Market access and gender roles in the Jatun Mayu watershed communities (Tiraque, Bolivia)

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Nadezda Amaya
Graduate student
AAEC – Virginia Tech

Blacksburg, Virginia
Introduction

• **Project framework:** Watershed Based Natural Resources Management in Small Scale Agriculture, Sloped Areas of Andean Region: Sub-watershed “Jatun Mayu” river. Tiraque – Bolivia

• **Cross-cutting gender research:** Analysis of gender roles within farmer’s economy
Study area: Subwatershed Jatun Mayu, Tiraque - Bolivia

Sub-watershed location

Cochabamba City
Study area: Subwatershed Jatun Mayu, Tiraque - Bolivia

- Located on the southern side of Tiraque Province, 70 Km away from the City of Cochabamba; and covers an area of 117 km²
- It is comprised of 14 communities, with a population of approximately 3000 inhabitants.
Study area: Subwatershed Jatun Mayu, Tiraque - Bolivia

• Primary economic activities:
  • Small-scale agricultural production
  • Livestock

• Low level of education and high illiteracy (33% - more than 60% are female)

• Primary social problems: low levels of income and lack of income-earning alternatives

• Principal environmental problems: soil erosion, deforestation and low levels of soil fertility
Market access and gender roles

Background

• Widely-held assumptions:
  • Andean societies to be strongly male-dominated
  • Role of women is relegated to reproductive responsibilities only.
Market access and gender roles

Objectives

• Describe the roles, responsibilities, actions and decision-making of small farmers and merchants in rural Bolivia

• Describe household dynamics and gendered social networks that facilitate or impede access to local and regional markets.
Market access and gender roles

Methodology

- Rapid Market Appraisal (RMA)
- Case Studies (CS)
  - Baseline data analysis (SANREM Project),
  - Secondary data
  - Semi-structured interviews
  - Direct observation and also an analysis of the social networks.
  - Participatory tools (regenerative cycles, crop budgets)
- Market analysis will be conducted around potato production (most important crop)

"The wholesaler never loses". This sentence used by farmers sums up the transaction relationship
Market access and gender roles

- **Methodology**

  **Case Studies (CS):** Participatory tools - regenerative cycles

  **Rapid Market Appraisal (RMA):** Semi-structured interviews
PRELIMINARY OUTCOMES

1. REPRODUCTIVE ROLE:

• An average household has 8 members.

• 12% of households are headed by women (access to resources is limited).

• 46% of women are literate, but 76% of the illiterate are women.

• Women undertake mainly the household work, animal care and agricultural production support.

Average family of 8 members: Father (right), Mother (middle) and six children (2 boys and 4 girls).
PRELIMINARY OUTCOMES

1. REPRODUCTIVE ROLE:

- The decisions about the income management and household are taken by men and women together (60%).
- Regarding the administration per se, women bear most of the responsibilities (43%).
- Mainly women are responsible for children’s education, feeding and health care.

Women are responsible for household management, child care, food security, health and education.
PRELIMINARY OUTCOMES

2. PRODUCTIVE ROLE

Agricultural Production:

• Families own from 0.5 to 20 ha;

• Households led by women own between 0.25 to 1.2 ha.

• Women only manage 5% of the cultivated lands.

• Men take most of the decisions in productive activities

• They always count on the support and opinion of women.

5 y.o. boy working in agriculture side by side with his father. “Everybody works in the family” say farmers.
2. PRODUCTIVE ROLE

Agricultural Production:

- Actually, as an effect of migration, women are engaged in production activities that were exclusive to men.
- Implementation of IPM (Integrated Pest Management) workshops for women

Due to migration, often women assume male’s activities, like plot preparation and irrigation.
2. PRODUCTIVE ROLE

Marketing:

- Sales decisions are made by men and women together

- Women are mostly responsible for marketing:
  - Negotiation skills
  - Bargaining power (higher prices)

- Wholesalers are mostly women

- In the markets men play the role of transportation, support and security of their wives.

*Both go to the market, women are in charge, but men support them*
2. PRODUCTIVE ROLE

Marketing:

- The high participation of women in markets is striking.

- Access to Information, mostly about prices, volumes and possible markets
  - Radio programmes,
  - Social networks
  - Cell phones (use has grown strongly in the last years).

*In market there is a high female attendance and predominance (View of Tiraque market)*
## Market Interviews

Summary: interviews of four markets (potato commercialization)
Farmers, Wholesalers, Retailers, Key actors (Municipality, truck drivers)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Fours markets</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distribution of market actors</td>
<td>More than 60% are women (i.e. more than 80% of wholesalers)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender roles in the market</td>
<td>• In the last 20 years women’s market participation has increased</td>
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<td>• Women are in charge of the business (potato sales)</td>
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<td>• Men support their wives with transportation and security</td>
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<td>Decision making</td>
<td>Women are in charge. It is their business</td>
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<td>Money management</td>
<td>Women are in charge. “women are the safe boxes of our families”</td>
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<td>Bargaining power and negotiation skills</td>
<td>• Women-wholesalers “Between women there is more understanding”.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• “Men do not argue with women” “men do not know how to bargain”. Wholesalers take advantage of men</td>
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<tr>
<td>Factors that affect the negotiation</td>
<td>• Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Age</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Origin (production)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social networks</td>
<td>• Important for negotiation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Use of cellphones plays an important role</td>
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<td>• Based on trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farmers – wholesalers relation</td>
<td>• “the wholesaler never loses”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Based on trust (oral contracts)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Importance of potato production</td>
<td>• Local markets: In Tiraque once a week major wholesalers can spend more than $63.000 (only potato purchases).</td>
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<td>• Approximately there are 10 major wholesalers in this market, only 2 of them are men</td>
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</table>
3. **COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT ROLES:**

- **The Union (Syndicate):** It’s the main social and political institution in the community, but it’s led only by men.

- In most communities women have no right to vote, but always have the last word at home

- **Women’s organization:** Are sponsored and promoted by institutions that work in the area.

View of a “Union” meeting with some female attendants but only as viewers.
Describe the roles, responsibilities, actions and decision-making of small farmers and merchants in rural Bolivia

- Women’s participation is a determinant factor:
  - Agricultural markets dynamic
  - Organizational structure

- Men are responsible for production activities and women for the marketing ones.

- Decision making: Women in the end have the last word (household, production and marketing)

Describe household dynamics and gendered social networks that facilitate or impede access to local and regional markets.

- Gender is an important factor to access to markets
- Social networks important source of information, but it is important to identify its gaps
- Analyze marketing system to identify obstacles to participation in higher-valued markets
Questions