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Leibniz Institute of Agricultural Development  
in Transition Economies



# The transition from cotton to horticulture: Effects on the role of rural women in Uzbek agriculture

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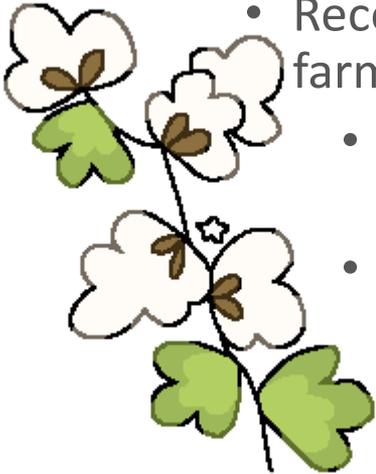
ASSA 2024 Annual Meeting

San Antonio TX, 5-7 January 2024



## Background

- Agrarian Landscape
  - 25% of GDP
  - Cotton production-oriented policies
- Employment in Agriculture
  - Cotton pickers- mainly women (ILO, 2017)
  - Informal organized workers brigade
- Recently started to recognize female farmers (4% of farmers are female)
  - The 15<sup>th</sup> of October “International Rural Women’s Day”
  - Creation of gender.stat.uz



## News

### Production of high-quality fruits, vegetables on rise in Uzbekistan

Date: 06.06.2014.



More than 200 representatives of international organizations and financial institutions, as well as leading scientists, experts and business people from over 40 countries, gathered in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, on 5-6 June 2014 for an international conference on Uzbekistan's food program. Photo credit: ifc.uz

Uzbekistan is paying more attention to increasing production of high-quality fruits, vegetables and grapes as a result of shift in agricultural policy since its independence in 1991.

Uzbekistan annually produces around 16m tons of fruits and vegetables, President of Uzbekistan

Islam Karimov said in

Most Important Reser

Uzbekistan exports for

agricultural exports h

30%

20%

10%

0%

21

cotto

Source: Sta

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## Uzbekistan liberalizes the cotton market, sets new targets

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## Uzbekistan's Journey to Better Cotton Production Continues

Words by Michelle Erdenesanaa



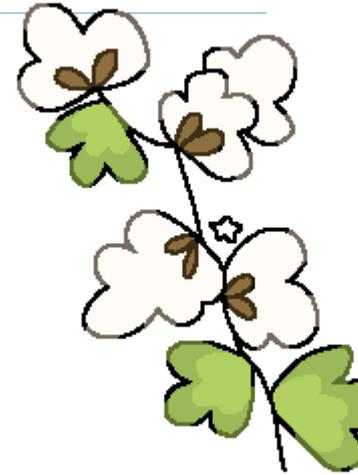
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### Cotton cultivation area will decrease, productivity will be increased

The presidential decree named 'Agriculture Development Strategy of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2020-2030' published in October 2019 announced that it will support the increase of high value-added horticulture and viticulture for both domestic use and export. With this decision, the goal was to reduce wheat and cotton cultivation areas but increase productivity with modernization efforts. Following this, with the presidential decree published in March 2020, state regulations regarding production, price and compulsory sales plans in the cotton market were abolished.

With the liberalization, cotton production quotas were formally cancelled and farmers were allowed to choose which crops to plant. In addition, the government will not announce a purchase price for raw cotton from the 2020 harvest, it will only be published as a recommendation. However, cotton producers will be able to freely grow any cotton variety they want, but a certified seed distribution system will be implemented. According to the decree, voluntary farm cooperatives will be organized with the participation of cotton gin enterprises in regions where there are no cotton clusters. The main tasks of these cooperatives will be the organization of machinery, equipment, vehicles and factories to be used jointly by the cooperative members.





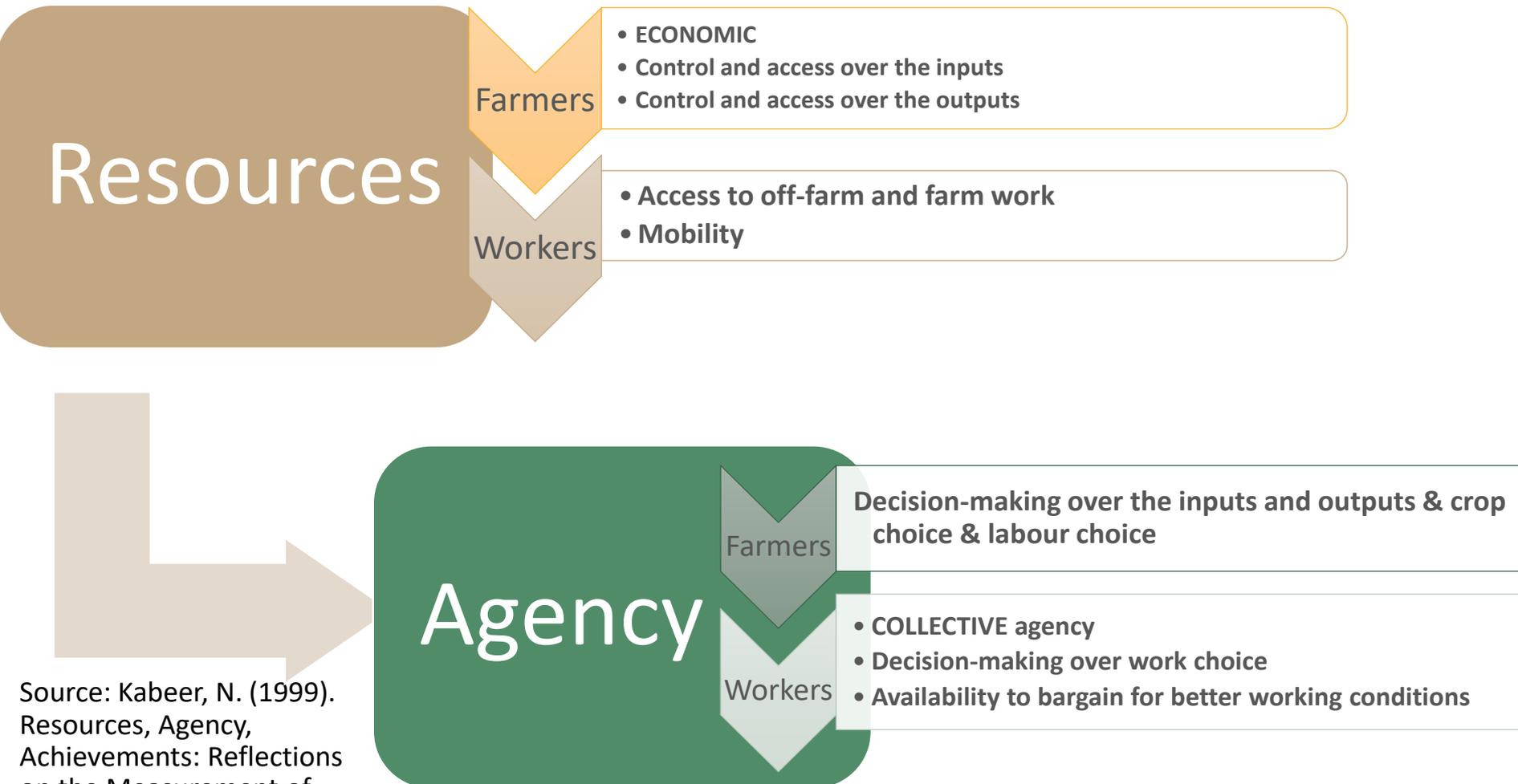
Research Question:

*How do the roles, economic activities, decision-making, and collective action (empowerment dimensions) of female farmers and female daily workers in horticulture villages differ in comparison to their counterparts in cotton-oriented villages?*

## Understanding Empowerment

- Gaining **power, control, and influence** over one's life (Kabeer, 1999; Malhotra et al., 2002; Bali Swain and Wallentin, 2009; Khan and Khan, 2016).
- Ability to make impactful decisions (Kabeer, 1999; Malhotra et al., 2002).
- Women's capacity for strategic life choices. Influenced by resources, agency, and achievements (Batliwa et al., 2010, Sen, 1999; Narayan, 2005; Alsop et al., 2006).
  
- Feminization vs empowerment

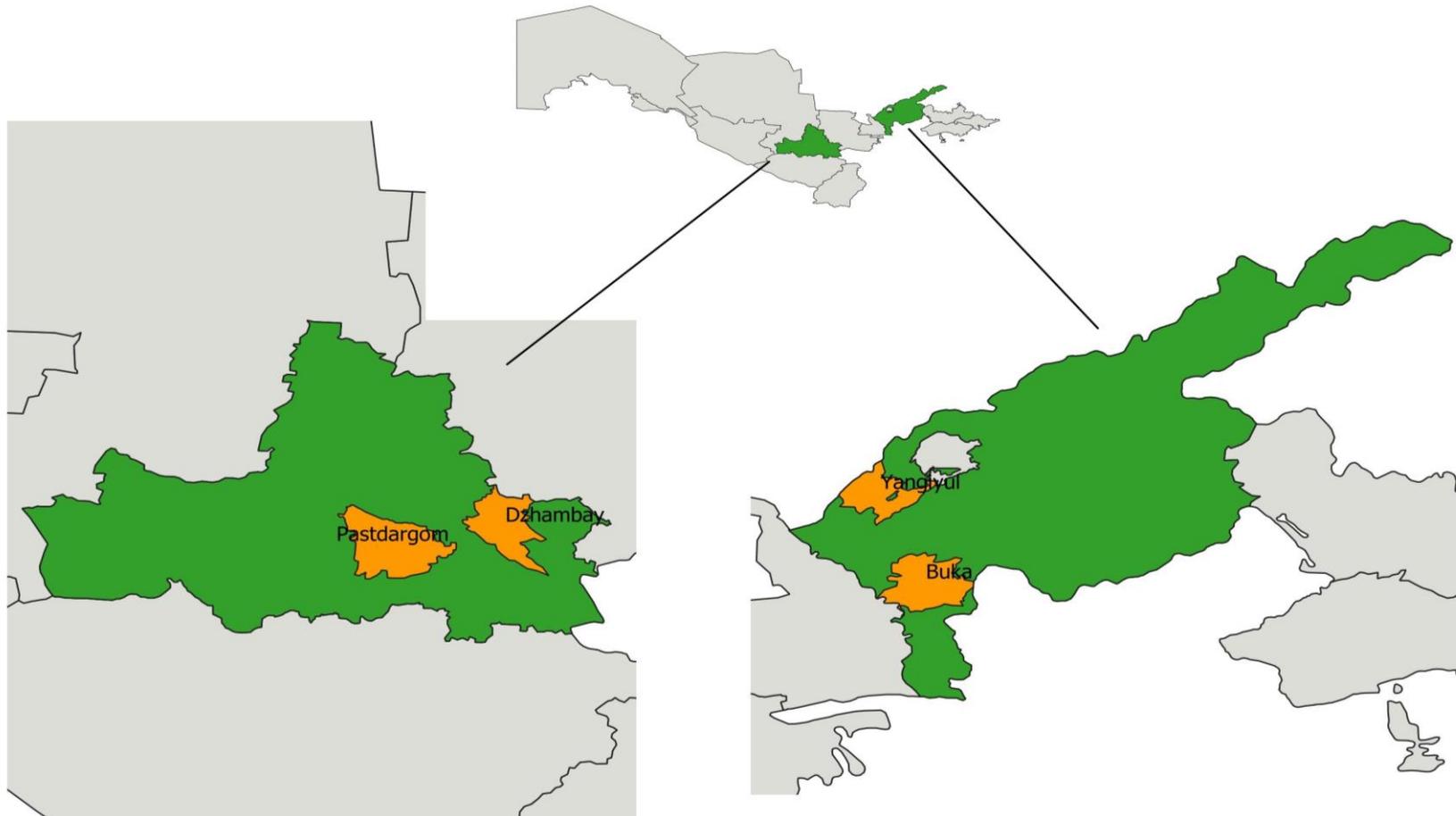
## Two-dimensions of women empowerment in Uzbek agriculture

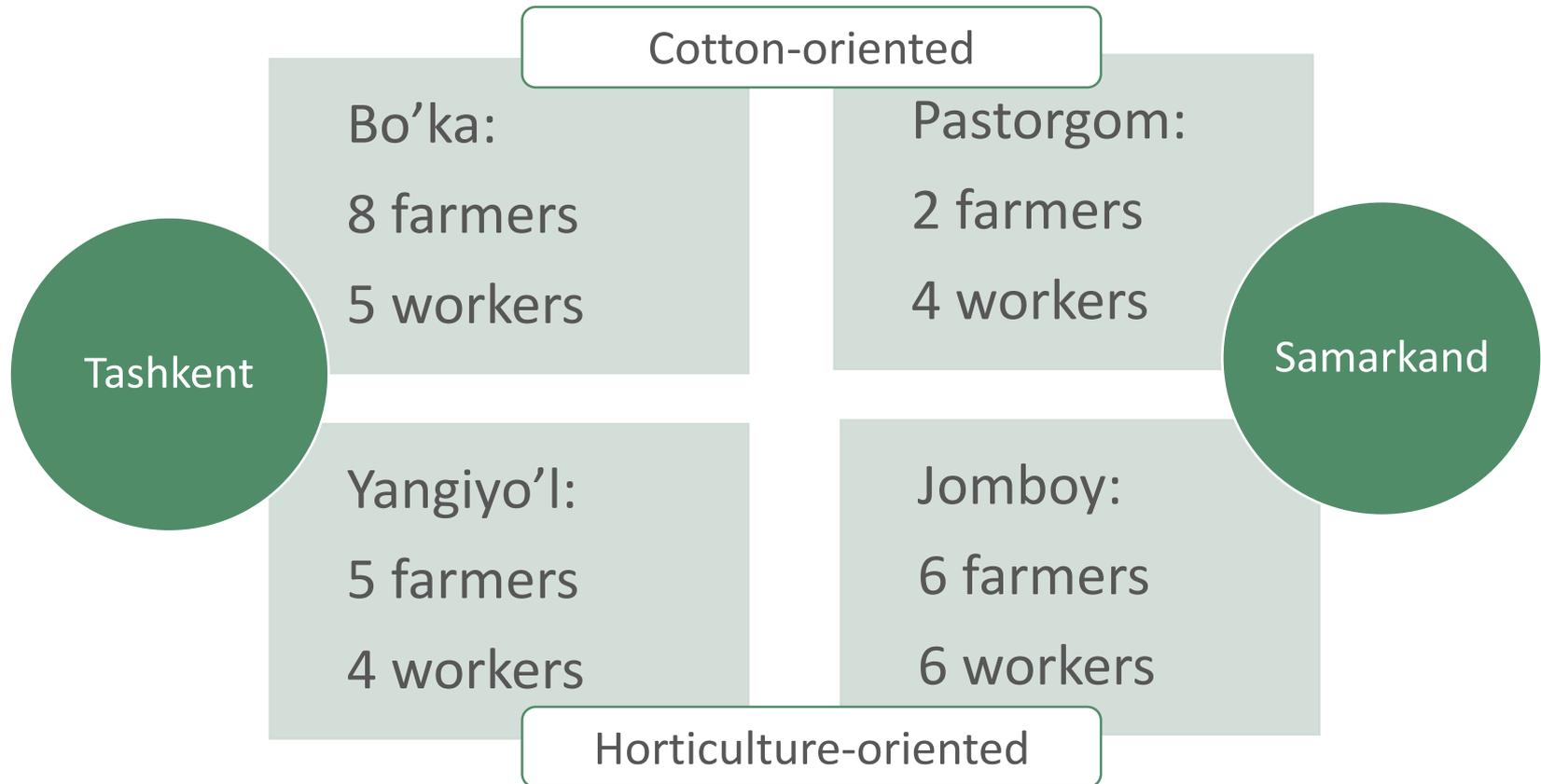


Source: Kabeer, N. (1999).  
Resources, Agency,  
Achievements: Reflections  
on the Measurement of  
Women's Empowerment

[www.iamo.de/en](http://www.iamo.de/en)

## The Map of Study Area





## Characteristics of Respondents

	Cotton Farmers (10 Respondents)	Horticulture Farmers (11 Respondents)	Workers From Cotton Districts (9 Respondents)	Workers From Horticulture Districts (10 Respondents)
Age	44-62	45-67	28-62	32-65
Educational Degree, (Number)	University Degree (5) Vocational School Degree (3) High-school (2)	University Degree (4) Vocational School Degree (6) High School Degree (1)	Vocational School Degree (4) High School Degree (5)	University Degree (1) Vocational School Degree (2) High School Degree (7)
Number Of Children	2-3	2-3	2-3	1-4
Availability Of Car	Yes (Themselves Or Husband/Son Uses)	Yes (Themselves Or Husband/Son Uses)	No	No/Yes (Husband/Son Uses)
Can Drive A Car	Yes/No	Yes/No	No	No
Tomorka	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
H Animals	Yes	Yes	No Or Poultry	Yes
Household Chores	Daughter-in- law/Herself	Daughter-in- law/Herself	Herself/ Unmarried Daughters	Herself/ Unmarried Daughters/ Daughter- in-law
Head Of Households	Themselves Or Husband	Themselves Or Husband	Husband Or Parents In Law	Husband Or Parents In Law
Household Related Decision Making	Herself/ Together With Husband	Herself/ Together With Husband	Husband/ Parents-in- law	Husband/ Parents-in- law

## Farm Characteristics

	Cotton	Horticulture
<b>Farm size</b>	57-106 ha	14-101 ha
<b>Land share</b>	35/50% wheat & 65/50% cotton (depends on the AIC contract)	30/40% wheat & 70/60% horticulture (depends on the AIC contract)
<b>Sharecropping</b>	Yes, permanent workers	With permanent workers, if there is wheat
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> crop</b>	Vegetables & beans	Vegetables & beans
<b>Outcome</b>	Cotton or wheat cluster, wheat pp	Clusters and market
<b>Input</b>	Partly form Clusters; AIC; Subsidised credits; Market	Clusters or market
<b>Permanent workers</b>	14-30	3-10
<b>Payment to p workers</b>	Sharecropping + overproduced wheat + monetary	Sharecropping + overproduced wheat/horticulture + monetary
<b>Seasonal workers</b>	15-80 (for cotton season)	10-40
<b>Work with self-organised brigades</b>	No	Yes

## Results

- Farmers: Resources
  - Subsidised Inputs, Access and Control of Inputs
  - Land tenure
- Farmers: Agency
  - Decision-making power over farm management
    - Crop choice freedom
    - Supply channel
    - Freedom over Surplus Crops
- Workers: Resources
  - Employment Opportunity: Economic activity all around the Year
  - Daily Mobility of Workers: Expanding and Refining Geographical Mobility among Rural Women
- Workers: Agency
  - Decision-making to work on choice
  - Socialising and Collective Agency within the Self-Organised Brigades

## Conclusion

- **Empowerment:** Horticulture acts as a catalyst for the empowerment of rural women.
- **Decision-Making Power:** Farmers have greater autonomy and control.
- **Economic Benefits:** Higher economic returns for both farmers and daily workers.
- **Expanded Employment:** More stable labour results in more working days for workers.
- **United Self-Organised Brigades:** Formation of self-organising brigades, increased collective action.

## Policy Recommendations

- **Continued Agricultural Liberalization:** Empower farmers with crop choice decisions, and broader farm management.
- **Broad Economic Diversification:** Beyond crop diversification, expand the entire rural economy's range.
- **Prioritize Rural Women's Education:** Invest in and emphasize the importance of educating rural women, rising awareness.
- **Rural Infrastructure:** Improved rural infrastructure is beneficial for rural women's economic empowerment.

**Thank you for your attention!**

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