

Gendered Perspectives on Sheep, Livelihoods, and Sense of Place in Sank'ayani Alto, Bolivia



Dr. Maria Elisa Christie, Keri Agriesti, Rubén Botello



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Outline

- SANREM CRSP and Gender CCRA
- Gender framework and literature
- Site description
- Participatory research
- Pasturing sheep and making chuño



SANREM's goal in the current phase is to increase smallholder food security through the development of participatory conservation agriculture production systems (CAPS) adapted to the biophysical and societal conditions in disadvantaged regions of the world.

CAPS:

- *Minimize soil disturbance from tillage*
- *Maintain a year-round soil cover*
- *Utilize crop rotation*



Activities are carried out by seven U.S. universities and 34 host-country organizations in 13 countries.

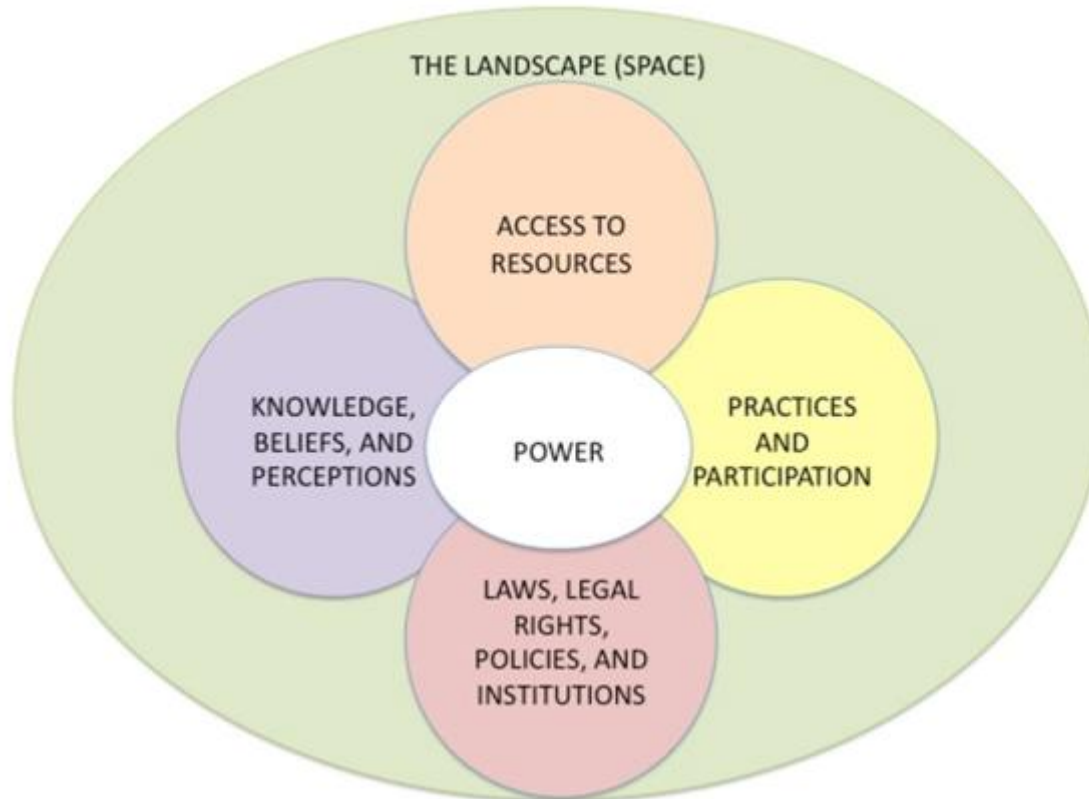
Our goal was to document soil knowledge and gendered space in relation to CAPS.



We went to a rural farming community in the Andes to document gendered soil knowledge and gendered space and place.

Using a gender dimensions framework, the Gender CCRA identifies gender-related factors that may contribute to the success or failure of CAPS.

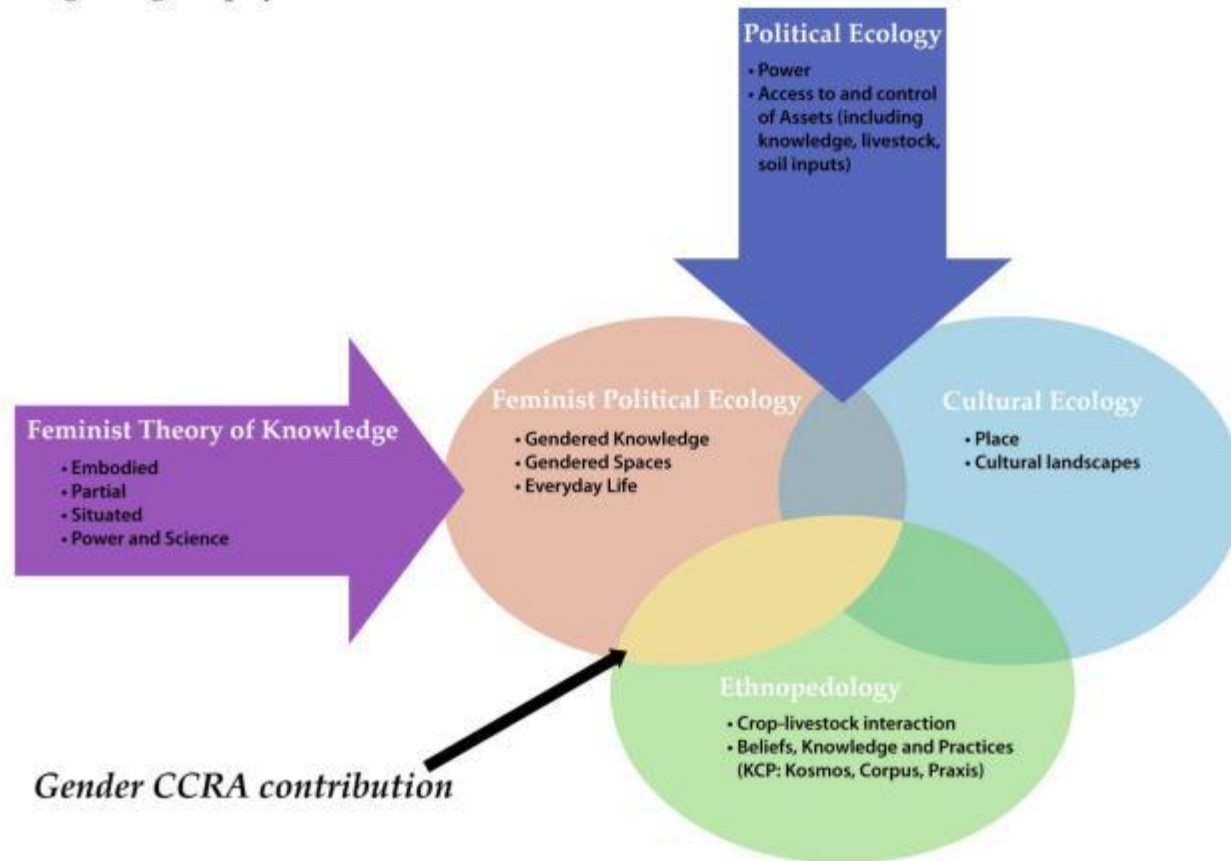
Power, Space, and the Four Dimensions



We ask: “Why is gender important?” and “How will CAPS affect men and women differently?” We added the landscape/space dimension to existing gender framework. (Rubin et al. 2009)

This research is informed by literature that connects social and environmental issues from a gender perspective.

Transdisciplinary Research Strategy: Integrating Biophysical and Socio-Economic Sciences



Sense of place



Places are “. . .spaces which people have made meaningful.” (Cresswell 2005)

Everyday life and food preparation

de Certeau stresses the importance of everyday life as a research focus.

(de Certeau 1998)



Kitchenspace: a key site of cultural and social reproduction.

(Christie 2004; 2008)

Sank'ayani Alto, Bolivia



Sank'ayani Alto,
Tiraque,
Cochabamba
District, Bolivia



70-80 Households
Population ~300
Smallholder Farmers
Average plot size < 1 Acre
Elevation 14,000-15,500 feet
Languages: Quechua and Spanish

Primary livelihood activities during June-August



Planting



Pasturing



Chuño: home consumption and selling/trading

Participatory, qualitative research methods



Focus
group
discussions

Mapping
soils on
satellite
image



Gendered resource mapping
(Rocheleau et al. 1995)

Participant
observation
included
planting
potatoes and
pasturing
sheep.

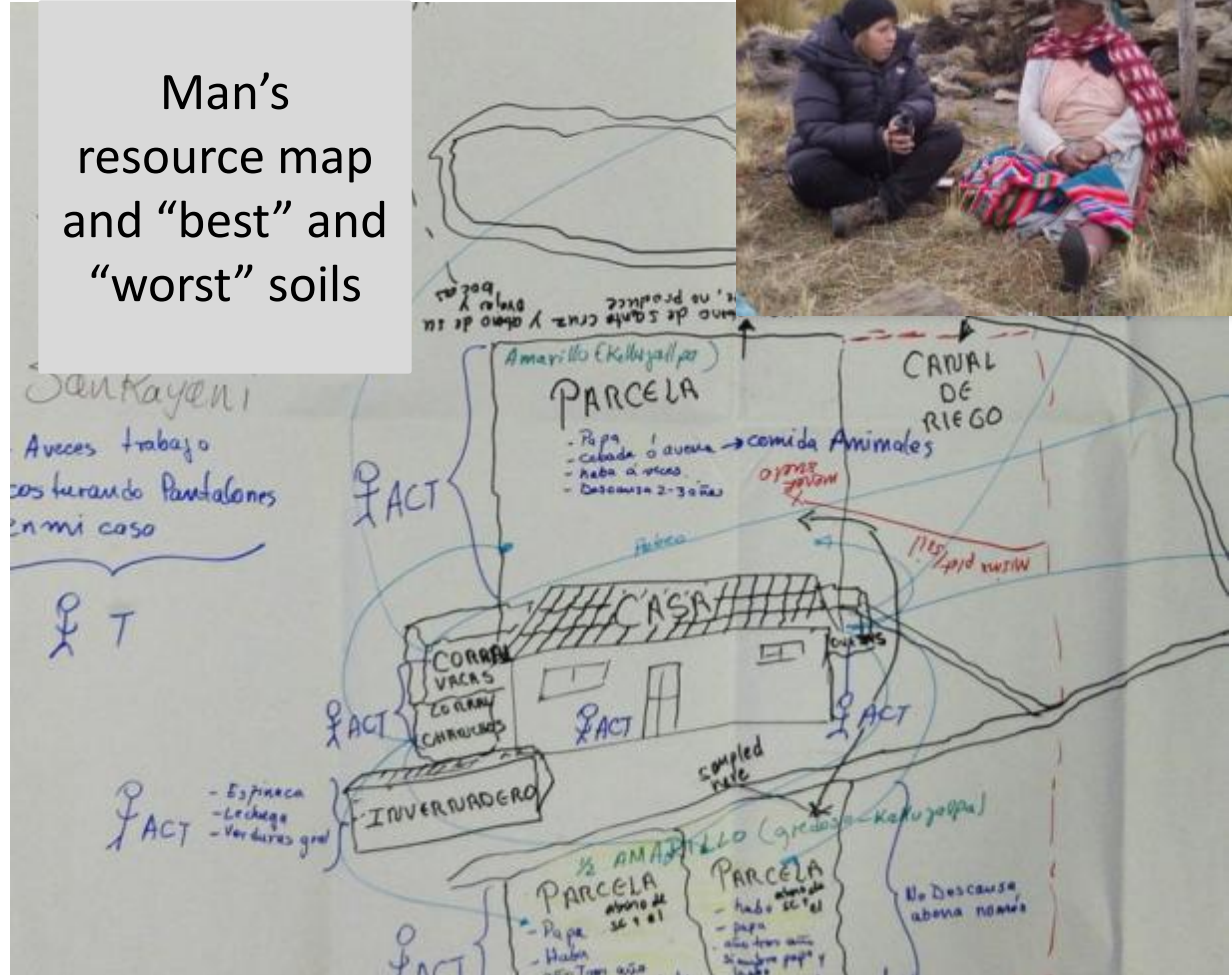


Describing gendered soil knowledge, space, and place



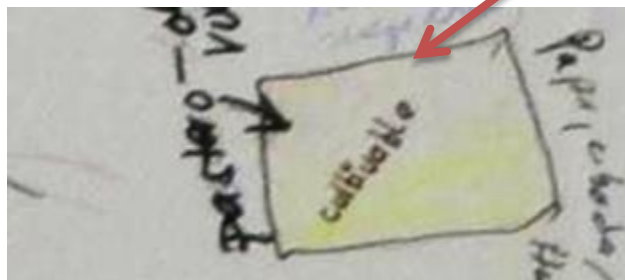
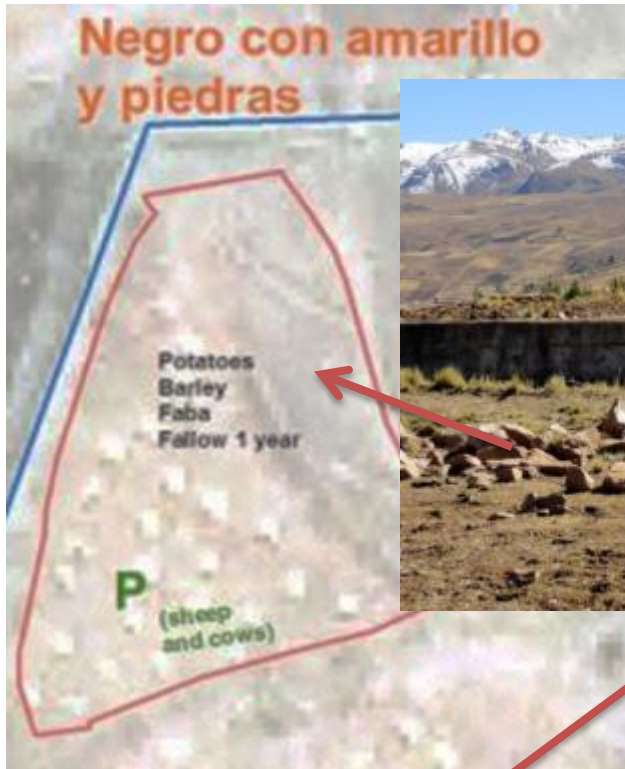
Men describing soils and place

Man's resource map and "best" and "worst" soils

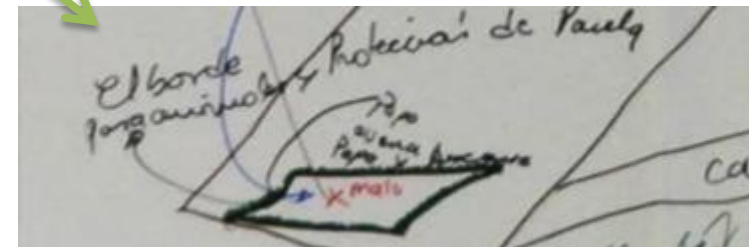


“Local or indigenous cultures and people hold significant knowledge of soils and environments, attained by *experience* and testing through many generations of *living close to the land*.” (WinklerPrins and Sandor 2002)

Using geospatial techniques to 'map' gendered knowledge



Man



Woman

We found that men and women's soil knowledge and space reflected a gendered sense of place.

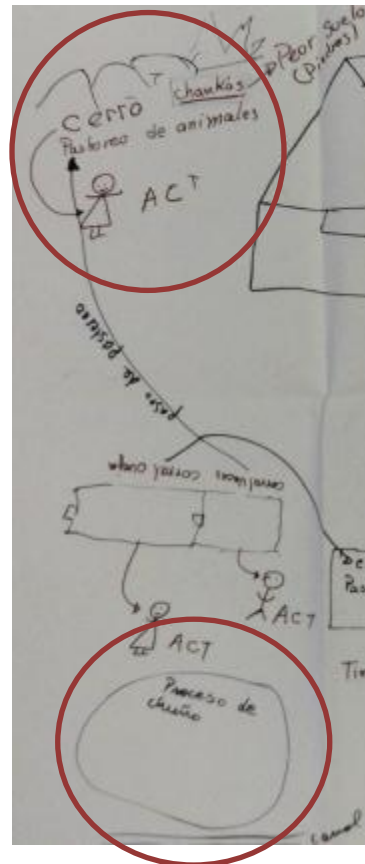


Chajwa jallp'a: A Quechua term used to describe a sandy soil, with stones or soil in slope. Farmers perceived this as a "worst" soil because it produces little, has too many small rocks, or gets too hard after rain. Some grow potatoes, oats, or barley. Many reported that they use this space to tie their animals or pasture.

Chuño and sheep, in addition to soil knowledge, showed gendered sense of place. We found this reflected in everyday life and the maps.



Woman's map of pasture land



A woman's map showing pasture and chuño



Chuño drying on a roof



Chuño is a freeze-dried potato that is unique to Andean culture and world history.

- Developed by the Aymara to remove toxins from potatoes and store for long periods
- 4,000 year old process
- Shaped Andean civilizations
- One of the world's first preserved foods
- Long used for consumption and trade



Black and white chuño

“Taking advantage of the freezing nights and brilliant days that the long dry season brings to these regions, they effectively freeze-dry their potatoes, turning them into hard and chalk-white *chuño* that is free of toxins and stores very well.” (Reader 2009)

Chuño was made in irrigation canals or other troughs and flat surfaces.

Woman washing chuño on a flat surface outside her house



Woman washing chuño with irrigation channel outside her house



“Nosotras las mujeres hacemos el chuño. Si es mucha cantidad recién el hombre nos ayuda. Mis hijos también ayudan en pisar y a pelar el chuño después de su escuela.” (Interview with woman farmer, June, 2011)

“The women were peeling frozen potatoes all day, but after a half an hour my fingers were completely frozen. When they made black chuño they stomped them barefoot all day long too.”
(Keri Agriesti, SANREM CRSP Gender GRA)



“Solo en los meses de Junio, Julio, Agosto. El mes de Julio tiene más helada y ahí procesamos más, nosotros llevamos donde mi tía a sus parcelas porque son planas aquí donde vivimos no es pampa y no congela.” (Interview with woman farmer, June, 2011)

Besides making chuño, women's sense of place is constructed in part by tying sheep in plots or shepherding them across mountains.



Woman's map showing where she ties her animals (right) and the mountain where she pastures (left).



“En las parcelas de descanso amarro mis animales cuando no tengo tiempo porque hay que hacer chuño, segar o cortar la cebada, y cuando tengo tiempo llevo al cerro a pastear a los animales. No los dejo en el cerro porque hay zorros, es peligroso, se lo come a las ovejas, también vienen a la casa a comer gallinas en agosto. Es muy peligroso, solo media día pasteamos en cerro.” (Interview with woman farmer, June, 2011)

For one woman, her sense of place and meaning tied to sheep and chuño characterizes her livelihood



Doña Ana's house and animal corral in Los Andes (top) and her with her house and sheep in Sank'ayani Alto.

“El chuño hace mucho tiempo se elabora aquí desde nuestros abuelos. Hacemos chuño porque no se hecha a perder como la papa. Además cuando nos falta dinero vendemos el chuño y cuesta más que la papa. Nosotros comemos más chuño, no comemos mucho macarrón, fideo, arroz.” (Doña Ana, July 2011)

Conclusions

- *“Yo amarro a los animales en el cerro, regreso a mi casa a lavar la ropa, preparo la comida, después regreso a recoger a los animales (ovejas).”* (Translated from Quechua; interview with woman farmer, June 2011)
- Making chuño extends kitchenspace onto the landscape and inform women’s sense of place.
- Grazing sheep on plots after harvest or in fallow fields

Questions?



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mechristie@vt.edu

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