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Irrigation and Equality: An integrative Gender-Analytical Approach to Water Governance with Examples from Ethiopia and Argentina

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Author(s)

Imburgia, Laura

Description / Abstract

This paper proposes the use of an integrative framework for better conceptualisation and operationalisation of research geared toward understanding irrigation systems, practices and processes, especially as relates to gender equality in water governance. More specifically, it discusses the importance of developing an integrative gender-analytical approach that enables both researchers and practitioners to analyse the complex interactions between technical and social dimensions of water governance, in order to determine how they contribute to, and thus effect, the overall success and sustainability of irrigated agriculture. Consequently, this paper provides a detailed account of the framework's key components; including how it is informed by feminist, ecological and sociological theories. There is also an account of the framework's practical application through a focus on specific outcomes in the dynamic field of water governance. To this end, the paper presents some results derived from an application of the integrative gender-analytical framework on data from a comparative study of small-scale irrigation systems in Ethiopia and Argentina. Ultimately, the goal of this paper is to promote a more nuanced and holistic approach to the study of water governance—one that takes both social and technical dimensions into similar account; particularly, if the aim is to promote broader social equality and the sustainability of irrigation systems.

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Gender Analysis

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