



GENDER Impact
Platform



Gendered access to assets and resources in small-scale fisheries and aquaculture in East Africa: Insights from feminist political ecology framework

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Introduction

- Fisheries and aquaculture are a major source of livelihood for many people in East Africa (Cowx & Ogutu-Owhayo, 2019).
- There are many productive aquatic ecosystems in the region that support fisheries (Fig. 1)
- Women have active and diverse roles in fisheries and aquaculture in the region as they are involved in different nodes within the value chains (VCs) (Frangoudes & Gerrard, 2019).
- Gendered aquaculture and fisheries research is becoming increasingly common as researchers and policy makers continue to acknowledge gender disparities present throughout the VCs and their implications on livelihoods.

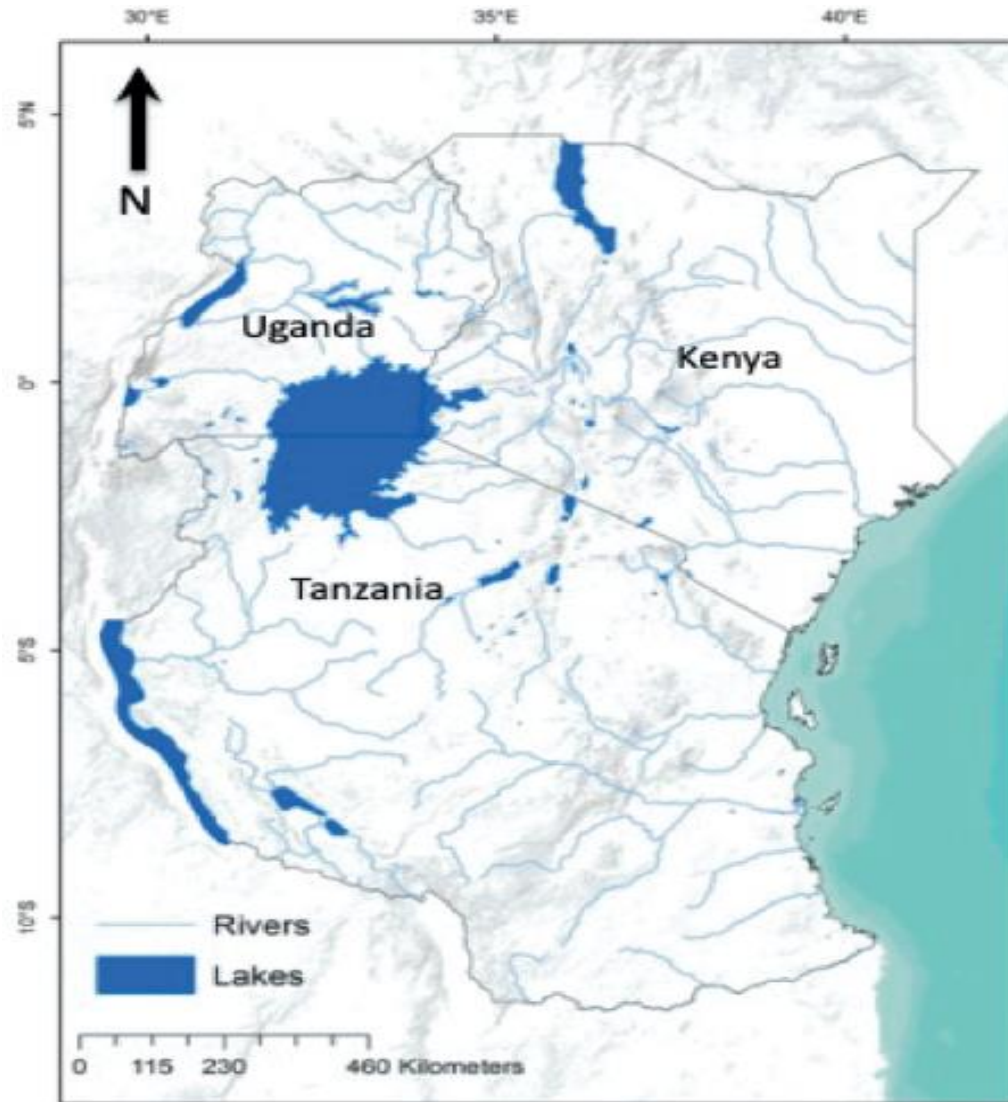


Fig. 1. Map of E. Africa showing main water bodies that support important fisheries [adapted from Marchant & Marchant (2021)].

- Gender dynamics and governance regimes determine differential access to- and control over resources between women and men in the region (Verma, 2007; Magaju et al., 2020).
- To this end, gender remains an integral part of and key element to understanding aquaculture and fisheries transformation in E. Africa.
- This paper uses the feminist political ecology (FPE) framework to assess the current gender dynamics in access to and control over assets and resources in the VCs in E. Africa.

Theoretical framework: Feminist Political Ecology (FPE)

- Political ecology seeks to understand the intersection and relations between political, economic and social factors and the environmental and ecological phenomena (Ankrah et al., 2020).
- The concept of FPE was birthed by Rocheleau et al. (2013) by adding a gendered lens to political ecology.
- It is a sub-field of political ecology that integrates elements of feminist theory in analyzing power relations in the access and control of productive resources (Mollett & Faria, 2013; Sundberg, 2016; Elmhirst, 2018).
- It lends a holistic view by examining gender and its intersection with class, race, ethnicity and culture (Ankrah et al., 2020).
- FPE considers macro-level forces without allowing them to over determine the microlevel picture.

Theoretical framework cont.

- FPE points out the specificity and complexity of men's women's relationships to their environments in different contexts (Mollett & Faria, 2013).
- FPE is a widely used framework in research on gender and agriculture in the developing world (Ankrah et al., 2020).
- This paper focuses on access to and control over resources within fish farming and fisher communities.
- FPE postulates that men and women possess differential rights to productive resources through their unique gender roles and family hierarchy structures (Elmhirst, 2015).
- Assets of fisheries and aquaculture include everything (both tangible & non-tangible) from financial capital to knowledge of the new production systems, human and social capital etc.

Methodology

- The study employed a systematic literature review (SLR) following an eight-step process:

1) Outlining the aim of the study,

2) Developing a search string,

3) Identifying data sources,

4) Outlining inclusion and exclusion criteria,

5) Refining literature,

6) Extracting data,

7) Presenting the findings,

8) Synthesizing the study outcomes.

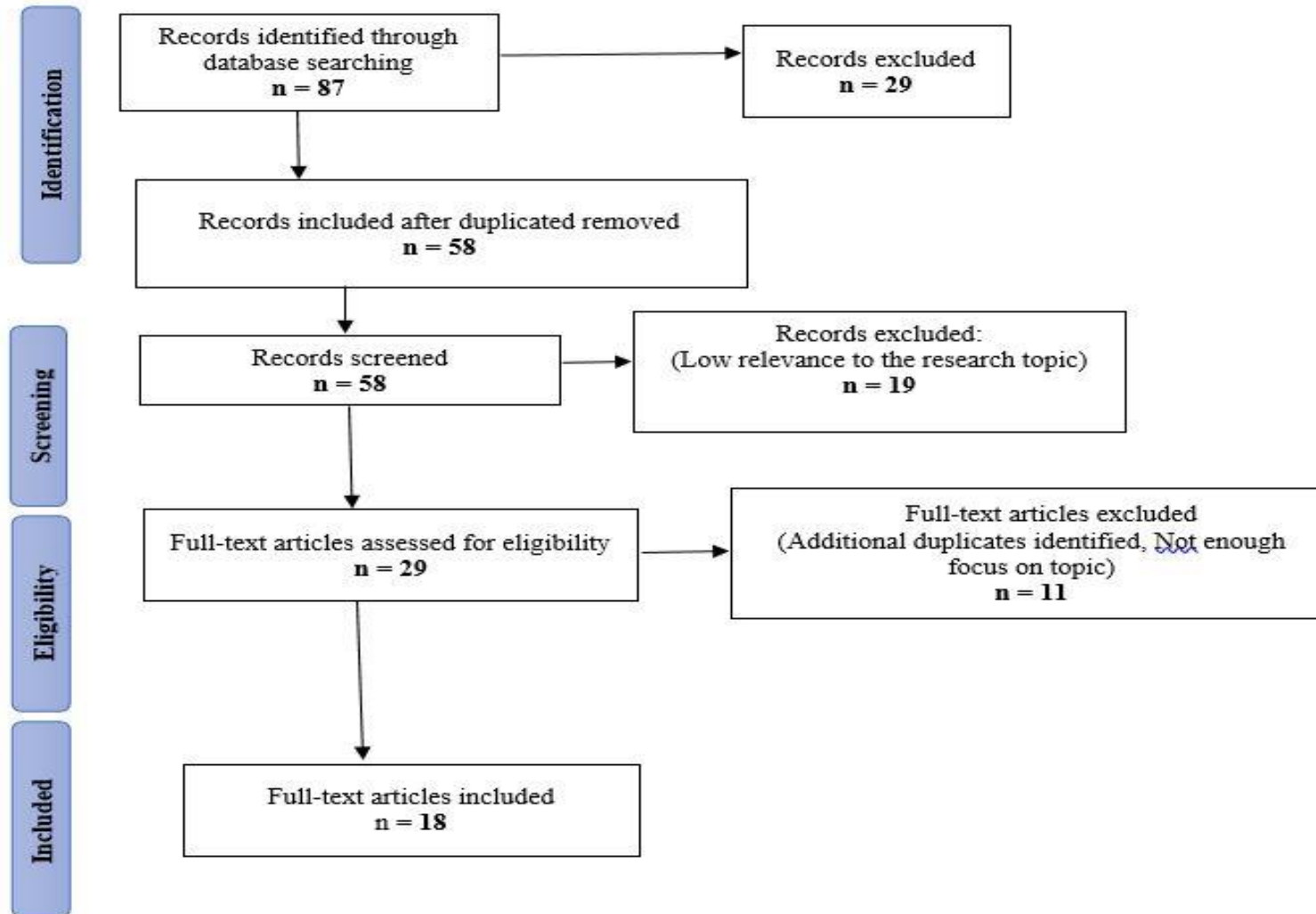
Methodology

- ▶ The **PRISMA checklist** was used as a guide (Tricco *et al.*, 2018)
- ▶ The literature search was done on electronic databases - Google Scholar, Scopus, Science Direct, and JSTOR for published materials.
- ▶ Search words included “gender”, “feminist political ecology”, “fisheries”, “aquaculture”, “assets”, “resources” and “east Africa”.

Inclusion criteria



The PRISMA flow diagram



Search terms



- Boolean operators ('OR' and 'AND') were appropriately used to further refine the search.
- The search yielded 87 papers. After deleting duplicates, a final sample of 58 papers were obtained.
- Further screening resulted in 18 papers, which were included in this study.

Findings

Case examples of differential access to resources between men and

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Asset/resource	Examples	Authors
Access to tenure rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inland female fish farmers in the Morogoro region and the area surrounding Lake Victoria find it extremely difficult to acquire land, and practically all fish ponds are owned by men. Most people who own land do so through familial inheritance, which excludes women. 	Chenyambuga et al. (2012)
Access to fishery resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Zanzibar, men enjoy access to the whole seascape, whereas women are restricted to nearshore fishing zones. On the Fumba Peninsula, men can access deeper populations by free diving all throughout the month whereas women are limited by the tide and can only harvest 10 days per month. Female gleaners In Chwaka Bay, women can only work during low tide (3–5 times a week) whereas men work more frequently 	(Crawford et al., 2010; Porter & Mbezi, 2010; Fröcklin et al., 2014; de la Torre-Castro et al., 2017)
Access to credit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is difficult for women to obtain credit from financial institutions 	Luomba (2013)
Access to training and extension services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women frequently lack access to training because events are not planned with gender roles in mind with regard to schedule and location. 	(Luomba, 2013; de la Torre-Castro et al., 2017).
Access to inputs/fishing gears	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More men have access to boats, than women. Women have to ask male fishers for a ride. Women use sticks or their hands to collect invertebrates, whereas men use snorkels, flippers and spears. On Songo Songo Island, men have more access to boats and diving gear. 	(Porter & Mbezi, 2010; Fröcklin et al., 2014).
Access to markets and marketing resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Female fish traders in Zanzibar lack access to main market tables, higher value fish, tourist buyers, transport and freezers. In Somanga, women only have access to fish that are left over once male brokers have taken their share. 	(Porter and Mbezi, 2010; Fröcklin et al., 2014)

Findings

Case examples of differential access to resources between men and women

Asset/resource	Examples	Authors
Access to tenure rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Kakamega and Trans Nzoia counties, women have limited access to land. In western Kenya, more male fish farmers own land as compared to female farmers 	(Kiumbuku et al., 2013; Githukia et al., 2020; Nabayunga et al., 2021)
Access to fish and fishery resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Homabay county, women are excluded in access of Lake Victoria for fishing. Around Lake Victoria, women may have to pay boat owners and crew for the privilege of buying fish or may have to agree to sex to secure and maintain access to fish. 	(Medard, 2012; Abwao & Awuor, 2019; Nunan & Cepić, 2020)
Access to funding/credit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In coastal Kenya, Kakamega and Trans Nzoia counties, men have better access to funding and credit than women. In western Kenya, more female fish farmers borrow money from their spouses than their male counterparts. In Homabay county, women have limited access to funds to start cage farming. Women around Lake Victoria have limited access to capital, thus taking up work that makes them dependent on men, including participating in transactional sex. 	(Kiumbuku et al., 2013; Pearson et al., 2013; Matsue et al., 2014; Abwao & Awuor, 2019; Githukia et al., 2020; Nunan & Cepić, 2020; Nabayunga et al., 2021)

Findings

Case examples of differential access to resources between men and

Asset/resource	Examples	Authors
Access to training and extension services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In Homabay county, more women lack training in improved fish technologies and production methods than men.	Abwao & Awuor, 2019
Access to information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In Kakamega county, women have inadequate information on aquaculture.	Nabayunga et al., 2021
Access to farm inputs/facilities/fishing gears	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In western Kenya, more male fish farmers own farm equipment and production facilities as compared to female farmers.• In Trans Nzoia county, women fish farmers have limited access to technologies as compared to men.• In Homabay county, women have limited access to cages used for tilapia culture in Lake Victoria.	(Kiumbuku et al., 2013; Abwao & Awuor, 2019; Githukia et al., 2020)
Access to markets and marketing resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In western Kenya, women lack mobility hence have lower access to markets.• In coastal Kenya, male traders purchase large fish to sell while small to medium fish are sold to female traders.	(Matsue et al., 2014; Githukia et al., 2020)

Summary findings through FPE lens

- ✓ Patriarchy, a major concern in FPE, hinders women's access to assets and resources.
- ✓ Women's assets/resources are made vulnerable to male claims because of patrilineal rules of the rural communities.
- ✓ Social norms produce contradictory class relations regarding access to assets and resources as witnessed by women's limited mobility.
- ✓ Women possess a “disproportionate burden of the hidden costs” of inequitable economic and political structures that place women in unequal peril e.g. poverty, malnutrition, STDS; sex-for-fish etc..



Conclusion



- Findings revealed that fisheries and aquaculture are resource-intensive, with social, cultural, and gender ideologies contributing to gendered access to assets and resources.
- Women's contribution to small-scale fisheries and aquaculture VCs is hampered by gender disparities and power imbalance in asset and resource ownership.

Recommendations



A reconceptualization of the role and identities of women in aligning with the complex food insecurity realities within the fisheries and aquaculture VCs.



Multidisciplinary research is needed to enhance knowledge.