

Brief literature review and annotated bibliography: Gender and social networks

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Feminist theory and scholarship has produced a large body of work pertaining to distinctly female experiences, perceptions, and production of knowledge (Bordo 1986; Dias and Blecha 2007; Haraway 1988; Mohanty 1984). Building upon these theories, researchers have recognized the need to further explore the specific roles, responsibilities, and knowledge of women in developing countries and to value their unique perspectives. In particular, they have identified social networks as critical components in empowering women because of the multiple roles that women play within communities (Flora 2001). Social networks can facilitate the increase in women's bargaining power within and outside of the household, thereby increasing their access to resources and opportunities. This process is directly related to increases in productivity, income generation, food security, and quality of life factors such as health, nutrition, and education for households in general (World Bank 2008).

The Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resources Management (SANREM) Collaborative Research Support Program (CRSP) sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has identified gendered social networks as a key component to be explored in a cross-cutting research initiative involving four projects. The SANREM Gender Cross-Cutting theoretical framework specifically seeks to understand how "the gendered nature of networks linking women to markets impacts the quality of information they receive and their bargaining power (in the household, market, etc.)" (SANREM 2008). Projects under the umbrella of the SANREM CRSP have already recognized the importance of social networks in increasing women's bargaining power in their preliminary findings. For example, a project in Zambia is exploring the effectiveness of farmer groups and networks in accessing markets and market information (Kandiwa-Majaha 2008). Projects in Bolivia are investigating the role of networks in information acquisition, social and economic organization of farmers, and price negotiation of products (Alwang and Amaya 2008; Jimenez and Fernandez 2008). In order to investigate these topics, social networks must first be defined and their measurement must be specified.

Researchers and academics from a variety of fields have explored the nature of social networks. To begin, social networks must be differentiated from social capital. Social networks refer to the links, relationships, and trust between individuals, groups, or other parties while social capital refers to the broader concept of potential resources that may be derived from such networks (Flora 2001; SANREM 2008). Networks may link micro- or macro-level interactions, and may exist between homogenous or heterogeneous groups through horizontal or vertical relationships (Granovetter 1973; Schafft and Brown 2003 Turner 2007). Also, network ties need not be strong to be effective in supporting and advancing community development. Weak ties have been shown to be as effective, if not more, in facilitating community organization and the diffusion of knowledge (Granovetter 1973). While social networks can facilitate access to resources, it is important to recognize that networks based on specific group membership may simultaneously prevent certain groups from gaining such access (Silvey and Elmhirst 2003). Additionally, networks cannot be accepted as the final solution for increasing access and productivity, as they are often deeply embedded in, and thereby continue to produce, unequal power dynamics and structures which have developed throughout history (Schafft and Brown 2003).

While establishing a concrete definition of social networks is important in understanding their role in increasing women's access to resources and opportunities, it is equally important to establish means to map and measure them and how they are gendered. Existing literature on this subject offers several methods to do so. Qualitative research methods have gained support throughout the social sciences as a means of collecting, organizing, and interpreting data in a flexible, sensitive, and creative way (Strauss and Corbin 1996). As such, qualitative research methods have been found to be particularly useful in measuring gendered differences in work, time use, networks, and access to resources. For example, time use studies in parts of the Caribbean, Africa, and South East Asia have shown that women spend disproportionately more time than men completing work such as gathering firewood and small plot cultivation, and therefore experience a greater burden from environmental degradation (Awumbila and Momsen 1995). In addition to time allocation studies, workshops, focus groups, and resource mapping have been found to be particularly helpful in measuring and interpreting gendered social networks and access to resources because women are more likely and able to participate in such methods of research (Colfer 1994; Flora 1994; Grandin and Avila 1994; Thomas-Slayter

1994; Wollenberg 1994). These studies have found that men and women have vastly different levels of control over, access to, and responsibility for resources (Thomas-Slayter 1995; Weller-Molongua and Knapp). While these methods have been particularly useful in illuminating the gendered nature of social networks, researchers must be careful in their interpretation of findings so as not to presume that the existence or structure of certain networks indicates clear causal relationships (Mohan and Mohan 2002).

Once the means of defining and measuring the gendered nature of social networks has been achieved, researchers must identify how social networks empower women, specifically in terms of increasing their bargaining power. Studies suggest that men and women build and utilize social networks differently, and because the multiple roles that women and women's social networks play in the private sector is often unrecognized, the facilitation of such networks can increase household access to necessary productive resources (Flora 2001). Increased participation by women in social networks can increase access to resources such as information about employment opportunities or income during economic crisis. However, social networks may also serve to produce and perpetuate gendered norms and disadvantages in terms of division of labor and decision-making processes or exclude certain ethnic or economic groups (Silvey and Elmhirst 2003; Turner 2007). Ultimately, social networks increase women's bargaining power and access to resources by providing opportunities to obtain and share information, pool and distribute resources, and build additional networks (De Haan 2001).

As research continues in this area, the definitions, measurements, and implications of gendered social networks will continue to be redefined and reinterpreted. While a large body of information has been produced regarding social networks and the specific roles that women play and benefits they receive through them, much is left to be explored. Existing scholarship and research on the topic has already led to the increased concentration on gender components in development projects, and its continued exploration will build upon this even further.

1. **Alwang, J. and N. Amaya. (2008) Case study for SANREM Gender Workshop. "Analysis of gender roles within farmer's economy in the Jatun Mayu watershed communities (Tiraque, Bolivia)."**

This case study outlines the research of SANREM CRSP LTRA #3 and how the concept of networks will be defined, understood, and utilized in gender cross-cutting research throughout the project. This particular project will examine the role of networks in information acquisition and social and economic organization of farmers in the Jatun Mayu watershed communities of Tiraque, Bolivia.

2. **Awumbila, M. and J. H. Momsen (1995). Gender and the environment: Women's time use as a measure of environmental change. Global Environmental Change-Human and Policy Dimensions. 5: 337-346.**

In this article, Awumbila and Momsen explore the variety of roles that women have in relation to environmental change. Whether collecting firewood for fuel or cultivating small plots of subsistence crops, women are both affected by and contribute to environmental degradation. This is evident in the results of time use studies conducted in dryland regions of Sri Lanka, Burkina Faso, Ghana, the Sudan, and the Caribbean. In particular, the authors found that women have less time to rest, more intense and diverse work, and experience more of a burden as environmental deterioration increases.

3. **Bordo, S. (1986). The Cartesian Masculinization of Thought. Signs, The University of Chicago Press. 11: 439-456.**

Bordo argues that the Cartesian separation and detachment of self and world, knowledge and knower as a result of the scientific revolution produced a thoroughly masculine (and thus non-feminine) knowledge of the world and means of producing knowledge. This process can be understood and examined through theories of developmental psychology and the separation of child from mother. Bordo encourages the revaluation of feminine epistemological perspectives in conjunction with "masculine" perspectives to create a thorough way of knowing the world and being connected to it.

4. **Colfer, C. J. P. Tools for the Field: Methodologies Handbook for Gender Analysis in Agriculture. "Time Allocation Studies: A Methodological Note": 163-171.**

This chapter of *Tools for the Field: Methodologies Handbook for Gender Analysis in Agriculture* examines the effectiveness of Time Allocation Studies (TAS) in documenting which tasks men and women complete in communities and how much time they spend doing so. In addition to time allocation, researchers can also use this data to determine which tasks are prioritized over others and how such preferences affect the gendered division of labor and gendered time use. The chapter highlights an example of TAS in crop production of home gardens through the Tropsoils-Indonesia project in Sitiung.

5. **de Haan, N. (2001). Of goats and groups: A study on social capital in development projects. Agriculture and Human Values. The Netherlands, Kluwer Academic Publishers. 18: 71-84.**

This article examines the effectiveness of social capital and group approaches in development projects as a means of ensuring social control and sustainability. The findings show that social capital influences access to and management of information. Also, group organization proved to be an institutionalized means through which women could gain share, distribute, and gain access to resources and information. Groups also enabled women to maintain and build upon social networks. The article uses examples from four Heifer Project International case studies in Tanzania.

6. Doss, C. R. (2001). "Designing Agricultural Technology for African Women Farmers: Lessons from 25 Years of Experience." World Development 29(12): 2075-2092.

In this article, Doss suggests that there are a variety of reasons and causes which affect African women farmers' adoption of new agricultural technologies and the effects of that adoption. She argues that household composition and gender roles and responsibilities within households and communities are vastly different throughout Africa, and are constantly changing in response to economic circumstances. This diverse and dynamic nature therefore prevents the generalization of findings, but also offers important indicators for successful research on women farmers in Africa and technology adoption.

7. Flora, C. (2001). Access and control of resources: Lessons from the SANREM CRSP. Agriculture and Human Values. Netherlands, Kluwer Academic Publishers. 18: 41-48.

This article examines the role of gender in access to and control over resources throughout SANREM CRSP projects. Because women have multiple roles within communities, building social capital and facilitating social networks among women is critical to improving productivity and sustainability in households and communities.

8. Flora, C. B. (1994). Tools for the Field: Methodologies Handbook for Gender Analysis in Agriculture. "Using Focus Groups with Rural Women": 62-65.

This chapter of *Tools for the Field: Methodologies Handbook for Gender Analysis in Agriculture* examines the effectiveness of focus group in determining labor patterns and gender roles of rural women. The chapter uses an example in Bolivia from the Appropriate Technology for Rural Women project sponsored by the Inter-American Women's Commission of the Organization of American States.

9. Grandin, B. E. and M. Avila. Tools for the Field: Methodologies Handbook for Gender Analysis in Agriculture. "Workshops for Gathering Information": 55-61.

This chapter of *Tools for the Field: Methodologies Handbook for Gender Analysis in Agriculture* examines the effectiveness of workshops and structured discussions in exploring gender roles and relations within households. Workshops offer an opportunity for field researchers to extend their role beyond disengaged observation and allows community members to share their insights and experiences more openly. The chapter uses examples from research in Zimbabwe and Swaziland.

10. Granovetter, M. (1973). The strength of weak ties. The American Journal of Sociology, The University of Chicago Press. 78: 1360-1380.

This article examines social networks as a means of linking micro level interactions between individuals to implications on community and large group interactions at the macro level. Previous studies of social networks have focused on strong ties between individuals. However, the author suggests that weak ties provide opportunities for community organization and activism as well as greater diffusion of information between individuals.

11. Haraway, D. (1988). Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. Feminist Studies. 14: 575-599.

In this essay, Haraway identifies feminist scholars' struggle with the dichotomous nature of "objective" knowledge. The author argues that feminist scholars must establish a way to "visualize" the world from multiple, specific, embodied perspectives, or situated knowledges, that will allow them to collectively and critically examine existing knowledge and create new knowledge. She also suggests that "objects" of knowledge should rather be regarded as agents or active participants of knowledge.

12. Jimenez, E. and E. Fernandez. (2008) Case study for SANREM Gender Workshop. "Market Access, Networks, Gender and Coalitions: Case Studies in Altiplano Ecosystems."

This case study outlines the research of SANREM CRSP LTRA #3 and how the concept of networks will be defined, understood, and utilized in gender cross-cutting research throughout the project. This particular project will examine the role of networks in price negotiation and the relations of actors along the value chain in case studies in La Paz, Bolivia and Apopata, Peru.

13. Kandiwa-Majaha, V. (2008) Case study for SANREM Gender Workshop. "Socio-Economic Change and Gender Equity in Luangwa Valley, Zambia."

This case study outlines the research of SANREM CRSP LTRA #2 and how the concept of networks will be defined, understood, and utilized in gender cross-cutting research throughout the project. This particular project will examine the effectiveness of farmer groups and networks in accessing markets and market information in Luangwa Valley, Zambia.

14. Mohan, G. and J. Mohan (2002). Placing social capital. Progress in Human Geography. 26: 191-210.

In this article, Mohan and Mohan examine various operationalizations, measurements, and applications of social capital and its relationship with geography. The authors distinguish between the concept of social capital and those concepts of human and cultural capital, as well as social networks. Mohan and Mohan also review various methods of measuring social capital, noting the difficulties that may arise in the process including spatial disaggregation and causal priority. The article concludes with a discussion of practical applications and implications of social capital.

15. Mohanty, C. T. (1984). Under Western Eyes, Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses. Boundary 2-an International Journal of Literature and Culture. DURHAM, NC, Duke University press. 13: 333-358.

Mohanty argues that Western feminist scholarship has produced the concept of the “third world woman” as a “singular monolithic subject,” objectified and victimized within the context of a male/female powerful/powerless binary relationship. This perspective suggests that Non-Western is “other,” making Western the norm and implicitly superior. It also presumes that women are a homogenous category and fails to address the historical and cultural contexts and complexities of women’s situations and experiences.

16. Padmanabhan, M. A. (2007). "The making and unmaking of gendered crops in northern Ghana." Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography 28(1): 57-70.

In this article, Padmanabhan explores the creation and renegotiation of gender relations through the meanings of new agricultural crops at specific social intrafaces among the Dagomba and Kusasi societies of northern Ghana. The author suggests that the introduction of new crops and technological innovations creates opportunities to alter the links between gender, crops, and the division of labor. However, these new technologies also perpetuate certain monopolies on knowledge and reassign gendered restrictions on crops.

17. SANREM CRSP. (2008) Framework for SANREM Gender Cross-Cutting Research.

This document was produced by the SANREM CRSP as a working draft of the theoretical framework to be used in gender cross-cutting research throughout SANREM projects. The research is guided by the question of how gendered social networks link women to markets and empower them by increasing their bargaining power. The framework outlines the objectives, hypotheses, operational definitions and variables that will be examined throughout the research.

18. Schafft, K. and D. Brown. (2003). Social capital, social networks, and social power. Social Epistemology. Routledge. 17(4): 329-342.

This article examines how social capital and social networks can facilitate community organization, access to resources, and productivity. However, networks cannot be accepted as the final solution for problems of community division and inequity as they are often deeply embedded in, and thereby continue to produce, unequal power dynamics and structures which have developed throughout history.

19. Silvey, R. and R. Elmhirst (2003). Engendering Social Capital: Women Workers and Rural-Urban Networks in Indonesia's Crisis. World Development. Great Britain, Elsevier Science Ltd. 31: 865-879.

This article examines the gendered power dynamics of social networks and social capital within the context of the Indonesian economic crisis from 1997-1999. The findings demonstrate that participation by women in social networks can increase access to resources such as information about employment opportunities or income during economic crisis, social networks may also serve to produce and perpetuate gendered norms and disadvantages in terms of division of labor and decision-making processes. Therefore, facilitating the construction and formation of social capital and social networks should not be considered an infallible method or resource for development.

20. Strauss, A. and J. Corbin (1996). Basics of Qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory, SAGE.

Strauss and Corbin assert that qualitative research should be a process of building theory through the collection, description, organization, and interpretation of data based on the principles of grounded theory. The authors also argue that those characteristics required of a grounded theorist, such as flexibility, sensitivity, and the ability to be simultaneously systematic and creative, will enhance the products of qualitative research.

21. Thomas-Slayter, B., et.al. (1995) A Manual for Socio-economic and Gender Analysis. "Gender Resource Mapping," ECOGEN.

This document explains how researchers can use gender resource mapping exercises to better understand the difference in control, responsibility, and labor of resources for different groups within a community.

22. Thomas-Slayter, B., A. L. Esser, et al. (1993). Tools of Gender Analysis: A Guide to Field Methods for Bringing Gender into Sustainable Resource Management. E. C. O. a. G. R. Project. Worcester, MA, Clark University.

This chapter of *Tools for the Field: Methodologies Handbook for Gender Analysis in Agriculture* examines the need and methodology for incorporating gender analysis in sustainable resource management projects. Thomas-Slayter focuses specifically on identifying problems, devising and executing projects, and improving the means of project management. These guidelines are based upon the ECOGEN research project sponsored by the International Development Program through Clark University.

23. Turner, S. (2007). Small-Scale Enterprise Livelihoods and Social Capital in Eastern Indonesia: Ethnic Embeddedness and Exclusion. The Professional Geographer. Oxford, UK, Blackwell Publishing. 59: 407-420.

This article examines the role of social capital in small-scale enterprises in Eastern Indonesia. Findings demonstrate that the networks and trust relationships developed by entrepreneurs play a significant role in facilitating access to resources and information, as well as adapting to new environments. However, the lack of networks across different ethnic and economic groups excludes certain groups from gaining such benefits. Also, certain institutional systems and bureaucratic processes prevent progress that entrepreneurs might achieve through social networks.

24. Weller-Molongua, C. and J. Knapp. Workshop: Social Network Mapping.

This exercise explains the process of mapping social networks between households and communities. Findings from such an exercise in a village in Southern Mali show that there is a marked difference in the interpretation of exchange between men and women, due in large part to the differences in access to and control of resources based on gender.

25. Wollenberg, E. K. Tools for the Field: Methodologies Handbook for Gender Analysis in Agriculture. "Selecting Methods of Time Allocation Research": 172-178.

This chapter of *Tools for the Field: Methodologies Handbook for Gender Analysis in Agriculture* examines the most effective methods for researchers to complete time allocation studies in their projects. Due to the high resource costs necessary for time allocation studies, researchers should be sure to a clear and relevant focus of study and analysis that will produce the most useful data.

26. World Bank, FAO, et al. (2009). Gender and Agricultural Markets. Washington, D.C., The World Bank, FAO, IFAD: 173-228.

This module examines the traditional division of labor within agricultural markets, where women farmers are primarily responsible for subsistence and household crop production while male farmers dominate the commercial sector. Challenging these gendered roles by increasing women farmers' access to resources and market opportunities has strong positive effects on household food security, health, and education. Also, the formation of women's groups helps women become active in decision making processes, but larger policies and provisions are often necessary to support them and help them maintain control over important economic assets.

27. World Bank, FAO, et al. (2009). Gender in Crop Agriculture. Washington, D.C., The World Bank, FAO, IFAD: 519-560.

This module examines the role of gender in crop agriculture as an essential component of development and poverty reduction. Gender is an integral aspect of crop agriculture because women's roles in crop production and household subsistence, as well as their knowledge of complex production systems are often unrecognized. Differences between women and men exist in terms of the types and management of crops, knowledge, and access to information and markets. These issues are explored further within the specific contexts of Gender and Soil Productivity Management, Gender in Seed Production and Distribution, and Gender and Crop Protection.