

# Research papers

## Authors

Hélène Périvier

## Coordination

Stéphanie Leyronas (AFD)

Serge Rabier (AFD)

## Bibliometric analysis of literature combining gender and the commons



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## **Bibliometric analysis of literature combining gender and the commons**

### **AUTHOR**

#### **Hélène Périvier**

Director of the PRESAGE  
program,  
OFCE Sciences Po

### **COORDINATION**

#### **Stéphanie Leyronas**

#### **Serge Rabier**

Agence Française  
de Développement

### **Abstract**

This research is based on a bibliometric analysis of the academic literature linking the gender perspective with that of the commons. The idea is not to report on all the theoretical and empirical contributions of these two fields, but rather to propose a framework for reading the heuristic intersection between gender and the commons in order to facilitate its understanding and appropriation by various categories of actors (academics, practitioners). The analysis is based on a literature review that is as exhaustive as possible, which led to the creation of a database, Genre&Com. This database makes it possible to identify some of the characteristics of the different approaches that have been used at the intersection of the two domains, namely gender and the commons. The idea is to capture the diversity of this dual field in order to identify avenues for future research.

### **Keywords:**

Gender, commons, bibliometrics

### **Acknowledgments**

I would like to thank Elise Lehman, for her work during her internship at the OFCE, Serge Rabier, Stéphanie Leyronas, Maxime Forest, and all those who took part in the in-house seminar at the OFCE for their valuable insights. Finally, I would like to thank Frank van Laerhove, Michael Schoon, and Tessa Eidelman for providing me with their data on the analysis of the literature on the commons.

### **JEL Classification**

B54, D70, O35, Z18

### **Original version**

French

### **Accepted**

May 2023

Translated by Cadenza  
Academic Translations

# Introduction

Since the 1970s and 1980s, gender studies and commons studies have developed steadily, culminating in the award of the 2009 Nobel Prize in Economics to political scientist Elinor Ostrom for her work on the commons. They now constitute two institutionally recognized fields with their own specialized academic journals (for example, *Gender and Society* and the *International Journal of the Commons*), university departments for gender studies,<sup>1</sup> and academic platforms and networks on the commons.<sup>2</sup> The two approaches share certain characteristics, in terms both of their object of study and of the ways in which they have each developed. Indeed, gender studies and commons studies are empirically and conceptually invested in furthering the production of knowledge (1) via the measurement of gender inequality, discrimination, the analysis of processes of domination, oppression, and exploitation, on the one hand, and, on the other, the study of the ways in which communities manage material or immaterial resources or collective efforts to preserve a resource.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, the London School of Economics set up a specialized department in 1993: “LSE Gender pioneers intersectional, interdisciplinary and transnational teaching and research, addressing the tenacity of gendered power relations and gendered inequalities in times of global transformations. Established in 1993, LSE Gender is the largest Department of Gender Studies in Europe.” In France, the CNRS research network MAGE, Marché du travail et GENre, was created in 1995 by Margaret Maruani, thus paving the way for the institutionalization of gender studies.

These two concepts are also used for programmatic purposes from a radical perspective (2) through the denunciation of forms of oppression, appropriation, or endangerment of populations; demands for equality and for the transformation of forms of ownership; and the questioning of the economic and political order. The boundary between the two spaces is porous. An abundant and diverse literature has thus emerged to conceptualize the problems raised, but also to highlight certain political demands.

In the academic sphere (1), research and publications (both theoretical and empirical) on the commons and on gender have developed with the creation of academic networks associated with conferences and publications. These conferences and publications, then, have gradually defined two fields that are both specific and cross-cutting. The literature on the commons and that on gender studies are both independent of traditional disciplines. They are based on collaboration,

<sup>2</sup> Such as the Ostrom Workshop at Indiana University: “The Ostrom Workshop is where the world’s top academics, lawyers, economists, policymakers, political scientists, urban and rural developers, and dozens of other disciplines come together. It was founded at Indiana University in 1973 by Nobel laureate Elinor Ostrom and her husband, Vincent. Here, professionals and researchers come together to share solutions to the world’s most pressing problems involving communal and contested resources—from clean water to secure cyberspace.”  
<https://ostromworkshop.indiana.edu/>

sharing concepts and knowledge that go beyond the academic and university divisions of the sciences and associated disciplines. In fact, they are sometimes relegated to the margins of knowledge classifications.<sup>3</sup> In both cases, this knowledge has led to a rethinking of the boundaries between the public and private spheres, the role of social norms in relation to individual choices, definitions of ownership, resource management and sharing (particularly from a North–South standpoint), and the role that communities and/or traditional knowledge can play in preserving resources from an environmental perspective.

The radical dimension of gender studies and commons studies (2) is reflected in the political demands underlying both concepts: critiques of capitalism or of statism and patriarchy. Campaigns against the globalization of capitalism and neoliberalism have revived the notion of the commons on the political scene (Klein, 2001). Similarly, debates around the internet commons have given rise to criticism of the growing privatization and fragmentation of knowledge, which has extended since the 1990s to new elements such as living entities (living things or “the living” (the human genome and seeds, for example) and to software and databases. These studies point to a “second enclosure movement” (Boyle, 2003) or a “tragedy of the anticommons” (Heller and Eisenberg, 1998) resulting from the proliferation of partial intellectual property rights,

which has fragmented access to knowledge. The feminist perspective has also been boosted by critiques of capitalism and of a liberal feminism deemed to be concerned solely with promoting the rights of women from privileged socioeconomic categories, to the detriment of those of other women (see, for example, Fraser (2010) and Pochic (2018)). The #MeToo movement has also been a driving force behind the renewal of feminist thought.

- Feminist movements in all their diversity denounce the male domination, oppression, and exploitation of women not only within the family, but also in the economic system as a whole; they defend women's rights and promote gender equality as gender inequalities can only be understood and combated when they are linked with other forms of discrimination or inequality, particularly those associated with social or ethnic origin, or sexual orientation.
- Movements to defend the rights of indigenous communities to use and access natural resources have led to a rethinking of ways of accessing and managing resources beyond those based on individual private property or the collectivization of resources by the state.
- Internet commons movements have opened up a new way of reclaiming the commons by developing methods for

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<sup>3</sup> For example, feminist economics is an institutionalized field of economics that has had a JEL code since 2006. It is located within the branch of heterodox approaches between Marxist economics and institutionalism (Périvier, 2020).

sharing software source code and new types of legal instruments (such as the General Public License).<sup>4</sup>

In the field of the commons, as in that of gender, there is a lot of back-and-forth between political movements and academic production: the aim is usually to challenge the way capitalist societies operate, which is deemed destructive to the environment and as a source of oppression and exploitation of certain categories of individuals. The bridges between the field of the commons and that comprising gender studies, feminist studies, and feminist practices have emerged in particular through questions related to the preservation of natural resources with a view to ecological sustainability and economic development. The ecofeminist approach, which is now gaining ground in the academic sphere, is one of the bridges between the commons and gender, and certainly the most visible one, as it is particularly prominent in public debates. But the link between these two fields is not limited to ecofeminism. Generally speaking, gender studies has (have?) enriched the theoretical and programmatic approaches to the commons by showing the impact of the gendered division of roles and the structural inequalities between women and men, including in the management of the commons. Combining the two perspectives produces a heterogeneous body of knowledge, analyses, and recommendations,

reflecting the diversity of the two fields from which it originates. This literature includes theoretical and historical approaches and alternates between an analytical approach and a radical critique of the economic and political order based on capitalism and patriarchy.

The aim of this research is to capture the diversity of the literature that combines gender and the commons in order to identify avenues for future research. It follows on from an initial study commissioned by AFD from OFCE in 2021, which looked at the intersection of gender and climate issues in the actions of the main international development actors (Forest and Foreste, 2021). This work aims to decompartmentalize knowledge so as to contribute to the renewal of AFD's reference frameworks for action. The "gender and climate" study was based on a corpus of texts produced by various categories of organizations. This report is based on a bibliometric analysis of the academic literature linking the gender perspective with that of the commons. The idea is not to report on all the theoretical and empirical contributions of these two fields, but rather to propose a framework for reading the heuristic intersection between gender and the commons in order to facilitate its understanding and appropriation by various categories of actors (academics, practitioners). The analysis is based on a literature review that is as exhaustive as possible, which led to the

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<sup>4</sup> These models of online collaboration mobilize large numbers of people through open platforms that are largely based on "peer" production (Bauwens and Lievens, 2015). They have inspired many collaborative projects, such as Wikipedia, OpenStreetMap, and open-access academic journals. This has also enabled other innovations such as social networks, the crowdsourcing of information, and crowdfunding.

creation of a database, Genre&Com. This database makes it possible to identify some of the characteristics of the different approaches that have been used at the intersection of the two domains, namely the commons and gender. In order to gain a better understanding of the specificity of this dual field, we use data from another bibliometric analysis on the commons, which was carried out to mark the thirtieth anniversary of Elinor Ostrom's book *Governing the Commons*, and which was published in the *International Journal of the Commons* in 2020 (Laerhoven, Schoon, and Villamayor-Tomas, 2020). We begin with a brief description of the research fields of the commons and gender, showing the different ways in which the two can be linked. We propose a framework for analyzing this dual field. We then present the methodology and the data used. Finally, we map out the literature on gender and the commons by applying the framework developed in the first part. We conclude by suggesting a number of avenues for future research.

# 1. The outlines of two fields of research

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## 1.1. The commons

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In 1968, Garrett Hardin argued that only the privatization or nationalization of an open-access common resource could guarantee its long-term survival and enable profits to be made from it (Hardin, 1968). Against this reading of the “tragedy of the commons,” a number of studies have shed light on diverse practices in the management of material or immaterial resources by a community of individuals. In 1984, the Common Property Network was created to provide a platform for the exchange and dissemination of information among academics from a range of disciplinary backgrounds. In 1989, the network changed its name to the International Association for the Study of Common Property (IASCP) under the impetus of researchers in the social sciences (political scientists, anthropologists, economists, and historians) as well as of practitioners of the commons. Elinor Ostrom, a member of this network, which in 2006 was renamed the International Association for the Study of the Commons (IASC), showed that modes of governance and of institutional arrangements based on user communities were feasible and effective ways of managing certain common resources. Her work led to the addition of a fourth type of good alongside private goods, public goods as defined by Samuelson (1954), and club goods as defined by Buchanan (1965): common-pool resources. The distinction between the different types of goods is based on two criteria: the *subtractability of use* of the resource, and the *exclusion of use*, which are not binary but graduated (see Table 1.1). The award of the **Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel** to Ostrom for this major contribution to the discipline marked a turning point in the growth of the literature on the commons: the number of IASC(P) members rose from 200 to 1,000 during the 2010s. The major recession of 2008 also gave new impetus to thinking about the commons, which was then seen as an alternative to market or state-run economies. This academic recognition and the development of work on the commons<sup>5</sup> have made it possible to broaden the intersections with other fields (such as ecology and the digital) and with other issues (such as climate change and social norms and interactions).

From this perspective, a commons is a social institution made up of three inseparable components: a *resource*, with regard to which a group of agents has rights and obligations, and whose *governance* is developed by that *community*, which regulates its use according to a set of rules, depending on changes in the ecological, social, and economic context. A commons is often locally situated and takes a specific form in terms of its purpose, its stakeholders, and its rules of governance. There is no resource that is intrinsically predisposed to being managed as a commons, and not every resource is necessarily intended to be a commons. Thus, defining the commons according to what resource or goods they are based on is unsatisfactory (Leyronas and Bambridge, 2018). The definition of the commons as an institution focuses more on the methods of organization and production of rules for managing this resource. Following in the footsteps of Ostrom, Coriat defines the commons as “a set of

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<sup>5</sup> Source: History of the IASC – The International Association for the Study of the Commons ([iasc-commons.org](http://iasc-commons.org)).

shared-access resources governed collectively by means of a governance structure that distributes rights and obligations among the commoners and aims to ensure the orderly exploitation of the resource, thus enabling it to be reproduced over the long term” (Coriat, 2017).

**Table 1.1 The four types of goods according to Ostrom  
(Ostrom and Laurent, 2012; Ostrom, Gardner, and Walker, 1994)**

		Degree of subtractability	
		High	low
Degree of user exclusion	High	<b>Private goods</b> -> food, cars, clothes	<b>Club goods</b> -> theaters, clubs
	low	<b>Common-pool resources</b> -> pastureland, forests <b>Common services</b> -> fisheries, irrigation systems	<b>Public goods</b> -> security, peace, health, education

Source: adapted from Ostrom and Laurent (2012)

Commons practices consist of multiple forms of collective problem-solving proposed by communities through the construction of ad hoc systems of rules that have an inherently flat hierarchy. These rules redefine ownership by taking into account its multiple dimensions. Schlager and Ostrom (1992) define bundles of rights that consist in specifying not only the prerogatives of the owners but also those of the users or beneficiaries of the resource in question. They point to rights of four types:

- the rights of access and withdrawal of a resource (1);
- the right of management → the right to participate in drawing up or modifying the rules for managing the resource (2);
- the right of exclusion → the right to decide who has access to the resource and to exclude certain people from it (3);
- the right of alienation → the right to sell or lease one of these four types of rights (4).

These rights, whether formal or informal, whether written or oral, are established by a given community according to its needs. They are combined so as to define various statuses: *owners*, who have rights (1) to (4); *proprietors*, who have rights (1) to (3); *claimants*, who have rights (1) and (2); and *users*, who have right (1). Finally, the question of how to manage the creation of value and its distribution within the community is negotiated and discussed in the context of resource management.

Land commons are organized around natural resources such as a forest, an underground water table, or pastureland, in order to ensure their long-term survival. They are generally managed by neighboring communities, who govern the conditions of access to and withdrawal of the resource for themselves and, if necessary, for those who do not border the resource but who are granted a right of use. Commons can also come into being so as to create new infrastructure (such as drinking water, electricity, or a health center) and to ensure that it is well managed and sustainable. In such cases, they are referred to as service commons. Commons can also be immaterial, such as when a community of rights holders comes together to create and maintain databases, software code, digital tools, shared knowledge, and literary and artistic artifacts. These commons can be situated on a global scale. The most emblematic and most frequently cited example is the online encyclopedia Wikipedia. Finally, commons can be based on a mixture of material and immaterial resources. A good example of this is fablabs, which serve as production, creation, and prototyping workshops and as sites for hands-on training, and which combine open-access digital resources and physical spaces with machine tools such as laser cutters and 3D printers for shared use. Commons are often flexible, adaptable systems, controlled by communities on the basis of their needs in a bottom-up process. To the triptych of resources, governance, and community, we can add the concept of the actual capabilities of individuals—in the sense used by Sen (2005) and Nussbaum (1997)—to participate in governance and to access the resource. This is what is known as the commons of *capabilities* (Fontaine, 2021).

These characterizations of the commons are based on the idea of a set of social practices. But the concept of the commons also refers to a political paradigm or even to an ethic. From this perspective, the commons can be defined as a political principle that designates the association of people who, because they engage in common tasks, produce moral, political, and legal norms to frame their actions (see Jourdain (2021) for details on this literature). The central issue here is no longer the resource itself, nor the community to which the individuals concerned belong, but rather the task these people share, which consists in preserving and passing on the commons. Dardot and Laval (2014) define the commons as a political principle that “defines a new system of struggles on a global scale.” In this context, social, political, and economic organization through the commons becomes an alternative both to neoliberal capitalism, by excluding a wider range of goods, services, and resources from the market process, and to state control of resources.

Jourdain (2021, p. 13) defines the commons succinctly as follows: “*institutions governed by stakeholders who are linked to the common or shared thing (material or immaterial) in the service of a social purpose that guarantees the capacities and fundamental rights (access, management, decision-making) of the parties with regard to the thing, as well as their obligations (preservation, openness, improvement) toward it.*”

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## 1.2. Gender and feminist studies

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Feminism is a current of thought and a political movement that aims for gender equality and the promotion of women's rights. It denounces sexism as a system that disqualifies women, as well as the gendered order and patriarchy (Périvier, 2020). Feminism cannot be reduced to a form of activism or an ideology: it is based on a complex process involving the development of theoretical thought combined with political practices and struggles. It is thus rooted in a logic of knowledge production and controversy, making it possible to open up an area of understanding around gender equality: *Le féminisme: ça pense!* (Fraisie, 2022). Considering that power and knowledge are inseparable, the feminist critique of science points to the fact that science has not been neutral on many occasions, and that it has often served to legitimize power structures within a society (Harding, 1991).

Gender studies have developed in the wake of feminist studies. Gender studies comprise a field of multidisciplinary and international research and study that analyzes power relations, inequalities, and discrimination based on sex, gender (including gender identity or expression), and sexual orientation, frequently at the intersection with other categories such as social class, real or supposed ethno-racial origin, religion, age, and disability. This field of study has contributed to the scientific controversy around concepts such as gender equality, sex, social relations of sex, gender, queerness, and intersectionality. The advantage of this approach is that it makes it possible to reflect on the construction of inequalities, on thinking about equality, on sociocultural and political practices, and on public policies. This field of research is constantly being renewed, driven by a critical and reflexive approach.<sup>6</sup> Gender is a concept that points to a system of domination made up of a dense web of hierarchical positions, social relations, reward mechanisms, and the assignment of roles in accordance with an individual's sex.

The contributions made by the concept of gender can be summarized along four axes set out by Bereni (2014):

1. **gender as a social construct** → the aim here is to critique an essentialist view of the difference between the sexes—a view that involves attributing to women and men immutable characteristics by seeking to anchor these in biology.
2. **gender as a relational process** → this involves asserting that the characteristics associated with each sex are constructed in opposition to each other. According to this view, the feminine associated with the category “women” can be understood only in conjunction with the masculine associated with the category “men.” Gender can be seen as a normative system that creates the boundary between the two categories of sex.
3. **gender as a power relation** → this approach focuses on the hierarchy between the two poles, in terms of access to and distribution of resources, as well as in terms of power and symbolic value. In the French-language literature, there were other terms that were used,

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<sup>6</sup> See the PRESAGE website, Programme de recherche et d'enseignement des savoirs sur le genre de Sciences Po.

before they were grouped together under the umbrella term *genre* (gender), such as *sexage* (sexing) (Guillaumin, 2016); *rapports sociaux de sexe* (social relations of sex) (Cardon et al., 2009); *valence différentielle des sexes* (differential valence of the sexes) (Héritier, 2012); and *genre* (Scott and Servan-Schreiber, 2012).

4. **gender intertwined with other power relations** → the aim is to emphasize the heterogeneous nature of the categories of sex, which are subject to multiple tensions and power relations that are, in turn, linked to social and ethnic origin, sexual orientation, and gender identity, for instance.

Gender studies are constantly evolving, and they range in scale from the private to the institutional. The concept of gender is employed in the singular when it refers to the analysis of power structures. In this case, it consists of shifting the issue of the sexes to a wider realm of thought. It can be employed in the plural when it relates to questions around gender identity. Like any field of research, it is fraught with controversy,<sup>7</sup> which also marks its sometimes–fractious intersection with other fields of study, such as decolonial theories (Dietze, 2014) or intersectionality (Lutz, Herrera Vivar, and Supik, 2016). An important aspect of these internal controversies has to do with the underrepresentation of scholars from the Global South in the literature on gender (Medie and Kang, 2018).

Through a critical analysis of the discourses and practices of institutionalized domination, the feminist perspectives at work in gender studies shed light on as–yet little–explored aspects of the commons. An approach that integrates the gender perspective enables us to give a more rigorous and more precise account of various living conditions. From an epistemological point of view, taking gender into account transforms economic analysis, not only because it leads to a broadening of the issues by adding questions related to women’s social experiences, but also because it leads to questions about how research subjects emerge and are shaped by values and norms (Ferber and Nelson, 1993). This perspective strengthens the theory of the commons, whether this is understood as the study of the organization of resource management by communities or as a political principle designed to replace capitalism or statism.

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### 1.3. Why and how should “gender” and “the commons” be linked?

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#### *The commons according to Ostrom and gender*

Ostrom conceptualized the fact that local actors can overcome the dilemma between collective action, individual interest, and the preservation of a common resource.

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<sup>7</sup> See, for example, the work of Fraisse (2010), which points out that gender is as much a magnifying glass for better understanding power relations and tensions as it is a mask that can make women invisible.

Her work highlights a set of principles for viable and sustainable resource management (Ostrom, 1990, pp. 90–102), including:

- a precise definition of the mode of access to the resource (as opposed to open access without rules),
- the application of the arrangements that have been negotiated,
- the introduction of credible sanctions for those who do not comply with these rules,
- conflict resolution mechanisms,
- a minimum level of recognition of the right to organize.

These principles are valid only if we can identify all the users of the resource, or its boundaries. Experiments show that cooperation within the commons is strengthened by reciprocity, individual reputation, and trust. That said, these analyses rarely include a gender perspective. And yet these rules can lead to a reinforcement of the patriarchal organization of communities by excluding women from the process of negotiating the rules and/or by producing rules that exclude them from access to the resource. The participation of women at the negotiating table does not necessarily lead to their inclusion in the management of the resource, as other factors such as social status or ethnic origin may also be decisive. To assume that the interests of all members of a community are homogeneous is to deny the existence of structures of power, oppression, and domination. Ostrom does not include the gender dimension in her research. Admittedly, she sometimes mentions the fact that these rules could have differential effects on the situations of women and men. Łapniewska's (2016) textual analysis of Ostrom's work measures the degree to which her publications take account of gender, or of the differential situations of women and men. Some papers distinguish between the situations of women and men. In an article published in 1999, Ostrom mentions the role of sex alongside other individual characteristics such as caste, age, ethnicity, clan, and class (Ostrom, 1999). In one chapter in an edited volume published in 2008, she introduces gender into her conceptual analysis of the commons by mentioning that the rule for managing the commons can be affected by certain individual characteristics of the participants in its development, including sex (Ostrom, 2008). However, the gender approach is transformative and cannot be reduced to the mere addition of a sex category in the analysis. If we adopt this definition of a gendered approach to research, we see that Ostrom's work is, on the whole, gender-blind, even when she mentions processes of control, exclusion, power, hierarchy, domination, and inequality. In an interview published in the journal *Feminist Economics* in 2012, she admitted that she had not deployed gender as a key factor in her work, but she did say that she had encouraged many of her students to adopt this perspective, such as Esther Mwangi, Ruth Meinzen-Dick, and Yan Sun (May and Summerfield, 2012a). The bibliometric analysis shows that Mwangi and Meinzen-Dick are indeed major contributors to the literature combining the gender perspective with that of the commons (see Chapter 3).

### *Gendering the commons, or commoning gender?*

The two concepts, gender and the commons, share similar characteristics in terms of the history of ideas and sociopolitical relations. Economic theories have long regarded the collaborative management of the commons as inherently inefficient, and have actually marginalized it, at least until Ostrom was awarded the Nobel Prize. At the level of practices, a large number of commons have been progressively dismantled, from the time of enclosures in the Middle Ages up to the extension of the market in the contemporary era (commodification). Individual exclusive ownership has become the dominant paradigm, entailing the privatization of public services, of nature, of knowledge, and of data. Similarly, gender, social relations of sex, gender inequalities, and the gendered division of roles have long been ignored or insufficiently taken into account in economic analyses. Feminist approaches have, along with others, helped to challenge the paradigm of the rational, free, calculating, and selfish *Homo oeconomicus* by highlighting, as in the thinking of the commons, individuals' disposition to empathy, to altruism, to the rejection of inequalities, and to cooperation. They have also highlighted the lack of reflection on the conditions under which this idealized rationality can be exercised. In practice, the commodification of women's bodies and their assignment to the domestic sphere for a "reproductive" function have for centuries structured the economic, social, and political organization and collective practices under the aegis of the patriarchal regime.

Gender issues and the commons share the same critique of the ambiguous role of the state and public powers. In high-income countries that rely on a market economy, the state has long organized women's subjection to the domestic sphere through public policies encouraging the reproduction of gendered hierarchies within the family.<sup>8</sup> The transformations that began in many of these countries in the 1960s have nevertheless helped to advance the equality agenda in terms of women's political, civil, economic, and social rights. But this metamorphosis on the part of welfare states has remained incomplete because of strong cultural resistance. As a result, discrimination and inequality persist (Périvier, 2020). Similarly, in certain situations, states have been able to push forward policies for the privatization or nationalization of the commons, to the detriment of local dynamics already at work, such as land policies or public services. As a result, these states may not be able to ensure the preservation of certain public goods. Finally, the notions of "gender" and "the commons" are both particularly susceptible to various appropriations, the object of global political struggles and controversies over their outlines, their definition, and their meaning. (On the appropriations of the concept of gender, see Lombardo, Meier, and Verloo, 2012). The literature at the intersection of these two fields is thus rich, heterogeneous, and abundant. The aim of this report is to capture the richness of this dual approach.

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<sup>8</sup> In the so-called socialist countries before 1990, the state certainly facilitated women's access to paid work and education. Some of them did this by developing childcare systems designed to alleviate their "double burden." However, an analysis of these regimes from a feminist perspective also shows the role played by the state in maintaining gender hierarchies in other forms, which (re-)emerged during the post-socialist transformation (Forest and Mink, 2004).

In order to map out the key issues associated with the intersection of the commons and gender, we propose a framework for reading this dual field (see Table 1.2 for a high-level view). It is structured around a twofold approach to each field: gender and feminism on the “gender” front, and, on the “commons” front, the commons as shared resources and as a political principle.

The fine line between the gender approach and the feminist approach is based on the following distinction:

- **the gender approach** highlights gender inequalities, as well as forms of domination, exploitation, and oppression.
- **the feminist approach** involves setting out a normative framework aimed at achieving gender equality. The idea here is to overcome patriarchy and promote gender equality. Equality is considered in its multiple dimensions, particularly social origin (or social status) and ethnic origin.

The boundary between the commons as a way of managing a resource and the commons as a political principle is quite clear:

- **approaching the commons as a way of managing a resource** is in line with Ostrom's work. We call this the analytical approach, because it involves analyzing the functioning of the commons in all their diversity, in terms of the resources involved, the modes of governance, and the community concerned.
- **approaching the commons as a political principle** views the commons as a means of rebuilding modern societies, thus making it possible to supplant capitalism, the market, and statism. We call this the political approach. From this perspective, rather than using the term “the commons,” some authors prefer the notion of “commoning.” This leads to a different positioning compared to the analytical approach, moving from the analysis of a resource and its management by a community à la Ostrom, to that of a practice or a way of building a community.<sup>9</sup>

The intersection of these two perspectives gives rise to four main categories of analysis within the literature on gender and the commons:

1. **The gender approach combined with an analytical approach to the commons** highlights the absence of a gender perspective in the analysis of how the commons work. This may involve highlighting the relations of domination at work in the governance of the commons, long ignored by a gender-blind literature.

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<sup>9</sup> On “commoning” as a verb rather than a noun: “To speak of the commons as if it were a natural resource is misleading at best and dangerous at worst—the commons is an activity and, if anything, it expresses relationships in society that are inseparable from relations to nature. It might be better to keep the word as a verb, an activity, rather than as a noun, a substantive” (Linebaugh, 2007).

When it comes to establishing bundles of rights, several questions arise:

- Have the rules been negotiated on a level playing field? Can women participate in decision-making on an equal footing with men? Social status is a key factor to be taken into account here. Does any such participation take the form of family or individual representation within the management and decision-making community?
- Are the governance rules for the commons egalitarian? Do they give men and women equal access to the resource?
- Are the more collaborative, more localized, and/or more traditional modes of management that characterize the commons free from any form of patriarchal oppression and/or the application of heterosexual norms (heteronormativity)?
- Are women more likely to be seen as *users* and less as *owners*, and how is that related to their social background?

**2. The gender approach combined with the political approach to the commons.** The idea here is to take the framework used to analyze the commons and extend it to social spaces such as the domestic sphere and the sphere of production, focusing on issues such as care and domestic and family work. The commons is thus conceived of as a political model capable of transforming the hierarchies and oppressions highlighted by gender, by blurring the boundaries between the private and public spheres.

**3. The feminist approach combined with the political approach to the commons.** This approach seeks an overhaul of the global economic and political order, particularly as regards North-South relations, and as such is likely to be associated with a decolonial reading.

- The commons is an egalitarian and horizontal political principle that will enable us to overcome capitalism and patriarchy;
- The widespread adoption of commons practices is seen as a response to the twofold oppression suffered by women and the Earth (through the loss of biodiversity; the extraction of natural resources; the replacement of local and empirical knowledge often held by women with technical knowledge that is indifferent to cultures and ways of life (see for example Shiva, 2020)) on which ecofeminism is based (D'Eaubonne, 2018).

The idea here is to think about the relationship between the two political principles of gender equality and the commons, by associating two fundamentally inseparable forms of oppression: that produced by capitalism and that produced by patriarchy.

4. **The feminist approach combined with an analytical approach to the commons** focuses on achieving gender equality and its link with the local management of a resource through the commons. This approach involves:

- seeing the commons as a way of managing resources that can be used to promote gender equality;
- showing that processes of nationalization and/or privatization have put an end to commons managed by women and have weakened women's economic status by reducing their decision-making power and their control over resources. The market and the state are structurally inegalitarian social and political institutions; their taking control of resources can accentuate gender inequalities and worsen the situation of women in the most precarious circumstances;
- showing that the link between the management of a resource as a commons on the one hand and, on the other, gender equality is not systematic. Observations in the field show that in some cases, the return to traditional commons-based management methods in order to preserve natural resources can increase gender inequalities and make the economic status of the most vulnerable women more precarious.

**Table 1.2 Framework for analyzing the literature on gender and the commons**

	Analytical approach to the commons (--> case)	The commons as a political principle (--> grid)
<b>Gender approach</b> (--> gender)	<p><b>I</b></p> <p>Denouncing practices unfavorable to women within the commons</p> <p>Women excluded from governance or sidelined</p> <p>Uncovering the gender-blind analyses that mask existing forms of domination</p> <p>--&gt; the commons seen through the lens of gender --&gt; highlighting the unequal mechanisms at work in the management of the commons</p>	<p><b>II</b></p> <p>Using the analytical framework to transform gendered organizations, the gendered order, and the gendered division of labor (domestic production)</p> <p>The commons as a political model for transforming social relations of sex and of gender in our economic and social organizations</p> <p>--&gt; extending the notion of the commons to social spaces and modes of production that are particularly marked by gender inequalities – -&gt; care as a commons</p>
<b>Feminist approach</b> (--> feminist)	<p><b>III</b></p> <p>Showing that the commons can be conducive to gender equality</p> <p>Sharing resources/women at the forefront of resource management/negotiating rules to build equal rights</p> <p>Showing that the link between the principle of equality and the commons is not systematic</p> <p>--&gt; integrating the principle of equality into the analysis of the commons (as these emerge or are reintroduced)</p>	<p><b>IV</b></p> <p>Developing the commons to overcome free-market capitalism</p> <p>Preserving resources by strengthening the role of women in resource management --&gt; ecofeminism</p> <p>The commons in the service of gender equality (to be constructed accordingly) --&gt; post-capitalist and feminist approach to the commons</p> <p>--&gt; the commons as a vehicle for gender equality and economic emancipation --&gt; an interdisciplinary critique of capitalism and patriarchy</p>

## 2. Methodology and data

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### 2.1. The Genre&Com database

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#### *Building a corpus of documents*

The Genre&Com database can be used to map out the literature, mainly from the social sciences, combining the gender perspective with that on the commons. Based on a literature review that is as systematic as possible, this database brings together documents related to the two issues:

- a body of literature dedicated to the commons, in which gender is used either as a concept for understanding modes of management and the power relations that operate within them, or as a means of ensuring their sustainability, or even their extension to other modes of resource management and other forms of social organization.
- or a gender studies or feminist body of literature that points out the blind spots in the literature on the commons. This perspective highlights the mechanisms by which women are exploited and dominated when it comes to the management of the commons. This approach can also be based on the commons as a means of putting an end to gender inequality and promoting the economic emancipation of women (empowerment). On that view, the commons is idealized as an alternative to the market, to *neoliberal dogma*, and as the way to put an end to patriarchy.

Starting with the bibliographies of articles that combine the gender perspective with that on the commons, the database has gradually been expanded. Following the example of Laerhoven, Schoon, and Villamayor-Tomas (2020), a systematic search via *Google Scholar* was used to complete the database. English-language searches were carried out with combinations of keywords such as “commons/commoning/common property resources” and “gender/feminist/women.”<sup>10</sup> The corpus of articles comes mainly from academic literature in the form of journal articles, chapters in edited volumes, working papers, and, less often, policy briefs. The difficulties faced by researchers from the Global South in getting their work published in international journals (particularly for academics from French-speaking Africa) mean that their contributions could not be taken into account in this literature review. That is one of the shortcomings of this bibliometric analysis. This is all the more true given that the questions of the commons and gender, in conjunction with those of economic development and ecological sustainability, are particularly relevant in these regions of the world.

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<sup>10</sup> French-language searches were carried out with the keywords “communs” on the one hand and “genre, féminisme, femmes” on the other.

To limit this bias, specific research was carried out on *OpenEdition*, with a focus on the journals *VertigO*,<sup>11</sup> *EchoGéo*,<sup>12</sup> and *Etudes caribéennes*.<sup>13</sup> The searches did not uncover a twofold approach to gender and the commons. Finally, the Genre&Com database is intended to be updated and extended: the languages that were used are English and French, but it would be interesting to explore literature in other languages, even though most of this literature today is published in English.

A number of journals have been exhaustively or quasi exhaustively reviewed:

- on the commons front: *International Journal of the Commons*.<sup>14</sup>
- on the gender and feminist studies front: *Feminist Economics*<sup>15</sup>; *Gender and Society*<sup>16</sup>; and *Gender, Work and Organization*.<sup>17</sup>
- a journal dedicated to development: *World Development*.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Founded in 2000, *VertigO* is an interdisciplinary journal in the natural sciences and the humanities. Submissions are subject to the usual rules of peer review. It promotes and disseminates academic research and analysis on major contemporary environmental issues in the French-speaking world. In less than eight years, it established itself internationally as the leading French-language online journal in the environmental sciences. <http://vertigo.revues.org>

<sup>12</sup> The online journal *EchoGéo*, created under the aegis of the PRODIG research unit, aims to build a bridge between the research community and an audience of specialists or enlightened amateurs who are interested in information that is clear, scientific, and relevant. Its aim is to provide reliable and scientifically validated geographical information on societies, the environment, and development.

<sup>13</sup> *Études caribéennes* provides a forum for the exchange of views among academics from the Caribbean and other parts of the world, as well as for original work by both young and established researchers. Its main focus is the Caribbean Basin. Geography, planning, economics, and social sciences (history, sociology, anthropology): through a multidisciplinary approach, this journal contributes to thought on the development of the Caribbean space. It publishes three issues a year, each organized around a central theme. The texts, which are published in French, English, or Spanish, are assessed by an international scientific committee. It is supported by the Institut des Sciences Humaines et Sociales at the CNRS.

<sup>14</sup> *The International Journal of the Commons (IJC)* is an initiative of the International Association for the Study of the Commons (IASC). As an interdisciplinary peer-reviewed open-access journal, the *IJC* is dedicated to furthering the understanding of institutions for use and management of resources that are (or could be) enjoyed collectively. These resources may be part of the natural world (e.g. forests, climate systems, or the oceans) or they may emerge from social realities created by humans (e.g. the internet or (scientific) knowledge, for example of the sort that is published in open-access journals).

<sup>15</sup> *Feminist Economics* is a peer-reviewed journal that provides an open forum for dialogue and debate about feminist economic perspectives. By opening new areas of economic inquiry, welcoming diverse voices, and encouraging critical exchanges, the journal enlarges and enriches economic discourse. The goal of *Feminist Economics* is not just to develop more illuminating theories, but to improve the conditions of living for all children, women, and men.

<sup>16</sup> Articles appearing in *Gender & Society* analyze gender and gendered processes in interactions, organizations, societies, and global and transnational spaces. The journal primarily publishes empirical articles, which are both theoretically engaged and methodologically rigorous, including qualitative, quantitative, and comparative-historical methodologies.

<sup>17</sup> Launched in 1994, *Gender, Work & Organization* was the first journal to provide an arena dedicated to debate and analysis of gender relations, the organization of gender and the gendering of organizations. Since then *Gender, Work & Organization* has published multi-disciplinary, high quality qualitative empirical research on gendered power relations and identities in the study of work and organization exploring issues of inclusion and exclusion. It has also published quantitative work guided by critical epistemologies on issues such as the gender pay gap, flexible work, career patterns, women on boards and access to leadership positions.

<sup>18</sup> The multi-disciplinary international journal devoted to the study and promotion of world development. See also Elsevier's Geography and Economics portals. *World Development* is a multi-disciplinary monthly journal of development studies. It seeks to explore ways of improving standards of living, and the human condition generally,

The Genre&Com database was created in Excel, and the information was processed and the variables constructed with R. For each article or document selected, several items of information were coded in order to analyze the content of the corpus and gain a better understanding of the different ways in which the gender and commons perspectives are linked. The variables available in Genre&Com are as follows:

- **author**: this variable indicates the first and last name of the author. The same document may be co-written by several authors, and one author may have written several articles or documents.
- **sex**: this variable indicates the sex of each individual. This information was sought based on details available online on each person by combining data on their first name, any photos, and material indicating their background. These are usually pages dedicated to their work by the institution they belong to or are affiliated with, or individual websites. The “sex” variable can take the values “F” or “M.” He/him/his corresponds to “M” and “she/her/hers” to “F.” No cases of non-binary or explicitly transgender people were identified.
- **field\_author**: this variable indicates the author's main discipline(s). This information comes from the affiliation when it is explicit or from an internet search. The same person may be associated with several disciplines. It is important to bear in mind that gender studies and commons research are often multidisciplinary or even transdisciplinary. Coding this variable raises the problem of the multiple names and disciplinary categories used in various countries. To reduce the number of disciplines, we grouped them as follows:
  - ✓ the **sociology** category includes social research, social sciences, sociology, social studies, and social policy;
  - ✓ the **environmental studies** category includes the school of earth and environment, biology, environmental studies/sciences, environment and development policy, development and biotechnology, biology, bioversity international, ecology, and sustainability;
  - ✓ the **rural studies** category includes nomadic pastoralism studies, department of forest and rangeland, rangeland ecosystem science, pastoralist sciences, agricultural sciences, land and water management, forestry, and international relations and rural development;
  - ✓ the **political science** category includes political science, public policies, political sciences, and political ecology;
  - ✓ the **regional/cultural studies** category includes Asian studies, African studies, postcolonial studies, global studies, Latin American studies, Bhutan studies, and cultural studies;

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by examining potential solutions to problems such as: poverty, unemployment, malnutrition, disease, lack of shelter...

- ✓ the **engineering** category includes applied information technology, technology, and engineering;
  - ✓ the **economics** category includes statistics, economics, management, development studies, planning and regional development, business, ecological economics, and finance;
  - ✓ the **geography/urban studies** category includes urban planning, geology, architecture, geography, and urban studies;
  - ✓ the **gender studies** category includes women and politics, and gender studies;
  - ✓ the **other** category includes law, psychology, demography, history, and communication and media.
- **country\_author**: this is the country of the institution the author is affiliated with. It does not refer to the nationality or geographical origin of the person, but to the location of the institution the person belongs to, which may change over time.
  - **publication\_title** and **yearpub**: **vol.**, **issue**: these variables indicate, respectively, the title of the journal, the year of publication of the document, the volume, and the issue number if applicable.
  - **title** and **key\_words**: these variables indicate the title of the article and any associated keywords.
  - **cited\_by**: this variable indicates the number of citations a document has, as indicated in *Google Scholar*. The number of citations a publication has is likely to increase over time. The Genre&Com database contains this information as at October 2022.
  - **region\_commons** and **country\_commons**: these variables indicate (if they are mentioned) the continent and the country in which the resource studied in the article (or its management as a commons) is located. Where several regions or countries are involved, all of them are mentioned.
  - **type\_commons**: this variable indicates, where relevant, the type of resource or sometimes the service with which the commons studied is associated (land, forest, water, irrigation, etc.). To reduce the number of resources or services mentioned, we grouped them as follows:
    - ✓ the *irrigation/water* category includes the *irrigation* service and the *water* resource;
    - ✓ the *forest/trees* category includes the *trees* and *forest* resources;
    - ✓ the *labor/care* category includes the *labour/labor*, *care*, *work*, and *reproduction* services;
    - ✓ the *digital/new/cultural* category includes resources or services associated with the *digital* and the *numeric*, *new commons*, *cultural*, *research network*, *civil commons*, and *collaborative and social computing*;
    - ✓ the *urban/mobility/housing* category includes the *space*, *urban*, and *housing* resources, and the *mobility*, *architecture*, and *design* services;

- ✓ the *lands* category includes the following resources: *lands, wetlands, tea gardens, pastoralism, wildlands, territory, landscape, and garden farming*;
- ✓ the *biodiversity/natural resources* category includes the following resources: *biodiversity, plants, natural resources, food, papyrus resources, and cooperative resources*;
- ✓ the *general* category includes *all, global commons, general, and common property* resources;
- ✓ the *fisheries/ocean* category includes the *ocean* resource and the *fisheries* service.

The **region\_commons**, **country\_commons**, and **type\_commons** variables relate mainly to articles with an empirical focus. For those that take a conceptual, theoretical, or more general approach, this information is not relevant. Although a few examples can be mentioned for illustrative purposes in this type of analysis (based on a specific resource and/or a particular geographical area), in most cases this information has not been included in the Genre&Com database.

- **abstract:** the abstract of each article is available in the database.

The Genre&Com database contains 158 documents, the majority of which are academic articles (141). The others are chapters in edited volumes (11), working papers or presentations at symposiums (3), and doctoral theses (3). The database lists 271 authors, 59.4% of whom are women. The academic papers were published in 75 different journals. Finally, there are 11 different disciplines (listed above) in the Genre&Com database.

#### *Genre&Com analytical framework*

To facilitate the analysis of the literature based on the framework put forward in the last section, each document in the Genre&Com database was tagged on the basis of the information available in the abstract.

With regard to gender, two approaches have been distinguished:

- either a “**gender**” approach that highlights the relations of power and domination at work in a community, in the management of a resource, in decision-making processes, in access to the resource, etc.—the aim being to describe the inequalities involved. This tag also applies to analyses that show, *a contrario*, that the commons is a mode of resource management that promotes the emancipation of women in certain contexts.
- or a “**feminist**” approach, which seeks to achieve gender equality. The explicit normative perspective denounces a system of patriarchal domination and proposes feminist modes of transformation with which the commons is associated. Papers adopting an ecofeminist perspective are identified by this tag, which also identifies other types of approach.

The **tag\_gender** variable is used to identify the two types of approach. It was constructed by identifying the following keywords in the abstract of each document:

- *feminism/feminist/féminisme/féministe, ecofeminism/ecofeminist, and patriarchal/patriarchy* for the **feminist** label.
- the other documents have been tagged, by default, with the **gender** label.

With regard to the commons, two approaches are distinguished in accordance with the analytical framework:

- an applied analytical approach aimed at describing the functioning of the commons or of a commons on the basis of case studies, by raising the associated issues, in which case the tag is **case**;
- a political and more often theoretical approach that sees the commons as a way of building society. The aim is to develop the use of the commons as an alternative to the market economy or statism. We describe this approach as a **grid**—that is, a framework for promoting a society that is seen as more egalitarian and fairer than the one dominated by the market and private property, and that is not based on the appropriation of resources by the state.

The **tag\_commons** variable is used to identify the type of approach to the commons.

It was constructed by identifying the following keywords in the abstracts of each article:

- *struggles, dispossession, social movement, oppression, neoliberalism, consumerism, Marxism/Marx, materialism, individualism, transformative, anti-capitalism/anti-capitalist/ capitalism/classe capitaliste, Global South, decolonization, liberal, climate justice/justice, degrowth/ decommodification/commonization, exploitation, social change, citizenship, militant, new initiative, domination, and commun social* for the **grid** label.
- by default, the other articles have been tagged with the **case** label.

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## 2.2. The ijc2020 database

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To enrich the analysis, we used a database constructed for the *International Journal of the Commons* on the thirtieth anniversary of the publication of Ostrom's book, *Governing the Commons*. This led to a bibliometric analysis of the literature on the commons since the publication of Hardin's article in 1968 (Laerhoven, Schoon, and Villamayor-Tomas, 2020). This database, which we call ijc2020, contains information similar to that available in the Genre&Com database, with the exception of the sex of the authors. The ijc2020 database contains information about the citations of the papers selected, but this information is older than that collected in Genre&Com, so the two variables are not perfectly comparable. In terms of disciplines, the two databases are not comparable, since in Genre&Com the disciplines are recorded by author (and

sometimes more than one discipline will be recorded for a single author), whereas in ijc2020 the disciplines are recorded by document. We nevertheless present graphs on the disciplines for ijc2020.

In order to harmonize the coding of disciplines with that in Genre&Com, we grouped them as follows:

- the **sociology** category covers the *social science* label as it appears in the ijc2020 database;
- the **environmental studies** category includes the *environmental sciences* and *earth and planetary science* labels;
- the **rural studies** category includes the *agriculture* and *biological science* labels;
- the **engineering** category includes the *computer sciences*, *decision science*, *energy*, *engineering*, and *mathematics* labels;
- the **economics** category includes the *business*, *management and accounting*, *economics*, *econometrics*, and *finance* labels;
- the **medicine/genetic** category includes the *medicine*, *biochemistry*, *genetics*, and *molecular biology* labels. This category does not appear in Genre&Com;
- the **other** category includes the *multidisciplinary*, *other*, and *n.a.* labels.

The bibliometric analysis uses the ijc2020 database in two ways:

1. the articles combining the gender perspective with that on the commons are identified and added to the Genre&Com database. Given that not all the variables are perfectly comparable, certain parts of the bibliometric analysis are carried out only on the Genre&Com database.
2. the articles in the ijc2020 database that do not take a gender perspective are used as a point of comparison for the bibliometric analysis of literature on gender and on the commons. This reference should be treated with caution because of the differences in the ways the two databases have been put together.

To identify articles on gender and the commons in the ijc2020 database, we tag with the **gender** label those articles whose abstracts contain any of the following terms: *feminism*, *feminist*, *féministe*, *féminisme*, *ecofeminism*, *ecofeminist*, *patriarchal*, *patriarchy*, and *gender*. This distinction makes it possible to separate articles on “gender” from articles “without a gender perspective.” But it does not make it possible to take into account those articles that have a “gender” or “feminist” dimension but that do not mention it in the abstract. Once we identified the articles that combine the gender perspective with that on the commons, we applied the same method as that used in the Genre&Com database to tag them in accordance with the proposed analytical framework, i.e., *gender* or *feminist* on the one hand, and *grid* or *case* on the other. We then added this set of articles to those in the Genre&Com database. We call the result Genre&Com&ijc2020.

The *ijc2020* database includes 3,818 documents and 6,668 authors. There are 55 papers in which the gender perspective is explicitly mentioned in the abstract. In total, documents adopting a dual approach to gender and the commons represent 1.4% of the papers listed in the *ijc2020* database. They were written by 104 authors altogether. 6 papers were already present in the *Genre&Com* database. The *Genre&Com&ijc2020* database thus contains 207 documents, by 356 authors, that adopt this twofold perspective. The list of these 6 papers that are shared by both databases is given in Table 2.1. It is worth noting that 2 of these 6 articles were written by Bina Agarwal, who is the most prolific author in this dual field (a point to which we will return in the next section); and that the journal *Feminist Economics* appears twice in this list, even though it is only the third most common journal in the *Genre&Com* database (Chapter 3).

**Table 2.1 List of documents that appear in both the *Genre&Com* and *ijc2020* databases**

List of articles that appear in both databases			
	Authors	Journal	Year of publication
A Feminist Perspective On Autonomism And Commoning, With Reference To Zimbabwe	Alexander, Tarryn & Helliker, Kirk	Journal Of Contemporary African Studies	2016
Conceptualising Environmental Collective Action: Why Gender Matters	Agarwal, Bina	Cambridge Journal Of Economics	2000
Creating A Space Where Gender Matters: Elinor Ostrom (1933-2012) Talks With Ann Mari May And Gale Summerfield	May, Ann Mari & Summerfield, Gale	Feminist Economics	2012
Environmental Action, Gender Equity And Women's Participation	Agarwal, Bina	Development And Change	1997
Gender Discrimination In Property Rights: Six Centuries Of Commons Governance In The Alps	Casari, Marco & Lisciandra, Maurizio	Journal Of Economic History	2016
Reading Elinor Ostrom Through A Gender Perspective	Łapniewska, Zofia	Feminist Economics	2016
6 articles appear in both databases, including 2 written by Bina Agarwal and 2 published in the journal <i>Feminist Economics</i> Source: <i>Genre&amp;Com&amp;ijc2020</i>			

### 3. Bibliometric analysis

#### 3.1. The dynamics of publishing and journals

##### *An expanding field*

The combined focus on gender and the commons is not new: the database includes papers published in the early 1990s. Since then, a certain dynamic seems to have been established, as Figure 1 shows. That said, this point should be nuanced based on a comparison with the literature on the commons. While this literature took off quite significantly in the 2000s, particularly after Elinor Ostrom was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics in 2009, the same momentum has not been seen in the literature on gender and the commons.

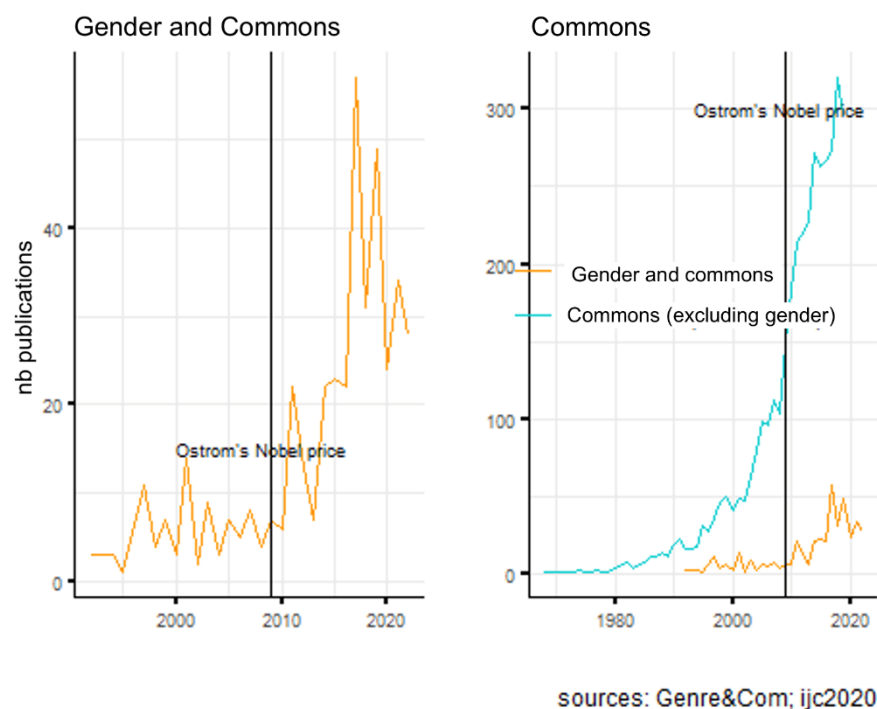
The surge we saw in 2019 was caused by the publication of a special issue of the *IJC* devoted to the gender approach to the commons. This issue devoted to the feminist and commons perspective, *Feminist Political Ecologies of the Commons and Commoning* (vol. 13, no. 1), edited by Floriane Clément, Wendy Harcourt, Deepa Joshi, and Chizu Sato, is a sign of the growing recognition of this dual field. (For the full list of articles, see Table 3.1).

**Table 3.1 List of articles published in the special issue of the *IJC* in 2019**

List of articles that appear in both databases			
	Authors	Journal	Year of publication
A Feminist Perspective On Autonomism And Commoning, With Reference To Zimbabwe	Alexander, Tarryn & Helliker, Kirk	Journal Of Contemporary African Studies	2016
Conceptualising Environmental Collective Action: Why Gender Matters	Agarwal, Bina	Cambridge Journal Of Economics	2000
Creating A Space Where Gender Matters: Elinor Ostrom (1933-2012) Talks With Ann Mari May And Gale Summerfield	May, Ann Mari & Summerfield, Gale	Feminist Economics	2012
Environmental Action, Gender Equity And Women's Participation	Agarwal, Bina	Development And Change	1997
Gender Discrimination In Property Rights: Six Centuries Of Commons Governance In The Alps	Casari, Marco & Lisciandra, Maurizio	Journal Of Economic History	2016
Reading Elinor Ostrom Through A Gender Perspective	Łapniewska, Zofia	Feminist Economics	2016
6 articles appear in both databases, including 2 written by Bina Agarwal and 2 published in the journal <i>Feminist Economics</i> Source: Genre&Com&ijc2020			

The articles listed in the Genre&Com database draw on a variety of concepts relating to the commons, most often in connection with environmental issues and the transformation of agriculture through agrarian reform. Various formulations have been used to designate the commons: *village commons* (Agarwal, 1992); *community property regimes*, *common property resource*, *common property*, or *community* (Quiggin, 1993; Rocheleau et al., 1997; Davidson-Hunt, 1995; Agarwal, 1995); *communal tenure system* (Carney, 1993); *land rights* (Agarwal, 1994) or *property rights* (Meinzen-Dick et al., 1997, 2001); *commons* (Taylor, 2003; Brownhill et al., 2005); *property status* (Bedi et al., 2011); *rights-based access* (Bose et al., 2011).

**Fig. 1. Change in the number of publications in the literature on gender and the commons**



#### *The journals represented*

The Genre&Com database includes 75 journals, or 114 if articles on gender from the ijc2020 database are included (as against 1,886 for the ijc2020 database, from which articles incorporating a gender perspective have been removed). Laerhoven, Schoon, and Villamayor-Tomas (2020) note that journals dealing with the commons are quite dispersed, with the result that the knowledge produced is quite fragmented and this field of research lacks visibility. One of the reasons the *International Journal of the Commons (IJC)* was set up was to facilitate the accumulation of knowledge by offering a forum dedicated specifically to the commons. This observation applies to gender studies, as specialist journals such as *Gender and Society* and *Gender, Work and Organization*, or even *Feminist Economics* have supported academic contributions dedicated to this field of research. The dual field of gender and the commons

suffers from the same dispersion, because of the cross-disciplinary nature of these approaches. While there is no specific publication devoted to this field, unlike with gender studies and the commons, three journals stand out: *World Development*, the *International Journal of the Commons*, and *Feminist Economics*. All three appear in the list of journals in the ijc2020 general commons database and in the Genre&Com database.

With regard to the literature combining the gender perspective with that on the commons, these three journals are the best represented, accounting for 29.5% of publications that combine these two approaches. *World Development* publishes more articles devoted to these two fields, with over 13.5% of articles, than the journal devoted entirely to the commons, the *IJC*, with 10.1% of articles, and *Feminist Economics*, with less than 5.8%. *World Development* is a multidisciplinary monthly journal devoted to development studies. It has been in existence since 1983. *Feminist Economics* is a quarterly journal founded in 1995. The *IJC*, which was launched in 2007, is more recent. It publishes just two issues a year. This explains the ranking of these three journals in terms of the number of publications that combine the gender and commons perspectives. For journals for which more than two articles have been identified, Figure 2 details how well they are represented. In addition to the three main journals already mentioned—the *IJC*, *Feminist Economics*, and *World Development*—journals dedicated to environmental issues (such as *Ecological Economics* and the *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management*) are particularly well represented, whether in the field of the commons on its own or that of both gender and the commons.

**Fig. 2. The main journals represented in the literature on gender and the commons**



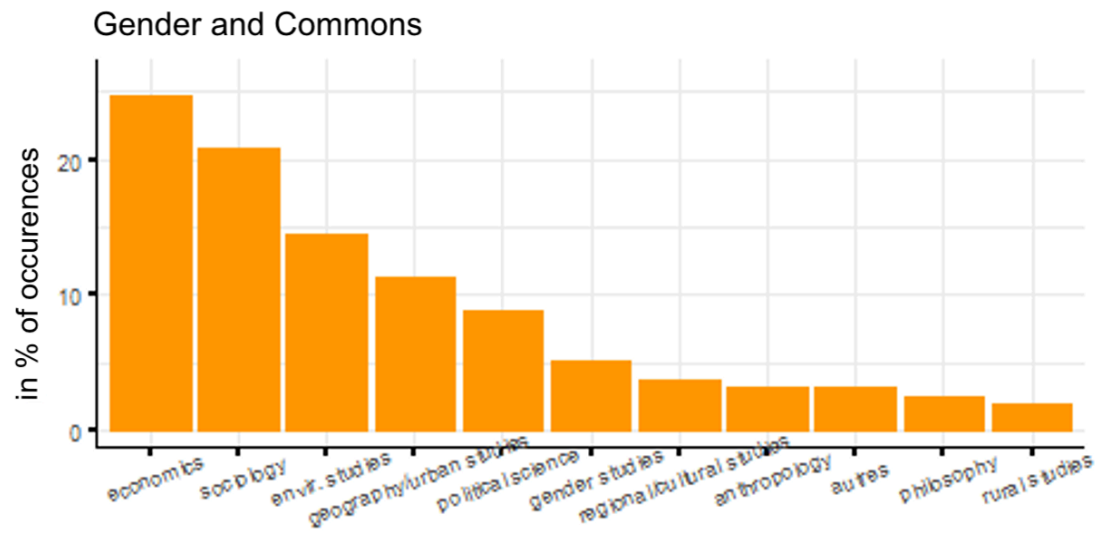
### 3.2. A multidisciplinary field

#### *Disciplines within the field of gender and the commons*

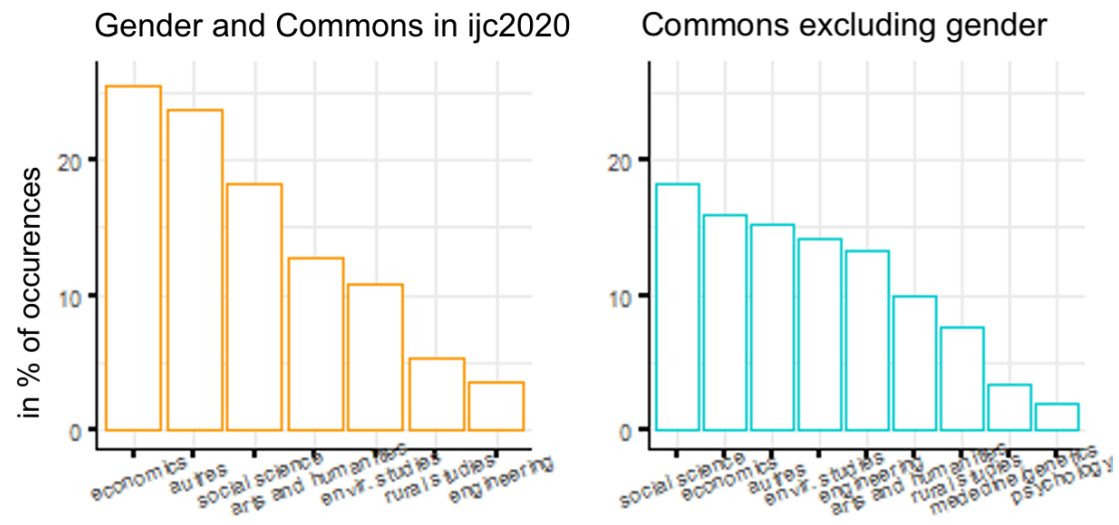
The research field of gender and that of the commons are both open to multidisciplinary: not only are collaborations between people with different educational backgrounds frequent, but researchers working in these two fields often have a multidisciplinary background themselves. The Genre&Com database was created by entering, for each author, the disciplinary fields in which their work and training are situated: one individual may be linked to several disciplines. However, the ijc2020 database provides less precise information on this subject, as disciplines are listed by document rather than by author. That is why, in what follows, we make use not of the Genre&Com&ijc2020 database, but of the Genre&Com and ijc2020 databases separately.

To clarify the disciplinary roots of the literature on gender and the commons, Figure 3 shows how each discipline is represented as a percentage of occurrences in the Genre&Com database. Economics and sociology are the disciplines that are drawn on most heavily, each accounting for around 20% of disciplines, followed by environmental studies, and then geography and urban studies. Political science is farther down the list, with less than 10% of occurrences. To offer a point of comparison, we compare the representation of the different disciplines between documents tagged “gender” and those outside the field of gender studies within the ijc2020 database. Both categories are comparable in terms of the coding of disciplines. Within the field of gender and the commons, there are 7 different disciplines as opposed to 9 (psychology and medicine are not represented). Figure 3 confirms that economics and sociology are significant in the literature on gender and the commons (in terms of the percentage of occurrences). This is probably because the concept of gender and feminist studies are more firmly rooted in the social sciences, and in sociology in particular. Economics is unique in that it combines an interest in the commons and, more recently, in gender. It should be noted that, in order to judge the relative weight of each discipline within the literature on gender and the commons, it would be appropriate to take into account the respective significance of each in all academic publications. It is therefore likely that the relative weight of environmental studies would be greater than that of economics or sociology, insofar as this disciplinary field seems *a priori* to be more heavily represented in the literature on gender and the commons than it is in academic publications as a whole.

**Fig. 3. Disciplines within the literature on gender and the commons**



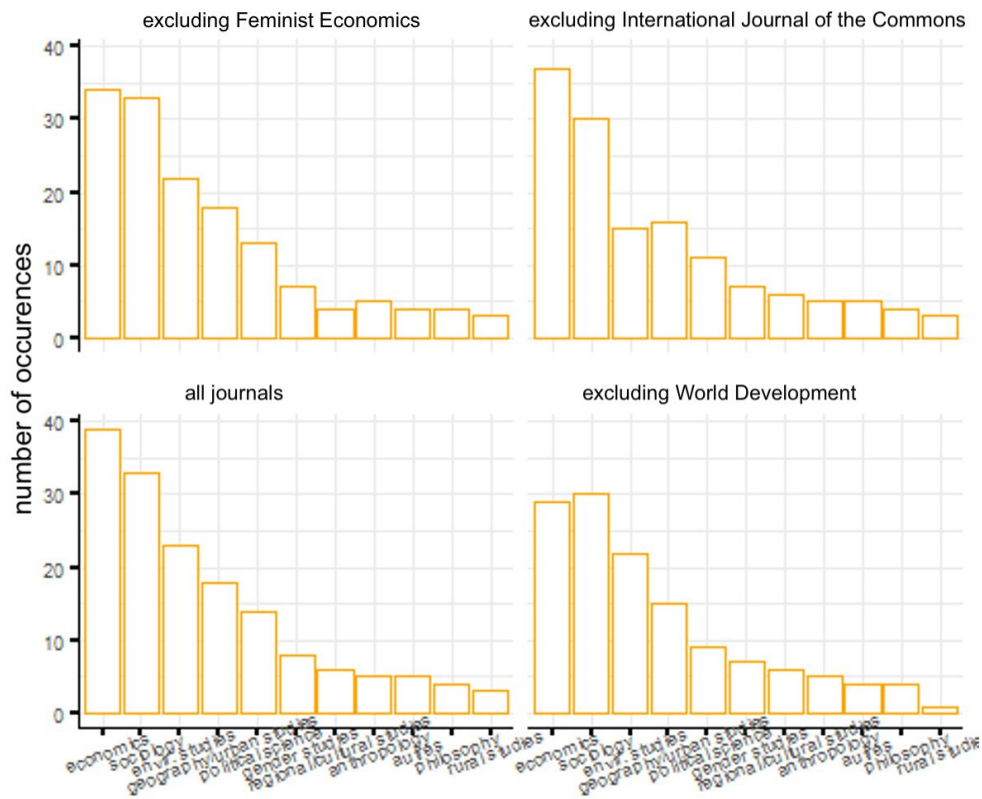
Source : Genre&Com



Economics, sociology, and environmental studies are the most heavily represented. An exhaustive list of publications in certain journals, such as *Feminist Economics* and *World Development*, may imply a bias in the representation of disciplines. To explore the role played by the three main journals, we reproduce Figure 3, successively removing these three main journals. Figure 4 shows the disciplinary distribution according to the number of occurrences of all the journals, then those excluding *Feminist Economics*, then *World Development*, and then the *IJC*. We can see that the first two journals occupy a fairly similar position in disciplinary terms, at least in this limited field of gender and the commons, with economics heavily represented. Meanwhile, the *IJC* is oriented more toward environmental studies (as defined above).

**Fig. 4. Disciplines represented in the literature on gender and the commons**

According to journals

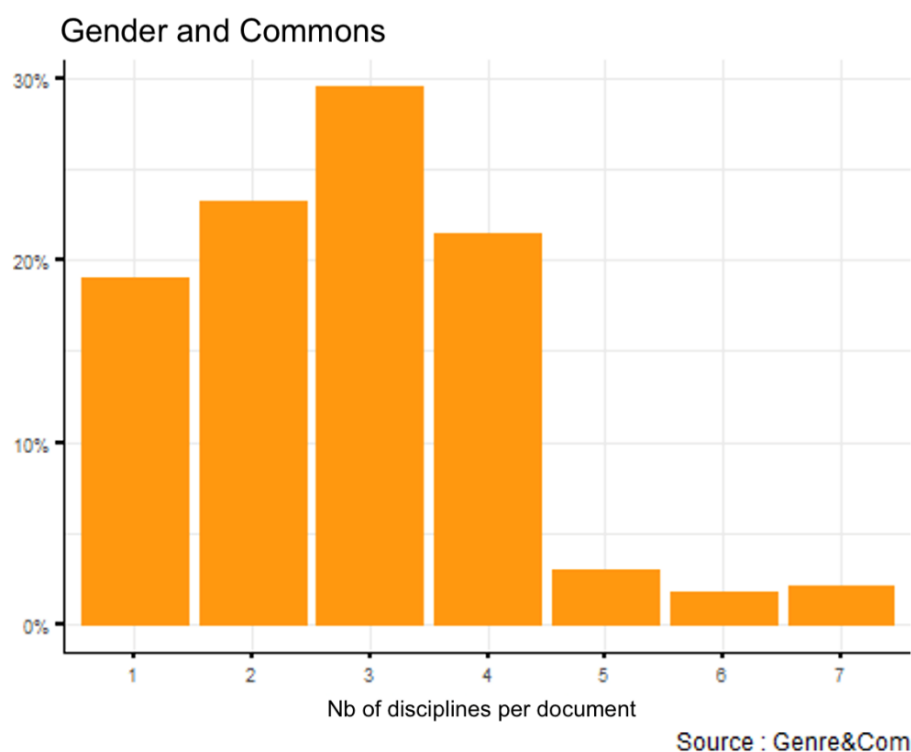


Source : Genre&Com

#### *Multidisciplinary in the literature on gender and the commons*

The number of disciplines involved in this field does not allow us to assess the degree of multidisciplinary as such, as it could be the case that work is done in various academic fields without any collaboration between them. To get a better idea of the extent of collaboration between disciplines, we calculate the number of disciplines involved per document. That calculation is possible thanks to the information available in the Genre&Com database. In the Genre&Com database, there is an average of 2.8 disciplines per document, indicating a high degree of multidisciplinary. Unfortunately, the data at our disposal does not allow us to compare it with what would be observed in the literature on the commons in general, since the ijc2020 database provides information on disciplinary fields by document and not by author, as is the case in Genre&Com. Figure 5 shows the percentage of documents as a function of the number of disciplines per document. We can see that over 30% of the documents in the Genre&Com database draw on 3 different disciplines (as defined above).

**Fig. 5. Multidisciplinarity in the literature on gender and the commons**



### 3.3. Collaboration and scientific dissemination

#### *The main contributors and co-authorship*

Among the 356 authors writing on gender and the commons, some stand out for their particularly prolific contribution. Table 3.2 lists authors who have more than 3 publications in the Genre&Com&ijc2020 database. We can point out two emblematic researchers in feminist studies, Bina Agarwal and Silvia Federici, and two specialists in the literature on the commons, Ruth Meinzen-Dick and Esther Mwangi, both of whom are mentioned by Elinor Ostrom among the researchers she encouraged to pursue this dual path of research on gender and the commons (May and Summerfield, 2012b). In view of the underrepresentation of authors from the Global South in the academic literature, it is noteworthy that 2 of the 6 authors mentioned below are from the Global South.

- Bina Agarwal is an economist and professor at the University of Manchester. She develops conceptual and theoretical analyses, which she illustrates with specific examples and cases. She is one of the most prolific contributors to this dual field, with 12 publications. These publications are also among the first to combine the gender/feminist perspective with a perspective on the commons. In fact, Bina Agarwal can be described as a pioneer in the field.

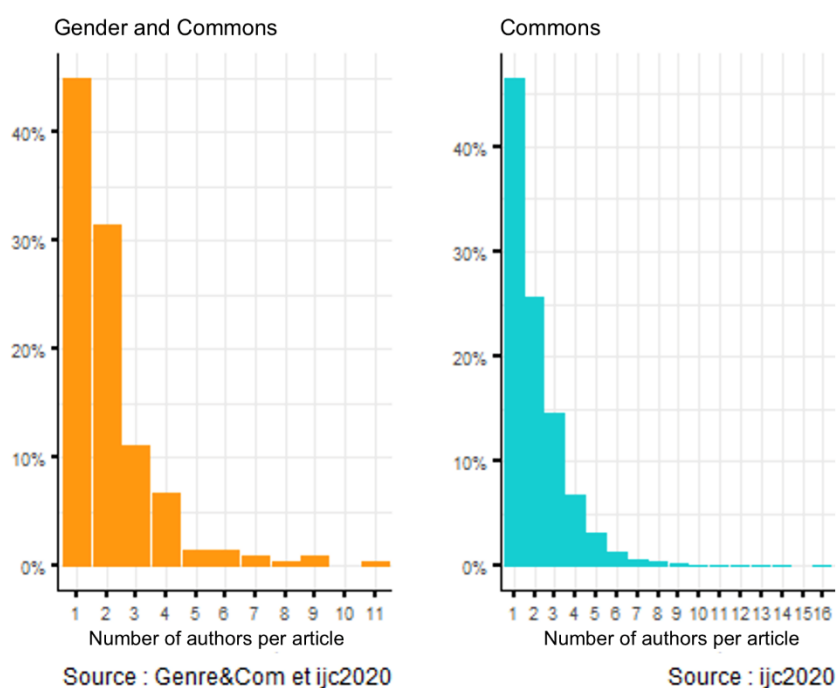
- Ruth Meinzen-Dick is a sociologist and anthropologist and a Senior Research Fellow at the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). Her transdisciplinary research focuses on how institutions and policies affect the management of natural resources, in particular water and land. Her work is based on case studies. She is also a major contributor to the dual field of gender and the commons, with 12 publications.
- Margreet Zwarteveen is an irrigation engineer and social scientist who studied at Wageningen University in the Netherlands. She is professor of water governance at the UNESCO-IHE Delft Institute for Water Education in the Netherlands. She studies water policies and practices, focusing on issues related to gender equality and justice. She studies the various institutions, organizations, and technologies for water distribution and the regulation of water flows, adopting an interdisciplinary approach whereby water distribution is considered as the result of interactions between ecology, technology, and society. Power relations and political issues are at the heart of her work.
- Silvia Federici is a Marxist-feminist sociologist whose work seeks to highlight the value of the domestic labor performed by women in all societies, as well as the mechanisms of exploitation associated with patriarchy and capitalism. 4 of her publications fall within the literature on gender and the commons. These publications are fairly recent and reflect the advances she has made in her thinking on the commons, which she views as a form of organization that makes it possible to go beyond capitalism and as a means of resisting neoliberalism.
- Anne M. Larson is a researcher at the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR). Her research focuses on policies around the governance of land and forests, including issues related to property rights, climate change, indigenous territories, and gender. She has a degree in environmental studies from Stanford University and a PhD in Wildland Resource Science. She has also worked for NGOs and has been an activist and lobbyist.
- Esther Mwangi was a specialist in environmental issues and public policy. A former student of Ostrom, she helped introduce gender into the Ostromian perspective on the commons. Her research focused on land property rights and gender. Her work on the division and privatization of Maasai-owned commons in Kenya showed that the most vulnerable groups were subject to unfavorable treatment (Mwangi, 2006).

**Table 3.2 Main contributors to the literature on gender and the commons (more than 3 publications)**

Contributors to the literature on gender and the commons with more than 3 publications	
Authors	Number of contributions
Agarwal, Bina	12
Meinzen-Dick, Ruth	12
Zwarteveen, Margreet Z.	6
Federici, Silvia	5
Larson, Anne M	4
Mwangi, Esther	4
Source: Genre&Com&ijc2020.	

The practice of co-authorship is fairly widespread in the two fields being compared, whether that of the commons alone (with around 25% of papers having 2 co-authors and 15% with 3 co-authors) or that of gender and the commons (with just over 30% of papers written with 2 co-authors and 10% written with 3 co-authors).

**Fig. 6. Co-authorship in the literature on gender and the commons**



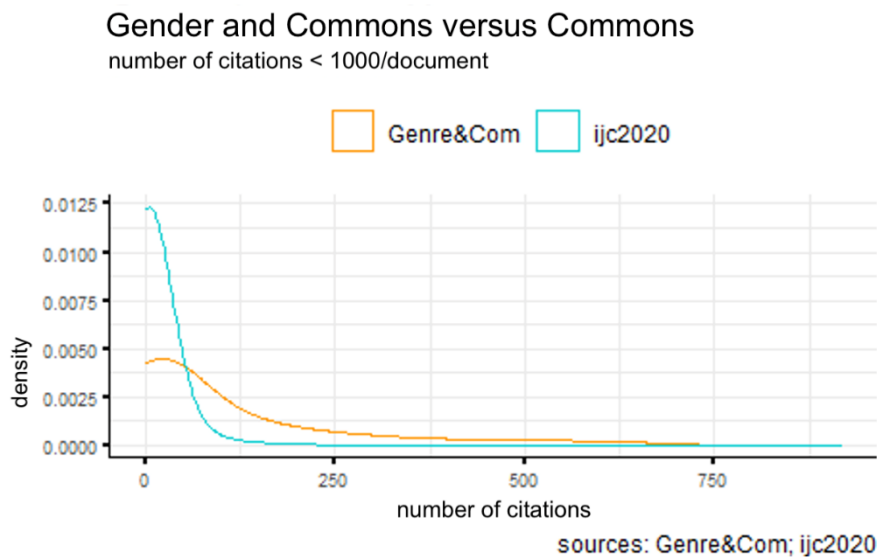
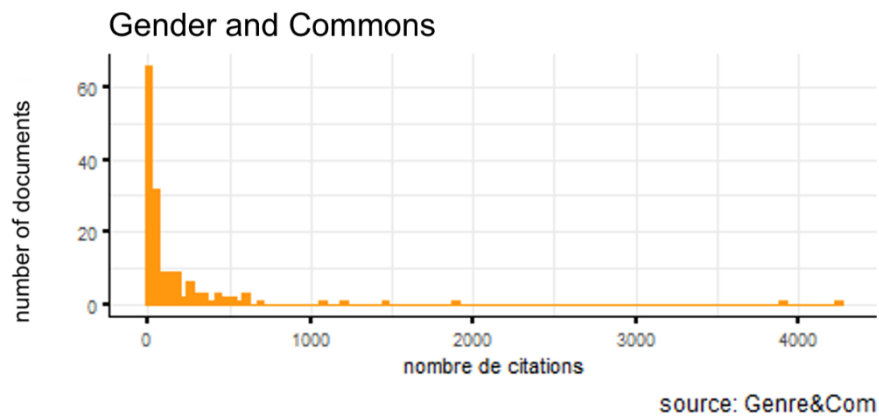
### *Citations by publication*

Both the Genre&Com and ijc2020 databases include information on the number of citations for each paper. That said, the two databases are not perfectly comparable in this respect, because the information was not collected at the same time. The number of citations changes over time for certain papers. For papers that are listed in both databases, the number of citations in the more recent Genre&Com database is systematically higher than that in the ijc2020 database. For this reason, we look only at the Genre&Com database, without taking into account the “gender” documents in the ijc2020 database. Figure 7 shows that papers on gender and the commons are fairly well represented among those papers that have 100 or so citations. The comparison with the field of the commons seems to show that those adopting a gender perspective are cited more often, which probably reflects the fact that this field is much narrower than that of the commons in general, which reduces the options for citation: given that fewer works have been published, the accumulation of citations is more dynamic, and so we find more citations for each document. Among the documents cited at least once, the average number of citations is seven times as high for the field of gender and the commons, with 205.8 citations per paper compared with 29.4 for the field of the commons in general. The median number of citations is five times as high (41) for the field of gender and the commons as for the field of the commons in general. Finally, the paper on the commons with the most citations is that by Hardin (1968), with 12,514 citations, while that on gender and the commons, by Agrawal and Gibson (1999), has 4,249 citations.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> This paper notes the potential for protest by certain marginalized groups, such as women; its inclusion in the Genre&Com database is debatable, given that the gender element is anecdotal.

**Fig. 7. Citations of papers in the literature on gender and the commons**



## 4. Mapping out the literature on gender and the commons

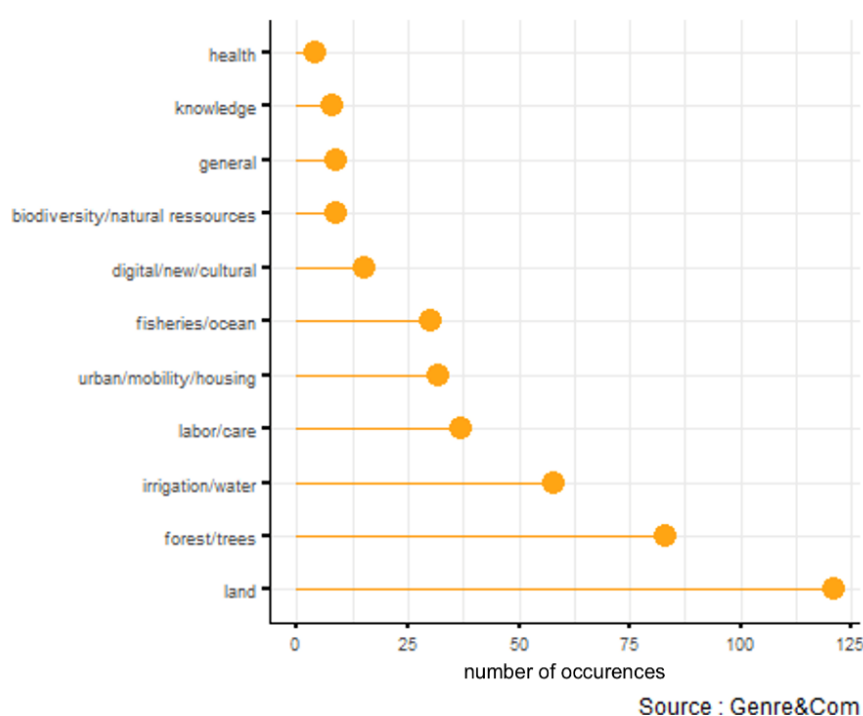
### 4.1. What types of commons, and where?

*The resources on which the commons are based*

Research on the commons is often associated with case studies on the local management of a resource by a community. The Genre&Com database contains precise information on the countries covered by the various articles and on the type of resources or commons that are analyzed. The same article may cover the management of several resources and/or different geographical areas. This information is not available in the ijc2020 database.

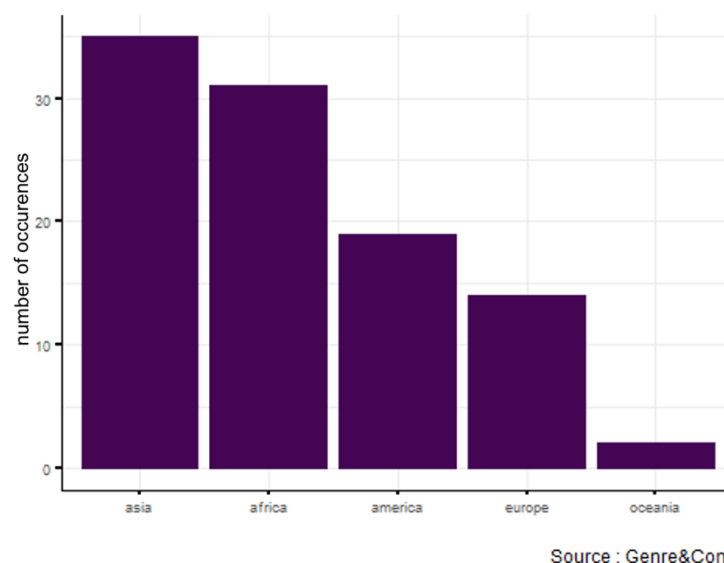
There are 11 different types of commons. Figure 8 shows that land, which remains a central concern for the management of property rights, is strongly represented, particularly in low-income countries. Among the “big five” identified in the literature on the commons (van Laerhoven and Ostrom, 2007)—forests, irrigation systems, fisheries, rangeland, and water—land/rangeland comes first, followed by forests and irrigation/water. Fishing, on the other hand, is second only to care/domestic work and urban commons. These last two resources or services raise questions that cannot be ignored from a gender or feminist perspective: care is based on the gendered division of labor, while urban commons are associated with gender inequalities when it comes to access to the public space. As in the general literature on the commons, the field of gender and the commons includes new themes such as biodiversity, climate, and the production of knowledge.

**Fig. 8. Types of resources/services represented in the literature on gender and the commons**

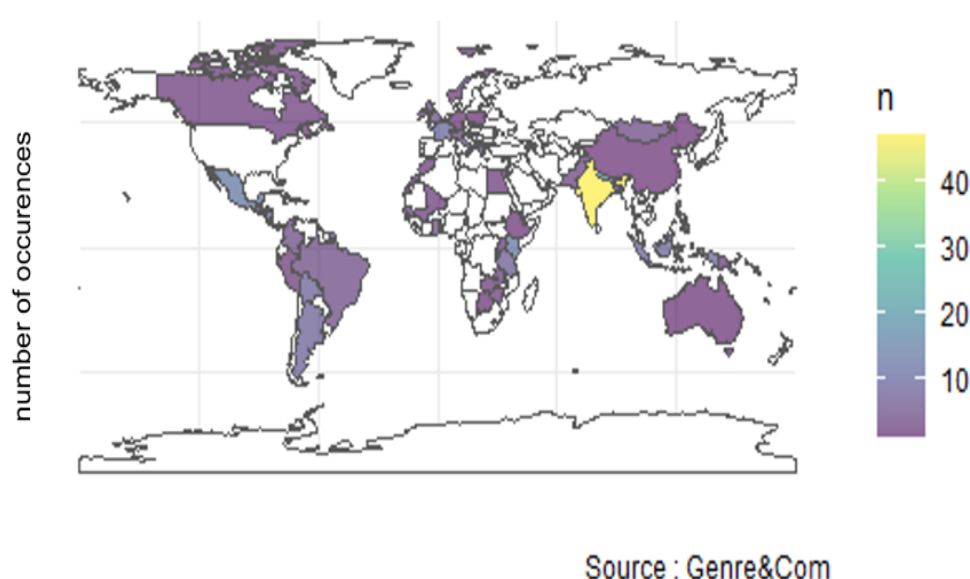


The documents in the Genre&Com database cover 72 countries. Figures 9 and 10 show the geographical breakdown of these analyses by region and then by country. They point to a specific focus on Asia and India in particular. It should be noted that the high representation of work by Indian researchers, such as Bina Agarwal, who has published extensively in this dual field, partly explains this overrepresentation of cases related to India. But it is possible that resources are more frequently organized and managed locally as commons in India.

**Fig. 9. Representation of geographical regions in the literature on gender and the commons**



**Fig. 10. Representation of countries in the literature on gender and the commons**



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## 4.2. Gender, feminism, and the commons

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### *Applying the analytical framework*

In order to apply the analytical framework presented in Table 2.1, the documents were tagged to identify the two approaches related to gender studies, the *gender* approach and the *feminist* approach, and the two related to the commons, the *analytical* approach and the *political* approach. Figure 11 shows the weight of each category, as measured by the number of publications. The most frequent combination in the literature is that of a *gender* approach with an *analytical* approach using case studies, with 94 documents, or 45.4% of the entire Genre&Com&ijc2020 database. Note that these two approaches are the ones we have defined by default, so that the weight of this category should be put into perspective. The *feminist* approach is evenly divided between the *analytical* approach and the *political* approach to the commons (with 46 and 45 documents respectively). The *feminist* perspective is just as much in evidence in publications focusing on practical case studies as it is in those focusing on the commons as a political principle for renewing the economic, social, and political order. The least frequent combination is between a *gender* approach and a *political* approach to the commons, with 22 documents, or 10.6% of the corpus of texts in the Genre&Com&ijc2020 database.

The *gender* approach combined with the *analytical* approach is less multidisciplinary than the other three combinations, with an average number of disciplines per publication of 1.9, as against more than 2.25 for the other combinations (2.55 for the *gender* approach and *political* approach combination; 2.5 for the *feminist* approach and *analytical* approach combination; and 2.2 for the *feminist* approach and *political* approach combination<sup>21</sup>). On the other hand, this is the combination in which co-authorship is most widespread, with an average of 2.34 co-authors per publication (1.95 for the *gender* approach and *political* approach combination; 2.17 for the *feminist* approach and *analytical* approach combination; and 1.53 for the *feminist* approach and *political* approach combination). The approach to the commons as a political principle seems less conducive to co-authorship than the case study approach. This can be explained by the type of knowledge produced: whereas the former is typically characterized by conceptual thinking, the latter generally involves field analysis, with data collection and sometimes the implementation of experiments, which requires a larger research team.

Table 4.1 shows the distribution of disciplines within each subfield. The analytical approach to the commons, combined with the gender approach, draws more on economics than do the other three combinations. Experimentation and empirical and statistical analysis are particularly well developed in this context. Whatever approach to the commons is adopted, the feminist perspective draws more on sociology, then on urban studies, and then on environmental studies.

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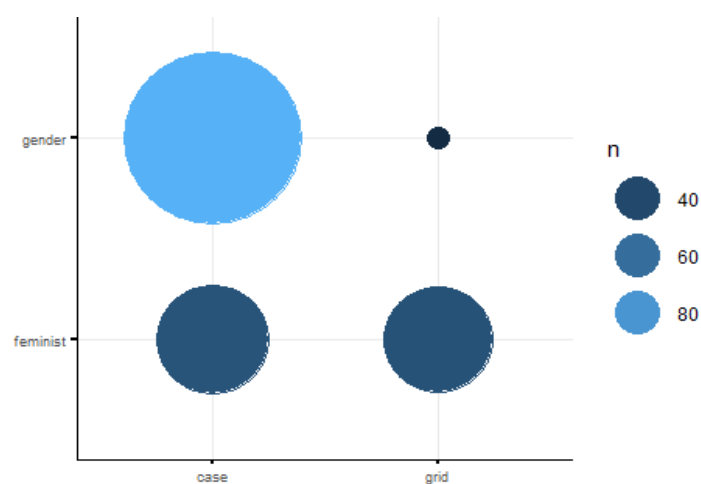
<sup>21</sup> On the Genre&Com database only, because, as noted above, the ijc2020 database provides information only on disciplines by document.

**Table 4.1 Disciplines within each field**

Representation of disciplines in each subfield As % of occurrences in each field				
	Analytical approach		Political approach	
	Gender	Feminist	Gender	Feminist
anthropology	4.4%	5.0%	8.9%	3.5%
Other	3.8%	2.5%	3.6%	1.8%
economics	21.9%	17.5%	12.5%	10.5%
engineering	3.3%	2.5%	3.6%	7.0%
envir. studies	14.2%	12.5%	14.3%	15.8%
gender studies	3.3%	7.5%	1.8%	7.0%
geography/urban studies	9.8%	12.5%	14.3%	14.0%
philosophy	3.8%	5.0%	1.8%	5.3%
political science	15.8%	7.5%	12.5%	8.8%
regional/cultural studies	1.6%	5.0%	3.6%	1.8%
rural studies	1.6%	5.0%	3.6%	1.8%
sociology	16.4%	17.5%	19.6%	22.8%

Note: In the combination between the analytical approach to the commons and the gender approach, economics represents 21.9% of the disciplinary fields mobilised.  
Source: Genre&Com

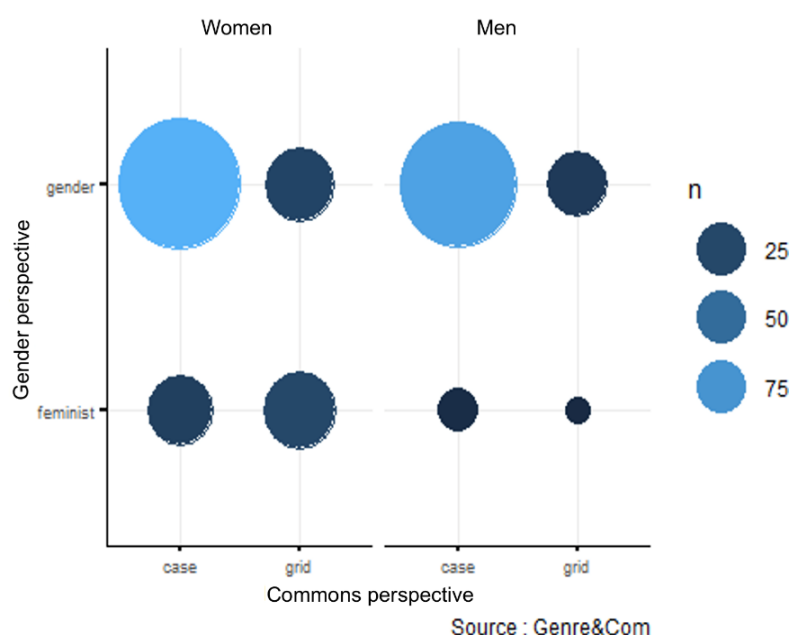
To measure the extent to which the author's sex modifies this mapping, we produced a graph similar to the one presented in Figure 11 by counting the number of authors in each of the categories identified. (Since there may be several authors per document, the numbers are higher than in the previous figure, which counts the number of documents.<sup>22</sup>) We can see quite clearly from Figure 12 that men publish much less than women when it comes to work that adopts a *feminist* approach, and in particular an approach combining feminism and the commons as a political principle. This is hardly surprising: historically, feminist and gender studies have been produced mainly by women.

**Fig. 11. Mapping approaches within the literature on gender and the commons**

Sources : Genre&Com&ijc2020

<sup>22</sup> As this information is not available in the ijc2020 database, this mapping is based on Genre&Com only.

**Fig. 12. Mapping approaches according to the author's sex**



### *The gender approach*

- Combined with the analytical approach to the commons

This combination is the most heavily represented in the databases used in the analysis (Genre&Com and Genre&Com&ijc2020). Some of this literature analyzes the role of the gender composition of the decision-making committee on resource management rules. Agarwal (1992) was one of the first to combine a focus on gender with work on the commons. She relies on the functioning of what she calls *village commons*, which are a form of joint management of resources (such as fodder, fuel, medicinal herbs, water, etc.) at the village level in rural India.

She highlights three major trends:

1. a deterioration in the quality and quantity of resources,
2. the process of nationalization of resources following decolonization,
3. the process of privatization of resources.

Agarwal shows that, regardless of the organization, the question of gender is central but is not enough to understand the relations of power and oppression at work in these modes of resource management. The gender perspective must be linked with perspectives that take into account social class, caste, and ethnicity. These different forms of oppression lead to a variety of situations, particularly in terms of access to resources and decision-making in the management of those resources, which place poor women in India at a particular disadvantage.

Agarwal (2009) extends the scope of her work by analyzing forest management (in India and Nepal) according to the gender composition of the decision-making committee. Given rural women's heavy dependence on local forest resources, one would expect that they would negotiate more lenient rules for their use. Yet, it has been found that the strictest rules come from committees made up of women, with the exception of those in which women who do not own land are particularly well represented. Sun, Mwangi, and Meinzen-Dick also analyze what effect the gender composition of forest resource user groups has on practices in various national contexts: Kenya, Uganda, Bolivia, and Mexico (Sun, Mwangi, and Meinzen-Dick, 2011). Gender-balanced groups participate more in the decision-making process and are more inclined to adopt exclusive use of the resource, whereas female-dominated groups participate less in the decision-making process and are less likely to sanction non-compliance with the rule and to exclude users. Similar work has been carried out in other contexts (Meinzen-Dick and Zwarteveen, 1998; Zwarteveen, 1997; Rap and Jaskolski, 2019). Doss et al. (2020) identify the specific features of women's land ownership that need to be taken into account in monitoring indicators to ensure their sustainability. They propose a conceptual framework for identifying the various dimensions and the factors that influence them. They show that the privatization, or even the nationalization, of commons makes women's lives more precarious. Levien has also shown that the dispossession of commons as part of agrarian reforms in various contexts systematically reduces women's independence, with the impact differing depending on caste or social origin, and makes it more likely that they will be assigned reproductive tasks within the household (Levien, 2017).

Some papers use an experimental framework to shed light on the ways in which women and men cooperate in managing a resource. For example, Aguilar-Ibarra, Micheli, et al. (2016) show that women are less inclined than men to extract resources when regulations and sanctions are applied. This result is based on experiments carried out in coastal fishing communities in Baja California, Mexico. The authors suggest that strengthening the decision-making role of women in the management of the commons, combined with the creation of an appropriate institutional environment, would lead to a more sustainable way of managing resources (Revollo-Fernández et al., 2016).

- Combined with the political approach to the commons

This approach includes more theoretical articles, often adopting a critical stance on neoliberalism and capitalism from a perspective that takes North/South relations into account. Podlashuc (2009) shows how commons practices within autonomous communities, such as social ecology and movements run by precarious women that resist market practices, help deconstruct the oppressions of industrial modernity. The aim is to substitute the agenda of the people for that of the elites. Kashwan et al. (2021) propose an agenda of empirical and theoretical research within the commons to strengthen the bridges between critical analyses of property and environmental justice. The aim is to gain a better understanding of how social, economic, and political inequalities affect the constitution of the groups that access and control the resource managed as a commons, with a focus on gender, ethnic origin, and social background. The authors call for the boundaries of commons theory to be pushed by exploring the processes of *commoning* or *decommoning* via "*grabbed commons*." They also propose to use the perspective of the commons to highlight the historical process of colonization and capitalist dispossession.

### *The feminist approach*

- Combined with the political approach

This dual approach involves combining the *feminist* perspective and the objective of equality with the *political* approach to the commons aimed at putting an end to capitalism, or at least bringing it under greater control. This is sometimes combined with a decolonial perspective. The ecofeminist movement is located within this dual perspective. This approach sees a link between male domination and the predation of natural resources by productivist societies. Perkins (2019) offers an overview of the theoretical foundations of the practices pursued by ecofeminists and indigenous thinkers in the fight against the fossil fuel economy and commodified property rights—practices based on *commoning*. In another context, Milani (2021) analyzes three urban garden communities in Brussels. The concept of the commons makes it possible to identify gardens as spaces of *commoning* practices whereby these resources are used and managed collectively. The ecofeminist approach emphasizes the logics of domination that subjugate women, racialized people, and people from disadvantaged social backgrounds. These logics are reproduced within the community and in its relations with the outside world. The author concludes that, under certain conditions, these shared gardens can provide an alternative that can challenge patriarchy and capitalist neoliberalism. This study, based on interviews and ethnographic observations, concludes that four factors are fundamental to avoiding the emergence of forms of domination in the practice of *commoning*: 1) knowledge exchange; 2) ecological responsibility; 3) power decentralization and 4) social and ecological interdependency.

Some publications focus on care work and its potential as a commons, in order to transform the market economy from a feminist standpoint. The aim here is to fight both capitalism and patriarchy, which are seen as two interrelated systems. Federici (2011), whose work takes a Marxist-feminist perspective, uses the commons to propose a way out of the market economy, and in particular to change the positioning of care work within societies. Her work re-examines the basis on which society is founded—that is, the gendered division of labor and the non-recognition of care work. It makes explicit the conditions under which the commons can become a means to go beyond capitalism (Caffentzis and Federici, 2014). It draws attention to the fact that the commons must not become a means of providing low-cost reproductive work. In the same vein, Dengler and Lang (2022) study the potential organization of care work in a degrowth society that combines social justice and ecology without prioritizing environmental justice over gender equality. Using the framework of the commons, the authors propose to take care work out of the market sphere. By going beyond the public sphere/private sphere dichotomy, they consider care as a commons (the “*commonization of care*”) based on a transformative community such as we find at the margins of

capitalism and that is created by social movements around the world. Sciannamblo et al. (2021) bring together the concepts of *commoning* and *caring* (in the general sense of looking after and caring for others) and show how this constitutes an alternative to capitalism.

Finally, Federici (2011) examines the criticism leveled by feminists at the reform of land ownership in Africa implemented by the World Bank in the 1990s. They pointed to the strengthening of the patriarchal system, and they showed that landless women living in urban areas appropriated unused public land for subsistence farming. Federici takes a mixed view of this feminist critique of communal land, denouncing an individualist drift that plays into the hands of neoliberalism. This reclamation of unused public land should have paved the way for the creation of new commons.

- Combined with the analytical approach

A number of works based on case studies of the commons tend to relativize the feminist scope of the commons as they have been built around traditions. Agarwal denounces the idealization of traditional resource management via the commons—an approach advocated in certain strands of ecofeminism. Indeed, the rules and governance are often based on patriarchal practices that exclude women, particularly those from lower castes, whose situations are the most precarious. Agarwal replaces ecofeminism with what she calls a feminist environmentalism, which emphasizes the materiality of human relations and oppressions (Agarwal, 1992). She also shows that the revival of the commons, particularly through the development of *systems communal management* (such as *joint forest management*) have led to a shift away from a system of access to resources based on citizenship (belonging to the village) to a system of *membership* (belonging to a club). These new management methods, inspired by the commons, have been designed without taking into account gender and class-based relations of domination, and thus give more power to men. The poorest women have been excluded from access to and management of these resources (Agarwal, 1997). Similarly, Carney (1993) shows that changes in the management of wetland environments in The Gambia following agrarian reform increased conflicts between women and men, because men were able to enclose the land and thus control women's domestic work. In response, the women developed ways of resisting this loss of control over resources.

## Conclusion

The literature linking a gender perspective and reflection on the commons is not new, but to date it has been insufficiently explored. It is bound to develop further, because the link is particularly fruitful for understanding the mechanisms of gender-based oppression, subjugation, and inequality as they emerge in resource management, and the modes of ownership associated with it. Like gender and feminist studies, and studies of the commons, the literature on gender and the commons is heterogeneous. The bibliometric analysis is based on this literature's twofold anchoring: in an academic and analytical perspective, and in a normative, activist, or political perspective. We have identified four areas for reflection on gender and the commons. The dual field of gender and the commons is conducive to multidisciplinary and diverse collaborations. Gender studies and feminist studies have been combined with work on the commons, based on themes related to the environment, resource conservation, and economic development.

The bibliometric analysis shows that most of the works published combine a gender perspective with an analytical approach to the commons, while works that combine a gender approach with a political approach to the commons are the least common. In addition, the feminist perspective is predominantly taken by female authors and much less by male authors. It is worth noting that this review of the literature should be supplemented by new entries with a view to better documenting the contributions made by researchers from the Global South. Controversies are emerging within this dual field (for example, around the various currents of ecofeminism). This study sheds light on practices and on the implementation of development projects. The commons are not free from forms of oppression (at the household or community level), so particular attention to the gender perspective is necessary. This must be considered alongside other forms of domination or inequality, such as those based on social or ethnic origin, or sexual orientation. To date, the research agenda remains open: further empirical work is needed if we are to understand the processes by which hierarchies are reconstituted within the commons as well as the modes of resistance on the part of oppressed groups.

This bibliometric work paves the way for an analysis of the gray literature produced by national and UN development agencies and by donors, following the example of the study carried out on gender and climate (Forest and Foreste, 2021). The aim here is to gain a better understanding of how the intersections of academic literature on gender and the commons influence the practices of these actors. With this in mind, the interpretive framework proposed in this report could be adapted to identify discursive and normative frameworks for action (policy frames). This work would be useful to actors such as AFD in (re)defining their approach to the commons from the standpoint of social and environmental transformation.

Without claiming to be exhaustive, this report demonstrates more generally the extraordinary fruitfulness of an approach that combines a perspective on gender with a perspective on the commons in tackling the issues associated with the major transitions that societies are facing:

- the environmental transition, which requires a transformation of the dominant modes of resource management;
- the demographic transitions associated with aging, which require that care be provided for dependent people in a variety of cultural contexts, and which underline the importance of care as a resource that can accommodate *commoning*;
- the digital transition, which, through the commodification of personal data, is radically transforming the boundaries between the public and the private, while reproducing, through artificial intelligence, the categories and hierarchies linked to gender and other factors of discrimination.

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**Publication Director** Rémy Rioux  
**Editor-in-Chief** Thomas Melonio

**Legal deposit** 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2024  
**ISSN** 2492 - 2846

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**Graphic design** MeMo, Juliegilles, D. Cazeils

**Layout** AFD

Printed by the AFD reprography service

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