



Tackling Agriculture-Nutrition Disconnects in South Asia: Policy and Politics

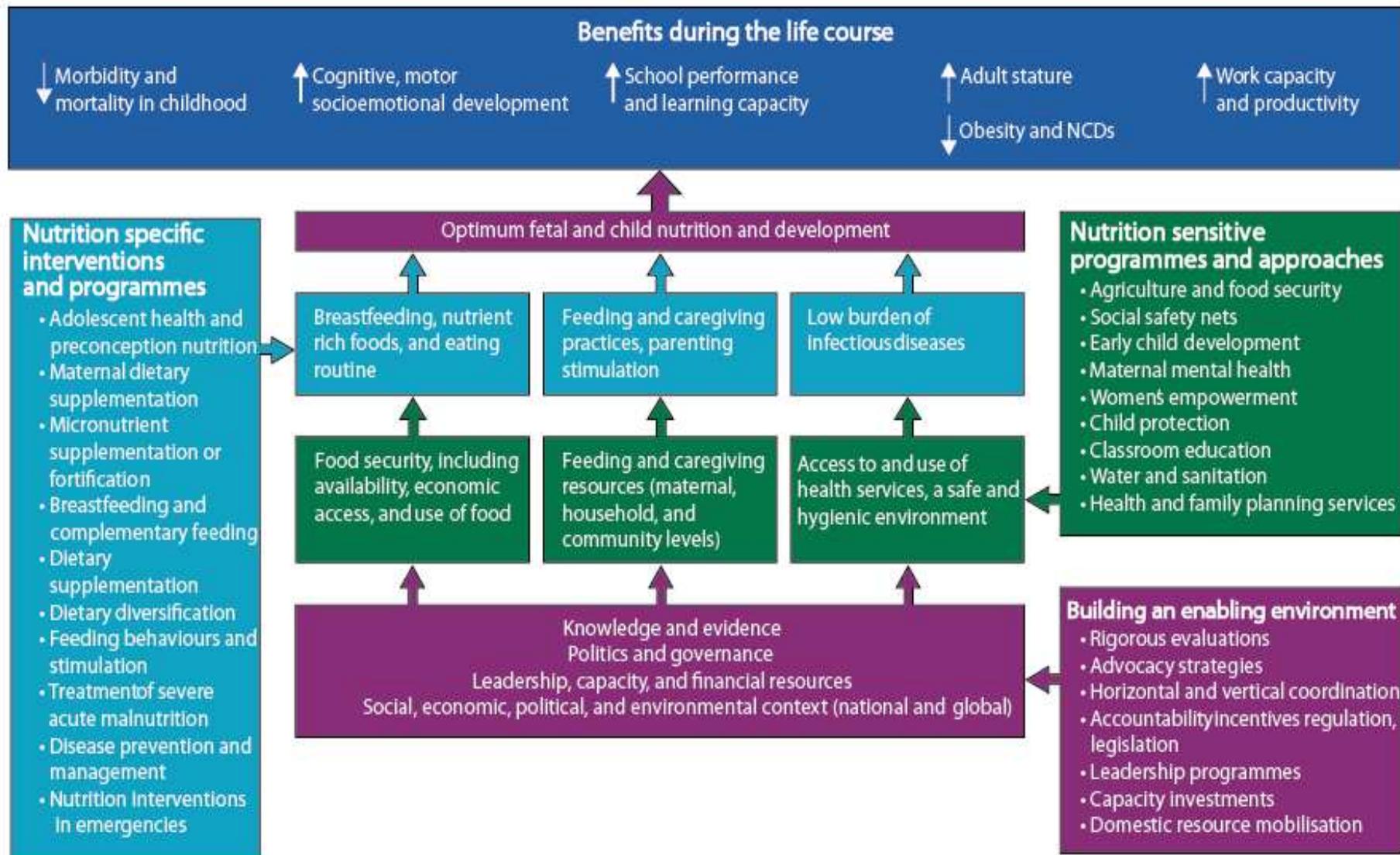
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Bonn, 23 September 2013

What are the political, institutional and policy-related challenges to enhancing the nutrition-sensitivity of agricultural systems in South Asia?

Outline

- Conceptualizing the challenge
- Knowledge and evidence (TANDI, LANSA reviews)
- Politics and governance
- Capacity and resources
- Ongoing work with LANSA

Lancet 2013 conceptual framework



What does an enabling environment for nutrition-sensitive agriculture look like?

Three vital factors for creating momentum and converting it to impact:



Creating and sustaining momentum for undernutrition reduction	Converting momentum to impact on nutrition status
Framing, generating and communicating knowledge and evidence	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Framing and narratives • What works? • Evidence/data on outcomes and benefits • Advocacy to increase priority (civil society) • Evidence on coverage and scale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation research (what works, why and how) • Monitoring coverage • Programme evaluation (impact pathways) • Generating demand for evidence of impact
Political economy of actors, ideas and interests	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentivising and delivering horizontal coherence (multisectoral coordination) • Building up accountability to citizens • Civil society: galvanizing commitment • Enabling and incentivizing positive contributions from the private sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering horizontal and vertical coherence • The role of civil society in delivery & impact • The role of private sector
Capacity (individual, organizational, systemic) and financial resources	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership/championing • Systemic capacity to sustain commitment • Understanding financing and making the case for additional resource mobilisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritisation and sequencing of nutrition action • Capacity for Implementation and scaling up • New forms of resource mobilisation

A4NH: Policies

AGRARIAN → TRANSFORMING → URBAN / INDUSTRIAL

**Agriculture
Policy**

**Health
Policy**

**Economic
planning/
development**

Country, regional,
continental,
international

**Nutrition
Policy**

**Social
policy**

Policy and institutional environments, processes, links

Evidence, information, ideas

Tools, technologies, methods, metrics

Capacity

1. Knowledge and evidence

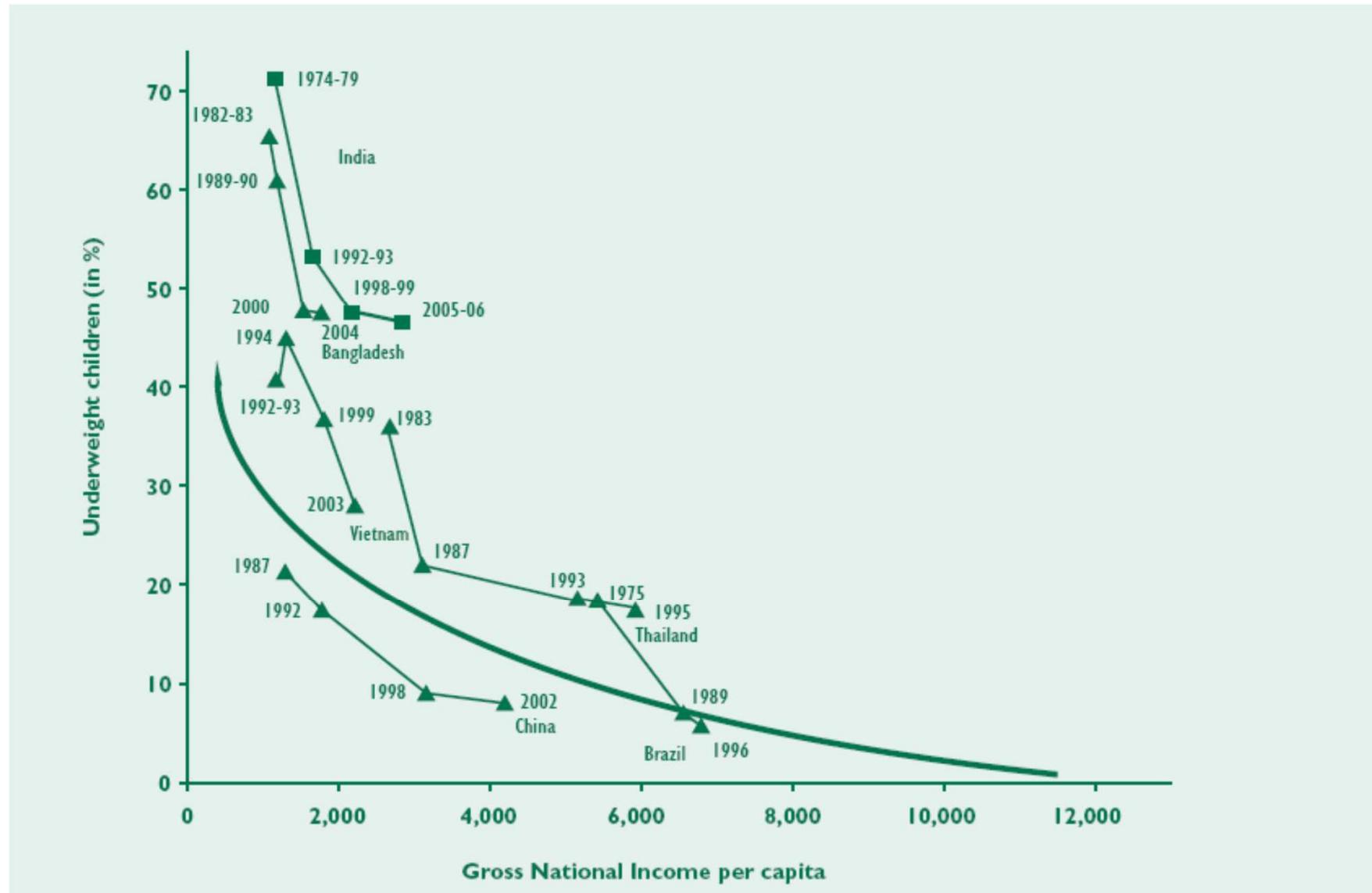
Knowledge and evidence

- What is the nature of the evidence base linking agriculture to nutrition?
- What *types* of evidence and knowledge exist?
- Where are the key gaps, disconnects or weaknesses?
- How are the links *perceived* by key decisionmakers?
- What are the dominant *narratives* that influence decisions ?
- Are there enough high-quality evaluations of successful intersectoral programs and interventions?
- Monitoring, surveillance data?
- Is there enough high-quality evidence for action, and is it reaching the right people in the right form at the right time?

Tackling the Agriculture-Nutrition Disconnect in India (TANDI I 2010-12)

After two decades of economic and agricultural growth in India, why do child undernutrition rates remain so high?

Trends in child undernutrition and Gross National Income per capita



Challenges and opportunities

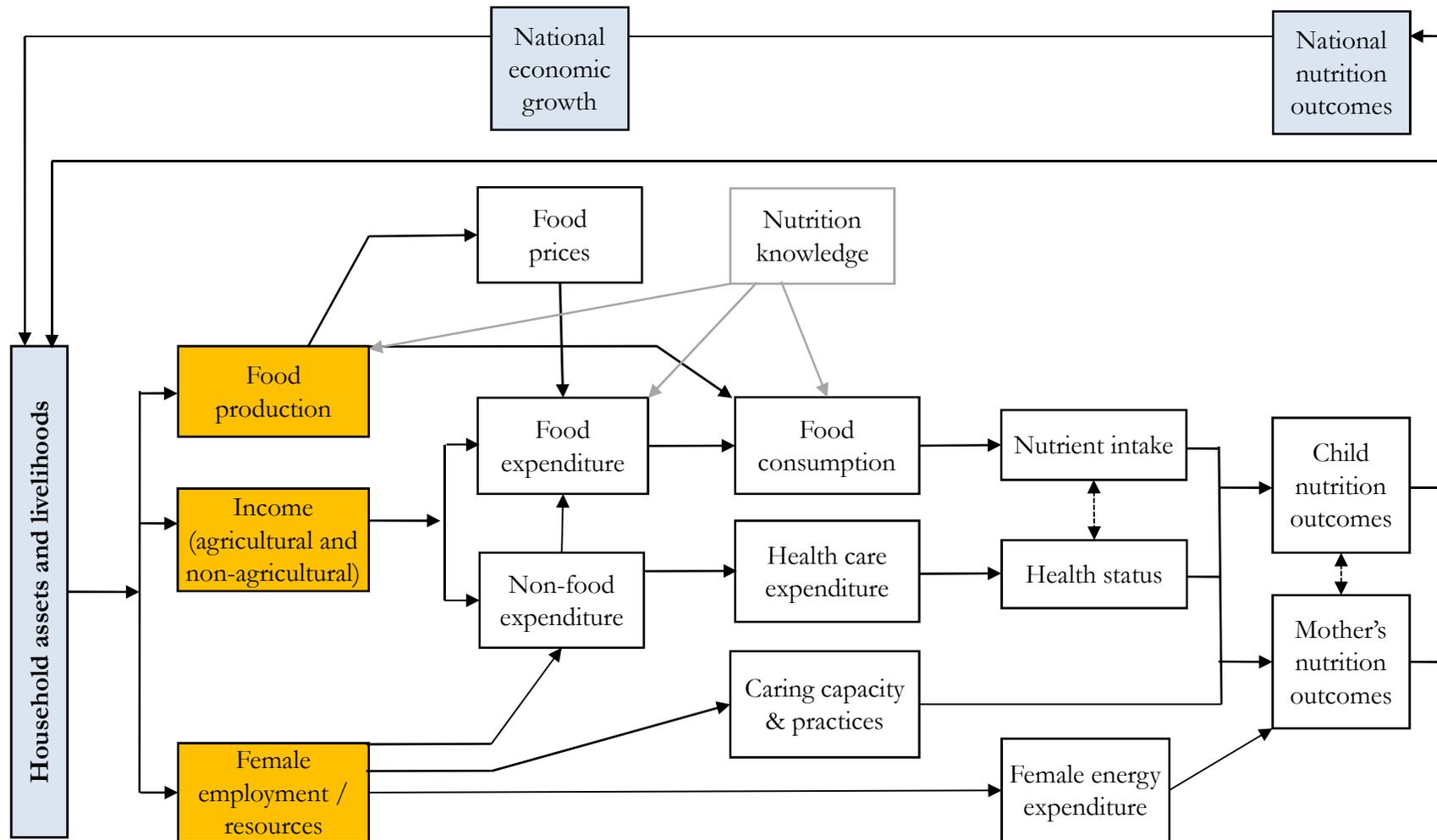
Challenges:

- Massive undernutrition problem in region
- Agriculture performing badly
- Ag and nutrition are poorly linked

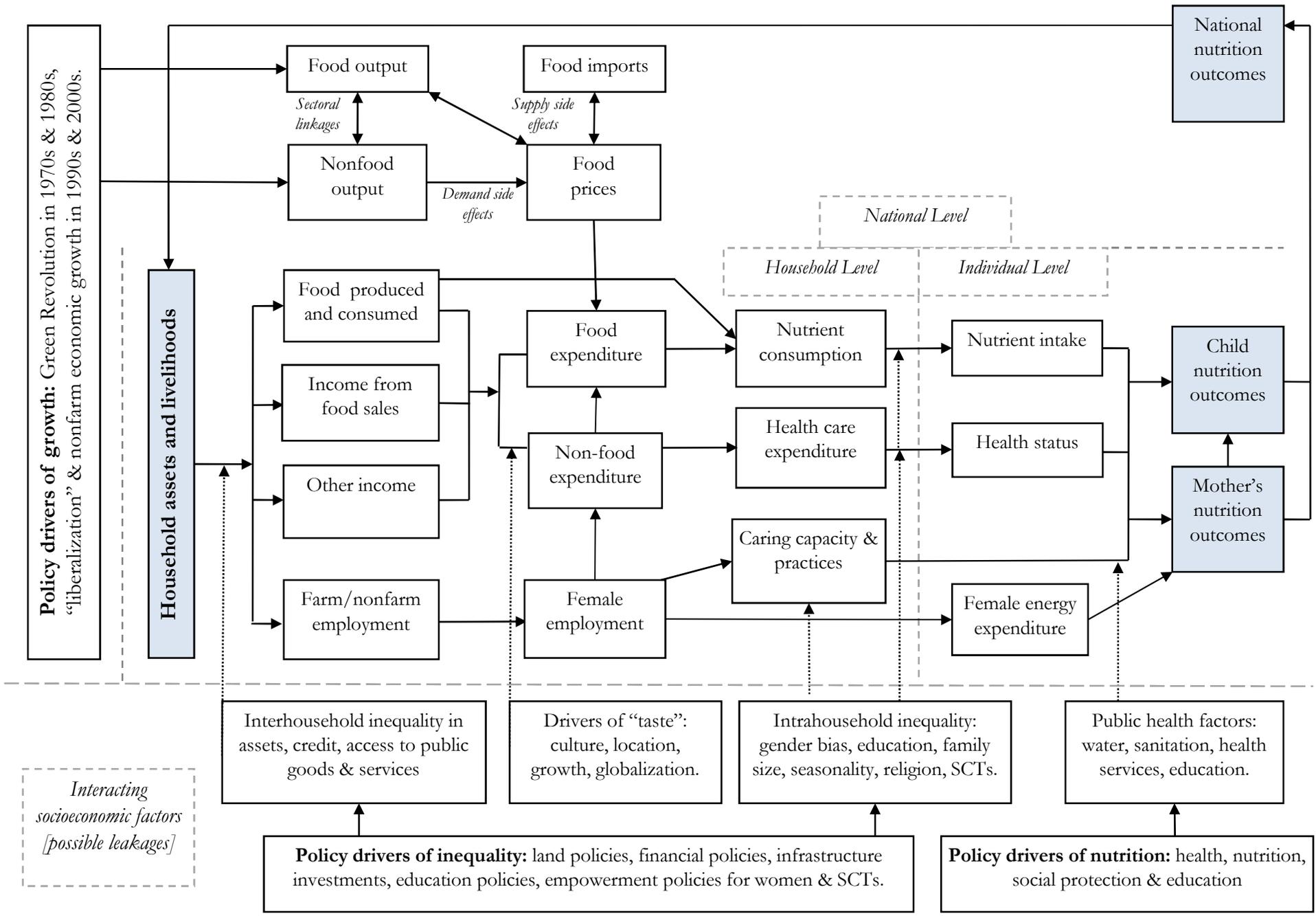
Opportunities:

- GDP per capita is booming (....at least, until recently...)
- Farming engages over 50% workforce, and generates over 50% rural income
- Agriculture is fundamental to a more inclusive and sustainable structural transformation
- The potential for agriculture to influence nutrition outcomes *at scale* is large
- Policy space exists to explore options via comparative research
- Global attention to nutrition

Pathways from agriculture to nutrition



Adapted from Gillespie et al. 2012 and Headey et al 2012



Conceptualizing the pathways between agriculture and nutrition

Agriculture is a key driver of poverty reduction

but...

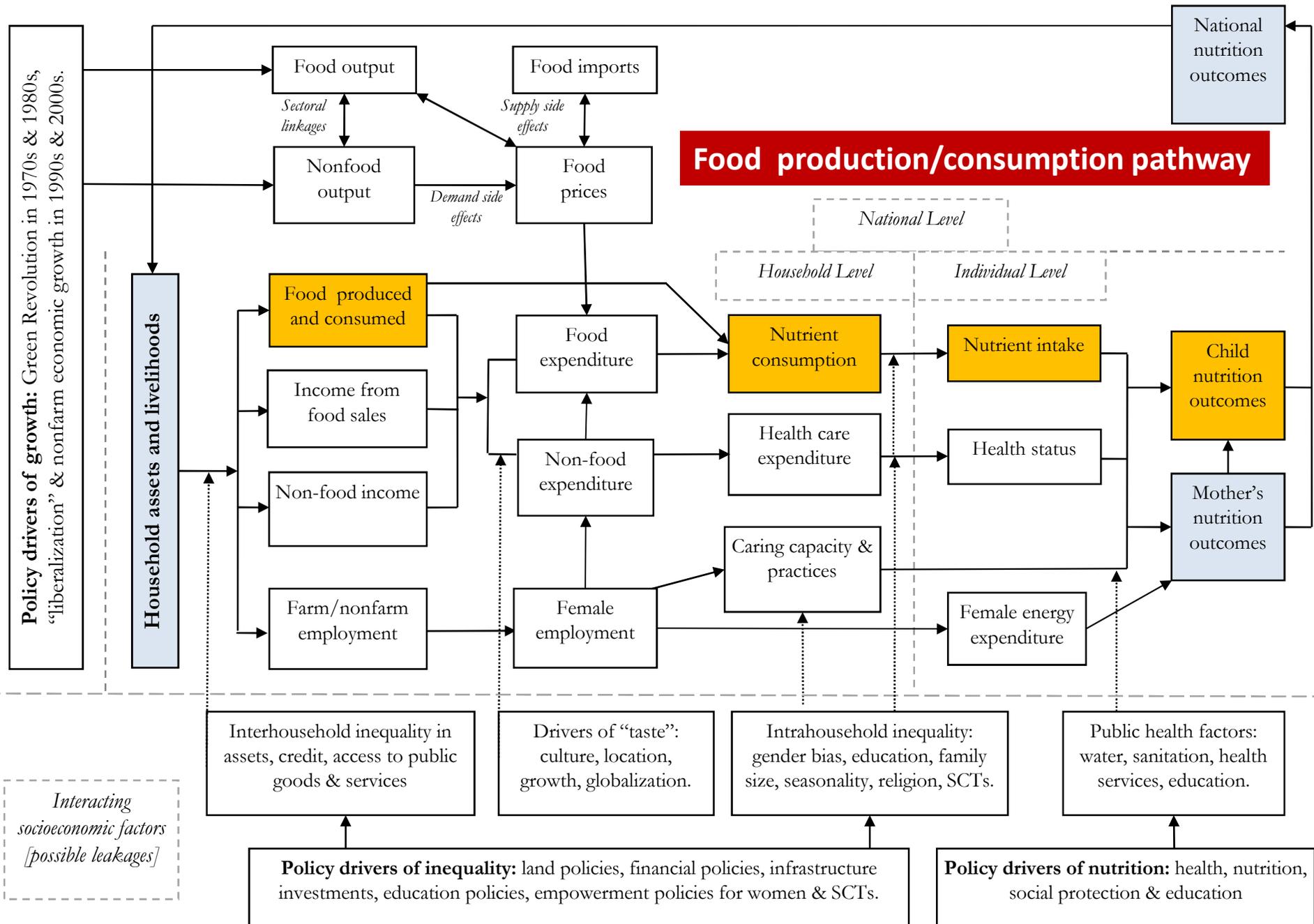
Pathways to nutrition are diverse and interconnected

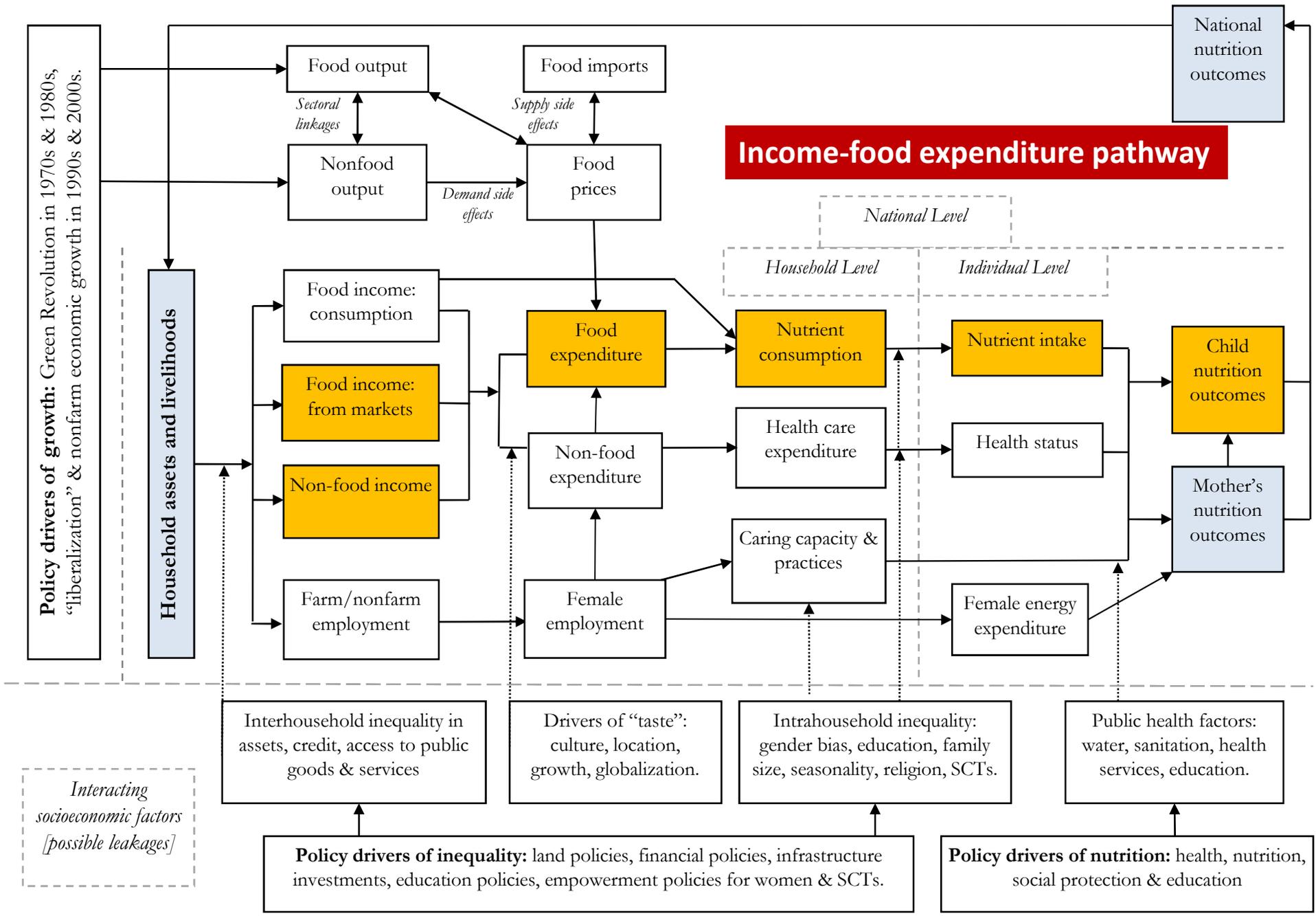
1. Agriculture as a source of food
2. Agriculture as a source of income:
 - how income from agriculture/non agriculture is spent on food and non food (other basic needs)

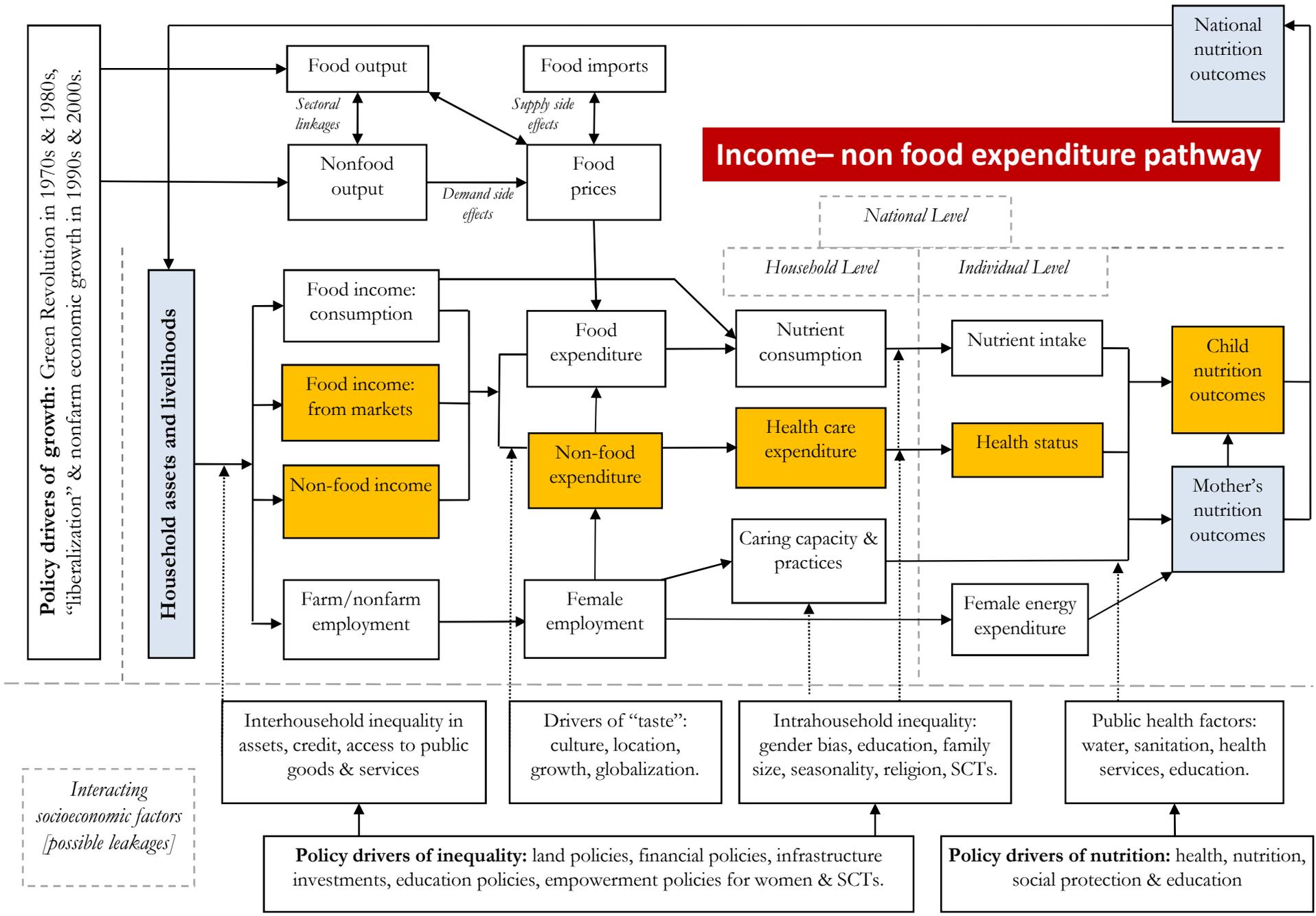
3. Agricultural policy and food prices

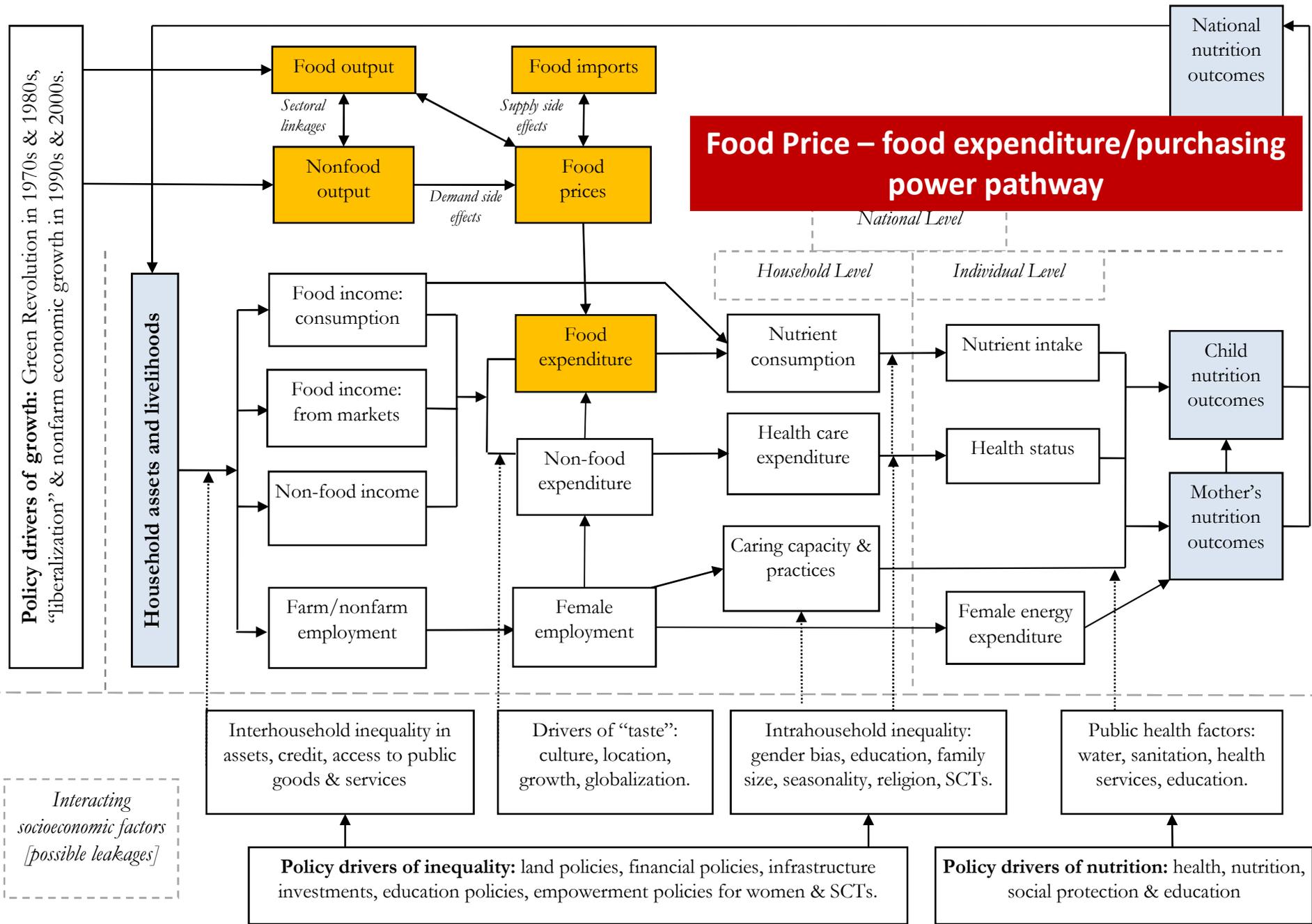
Gender dimensions

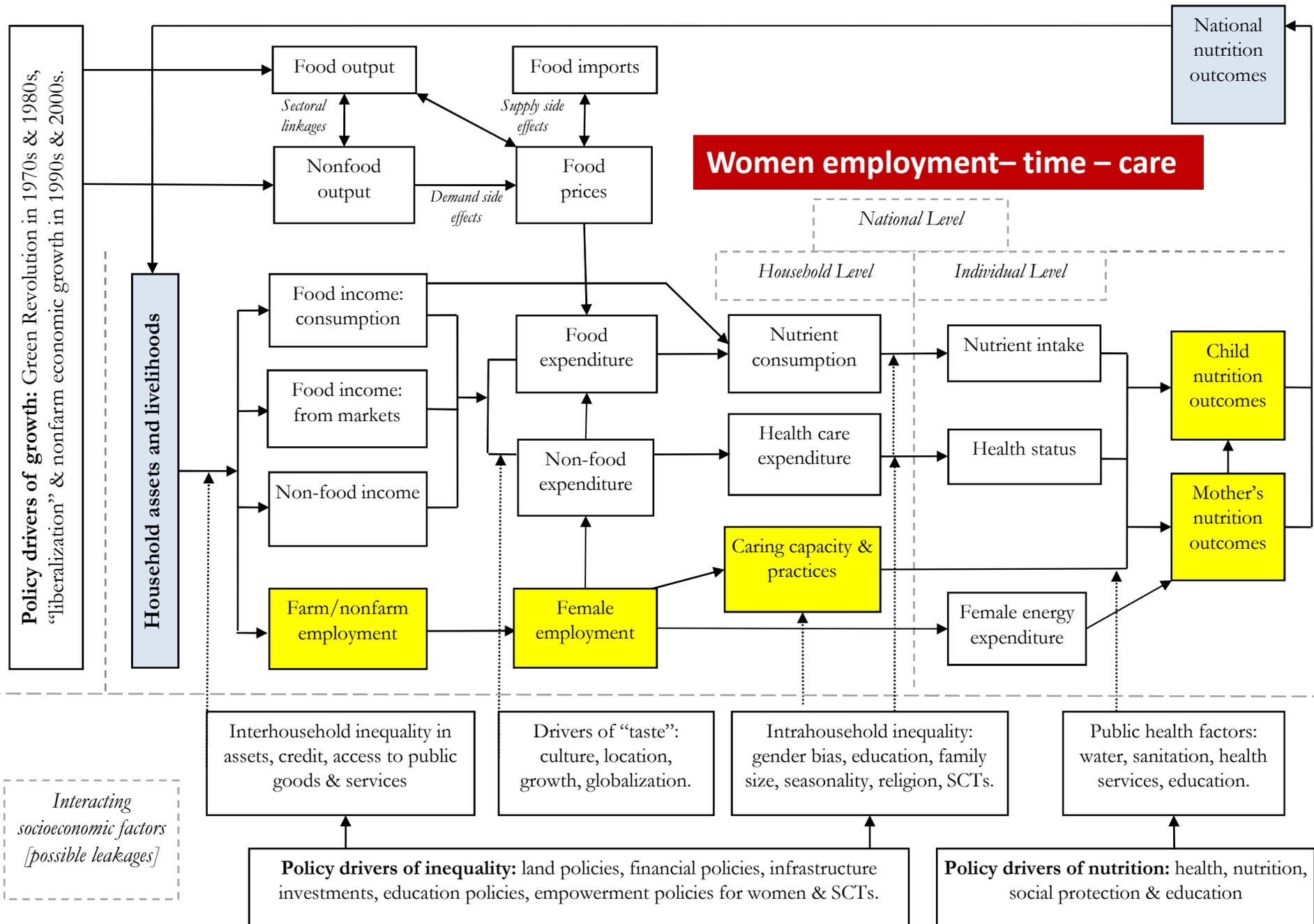
4. Women's employment, time and ability to manage young child care
5. Women's status, decision making power and control over resource allocation
6. Women's own health and nutritional status

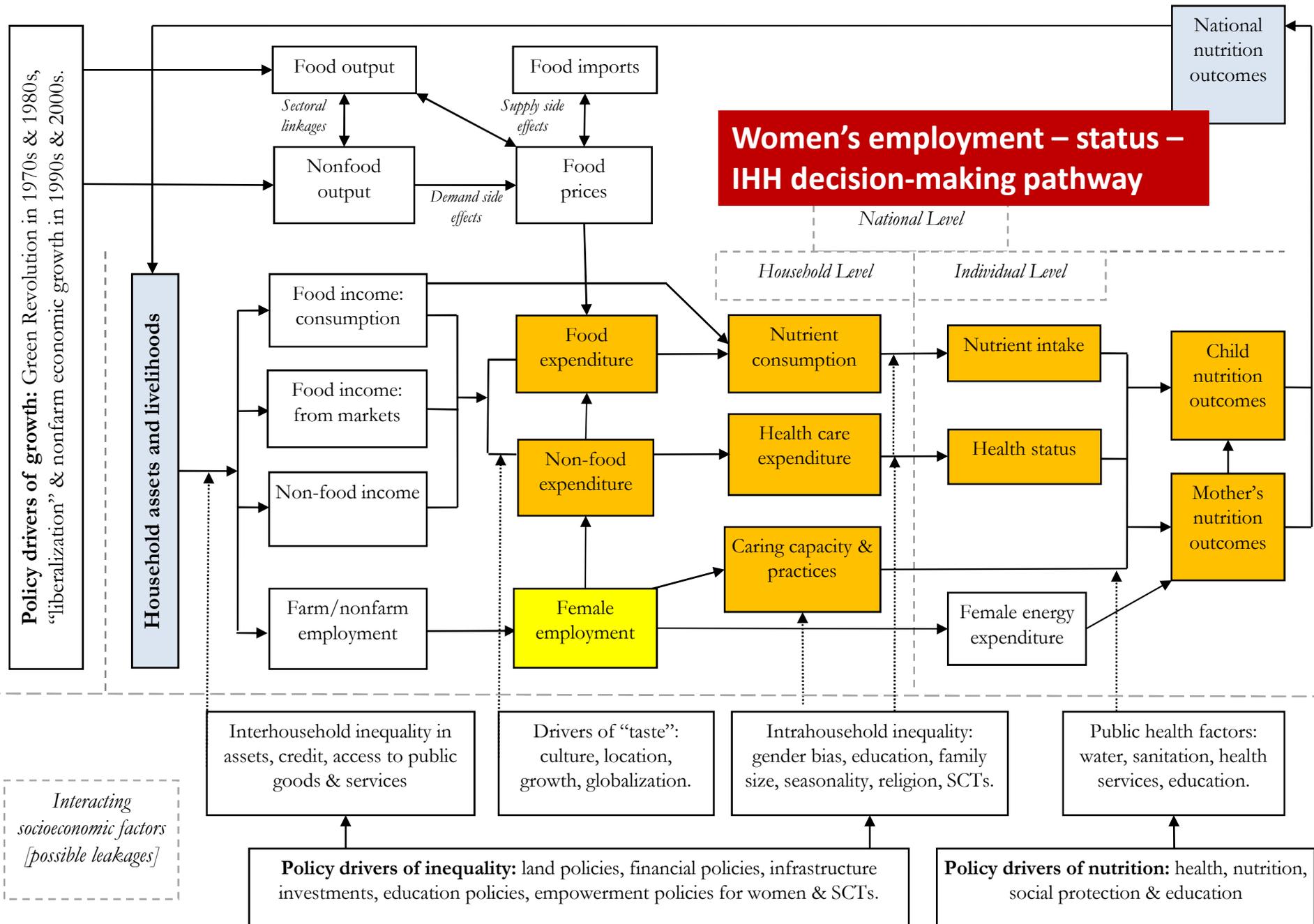


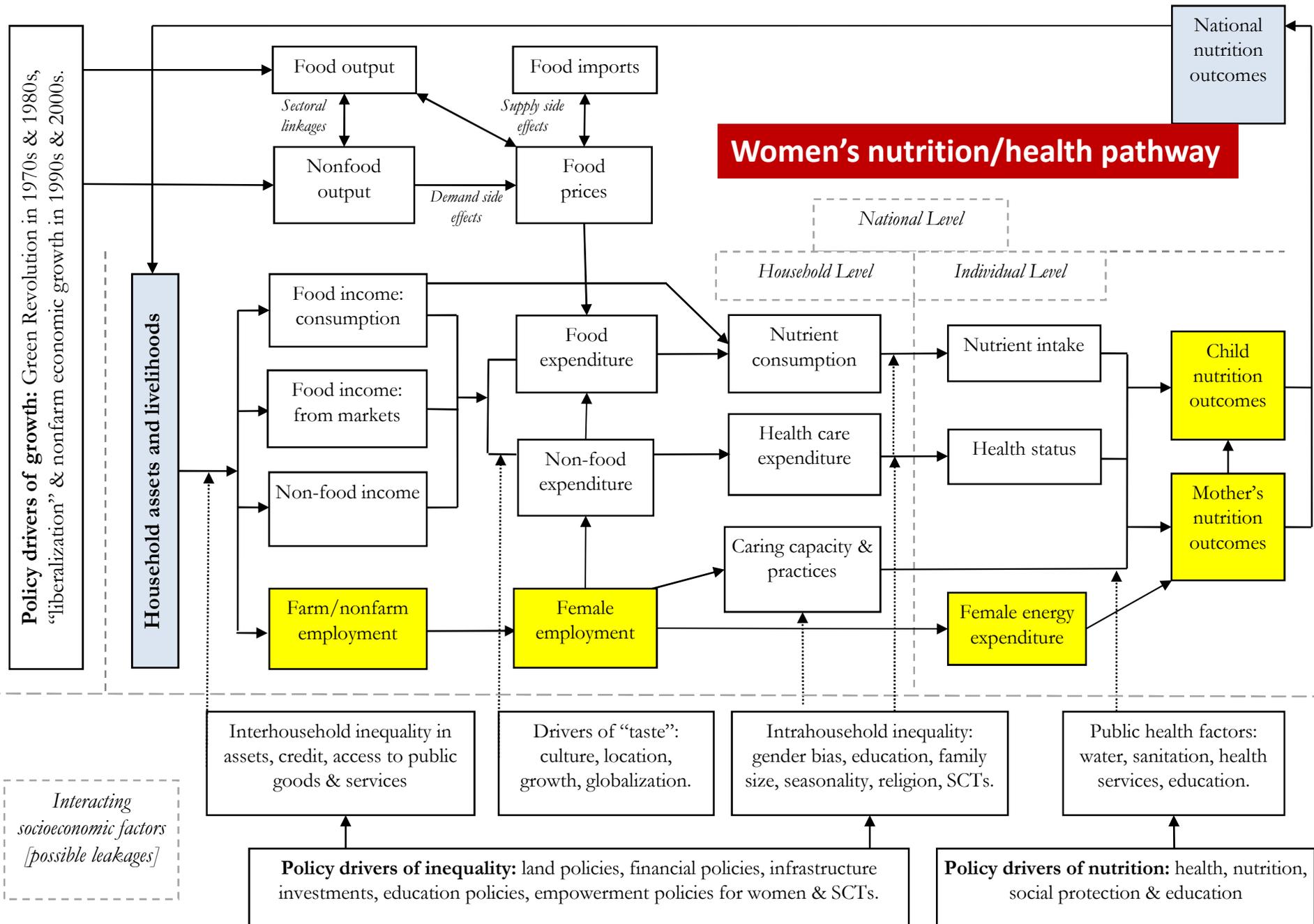












Research disconnect

- Systematic TANDI search of 15 databases
 - Only 71 articles of varying scale, scope, methodology and rigour attempted to address the issue of agriculture-nutrition links
 - Not one measured nutrition status
 - A stark empirical and conceptual disconnect in the literature

Data disconnect

- Research disconnect  data disconnect
- Health/nutrition surveys (e.g. NFHS) have anthropometric measures, some basic food consumption measures, good data on nutrition/health factors, but few economic data.
- “Economic” surveys (e.g. LSMS, NSS, agric census) have income, expenditure and agric asset data, but no anthropometric measures.

Missing data

Survey details	Nutrition outcomes	Access to health services	Access to water & sanitation	Feeding & health practices	Gender, caste, ethnicity	Expenditure, consumption, incl. food	Agriculture production, inputs, etc.	Income (farm, nonfarm)
NHFS-III	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
						<p>GAP! “Nutrition” surveys have major gaps from the economist’s standpoint</p>		
LSMS	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
		<p>GAP! “Economic” surveys have major gaps from the nutritionist’s standpoint</p>						

Conclusion

- Programs vary; several studies, but very few high-quality.
- Evidence to date is minimal, and mixed
- More rigorous evaluations needed, not more systematic reviews!
- “Absence of evidence of impact is not absence of impact” (*Ruel and Alderman 2013*)
- “Need research that utilises robust randomised or quasi-experimental designs, evaluates biologically appropriate nutrition indicators, is adequately powered for these indicators and includes appropriate assessment and control for confounding and/or effect modification” (*Girard et al 2012*)

But also.....

- Need to avoid mechanistic approach to reviews
- Be analytical as well as methodological
- Seek qualitative contextual evidence
- Understand pathways, dynamics and implications in different contexts

- But evidence of program effectiveness is not enough
 - Need to know how to work cross-sectorally...
 - We need to better understand:
 - Politics and governance
 - Capacity and resources

2. Politics and governance

Politics and governance

- What is the political context and institutional architecture?
- What are the key processes relevant to leveraging agriculture for nutrition?
- Who are the key actors, organizations, political institutions, networks and systems, and how are they connected?
- Enabling (or disabling) policy environments and processes
- Drivers/incentives and motivations?
- Barriers and roadblocks?
- Pathways of influence and change
- Meeting challenges and exploiting windows of opportunity
- Various analytical frameworks available to examine policy processes in the agriculture-nutrition space.....

e.g: issue salience/ascendance (Shiffman)

- **Actors**
 - Networks, leadership, focal organization, NGOs
- **Ideas**
 - Internal, external
- **Issue characteristics**
 - Indicators, severity/urgency, effective solutions?
- **Contexts**
 - Political windows, governance structures

e.g: multisectoral coordination (Garrett)

Internal context

- Leadership
- Vision
- Capacity
- Organization structures, values, cultures and experience
- Incentives

External context

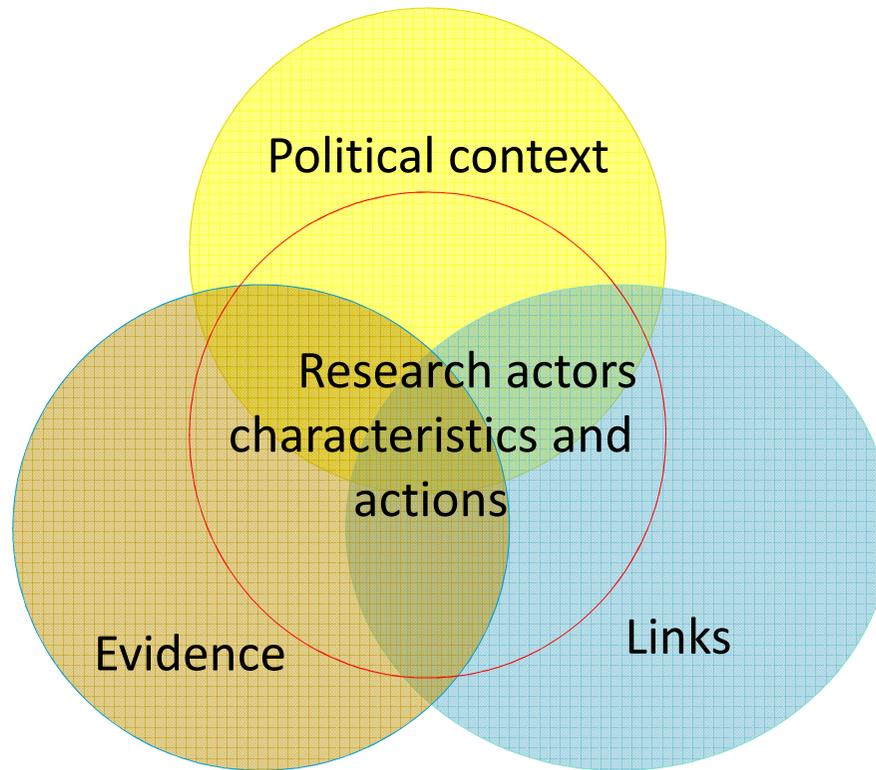
- Development priorities
- Urgency
- Economic, social, political and legal environment

Institutional links

- Shared understanding
- Roles, responsibilities and accountability
- Partnership and stakeholder relations
- Partnership type

e.g: RAPID (ODI)

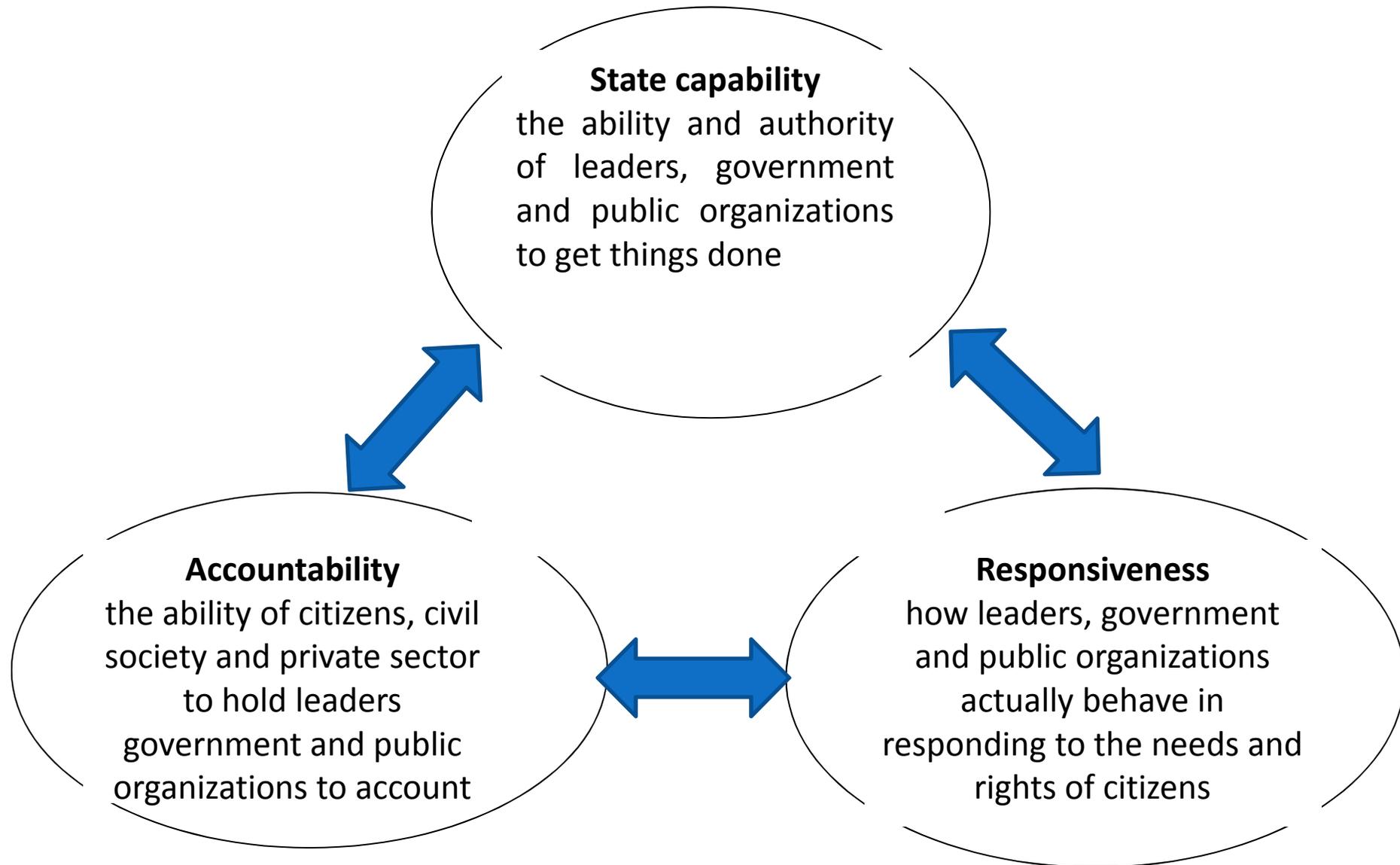
External context



e.g: policy science framework (Clark)

- Agenda-setting
- Policy formulation
- Legitimation
- Implementation
- M&E

e.g. governance (DFID)

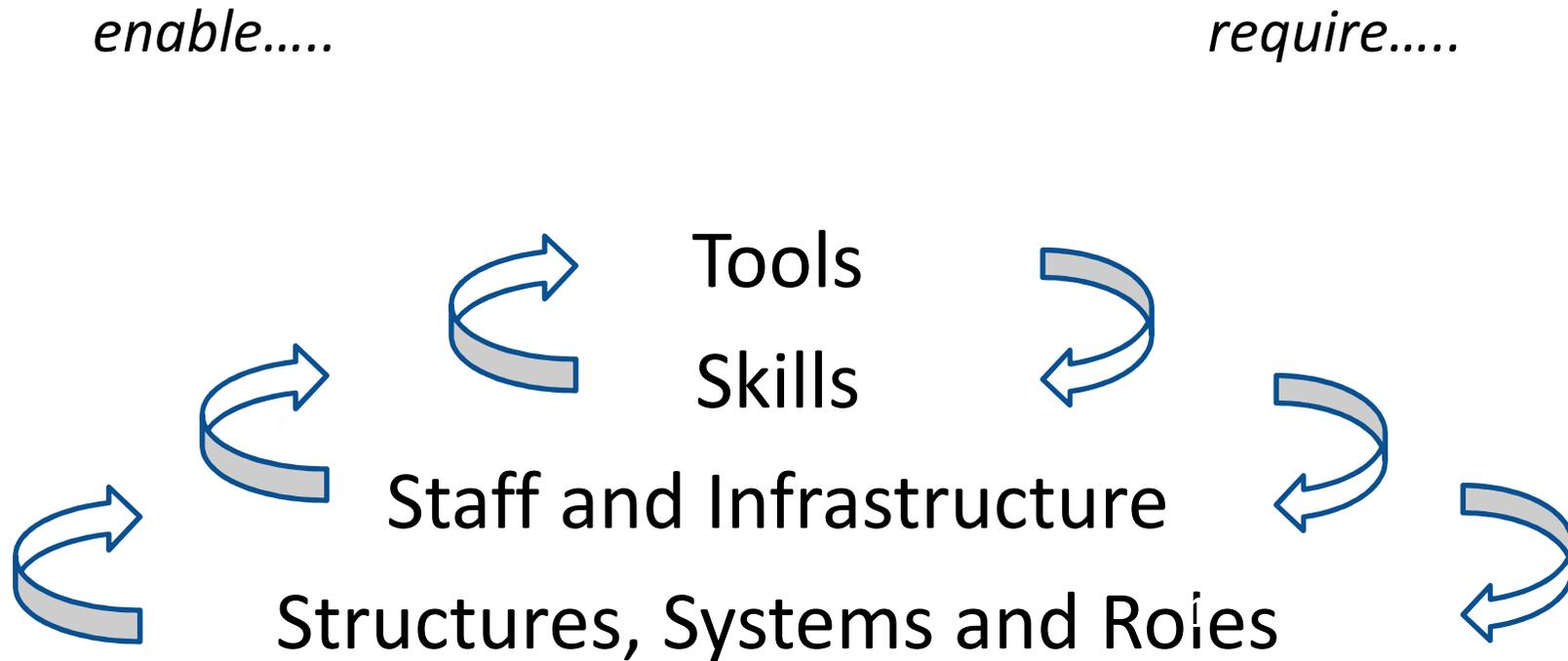


3. Capacity and resource mobilization

Capacity assessment and strengthening

- INDIVIDUAL: tools, skills
 - performance capacity
 - personal capacity
- ORGANIZATIONAL: staff and infrastructure
 - Staff workload, supervision
 - Facilities, services, horizontal and vertical links
- SYSTEMIC: structures, systems, roles
 - Decision-making forums and processes
 - Systems of information, financing, communication, problem-solving, M&E etc
 - Authority, responsibility, power, leadership

Systemic capacity strengthening: a hierarchy of needs



Brough and Potter (2004)

Tools, technologies, methods, metrics

- Tools/innovations to re-view and re-shape policy environments and processes
- New methods, metrics and indicators to improve measurement, accountability, responsiveness

Harmonized Policies

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Capacity

Leveraging Agriculture for Nutrition in South Asia (LANSA)

Overarching question

How can South Asian agriculture and related food policies and interventions be designed and implemented to increase their impacts on nutrition, especially the nutrition status of children and adolescent girls?

Core research pillars/questions

1. How **enabling** is the wider context in linking nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems to other determinants of nutrition status?
2. How can agriculture and food systems become more **nutrition-sensitive**?
3. What is the scope for embedding **nutrition innovations** within specific agricultural interventions?

Cross-cutting issues: innovation, gender, fragility

LANSA Pillar 1

How enabling is the wider context in linking agriculture and food systems to other determinants of nutritional status?

Purpose

- To better understand the nutrition-relevant landscape (within focal countries) and its relation to the agriculture-nutrition nexus
- To baseline and monitor key stakeholders, policies and programs so as to identify options and entry points to leverage agriculture for nutrition, and to identify key knowledge gaps and disconnects to be filled and bridged by LANSA research.

What's needed for action: generating consensus

1. Evidence mapping
2. Actors, stakeholders, organizational mapping
3. Policies, programs, intervention mapping
4. Political economy analyses
5. Capacity and resource mapping
6. In-country consultations
7. Regional e-consultation
8. Synthesis