

Carmen Diana Deere

Winner of the 2018 Kalman Silvert Award

A development economist, Carmen Diana Deere is among the pioneers in the study of gender and development in Latin America, particularly in the field of Latin American agricultural development and policy. The causes and consequences of gender inequality constitute a crosscutting theme that unifies most of her research, grounded in primary field research throughout the region including the Andes, Central America, Cuba, and Brazil. Methodologically, her scholarship combines qualitative and quantitative methods in addition to archival research. She has excelled in both interdisciplinary and comparative analyses and has led a number of large-scale, cross-country comparative studies in Latin America and globally.

Deere grew up bilingual and bicultural, the daughter of a Puerto Rican mother and American father. Born in Carlsbad, New Mexico, she moved shortly after with her parents to Mayagüez, Puerto Rico, where they were on the faculty at the University of Puerto Rico. She completed most of her primary schooling in San Juan, and then high school in Urbana, Illinois. She earned a BA at the University of Colorado, Boulder, in 1967 in international affairs, an MA at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in 1968 in development studies, and her PhD at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1978 in agricultural economics.

Her interest in Latin America was sparked by a summer spent in Mexico City with her family right before she began college. Curious about the differences between Latin American countries, she studied Portuguese at CU and focused on Brazil, and then after completing her MA, spent a summer in Chile. Eager to work in Latin America, she joined the US Agency for International Development in 1969 and spent two years in Bolivia, followed by a year in Brazil.

It was in Bolivia that she developed her interest in peasant economies and women's role in agriculture. Assigned to the joint USAID-Embassy economics section as an intern, she was named acting agricultural attaché and spent the next 18 months traveling throughout the country learning about the agricultural sector from the ground up.



Although increasingly cognizant of the negative role of US policies in Latin America, she decided to take on another tour with USAID when offered the opportunity to move to Brazil and finally perfect her Portuguese. Initially stationed in Recife and then Rio de Janeiro, she was part of the cohort of embassy staff who moved to Brasília in 1971 when the new capital was still a large construction site. At that point she was ready to resign from USAID to pursue a PhD but was unsure in what discipline, with economic anthropology, agrarian history, and agricultural economics being of equal interest. She settled on the latter to study under Alain de Janvry, and after traveling by land through much of South America, began the doctoral program at Berkeley in 1972.

At Berkeley, Deere joined the recently founded Union of Radical Political Economists and various feminist study groups associated with it, in addition to the Chile Solidarity movement. Equally important in her intellectual development was her discovery of Ester Boserup's *Women's Role in Economic Development* (published in 1970), and her participation in the First Research Training Seminar on Feminine Perspectives in Social Science research in Latin America, organized by June Nash, Helen Safa, and Elsa Chaney during the

summer of 1974 in Cuernavaca, Mexico. With their encouragement and the support of her advisor, she proposed a dissertation on rural women's work in agriculture, a topic not considered of much importance in the field of agricultural economics at the time. She subsequently carried out 15 months of fieldwork in Cajamarca, Peru, funded by a Social Science Research Council Dissertation Fellowship.

Deere began her academic career in 1977 in the Economics Department at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, where she was to spend the next 27 years, rising through the ranks to Professor of Economics. There she was also the Director of the Center for Latin American, Caribbean, and Latino Studies (1992-2004). She considers herself extremely fortunate to have landed in what is known today as a heterodox economics department, where she had the intellectual freedom to develop as a feminist economist and to pursue her many interdisciplinary interests.

Even before she began writing her dissertation, Deere became involved in her second major research project, a national-level study of rural women in Colombia with Colombian sociologist Magdalena León, who was to become her lifelong research collaborator. This study resulted in their first two co-authored books, *Mujer y capitalismo agrario* (1980) and *Women in Andean Agriculture* (1982). An expanded version of Deere's dissertation was eventually published as *Household and Class Relations: Peasants and Landlords in Northern Peru* (1990) and received the New England Council of Latin American Studies (NECLAS) Best Book Prize.

In the 1980s, her field research focused on the Nicaraguan and Cuban agrarian reforms. In Nicaragua, she served as research advisor on rural women to the Centro de Investigación y Estudios de la Reforma Agraria (CIERA) of the Ministry of Agricultural Development. She also developed training courses for the study of rural women and gender and development more broadly, imparted in collaboration with universities and NGOs in the Dominican Republic and Honduras, and later in Mexico and Bolivia. Her co-edited volumes with Magdalena León, *Debate sobre la mujer en*

América Latina y El Caribe (3 vols., 1982) and *La mujer y la política agraria en América Latina* (1986), complemented that effort to train a new generation of feminist researchers in Latin America and the United States.

In this period, Deere also served on the boards of a number of NGOs working to influence US policy toward Latin America, most notably as co-chair (with Richard Fagen) of PACCA, Policy Alternatives for the Caribbean and Central America, and she co-edited or co-authored several of the PACCA publications.

Her most intensive period of fieldwork in Cuba was in the early 1990s, where she led the Cuba case study for a five-country comparative study of socialist agriculture in transition (also including Bulgaria, China, Hungary, and Russia), funded by the MacArthur Foundation. In collaboration with colleagues at the University of Havana, in 1992 she carried out the first rural household income survey to be done in Cuba since 1953. She set a record for the number of licenses that she obtained from the US Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control to carry out this research, most notably, to purchase a Lada jeep. The co-authored book that resulted from this study, *Historias agrarias* (1998), received best book awards from the University of Havana and the Cuban Academy of Sciences. An article based on her parallel historical research, "Here Come the Yankees," received NECLAS's 1998 Best Article prize.

In the mid-1990s, Deere and León began their most ambitious project yet, a 12-country study of the impact of the neoliberal agrarian counterreforms on women's land ownership. This project, funded by the Ford Foundation, resulted in their co-authored *Empowering Women: Land and Property Rights in Latin America* (2001), which was awarded the Latin American Studies Association's 2003 Bryce Wood Best Book Award as well as two other book prizes. The book's participatory research process and its findings influenced the land laws of numerous Latin American countries that now incorporate the demand for joint titling of land to couples and/or priority to female-headed households. A follow-up archival study of nineteenth-century civil codes and legislation led

to their “Liberalism and Married Women’s Property Rights in Nineteenth-Century Latin America,” which was awarded the 2005 James A. Robertson Prize of the Conference on Latin American History as the best article published in the *Hispanic American Historical Review*.

Eager to undertake more field research, Deere spent the year 2000 at the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro in Brazil with a Fulbright-Hays Faculty Research Fellowship. There she pursued a comparative seven-state study of the role of rural social movements in placing women’s land rights on the regional and national agenda. She subsequently led a United Nations Development Programme mission to Brazil in 2004 on land reform and poverty reduction.

In 2004, Deere was recruited to the University of Florida as Director of UF’s Center for Latin American Studies (2004–2009). The first Center conference that she organized at UF was on the rural social movements in Latin America, an opportunity that brought together scholars and social movement activists and resulted in the co-edited book (with Fred Royce), *Rural Social Movements in Latin America: Organizing for Sustainable Livelihoods* (2009).

Her lifelong interest in gender inequality and the factors associated with women’s economic empowerment took a new turn in this period to focus on women’s asset ownership and wealth more generally. In collaboration with a team of feminist economists, she co-led a three-country study (in Ecuador, Ghana, and Karnataka, India), funded by the Dutch Foreign Ministry and UN Women, which included the first nationally representative household wealth surveys in developing countries to measure men’s and women’s individual wealth. Deere led the Ecuador study, which was hosted by FLACSO, the Facultad Latina Americana de Ciencias Sociales, in Quito. The analysis of these data sets, as well as of the qualitative fieldwork upon which the surveys were based, led to dozens of journal articles, working papers, and policy briefs, both comparative and on Ecuador.

Deere’s research has been generously supported by grants from a number of institutions, among those not yet mentioned the Joint Committee on Latin American Studies of the Social Science Research Council and the American Council of Learned Societies, the Rockefeller Foundation, the International Labour Office, the UN Foundation, the Vanguard Foundation, and the World Bank. She has been privileged to hold research fellowships at the Bunting Institute of Radcliffe College, the Helen Kellogg Institute of the University of Notre Dame, the International Institute of Social Studies in The Hague, and an appointment as Bacardi Family Eminent Scholar in Latin American Studies at the University of Florida.

Among the aspects of her academic career that Deere has enjoyed the most has been the mentoring of students, particularly, the opportunities that have allowed her to engage students in her research, including fieldwork. At UMass, she participated in 48 PhD committees, chairing 21 dissertations; at UF, she was chair or a member of 42 master’s and PhD committees. Deere was awarded the Chancellor’s Medal at UMass for distinguished research, teaching, and service.

Deere’s most distinguished service to the profession has been to LASA. She has participated in some role in every congress but two since 1977. First elected to LASA’s Executive Council in 1983–1986, she served a two-year term as the association’s Treasurer and helped launch the LASA Endowment Fund. She served on the Executive Council again from 1991 to 1995 as Vice President, President, and Past President. In this period, she co-led (along with Lars Schoultz and Cynthia McClintock) LASA’s first-ever capital campaign, and as President (1992–1994), wrote LASA’s first (unsuccessful) request for NEH matching funding for the campaign, instituted its Life Memberships, and hired its first development officer. As Past President, she served as the first chair of LASA’s Development Committee, then as its co-chair for a number of years; she has remained an active member of this committee ever since. She also served on the Search Committee for Executive Director, as chair of the Nominating Committee, and as a member of various task forces and sections.

Her service to the field of Latin American Studies also includes a term as President (1991-1992) of NECLAS and as a founding member of the Executive Committee of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic Association (LACEA). She has served on the editorial boards of some 20 journals, many of which are published in Latin America or Europe, and including the *Latin American Research Review*. She has been an Associate Editor of the journal *Feminist Economics* since 2001.

Throughout her career, Deere has worked with various Latin American ministries of agriculture in the development of agricultural policy, and statistical agencies on the improvement of gender statistics. She has served as a consultant to numerous international organizations, including the UN Food and Agricultural Organization and the International Fund for Agricultural Development. As a scholar-activist, Deere has also been deeply committed to the strengthening of rural women's organization, serving as a mentor and advisor to organizations ranging from the Red de Organizaciones de Mujeres Rurales de Centro America to those affiliated with La Vía Campesina. She has also advised international NGOs that advocate for rural women's land rights.

Deere was named Distinguished Professor of Latin American Studies and Food and Resource Economics at UF in 2012; she retired in 2015 and was appointed Distinguished Professor Emerita. Her collaboration with FLACSO-Ecuador continues. Since 2015, she has been Honorary Professor-Researcher Emerita at that institution, where she teaches yearly, continues to mentor students, and finds new puzzles to research.

Selected major publications

"Rural Women's Subsistence Production in the Capitalist Periphery." *Review of Radical Political Economy* 8, no. 1 (1976): 9-17. Rev. version in R. Cohen, P. Gutkind, and P. Brazier, eds., *Peasants and Proletarians: The Struggles of Third World Workers*, 133-145. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979.

"A Conceptual Framework for the Empirical Analysis of Peasants," with Alain de Janvry. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* 61, no. 4 (1979): 601-611.

Mujer y capitalismo agrario, with Magdalena León de Leal, coord., et al., Colombian Rural Women Study. Bogotá: Asociación Colombiana para el Estudio de la Población, 1980.

Women in Andean Agriculture: Peasant Production and Rural Wage Employment in Colombia and Peru, with Magdalena León de Leal. Geneva: International Labour Office, 1982.

Debate sobre la mujer en América Latina y El Caribe: Discusión acerca de la unidad producción-reproducción, Vol. 1, *La realidad colombiana*; Vol. 2, *Las trabajadoras del agro*; Vol. 3, *Sociedad, subordinación y feminismo*; Magdalena León, ed., and C. D. Deere and Nohra Rey, eds. Bogotá: Asociación Colombiana para el Estudio de la Población, 1982.

"Rural Women and State Policy: The Latin American Agrarian Reform Experience." *World Development* 13(9), 1985, 1037-1053. Repr. in L. Beneria, ed., *Gender and Development: Theoretical, Empirical and Practical Approaches*, 477-493. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2001.

La mujer y la política agraria en América Latina, ed. with Magdalena León. Bogotá: Siglo XXI, 1986. Eng. version, *Rural Women and State Policy: Feminist Perspectives on Agricultural Development in Latin America*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1987.

Transition and Development: Problems of Third World Socialism, ed. with Richard Fagen and José Luis Coraggio. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1986. Sp. version, *La transición difícil: La autodeterminación de los pequeños países periféricos*. Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1986; repr., Managua: Editorial Vanguardia, 1987.

Household and Class Relations: Peasants and Landlords in Northern Peru. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990. Sp. version, *Familia y relaciones de clase: El campesinado y los terratenientes en la sierra norte del Perú, 1900-1980*. Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 1992.

In the Shadows of the Sun: Caribbean Development Alternatives and U.S. Policy, C. D. Deere, coord., with Peggy Antrobus, Lynn Bolles, Edwin Melendez, Peter Phillips, Marcia Rivera, and Helen Safa. Boulder: Westview Press and PACCAs, 1990.

"Household Incomes in Cuban Agriculture: A Comparison of the State, Cooperative and Peasant Sectors," with Ernel González, Niurka Pérez, and Gustavo Rodríguez. *Development and Change* 26, no. 2 (1995): 209-234.

Güines, Santo Domingo y Majibacoa: Sobre sus historias agrarias, with Niurka Pérez, Cary Torres, Myriam García, and Ernel González. Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1998.

"Here Come the Yankees! The Rise and Decline of United States Colonies in Cuba, 1898-1930." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 78, no. 4 (1998): 729-765.

Empowering Women: Land and Property Rights in Latin America, with Magdalena León. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001. Sp. version, *Género, propiedad y empoderamiento: Tierra, Estado y mercado en América Latina*. Bogotá: Tercer Mundo

and National University of Colombia, 2000; 2nd ed., Mexico City: PUEC/UNAM and FLACSO, 2002; Port. transl., *O empoderamento das mulheres: Terra e direitos de propriedade na America Latina*. Porto Alegre: Editora da Universidade, UFRGS, 2002.

"The Gender Asset Gap: Land in Latin America," with Magdalena León. *World Development* 31(6), 2003, 925-947; Port. transl., *Sociologias* (Porto Alegre), no. 10 (2003): 100-153; Sp. transl., *Estudios Sociológicos* (Mexico City) 22, no. 65 (2004): 397-439; Fr. transl., *Cahiers genre et développement* (Geneva), no. 8 (2012).

"Women's Land Rights and Rural Social Movements in the Brazilian Agrarian Reform." *Journal of Agrarian Change* 3, no. 1-2 (2003): 257-288. Port. transl., *Revista de Estudos Feministas* (Florianopolis) 23, no. 1 (2004): 175-204.

"Liberalism and Married Women's Property Rights in Nineteenth Century Latin America," with Magdalena León. *Hispanic American Historical Review* 85, no. 4 (2005): 627-678. Sp. transl., in M. León and E. Rodríguez, eds., *Ruptura de la inequidad? Propiedad y género en la América Latina del siglo XIX*, 29-103. Bogotá: Siglo del Hombre, 2005.

"The Gender Asset Gap: What Do We Know and Why Does It Matter?" with Cheryl R. Doss. *Feminist Economics* 12, no. 1-2 (2006): 1-50.

The Rural Social Movements in Latin America: Organizing for Sustainable Livelihoods, ed. with Frederick S. Royce. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2009.

"Gender Inequality in Asset Ownership in Latin America: Female Owners versus Household Heads," with Gina Alvarado and Jennifer Twyman. *Development and Change* 43, no. 2 (2012): 505-530.

"Gendered Perceptions of Land Ownership and Agricultural Decision-making in Ecuador," with Jennifer Twyman and Pilar Useche. *Land Economics* 91, no. 3 (2015): 479-500.

"Asset Accumulation through International Migration: Gender, Remittances, and Decision Making in Ecuador," with Gina Alvarado. *Latin American Research Review* 51, no. 4 (2016): 249-270.

"Women's Land Rights, Rural Social Movements, and the State in the 21st-Century Latin American Agrarian Reforms." *Journal of Agrarian Change* 17, no. 2 (2017): 258-278. //