges as they took us on a challenging, insightful and rewarding intellectual journey. We are thrilled to finally present our work to the readers.

The issue aims to illustrate how the lens of social reproduction – in its varied approaches and theorisations – can significantly contribute to the study of agrarian change. The early gestation of this project took place during the difficult years of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic and its socio-economic consequences powerfully exposed the centrality of social reproduction for the whole functioning of global capitalism, everywhere (Mezzadri, 2020a, 2020b; Stevano et al., 2021). Social reproduction theorisations have unveiled the role that gendered unpaid domestic labour plays in sustaining capitalism (Dalla Costa & James, 1972; Federici, 2012, chapter written in 1975; Fortunati, 1981; Hensman, 1977; Luxton, 1980; Mies, 1986). They have highlighted how neoliberalism first and foremost restructured the institutions and architecture of care and welfare provision, leading to a ‘crisis of reproduction’ (Bakker, 2007; Bakker & Gill, 2003, 2019; Fraser, 2017), which the pandemic further amplified (e.g., Rao, 2021; The Marxist Feminist Collective, 2020). They have illustrated how social oppression is co-constitutive of, rather than epiphenomenal to, processes of class formation (Bannerji, 2005, 2011; Bhattacharya, 2017; Federici, 2004). Notwithstanding their differences in approach and objectives (Mezzadri, 2022; Winders & Smith, 2019), these theorisations have re-energised earlier feminist debates on the role of the household and features of gendered and racial oppression under capitalism (e.g., Davis, 1981; Holborow, 2024; Mies, 1982). They are reframing and extending debates on exploitation and value (compare Cammack, 2020; Ferguson, 2019; Mezzadri, 2019, 2020b), on racialisation (Bhattacharyya, 2018; Glenn, 2010) and on linkages between exploitation, oppression and nature (e.g. Barca, 2020; Moore, 2015), also in contexts of rising social mobilisations against patriarchy, colonialism, racism, environmental destruction (Gago, 2018) and/or debt (Caballero & Gago, 2021).

Within this renaissance of social reproduction studies, the members of this guest editorial team already noted a relative bias towards the Global North, an issue eventually tempered by a rising number of analyses focused on the

majority world (e.g., Bargawi et al., 2022; Mezzadri et al., 2022; Naidu, 2023; Ossome, 2021; Stevano et al., 2021). In fact, this has been compounded by a certain 'urban bias' in the geographical focus of the analyses centred on social reproduction. Indeed, if the lens of social reproduction provides exciting new avenues to reclaim a more inclusive history of capitalism as a whole, it must also offer a chance to review key debates in the political economy of agrarian change. A growing set of studies grappling with 'decolonising' and decentring social reproduction approaches by focusing on the Global South and/or informal work have also focused on agrarian systems (e.g., Baglioni, 2022; Cousins et al., 2018; Fernandez, 2018; Hornby & Cousins, 2019; Rao & Ramnarain, 2023; Stevano, 2019). Others have highlighted the embeddedness of agrarian labour regimes in 'reproduction zones' (e.g., Pattenden, 2018) or, more recently, their interconnections with varied forms of racial capitalism (Dieng, 2024). Yet, overall, more work is needed to systematically place social reproduction theorisations in conversation with studies analysing capitalist development, as well as forms of resistance to it, within agrarian settings of the Global South.

Contributing to this agenda, this Special Issue deploys a social reproduction lens to engage with theories, debates and empirical studies in the political economy of agrarian change. The political economy of agrarian change has already incorporated gendered perspectives and considered the differential impact of rural transformations on men and women (e.g., Agarwal, 2003; Carney & Watts, 1991; Deere, 1976, 1995; Jacobs, 2009, 2014; Mackintosh, 1984, 1989; Rao, 2006; Razavi, 2003, 2009; Tsikata, 2016; Tsikata et al., 2024; Whitehead, 1981). Building on these critical insights, the deployment of a social reproduction lens offers a complex theoretical and methodological toolkit that illuminates how different forms of inequality, including race, ethnicity, caste, class and gender, articulate to shape agrarian outcomes. It places at its centre the inter-linkages and dynamics between processes of capitalist production and those involved in the regeneration of life (Katz, 2001; Winders & Smith, 2019). The latter include the reproduction of labour and the environment as they work for and struggle against capital. A social reproduction lens emphasises the inherent conflict between forces of production and 'forces of reproduction' (Barca, 2020), as labour in its racialised, gendered forms struggle to transform and/or build autonomies from the capital. In agrarian settings, this perspective may help overcome productivist biases and lead to a more systemic incorporation of feminist perspectives and methods in the study of agrarian change and rural life.

At the same time, building on a long-standing historical trajectory of analyses of capitalist transitions, class differentiation, livelihoods and subsistence dynamics within the Global South, the political economy of agrarian change has the potential to further highlight global relations of social re/production and enrich the social reproduction gaze beyond its urban and industrial horizon. Avoiding essentialist notions of the peasantry, critical agrarian political economy traditionally emphasises processes and projects of class-making and rural differentiation in the countryside and explores how these articulate with family farming and greatly diverse multisectoral and multilocal livelihoods, including agricultural cooperatives and social movements of resistance to the capitalist transformation of agrarian life (Bernstein & Byres, 2001; McMichael, 2008; O'Laughlin, 2002). It is rooted in a rich intellectual tradition of painstaking deconstruction of social relations of production in capitalism and the manifold ways they manifest in agrarian settings dominated by petty commodity producers (PCP), often polarised in 'classes of capital' and 'classes of labour' (Banaji, 2010; Bernstein, 2007, 2010; Harriss-White, 2014).

Notably, in pursuing this tradition and agenda, the Special Issue builds on the many contributions of scholars of agrarian change who have directly and indirectly explored the centrality of reproduction to understanding accumulation and/or class formation (e.g. Bennholdt-Thomsen, 1982; Chari, 2004; Cousins et al., 2018; Moyo et al., 2013; Moyo & Yeros, 2005; O'Laughlin, 1996; Sender & Smith, 1990; Sharma, 1985; Shivji, 2017); access to land and processes of proletarianisation in the Global South (Ossome & Naidu, 2021a, 2021b); the industrialisation myth and new agrarian questions (e.g. Moyo et al., 2013); trans-local processes including labour circulation and the outcomes of rural industrialisation (e.g. Hart, 2002; Shah & Lerche, 2020); and the relation between production, reproduction and health (e.g. O'Laughlin, 2013). Moreover, it also builds on the excellent work of agrarian political economists on the centrality of the household and care provisioning in processes of agrarian transformation (e.g. Razavi, 2009).

This Special Issue explores different aspects of the social reproduction of agrarian change and its complex political economy, politics, contradictions and contestations, by examining 12 rich case studies from the Global South, covering geographical contexts ranging from Asia to Latin America and Africa. Through situated analyses of significant empirical breadth and depth, as typical of the political economy of agrarian change intellectual tradition, the articles focus on either historical or contemporary processes of agrarian change and the role social reproduction played/plays in them. Within these broad regions, the articles cover Turkey (Çelik), Uzbekistan (Lombardozi) and the Soviet Union (Lyubchenko) in Central Asia/Eastern Europe; the Syria-Lebanon border (Sajadian) in the Middle East; India (Rao et al; Chakravarty and Sharma) and Pakistan (Khan) in South Asia; China (Liu) and Cambodia (Joshi) in East Asia; Ecuador and Chile (Raynolds and Ipsen) in Latin America; and South Africa (Yeni; Bunce et al) in Africa.

Whilst all analyses featured here show the relevance of integrating social reproduction in the study of agrarian change, and how the analysis of 'the agrarian' provides new avenues for social reproduction research, theory and politics, they also contribute distinctively to different theoretical, methodological, empirical and political debates in agrarian studies, their gendered political economy, and interplays with socially reproductive processes and outcomes. Altogether, the three sections below present the analytical syntheses of each article in this special issue, whilst selectively interweaving them together based on the contributions they distinctively make to the development of a feminist political economy of agrarian change centred on social reproduction. Crucially, the organisation proposed below shall be only read as one possible helpful compass and compare the greatly diverse analyses composing this Special Issue. Each analysis does so much more than what we can capture in this Introduction – and shall be read in its unique contribution to the literature on agrarian change and social reproduction.

## 2 | AGRARIAN CLASSES, HOUSEHOLDS AND LABOUR READ THROUGH SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

The articles composing this collection contribute differently to the exploration of the social reproduction of agrarian change and its feminist political economy. The first set of articles explores the reproductive contours and/or implications of rural transformations and processes of socio-economic differentiation of the countryside, also considering dispossession and redistribution, de-agrarianisation and the emergence of new employment opportunities in rural areas. These processes, and their impact on greatly diverse 'classes of labour' (Bernstein, 2007, 2010) and petty commodity producers (PCP) (Harriss-White, 2014; Kesar et al., 2022) have always represented a crucial theme in critical agrarian and peasant studies and are widely discussed in this journal. The articles featured here build on this literature, whilst integrating it with a social reproduction lens, with the objective of exposing the interplays between productive and reproductive dynamics at work in these processes of transformation.

Opening this collection, and focusing on the Soma Coal Basin, Wester Anatolia, Coşku Çelik's article explores the impact of neoliberal transformations in rural Turkey, involving both the dispossession and proletarianisation of small-scale farmers caused by the rise in mega-investment in natural resource industries. Combining critical agrarian studies and early social reproduction feminism, the article shows that rural change and proletarianisation in rural extractive regions are gendered and structured around 'housewifization' (Mies, 1986), with women taking on key roles in the production and social reproduction of novel 'classes of extractive labour'. In line with other noteworthy recent analyses (e.g., Benya, 2015), the narrative fights dominant representations of women as 'shadowy figures' in extractive communities and reveals instead the productive and reproductive centrality of 'miners' wives' as 'last guarantors of survival' for communities exposed to 'accumulation by dispossession' (Harvey, 2004). Women guarantee survival by becoming part of a new feminised class of labour of precarious tobacco farmers whilst sustaining the regeneration of the mining household via unpaid work, a reproductive 'squeezing' arrangement that is highly re/productive for capital.

Set in Uzbekistan, also Lorena Lombardozi's analysis contributes to debates on class differentiation in rural settings, this time by using food systems as a social reproduction lens to explore agrarian change. The text examines the reproduction 'of and through' food among four classes of Uzbek farmers and farmworkers. Reading food systems as constituent elements of the social reproduction of life, Lombardozi's analysis explores inequality between classes of *farmers* and *dekhans* as shaped by patterns of food production, access and consumption. In her account, food becomes a magnifying lens through, which examining class-based struggles for social reproduction. As already touched upon in Çelik's work, Lombardozi discusses the role of the state in mediating reproductive outcomes – in this case, the differentiation of dietary patterns of different classes of farmers. The analysis highlights tensions between global food systems' dynamics and Uzbekistan's state-led development commitments towards the social reproduction of rural life. This contribution can be read as part of a renaissance of feminist studies on food systems and regimes centring on social reproduction (e.g., Lombardozi, 2022; Stevano, 2021, 2024).

The exploration of work and social reproduction in rural India carried out by Smriti Rao, Smita Ramnarain, Sirisha Naidu, Anupama Uppal and Avanti Mukherjee is yet another contribution to the literature on rural class and labour differentiation, from a feminist political economy methodological standpoint. Committed to the development of more inclusive understandings of intersections of gender, class and caste shaping work in India, the authors propose a framework based on four analytical dyads: waged productive labour, non-waged productive labour, waged reproductive labour and non-waged reproductive labour. According to the narrative, different configurations of these dyads – which are not fixed categories but rather overlapping, overflowing and intersectionally articulated along class, caste and gender lines – contribute to the constructions of different 'zones of reproduction/labour control regimes' across the Global South (Baglioni & Mezzadri, 2020; Pattenden, 2020). The analysis celebrates the purchase of small-scale time-use surveys for analyses of social reproduction and work, a point to which we will come back in section 5 on methods.

Finally, also contributing to several feminist and/or agrarian debates (including Elson, 1998; Jacka, 2018; Razavi, 2009), Liu's article explores how processes of social reproduction within the rural family evolved in China since 1949. It shows how the systematic externalisation of reproductive costs to rural households played out across three generations in China, always allowing both the state and the market to draw on gendered unpaid labour to sustain economic transformations. Crucially, the analysis captures the intergenerational role played by feminised unpaid reproductive work in China's process of modernisation in *both* the planned economy and market reform eras. The multi-generational study of rural families and their gendered work patterns highlights four interrelated processes perpetuating the exploitation of women's unpaid labour in China; namely, the cultural legacy of the Confucian family; the lack of state policies challenging gendered ideologies across *all* development eras, including the Maoist one; the constituting power of gendered ideologies in shaping economic processes, including migration patterns (see Pun, 2005); and finally, the constant internalisation of all crisis of care by women within rural households, in a context of lack of commodification of reproductive work.

Through diverse, combined analytical prisms accounting for both critical agrarian studies and social reproduction theorisations, the four articles centre households' and/or gendered dynamics as crucially paving *all* processes of class differentiations and rural transformations. They emerge as constituting the regeneration of varied 'classes of labour'; impacting the shifts towards different agrarian lifeworlds; and mediating the outcomes of varied policy and political regimes. Land – as connected to proletarianisation, dispossession or property regimes – is always, obviously, a key element in the analyses examined thus far. Yet, it is even more central to the contributions we turn our attention to in the section below.

### 3 | LAND, ACCUMULATION, SURPLUS LIFE AND STRUGGLES AS/OF SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

The land question and the politics of land have been central topics in critical agrarian studies, with land reforms being a key element of post-independence governments and thus central to state as well as class formation (Fautras & Iocco, 2019). Demand for land in the agrarian south is a direct response to colonial dispossession and in many countries, competition over land has only intensified in the late twentieth century, leading to rising land values, increasingly commercialised patterns of land acquisition, concentration of land holdings, prolonged litigation and violence (Berry, 2002). At the same time, historical responses to the land question have tended towards land reform, control of land and change in ownership. These calls are seriously undermined in contemporary times by land grabs driven by financialisation of capital and the deepening impact of ecological factors on access to viable land – shifts that bear implications for the classical agrarian question of capital and labour as understood in agrarian political economy (Oya, 2013).

The agrarian question of capital described in broad terms as ‘the continuing existence in the countryside of a poor country of substantive obstacles to unleashing of the forces capable of generating economic development, both inside and outside agriculture’ (Byers, 2012, cited in Oya, 2013: 1547), produces a problematic that generally undermines social reproduction. The gradual generalisation of wage labour as a way of survival and the gradual separation of workers from their means of production, especially land, through the process of primitive accumulation (ibid) at the same time raises an agrarian question of gendered labour that has not yet received sufficient attention in the literature. The livelihood and societal transformations that occur as a result of these changes continue to constitute a core basis of social and political demands for land and agrarian reforms.

In the agrarian south, claims over land – including, in a context like Southern Africa, land reforms driven by demands for redistribution – remain central to the project of national liberation and decolonisation. The literature distinguishes between classical and contemporary agrarian questions, the latter including regional integration, ecological issues and gender equity (Moyo et al., 2013). Gender inequality emerges as a key prism of an agrarian question that links land to social reproduction through exploitative regimes of gendered labour and the imperative for survival (Naidu & Ossome, 2016; Ossome & Naidu, 2021a), and by a unitary capitalist social division of labour that is shaped by the interdependence of contradictions of class with those of gender and race (O’Laughlin, 2021: 5). Recent theorisations also link the relevance of land to the problem which surplus populations raise in relation to their survival and reproduction (Ossome, forthcoming; Yeni, in this issue).

Different aspects of the land question dominate the contributions by Bunce et al, Lyubchenko, Yeni and Joshi. These articles engage with varied reproductive aspects and readings of shifts in land regimes, accumulation, land dispossession and repossession and its connection to surplus life. They also interrogate the centrality of land in relation to the formation of moral economies of resistance and gendered forms of political contestation.

Mobilising a significant number of sources on social and societal reproduction (e.g., Federici, 2004; Fraser, 2017), the analysis by Brittany Bunce, Donna Hornby and Ben Cousins on South Africa showcases the benefits of exploring agrarian dynamics via feminist lenses to unpack the tensions shaping livelihoods of fragmented classes of labour during rural transformations in land regimes. The article unveils the contradictory dynamics of production and social reproduction in collectively-owned agricultural enterprises, emerging as a consequence of the redistributive land reform and shift to cooperative agricultural enterprises in KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape Provinces. It reveals the fundamental contradiction between the social reproduction of households’ members - with their social networks, including kinship-based ones - and the requirements of simple or expanded reproduction of the collective agricultural enterprise. The analysis contributes to Bernstein’s (2010) theorisation of competing ‘reproduction funds’ - consumption, replacement, ceremonial and rent - as crucial to regenerate livelihoods in the countryside and highlights trade-offs fracturing the ‘social reproduction fund’. Land reform policy should consider how to address these trade-offs to avoid failures of collective land reform enterprises, due to a misalignment between households and collective enterprises’ reproductive needs.

Proposing a rich social reproduction analysis of what she calls as primitive Soviet accumulation and placing the Soviet experience of industrialisation in dialogue with contemporary debates, Olena Lyubchenko's article focuses on *Zhenotdel's* (autonomous Women's Sections of the Communist Party) involvement in collectivisation as part of the Soviet Union's push for rapid industrialisation in the 1920 to 1930s. As already Bunce et al also show, this analysis – albeit historical rather than contemporary – highlights the contradictions and tensions between social reproduction and societal transformations in land regimes and property rights, in this case at the dawn of the Bolshevik's Revolution. The narrative shows that women opposed collectivisation based on gendered imperatives of social reproduction rather than on the internalisation of pre-revolution patriarchal norms. The Soviet revolutionary women's movement, Lyubchenko argues, developed their own attempt to theorise social reproduction and conceive alternative social policies on land. The article highlights how the lens of social reproduction – mostly in its declination as social reproduction theory (SRT) here but also in conversation with Federici's (2004) groundbreaking feminist analysis of primitive accumulation – allows for the simultaneous recognition of the violence inherent in primitive Soviet accumulation and the radical redistribution it enabled. This took place via the accelerated transfer of agrarian surplus onto the expanded social reproduction sphere of the state apparatus, where it financed a vast reproductive infrastructure. The analysis concludes that the socialisation of social reproduction outside wage relations eventually laid the groundwork for the development of the Soviet 'mother-worker' gender contract in the post-Second World War era.

After this enriching detour in history and time, the article by Sithandiwe Yeni takes us back to South Africa to explore the land question as central to the regeneration of the 'landed surplus population'. Analysing the case of Mhlopheni former labour tenants who were able to reclaim land after eviction, Yeni makes a case for land redistribution to be assessed based on its central role in social reproduction (see Ossome & Naidu, 2021b), rather than only productivity. In building a case de facto arguing for *land for social reproduction*, Yeni highlights the interrelated nature of three processes; namely, the importance of redistribution to the dispossessed; the socially embedded nature of tenure arrangements mediating outcomes; and the role of unpaid gendered labour within the household, largely performed by women, to sustain life. Once Mhlopheni formerly evicted labour tenants turn into a landed relative surplus population, the article shows, they are able to reproduce themselves better, thanks to the interconnected processes mentioned above. Ultimately, Yeni suggests (see also Nkosi, 2023), that the land question should not be merely examined via productivist lenses, given its key role in mitigating the rural crises of social reproduction in the Global South, and its connection to social justice claims.

Indeed, social justice claims for land and the role of land for social reproduction are also main objects of enquiry in Saba Joshi's exploration of 'gendered moral economies of resistance' against land grabs in rural Cambodia. Interrogating Scott's (1977) moral economies through the lens of social reproduction, the article analyses land activists' resistance against violent processes of state-led dispossession. The analysis focuses particularly on women who have become prominent activists in their communities. It shows how they construct moral claims over land based on histories of settlement and gendered/reproductive work, yet also strategically invoking norms of reciprocity based on patron-client relations as a sort of historical expression of a moral order of the countryside. Resistance, in these contexts, is not merely embedded in 'traditional' beliefs; rather these beliefs are strategically invoked for struggles centring the social reproduction of the peasant household. Notably, through this contribution, debates on social reproduction in/and agrarian contexts are also powerfully reconnected to socialist ecofeminist analyses (including by Barca, 2020), and in conversation with other feminist studies of land grabs (like by Gironde et al., 2021 or Dieng, 2022).

Overall, all four contributions grouped in this section set land as crucial to processes of life-making (Bhattacharya, 2017) and social reproduction, whilst also exploring how the varied imperatives of social reproduction shape people's engagement with land-centred processes. In examining land tenure and property rights transformations (Bunce et al); contestation against state-led dispossession, and redistribution via collectivisation (Lyubchenko); reappropriation and subsistence (Yeni); and resistance against expropriation (Joshi) all articles explore, as noted by Joshi, what Borrás et al. (2022) call 'the strategic location of land' as a simultaneous means of production and social

reproduction. The last set of articles, instead, move the boundaries of 'the agrarian' to study complex multi-spatial and/or global geographies challenging classic boundaries between the urban and the rural, land and sea, the labouring and surplus population.

## 4 | THE GLOBAL GEOGRAPHIES REPRODUCING AGRARIAN LIFEWORLDS

Each in its own distinctive way, the last set of contributions illustrates the purchase of social reproduction theorisations in capturing the working mechanisms of varied global rural geographies regenerating increasingly complex agrarian lifeworlds. In fact, a social reproduction lens proves helpful indeed in either integrating already existing studies of global agro-food chains and labour regimes (e.g., Baglioni, 2022; Stevano, 2023), or mapping novel global or regional geographies of agrarian life whereby the very boundaries of 'the agrarian' or 'the rural' are fraught, contested and redrawn, and which sustain life-making for particularly vulnerable sets of liminal and/or marginal workers.

Contributing to debates on the reproductive aspects of global commodity networks shaped by agro-food production, the article by Laura Reynolds and Annabel Ipsen explores the reshaping of systems of social and labour protection in feminised export-oriented agriculture in Chile and Ecuador, as triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic. In both countries, the pandemic significantly reduced women's employment opportunities in the flower and fruit sectors, whilst increasing the extraction of their unpaid labour and exposure to gendered violence an issue also highlighted by other feminist theorisations centred on Latin America (e.g., Caballero & Gago, 2021). Yet, the significantly different government responses to the pandemic entailed a growing repressive stance in Ecuador - and one undermining the already fragile commitment to social democratic gendered equality - against a strengthening of social democratic support for gender and class equality in Chile. Highlighting the interconnections between gender and labour regimes in both countries (see also Baglioni & Mezzadri, 2020), and their relation to state practice, the article shows that the crisis of social reproduction (Fraser, 2017) caused by the neglect of social reproductive costs is currently undermining the neoliberal feminised model of agro-export production in both contexts.

In her ethnographically rich account of commercial agricultural production at the Lebanese-Syrian border, China Sajadian explores the gendered economy of debt among Syrian farmworkers living in *shawish* camps whilst sustaining food systems in Lebanon through their labour. The article analyses how debt relations in camps reconfigure both gendered and generational divisions of labour among the displaced families and intensify the burdens of feminised work both in the fields and in the home. In Sajadian's analysis, debt once again emerges as a key feminist concern, mediating both patterns of paid and unpaid work as well the rhythms and temporalities of socio-economic life (see also Mezzadri & Majumder, 2022). The article contributes to a rising literature on 'the sexual division of debt' across agrarian worlds (i.e., Guerin et al., 2023), which illustrates how women are disproportionately affected by indebtedness, in ways which impact both their experiences of paid employment and their unpaid reproductive burden and conjugal and community obligations. Like other systems of debt-bondage across the world, the camp system examined in this article is structured around maximising the flexibility and extraction of feminised labour along the production-reproduction continuum. Arguably, the incorporation of *shawish* camps into the broader political economy of food production in Lebanon sets gendered indebtedness and the feminised working poverty it shapes in agrarian settings as central to various social and societal reproduction processes at multiple levels and scales.

To an extent, also the article by Danish Khan examines the making and remaking of a border/frontier and its economy; not a national one, but that constituting and reshaping the 'agrarian-urban frontier' (Akhtar & Rashid, 2021) and changing the landscape and meaning of 'the agrarian' and its perimeters in Pakistani Punjab. Building on feminist political economy analyses stressing the value-generating role of social reproduction (Mezzadri, 2021) and the intersectional aspects of exploitation (Folbre, 2020, 2021), Khan argues that the agrarian-urban frontier in Punjab constitutes a key yet under-theorised site of value extraction, based on the swift conversion



of agricultural land into commercial real estate and the organisation of the latter into gated housing communities in need of paid reproductive services. If the commercialisation of land into real estate precipitates the devalorisation of small-farm work, at the same time the rise in gated housing enclaves enables the extraction of gendered surplus labour from a rising 'class of labour' of domestic workers. In this case, the devalorisation of agrarian livelihoods and the exploitation of women's work are two processes reinforcing each other, in the context of the changing spatiality, meaning and economy of an increasingly urbanised countryside. In fact, as farmers' communities lose their means of survival through the process of devalorisation of land for agricultural purposes and its revalorisation as real estate business, women are forced to turn into paid domestic labour at cheaper rates, given the lack of alternative opportunities. Their exploitation is intersectionally driven by their gender, class and provenance, whilst shaped by the process of valorisation taking place at the agrarian-urban frontier.

Finally, in their study of central and eastern Indian Adivasi communities migrating to work in the marine fishing industry of the coastal state of Goa, Siddharth Chakravarty and Ishita Sharma analyse a 'terraqueous territoriality' (Campling & Colas, 2021), where life, migration and labour circulation cut across state borders and take place across land and sea. The analysis reveals yet another complex and novel regional agrarian geography of production and community-based social reproduction, whereby socio-economic and life-making processes at work in the forest and in the Ocean interplay and interact. For the Adivasi communities concerned, the process of migration exists both as a form of oppression and a space of opportunity, simultaneously (Yadav, 2020), a point which reinforces the need to study oppression and exploitation of specific marginalised workers interterritorially and across 'non-hegemonic configurations' centring people's journeys. The article also makes an important link between ecological appropriation and social oppression - in this case, caste. This agenda, the authors argue, may enable an analysis of people's struggles accounting for the experience of those whose exploitation takes place in more hidden ways, and promote solidarities across communities and regions (see also Mezzadri, 2019). Notably, this analysis also contributes, like several others here, to debates around labour and labour control regimes (Baglioni et al., 2021).

Across all contributions analysed in this section, 'the agrarian' is represented as a contested space redesigned and reorganised by multiple processes challenging 'old' forms of agrarian life and/or where agricultural processes take place across expanded and flexible geographies of production and social reproduction, connecting states, regions, communities and even land and seas. As we learn about the processes of mobility, immobility, labour, circulation and extraction characterising these flexible agrarian spatial formations and life within them, we challenge the boundaries of classic questions of agrarian studies, and we move towards a further multiplication of agrarian questions, of capital (Oya, 2013) of labour (Bernstein, 2006), of national questions (Moyo et al., 2013), but also of gendered labour (Ossome & Naidu, 2021b), and of life and survival (Shattuck et al., 2023). Notably, this broadening of the horizon in agrarian studies to include the reproductive terrain and its gendered dynamics also contributes significantly to social reproduction theorisations and methods. The next section explores the methodological insights emerging from the contributions, whilst the concluding section reflects on how the study of 'the agrarian', whilst benefitting tremendously from social reproduction readings, in turn greatly contributes to social reproduction key debates.

## 5 | METHODS AND UNITS OF ANALYSIS TO EXPLORE THE SOCIAL REPRODUCTION OF AGRARIAN CHANGE

The study of agrarian change has extensively documented how the processes of transformation of rural life entail complexity, differentiation and a multiplicity of actors, and therefore require methodologies equipped to capture and document compounded realities (Borras, 2009). From a Marxist perspective, agrarian political economy has applied concepts and methods derived from Marx to analyse capitalist development in the agrarian South, confronting itself with how the method of historical materialism and class analysis can be operationalised to understand contemporary agrarian realities in different contexts (e.g., Bernstein, 2021; Bunce, 2023; Campling & Lerche, 2016;

Mtero et al., 2021; Selwyn, 2021). Thus, deep engagement with the field (see Mezzadri, 2021), as a site where theory becomes concrete but is also interrogated and adapted, has come to characterise methodological approaches in the Marxist political economy of agrarian change. In this sense, social reproduction approaches are an ideal companion as they are motivated by similar engagement with theory and context-specific empirical research. As it may be already evident from the mapping offered above, the collection of papers in this Special Issue is a precise illustration of the theoretically grounded and empirically-rich character of social reproduction research with a focus on the (agrarian) Global South – a trait that has already emerged in other feminist research on work and social reproduction (see Mezzadri et al., 2022).

A first cross-cutting feature of the papers in this Special Issue is the use of case studies and context-specific empirical research to build or inform theory. Beyond providing detailed accounts of the social reproduction of agrarian change in a specific case and/or context, the papers are clearly motivated by a theoretical aim. For instance, Joshi explicitly invokes a grounded theory approach (see Strauss & Corbin, 1997), where the study of land dispossession and resistance to it in rural Cambodia will provide the basis to develop a richer theorisation of moral economies from a feminist social reproduction lens. By studying the conversion of farmland into gated housing enclaves in Punjab, Pakistan, Khan extends the conceptualisation of the agrarian-urban frontier. Even when the theoretical motivation is not accompanied by a specific research design, the papers question concepts and categories, ultimately contributing to an expansion of the theorisation of social reproduction. For instance, Rao et al. introduce four analytical dyads (waged productive, non-waged productive, wage reproductive and non-waged reproductive) to expand the conceptualisation of work. Through her study in the Mhlopheni community in rural South Africa, Yeni concludes that social reproduction depends on land redistribution, socially embedded tenure arrangements and gendered unpaid labour within households. In the process of questioning and extending concepts, some authors develop novel concepts that enrich both the social reproduction and agrarian change research agendas. An example is provided by Sajadian's elaboration of the concept of 'reproductive binds' to describe 'the daily processes through which the burdens and affordances of debt are redistributed and negotiated among kin, down to the most minute scale of the gendered body' (p. 4).

The exercise of using context-specific evidence, not least from various and different contexts in the Global South, to conceptualise and theorise is central to any attempt to decentre, decolonise and pluralise social reproduction – a direction that social reproduction research is moving towards but that still requires much thinking (see Mezzadri et al., [forthcoming](#)). Further, the use of primary data to unpack, question and reverse certain accepted categories is a core dimension of the feminist project, especially in disciplines that are typically more reliant on secondary data (Berik, 1997). It frees multi-faceted and complex realities from the straight-jacket of pre-imposed categories and, in doing so, it also gives voice to the experiences of the marginalised, a point also made in Liu's ethnographic study of intergenerational social reproduction in China. Fundamentally, it allows for a nuanced understanding of capitalism, including through the study of acts of resistance to it (e.g., movements against land dispossession, Joshi and agricultural cooperatives, Bunce et al. and Yeni) and in historical socialist contexts (Soviet Union, Lyubchenko) or transitioning from a planned economy to a market economy (e.g., China, Liu).

It is in fact fundamental that the theoretical aim is accompanied not only by empirical research but also by deep engagement with the studied context, or the field. The papers in this Special Issue do so in three main ways: i) by combining multiple, predominantly but not exclusively, qualitative methods for primary data collection; ii) by choosing long-term engagement with the field and iii) by engaging with secondary sources on the studied context, privileging a historical approach. In terms of methods for primary data collection, while qualitative interviews of various sorts (especially individual semi-structured interviews) are used in the majority of the papers, life history interviews appear to serve a specific purpose to obtain a longitudinal (Bunce et al, Sajadian) or intergenerational (Liu) understanding of social reproduction in agrarian life. Bunce et al. explain how the combination of intensive methods (to reach depth) and extensive methods (for coverage) is supported by the epistemological underpinnings of critical realism, which indicate that iterative processes of data collection, as well as triangulation, are needed to connect observed phenomena with underlying causes (see Downward & Mearman, 2007). Some authors use surveys to

collect data (Bunce et al; Lombardozi; Yeni; Rao et al.), which differ substantially from the large-scale ones in that they are developed to specifically fit the context. In this respect, Rao et al. develop their own time-use survey, focused on a village, and used it in combination with non-participant observation and open-ended questions to understand the everyday reality of social reproduction labour. A small-scale survey, in combination with qualitative methods, also helps Lombardozi identify key limitations in standardised measurements of food security and dietary diversity.

Long-term engagement with the field through either long ethnographic research or multiple visits over time signals the centrality of deeply understanding the context, in the present, over time and historically. The social reproduction of agrarian change inherently refers to a process and therefore requires methodologies that are suitable to capture process and transformation over time. The authors in this Special Issue do so through i) multiple visits to the field (Joshi, Lombardozi, Liu) and combining remote and in-person interviews at different times (Yeni, Çelik); ii) triangulating relief work on social media platforms with spatial mapping and field-visits to collect data on hard-to-reach populations like vulnerable migrants (Chakravarty and Sharma); iii) long-term ethnography entailing participant observation (Sajadian) and iv) engaging with literature or archival resources documenting the history of the context (all papers, with that by Lyubchenko standing out for archival work on Soviet magazines and stenographic reports of Party congresses). Such approaches offer the benefit of connecting broader processes of structural change with everyday realities and shedding light on intergenerational practices of social reproduction.

The last methodological issue we want to highlight pertains to units of analysis. Almost all papers engage, in one way or another, with the household as a unit of analysis or site of interest from a social reproduction perspective. The household has been recognised as a central location of gendered unpaid labour in the literature on gendered agrarian political economy (e.g., Razavi, 2009). Crucially, however, the articles in this Special Issue treat the household as a unit embedded in a wider socio-economic context and interacting with other sites of social reproduction. For instance, in rural South Africa, Bunce et al. look at the household alongside the continuing relevance of kinships and lineages and Yeni locates households alongside the 'community forum' as the two main institutions involved in land allocation. In camps for Syrian farmworkers on the Syria-Lebanon border, households are de facto tent households of a patrilocal nature (Sajadian). In keeping with the feminist call for examining intra-household inequalities of gender and generation (e.g., O'Laughlin, 2014), most analyses featured here delve into inner-household and -family dynamics.

Contemporary social reproduction scholarship recognises that the household is not the only site of social reproduction (e.g., Bhattacharya, 2017) and therefore other units of analysis need to be considered. Beyond the village and various types of community-based organisations mentioned across the articles in this Special Issue, a number of articles make reference to the role of the state, either explicitly, through how government institutions shape social reproduction (e.g., Fraser, 2014, 2017), or more tacitly, including through the ways in which the state, like other institutions, acts as a bearer of gender (Pearson, 2013). For example, Reynolds and Ipsen demonstrate how different policy backgrounds interact with more recent government responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the case of Ecuador this has resulted in an increasingly repressive stance towards gender equality while in Chile an opposing dynamic can be traced. The state also appears in close relationship with gender norms and ideology, simultaneously shaping and being shaped by them. In the historical case of the Soviet Union, Lyubchenko reflects on how the socialisation of aspects of social reproduction laid the foundations for the development of the Soviet 'mother-worker' gender contract in the post-Second World War era. By contrast, Liu shows how economic modernisation in China (over both the planned and market-reform eras) has drawn upon a persistent gender ideology and practice, namely the feminisation of unpaid reproductive work. A similar dynamic can be found in the Turkish context by Çelik. Here the 'housewifisation' ideology means that unpaid reproductive work has remained invisible and paid work undertaken by women is only considered supplementary, despite both being essential to the model or neoliberal agribusiness and resource extraction capitalism adopted by the Turkish state.

Having discussed the key conceptual and methodological insights on using social reproduction approaches to explore the process of agrarian change, rural transformation and lifeworlds, we now conclude this introductory piece

by turning our attention to and highlighting how agrarian change can enrich our understanding of social reproduction.

## 6 | ON AGRARIAN CHANGE AS LENS TO EXPLORE SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

As we have explored in this Introduction, the study of agrarian change through the lens of social reproduction enables us to de-invisibilise key processes of life-making impacting upon processes of agrarian transformation; to better grasp the constitution and regeneration of complex 'classes of labour' in rural areas; to further qualify and gender processes of de-agrarianisation and their implications for livelihoods; and to finally centre women's labour within and beyond the household - across spaces and temporalities - as central to life-making in the countryside. It also allows us to complicate the land question beyond productivist readings, explore its significance for 'making life' in rural settings, and centre social justice in our analyses of land redistribution. This broader horizon for assessing the meanings of land, we argue, further multiplies the already many agrarian questions of our times, whose histories and trajectories must ultimately grapple with debates around economic justice. Finally, the analysis of 'the social reproduction of agrarian change', as we defined it in this intervention, also provides us with a novel gaze to read the formation, restructuring and reorganisation of complex global geographies of the rural, their impact on reinforcing or mitigating crises of social reproduction for precarious and hyper-mobile gendered labour forces; their ability to redraw the economic, social and reproductive fabric of the urban-rural divide; and their articulation across multiple different domains and spaces between lands, or lands and seas.

In turn, the study of the complex, shifting and transforming agrarian lifeworlds analysed in this Special Issue also contributes significantly to the study of and debates around social reproduction. As we conclude this Introduction, we shall identify at least three lines of contribution in this regard. First, the porous, flexible, segmented and fragmented social, class and labour relations dominating the 'agrarian South' directly speak to the 'messy, fleshy' (Katz, 2001) and chaotic processes of 'life-making' (Bhattacharya, 2017) that social reproduction theorisations aim at centring in their study of capitalism. Together with informalised labour relations, these form the backbone of how life on our planet is currently organised and regenerated. Hence, the study of these relations *should be centred* in all conceptualisations of exploitation, value generation, oppression, extraction and dispossession, rather than being considered as exceptions or deviations from the 'normal' development of (narrowly defined and western-centric) idealised types of capitalist relations. Through a deep understanding of agrarian life in the Global South, the fictitious compartmentalisation of reproductive/productive work, unpaid/paid work and, life-making/profit-making becomes apparent.

Secondly, the study of 'the agrarian' further confirms the key relevance of the household as a key unit of reproductive governance of capitalism (see O'Rourke & Gleeson, 2021). Yet, it also shows the compelling need to further unpack its varied gendered trajectories, including the contemporary transformations of the 'domestic' and its articulations with novel forms of gendered and racialised cheapened labour, shaping contemporary iterations of 'housewifization' regenerating precarious living in today's global economy (Dieng, 2024; Joshi, 2020; Mezzadri, 2022). In addition, it is all the more evident that households are not sufficient units of analysis and/or sites of social reproduction for rural life. They are always embedded in other social formations that matter for expanded processes of social reproduction and agrarian change, including kinship networks, the community and grassroots groups, which should also become fundamental units of analysis in social reproduction research.

Thirdly, the centrality of the land question for sustaining life on our planet should further inform debates on the nature of social reproduction and its crises, moving current analyses primarily articulated around care and the care economy towards broader questions of survival, livelihoods, and their ecological implications - an issue we in fact only touched upon but did not properly explore in this Special Issue, and which remains paramount for future interventions. In fact, finally, an engagement with 'the agrarian' and with its many questions of and around land

enables us to appreciate the ongoing, relentless repercussions of what we can define as the 'afterlives' of primitive accumulation or of accumulation by dispossession in different corners of the world economy. These complex afterlives remind us, in the words of Silvia Federici (2017), that we must consider 'different histories of primitive accumulation', written from multiple perspectives including those by 'people whose lands continue to be the main target of the enclosures, and the many social subjects whose place in the history of capitalist society cannot be assimilated to the history of the waged'. Related to this and a point worth further interrogation are the identitarian questions that emerge in the context of right-wing political mobilisation in relation to social reproduction. Studies across the global/agrarian south demonstrate how social reproduction depends on the reproduction of colonial social relations (gender, race, ethnicity, caste, sexuality), thus raising questions of inequality embedded in the wider structure of social reproduction itself. These questions have not been sufficiently explored in this Special Issue but remain important for our analysis of the consequences of underdevelopment and deindustrialisation (Ossome, *forthcoming*). Indeed, we see this Special Issue – which we understand as the mere beginning of a conversation rather than a point of arrival – as ultimately contributing to the rich intellectual agenda of recentring intellectual, theoretical and methodological debates on agrarian change towards its reproductive, life-making aspects. Part of this conversation must also necessarily entail reclaiming the very categories of analysis through which we have assessed the processes of change we want to map so far.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors of this introduction would like to thank Bridget O'Laughlin, Carla Gras and Jens Lerche, for their outstanding support in the making of this Special Issue. We also want to thank Elena Baglioni, Jairus Banaji, Kaustav Banerjee, T.J. Byres, Henry Bernstein, Silvia Federici, Rohini Hensman, Praveen Jha, Deborah Johnston, Haroon Akram-Lodhi, Sam Moyo, Sirisha Naidu, Carlos Oya, Helena Perez-Niño for the wonderful, endless conversations on the themes this issue touches upon, connects, and hopes to contribute to. Thanks are also extended to those presenting their work during the Social Reproduction and Agrarian Change panels at the IIPPE conference in Madrid, in September 2023, and to the members of the audience who provided feedback. Finally, thanks to all the authors who contributed to this issue, as their work breaks new ground in tracing the Social Reproduction of Agrarian Change. May this be just the beginning of the conversation.

## ORCID

Alessandra Mezzadri  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4233-6341>

Sara Stevano  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0532-4894>

Lyn Ossome  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8255-8742>

Hannah Bargawi  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7330-9090>

## REFERENCES

- Agarwal, B. (2003). Gender and land rights revisited: Exploring new prospects via the state, family and market. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 3(1–2), 184–224. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-0366.00054>
- Akhtar, S. A., & Rashid, A. (2021). Dispossession and the militarised developer state: Financialisation and class power on the agrarian–urban frontier of Islamabad, Pakistan. *Third World Quarterly*, 42(8), 1866–1884. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2021.1939004>
- Baglioni, E. (2022). The making of cheap labour across production and reproduction: Control and resistance in the Senegalese horticultural value chain. *Work, Employment and Society*, 36(3), 445–464. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017021999569>
- Baglioni, E., Campling, L., Coe, N. M., & Smith, A. (2021). *Labour regimes and global production*. Agenda Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv2b6z898>
- Baglioni, E., & Mezzadri, A. (2020). Labour control regimes and social reproduction: Some reflections on the strengths and weaknesses of an evolving framework. In A. Hammer & A. Fishwick (Eds.), *The political economy of work in the global south* (pp. 115–130). Macmillan Education. (Critical Perspectives on Work and Employment).

- Bakker, I. (2007). Social reproduction and the constitution of a gendered political economy. *New Political Economy*, 12(4), 541–556. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13563460701661561>
- Bakker, I., & Gill, S. (2003). *Power, production, and social reproduction: Human in/security in the global political economy*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bakker, I., & Gill, S. (2019). Rethinking power, production, and social reproduction: Toward variegated social reproduction. *Capital & Class*, 43(4), 503–523. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309816819880783>
- Banaji, J. (2010). *Theory as history: Essays on modes of production and exploitation*. Brill. <https://doi.org/10.1163/je.9789004183681.i-406>
- Bannerji, H. (2005). Building from Marx: Reflections on class and race. *Social Justice*, 32(4), 144–160.
- Bannerji, H. (2011). Building from Marx: Reflections on “race,” gender, and class. In S. Carpenter & S. Mojab (Eds.), *Educating from Marx* (pp. 41–60). Palgrave Macmillan. [https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230370371\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230370371_3)
- Barca, S. (2020). *Forces of reproduction: Notes for a counter-hegemonic Anthropocene*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108878371>
- Bargawi, H., Alami, R., & Ziada, H. (2022). Re-negotiating social reproduction, work and gender roles in occupied Palestine. *Review of International Political Economy*, 29(6), 1917–1944. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09692290.2020.1868017>
- Bennholdt-Thomsen, V. (1982). Subsistence production and extended reproduction. A contribution to the discussion about modes of production. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 9(4), 241–254. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066158208438180>
- Benya, A. (2015). The invisible hands: Women in Marikana. *Review of African Political Economy*, 42(146), 545–560. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03056244.2015.1087394>
- Berik, G. (1997). The need for crossing the method boundaries in economics research. *Feminist Economics*, 3(2), 121–125. <https://doi.org/10.1080/135457097338735>
- Bernstein, H. (2006). Is there an agrarian question in the 21st century? *Canadian Journal of Development Studies/Revue Canadienne d'études Du Développement*, 27(4), 449–460. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02255189.2006.9669166>
- Bernstein, H. (2007). *Capital and Labour from Centre to Margins*. In Paper presented to “living on the margins: Vulnerability, exclusion, and the state in the informal economy” Cape Town, 26-28 march 2007. <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/document?repid=rep1&type=pdf&doi=d54a64931238f19d49b7c2ef59701ba26ab3e8c9>
- Bernstein, H. (2010). *Class dynamics of agrarian change*. Kumarian Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781565494077>
- Bernstein, H. (2021). Into the field with Marx: Some observations on research class. In A. Mezzadri (Ed.), (2021) *Marx in the field* (pp. 17–30). Anthem Press.
- Bernstein, H., & Byres, T. (2001). From peasant studies to agrarian change. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 1(1), 1–56. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-0366.00002>
- Berry, S. (2002). Debating the land question in Africa. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 44(4), 638–668. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417502000312>
- Bhattacharya, T. (2017). *Social reproduction theory: Remapping class, recentring oppression*. Pluto. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1vz494j>
- Bhattacharyya, G. (2018). *Rethinking racial capitalism: Questions of reproduction and survival*. Rowman and Littlefield.
- Borras, S. M. Jr. (2009). Agrarian change and peasant studies: Changes, continuities and challenges—an introduction. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 36(1), 5–31. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150902820297>
- Borras, S. M., Franco, J. C., Ra, D., Kramer, T., Kamoorn, M., Phyu, P., Ju, K. K., Vervest, P., Oo, M., Shell, K. Y., Soe, T. M., Dau, Z., Phyu, M., Poine, M. S., Jumper, M. P., Mon, N. S., Oo, K., Thu, K., Khine, N. K., ... Ye, J. (2022). Rurally rooted cross-border migrant workers from Myanmar, Covid-19, and agrarian movements. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 39, 315–338.
- Bunce, B. (2023). A methodology for class analysis: Agricultural investments and agrarian change in South Africa. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 23(2), 404–432. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joac.12505>
- Byers, T. J. (2012). The agrarian question and the peasantry'. In B. Fine & A. Saad-Filho (Eds.), *The Elgar companion to Marxist economics*. Edward Elgar. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781781001226.00008>
- Caballero, L., & Gago, V. (2021). *A feminist Reading of debt*. Pluto (translated by Mason-Deese L). <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1k531kq>
- Cammack, P. (2020). Marx on social reproduction. *Historical Materialism*, 28(2), 76–106. <https://doi.org/10.1163/1569206X-00001934>
- Campling, L., & Colas, A. (2021). *Capitalist and the sea capitalism and the sea: The maritime factor in the making of the modern world*. Verso.
- Campling, L., & Lerche, J. (2016). Introduction to the special issue the political economy of agrarian change: Essays in appreciation of Henry Bernstein. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 16(3), 365–369. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joac.12180>
- Carney, J., & Watts, M. (1991). Disciplining women? Rice, mechanization, and the evolution of Mandinka gender relations in Senegambia. In *Signs*, 16(4), 651–681. <https://doi.org/10.1086/494698>



- Chari, S. (2004). *Fraternal capital: Peasant-workers, self-made men, and globalization in provincial India*. Stanford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781503624375>
- Cousins, B., Dubb, A., Hornby, D., & Mtero, F. (2018). Social reproduction of “classes of labour” in the rural areas of South Africa: Contradictions and contestations. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 45(5/6), 1060–1085. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2018.1482876>
- Dalla Costa, M., & James, S. (1972). *The power of women and the subversion of the community*. Falling Wall Press Ltd.
- Davis, A. Y. (1981). *Women, race, and class*. Random House.
- Deere, C. D. (1976). Rural women's subsistence production in the capitalist periphery. *Review of Radical Political Economics*, 8(1), 9–17. <https://doi.org/10.1177/048661347600800102>
- Deere, C. D. (1995). What difference does gender make? Rethinking peasant studies. *Feminist Economics*, 1(1), 53–72. <https://doi.org/10.1080/714042214>
- Dieng, R. S. (2022). Adversely incorporated yet moving up the social ladder? Labour migrants shifting the gaze from agricultural investment chains to ‘care chains’ in capitalist social reproduction in Senegal. *African Development*, 47(3), 133–166. <https://doi.org/10.57054/ad.v47i3.2678>
- Dieng, R. (2024). Racial capitalism and women's horticultural labour in Senegal: Neo-housewifisation and the micro-politics of paternalism. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 1–28. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2024.2343332>
- Downward, P., & Mearman, A. (2007). Retrodution as mixed-methods triangulation in economic research: Reorienting economics into social science. *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 31(1), 77–99. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cje/bel009>
- Elson, D. (1998). The economic, the political, the domestic: Businesses, states, and households in the organization of production. *New Political Economy*, 3(2), 189–208. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13563469808406349>
- Fautras, M., & Iocco, G. (2019). Land, politics and dynamics of agrarian change and resistance in North Africa. *Review of African Political Economy*, 46(162), 535–548.
- Federici, S. (2004). *Caliban and the witch: Women, the body and primitive accumulation*. Autonomedia.
- Federici, S. (2012). Theorizing and politicizing housework. Wages against housework. In S. Federici (Ed.), *Revolution at point zero: Housework, reproduction and feminist struggle* (Ch. 1, pp. 15–22). PM Press.
- Federici, S. (2017). *On primitive accumulation, globalization and reproduction*. Friktionmagasin. <https://friktionmagasin.dk/on-primitive-accumulation-globalization-and-reproduction-c299e08c3693>
- Ferguson, S. (2019). *Women and work: Feminism, labour and social reproduction*. Pluto. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvs09qm0>
- Fernandez, B. (2018). Dispossession and the depletion of social reproduction. *Antipode*, 50(1), 142–163. <https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12350>
- Folbre, N. (2020). Manifold exploitations: Toward an intersectional political economy. *Review of Social Economy*, 78(4), 451–472. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00346764.2020.1798493>
- Folbre, N. (2021). *The rise and decline of patriarchal systems: An intersectional political economy*. Verso.
- Fortunati, L. (1981). L'arcano della riproduzione: Casalinghe, prostitute, operai e capitale. Marsilio.
- Fraser, N. (2014). Behind Marx's hidden abode: For an expanded conception of capitalism. *New Left Review*, 86, 55–72.
- Fraser, N. (2017). *Crisis of care? On the social-reproductive contradictions of contemporary capitalism*. Bhattacharya T. (2017) *social reproduction theory: Remapping class, recentring oppression* (pp. 21–36). Pluto.
- Gago, V. (2018). *The feminist international: Appropriating and overflowing the strike*. Viewpoint Magazine. at <https://viewpointmag.com/2018/03/07/feminist-international-appropriating-overflowing-strike/>
- Gironde, C., Reysoo, F., Ramirez, T. A., & Seng, S. (2021). No cash, no food. Gendered reorganization of livelihoods and food security in Cambodia. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 48(7), 1485–1506. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2021.1960826>
- Glenn, E. N. (2010). *Forced to care: Coercion and caregiving in America*. Harvard University Press.
- Guerin, I., Kumar, S., & Venkatasubramaniam, G. (2023). *The indebted woman, kinship, sexuality and capitalism*. Stanford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781503636910>
- Harris-White, B. (2014). Labour and petty production. *Development and Change*, 45(5), 981–1000. <https://doi.org/10.1111/dech.12124>
- Hart, G. (2002). Multiple trajectories: A critique of industrial restructuring and the new institutionalism. *Antipode*, 30(4), 333–356. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8330.00083>
- Harvey, D. (2004). The ‘new’ imperialism: Accumulation by dispossession. *Socialist Register*, 40, 63–87.
- Hensman, R. (1977). Wage-labour: The production and sake of the commodity labour-power. Republished in Historical Materialism Blog, 2020. Retrieved June 11, 2024, from <https://www.historicalmaterialism.org/blog/wagelabour-production-and-sale-commodity-labour-power-1977>
- Holborow, M. (2024). *Homes in crisis capitalism: Gender, work and revolution*. Bloomsbury.
- Hornby, D., & Cousins, B. (2019). ‘Reproducing the social’: Contradictory interconnections between land, cattle production and household relations in the besters land reform project, South Africa. *Anthropology Southern Africa*, 42(3), 202–216. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23323256.2019.1653206>

- Jacka, T. (2018). Translocal family reproduction and agrarian change in China: A new analytical framework. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 45, 1341–1359. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2017.1314267>
- Jacobs, S. M. (2009). *Gender and agrarian reforms*. Routledge.
- Jacobs, S. M. (2014). Women's land rights: Tenure, organisational issues, the local and the global. *Politics and Culture*. [https://e-space.mmu.ac.uk/605686/1/4Susie\\_Jacobs\\_landrts-Matfemsproofcopy14.pdf](https://e-space.mmu.ac.uk/605686/1/4Susie_Jacobs_landrts-Matfemsproofcopy14.pdf)
- Joshi, S. (2020). Working wives: Gender, labour and land commercialization in Ratanakiri, Cambodia. *Globalizations*, 17(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2019.1586117>
- Katz, C. (2001). Vagabond capitalism and the necessity of social reproduction. *Antipode*, 33(4), 709–728. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8330.00207>
- Kesar, S., Bhattacharya, S., & Banerjee, L. (2022). Contradictions and crisis in the world of work in the present conjuncture: Informality, precarity and the pandemic. *Development and Change*, 53(6), 1254–1282.
- Lombardozi, L. (2022). The marketisation of life: Entangling social reproduction theory and regimes of patriarchy through women's work in post-soviet Uzbekistan. *Review of International Political Economy*, 29(6), 1870–1893. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09692290.2021.1910063>
- Luxton, M. (1980). *More than a labour of love*. The Women's Press.
- Mackintosh, M. (1984). Subsistence production and extended reproduction. In K. Young, C. Wolkowitz, & R. McCullagh (Eds.), *Of marriage and the market: women's subordination in international perspective*. CSE Books.
- Mackintosh, M. (1989). *Gender, class and rural transition: Agribusiness and the food crisis in Senegal*. Zed.
- McMichael, P. (2008). Food sovereignty, social reproduction and agrarian question. In A. H. Akram-Lodhi & C. Kay (Eds.), (2008) *Peasants and globalization: Political economy, agrarian transformation and development* (pp. 288–312). Taylor & Francis Group.
- Mezzadri, A. (2019). On the value of social reproduction: Informal labour, the majority world, and the need for inclusive theories and politics. *Radical Philosophy*, 2(4), 33–41.
- Mezzadri, A. (2020a). A crisis like no other: Social reproduction and the regeneration of capitalist life during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Developing economics*. <https://developingeconomics.org/2020/04/20/a-crisis-like-no-other-social-reproduction-and-the-regeneration-of-capitalist-life-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/>
- Mezzadri, A. (2020b). A value theory of inclusion: Informal labour, the homeworker, and the social reproduction of value. *Antipode*, 53(4), 1186–1205. <https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12701>
- Mezzadri, A. (Ed.). (2021). *Marx in the field*. Anthem Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvx8b7jk>
- Mezzadri, A. (2022). The social reproduction of pandemic surplus populations and global development narratives on inequality and informal labour. *Development and Change*, 53(6), 1230–1253. <https://doi.org/10.1111/dech.12736>
- Mezzadri, A., & Majumder, S. (2022). Towards a feminist political economy of time: Labour circulation, social reproduction & the 'afterlife' of cheap labour. *Review of International Political Economy*, 29(6), 1804–1826. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09692290.2020.1857293>
- Mezzadri, A., Newman, S., & Stevano, S. (2022). Feminist global political economies of work and social reproduction. *Review of International Political Economy*, 29(6), 1783–1803. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09692290.2021.1957977>
- Mezzadri, A., Rai, S. M., Stevano, S., Alessandrini, D., Bargawi, H., Elias, J., Hassim, S., Kesar, S., Lingham, J., Natile, S., Neetha, N., Ossome, L., Pratt, N., Raghuram, P., Tsikata, D., & Wöhl, S. (forthcoming). Pluralising social reproduction approaches. *International Journal of Feminist Politics*.
- Mies, M. (1982). *The lace makers of Narsapur: Indian housewives produce for the world market*. Zed Books.
- Mies, M. (1986). *Patriarchy and accumulation on a world scale: Women in the international division of labour*. Zed.
- Moore, J. W. (2015). *Capitalism in the web of life: Ecology and the accumulation of capital*. Verso.
- Moyo, S., Jha, P., & Yeros, P. (2013). The classical agrarian question: Myth, reality and relevance today. *Agrarian South: Journal of Political Economy*, 2(1), 93–119.
- Moyo, S., & Yeros, P. (2005). *Reclaiming the land: The resurgence of rural movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America*. Zed. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350222175>
- Mtero, F., Bunce, B., Cousins, B., Dubb, A., & Hornby, D. (2021). Investigating class relations in rural South Africa: Marx's rich totality of many determinations. In A. Mezzadri (Ed.), (2021) *Marx in the field* (pp. 129–146). Anthem Press.
- Naidu, S. C. (2023). Circuits of social reproduction: Nature, labor, and capitalism. *Review of Radical Political Economics*, 55(1), 93–111. <https://doi.org/10.1177/04866134221099316>
- Naidu, S. C., & Ossome, L. (2016). Social reproduction and the agrarian question of women's labour in India. *Agrarian South: Journal of Political Economy*, 5(1), 50–76.
- Nkosi, M. (2023). *These potatoes look like humans: The contested future of land, home and death in South Africa*. Witz University Press. <https://doi.org/10.18772/12023098400>
- O'Laughlin, B. (1996). Through a divided glass: Dualism, class and the agrarian question in Mozambique. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 23(4), 1–39. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066159608438618>



- O'Laughlin, B. (2002). Proletarianisation, agency and changing rural livelihoods: Forced labour and resistance in colonial Mozambique. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 28(3), 511–530. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305707022000006495>
- O'Laughlin, B. (2013). Land, labour and the production of affliction in rural southern Africa. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 13(1), 175–196. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-0366.2012.00381.x>
- O'Laughlin, B. (2014). Unsettled debates in development thinking: Conceptualising households in rural Africa. *Development and Change*. [https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/pb-assets/assets/14677660/dech\\_12142\\_\\_Virtual\\_Issue\\_-\\_1509476878000.pdf](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/pb-assets/assets/14677660/dech_12142__Virtual_Issue_-_1509476878000.pdf)
- O'Laughlin, B. (2021). No separate spheres: The contingent reproduction of living labor in southern Africa. *Review of International Political Economy*, 29, 1827–1846. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09692290.2021.1950025>
- O'Rourke, E., & Gleeson, J. J. (2021). *Transgender marxism*. Pluto.
- Ossome, L. (2021). The care economy and the state in Africa's Covid-19 responses. *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*, 42, 68–78. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02255189.2020.1831448>
- Ossome, L. (forthcoming). Social reproduction and surplus populations of the agrarian south. In S. Hassim & A. Korteweg (Eds.), *Handbook on politics and society*. Edward Elgar.
- Ossome, L., & Naidu, S. C. (2021a). Does Land Still Matter? Gender and Land Reforms in Zimbabwe. *Agrarian South: Journal of Political Economy*, 10(2), 344–370. <https://doi.org/10.1177/22779760211029176>
- Ossome, L., & Naidu, S. (2021b). The Agrarian Question of Gendered Labour. In P. Jha, W. Chambati, & L. Ossome (Eds.), *Labour questions in the global south* (pp. 63–86). Palgrave Macmillan. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-33-4635-2\\_4](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-33-4635-2_4)
- Oya, C. (2013). The land rush and classic agrarian questions of capital and labour: A systematic scoping review of the socio-economic impact of land grabs in Africa. *Third World Quarterly*, 34(9), 1532–1557. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2013.843855>
- Pattenden, J. (2018). The politics of classes of labour: Fragmentation, reproduction zones and collective action in Karnataka, India. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 45(5–6), 1039–1059. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2018.1495625>
- Pattenden, J. (2020). Local labour control regimes, reproduction zones and the politics of classes of labour in South India. In A. Hammer & A. Fishwick (Eds.), *The political economy of work in the global south*. Macmillan.
- Pearson, R. (2013). Gender, Globalization and the Reproduction of Labour. In S. Rai & G. Waylen (Eds.), *Chapter 2 in new Frontiers in feminist political economy* (pp. 19–42). Routledge.
- Pun, N. (2005). *Made in China made in China: Women factory Workers in a Global Workplace*. Duke University Press.
- Rao, N. (2006). Land rights, gender equality and household food security: Exploring the conceptual links in the case of India. *Food Policy*, 31(2), 180–193. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodpol.2005.10.006>
- Rao, S. (2021). Beyond the coronavirus: Understanding crises of social reproduction. *Global Labour Journal*, 12(1), 39–53. <https://doi.org/10.15173/glj.v12i1.4307>
- Rao, S., & Ramnarain, S. (2023). Gender, social protection, & crises of social reproduction: Contextualizing NREGA. *Review of Radical Political Economics*, 55(1), 70–92. <https://doi.org/10.1177/04866134221123817>
- Razavi, S. (2003). Introduction: Agrarian change, gender, and land rights. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 3(1–2), 2–32. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-0366.00049>
- Razavi, S. (2009). Engendering the political economy of agrarian change. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 36(1), 197–226. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150902820412>
- Scott, J. (1977). *The moral economy of the peasant: Rebellion and subsistence in Southeast Asia*. Yale University Press.
- Selwyn, B. (2021). Learning Marx by doing: Class analysis in an emerging zone of global horticulture. In A. Mezzadri (Ed.), (2021) *Marx in the field* (pp. 103–116). Anthem Press.
- Sender, J., & Smith, S. (1990). *Poverty, class and gender in rural Africa: A Tanzanian case study*. Routledge.
- Shah, A., & Lerche, J. (2020). Migration and the invisible economies of care: Production, social reproduction and seasonal migrant labour in India. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 45(4), 719–734. <https://doi.org/10.1111/tran.12401>
- Sharma, M. (1985). Caste, class, and gender: Production and reproduction in North India. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 12(4), 57–88. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066158508438275>
- Shattuck, A., Grajales, J., Jacobs, R., Sauer, S., Galvin, S. S., & Hall, R. (2023). Life on the land: New lives for agrarian questions. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 50(2), 490–518. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2023.2174859>
- Shivji, I. G. (2017). The concept of 'working people'. *Agrarian South: Journal of Political Economy*, 6(1), 1–13.
- Stevano, S. (2019). The limits of instrumentalism: Informal work and gendered cycles of food insecurity in Mozambique. *The Journal of Development Studies*, 55(1), 83–98. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220388.2017.1408793>
- Stevano, S. (2021). Marx and the Poor's Nourishment: Diets in Contemporary Sub-Saharan Africa. In A. Mezzadri (Ed.), (2021) *Marx in the field* (pp. 103–116). Anthem Press. pp. 175–188.
- Stevano, S. (2023). The workplace at the bottom of global supply chains as a site of reproduction of colonial relations: Reflections on the cashew-processing industry in Mozambique. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 30(2), 496–509. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12757>

- Stevano, S. (2024). Ultra-processed food, depletion, and social reproduction: A conceptual intervention. *Antipode*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.13046>
- Stevano, S., Mezzadri, A., Lombardozzi, L., & Bargawi, H. (2021). Hidden abodes in plain sight: The social reproduction of households and labor in the COVID-19 pandemic. *Feminist Economics*, 27(1-2), 271-287. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13545701.2020.1854478>
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (Eds.). (1997). *Grounded theory in practice*. Sage Publications.
- The Marxist Feminist Collective. (2020). On social reproduction and the Covid-19 pandemic: Seven theses. *SPE Journal*. <https://spectrejournal.com/seven-theses-on-social-reproduction-and-the-covid-19-pandemic/>
- Tsikata, D. (2016). Gender, land tenure and agrarian production Systems in sub-Saharan Africa. *Agrarian South: Journal of Political Economy*, 5(1), 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2277976016658738>
- Tsikata, D., Prasad, A., & Yeros, P. (Eds.). (2024). *Gender in agrarian transitions: Liberation perspectives from the south*. Tulika.
- Whitehead, A. (1981). Women, kinship and capitalist development. In K. Young, C. Wolkowitz, & R. McCullagh (Eds.), *Of marriage and the market: women's subordination in international perspective*. CSE Books.
- Winders, J., & Smith, B. E. (2019). Social reproduction and capitalist production: A genealogy of dominant imaginaries. *Progress in Human Geography*, 43(5), 871-889. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132518791730>
- Yadav, S. (2020). Precarity as a coping strategy of the Gonds: A study of insecure and long-distance seasonal migration in Central India. *Indian Journal of Human Development*, 14, 7-22.

**How to cite this article:** Mezzadri, A., Stevano, S., Ossome, L., & Bargawi, H. (2024). The social reproduction of agrarian change: Feminist political economy and rural transformations in the global south. An introduction. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 24(3), e12595. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joac.12595>