

Agrarian transition and social differentiation with a boom crop of cassava: A case study in Son La and Dak Lak in Vietnam



Nozomi Kawarazuka
Jonathan Newby

Presentation outline

1. Introduction
2. Research questions
3. Conceptual framework
4. Methodology
5. Key findings
6. Implications for inclusive interventions to support the poor

1. Introduction

- Boom crops in Southeast Asia
- Cassava – a cash crop for the poor

- Problem 1 - Sustainability
- Problem 2 - Social differentiation

- Support for poor farmers
- Gender – a missing element in the literature

2. What this study is looking for

- 1) Various responses to boom crops among the households
- 2) Social relations with value-chain actors
- 3) Gender and social dimensions of technological issues of cassava production

3. Conceptual Framework

- Political ecology in agrarian change

Power dimensions of boom crops (a single victim narrative with the community/ethnic group/the poor)

- Political ecology linked with gender relations

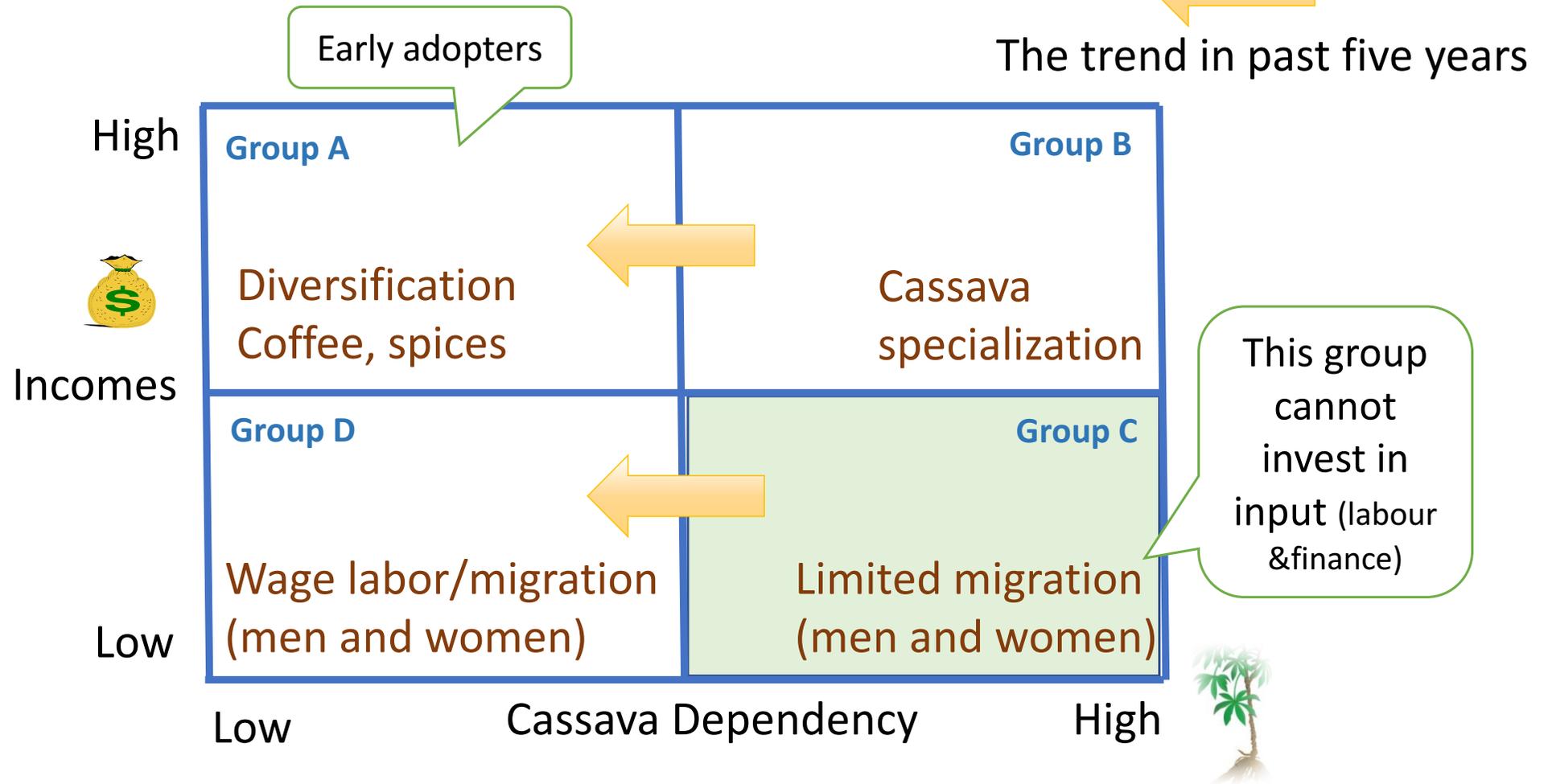
Gender as relational power not as a variable. A useful framework for understanding farmers' diverse agency to respond to boom crops.

4. Methods

- Son La, Dak Lak – 2 districts each, 1 commune each and 2 villages each
- In-depth interviews with 50 men and 50 women
- Thai, Xinh-Mun, Khơ mú (Son La)
Tay and Ede (Dak Lak)



5-1. Key findings: responses to boom crops



Responses to boom crops: Group C and Group D

8/13

Ms Huong, 26, Khơ mú:
She tried to increase cassava production by using fallow land, having an interval by planting maize, and to ask for planting materials from neighbours.



Ms H Got from Dang Kang expanded her cassava field this year in a mountain bush area located 10km away from her house.



Mr Hieu sent his two sons to Hanoi and stopped growing cassava. He thinks that due to low prices and severe soil erosion, it is the right time to stop growing cassava to make his land fallow, waiting for some financial capital available from his son's work to reinvest in farming.



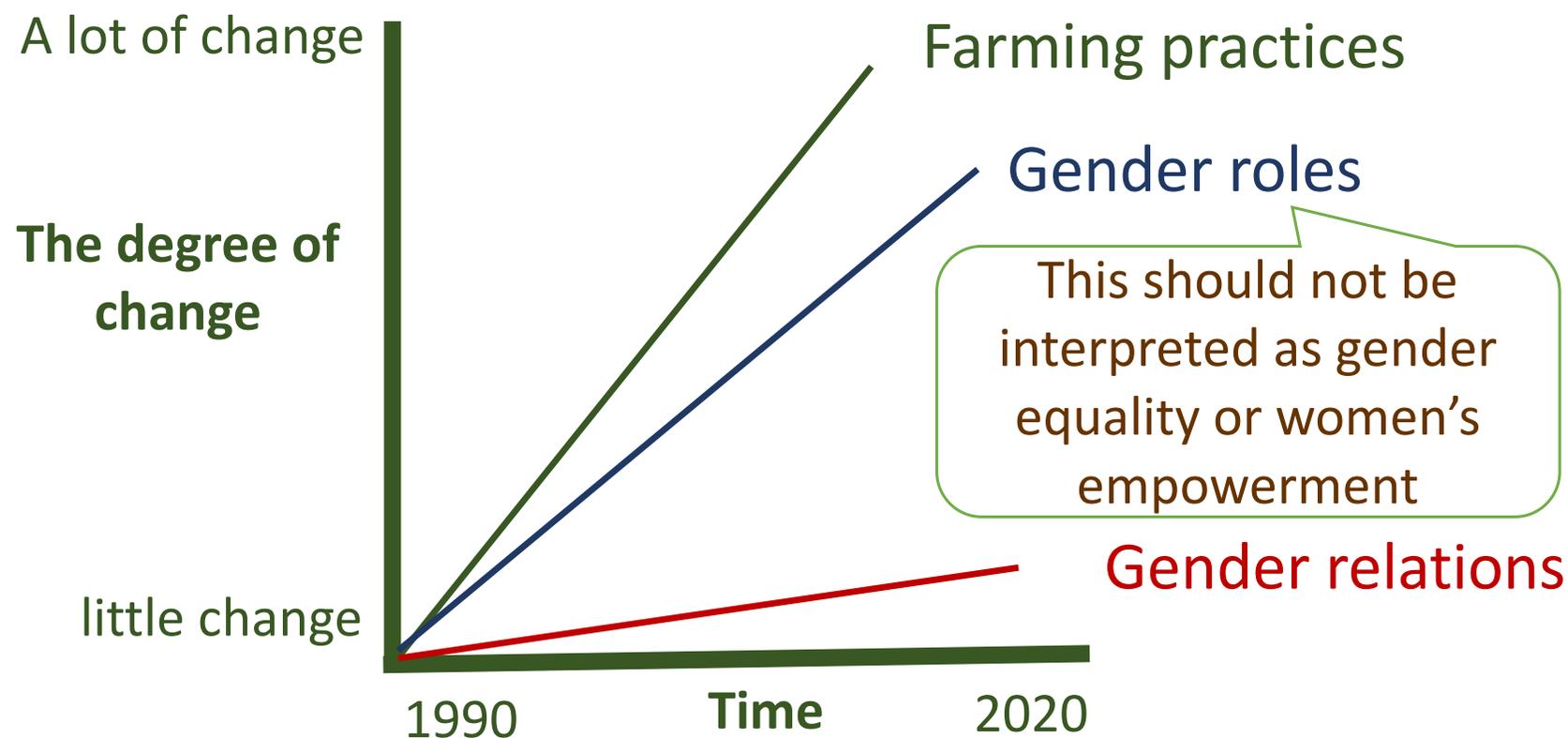
Mr Y Thoi from Ea Sar, decided to rent his 0.5ha of cassava farm to a Kinh investor as profit from his farm was too low and he thought wage labour work was much more secure than investing in his own farm in his family situation with school-aged children who could still not work as family labourers.

5-2. Key findings: relationships with value-chain actors



- Agents, collectors and traders have different interests. Incentives for supporting farmers vary.
- Ethnic minorities trust their relatives than information from agents, factories or agricultural extension workers.

5-3. Key findings: constraints and incentives originated from gender roles and relationships 10/13



5-3. Key findings: gender and social constraints

11/13

Technological problems	Gender and social constraints and challenges
Soil erosion	Women have been compensating for the shortage of male labour and capital with their own labour
Pest and diseases	Women cannot climb up to the field everyday to spray and/or monitor cassava.
Processing	Poor households cannot wait for drying: immediate cash for buying rice is needed.
Information flows	Poor households cannot wait for drying: immediate cash for buying rice is needed.

6. Implications for more inclusive interventions

12/13

- Interventions: which group do you target? Group B or C? Who are likely to benefit from proposed interventions?
- Information/adoption flows: ethnic minorities have their own information sharing networks based on trust. Are you providing information to the right networks?
- Investments: risks should be small and shared by somebody whom they trust. Why some farmers don't take a risk?
- Approaches to interventions: what are social and gender constraints and barriers to address technological issues?

Acknowledgement

We thank the 100 farmers who participated in this study, Mrs Phan Huy Chuong and Do Trong Hieu (NOMAFSI) and Ms Do Thi Kieu An (Tay Nguyen University) for their field research support, and Ms Bui Thi Quynh Trang, Mr Y Cuôr Bkrông and Ms Nguyen Thi Van for translation.

This case study was conducted as part of AGB/2012/078 project of ACIAR and also partly funded by CGIAR RTB Research Program.



RESEARCH
PROGRAM ON
Roots, Tubers
and Bananas

