



Tropentag, October 7-9, 2008, Hohenheim

“Competition for Resources in a Changing World:  
New Drive for Rural Development”

## Time Allocation, Poverty and Gender: Evidence from Post-War Rwanda

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### Abstract

This paper analyses the impact of gender on time allocation in a developing country context, using household survey data from Rwanda. Even though more than a decade has passed since the genocide, Rwandan society still bears the demographic impact of the conflict, which killed many more men than women. In the aftermath of the genocide, the share of female-headed households increased sharply and many women became the principal income-earner of their household.

The paper addresses these issues by analysing the determinants of time allocation on domestic activities, such as water fetching and cooking, and on market activities, including wage work and self-employment. This paper contributes to the literature in two ways. First, it extends the framework of gender indicators and accounts for interrelations between different indicators. More specifically, the paper compares the impact of 1) gender of head, 2) the regime of intra-household decision-making processes, 3) an individual's position within the household hierarchy, and 4) civil status. Second, this paper applies the analysis both to the unit of the household and of the individual.

Methodologically, the paper applies probit and tobit estimations and differentiates between the participation in a particular activity and the intensity of time allocated to an activity, expressed as shares of total time. This approach accounts for the selection into an activity.

Results reveal three issues. First, household composition has the most important effect on how men and women, but also male-headed and female-headed households allocate their time. The presence of adult males particularly increases household time spent in wage work — an important income source that insures household income against agricultural risks in rural areas. Second, household hierarchy and gender are interrelated as women heads do engage more intensively in domestic tasks. Given that domestic tasks contribute less to the household income this may explain the higher incidence of poverty among female-headed households. Third, more time is devoted to wage work if the decision-making authority is concentrated in the head. The findings of this paper make a strong argument for the provision of basic infrastructure which might particularly increase women's time shares in market activities.

**Keywords:** Gender, household, poverty, Rwanda, Sub-Saharan Africa, time allocation