Work and Social Reproduction in Rural India: Lessons from Time-Use Data

Smriti Rao, Smita Ramnarain, Sirisha Naidu, Anupama Uppal, and Avanti Mukherjee

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Work and Social Reproduction in Rural India: Lessons from Time-Use Data

Smriti Rao[1]
Assumption University, MA, USA
and
Women's Studies Research Center, Brandeis University, MA, USA

Smita Ramnarain,
University of Rhode Island, RI, USA

Sirisha Naidu,
University of Missouri-Kansas City, MO, USA

Anupama Uppal
Punjabi University, Punjab, India

Avanti Mukherjee
State University of New York, Cortland, NY, USA

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Abstract

Even as the literature on work in the Global South acknowledges the importance of forms of non-waged work, it has not sufficiently incorporated consideration of the labor of social reproduction. We propose understanding work through four conceptual dyads: waged productive labor, non-waged productive labor, waged reproductive labor, and non-waged reproductive labor. Through an in-depth description of three specific cases from a Time Use Survey we conducted in rural Punjab, India, we argue not only that all four dyads are required to encompass the world of work, but that this more expansive conceptualization can help us produce richer analyses of the intersections of class, caste and gender.

Keywords: Labor, Gender, Punjab

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1. Introduction

Attempts to understand the world of work in the Global South appear to be breaking with teleologies constructed from the experiences of the Global North. An emergent literature aims to conceptually ground an important empirical reality: that 'doubly free' wage labor hired by relatively centralized capital is not the dominant organizational form of work in many contexts of the Global South (Scully 2016). The vast majority of workers in India, for instance, work in the unregulated informal sector, with few protections, great insecurity, and significant unpredictability (Breman 2010). Rural households rely on multiple sources of livelihood, ranging from precarious temporary migration, wage work in local farm and non-farm economies, and petty commodity production (PCP) (Pattenden 2016, Harriss-White 2018). As the literature on petty commodity production, formally subsumed labor, and classes of labor argues, this divergence from the trajectory of advanced capitalist countries can no longer be treated as temporary (Harriss-White 2014; Bernstein 2017, Banaji 2013).

Many of these studies now acknowledge the constitutive role of the work of social reproduction - the under-remunerated effort of producing use-values essential to 'life-making' (Bhattacharya 2017). However, very few then proceed to rethink conceptual categories of work to account for such effort (Mezzadri 2020). Furthermore, some existing categories of work are applied at the level of the household, without sufficient consideration of the differentiation of effort based on gender, class, caste, or age within and across households (Razavi 2009). Thus the literature has not gone far enough in conceptually grounding another empirical reality: the dominance of the labors of "variegated social reproduction" (Bakker and Gill 2019) in the lives of many inhabitants of the global South. An analysis of lives and livelihoods that does not fully incorporate this labor of social reproduction invisibilizes the work itself and elides the diverse and multifarious activities that are undertaken, not simply to subsist, but also to embed one's lives and living within the social fabric of the community (Shah and Lerche 2020).

The methods by which data on work are collected are usually even less responsive to feminist critiques of productivist frameworks. There is now a large literature demonstrating the weaknesses of standard employment/unemployment surveys and showing that time-use studies provide an alternative and more inclusive methodology to examine work (Folbre 2006, Kongar and Connelly 2017). A time-use survey (TUS) can help us identify the extent, scope, and characteristics of labor time in ways that could also provide an effective tool to apply a feminist political economy lens to extend our understanding of work.

Following feminist literature, we understand work as all human effort that is undertaken to produce exchange and use value. In order to understand the diversity of human effort expended in sustaining human life, we conducted a TUS of 192 women and men in the village of Hakamwala in the state of Punjab in India. In this paper, we provide an in-depth description of three specific cases from this study in a heuristic exercise using disaggregated time-use data. Our goal is to demonstrate the complexity of the world of work in rural Punjab, and to illustrate how the labor of social reproduction intersects with existing analytical categories of work. Doing so demonstrates the importance of developing analytical categories that explicitly include the waged and non-waged work of social reproduction.

2. Literature on Labor and Social Reproduction

2.1 Theorizations of Labor without Social Reproduction

The dominant understanding of the working class has been based upon the 'standard employment relationship (SER)' that is treated as the norm in the Global North (Breman and van der Linden 2014: 921). Despite the exploitation embedded in the SER, such work granted workers a certain limited stability and recourse to legal rights, created by preceding waves of worker struggles. Yet, a vast majority of working people in the South participate in forms of work that are several degrees removed from SER. Concepts such as "classes of labor" or "awkward classes" attempt to map this world of non-SER work. In particular, a debate has emerged about whether precarious self-employment in India is better understood as a specific labor process of petty commodity production (PCP) as Harriss-White (2014) may argue, or, as Banaji (2013) or Bernstein (2017) may frame it, as effectively constituting classes of labor that may be formally subsumed to capital even where work appears to be own-account.

We are less concerned here with intervening on one or the other side of the Harriss-White and the Banaji/Bernstein perspectives on the classes of labor/PCP divide. Each is an attempt to grapple with the extent and nature of non-waged work in the Indian economy, and to move beyond the agriculture/non-agriculture divide that was once central to both labor theory and politics in India. The shift away from studying waged work alone also allows more room for the incorporation of unpaid labor as part of a broad category of non-waged work. The significant point for us is that these perspectives do not sufficiently incorporate the labor of social reproduction into their theoretical categories (Rao 2018; Mezzadri 2020). Even as the waged labor of social reproduction emerges as an increasingly important category, in the under-employed Global South, there may be contexts where labor power is reproduced without any guarantee that this labor will be exploited by capital at all (i.e. enter into the circuits of capital). The non-waged labor of social reproduction is thus critical for survival (Naidu and Ossome 2016). This is a point we demonstrate below with our time-use narratives, where we show that the PCP/formal subsumption/wage worker debate misses/excludes workers for whom the work of social reproduction, both waged and non-waged, constitute a significant proportion of work they perform.

2.2 Incorporating the Labor of Social Reproduction

The social reproduction framework (SRF) recognizes that life making, i.e., the processes of reproducing and maintaining life, occurs within the framework of class relations (Arruzza 2016)[2]. Marxists feminists have long argued for the explicit recognition of life-making as central to sustaining the working classes. This political endeavor challenges a solely productivist understanding of work that is defined only by its relationship to the labor market (Federici 2012).

[2] The literature also draws a distinction between societal reproduction, which reproduces the entire system of social relations such as class, gender and caste relations, and social reproduction, which includes the biological, daily, and generational reproduction of the labor force as well as its provisioning and caring needs (Bakker 2003). Without denying the importance of the former, our focus here is on the latter.

The work of reproducing people, whether paid or unpaid, waged or non-waged, is considered part of social reproduction (Laslett and Brenner 1989, Bakker 2003). Thus, for example, the effort expended to provide health care is an example of the labor of social reproduction. This labor can be performed without pay in the household, but it can also be paid/waged labor performed by a nurse or doctor in a private or public hospital, or in their own clinic. In drawing attention to the ways in which this labor is deemed the result of the naturalized caregiving impulses of certain groups of people, and of gendered, racialized and caste-ized processes, SRF also incorporates an understanding of why, even when such labor becomes *paid,* it may continue to be undervalued, whether it is performed within or outside of the family or household (Bhattacharya 2017). In other words, SRF sees the family or household as one of many sites where the renewal of labor power takes place.

If we understand capitalism itself to be variegated spatially and historically, and a "tangled" hierarchy of markets at various scales (Jessop 2018), then social reproduction must also be understood as differentiated and rooted in specific contextual social, economic, cultural, or ecological practices (Bakker and Gill 2019). Thus, the labor of social reproduction is not merely gendered; it is experienced by the working classes within certain historical contexts that are impacted by caste, race and ethnicity (Shah and Lerche 2020). In this vein of variegated social reproduction, we look to co-constitutive relations of class, caste, and gender with the objective of understanding the human effort of life-making.

From our time-use data we find that at least four conceptual dyads are required in order to capture the full range of livelihood activities engaged in by our interviewees across gender, caste, and class. We start from the division between waged and non-waged work developed by the literature discussed earlier, except in our case, we understand non-waged work to include not just PCP, but also unpaid work. We then layer the distinction between waged and non-waged work upon the distinction between production and social reproduction to obtain the categories of: i) waged productive work ii) non-waged productive work iii) waged reproductive work and iv) non-waged reproductive work.

As discussed earlier, the bulk of the existing literature on work has tended to focus on the dyads of waged-productive work (e.g. daily wage labor) and non-waged-productive work (such as PCP). The latter has been pointed to as a distinctive and non-transitory feature of the Indian world of work. But those same studies of rural India tend to miss the non-waged labor of social reproduction, which emerges as central in our data. Another dyad that is important in our data – the waged work of social reproduction – is often subsumed under paid work more generally and not treated as analytically distinctive, despite feminists arguing otherwise. We argue below that these failures of theory and empirics have led to impoverished analyses not just of the role of gender, but also the role of caste, co-constituted with class to shape the lives and livelihoods of most Indian workers. We also argue that it is no coincidence that such failures/gaps become more obvious when employing time-use data.

For instance, the work of a woman sewing an item of clothing for her daughter, as in the case of one of our respondents, would be ignored in official employment statistics because it is assumed to be unpaid. We categorize it as non-waged manufacturing work in our framework. There is a case to be made that a further distinction between non-waged paid (for-profit at first glance)

work and unpaid work could help elucidate how forms of surplus extraction vary when work is entirely unpaid/subsistence, as compared to when it is PCP/ formally subsumed[3]. This requires us to further track whether or not it eventually ends up being sold and/or profitable, even if originally intended for a family member. In situations like the ones we encountered in the field, the decision to sell, or produce 'for profit' was not always fixed, shifting depending upon the circumstances of the household and individual. In future research, we hope to elucidate on how the different categories and their variants might combine into particular modes of exploitation.

For the dyads that we do discuss in this paper, it is not our intention to suggest a Cartesian-like framework of firmly bounded categories. Rather we view these forms of work as potentially overlapping, as we discuss later. Table 1 below provides a summary of how we categorized the work activities we encountered in our fieldwork[4].

Table 1 about here

3. Methodological Approach, Background, and Context

In the following sections, we discuss our specific methodological approach and provide a brief background into the fieldwork context.

3.1 Disaggregating the Work of Life-Making through Time Use Studies

There is now widespread acknowledgement that conventional measures of work in employment surveys rely too much on the mediation of the market (Folbre 2006). The measures are further distorted by the racialized, gendered, classed, and caste-based biases of surveyors and respondents about who works and what work is (Razavi 2007). In response to these critiques, time use surveys have emerged as an important alternative form of collecting data on people's daily activities. A TUS asks respondents about their activities over the course of a representative day or week without explicitly deploying categories of 'work' or 'labor' during the survey itself. Thus, it can better capture the work done for 'pay or profit' as well as unpaid, non-market work and leisure activities (Antonopoulos and Hirway 2010). Such surveys have been an especially critical tool for tracking non-waged reproductive labor in ways that standard employment surveys cannot.

In addition, time use data allows a fine-grained analysis of precarious, and spatially and temporally fragmented forms of formally subsumed/PCP work that evade standard employment surveys and yet are the norm in the Global South. Indeed, TUSs and time-budget studies first emerged from a desire to better understand the living conditions of the working classes in early industrial development (Szalai 1972). We posit, therefore, that there is much greater scope for this methodology to be utilized in contemporary Marxist-feminist political economy analyses.

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[3] See Rao (2018) for one attempt to understand the articulation between absolute surplus extraction through formally subsumed labor, and the subsidy to capital from unpaid work.

[4] Reproductive labor may be further sub-divided into direct and indirect care work (Folbre 2006), and the burden of the latter does tend to be unusually high in India (Hirway and Jose 2011), but that particular distinction is beyond this scope of this particular paper.

A number of time use studies have been implemented across the world in the last thirty years. India implemented a pilot TUS in 1998-99 (Hirway and Jose 2011), followed by a recent national level survey carried out in 2019. At the time of writing, the data had just been released, and we look forward to learning about its main findings in future analyses. For the purposes of our own analysis, we devised and implemented a TUS in the village of Hakamwala in Punjab in February-March 2020[5] before the release of the national-level data.

3.2 Study details and method

The TUS we conducted in Hakamwala village, Punjab is part of a larger project to understand how changing gender relations have shaped and been shaped by agrarian change. Hakamwala was previously surveyed by a research organization in India, the Foundation for Agrarian Studies (FAS), in 2011 (Sivamurugan and Swaminathan 2017, FAS 2020). In the tradition of village studies, our choice of this village was influenced by the existence of this previous data, enabling some comparisons over time.

Our overall sample was selected as follows. We split all households in the village that contained married couples of working age (18-65 years) into two groups: i) the landed (greater than 2 acres of land owned) and ii) the land-poor and landless (with 2 acres or less of land owned). In proportion with FAS's census of the village in 2011, we then selected 55% of our sample of 100 households from the latter group and 45% from the former using a randomized selection system. We use 'household' here not to signify a unified category of analysis, or one where the boundaries between the household and the rest of the village are firm or defined. Rather we use household as a "historically appropriate approximation" (O'Laughlin 1999) to help initiate our data collection efforts.

Following feminist critiques of analyses that stop at the level of the household (Deere 1990, O' Laughlin 1999, Razavi 2009), we administered a TUS separately to each member of a working-age, married couple. Therefore, we present our analysis disaggregated by respondent. Each interviewee answered a questionnaire on demographic details, select household assets, and the distribution of responsibility for various kinds of unpaid work. In collecting this data, we trained enumerators to ask probing questions about work (to account for enumerator and respondent bias) and created multiple points of cross-validation to obtain a more complete profile of work. We used a 24-hour recall method for our TUS, with an interviewer guiding the respondent though an account of the day. Our final sample consisted of 192 completed interviews of 96 spousal pairs.

3.3 Capturing life and labor through Time-Use 'Narratives'

Time use data are typically presented as aggregate numbers. Such aggregated data are useful if the objective is to calculate the value of, say, unpaid economic activity. Rather than valuation, however, our purpose in this paper is to understand how the labor of social reproduction appears in everyday activities of the respondents, and how it intersects with other forms of labor. Our

[5] Our TUS design benefitted from helpful discussions with members of the Foundation for Agrarian Studies (FAS) who implemented a time-use survey (covering only women) in two villages in Karnataka (see Swaminathan 2020).

interest is in delineating how the intersections between different forms of work also complicate the existing categories used to understand labor.

In this paper, therefore, we use narrative data and in-depth description of the livelihoods and life-making activities for three spousal pairs from our survey sample. Based on detailed and disaggregated descriptions of the work activities of these spousal pairs, we provide an in-depth reconstruction of a specific day. The information gathered through select time-use interviews is supplemented by information gathered through observations and additional open-ended questions. The three spousal pairs were purposively chosen from our sample to provide a succinct showcase for the concerns we wish to highlight in this paper.

Social researchers, and feminist political economists in particular, have long emphasized the necessity of understanding the 'imprint of values' that may lie behind survey data (Berik, 1997: 122). Although survey data may present themselves as quantitative data points, their honest interpretation relies upon contextual knowledge and awareness of the complex processes that underlie the observed economic outcomes (Basole and Ramnarain 2016). In this paper, we employ the TUS not to understand aggregated *outcomes* (how much time is spent on each activity) but to understand the *processes* of life-making (*viz.* the range of activities undertaken, the implicit norms behind who does what activity, how such decisions are mediated by class, gender or caste) and their intersections with other types of labor and livelihoods activities (see also Garikipati 2010). Our particular use of time-use data as an illustrative device here – to understand precisely these processes – is, therefore, appropriate.

3.4. Context: Punjab and Hakamwala village

As one of India's most important agriculture producing states, and one that has amongst the lowest officially measured female labor force participation rates in the country (16%), Punjab represents a particularly interesting context to study the intersection of gender and agrarian change (NSSO 2019). After being the richest state in India for a good portion of the 1980s, Punjab's economy decelerated in the 1990s, and since then has been stagnant relative to the larger Indian economy. Although Punjab was shielded from the worst aspects of agrarian crisis in the post-liberalization period due to price supports[6], input subsidies from the state and national government, and public investment (including credit and electrification), its lack of crop diversification in agriculture is also responsible for relatively low growth rates post-2005 (Chand and Parappurathu 2012). The relatively high degree of mechanization in agriculture also means that agricultural growth does not generate corresponding employment growth. The now established system of labor in-migration from poorer states during the peak agricultural season for rice has further reduced the use of local agricultural labor (Gulati, Roy and Hussain 2017).

In fact, rural Punjab has a relatively small share of large/middle farmer households or agricultural wage workers in the working age population at this point. Meanwhile, the share of the working age population in petty non-agricultural self-employment has stayed above the national average. As a result, 57% of rural working age Punjabis now live in households whose main source of income is reported to be petty non-agricultural self-employment (21%) or non-

[6] Over 80% of cropping area in the state is devoted to food grain production, which is largely covered by the government Minimum Support Price (MSP) purchasing system (Gulati, Roy and Hussain 2017).

agricultural wage work, whether casual or salaried (36%) (NSSO 2019). Clearly, studying rural Punjab means studying much more than agriculture. Punjabis, now relatively highly educated compared to the national average, are also heavily invested in out-migration, not just to neighboring Delhi, but also to an increasingly wide range of international locations.

Punjab also had the second highest inequality adjusted Human Development Index in India after Kerala as of 2011 (Suryanarayana et al 2016). Large shares of the rural population have access to schooling, electricity, sanitation, clean water and roads, suggesting a relatively broad base of development by Indian standards. Within Punjab, however, the Malwa region, where Hakamwala village is located, is less-developed. Irrigated land in less common than in the fertile 'Doaba' region of Punjab, and there are also fewer non-agricultural sources of employment within Hakamwala's commuting zone.

Despite a majority of Punjabis being Sikh, a religion that is formally anti-caste, data on both occupational and residential segregation within the villages of Punjab indicate the powerful role of caste. In 2011, per FAS data (FAS 2019) 44% of the Hakamwala population was Dalit, 13% belonged to the Nai Sikh (lit: barber) and Kumhar (lit:potter) castes.The remaining 43% belonged to the Jat Sikh community[7], the economically and politically dominant caste in the Punjab region (Mooney 2013). Dalit**s** in Hakamwala were relatively crowded into visibly smaller homes in one corner of the village. While around 55% of all households were land poor (less than two acres) or landless, that percentage rose to 97% for Dalit households (FAS 2019), so that land ownership continued to be dominated by Jat Sikhs. The starkly caste-segregated nature of land ownership explains the strength of the *Dalit Zaminprapti* movement in this part of Punjab. This movement intensified after 2014 as village elites in Punjab attempted to subvert the ability of Dalits to cultivate village common lands (Bansal 2020).

4. Caste, gender and work: Findings from Hakamwala, Punjab

4.1 Overview and descriptive statistics: work and activities not including unpaid social reproduction

In this section, we present some descriptive statistics from the non-time use sections[8] of our survey to present an overall picture of how caste and gender co-constituted the world of work for pay or profit in Hakamwala.

Table 2 about here

Within our sample, Table 2 shows the caste-based inequality in the ownership of land, and irrigated land. Non-agricultural sources of employment have thus been especially critical to Dalit

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[7] The term 'Jat Sikh' simultaneously conveys religious, ethnic, and caste designations. Mooney (2013) argues that although Jats were considered lower caste as farmers, the Jat Sikhs in Punjab came to enjoy an elevated caste position due to their reputation as a martial race and due to their renown as a community of farmers and landlords in the Punjab, India's 'bread basket'.

[8] Note that this section of our survey more closely resembled a conventional employment survey, and therefore does not include unpaid reproductive work.

livelihoods for several decades now, particularly as agricultural wage work is increasingly carried out by temporary migrants from other states. As Table 3 below shows, India's National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) has played a significant role in this regard.

Table 3 about here

Punjab is well-known for the "white revolution" in dairy production that it underwent alongside the green revolution. This is reflected in widespread ownership of livestock, particularly buffalos, usually housed and tended to within the boundaries of the home. 77% of all women, and 68% of all men reported regularly engaging in some form of care of livestock, with a notably more similar distribution across castes than in the case of either agricultural or non-agricultural work. The care of livestock is a significant activity in women's workdays (Venkatasubramanian and Ramnarain 2018) and, as Swaminathan and Ramchandran (2020) argue based on village surveys across the country, the systematic exclusion of livestock activities by national survey agencies is partly responsible for the low women's labor force participation rates reported by these agencies. Our interviewees were very clear that they were rearing livestock not just for subsistence but also with an eye to profit opportunities – the sale of excess milk, or of calves once older. Thus, our field work suggests that excluding activities from the calculation of labor force participation undercounts even the work "for pay or profit" that women are engaged in.

Outside of livestock rearing, a larger share of both men and women in Hakamwala reported livelihood generation through agriculture as compared to non-agriculture. Thus, 47% of women reported some form of agricultural participation as compared to 39% reporting non-agricultural participation, while 78% of men reported agricultural participation as compared to 43% reporting non-agricultural participation.

This data comes with the very significant caveat that elite non-agricultural activities that stem from investment (running dealerships, real estate etc.) are very likely to be under-reported in our data. We found elite men much more comfortable with presenting themselves as cultivators – perhaps for tax reasons, as well as reasons of status – despite anecdotal and observational evidence that they were engaged in non-agricultural business dealings outside the village. Such self-identification may be a reason for the under-counting of non-agricultural activities on the part of elite men in particular.

Perhaps as a result of such under-reporting, as well as the high degree of mechanization and use of (male) in-migrants in agricultural labor in Punjab, the gender gap in participation was actually higher for agricultural than for non-agricultural activities, with fewer women reporting participation in agricultural activities. The very significant roles of both NREGS and reproductive labor (for example: teaching, paid domestic work, work as a midwife) in generating higher non-agricultural participation is also clear from the table.

For Dalit women, rates of participation in agricultural and non-agricultural work are very similar, and higher than for women in other caste groups. However, Dalit women's (and men's) participation in agricultural and non-agricultural work is primarily through wage work, whereas the agricultural participation of men belonging to other caste groups is mainly in the category of own cultivation and supervision of agriculture.

The earlier statistic for women's low participation in agriculture overall is driven by Jat Sikh women, who report low shares of participation in own-cultivation, and even lower shares in agricultural wage labor. Within non-agricultural work, Jat Sikh women do not participate in NREGS work, but do engage in work for pay or profit, both reproductive and productive, including some work that requires them to enter the 'outside' of the home. The key distinction is that these tend to be more white-collar occupations, for example, as health care workers, teachers or beauticians providing threading services[9]. Once we include women's participation in livestock rearing, however, any inverse relationship between caste status and women's labor force participation becomes insignificant.

As expected, women were more likely to participate in reproductive labor for pay or profit relative to men, with a higher percentage of Dalit women participating in this work relative to other women. Importantly, only Dalit women reported low-wage forms of reproductive work as domestic servants or janitors. Women from the so-called higher castes reported being teachers or health care workers. The two Jat Sikh men performing waged reproductive labor also held salaried jobs as teachers. This is consistent with the operation of commodified reproductive labor in many countries, where markets often allocate (undervalued) reproductive labor to those marginalized by race, caste and gender.

Our data suggest that patterns of work are obscured when they are not disaggregated by caste and gender. What looks like low women's participation in agriculture is not the case for Dalit women. It also becomes clear that certain categories of work, waged reproductive labor for example, can be especially important in revealing the co-constitution of caste, gender and class, as we note in the time-use narratives below as well.

4.2 Analysis of Time-Use Narratives

We focus here on narratives summarizing the results of our TUS for three couples with slightly different occupational profiles. In the case of the first couple, a landless Dalit household marked by the predominance of waged labor for both the man and the woman we interviewed, we find less dissonance between what the TUS excavates and the dominant categories of work employed in the existing literature, which are organized, as discussed earlier, around the waged/non-waged labor divide. The labor of social reproduction does, however, still cast a shadow upon these categories.

The second and third households more directly reveal the gaps and elisions in the existing ways of capturing the world of work if we fail to employ the cross-cutting category of labor of social reproduction alongside the waged/non-waged labor distinction. In both cases, the paid and unpaid work of social reproduction looms large in the actual daily labors of our respondents. It is important to note that these interviews were conducted during the lean agricultural season, resulting in lower time spent on agricultural activities.

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[9] Despite careful probing by surveyors and despite interviewing women separately, in at least two cases surveyors suspected (from offhand comments) but could not get the respondent to confirm, that they were in fact engaged in non-agricultural work for pay. Our numbers might therefore still be an under-count.

1. Dominance of waged work

Chainpreet Kaur and Jogi Singh[10] are a couple whose time-use is much better captured by existing wage-labor dominant categories, although (i) non-waged reproductive labor is part of the story, and (ii) examining waged-reproductive labor as a category reveals the broader context of gendered and caste hierarchies within which the labor is situated.

Chainpreet Kaur and Jogi Singh are landless. They are Mazhabi Sikhs, the local term for Dalits within Sikhism. In 2011, when FAS first surveyed them, they reported mortgaging out 0.04 acres of irrigated crop land. By 2020, they were reporting no land owned, suggesting that the land had been lost. Then and now, they lived with their two sons and daughter, ranging in age from 14 to 9, all three of whom were enrolled in school. Their daughter was now 14, and helped her mother with housework and animal husbandry.

In 2011, the couple did not report owning livestock, but in 2020 they owned a buffalo. And while JS reported casual agricultural wage labor in cotton, wheat and paddy as his occupation in 2011, he is now a permanent agricultural labor (*seeri* worker), attached for the entire year to a single large landlord's home, where he is paid cash, but also provided tea and his morning meal. At the landlord's, he performs a mix of animal husbandry (including collecting fodder), agricultural labor, but also tasks such as deseeding cotton flowers and buying vegetables for the landlord at a nearby vegetable *mandi* (market).

Chainpreet Kaur had reported performing primarily non-waged reproductive labor in 2011, with some 45 days of agricultural wage labor in the cotton-picking season, and another 60 days of non-agricultural wage labor in the NREGA program. But by 2020, she had obtained a job as a worker in the village government school. There she cleans and maintains classrooms, serves the teachers tea and lunch and does a number of janitorial tasks. She also, however, performs part-time paid work in animal husbandry and reproductive labor at the home of the same landlord who employs her husband. The reproductive labor she performs is thus now primarily waged, rather than unpaid, but her assignment to these two particular, relatively low-wage forms of paid reproductive labor is a result of historically gendered and caste-based divisions of labor, as well as the expansion of public schooling in the village.

Table 4 about here

As with most other families in the village, the animal husbandry activities that Chainpreet Kaur is principally responsible for were directed at own-consumption during the lean season, but with an eye to selling milk, or a calf once it was old enough, later in the year.

In contrast to the couples we discuss below, this couple combined performs markedly less non-waged labor of any kind (see Table 4). In fact, while Chainpreet Kaur herself performs reproductive labor, the vast majority was waged, with only 1 hour and 55 minutes that day devoted to cooking and to washing clothes. The presence of an older daughter who took over some of the tasks of cooking and cleaning was clearly very significant here. Thus, even in this

[10] Pseudonyms are used to preserve the anonymity of the respondents.

story, the view over time requires an acknowledgement of non-waged reproductive labor, which was Chainpreet Kaur's primary occupation when her children were younger.

2. Dominance of non-waged work.

Ravinder Singh and Chayya Kaur live with their three young sons, aged 9-12, and RS's 70-year-old mother who is a widow. They are also Mazhabi Sikhs, but like many other contemporary Dalit families in the region, they followed the teachings of the Saint Ravidas, based upon whose egalitarian, anti-caste preachings, many Dalits in Punjab have broken away from mainstream Sikhism and become 'Ravidasis'.

Nine years ago, in 2011, when their household was first surveyed by FAS, Ravinder Singh' s father was still alive. The father lived in the home next door with his wife, and their younger son, Ravinder Singh's brother. Ravinder Singh's father tended to about 0.25 acres of land that the family owned. Ravinder Singh reported performing non-agricultural wage labor, as did his brother. Ravinder Singh's major source of income that year came from laboring in a brick kiln in a neighboring village. He also reported performing occasional agricultural labor. Chayya Kaur, meanwhile, reported primarily tending to her family and their livestock. She did report that she performed agricultural wage labor during the peak agricultural season, as well as some non-agricultural labor in the brick kiln that her husband and brother-in-law also worked in.

Chayya Kaur's occupational profile did not look very different when we resurveyed the household in 2020, except that she no longer reported wage labor at the brick kiln. Ravinder Singh's occupational profile had changed quite a bit. While his mother now lived with them, he did not report cultivating the 0.25 acres his father had in 2011. Ravinder Singh no longer reported performing non-agricultural or agricultural wage labor either. Instead, he had been able to buy a motorbike and is using it to retail vegetables within the village. He buys vegetables from a wholesale market in the neighboring town of Budhladha, and then sells to households within the village: households call him on his cellphone, letting him know what they want to buy. He rides over and drops off the order.

Ravinder Singh's story suggests one possible path of occupational change over time: the move away from land cultivation, toward non-agricultural wage labor, and eventually to becoming a non-agricultural trader – the kind of shift that would, on the surface, fit the thesis that non-waged work, such as PCP, is increasingly common in India.

His wife's occupational profile, on the other hand, suggests more continuity than change. Her occupational profile is one that we observed for several middle-aged women in Hakamwala. They perform not just unpaid reproductive labor but also some agricultural labor during the relatively labor-intensive paddy-planting and cotton harvesting seasons, alongside non-waged, but at least partly for profit, animal husbandry activities.

On the day we collected time use data for Chayya Kaur and Ravinder Singh, Chayya Kaur woke up at 5am and slept at 10pm. During this 17-hour day (see Table 5), she spent a half hour helping her husband sort the vegetables he was preparing to sell. She spent 3 hours on animal husbandry activities, 8 hours on the work of cooking, cleaning, washing clothes and utensils etc., and

another 2 hours and 45 minutes on direct care of her children and mother-in-law, all but half an hour of which was simultaneous with socializing and/or personal care such as eating or drinking tea. We record Chayya Kaur's animal husbandry-related work under total non-waged productive work.

Table 5 about here

Ravinder Singh woke that same day at 4am, and slept at 9pm. By 5am he was travelling to the wholesale market in Budhladha to buy vegetables. He spent 2 hours and 45 minutes of his day travelling or waiting for transactions related to buying wholesale vegetables, 3 hours and 30 minutes buying vegetables at the wholesale market, another 4 hours selling the vegetables, and finally 2 hours helping to resolve a neighborhood dispute at the local police station. He reported 45 minutes of child care in addition.

The 10 hours and 45 minutes the couple together spent on activities (including travel) relating to his trade in vegetables, potentially constitute either a 'pure' petty commodity labor process or a labor process that is formally subsumed to capital (represented here by wholesale vegetable traders and/or potential money lenders) (Pattenden 2020). Once we take into account the very similar nature of CH's livestock activities – which also have the potential to generate at least some profit margins for some part of the year - it becomes clear that RS is not the only one engaged in petty commodity/formally subsumed labor processes.

But looking at the distribution of their time worked, the almost 11 hours of direct and indirect care performed by Chayya Kaur is comparable to the total time spent on petty trade and livestock activities. It is also possible to think about the 2 hours spent by her husband to resolve the neighborhood dispute as part of the labor of social reproduction, as it helps to produce and reproduce relationships within the community/neighborhood that may be a source of sustenance and survival for Hakamwala households (more on this below). If so, this would take the labor of social reproduction to over 13 hours. The work of social reproduction thus accounts for a significant share of the work performed by the couple together, stressing the importance of an established analytical framework that takes these 13 hours into account.

Within the existing literature, the main analytical question with respect to RS and CH's household would be whether their petty trading activities are autonomous of capital (and thus PCP) versus subsumed to it in some way. But that debate ends up erasing the gender division of labor more generally, and the work performed by Chayya Kaur in particular.

3. Waged and non-waged labors of social reproduction

Jagjot Singh is a Jat Sikh who is self-employed in agriculture, and his wife Harleen Kaur is an Anganwadi[11] worker. They have two adult children, a daughter and a son. Their unmarried son

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[11] An *Anganwadi* (lit: courtyard shelter) worker is a provider of rural health care and child care services in India, working in a government program of the same name. Anganwadi workers provide education on nutrition for pregnant women and mothers with young children, and provide some preschool activities in villages with *Anganwadi* centers, such as Hakamwala. *Anganwadi* centers often provide children with a meal or snacks in their efforts to combat malnutrition.

has emigrated to Canada after completing a diploma course on computer applications, while their unmarried daughter is currently a student working on a post-graduate degree in education.

Neither respondent's occupational profiles has changed significantly between 2011– when the household was first surveyed by FAS – and the 2020 TUS. Land ownership declined from 12 acres reported in 2011, to about 8 acres in 2020. Of this, Jagjot Singh reports 7 acres being leased out. In addition, he also leases in land (about 2.5 acres). The crops grown are wheat, cotton and rice. The family retains a third of the wheat cultivated for their own consumption, but all of the rice and cotton grown is for sale. The family also owns livestock, namely one buffalo and one cow, and both perform tasks associated with livestock care. In 2011, Harleen Kaur had reported earning Rs. 45,600 per month at her job as an Anganwadi worker.

On the day we interviewed the couple, both had 14 hour days, waking around 6 am and retiring a little past 10 pm (see Table 6). From the time of waking up, Harleen Kaur reported about 3.25 hours of waged care work in her role as Anganwadi worker, playing with, teaching, and supervising children, and providing them with food. A little less than 2.5 hours was spent on stitching and needlework at home, which we classify as non-waged manufacturing, as discussed earlier. Tasks related to animal husbandry took up another half hour or so. While these tasks carried out by women would be considered unproductive domestic labor by national survey agencies, here we report it as non-waged 'productive' work. Harleen Kaur's time diary presents a balance between waged reproductive labor and unwaged reproductive labor, with both dyads being equally important. Being a Jat Sikh, she is engaged in a relatively white-collar form of waged reproductive labor (in contrast to CK in our first narrative), indicating again the importance of caste in shaping the world of work in Hakamwala.

Table 6 about here

Jagjot Singh spent a little over 2 hours on animal care, and an hour supervising crops in the fields and interacting with hired labor there. He reported about 15 minutes of bureaucratic business for the household, including travel time (collecting a driving license from a nearby village office). On this particular day, he also reported about 5.5 hours of phone usage and social interaction with others, including assisting our survey team, which was surveying individuals in the village. Part of the reason he was our point of contact in Hakamwala was our connection to a close relative of his. The time he spent helping us was a reflection of his good natured-ness, but very likely also an investment in the maintenance of that familial relationship. Furthermore, some of the time spent on the phone appeared to relate to forms of non-agricultural investment in the nearby city that remained opaque to us. Notably, about half an hour of his 'social' time – reported as chatting with other villagers – involved a discussion with other farmers regarding field irrigation systems, which we count as part of his 'productive' agriculture-related work.

Jagjot Singh's social interactions with the survey team, a portion of the nearly 5 hours in the table above, remain somewhat ambiguous. One interpretation might be that he helped the team in order to maintain relations of mutuality with the family member who was our point of contact in the village. Such relations constitute an essential component of village life and one could conceive of his labor as the labor of social reproduction (Cousins et al 2018). But, of course, this same labor, like Ravinder Singh's in the previous narrative, also reproduces class/ caste relations

that shape the operation of capitalism in rural Punjab, perhaps moving it into the realm of societal reproduction (Laslett and Brenner 1989, Bakker 2003). There is the additional ambiguity of the content of his phone calls, which seemed to be productive in monitoring his investments outside Hakamwala, but the exact nature of which he was unwilling to confirm. Even with an expanded conception of work, JST's account poses difficult questions about the porousness of the boundaries between leisure, productive and reproductive work.

4.3. What time-use data reveal

Time- use studies allow us to return at least provisionally to the notion of labor time as a unit of analysis (without getting into overly technical debates over the labor theory of value). They also, as our analysis shows, allow us to 'see' the gender division of labor more clearly and more directly account for the work of social reproduction in our understanding of the lived, everyday realities of households in the global South (Katz 2001).

During our fieldwork, the importance of the work of social reproduction seemed overwhelming. The second family in our narrative, for example, while relatively upwardly mobile, and certainly much less tied to agriculture than they were ten years ago, is still clearly sustained as much by the non-waged labor of social reproduction as by labor that is partially or wholly subsumed to capital. In the case of our third narrative, reproductive labor, directed not just at the individual or household but the wider realm of the community, is potentially significant for the man as well.

Understanding our respondents' patterns of work thus requires employing all four dyads we proposed earlier. To the point made by the literature on the importance of non-waged work in India, vegetable seller Ravinder Singh performed labor that appears to be PCP but may also prove to be 'formally subsumed' upon further investigation into relations of debt. In fact, neither Ravinder Singh nor his wife reported performing any waged labor at all. Chainpreet Kaur and Harleen Kaur both spent a substantial amount of time performing very different kinds of waged reproductive labor, a category of increasing importance in service-led economies like India's and one that demonstrates the inter-constitutive effects of caste and gender hierarchies. Chayya Kaur in our second narrative performed significant shares of non-waged reproductive labor, demonstrating why the use of these categories may help us "see" forms of labor we otherwise might have missed.

A person may occupy multiple dyads at a particular point in time – these are not mutually exclusive. While our survey occurred at a single point in time, it is clear that individuals move across these dyad over time. For example, Ravinder Singh and Chayya Kaur in our second narrative were performing less waged work in 2020 than in 2011. Chayya pointed out to us that because the peak season for agricultural wage labor and the milking of livestock (for the sale of milk) coincide, during the peak season her waged and non-waged productive labor time tended to increase, reducing the time available for non-waged reproductive labor. We can imagine future analyses that trace these shifts over time.

5. Conclusion

Our call is for a transformation of the analytical categories employed to map forms of work so as to include the waged *and* non-waged work of social reproduction. We have used information from the everyday activities of three couples in rural Punjab – collected in the course of a TUS – to demonstrate how the labor of social reproduction is central to everyday life-making in this context, and how this labor intersects with other kinds of labor.

These narratives show that a social reproduction perspective is especially useful for several reasons. First, reproductive work plays a significant role in terms of both labor time as well use-values produced. Second, it helps to reveal the inter-constitutive operations of caste, race and ethnicity. Last but not the least, it may be a more salient axis along which to differentiate work than an increasingly less relevant agriculture/non-agriculture divide. Thus in our analysis, we disaggregate work into four dyads with one axis of analysis being waged versus non-waged labor processes (whether PCP, formally subsumed or unpaid), and the other being that of production and social reproduction.

What we propose here is at a lower level of abstraction, and thus potentially complementary, to concepts of 'labor control regimes' or spatially differentiated 'zones of reproduction' (Baglioni and Mezzadri 2020, Pattenden 2016, 2020). It may be that various labor regimes or zones of reproduction emerge as a result of changing configurations of these four dyads of work, producing different conjunctures as they 'collide and align in particular constellations' (Li, 2014: 16).

This framework also allows for the existence of households whose connection to the world of capital accumulation is tenuous at best and whose internal logic and choice of livelihood activities may be driven by the imperatives of sheer survival- the reproduction of labor power in contexts where that labor power is not guaranteed to ever enter into circuits of capital (Naidu and Ossome 2016). It thus moves our gaze off just the world of capital and onto the dialectical relationship between those circuits of capital and circuits of survival/reproduction. This understanding is imperative both from analytical and political perspectives, as Left organizing efforts in countries like India still struggle to recognize the importance of processes of life-making and reproduction and their variability based on caste and gender, as well as class (Shah and Lerche 2020).

We look forward to future research that questions and challenges, in order to enrich, the particular methodological and theoretical choices we have made in this paper. Following Mitchell et al. (2003), we recognize that in reality, the boundaries we draw between production and reproduction, work and life, are frequently blurred. After all, as Katz (2001: 711) points out, social reproduction is the 'fleshy, messy, and indeterminate stuff of everyday life.' As we noted earlier, these ambiguities arise not just in the understanding of women's work, but also in the work of men such as Ravinder Singh and Jagjot Singh. We have spent decades debating the particularities of definition and measurement when it comes to productive work (without always resolving those ambiguities!), while ignoring reproductive work. This contribution is part of an effort to redress that imbalance, and move towards an equally rich debate over the definition, measurement and deployment of these expanded conceptions of work.

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Tables

Table 1: Classifying Types of Work

Reproductive Work (may be waged or non-waged)	Productive Work (may be waged or non-waged)
Cooking	**Agricultural work**
Cleaning and washing	**Animal husbandry**
Collection of fuel, fodder, water, food items	**Petty trading/retail**
Everyday care of children, the elderly and other members of the family/community **Healthcare** **Education**	**Manufacturing** **Construction**

Table 2: Land and Livestock by Caste for sampled households

Caste	Total households sampled	Livestock owned	Less than 2 acres owned	Mean Land owned (acres)	Land irrigated (wholly or partly)
Jat Sikh	**45**	**39%**	**16%**	**8.81**	**36%**
Kumhar, Nai Sikh	**12**	**9%**	**83%**	**1.93**	**7%**
Dalit	**39**	**28%**	**97%**	**0.29**	**7%**

Table 3: Gender, caste and work for pay or profit, sampled households

	Dalit (N=39)			Kumhars and Nai Sikhs(N=12)			Jat Sikhs (N=45)			All castes (N=96)		
	Women %	Men %	Gender Gap	Women %	Men %	Gender Gap	Women %	Men %	Gender Gap	Women %	Men%	Gender Gap
1.Care of livestock	**69**	**54**	**15**	**73**	**73**	**0**	**87**	**80**	**7**	77	68	9
2.Agricultural participation	**67**	**72**	**-5**	**45**	**73**	**-28**	**31**	**87**	**-56**	47	78	-31
Own cultivation	10	28	-18	27	73	-46	20	78	-58	17	56	-39
Supervision of agriculture	0	8	-8	18	36	-18	7	36	-29	5	24	-19
Agricultural wage labor	67	59	8	18	9	9	7	22	-15	32	35	-3
3.Non-ag participation(all)	**59**	**62**	**-3**	**33**	**58**	**-25**	**22**	**22**	**0**	39	43	-4
NREGS	33	0	33	8	0	8	0	0	0	15	0	15
Waged reproductive labor	15	3	12	8	0	8	9	4	5	11	3	8
Non-waged reproductive labor	3	3	0	0	8	-8	4	0	4	3	2	1
Waged productive non-ag work	15	49	-34	25	42	-17	7	9	-2	10	28	-18
Non-waged productive non-agr	3	15	-12	8	8	0	2	9	-7	5	11	-6

Table 4: Summary of time use diaries for CK and JS, Jan 26, 2020.

	CK	JS
Animal husbandry Non-waged	2 hours 40 mins	
Petty trade activities		
Total non-waged productive labor	*2 hours 40 mins*	
Animal husbandry (including fodder collection) for wage	30 minutes	9 hours
Total waged productive Labor	*30 minutes*	*9 hours*
Work as a janitor in school	5 hours 50 mins	
Waged labor of social reproduction (work as janitor)	*5 hours 50 mins*	
Laundry, cleaning at home	1 hour 55 minutes	
Non-waged labor of social reproduction	*1 hour 55 minutes*	*0*

Table 5: Summary of time use diary for CH and RS Jan 27, 2020.

	CH	RS
Animal husbandry non-waged	3 hours	
Petty trade activities	30 mins	10 hours, 15 mins
Total non-waged productive labor	*3 hours 30 mins*	*10 hours 15 mins*
Total waged labor of production or social reproduction	0	0
Non-waged work of cleaning, cooking, child and elderly care	10 hours 45 minutes	30 minutes
Maintenance of social/community relations		2 hours
Total non-waged labor of social reproduction	*10 hours, 45 mins*	*2 hours, 30 mins*

Table 6: Summary of Time-Use Diaries for HK and JST, Jan 27, 2020.

	HK	JST
Non-waged Animal husbandry	35 mins	2 hours, 10 mins
Non-waged Manufacturing	2 hours, 20 mins	
Crop supervision	0 mins	1 hour, 30 minutes
Total non-waged productive labor	*2 hours, 55 mins*	*3 hours, 40 mins*
Waged direct care at Anganwadi	3 hours, 15 mins	
Total waged labor of social reproduction	*3 hours 15 mins*	*0 mins*
Non-waged cleaning, cooking, household maintenance	4 hours, 5 mins	15 mins
Maintenance of social/community relations?		4 hours, 55 mins
Total non-waged labor of social reproduction	*4 hours, 5 mins*	*5 Hours and 10 mins*